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CONCERNING SCHMIEDEL'S "PILLAR-PASSAGES"

The publication by Paul W. Schmiedel in 1901 of the article "Gospels" in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* marks (we do not say, creates) something very much like an epoch in the history of the criticism of the Gospel-narratives. For more than a century—"from Reimarus to Wrede"—"the quest of the historical Jesus" has been pursued with unflagging industry. That is to say, the energies of a long line of brilliantly endowed scholars, equipped with the instrument of the most extensive and exact erudition, have been exhausted in the effort to discover some historical basis for the "natural" Jesus which their philosophical presuppositions compelled them to assume behind the supernatural Jesus presented in the Gospel-narratives. "Exhausted" is the right word to use here. For precisely what Schmiedel's article advises us of, is the failure of this long-continued and diligently prosecuted labor to reach the results expected of it. After a half-century of somewhat unmethodical investigation, Ferdinand Christian Baur, in the middle of the last century, laid down the reasonable rule by which subsequent research has been governed: "criticism of documents must precede criticism of material."¹ But the subsequent half-century of criticism of

¹F. C. Baur, *Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien*, 1847, Introduction. Strauss had proceeded on the principle that a history which contains narratives of miracles can deserve no credit. Baur raises the question whether this is not a rash conclusion; whether the metaphysical notion of the miraculous is not too abstract a category to be made the test of the entire evangelical history; whether, in a word, some investigation into the origin of the narratives is not called for before a conclusion is drawn against their contents; and whether, therefore, Strauss has not erred in making his criticism so exclusively a criticism of the history to the neglect of criticism of the writings (p. 46). He recognizes a certain naturalness in Strauss' procedure in the state of the documentary criticism of the day. But he concludes: "The fault of the Straussian work is that it makes the Gospel history the object of criticism without first attaining a solid result with the criticism of the writings" (p. 71).

documents has issued in certainly nothing to the purpose, and, Schmiedel seems half-inclined to declare, nothing solid at all. The Synoptic problem, he tells us, remains as vexed at the end of it as it was at the beginning. Certain immediate sources of the Synoptics' material it is, of course, easy enough to discern lying behind them, and these are very generally recognized. But behind them in turn stretches a vista of sources, traveling down which the eye becomes weary; and the complications which result when an attempt is made to take these into consideration confound the most promising hypotheses. "The solution of the Synoptical problem which appeared after so much toil to have been brought so near," remarks Schmiedel, "seems suddenly to be removed again to an immeasurable distance."² "It cannot but seem unfortunate" therefore, he continues, "that the decision as to the credibility of the Gospel-narratives should be made to depend upon the determination of a problem so difficult and perhaps insoluble as the Synoptical is."³ Consequently he proposes a return to the pre-Tübingen position of criticism of the material independently of the criticism of the documents in which this material is presented. "It would accordingly be a very important gain," he says, "if we could find some means of making" the decision as to the credibility of the Gospel-narratives "in some measure at least independent of" the determination of the Synoptical problem.⁴

The procedure which Schmiedel here proposes is ob-
 "However natural and in a sense unavoidable the way opened up by Strauss may be, it nevertheless remains undeniable that it is from the very nature of the case impossible to reach an assured result with the criticism of the history, so long as the criticism of the writings is so wavering and uncertain" (p. 72). Cf. Otto Pfeiderer, *The Development of Theology in Germany since Kant*, 1890, p. 224 ff.

² *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1868.

³ *Ibid.*, col. 1872.

⁴ *Ibid.*, col. 1872; cf. *Protestantische Monatshefte* x. (1906), p. 400: "They [his 'pillar-passages'] provide the possibility of establishing very essential traits of the life of Jesus without the question of the origin and the mutual relations of the first three Gospels having to be solved."

viously revolutionary; so revolutionary that it marks, as we say, something very like an epoch in the history of the criticism of the Gospel-narratives. It is an express return to the methods of Strauss as opposed to the more scientific methods validated once for all by Baur as against Strauss; and in returning to Strauss' methods it returns in a very curious way to Strauss' exact standpoint of unreasoned scepticism with respect to the Gospel-narratives. What it particularly concerns us here to emphasize, however, is that it registers the failure of "literary criticism" of the Gospels as prosecuted during the last half-century, either, as Schmiedel intimates, to accomplish anything of importance, or, in any event, to accomplish anything to the purpose. There are many, no doubt, who will disown Schmiedel's low estimate of the formal results of Synoptical criticism. But no well-informed person will care to deny that for the ultimate purpose for which this criticism has been invoked its failure has been complete. No stratum of tradition has been reached by it in which the portrait of Jesus differs in any essential respect from that presented in the Synoptic Gospels. If the writers of the Synoptic Gospels were (in Schmiedel's phrase⁵) "worshippers of Jesus," no less were those who formed and transmitted to them the tradition on which they ultimately rest (also in Schmiedel's phrase⁶) "worshippers of Jesus." As we go back, and ever farther back, to the very beginnings

⁵This is the term employed in the English of the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* (e.g. col. 1872), the Preface which Schmiedel contributed to Arno Neumann's *Jesus* (e.g. pp. ix., xviii.), and his lecture on *Jesus in Modern Criticism* (e.g. p. 16) alike; and as all these discussions owe their English clothing to friends of Schmiedel, working under his eye, we should perhaps permit the term to stand. The German term which is rendered (*Verehrung, Verehrer*) we should not suppose necessarily expressed so specific a notion.

⁶Preface to Neumann, p. ix.: "The Gospels are, all of them, the work of worshippers of Jesus, and their contents have been handed down through the channel of tradition in like manner by His worshippers"; p. xviii: "This tradition was itself really handed down by worshippers of Jesus." So also W. Heitmüller, in Schiele and Zscharnack's *Die Religion*, etc., III. pp. 357-359.

of any tradition to which literary criticism can penetrate, the purely human Jesus who is assumed to lie behind the Jesus of the Gospels still continually eludes us. Accordingly a Pfleiderer frankly despairs of ever recovering Him,⁷ and a Wellhausen leaves on his readers a strong impression that his drastic criticism must land us ultimately in the same desperation.⁸ Schmiedel's counsel is, in these circumstances, to reverse the established method of the last half-century, and, abandoning the criticism of documents which no longer seems hopeful, to seek to break a way to the assumed purely human Jesus by means of immediate criticism of the historical material itself. And he thinks he can blaze out the road directly to the desired goal.

It ought to be noted in passing that Schmiedel sometimes speaks as if he were not prepared to admit that the attainment of the purely human Jesus, so long sought in vain by literary criticism, were the determining motive of the change of procedure which he suggests.⁹ He everywhere speaks, indeed, as if the critical principle which he invokes were quite indifferent to this issue. He even asserts explicitly: "In reality, my foundation-texts were in no sense sought out by me for any purpose whatever; they thrust themselves upon me in virtue of one feature, and one feature only: the impossibility of their having been invented, and their consequent credibility."¹⁰ Except in a purely formal sense, however, this is manifestly absurd. It is its superhuman Jesus with His nimbus of the supernatural which is the sole *scandalon* of the Synoptic narrative, apart from which that narrative would be acknowledged by all as exceptionally trustworthy. "Precisely this," remarks Albert Schweitzer justly, "is the characteristic of the liter-

⁷ Cf. *The Princeton Theological Review* iv (1906), pp. 121-124.

⁸ Cf. H. Weinel, *Ist das "liberale" Jesus widerlegt?* 1910, p. 20: "And even now if Wrede and Wellhausen do not really mean that Jesus is a wholly imaginary figure, yet the judgment to which their work leads runs: 'Jesus is for us unknowable (*unerkennbar*)'."

⁹ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1881.

¹⁰ Preface to Neumann, p. xxi.

ature of the Life of Jesus at the opening of the twentieth century,—that the purely historical, even in the productions of historical, scientific, professional theology, retires behind the interest in the world-view."¹¹ Schmiedel does not separate from his companions in this. He comes to the criticism of the Gospel-narratives with a definite world-view as the primary presupposition of his work; and this world-view is the current anti-supernaturalistic one. There is nothing of which he is surer than that Jesus was merely a man;¹² unless it be that miracles in general do not happen.¹³ The only reason why he rejects out of hand the Jesus given him by the Synoptic narratives is that the Jesus given him by the Synoptic narratives is not a mere man. And the precise thing he sets himself to look for behind the Synoptic narratives is evidence of some kind that the real Jesus was, despite the constant testimony of the tradition, nevertheless merely man. "What," he asks, "are the portions of the Gospels so persistently objected to?" And he replies: "We find that they are, to say all in a

¹¹ *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 322.

¹² Hibbert Journal Supplement: *Jesus or Christ?* 1909, p. 601: "Since the divine and human nature cannot be united in Jesus, and since Jesus was undoubtedly man, we have simply to regard His human nature as given." *Jesus in Modern Criticism*, 1907, p. 86: "My religion, moreover, does not require me to find in Jesus an absolutely perfect model, and it would not trouble me if I found another person who excelled Him, as indeed, in certain respects some have already done. Convinced as I am that He was human, if another should have more to offer me than He had, I should consider this simply another instance of God's bounty and favour." *Ibid.*, p. 6: "It is no less pleasant to note at the same time that the person of Jesus is being explained in a more and more definitely human way by all theological parties, and in a more or less human way even by ultra-conservatives." *Cf. Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1881; *Jesus in Modern Criticism*, p. 24.

¹³ "It would be clearly wrong," he indeed declares (*Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1876), "in an investigation such as the present, to start from any such postulate or axiom as that 'miracles' are impossible;" but he is soon found arguing that "even one strongly predisposed to believe in miracles would find it difficult to accept a narrative," like that of Lk. xxiii. 44 ff because it alleges a darkening of the sun at a time of the month when eclipses do not happen—that is because if it happened at all it must have been by miracle.

word, those in which Jesus appears as a Divine Being, whether in virtue of what He says, or in virtue of what He does."¹⁴ There is no other reason why the portrait of Jesus given by the Synoptics should be "objected to." And so firmly set is Schmiedel's reluctance to the admission of the possibility of such a Jesus that he even goes the length of declaring that were this representation consistent and unbroken, he, for his part might find it impossible to defend the actual existence of any Jesus at all.¹⁵ Either a purely human Jesus or no Jesus at all is the only alternative that he will admit, prior to entering into any critical inquiry into the evidence; and the sole object of his criticism is to discover some evidence of the existence of a purely human Jesus. The precise significance of his proposed revolution in critical procedure, therefore, is that it openly recognizes that literary criticism has failed to discover any evidence of the existence of a purely human Jesus behind the super-human Jesus of the Synoptic narratives, and suggests that another and more direct way be therefore tried to reach the desired end.

Schmiedel's criticism brings us, then, to a parting of the ways. Not only are we justified, therefore, in giving it an attention which in itself it might not seem to merit. It is in a sense required of us to subject it to a sufficiently careful scrutiny to assure us that we understand exactly what he proposes, and also, if possible, exactly what the significance of this proposal is.

So far as we are informed Schmiedel first propounded his new critical method in the article "Gospels" which was published in the second volume of the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* in 1901. The commendation of it to a German public seems in the first instance to have been made by expositions

¹⁴ Preface to Neumann, p. ix.

¹⁵ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1881: "If passages of this kind were wholly wanting in them, it would be impossible to prove to a skeptic that any historical value whatever was to be assigned to the gospels; he would be in a position to declare the picture of Jesus contained in them to be purely a work of phantasy, and would remove the person of Jesus from the field of history."

of it given by his brother, Otto Schmiedel, in 1902¹⁶ and by his pupil, Arno Neumann, in 1904.¹⁷ It was apparently not until 1906 that Schmiedel himself laid it before his countrymen, early in that year somewhat incidentally in a tractate on the Gospel of John as compared with the Synoptics,¹⁸ and later more at length in a lecture on the Person of Jesus in modern controversy, which was delivered at the meeting of the Swiss Association for Free Christianity on June 15, 1906, and published in the July number of the *Protestantische Monatshefte*, and afterwards separately.¹⁹ In the same year he returned to its exposition and defence in English in a preface which he wrote for the English translation of Neumann's *Jesus*;²⁰ and in the following year there was issued an English translation of his Swiss lecture.²¹ These publications constitute our sources of information with respect to the proposal we are to examine.²²

¹⁶ *Die Hauptprobleme der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, von Otto Schmiedel, 1902, § vi., Auswahl absolut glaubwürdiger Stellen, pp. 39-41. The second edition, 1906, repeats this section without change, pp. 46-48.

¹⁷ *Jesus, wer er geschichtlich war*, von Arno Neumann, 1904, Die Vorfrage, § 5, pp. 16-18. English Translation: *Jesus*, 1906, pp. 9-11.

¹⁸ *Das vierte Evangelium gegenüber den drei ersten*, von Professor D. P. W. Schmiedel, Zürich, being the 8th and 10th parts of the first series of the well-known *Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher*, 1906, pp. 16-22, 31 f, 33, 81-83, 85-87.

¹⁹ *Protestantische Monatshefte*, x. (1906), 7 pp. 257-282. *Die Person Jesu im Streite der Meinungen der Gegenwart*, Vortrag . . . von D. Paul Wilh. Schmiedel . . . Leipzig, 1906. Also in an edition published at Zürich [1906] which contains also: Erstes Votum von J. G. Hosang, Dekan in Pontresina, samt Schlusswort der Referenten.

²⁰ *Jesus*. By Arno Neumann. Translated by Maurice A. Canney, M.A. With a Preface by P. W. Schmiedel, London: Adam and Charles Black, 1906. The Preface occupies pp. v.-xxviii.

²¹ *Jesus in Modern Criticism*. A lecture by Dr. Paul W. Schmiedel, Professor of Theology in Zurich. Translated into English (by permission of the publishers of the *Prot. Monatshefte*) by Maurice A. Canney, M.A. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1907.

²² A "Nachwort über die 'Grundsäulen' eines Lebens Jesu" in reply to an article in the same number (pp. 386-392) by Eduard Hertlein of Jena, entitled, "Neue 'Grundsäulen' eines 'Lebens Jesu'?" was published by Schmiedel in the number of the *Protestantische Monatshefte* for Nov. 1906 (x. 10, pp. 393-400).

In its primary publication²³ Schmiedel explains his suggestion, if succinctly, yet with sufficient clearness. Turning from literary to historical criticism, the investigator finds, he remarks, two lines of procedure open to him—a negative and a positive one. He must on the one hand, “set on one side everything which for any reason, arising either from the substance or from considerations of literary criticism, has to be regarded as doubtful or wrong.” On the other hand, “he must make search for all such data, as from the nature of their contents cannot possibly on any account be regarded as inventions.” Following out the former of these lines of inquiry with respect to the Synoptic Gospels Schmiedel points out a number of matters (including their accounts of miraculous occurrences) in which he considers them clearly untrustworthy.²⁴ With this negative criticism we are not for the moment concerned. We only note in passing that it is sufficiently drastic to lead Schmiedel to remark at the close of the sections devoted to it, “The foregoing sections may have sometimes seemed to raise a doubt, whether any credible elements were to be found in the Gospels at all.”²⁵ The method of the positive investigation is outlined as follows:²⁶

“When a profane historian finds before him a historical document which testifies to the worship of a hero unknown to other sources, he attaches first and foremost importance to those features which cannot be deduced merely from the fact of this worship, and he does so on the simple and sufficient ground that they would not be found in this source unless the author had met with them as fixed data of tradition. The same fundamental principle may be safely applied in the case of the gospels, for they also are all of them written by worshippers of Jesus. We now have accordingly the advantage—which cannot be appreciated too highly—of being in a position to recognise something as being worthy of belief even without being able to say, or even being called on to inquire, whether it comes from original Mk., from logia, or from oral tradition, or from any other quarter that may be alleged. The relative priority becomes a matter of indifference, because the absolute priority—

²³ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1872 ff.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, col. 1873-1880.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, col. 1881.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, col. 1872.

that is, the origin in real tradition—is certain. In such points the question as to credibility becomes independent of the synoptical question. Here the clearest cases are those in which only one evangelist, or two, have data of this class, and the second, or third, or both, are found to have taken occasion to alter these in the interests of the reverence due to Jesus.

"If we discover any such points—even if only a few—they guarantee not only their own contents, but also much more. For in that case one may also hold as credible all else which agrees in character with these, and is in other respects not open to suspicion. Indeed the thoroughly disinterested historian must recognise it as his duty to investigate the grounds for this so great reverence for himself which Jesus was able to call forth; and he will then, first and foremost, find himself led to recognise as true the two great facts that Jesus had compassion for the multitude and that he preached with power, not as the scribes (Mt. ix. 36; vii. 29)."²¹

²¹ The meaning of these last sentences is practically that, having by the processes of criticism outlined in the preceding paragraph secured a merely human Jesus, Schmiedel now sets himself to present as high a conception of this merely human Jesus as he can without overstepping the bounds of His mere humanity. Consequently he is willing to point to such passages as Mt. vii. 29; Mk. vi. 34; Mt. xi. 28 as "of the same truthful nature" as the "pillar passages," though the principle of their selection is now the opposite one, that they *enhance* the character of Jesus (*Jesus in Modern Criticism*, pp. 25-26). He is even on this principle prepared to run directly in the teeth of the principle of his "pillar-passages." Those passages, he says, have thrust themselves upon him because the statements in them are too inconsistent with the reverence in which Jesus was held by the community to represent their view, and must therefore have come from an earlier tradition which is true. But there are passages which in his judgment attribute to Jesus teachings which he refuses to believe was genuinely Jesus' because they are altogether too inconsistent with reverence for Him. There is, for example, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in which (in his view) mere poverty is made a virtue, and mere riches a vice (Lk. xvi. 25). There is the parable of the unrighteous steward in which mere relaxation of financial claims without any consideration of the rights and duties involved, is made a shining virtue (Lk. xvi. 1-9). Why not reason that these are obviously fragments of an earlier tradition inconsistent with the worship in which Jesus had come to be held, and demonstrate to us that Jesus was an "Ebionite," a fanatical leveler? But Schmiedel draws back and remarks: "It should be obvious that Jesus cannot have said such things as these" (*Jesus in Modern Criticism*, pp. 72-73), arguing against their genuineness after a fashion which sounds very strange on his lips, and raises the question whether he himself really believes in the principle of his "pillar-passages."

Proceeding after this fashion Schmiedel fixes primarily on five passages which seem to him to meet the conditions laid down; that is to say, they make statements which are in conflict with the reverence for Jesus that pervades the Gospels and therefore could not have been invented by the authors of the Gospels, but must have come to them from earlier fixed tradition; and they are preserved in their crude contradiction with the standpoint of the evangelists, accordingly, only by one or two of them, while the others, or other, of them, if they report them at all, modify them into harmony with their standpoint of reverence.²⁸ These five passages are: Mk. x, 17 ff ('Why callest thou me good? None is good save God only'); Mt. xii. 31 ff (blasphemy against the Son of Man can be forgiven); Mk. iii. 21 (His relations held Him to be beside Himself); Mk. xiii. 32 ('Of that day and of that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son but the Father'); Mk. xv. 34, Mt. xxvii. 46 ('My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'). To these he adds four more which have reference to Jesus' power to work miracles, viz.: Mk. viii. 12 (Jesus declines to work a sign); Mk. vi. 5 ff (Jesus was able to do no mighty works in Nazareth); Mk. viii. 14-21 ('The leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod' refers not to bread but to teaching); Mk. xi. 5, Lk. vii. 22 (the signs of the Messiah are only figuratively miraculous). These nine passages he calls "the foundation-pillars for a really scientific life of Jesus." In his view, they prove, on the one hand, that "Jesus really did exist, and that the Gospels contain at least some trustworthy facts concerning Him,"—a matter which, he seems to suggest, would be subject to legitimate doubt in the absence of such passages; and, on the other hand, that "in the person of Jesus we have to do with a completely human being, and that the divine is to be sought in Him only in the form in which it is capable of being found in a man."²⁹

²⁸ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1881.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

From them as a basis, he proposes to work out, admitting nothing to be credible which is not accordant with the non-miraculous, purely human, Jesus which these passages imply.

The principle of procedure which Schmiedel invokes, it will be seen, he represents as one which is in universal use in like circumstances among profane historians. He represents it as altogether independent of literary criticism and as finding its chief value in this fact. He represents it further as yielding results which may be confidently depended upon. And he represents these results as totally reversing the portrait of Jesus presented in the documents subjected to this critical scrutiny, substituting for the divine Jesus which they depict a purely human Jesus. All this will become clearer as we attend to the subsequent expositions he has given of his method.

The subject is introduced, in the little book on John,³⁰ in the course of a discussion of the miracles attributed to our Lord by John. John, it is remarked, represents our Lord as working miracles as "signs;" but we learn from Mk. viii. 11-13 that Jesus refused to give a "sign" to that generation. "And," continues Schmiedel, "He must really have made this declaration; for no one of His reporters would have invented it, since they, each and every one of them, believed that Jesus did work miracles with this purpose." Then he continues:

"In order to place the significance of such passages in its full light, we give them the name of *foundation-pillars of a really scientific life of Jesus*. Every historical investigator, no matter in what field he works, follows the principles to hold for true in the first instance, in any account which testifies to reverence (*Verehrung*, 'worship') for its hero, that which runs counter to this reverence, because that cannot be based on invention. Since we possess a plurality of Gospels we can further observe how in one or more of them such passages are in part transformed, in part wholly omitted, because they were too objectionable precisely to reverence for Jesus. In their original form such passages show, therefore, in the most certain way how Jesus really thought and lived, namely after a fashion which we—with all

³⁰ Pp. 16-17.

recognition that there was something divine in Him—must call a genuinely human one. On the other hand, it is only such passages which give assurance that we may, at least in some degree, depend upon the Gospels in which they occur, that is to say the first three Gospels. Were they wholly lacking in them, it would be difficult to withstand the allegation that the Gospels *everywhere* give us only a sacred image painted on a gold ground, and we could not at all know what kind of an appearance Jesus really made, or indeed perhaps even whether He ever existed at all. The 'foundation-pillars' upon which, along with the one already mentioned, we can rely in order to obtain a right idea of the miraculous works of Jesus, we speak of at pp. 31ff, and in chapter iii., paragraphs 18 and 19; and of the remaining ones which are of importance for other aspects of Jesus' nature at pp. 18 f, 19 f, 21, 22, and 33.

"It is self-evident that what we find to be credible in the Synoptics is in no wise confined to these nine 'foundation-pillars.' It belongs to the chief tasks of an historical investigator, from His words and acts, to make the effect (*Erfolg*) which a great historical figure has had intelligible. This effect in Jesus' case is, however, so great that even an investigator who stands entirely cool in His presence must seek out and accept as true everything which is adapted to establish His greatness and to make the reverence felt for Him by His contemporaries intelligible,—it being premised, of course, that it does not contradict the portrait of Jesus obtained from the 'foundation-pillars,' and also does not otherwise rouse well-grounded doubts."

There is perhaps observable in this statement a certain heightening of what was more cautiously expressed in the initial statement, in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*. There, for example, we were told that it was when a historian found himself before a unique document testifying to the worship of a hero unknown to other sources that he resorted to this method of investigating the credibility of his otherwise uncontrollable informant. Here all this qualification falls away and it is spoken of as if this were a universally practised method in all historical research. The general untrustworthiness of the evangelical portrait of Jesus and the closeness of the alternative that we should have no credible account of Jesus and perhaps be left in doubt of his very existence seems also to be somewhat more extremely suggested.

We are in a different atmosphere in the Preface to Arno

Neumann's *Jesus*. Here Schmiedel is defending his critical method and its results against the strictures of John M. Robertson, who holds that Jesus is a pure myth and that therefore the Gospels cannot contain any credible testimony to His existence. Schmiedel is concerned accordingly to throw into emphasis the positive side of his method, and to make plain that he obtains by it not mere probability but certainty as to Jesus—both as to His existence and as to His true character. He concedes that the Gospels present the appearance of altogether untrustworthy narratives, and that we are, therefore, with them on our hands as our sources of knowledge of Jesus, in a very unfavorable position. But he reasons thus:³¹

"Yet let us examine a little more closely. What are the portions of the Gospels which are so persistently objected to? We find that they are, to say all in a word, those in which Jesus appears as a Divine Being whether in virtue of what He says or in virtue of what He does. And the reason why exception is taken to these passages may be stated thus: The Gospels are, all together, the work of worshippers of Jesus, and their contents have been handed down through the channel of tradition in like manner by His worshippers; the portions to which exception is taken are open to the suspicion that they are the outcome of these feelings of devotion, and not purely objective renderings of the facts as they actually occurred. But how, let us ask, if the Gospels also contain portions which are absolutely free from any suspicion whatever of this sort? So far as the difficulty just referred to is concerned, these at least may be historical. May be; yet it is also possible that they may not be; plainly, in fact, they cannot be if the person of Jesus is altogether unhistorical. For example: moral precepts which in themselves might justify no suspicion against the historical character of the person to whom they are attributed, could yet very easily be put into the mouth of a purely invented and in no sense historical Jesus.

"Thus we find ourselves still left in the unfavorable position already indicated—unless peradventure, we should be able to find in the Gospels some passages which far from being equally appropriate alike to an invented and to a historical Jesus, should be wholly impossible in the former case. If Jesus is an imaginary person, the things which are, without historical foundation, ascribed to Him are entirely due to the reverence in which He was held. If, accordingly, we find in the Gospels any passages

³¹ Pp. ix. ff.

which cannot by any possibility have found their inspiration in the worshipful regard in which He was held, and which in fact are, on the contrary, incompatible with it, they in themselves prove that the Gospels contain at least something that has been rightly handed down; for if these passages had not been handed down to the Evangelists and those who preceded them, in a manner that made doubt impossible, they would never have found admission into our Gospels at all.

"Such was the underlying thought when in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, § 131, 139 f, I characterized nine passages in the Synoptical Gospels as 'the foundation-pillars for a truly scientific life of Jesus.' I limited myself to so small a number because I desired to include no instance against the evidential value of which any objection could possibly be taken with some hope of success; and further, I, of set purpose, selected only those passages in which it is possible to show from the text of the Gospels themselves that they are incompatible with the worship in which Jesus came to be held. Thus they are, all of them, found only in one Gospel, or at most two; the second and third, or the third, either omits the passage in question, although by universal consent, the author who omits must have known at least one of the Gospels in which it occurs, or the source from which it was drawn; or alternatively, he turns it round, often with great ingenuity and boldness, in such a manner that it loses the element which makes it open to exception from the point of view of a worshipper of Jesus."

What is most insisted upon in this statement is that there are sought (and found) in Schmiedel's "pillar-passages" not merely affirmations which are appropriate to a human Jesus, but affirmations which are impossible for a Divine Jesus. Their characteristic is, as Schmiedel expresses it on a later page,³² that "they are not consistent with the worship in which Jesus had come to be held;" that they "are appropriate only to a man, and could never, by any possibility, have been written had the author been thinking of a demi-god." There are in the Synoptic Gospels, as Schmiedel explains,³³ three classes of "sayings of Jesus (or, to speak more correctly, passages in the Synoptics about Jesus):" "first, those which are plainly incredible; secondly, those which are plainly credible; and in the third category those which occupy an intermediate

³² P. xvii.

³³ P. xiv.

position as bearing on the face of them no certain mark either of incredibility or of credibility." This is Schmiedel's way of saying that there are some passages which clearly ascribe a supernatural character to Jesus; some which are clearly inconsistent with a supernatural character in Him; and still some others which do not raise the question of His supernatural character at all. This third class of passages Schmiedel is perfectly willing to accept as transmitting a true tradition: he actually does so accept them. But not on their own credit, but only on the faith of the small class of passages—his "pillar-passages"—which assure him of the actual existence of a merely human Jesus to whom, then, it is natural to ascribe these "indifferent" passages also. For, as he says in his primary statement,³⁴ and repeats here:³⁵ "If we discover any such points—even if only a few—they guarantee not only their own contents but also much more. For in that case one may also hold as credible all that agrees in character with these, and is in other respects not open to suspicion." The fundamental characteristic of the "pillar-passages," without which they would not be "pillar-passages", is, therefore, that they are absolutely irreconcilable with a supernatural Jesus.

The statement in the lecture on *Jesus and Modern Criticism*³⁶ is made from the same standpoint as that in the Preface to Neumann's *Jesus* and adds very little to it. We are told that "it is of little use merely to say in a vague and general way that the figure of Jesus portrayed in the Gospels could not possibly have been invented." What is of importance is that we should recognize that "the Gospels, though they seem to be very much exposed to doubt, actually contain in themselves the best means of overcoming it."

"All that we require to do is to limit the statement that their contents could not have been invented, which in its vague and general form possesses no evidential value, to specific passages in which it is not open to question. I select nine such passages,

³⁴ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1872, § 131.

³⁵ Neumann, p. xiii.

³⁶ Pp. 15 ff.

and, in order to emphasize their importance, give them a special name; I call them the *foundation-pillars of a really scientific life of Jesus*.

"Now the important point is that they are chosen on the same principles which guide every critical historian in extra-theological fields. When we make our first acquaintance with a historical person in a book which is throughout influenced by a feeling of worship for its hero, as the Gospels are by a feeling of worship for Jesus, in the first rank for credibility we place those passages of the book which really run counter to this feeling; for we realize that the writer's sentiments being what they were, such passages cannot have been invented by the author of the book; nor would they have been taken from the records at his service if their absolute truthfulness had not forced itself upon him. In the case of the Evangelists, moreover, we are so fortunate as to be able to note how a record of this kind which runs counter to the author's feeling of worship for Jesus is often incorporated by one or by two of them, while the other has omitted it or has altered it with the clear intention of emphasizing Jesus' higher rank. I have included among my foundation-pillars only such passages as have been passed over or altered by at least one of the three Evangelists. Of course, in the case of almost every one of these, it has already been said once, perhaps often, that it could not be the product of an inventive mind. What scholars had previously neglected to do was to make these passages the starting point for the critical treatment of the life of Jesus. . . .

"What then have I gained in these nine foundation-pillars? You will perhaps say, 'Very little.' I reply, 'I have gained just enough.' . . . In a word, I know, on the one hand, that his person cannot be referred to the region of myth; on the other hand, that he was man in the full sense of the term, and that, without of course denying that the divine character was in him, this could be found only in the shape in which it could be found in any human being.

"I think, therefore, that if we knew no more, we should know by no means little about him. But, as a matter of fact, the 'foundation-pillars' are but the starting-point of our study of the life of Jesus. . . . We must, therefore, work upon the principle that, together with the 'foundation-pillars,' and as a result of them, everything in the first three Gospels deserves belief which would tend to establish Jesus' greatness, provided that it harmonizes with the picture produced by the 'foundation-pillars,' and in other respects does not raise suspicion."

Certainly, with four such extended expositions of his method, it would be difficult seriously to misapprehend Schmiedel's essential meaning. Nevertheless some difficulty

has apparently been experienced in grasping at once what we may call the principle of direct contradiction which forms its core. Even Otto Schmiedel, for example, seems to lose hold of it,—although, no doubt he does not profess to do more than to follow his brother's scheme "in its essentials." His version of it runs as follows:³⁷

"The criticism of the sources has brought us thus far. I will now make a further attempt, from general considerations which are independent of the search for sources, to find certain points of support to give the necessary certainty to the portrait of the life of Jesus which we are seeking to sketch. We have recognized it as an essential characteristic of the presentations of the lives of the founders of religions and redemptive personalities, that they glorify, and indeed deify these personalities. The more this tendency increases the more does the account lose its historical character and become legendary. Let us turn the matter around. If we find in the Gospels passages which declare of Jesus something in contradiction to this tendency to glorification, which, however, have been altered or omitted by *later* Gospels, because they take offence at these human things, at this lack of glorification, then we may with assurance infer from this that these passages which do not glorify Jesus are *old* and *authentic*."

He then adduces five examples of such passages, intimating in passing that many more might be produced, and declares of them in the mass that they form the skeleton of what is incontestable and thus provide a solid basis for the Life of Jesus. Three of his five passages, he takes over from P. W. Schmiedel. The two that are added can scarcely be said to preserve perfectly the characteristic feature claimed for the "pillar-passages,"—express contradiction of the deity ascribed to Jesus in the historical tradition. They are expounded by Otto Schmiedel thus:

"In the oldest Gospel, Mark, it is continually emphasized that Jesus forbade His disciples to make His deeds of healing known. In the later Gospels this trait retires, and indeed the number and importance of the deeds of healing steadily increases. This last serves for glorification. *Therefore* the representation of Mark, Jesus' horror of being trumpeted as a miracle-worker, is all the more certainly historical."

"The older Gospels relate, with assignment of reasons, that Jesus was betrayed by Judas Iscariot. Luke and John seek

³⁷ *Die Hauptprobleme der Leben-Jesu Forschung.* 1906 pp. 46 ff.

all kinds of explanations for this, while the enemies of Christianity mock at the betrayal of the Master by one of His own disciples: all the more certain is it that the betrayal was not invented by Jesus' adherents, but is old and historical."

It does not appear why a divine, no less than a human Jesus, might not, for reasons of His own, forbid His cures to be heralded abroad; or why a divine, no less than a human Jesus, might not be betrayed by one of His own disciples. The stress which P. W. Schmiedel lays on the contradiction to the deity of Jesus in his "pillar-passages," Otto Schmiedel lays rather on modifications by later Gospels of statements in the earlier which struck the Christian feeling of the time as making too little for the glory of Jesus. The alteration or omission of the statements of his "pillar-passages" by one or another of the Gospels had been appealed to by P. W. Schmiedel only as a secondary consideration; it bears the character of a verification of the asserted offensiveness of these passages to the Christian feeling of the day. The hinge of his argument turns on the intrinsic inconsistency of these statements with the deification of Jesus. He infers immediately from this their "un-inventibility" by the authors of the Gospels and of the tradition which the Gospels represent, and their consequent originality. The hinge of Otto Schmiedel's argument, on the other hand, turns on the modifications which these statements have suffered at the hands of later Evangelists. From these he infers the relative originality of the simpler statement, and by further consequence the unpretentiousness of Jesus' self-manifestation. The movement of thought in the two cases is not only different but directly opposite. This is particularly apparent in the diverse treatment given by the two writers to "the pillar-passages" which are adduced by both. On Mark vi. 5f P. W. Schmiedel writes:³⁸

"When He appeared in His native city of Nazareth He was sneered at as one of whom it was known whose son and brother He was and was made to feel that a prophet finds no honor in His own country. Now in Mark (vi. 5f) we read further:

³⁸*Das vierte Evangelium*, etc., pp. 31-32.

'And He could not do any mighty work there, except that He healed a few sick folk by laying His hands upon them; and He marveled at their unbelief.' He could not. This is another narrative like that of the sign of Jonah; it most certainly would not be found in our Gospels if it had not been handed down by someone who had himself witnessed the occurrences and then been repeated unaltered. How unacceptable it must have been to the later narrators, all of whom, Mark not excepted, were convinced of Jesus' power to work miracles, is shown by Matthew, who (xiii. 5 f) reports it thus: 'And He *did* there not many mighty works, because of their unbelief.'

In Otto Schmiedel's hands, we find, on the contrary, this essentially different representation (we do not stop to point out the misreport of what Mark says, or even the remarkable illation):³⁹

In Mk. vi. 5 there stands: In Nazareth Jesus *could* work no miraculous cures because of the lack of faith in His fellow-townsmen. In Mt. xiii. 58: 'He did there *not many* miracles.' It is, therefore, historically certain His healing work was *dependent* psychologically on the *trust* of those who sought the healing."

Of Mk. xiii. 32, P. W. Schmiedel, contrasting it with John's ascription of omniscience to Jesus, writes:⁴⁰

"In the Synoptics we find His express declaration (Mk. xiii. 32) that 'of that day,' that is to say that on which He was to return from heaven in order to establish the kingdom of God on earth, 'or of that hour, knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, nor yet the Son, but the Father only;' another one of the statements which certainly no one of His worshippers invented. Luke leaves it out altogether; Matthew (according to the probably original text) at least the decisive words 'nor yet the Son.'"

What we find in Otto Schmiedel is:

"Mk. xiii. 32 says: Time and hour *when* the Son of Man returns on the clouds of heaven knoweth no one, *not even the Son*. Mt. xxiv. 36 leaves out 'not even the Son' as offensive to him. Therefore these words are *genuine*. Jesus claims for Himself therefore *no* knowledge of the future."

In the treatment of the remaining passage adduced by them both a more primary place seems to be given by P. W. Schmiedel to the forms in which it appears in the several Gospels. This, however, is an illusion, and is due largely

³⁹ P. 47.

⁴⁰ *Das vierte Evangelium*, etc., p. 22.

to the circumstance that his primary discussion of it happens to be introduced at that point in his argument where he is preoccupied with the relations of the Gospels to one another.⁴¹ As in the other cases we quote what he says about it in his booklet on John's Gospel:⁴²

"And equally unacceptable to the Evangelist would be the record in Mk. (x. 17 f) and Lk. that Jesus, to the address of a rich man, 'Good Master, what must I do to obtain eternal life?' replied: 'Why callest thou me good? No one is good except God alone.' And yet beyond question, this reply came from Jesus' lips. How little it could have been invented by anyone of His worshippers, who drive the pen in the Gospels, Matthew shows. With him (xix. 16 f), the rich man says, 'Master, what good thing must I do in order to have eternal life? And Jesus answers, 'Why askest thou me concerning the good? There is One that is good.' How does Jesus come here to the six last words? Should He not, since He was asked concerning the good, proceed: 'There is *one thing* that is good'? And that would be the only suitable reply not only because of what had preceded, but also because of what follows; for Jesus says further, 'If, however, thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments.' Accordingly, in Jesus' opinion, the good concerning which He was asked consists in keeping the commandments. How did Matthew come to the words, 'There is One that is good'? Only by having before him, as he wrote, the language of Mark. Here we have our finger on the way in which Matthew, with conscious purpose, altered this language in its opening words, so that it should no longer be offensive, and on the way in which, at the end, he has left a few words of it unaltered, which betray to us the manner in which the thing has been done."

Here also Otto Schmiedel's whole case is summed up in the relations of the Synoptical reports:

"Here also belongs the passage which has been mentioned in another connection,⁴³ where Jesus, in Mk. x. 18, said to the rich young man, 'Why callest thou me good. No one is good except God.' Jesus denies, therefore, His absolute sinlessness. Mat. xix. 17 seeks to efface this."

⁴¹ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1847 (b).

⁴² P. 19.

⁴³ Cf. p. 27: "In Mk. x. 18 Jesus says to the rich young man, 'Why callest thou me good? No one is good except God.' To Matthew (xix. 17) this statement seemed to put the sinlessness of Jesus in danger, and so he changed it to, 'Why askest thou me concerning the good (neuter)?' Now, however, the following, 'No one is good,' etc., naturally no longer fits on."

The same imperfect grasp upon the exact point of the "pillar-passages" which deflects Otto Schmiedel's treatment of them, has affected also the use made of them by Schmiedel's pupil, Arno Neumann. Neumann does, indeed, quite purely reproduce Schmiedel's point of view in his general statement. After having likened the attempt to get at the true tradition of Jesus' life, to working through a series of geological strata, he raises the question whether this does not "make the whole foundation of our knowledge of Jesus precarious, and open a door to all kinds of arbitrary conjecture." He then proceeds:⁴⁴

"It would do so if we did not come upon such elements in the tradition as the worshippers of Jesus would never have preserved unless they had been handed down as facts in the story of Jesus' life, or if we were no longer able to show from the parallel accounts how worship has constantly changed the old data handed down by traditions and adapted them to its own wishes. But we do find sayings and incidents of this description in one or other of the Gospels, be they few or many, and, this being so, we are entitled to draw from them general inferences as to what is credible in the life and work of Jesus. For it is impossible (here every historian will agree) for one who worships a hero to think and speak in such a way as to contradict or essentially modify his own worship.⁴⁵ Statements which do this can be nothing more or less than survivals of the truth, precious fragments which have been covered and well-nigh hidden for ever by the deposits of later times. For this reason a scholar of our own time, Dr. Schmiedel, has called these portions of the tradition, 'foundation-pillars of the life of Jesus.' The existence of such statements is the salvation of the Synoptic Gospels, giving them a definite value of sources.⁴⁶ The Gospels cannot be pure sagas or legends when material so intractable is enshrined in them."

Perhaps a certain imperfection in Neumann's appreciation of the stringency of the presumed effect of the "pillar-passages" is already betrayed by the admission of an alternative expression into the phrase declaring it impossible

⁴⁴ *Jesus*, pp. 9 ff.

⁴⁵ More literally: "For every historian will pronounce it impossible that one who reverences" (or "worships") "a hero should invent or assert things which contradict his own reverence" (or "worship"), "or modify it fundamentally."

⁴⁶ More literally: "By their presence a certain source-value is preserved to the Synoptic Gospels."

for a worshipping writer to invent or assert anything not merely which contradicts but also which "essentially modifies" his own worship. We perceive clearly his defection from this stringency, however, only when we scan his illustrative passages.. He adduces eight of these, two of Schmiedel's being omitted, and a new one added and indeed given the premier place in the list. The two omitted—Mk. viii. 14-21, and Mt. xi. 5—are both, in Schmiedel's view, "transformed parables" and the inclusion of them in the "pillar-passages" is in any case surprising, so that we need not wonder that Neumann omits them, although perfectly agreeing with Schmiedel that they are "transformed parables."⁴⁷ The passage added is however, as little stringent as any could be. It is, "Lk. ii. 52 (*cf.* iv. 16), which says that Jesus grew in stature in a truly human way." "Had the writer been a worshipper of Jesus as a deity," Neumann comments, "he would have presented Him to us as full-grown,"—of which we have no other assurance, however, than this expression of opinion by Neumann himself, in opposition to the example of Matthew and Luke, both of whom were "worshippers of Jesus" and both of whom record the story of His infancy. But what most clearly shows us the imperfection of Neumann's grasp on the peculiarity of the "pillar-passages" is a remark he adjoins at the end of the list, in which he endeavors to make them do double duty. "All these passages," he tells us, "are of such a nature as neither the worship of Jesus in the growing church, nor yet the religious socialism of the masses, could ever have invented."⁴⁸ But why could not a "religious socialist" believe that Jesus grew up like any other boy? Or that Jesus refused to work "signs," or indeed that He could not work miracles; or that He did not

⁴⁷ See pp. 86, 76. Neumann calls attention on p. 11, note 1, to his passing them by here, apparently in order to avoid giving the impression that he is correcting Schmiedel.

⁴⁸ The German is perhaps a little more lucid: "The list of passages which the common reverence of the growing church, or for that matter the religious socialism of the masses could never have invented."

know all that the future had in store for Him or His followers? Or, indeed, that He was not absolutely without sin, or could be thought by His kinspeople to be out of His head, or could have felt Himself deserted by God in the end? Socialists in our own day seem to have no difficulty in believing such things. Neumann has obviously temporarily lost the exact point of view of the "pillar-passages," and consequently has confused the argument which is built upon them. We say he has "temporarily" lost their point of view; for he immediately recovers it and writes:

"They prove, it is true, that we have before us in Jesus originally a 'genuinely human figure.' Of 'deity' we can therefore speak in connection with Him only as it is possible within the limits of the human. . . ."

He was, no doubt, greatly human, and we must of course paint Him so; but

"We must now still add the critical limitation: so far as it readily (*mühe*los) permits itself to be ranged within the iron limits of that knowledge derived from the 'foundation-pillars.'"

We know much more of Jesus than we can learn from the "pillar-passages"; but the Jesus we know cannot transcend the Jesus of these fundamental texts. They give us the absolute norm of what Jesus was.

The tendency of Schmiedel's followers to abate a little of the stringency of the idea of the "pillar-passages" means, of course, a tendency, more or less developed, to look at them broadly as passages which do not find their explanation in "the faith of the community" and may therefore very well be (or perhaps we may insist, are most probably, or even quite certainly) genuine traditions; rather than narrowly, as passages which, because they directly contradict the reverence for Jesus which forms the primary bias of the vehicles of the tradition, oral or written, that has preserved for us the memory of Jesus, must therefore necessarily preserve true traditions and give us not only our most reliable knowledge of Jesus but knowledge of Him which is absolutely trustworthy. And this change in point of view, as we cannot have failed to observe, is accompanied by an associated tendency to treat the appeal to such "pil-

lar-passages" not so much as a substitute for literary criticism—though this is the precise thing which commends the appeal to them to Schmiedel himself—as rather as a supplement to it, called in only after it has done its work, to enable us to take a step farther than it can lead us. These tendencies, in proportion as they are yielded to, are tantamount, of course, to desertion of all that is distinctive in Schmiedel's critical method and reversion to the common methods of "Liberal" criticism, which first employs literary criticism in order to ascertain what the oldest sources contain, and then calls in historical criticism,—operating on the single canon that we are to penetrate by its aid behind "the faith of the community"—that we may ascertain what, in that which is transmitted by the sources, is true. It will conduce to a better understanding, both of the general "Liberal" method and of the peculiarity of Schmiedel's method if we bring into view a tolerably full account of the "Liberal" method in one of its most consistent and yet genial recent exponents. We cannot do better for this purpose than turn to the exposition of it by W. Heitmüller, in his interesting article "Jesus Christ" in Schiele and Zscharnack's encyclopaedia, published under the title of *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*.⁴⁹ The circumstances that Heitmüller is writing for a general, educated and not merely a technically theological public, and that Schmiedel's criticism is apparently not wholly out of his thought, only add to the value of his exposition for our purposes.

At the point at which we enter his discussion he is engaged in searching out the trustworthy sources of knowledge of Jesus. He has just outlined the processes by which the evangelical documents are tested. It has been a long and difficult task to penetrate by this criticism to their Sources, and when we have reached these Sources our labors are far from being at an end. Mark and the Discourse-Source are after all not the *ultimate* Sources. The *ultimate* Sources are "the separate narratives and separate declarations or

⁴⁹ Vol. iii. 1912, pp. 356 ff.

discourses of Jesus to be obtained from these and from the peculiar portions of Matthew and Luke, by the help of critical labor." And then, when we have got these well before us, we have to raise the question whether they give us "immediately historical, utilizable, trustworthy material." "Is the portrait of Jesus,—no, are the separate features of this portrait which look out upon us from these separate fragments—really genuine features"?⁵⁰ From the Discourse-Source and Mark (which with Heitmüller is the Narrative-Source), on to John we have found everything in a flux. What was there previous to the Discourse-Source and Mark? Were not the same forces which modified the transmission subsequently already at work before these Sources arose? The question requires only to be put for the answer to come clearly back to us.

"These narratives and declarations were taken from the oral tradition of the Christian community and written down about 60 or 70 A.D.; thus they had lived for thirty or forty years in the oral tradition, they were handed on from mouth to mouth, from hand to hand, through how many hands! What lived on further and was preserved was necessarily conditioned in its very substance by the nature and the need of the community. Accordingly, we must suppose it at least possible that these separate materials, as they are accessible to us in Mark, say, have been influenced by the faith of the community and those other entities. That means, however, that the ultimate direct Sources which can be reached by us, the separate declarations and narratives, do not, when taken strictly, carry us beyond the portrait of the Christ of the Palestinian community of about 50-70 A.D. To turn aside here from everything else for the sake of brevity, we need only to realize that the community which transmitted orally knowledge of Jesus, stood under the influence of belief in the resurrection of Jesus; how this belief must already have steeped even good reminiscences in an alien, new light! Nay, must we not assume that even for the immediate disciples recollection was disturbed in many points by the influence of the Easter experience and the faith which attaches itself to it? And in point of fact a more careful scrutiny shows that even in this oldest obtainable memorial, of separate declarations and separate narratives, legendary traits are present, that the belief and usage of the community have already exerted their moulding and forming power and activity."⁵¹

⁵⁰ P. 356.

⁵¹ Pp. 356-7.

It is in this circumstance that the difficulty of research into the life of Jesus lies. "The starting-point of all further investigation is recognition that the ultimate Direct-Sources carry us only to the portrait of Jesus of the primitive community of about 60 A.D."⁵² The question is whether we have any means—any possibility—of getting behind the portrait of Jesus of the community to the actual reality. Some are utterly sceptical of doing so. But this extreme scepticism is unreasonable. It is not difficult to show that the portrait of Christ current in the community of 60 A.D. is not a simply imaginary one.

"That in spite of legendary, mythological elements, in spite of the repainting by the faith of the community, which must be admitted, in this Evangelical representation, there are historical elements in the ultimate sources of which we have spoken, will, in accordance with universally recognized principles, have to be allowed to be certain if *constituents* are found in them which *are not reconcilable (vereinbar)* with the faith of the community to which the whole portrait belongs. What does not stand in harmony with it can certainly not owe its origin to it. Not a few constituents, now, of this kind are found. They not seldom betray themselves as contradictory to the faith of the community by this—that they are omitted or altered by the later narrators. Let us indicate some of them.⁵³ In Mk. x. 17 ff. Jesus repudiates the address of 'Good Master' with the words, 'Why callest thou me good? None is good but God only.' The community looked upon its Lord as sinless; this account is not then the product of their belief. How little the declaration of Jesus pleased the community is shown by its alteration by the later Mt. xix. 16 ff, which formulates the question of the young man thus: 'Master, what good thing must I do?' and makes Jesus answer: 'Wherefore askest thou me concerning the good? Only One is good.' . . . The Gethsemane scene, Mk. xiv. 32-42 which shows Jesus in deep dis-

⁵² P. 357.

⁵³ It will be observed that of the six passages here adduced by Heitmüller, two are common to him and Schmiedel (Mk. x. 17; iii. 21), and a third is of the same character (Mk. ix. 22-32, and is, of course, looked upon by Schmiedel in the same light as the others (see *Das vierte Evangelium*, etc., p. 20); a fourth, the Parable of the Lost Son (Lk. xv. 11 ff) although belonging to another category is, of course, also accepted as genuine by Schmiedel with the same heartiness as by Heitmüller (*Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1841, 3); while the two remaining ones concern the sensitivity of the early community for the honor of the Apostles, not of Jesus.

trass, could never have been invented by the believing community; it glorified Him precisely as one who went of His own will to His death. Luke softens down the account; John omits it. The story of Mk. iii. 21, according to which His own people say of Jesus, 'He is beside Himself,' cannot be understood as an invention of the faith which glorified Jesus: Matthew and Luke pass the story by. The community saw in Peter its chief Apostle: it cannot have invented his shameful denial. The community glorified the disciples: the story of their cowardly flight (Mk. xiv. 58) when Jesus went to His death, was certainly not the product of their fancy: Luke and John suppress this also. It was early the belief of the community (1 Cor. xv. 1 ff) that Jesus died for the sins of men. And yet in the old tradition there are very few declarations in which this belief has found any sort of expression (Mk. x. 45; ix. 24); but there has been preserved on the other hand a parable (Lk. xv. 11 ff), that of the Lost Son, which is utterly irreconcilable with this dominant idea.⁵⁴ These and other observations suffice to prove with compelling convincingness that in the community's portrait of Jesus, about 50-70 A.D., there are in any case contained and are recognizable some indubitably genuine original traits. This fact, now, is adapted to strengthen confidence in the tradition in

⁵⁴ We may ask in passing what ground on Heitmüller's principles there is for assigning Lk. xv. 11 ff to the oldest tradition, seeing that it occurs neither in Mk. nor in the Discourse-Source. Heitmüller's account of the parables (p. 361) is: "With respect to the apothegms and parables the principle that that will pass for genuine which seems individual, striking and original, will not be wholly rejected, but as a principle which is not decisive, will be applied only with the greatest caution." Cf. Schmiedel, *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1841. From our own point of view, there is of course no reason why the matter peculiar to Luke should not be of as indisputable originality as that which is common to him with Matthew or with Matthew and Mark. Cf. Schmiedel, *ibid.*, col. 1868; and especially Weinel, *ZThK*, 1910, i. p. 24: "Finally Wellhausen has ventured on the proposition: 'The presupposition is self-evident that we must recognize in the peculiar matter which is found in one of the Evangelists, the latest literary stratum' (*Einleitung*, etc., p. 73). That is true—provided only, precisely in Wellhausen, it does not mean more than it says, provided only there is not continually connected with it an attempt to assign to these passages a lower rank not only literarily but also *historically*, that is to say with reference to their value as sources. It is however, wholly false to hold a narrative better attested for this reason—that three Evangelists (that means, however, Mark, which the others follow) or that two (that means, however, the Discourse-Source) report it—than if only one (that means another tradition) reports it. That a tradition has been written down say ten years after Mark does not weight it with a presupposition against it."

general. For if, as we see here, the community has transmitted declarations and narratives which contradict its own conception, it follows that this community has shown respect for the tradition, and in any case has not set itself simply to suppress what was unpleasant to it. And now, there force themselves on the attentive eye other observations also which operate greatly to strengthen confidence in the oldest tradition."⁵⁵

Heitmüller then proceeds to adduce the Aramaic coloring of the basis of both Mark and the Discourse-Source, their particularity in intimate details, the general tone of the Discourse-Source, the cultivated memories of the men of the day, as conducing to the conclusion that there is much gold mingled with the dross in the tradition.⁵⁶ The question is how the gold is to be extracted. And the answer is that first, by literary criticism, the oldest attainable form of each narrative or declaration is to be established, and then historical criticism is to be called in. At the foundation is to be laid "the material which runs counter to the belief, the theology, the customs, the cultus of the primitive community, or which at least does not completely correspond with it." "We may have," he declares, "unconditional confidence in such material." We may admit, along with this, much that stands in close relation with it, and yet is in harmony with the belief of the community. On the other hand, we must pronounce ungenueine everything which "all too plainly corresponds with the belief, the cultus, and the dogmatic and apologetical needs of the community, or can be explained only from them." Our scrupulosity must be particularly active "against everything that lay especially at the heart of the oldest Christianity"—such as belief in Jesus' messiahship, His approaching return, the whole domain of so-called eschatology, His passion and resurrection, His miraculous power. In this careful and laborious fashion it will be possible to penetrate behind the community's portrait of Christ at about 60 A.D. and approach the truth about Jesus.

The critical methods of Schmiedel and Heitmüller are

⁵⁵ Pp. 359 ff.

⁵⁶ P. 361.

fundamentally the same; and yet they differ at cardinal points. Heitmüller, as well as Schmiedel, acknowledges the failure of literary criticism to reach a stratum of tradition in which Jesus is other than the divine figure which the Evangelists paint Him; and like Schmiedel he calls in historical criticism to recover some trustworthy traces of a merely human Jesus. He applies this historical criticism, however, only to the Sources which literary criticism has unearthed, and therefore finds his "pillar-passages" not, as Schmiedel does, in any of the Synoptic Gospels indifferently, but all in Mark, which is to him the Narrative-Source.⁵⁷ The principle of his "pillar-passages" is not as with Schmiedel (or at least not so openly) narrowly that they directly contradict the deifying conception of Jesus which dominated the transmitters of the tradition, but more broadly that they contradict, or at least do not find their explanation in the general point of view of the early Christian community, they do not reflect "interests" of that community. Accordingly the evidential value of these "pillar-passages" as witnesses to the real Jesus is hardly as great with Heitmüller as with Schmiedel. With Heitmüller they form no doubt as with Schmiedel the nucleus of "all sound historical knowledge of Jesus," but they scarcely come with the demonstrative force which they take on in Schmiedel's hands, placing beyond all possibility of question both the actual existence and the purely human character of Jesus. From the "pillar-passages" both work outwards to the same general results with respect both to the compass of the transmitted material which may be utilized in forming our picture of Jesus and His life and work; and with respect to the actual portrait of Jesus which is derived from this material as the genuine Jesus of history. The principle of the construction of the real Jesus of history in both writers alike is that of contradiction to the whole mass of the testimony concerning Him, which is set aside on no other ground than that it is possible to find here and there

⁵⁷ For exceptions, see above note 54.

imbedded in it a statement which seems to these writers not perfectly consistent with its general drift. As to the legitimacy of this procedure, particularly when the mass and weight of the testimony is considered, and the number and character of the contradictory passages, we for the moment leave the reader to judge for himself.

Although Schmiedel's critical method has been before the public since 1901, and very fully since 1906, it has as yet been subjected to very little formal criticism. This has been due partly, no doubt, to a feeling that it is only a modification—and that not a very important modification—of the ordinary critical procedure in general use among "Liberal" theologians, and partly to a greater or less failure to apprehend precisely the nature of the modification in the ordinary "Liberal" procedure which it proposes. Perhaps also account should be taken of the circumstance that no separate work has been devoted by Schmiedel himself to the exposition of his proposals, but they have been presented only incidentally in works whose chief concernment lies elsewhere. In reviews of these publications there has been, of course, some expression of opinion upon this portion of their contents also, more or less fully supported by reasoning. Only here and there, however, has there been any extended discussion of the new critical method in its details, except indeed at the hands of the extreme radicals, who deny the very existence of Jesus.⁵⁸ It is part of Schmiedel's contention, it will be remembered, that his

⁵⁸ E.g. John M. Robertson, *Pagan Christs*, 1903, pp. 227-238; Friedrich Steudel, *Im Kampf um die Christumythe*, 1910, pp. 88-110; William Benjamin Smith, *Ecce Deus: die urchristliche Lehre des reingöttlichen Jesus*, 1911, pp. 104-224 (E. T. under same title, 1912); Arthur Drews, *Die Zeugnisse für die Geschichtlichkeit Jesu*, 1911, pp. 212-225 (E. T. *The Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus*, 1912, pp. 144-156). With these writers, no doubt, Eduard Hertlein *Protestantische Monatshefte*, x. (1906), pp. 390 ff may be classed for the essence of the matter without danger of great injustice. Cf. also F. Ziller, *Die moderne Bibelwissenschaft und die Krisis der evangelischen Kirche*, 1910, pp. 117-118. Schmiedel replies elaborately to Robertson in his preface to Neumann's *Jesus*, and to Hertlein in the next number of the *Protestantische Monatshefte*.

method supplies a short and easy demonstration of the actual existence of Jesus. This side of his contention has attracted the attention and drawn the fire of those writers who are engaged in an attempt to persuade the public that the whole figure of Jesus is mythical. Little of value in the way of general criticism of Schmiedel's method could be expected from this quarter; and in point of fact these writers usually lose themselves quickly in discussions of the exegesis of the passages adduced by Schmiedel as "pillar-passages," ordinarily in an effort to vacate their literal sense and to impose on them a purely symbolical significance, which would make them part and parcel of the myth of Jesus, the pure product of the invention of His votaries.

"There are no passages in the Gospels," declares W. B. Smith,⁵⁹ "which testify to a pure humanity for Jesus. It is of course set forth how He teaches, journeys from place to place, how even He sleeps and (in a very transparent parable) hungers, how he works miracles, is arrested, imprisoned, tried, condemned, executed, buried and rises again. But all this is intended only figuratively; it is only the linen cloth that is thrown around the divine form of the 'new doctrine'; it is only the historical projection of a system of religious ideas. The profound thinkers who invented these parables and symbols were fully conscious of their real inward meaning, as were also those who first heard them, and repeated and recorded them."

Nevertheless the broader question is not wholly left to one side, nor are there lacking in the remarks devoted to it criticisms which, if they do not quite go to the root of the matter, yet have real validity as against Schmiedel's modes of presenting his argument. It is common to all of these writers, for example, to point out that this argument proves too much; that, if it were valid, there are few characters of fiction, professed or mythical, which we should not have to recognize as having really existed. Thus, Friedrich Steudel urges:⁶⁰

"There is a fatal flaw involved in the whole of the demonstration which Schmiedel essays. It is, no doubt, true that when a historian portrays a personality the historicity of which is *oth-*

⁵⁹ *Ecce Deus*, p. 199.

⁶⁰ P. 98.

otherwise established, most credit will be given to those accounts which stand in a certain contradiction to the characterization which is intended to be given of him in general. But it could never be erected into a universally valid method, to conclude solely from the presence of such traits in a tradition to the historicity of a personality depicted in it. For in that case, to speak plainly, even a Zeus to whom his worshippers have imputed all sorts of vicious, human—only too human—traits must be a historical personality because it cannot be otherwise understood how his worshippers could have ascribed to him such human traits. Indeed any contradictory trait which a critic discovers in the characters of a dramatic poem must, according to the requirements of Schmiedel's method, bring him to the view that the poet cannot have been inventing here but must have had a historical model. Or, to make the application to our own case,—if the historicity of Jesus,—which, however, is just the thing that stands in question—*did not stand in question*, then it could be said that when the writer who defies Him, nevertheless adduces human traits, there the historical element lies most certainly before us; but historicity can and may never be concluded merely from the fact of apparent contradictions within a portrait which on other grounds has become questionable, especially when, as in the case in hand, these contradictions find their simplest and most natural explanation in the dogmatic and literary peculiarity of the sources."⁶¹

Following out the same line of remark, John M. Robertson⁶² directs us to Grote's famous chapter on Greek myths, and cites from it a series of apt sentences in which Grote argues that no trustworthy historical facts can be extracted from such mythical stories. The passage adduced runs in its entirety, as follows:⁶³

"The utmost which we accomplish by means of the semi-historical theory even in its most successful applications, is, that after leaving out from the mythical narrative all that is miraculous or high-colored or extravagant, we arrive at a series of credible incidents—incidents which *may, perhaps*, have occurred,

⁶¹ Similarly Arthur Drews (*Die Zeugnisse*, etc., p. 221; E. T. p. 152); "If the historicity of Jesus was *otherwise established*, then it would be justifiable to conclude from the presence of such traits to the historical tradition which the author could not evade." On this reasoning, he remarks, we could prove the historicity of Heracles from the presence in his legend of traits which accord very ill with the otherwise noble figure of this hero.

⁶² P. 230.

⁶³ George Grote, *History of Greece*, American reprint of the second London ed., 1856, i., p. 429 (Robertson cites London, 1888, i., p. 382).

and against which no intrinsic presumption can be raised. This is exactly the character of a well-written modern novel (as, for example, several among the compositions of Defoe), the whole story of which is such as may well have occurred in real life; it is plausible fiction and nothing beyond. To raise plausible fiction up to the superior dignity of truth, some positive testimony or positive ground of inference must be shown; even the highest measure of intrinsic probability is not alone sufficient. A man who tells us that, on the day of the battle of Plataea, rain fell on the spot of ground where the city of New York now stands, will neither deserve nor obtain credit, because he can have had no means of positive knowledge; though the statement is not in the slightest degree improbable. On the other hand, statements in themselves very improbable may well deserve belief, provided they be supported by sufficient positive evidence; thus the canal dug by order of Xerxès across the promontory of Mount Athos, and the sailing of the Persian fleet through it, is a fact which I believe, because it is well attested—notwithstanding its remarkable improbability, which so far misled Juvenal as to induce him to single out the narrative as a glaring example of Grecian mendacity."

The hinge of Grote's position, it will be seen, turns on the distinction between the possible and the actual, the credible and the certified. We may purge a narrative of impossibilities and not make a single step towards authenticating it. "The narrative ceases to be incredible, but it still remains uncertified,—a mere commonplace possibility."⁶⁴ "By the aid of conjecture we get out of the impossible and arrive at matters intrinsically plausible, but totally uncertified; beyond this point we cannot penetrate without the light of extrinsic evidence, since there is no intrinsic mark to distinguish truth from plausible fiction."⁶⁵ In the absence of positive evidence of reality, no superior intrinsic credibility attaching to certain events above others in the same narrative can accredit them as real.

Schmiedel has fairly laid himself open to a rejoinder of this kind by his reprehensible dallying with the suggestion that Jesus may never have really existed. If Heinrich Weinel thinks it necessary to rebuke the levity of his Preface to W. B. Smith's *Der vorchristliche Jesus*,⁶⁶ what

⁶⁴ P. 431.

⁶⁵ P. 418.

⁶⁶ *Ist das "liberale" Jesusbild widerlegt?*, 1910, p. 13: "It was not,

shall we say of his repeated intimation in the exposition of his method of criticism, not merely that the real existence of Jesus is an open question, but even that it is a question which is all but closed, which apart from the "pillar-passages" would be closed, in an adverse sense? To say that "if passages of this kind were wholly wanting in them, it would be impossible to prove to a sceptic that any historical value whatever was to be assigned to the Gospels; he would be in a position to declare the picture of Jesus contained in them to be purely a work of phantasy and could remove the person of Jesus from the field of history;"⁶⁷ or even, as it is elsewhere perhaps not quite so strongly put,⁶⁸ that "if they were wholly wanting in them, it would be difficult to withstand the allegation that the Gospels *everywhere* give us only a sacred image painted on a gold ground, and we could therefore not at all know what kind of an appearance Jesus really made, if not indeed even whether He ever existed at all;"—is of course mere fustian: nobody knows better than Schmiedel that even were there no Gospels at all the actual existence of Jesus would be exceptionally attested and altogether beyond question. But the effect of permitting himself to give utterance to such inconsiderate assertions is to hand himself over bound hand and foot to his enemies. He has treated the whole tradition of Jesus as if it were pure myth, and has represented the task of the historian to be to seek out and isolate the kernel of fact which lies at the center of this myth. It is open to anyone to rejoin that this task is hopeless; that on this however, a merely tactical blunder in Schmiedel, to write for the German translation of Smith a Preface in which he not only maintained that it is not easy to refute Smith, but further that Smith's learning is 'by no means at the disposal of every one who works after a strictly scientific fashion'; and in which he speaks of the 'art of his scientific method.' This is simply untruth. And Schmiedel only gets what he deserves, when, despite his protestation that he does not think anything in Smith's construction right, he is everywhere invoked as compurgator—after allowance for the 'theological arabesque.'"

⁶⁷ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1881.

⁶⁸ *Das vierte Evangelium*, etc., p. 17.

pathway we can reach only the plausible, not the attested, while it is only the attested that can claim to be the actual. It is ineffective to urge in rebuttal that the statements appealed to do not range with the merely "credible" elements which are selected out from the body of the myth by those whom Grote speaks of as advocates of "the semi-historical theory," but have the peculiarity that they could not have been invented by the framers of the myth, because they are inconsistent with its whole substance and must therefore have been carried over unchanged from the pre-mythical tradition. It is easy to rejoin (with W. B. Smith) that an impossibility is attempted here; that no limits can be set to the invention of man; and it is equally easy to point out (reverting to Grote) that what is here claimed as a peculiarity of the "pillar-passages" is a common phenomenon in all divine myths. In them all express inconsistencies abound and in the nature of the case must abound, since human invention is incompetent to the task of consistently dramatizing deity. Let a poet be of the highest genius and do his utmost to realize his picture of the divine actor he is depicting: "If he does not consistently succeed in it the reason is because consistency in such a matter is unattainable, since after all, the analogies of common humanity, the only materials with which the most creative imagination has to work upon, obtrude themselves involuntarily and the lineaments of the man are thus seen even under a dress which promises superhuman proportions."⁶⁹ And what the most supreme art must fail in—how can we attribute that to the blind working of the mythopoeic fancy? But above all it is pertinent to rejoin that thus the whole ground of the argument has been shifted. It was assumed that the entire story of Jesus is mythical, and it was represented that unless some kernel of truth could be found embedded in this myth the historicity of Jesus could scarcely be defended. It is now assumed that the story of Jesus is, rather, essentially history. We are in effect betrayed into

⁶⁹ *History of Greece*, i., p. 385.

a vicious circle of reasoning: and we assign an underlying reality to statements like those contained in the "pillar-passages" only because we have from the beginning assumed that a reality lay behind our so-called myth and our task was merely to ascertain its nature. If there exists indeed good reason, extraneous to the myth itself which we are investigating, to believe in the actual existence of the hero it celebrates, why undoubtedly *cadit quaestio*. "Grote," even Robertson tells us,⁷⁰ "never argued that history proper, the record of a time by those who lived in it, is to be so tried; and he constantly accepts narratives which might conceivably be plausible fictions,—nay, he occasionally accepts tales which appear to some of us to be fictions. It is when we are dealing with myths that he denies our power to discriminate; in history proper he undertakes—at times too confidently—to discriminate." We must really settle in our minds whether we are dealing with myth in which there may possibly be embedded some historical kernel, or with history which may possibly be encrusted with some mythical adornments, before we can profitably proceed with our criticism.

It is not worth our while to pause here, to inquire into the justice of the extreme attitude taken up by Grote with reference to the possibility of extracting matters of fact from pure myths without the aid of extrinsic attestation.⁷¹ This,

⁷⁰ P. 232.

⁷¹ Grote himself tells us (pp. 408-9 note) that exception was already taken to the extremity of his views as well by an able article in *The Quarterly Review* for October, 1846 (what is meant is No. clv. pp. 113 ff) as by Professor Kortüm writing in the *Heidelberger Jahrbücher der Literatur* for 1846. The former contended that "the mythopoeic faculty of the human mind, though essentially loose and untrustworthy, is never creative, but requires some basis of fact to work upon;" the latter similarly that the myths always contain "real matter of fact along with mere conceptions." Grote responds that this may very well be; all that he asserts is that apart from extrinsic attestation we are without criteria for singling out the matters of fact. Robertson refers us to the criticism of Grote's position by Sir Alfred C. Lyall in his *Asiatic Studies*, First Series, ed. 2, 1884, p. 30 ff; see also Second Series, 1899, pp. 324 ff. The difference between Grote and Lyall seems to reduce actually to something like this: Whether

at the moment, not merely because of the absurdity of treating the tradition of Jesus as if it were pure myth. But because of the absurdity of the proposal to treat it as if it were pure myth coming from Schmiedel. For despite this implication of his suggestion Schmiedel does not really believe that the historicity of the Jesus whose figure is presented to us in the Gospel narratives is without sufficient attestation apart from the Gospels to render it indisputable. He may minimize the amount and force of this attestation, speaking, for example, of "the meagreness of the historical testimony regarding Him, whether in canonical writings outside the Gospels, or in profane writers, such as Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius and Pliny."⁷² But this is only part of the attempt to give an external appearance of propriety to his dealing with the tradition of Jesus as if it were, if not pure myth, yet at least almost pure myth; and it does not in point of fact even so far fairly represent his own point of view. The plain fact is that Schmiedel comes to the Gospel narratives with the historicity of Jesus already immovably established on extrinsic grounds, and therefore cannot properly represent the historicity of Jesus as in any sense dependent on his power to separate out from those narratives on intrinsic grounds items of information about Jesus which cannot in the nature of the case be their invention. Whatever we may think of the validity of the argument that the presence of such statements in such a

myths are ordinarily a specific product of imagination and feeling distinct in kind from both history and philosophy (as Grote contends), or concretions gathered around a nucleus of fact (as Lyall contends). In the former case they are fundamentally fictions and plausibility in their contents is no evidence of reality. In the latter, they are fundamentally history, however bad history, and the kernel of fact in them may be sought and conceivably found. The difference is, however, only relative; and the real crux is, as Grote insists, Granted that there is a kernel of truth in myths, how are we going to get at it? The Quarterly Reviewer confesses: "We pretend to no key by which we can extract the history from the legend" (p. 119) and Sir Alfred C. Lyall suggests none.

⁷² *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1881, cf. Preface to Neumann, pp. vii., viii.; *Jesus in Modern Criticism*, p. 14.

narrative can be accounted for only by the imposition of them upon it by primitive tradition, so that they must be recognized as preserving fragments of historical truth, in the actual case before us this argument can possess only corroborative value with reference to the historicity of Jesus, and acquires primary importance only with reference to the character of the historical Jesus already given. It is nothing less than a reprehensible misrepresentation of the state of the case to endeavor to convey an impression that the recognition of the historicity of Jesus is in any sense dependent on this argument. In point of fact no one is more assured than Schmiedel that it is quite firmly established altogether apart from this argument.

Even when we have settled it well in our minds, however, that we have to do in the Gospel narratives, not with a myth in which we may hope to find, perhaps, some relics of tradition, but fundamentally with historical tradition, we have not yet escaped from misleading suggestions of the state of the case. Schmiedel is very eager to have it understood that the critical procedure he proposes is the common method of historians. "Every historical investigator," he tells us, therefore, in commending it to us,⁷³ "in what field soever he may be working, follows the principle of holding for true, in the first rank, in any account which testifies to reverence for its hero, that which runs counter to this reverence, since that cannot rest on invention." The broad generality of this representation is not, however, always retained. Sometimes the suggestion is rather that it is only when the historian "makes his first acquaintance with a historical person from a book which is pervaded by reverence for its hero as the Gospels are for Jesus," that "he places in the first rank of credibility those passages of the book which run counter to this reverence."⁷⁴ Sometimes indeed, as in the primary statement,⁷⁵ we are carried into an even narrower sphere, and actually read: "When a

⁷³ *Das vierte Evangelium*, pp. 16-17.

⁷⁴ *Jesus in Modern Criticism*, p. 16 (German edition. p. 6).

⁷⁵ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1872.

profane historian finds before him a historical document which testifies to the worship of a hero unknown to other sources, he attributes first and foremost importance to those features which cannot be deduced merely from the fact of this worship, and he does so on the simple and sufficient ground that they would not be found in this source unless the author had met with them as fixed data of tradition." It is amazing to read here farther: "The same fundamental principle may safely be applied in the case of the Gospels, for they also are all of them written by worshippers of Jesus." We get further and further from the actual state of the case with the narratives of the Gospels, of course, as each of these limitations is added. Nobody first learns of Jesus from the Gospel narratives. To suggest that Jesus is "unknown to other sources" than the Synoptic Gospels, or that these Gospels may be treated as if they were a single document, fairly attains the absurd. If an analogy to the critical method which Schmiedel recommends us to apply to the Gospels can be found in the practice of "every historical investigator in the extra-theological field" only in such dissimilar cases as are here indicated,—why, then, there is no analogy. The appearance is very strong that Schmiedel, wishing to appeal to the example of secular historians in support of the critical method he is propounding, and finding among them no exact analogies, except in the very specific case which he alludes to, vacillates between simply claiming the example of secular historians in general, and assigning the case of the Gospel narratives to the obviously unsuitable category in which he finds in practice the closest analogy to his proposed critical method.

The question having thus been raised it may be interesting to inquire what established methods of research are in use among historians in general which may be thought to present analogies more or less close with the manner of dealing with the Gospel narratives proposed by Schmiedel. Anything like close analogies we shall, of course, find only among the methods which have been devised for as-

certaining what may be regarded as trustworthy in generally untrustworthy accounts, or, to put it baldly, for eliciting the truth from the accounts of partizan writers. The fundamental presupposition of Schmiedel's criticism—as indeed of the whole "Liberal" criticism—is that we have to do in the historical tradition of Jesus with intensely partizan reports. The entire tradition is the product, in Schmiedel's phrase, of "worshippers of Jesus," and has consequently been cast in the moulds of their worship of Jesus; in the phrase of the common "Liberal" criticism it is the work of the primitive Christian community and reflects at every point the beliefs of that community. How, then, do the methodologists deal with bias? Ernst Bernheim describes the general procedure as follows:⁷⁶

"We must keep clearly in view with what particular circle an author has more or less personal relations, of what nation, of what station he is, whether he belongs to a particular political or confessional party, whether he is a one-sided patriot, whether he has had part in the determining of the events which he describes, whether he gives accounts of personal enemies or friends. In all these relations there can lie reasons, on the one side, for keeping silence as to, or smoothing over, what is obnoxious, for immoderately emphasizing and praising what is congenial; on the other side for ignoring what is meritorious and emphasizing what is obnoxious. The statements of a writer who is involved in such relations, cannot be taken as absolute matters of fact, without some testing, so far as they may be affected by these relations; and the old methodologists already emphasize strongly enough that a partizan writer deserves unqualified credit only when he relates what is good of his enemies, what is prejudicial of his friends, fellow-partizans, compatriots."

Accordingly, a little later, speaking of the possibility of extracting trustworthy facts out of an untrustworthy narrative he writes:⁷⁷

"It is especially to be observed that there often meet us, in the midst of untrustworthy communications, statements which, precisely in these surroundings, we may hold to be unqualifiedly trustworthy: to wit, when an author who is governed by distinctly marked interests or tendencies, adduces facts, passes judgments, which stand in contradiction with his tendency, since he here

⁷⁶ *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*,² 1908, p. 509; cf. pp. 485-6, 492-3.

⁷⁷ P. 523.

involuntarily pays homage to the pure truth, and does not observe, or at least does not heed, the contradiction with his tendency,—as in the case of admissions of defeats, blunders, weaknesses of his own party, or on the other hand in the case of communication of victories, services, virtues of the enemy. The testimony of Lambert of Hersfeld, for example, must be taken as altogether trustworthy when, in involuntary recognition, he relates individual honorable traits of Henry IV, because Lambert is animated throughout by a strong enmity to the King. We can generalize this observation to the effect that statements in general, which have a content obnoxious for the communicator and his personal interests—obnoxious, that is to say, not according to our opinion, but in his own view—are thoroughly trustworthy; for, if it is already for most men difficult to communicate truths which are unfavorable to themselves and those associated with them, it runs entirely counter to human nature falsely to set itself in an unfavorable light."

To the important qualifying clause, "obnoxious, that is to say, not according to our opinions, but in his own sense," Bernheim attaches a note which tells us that Charles Seignobos, "has rightly emphasized this," in the *Introduction aux études historiques* which he published in collaboration with Langlois.⁷⁸ In the passage referred to, Seignobos is pointing out the kinds of statements which, occurring in historical documents, authenticate themselves. Thus, for instance, he tells us,⁷⁹ *bona fides* at least may be inferred when "the fact stated is manifestly prejudicial to the effect which the author wishes to produce." "In such a case," he remarks "there is a probability of good faith." But we must take good care to reach our judgments in such matters from the point of view of the writer, not our own. "It is quite possible that the author's notions of his interest or honour were very different from ours." We need not accredit good faith to Charles IX, for example, when he acknowledged that he was responsible for the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day; to us that would be to confess an infamy, to him it was a boast of glory. There are even cases, Seignobos proceeds to intimate, in which more than *bona fides*,—in which truth itself—may be inferred, viz.

⁷⁸ 1898, p. 158.

⁷⁹ *Introduction to the Study of History*, E. T., 1908, p. 186.

when "the fact was of such a nature, that it could not have been stated unless it were true."⁸⁰

"A man does not declare that he has seen something contrary to his expectations and habits of mind unless observation has compelled him to admit it. A fact which seems very improbable to the man who relates it has a good chance of being true. We have then to ask whether the fact stated was in contradiction to the author's opinions, whether it is a phenomenon of a kind unknown to him, an action or a custom which seems unintelligible to him; whether it is a saying whose import transcends his intelligence, such as the sayings of Christ reported in the Gospels, or the answers made by Joan of Arc to questions put to her in the course of her trial."

And then the caution is again added that in all such cases we must be very careful to judge according to the ideas of the author, not our own.

That the whole case may be before us we append an additional citation from another writer on general historical method. H. B. George remarks:⁸¹

"If a particular writer is our only authority for this or that matter, concerning which his sentiments are obvious, it is inevitable that we should feel a tinge of *prima facie* suspicion that the facts may not be fairly represented. Our belief in his statement will not be quite so confident as if there were separate and independent testimony in support of it, but we have no ground for carrying our mistrust further. In such a case, as continually when dealing with historical evidence, we must be content with something short of unhesitating conviction." "Internal criticism may indeed suggest that the author was a partizan, and in general knowledge that partizanship is liable to lead authors into misrepresenting facts may reasonably render us suspicious; but no merely internal indications could justify our totally disbelieving the author's specific statements on a matter concerning which, *ex hypothesi*, we have no evidence but his." "The most bigoted partizan may be giving a thoroughly true account of a transaction which is of special importance to the cause that he favors; the most credulous of writers may be telling a palpably true story, even if it sounds improbable."

The principles of procedure outlined in passages like these are in general those which Schmiedel wishes to invoke in his criticism of the Gospel narratives. We could almost conjecture that he wrote with the very words of

⁸⁰ P. 188.

⁸¹ *Historical Evidence*, 1909, pp. 84, 96, 95.

Bernheim in his mind. Nevertheless a different spirit breathes in them from that which animates his procedure. And in attempting to apply such principles to the criticism of the Gospel narratives, he has been misled into a number of violences in dealing with his material.

In the first place, there is the flagrant absurdity, of which something has already been said, of suggesting that the Synoptic Gospels may be treated as the sole source of our knowledge of Jesus. The evidence, not merely of the existence of Jesus, but of the manner of man he was, quite independent of the Synoptic Gospels, is altogether exceptional, as well in consistency and contemporaneousness, as in sheer amount. This evidence culminates, of course, in the testimony of Paul, though it is by no means confined to his testimony. Schmiedel, it is true, minifies the testimony of Paul; but he cannot deny it, much less can he evacuate it. It only betrays the exigencies of his position when he permits himself to speak regarding it in such studiously disparaging terms as these:⁸²

"If, as Dr. Neumann and the present writer believe, it is possible to show that the genuineness of these Epistles"—the major Epistles of Paul—"is unassailable, and that the figure of Jesus cannot be projected back into a period earlier than the Christian era, we shall be justified in regarding the existence of Jesus as historically established. Only, by this we have gained exceedingly little for the construction of a Life of Jesus; the number of data supplied by Paul is but small."⁸³

"With reference to the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, which no doubt unquestionably presuppose an actual Jesus, appeal can be made to the fact that according to many investigators they all came into being only in the second century. And if the composition of the most important of them be assigned to the years 50-60 A.D.,—which is my view also—nevertheless it must be acknowledged that they relate deplorably little about Jesus, and do not in the least afford a guarantee for all that is commonly regarded as credible about him from the first three Gospels."⁸⁴

If it be borne in mind that the question at issue does not concern the details of the daily life of Jesus, but His very existence and the manner of person He was, the unhappy

⁸² Cf. *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1881.

⁸³ Preface to Neumann, p. viii.

⁸⁴ *Die Person Jesu* etc., p. 6; E. T. p. 14.

art of these statements will be apparent. Much more justly Heinrich Weinel not only tells us that Paul's letters "contain so much about Jesus that he is our best and surest witness in the controversy that has just been started afresh about the historicity of the person of Jesus," and that, however few references he makes to events in His life, Paul has yet "preserved the picture of Jesus for us very clearly and distinctly,"⁸⁵ but, addressing himself to the precise point now engaging our attention, says plainly:⁸⁶

"The critical theology has continually emphasized how little we learn of Jesus from Paul. I too myself have formerly placed the matter in this false light. What Paul gives us of Jesus and His words is little, if we measure it by the standard of a Gospel; it is little too if we demand that a Paul shall buttress all his ideas with declarations of Jesus. It is, however, not merely enough to find the existence of Jesus attested in the Epistles of Paul; rather in all important matters the echoes of Jesus' sayings are heard in Paul, and there is not only a whole multitude of details which Paul knows and transmits, but also all the distinguishing traits of the preaching of Jesus and His nature are preserved to us by Paul. There is therefore a great deal, if we do not carry the old prejudice with us to these Epistles which are after all occasional writings and are not written with the express design of informing us of Jesus."

Even Schmiedel's own pupil, Arno Neumann, indeed, rebukes the madness of his teacher, when, in the Introduction to the little *Life of Jesus*, to the English translation of which Schmiedel contributed a Preface, coming to speak of Paul's testimony to Jesus, he tells us that to give any scientific character to the denial of Jesus' existence, we must first push incontinently out of the path that "historical Rock whose name is Paul." By Paul, the genuineness of whose chief Epistles is indubitable, he adds,⁸⁷

"there are accredited not only the manifestation (*Auftreten*) of Jesus Christ in general, His epoch, the peculiarity of His character, and His death, but also some of His fundamental ideas, His twelve disciples, and the remarkable impression He must have made,"—

in a word, the entire fact and figure of Jesus. But that the

⁸⁵ *St. Paul, the Man and his Work*. E. T., 1906, pp. 316, 321: the whole passage should be read.

⁸⁶ *Ist das "liberale" Jesusbild widerlegt?* 1910, p. 16.

⁸⁷ *Jesus, wer er geschichtlich war*, 1904, pp. 10-11; E. T. pp. 4-5.

force of Paul's testimony may be fully appreciated it must be kept in mind that it is original testimony, properly so-called contemporaneous testimony.⁸⁸ Paul, it is true, was not himself a companion of Jesus; but he connected himself with the Christian movement in its very earliest days, lived in constant communication with Jesus' immediate disciples, enjoyed the fullest opportunity to learn at first hand all they knew, and wrote under their eye.⁸⁹ In a true sense his testimony is theirs; he is in it their mouth-piece; and it is accordingly supported in all its extent by every line of tradition which comes down from them.⁹⁰

The absurdity of treating the Synoptic Gospels as the sole source of our knowledge of Jesus is fairly matched by the absurdity of attempting to treat them as together constituting but a single source of that knowledge, and that a source of the value of which we are ignorant. Schmiedel warns us not to imagine that a narrative which is found in all three of the Synoptic Gospels comes to us

⁸⁸ "Original authorities," according to Bernheim (pp. 413-507) are strictly only actual eye-and-ear-witnesses of what is narrated. But as even these must fill out what they relate from the testimony of others, it is usual to widen the notion and to call "contemporary accounts which rest on their own immediate perception and on that of other contemporaries" "original authorities." This is reasonable. On the other hand, E. A. Freeman (*The Methods of Historical Study*, 1886, p. 168) unduly extends the notion when he accords the name of "original authorities" to derived accounts in case the original sources are lost. To deserve the name of "original authorities" the element of contemporaneousness must not be wholly lacking.

⁸⁹ Accordingly Neumann adds (p. 11; E. T. p. 5): "It is accordingly no impairment of the value of Paul as reporter that he never personally saw Jesus; for certainly there was nothing left lacking to this new convert of the most eager inquiries (1 Cor. xi. 23; vii. 10 ff; 2 Cor. x. 18 ff)."

⁹⁰ Out of the immense literature of the subject, cf. especially: R. J. Knowling, *The Testimony of St. Paul to Christ*, 1905; Th. Zahn, *Einleitung in das N. T.*¹ I. pp. 164 ff (ix. § 48, Anmerkungen 4, 5); R. Drescher, *Das Leben Jesu bei Paulus*, 1900; H. J. Holtzmann, in *Die Christliche Welt* xxiv. (1910), col. 151-160; A. J. Mason, *Cambridge Theological Studies*, edited by H. B. Swete, 1905, pp. 425 ff; J. G. Machen, *Princeton Biblical and Theological Studies*, 1912, pp. 561 ff.

therefore accredited by three witnesses; for, says he, "all are drawing from one source."⁹¹ But he does not take the same trouble to warn us that this one source lies, therefore, distinctly nearer to the events it narrates than any of the three Gospels that have drawn from it; or that the circumstance that they have all drawn so largely from it accredits it as a very excellent source, everywhere depended upon in its own day; or, even, that it is not the only source from which these Gospels draw,—that by its side lies another source, certainly equal in age and value to it, from which two of them at least draw, and by their side lie still other sources from which one or another of them draws, which need not be inferior in either age or value to either of them. If we are to break up the Gospels into their sources and appeal rather to these sources than to the Gospels themselves (which is not the method of procedure which Schmiedel is in act to commend to us, presenting his critical method rather as independent of literary criticism) we do not lose but profit by the process. Instead of three witnesses of about the seventh decade of the century we have now in view quite a number of witnesses, all earlier than the seventh decade of the century, some of them perhaps very much earlier; and all commended to our favorable consideration by their selection as trustworthy sources of information concerning Jesus by writers so earnest and careful as the authors of the Synoptic Gospels, and by the remarkable completeness of their harmony with one another in the portrait of Jesus which they draw, a harmony which extends also to the portrait of Jesus given us by Paul and by all other witnesses which we may be willing to accept as coming to us from the same general period. No fault in the historical criticism of the Gospel narratives could be more gross than the obscuring of the existence or of the impressiveness of this consistent tradition concerning Jesus, stretching back of the Synoptic Gospels to the very beginning of the Christian movement. And nothing

⁹¹ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1872.

requires to be more strongly emphasized than that it is just because of the impressive consent of the whole tradition of Jesus, running back of the Synoptic Gospels to the beginning, that critics whose presuppositions will not permit them to accept this tradition as trustworthy appeal from literary criticism to historical criticism in an endeavor to get behind the consistent tradition to a Jesus unknown to it. The Synoptic Gospels come before us, meanwhile, not as new phenomena relatively to the portrait of Jesus which they embody, but distinctly as merely the bearers of a tradition of the richest and most consistent sort, which from all that appears is aboriginal; in a word, as witnesses of really contemporaneous value to the Jesus who was known by those who companied with Him and could give first-hand information about Him. This great fact is obscured by Schmiedel, by suggesting unreasonably late dates for the composition of the Synoptic Gospels, thus lengthening unwarrantably the interval which separates them from the facts which they narrate; by leaving in the background the richness and trustworthiness of the tradition which bridges this interval; by treating the Synoptic Gospels as "flying leaves" of wholly unknown provenience and value; and by dealing with them as if they were a single unsupported document.

It must not be supposed that Schmiedel speaks dogmatically upon all these matters. That is not his ordinary manner. The whole drift of his reasoning is towards a late date for the Gospels; he seems indeed to wish to cluster them in the last few years of the century.⁹² But he is careful to guard his readers against supposing that it would affect his estimate of the value of their contents if they should turn out to be earlier. He says:⁹³

"The chronological question is in this instance a very subordinate one. Indeed, even if our Gospels could be shown to have

⁹² Otto Schmiedel, who may possibly consider himself the follower of his brother in this matter, gives more distinctly the following dates: Mark, A.D. 80; Matthew 90, with reworking up to 120 or even later; Luke, 100.

⁹³ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1894.

been written from 50 A.D. onwards, or even earlier, we should not be under any necessity to withdraw our conclusions as to their contents, we should on the contrary only have to say that the indubitable transformation in the original tradition had taken place much more rapidly than one might have been ready to suppose. The credibility of the Gospel history cannot be established by an earlier dating of the Gospels themselves in any higher degree than that in which it has been shown to exist, especially as we know that even in the life-time of Jesus miracles of every sort were attributed to Him in the most confident manner. But as the transformation has departed so far from the genuine tradition, it is only in the interest of a better understanding and of a more reasonable appreciation of the process that one should claim for its working out a considerable period of time."

On the peculiarities of the reasoning of this paragraph we do not feel called upon to comment. Each sentence seems to neutralize its immediate neighbors. But in any event few will be found to agree with Schmiedel that it will make no difference in our estimate of the credibility of the Gospels whether we place their own composition about A.D. 100, and that of their chief sources about 70; or their own composition somewhere around 50, and that of their chief sources—shall we say about 40 or 35, or even earlier? To assert otherwise is indeed to deny a fundamental canon of criticism. For it is quite obvious that if our Gospels were composed from 50 to 70 (it is our own belief that they were composed in the sixties) and rest on sources, to a considerable extent recoverable from them, which come from a period ten or twenty years—or more—earlier, we possess in them in effect contemporaneous testimony. And contemporaneous testimony of such mass and constancy cannot be lightly neglected. It is not easy to believe in a transformation so great as that which is assumed, taking place so rapidly as in this case it must have done; though, of course, this will not appear formidable to Schmiedel who allows that Jesus was looked upon as a supernatural person even in His lifetime, thus admitting in effect that it is not a question of transformation with which we are concerned but a question of the credibility of contemporaneous testimony. From our point of view, at any rate,

it is not a matter of indifference whether the Gospels are dated near 100 A.D., or between 50 and 70, and we therefore think it worth while to insist that there is really no reason for removing any of them to a time later than A.D. 70, as even a Harnack has (somewhat tardily) come to see.⁹⁴

No more than the early dates of the Gospels does Schmiedel dogmatically deny the richness of the tradition that lies behind them. He even elsewhere fully recognizes it, investigating with great diligence the sources of the sources and intimating the far-reaching consequences which the recognition of them has upon the literary criticism of the Gospels.⁹⁵ But when he comes to consider the credibility of the Gospel narratives he ignores altogether the fulness and constancy of this historical tradition of which they are merely the vehicles. We do not forget that this is in accord with his professed procedure; that precisely what he proposes to do is to turn away from literary criticism and to seek to reach a decision upon the credibility of the narratives by a historical criticism which, wholly inde-

⁹⁴ Cf. W. P. Armstrong, in the Princeton *Biblical and Theological Studies*, 1912, pp. 348-9: "With the increasing recognition of the evidence for the early date of the Synoptic Gospels, their sources—of whatever kind and constitution—being still earlier—carry back the witness of the documents to the time of the eye-witnesses. And among these there was no difference of opinion concerning the factual basis which underlies the tradition recorded by the Gospels in concrete and varying forms. To admit with Harnack that the Gospel of Luke was written before 70 A.D., and early in the sixties (*Neue Untersuchungen zur Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 81 ff), is to accept a fact which has an obvious bearing on the origin of the sources of the Synoptic Gospels,—a fact which makes it difficult, as Harnack himself foresaw (*Die Apostelgeschichte*, p. 221. n. 2), to regard as legendary their account of supernatural events. For if the Gospels embody the view of Jesus which was current in the primitive community about 60 A.D.,—as Heitmüller admits—or earlier—as Harnack's dating of Luke requires—the rejection of their witness cannot be based upon their differences or upon purely historical considerations. Recourse must be had to a principle springing ultimately out of philosophical conceptions by which their unanimous witness to essential features in their portraiture of Jesus may be set aside." Cf. also the accompanying note 180.

⁹⁵ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1862 ff §§ 128-129.

pendently of literary criticism, works directly upon the transmitted material itself without consideration of the modes or channels of its transmission. But precisely what we are complaining of is the impropriety of this method. It is in essence an attempt to ignore a fundamental fact, the fact, that is, that the Synoptic Gospels do not stand off in isolation, and cannot be dealt with as if they were,—or even as if they were only possibly—a body of inventions; but are known to rest on a background of copious, consentient and contemporary historical tradition. To lose sight of this fact is to lose sight of the primary fact in the case, and to do violence to the fundamental law of evidence which demands that well-attested facts shall not be treated as unattested facts. What Schmiedel asks of us is to begin our investigation into the credibility of the Synoptic Gospels by abstracting our attention from the primary evidence of their credibility, viz., that they are but vehicles of a copious and unbroken historical tradition which is contemporaneous with the facts which it transmits. Having failed to shake this testimony by literary criticism he proposes—not to allow it its due weight but—to neglect it and direct his assault upon the credibility of the Gospel-narratives to another point!

It is part of this studied disregard of the real conditions of the case, that Schmiedel treats the Synoptic Gospels as documents of entirely unknown provenience and value. Here indeed he becomes even dogmatic. He is quite sure that the Third Gospel, for example, is not the production of Paul's companion, Luke, although he is equally sure that this Gospel and the Book of Acts are from the same pen;⁹⁶ he will not concede to Luke even the "we"-sections of Acts, which he considers to come from a different hand from the rest of the book. We take it however, that,—as even a Harnack again has come to perceive⁹⁷—a sober criticism

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, col. 1893.

⁹⁷ See especially nos. i. iii. and iv. of Harnack's *New Testament Studies* (Crown Theological Library, xx., xxvii., xxxiii.): *Luke the Physician*, 1907; *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1909; *The Date of the Acts and of the Synoptic Gospels*, 1911.

must allow that Acts is all of a piece—"we"-passages and all—and Acts and the Third Gospel are from the same hand, and this hand is that to which a constant historical tradition has from the earliest times ascribed both books,—that of Luke. This being so, the Gospel of Luke is entitled to the credit which belongs to a book by a known author, of known opportunities to inform himself of the subject-matter of which he treats, and of known will and capacity to treat that subject-matter worthily. Luke is known to have been an educated physician, who as a companion of Paul's was exceptionally favorably situated for learning the facts concerning Jesus. Whatever Paul knew, he knew. Whatever was known by other companions of Paul's into contact with whom he came, some of whom (as for example John Mark) had come out of the circle of Jesus' immediate disciples, he knew. He even visited Jerusalem in company with Paul; and resided with him for two years at Caesarea in touch with primitive disciples. What such a writer has given us concerning Jesus, set down in such an obviously painstaking narrative,—especially when it proves to be wholly at one with what is given us by Paul, as well as by his fellow evangelists in equally painstaking narratives, and indeed with the whole previous tradition so far as that tradition can be penetrated,—cannot be treated simply as floating reports.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ It may conduce to a better understanding of the trustworthiness of Luke as a biographer if we will look at it in the light of an analogous case. Why is not Luke's relation to the subjects he deals with in his Gospel much the same as that of, say, Mr. Clement R. Shorter to the Brontës? Mr. Shorter did not know the Brontës. But he has diligently sought out the facts from those who knew them, and from those who have described them at first hand. His title page very fairly parallels Luke's prologue: "The Brontës: Life and Letters. Being an attempt to present a full and final record of the lives of the three sisters, Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë, from the Biographies of Mrs. Gaskell and others, and from numerous hitherto unpublished Manuscripts and Letters." That is not far from the way Luke might have phrased his title page: "Jesus Christ: Life and Teachings. Being an attempt to present a trustworthy record of His life from the biographies which have been published of Him, and from hitherto unpublished recollections communicated by those who

With elements of the actual state of the case like these clearly in mind, we shall know what estimate to place on the extremely sceptical attitude which Schmiedel takes up with reference to the Synoptic narratives. He does not approach them with the deference due to an exceptionally well-attested historical tradition, but with an already active assumption of their untrustworthiness, in the portrait of Jesus which they transmit. Of this assumption no justification is possible and none is attempted. We cannot rank as such the pages in which there are accumulated elements in the Synoptic narratives "which for any reason arising either from the substance or from considerations of literary criticism" seem to Schmiedel "doubtful or wrong;"⁹⁹ and which he closes with the words: "The foregoing sections may have sometimes seemed to raise a doubt whether any credible elements were to be found in the Gospels at all."¹⁰⁰ But these sections register the effects not the

knew Him." Of course, this is second-hand biography; Luke, like Mr. Shorter, belongs to the second generation. But, like Mr. Shorter, he enjoyed exceptional opportunities to learn the truth, and exhibits exceptional zeal in ascertaining and recording the truth of the matters with which he deals. In the circumstances in which he wrote the trustworthiness of his communications, and particularly of the general portraiture he gives of Jesus, is not lessened,—it is perhaps even enhanced—by his secondariness. Mrs. Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* cannot be superseded; but Mr. Shorter's account is not inferior in trustworthiness to it. The sources from which Luke drew are, of course, more original than his own narrative; but his narrative resting on these written sources, supplemented by his own inquiries, does not yield in trustworthiness to them. It is, in fact, just these sources themselves, tested and supplemented by competent inquiry in original quarters, and these sources do not lose but increase in value by being incorporated in such a work as Luke's. By all means let us go back to the Narrative-Source, and to the Discourse-Source, and to any other sources we can identify, so far as we can isolate them; but let us not fancy that out of Luke they are more trustworthy than they are in Luke, or that the cement in which Luke imbeds them is less trustworthy than they are—this cement itself is from original sources. It is not merely what Mr. Shorter repeats from Mrs. Gaskell or other formal biographies which is worthy of credit in his book.

⁹⁹ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1873-1881; §§ 132-138.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, col. 1882.

cause of the scepticism with which Schmiedel approaches the Synoptic narratives and form a body of what is little better than special pleading. Nowhere are the Synoptic narratives given the benefit of the presumption which lies in their favor; that is to say, nowhere is any consideration shown to the weight of the historical tradition of which they are but the vehicles, and which confessedly stretches back to the very beginning of the Christian movement. The one aim of all his criticism is to set aside this tradition; the principle he invokes is that of contradiction; and the effect of his criticism is to substitute for the portrait of Jesus handed down by the entire tradition a new portrait related to it as its precise opposite.¹⁰¹

It is needless to say that in this extreme scepticism as over against the whole historic tradition Schmiedel receives no encouragement whatever from the general practice of historians. We have only to glance over even the brief extracts we have cited¹⁰² from the methodologists to perceive in how different a spirit historians are accustomed to approach their task. The attitude they commend to us is one of general deference to positive testimony; and if they point out conditions which in particular instances may rightly modify this deference or even neutralize it, and indicate methods of procedure by which, when suspicion is justified, the more trustworthy elements of a tradition may be sifted out, they never suggest an attitude of general scepticism as over against positive testimony; they even expressly deny the propriety of altogether rejecting positive testimony on merely internal grounds. The whole tendency of the recommendations of the methodologists is towards respect to positive testimony, and they test it with a view rather to discovering what we can most completely trust than with a view to disregarding it in principle.

¹⁰¹ Johannes Weiss, *Jesus von Nazareth*, etc., 1910, pp. 84-85 has some wise words on "the really morbid scepticism" which is too often permitted by modern critics (his example is Wrede) to intrude between the source and the reader.

¹⁰² See above pp. 234-6.

Schmiedel, on the contrary, begins with the rejection of the tradition in principle although it is exceptionally copiously and harmoniously attested; and sets himself to seek in it not the most trustworthy elements in a generally trustworthy tradition, on the basis of which the whole positive testimony may be given its rightful coloring and validity; but encysted elements of an underlying truth in contradiction to the whole testimony, on the basis of which he can reverse the tradition and recover the lost truth submerged by it. For a procedure of this sort, applied to a historical tradition such as that embodied in the Synoptic Gospels, supported as that tradition is by a wealth of extraneous testimony such for example as that of Paul, and traceable as it is back to contemporary sources, it is safe to say no support can be found in the recognized practice of secular historians. It is in fact not a historical procedure which is proposed at all; it is pure anti-historism—a bold attempt to pour history into the mould of an *a priori* construction. Against such a procedure the methodologists protest with all their strength. No one has less their respect than the critic who—as Bouché-Leclercq expresses it—“after having discredited all his witnesses, claims to put himself in their place, and sees with their eyes something quite different from what they saw.”¹⁰³ “The one thing which is illegitimate for criticism,” remarks H. B. George,¹⁰⁴ “is to assume that it can divine the truth underlying the existing narrative, which it declares to be more or less fabulous.”¹⁰⁵

Certainly it will be admitted that if a historical tradition like that transmitted to us in the narratives of the Synoptic Gospels is to be reversed on the faith of fragments of a

¹⁰³ Quoted by Seignobos, in Langlois and Seignobos, *Introduction to the Study of History*, 1898, p. 156, note 2.

¹⁰⁴ *Historical Evidence*, 1909, p. 69. He adds: “It can put forward conjectures and they may seem probable; but nothing can transform them into ascertained facts.”

¹⁰⁵ F. J. A. Hort long ago warned us that “criticism is not dangerous except when as in so much Christian criticism, it is merely the tool for reaching a result not itself believed in on that ground, but on the ground of speculative postulates” (*Hulsean Lectures*, p. 177).

rival tradition which, if not older (for there can scarcely be a tradition older than that which confessedly was shared by the immediate disciples of Jesus) is yet truer, imbedded in it like flies in amber, then these fragments of the truer tradition must authenticate themselves with absolute certainty as quite irreconcilable with the tradition which is to be replaced by them. Schmiedel, in point of fact, does not fail to claim this absolute contrariety with the tradition in which they are imbedded for his "pillar-passages." It is because he finds imbedded in the Synoptic narrative occasional statements which run absolutely counter to it in its fundamental tendency, and therefore cannot owe their origin to the invention of those to whom this narrative (immediately or ultimately) is due, that he feels able to point to them as fragments of an underlying truer tradition which would have perished save for the vitality of these fragments. They were too firmly established in the minds of the followers of Jesus to be passed by; and have therefore been taken up into the growing legend to preserve the memory of the real Jesus, which it was obliterating. When we come to scrutinize these relics of truer recollection, however, we are surprised to note how little they are able to bear the burden of the argument which is erected upon them. Schmiedel selects nine of them for special remark. He intimates that these are by no means all that might be gathered out of the fabric of the narrative.¹⁰⁶ But it lies in the nature of the case that they are fairly representative of the whole body; and indeed that they present the clearest and most convincing instances of the phenomenon adverted to. Schmiedel himself divides them into two categories. Five of them, he tells us, "throw light on Jesus' figure as a whole;" the other four "have a special bearing on His character as a worker of wonders."¹⁰⁷ To speak more plainly the five former of them are supposed to stand in irreconcilable contradiction with the deification of Jesus which had grown up in the Christian community; the latter

¹⁰⁶ See e.g., Preface to Neumann, p. xiii.

¹⁰⁷ *Die Person Jesu*, etc., p. 7. E. T. p. 18.

four are supposed to stand in equally irreconcilable contradiction with the ascription of miracles in the strict sense to Jesus, which had also become the custom of the Christian community. On the basis of the former five Schmiedel thinks that we are entitled to assert that Jesus was originally fully understood by His followers to be merely a human being; on the basis of the latter four that He was equally fully understood by His followers originally to be a wholly non-miraculous man. The two classes of statements together make it clear that Jesus was not at first the object of worship by His followers: they are "not consistent with the worship in which Jesus came to be held;" "they are appropriate only to a man, and could never by any possibility have been written had the author been thinking of a demi-god."¹⁰⁸

Now, the singular thing is, that some of the "pillar-passages," at least, even with the meaning which Schmiedel puts upon them, do not obviously have the directly contradictory bearing upon the attribution of deity or of the possession of supernatural powers to Jesus, which is ascribed to them, and which is required of them if they are to serve the function put upon them. It is not immediately apparent, for example, that the statement in Mk. iii. 21 to the effect "that His relations held Him to be beside Himself"¹⁰⁹ contradicts the attribution of deity to Jesus. Why must a divine Jesus be supposed to have been fully understood "in the days of His flesh," even by those nearest to Him? Or, for the matter of that, why should not worshipers of Jesus even invent such a statement? "As if," exclaims Friedrich Steudel,¹¹⁰ with considerable force, "a poet would depreciate his hero, by representing him as one who was misunderstood in his closest surroundings!" As if, in a word, the tendency of such an incident as is here recorded might not easily be,—on the supposition that it is part and parcel of a mythical account of a divine being for

¹⁰⁸ Preface to Neumann, p. xvii.

¹⁰⁹ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1881; cf. *Das vierte Evangelium*, p. 18.

¹¹⁰ P. 89.

a time on earth—precisely to show His greatness by representing that not only did His enemies accuse Him of working wonders by the power of the Evil One, but His very friends thought Him mad. And certainly Schmiedel himself must have felt some difficulty in including among his "pillar-passages" Mk. xiii. 32 (*cf.* Mt. xxiv. 36),¹¹¹ in which, if Jesus is made to confess that there was at least one thing He did not know, He is at the same time made to range Himself in dignity of being above the angels—and on the side of God in contrast with even the highest of creatures. Upon others of the "pillar-passages" a most unnatural meaning has to be imposed before they can be thought of in that connection. For example, in the narrative connected with Jesus' warning of His disciples to beware of "the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod" (Mk. viii. 15, *cf.* Mt. xvi. 6), it is only by the most sinuous exegesis that we arrive at the conclusion that the miracles of the feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand (both of which are narrated both by Matthew and by Mark) are only "transformed parables"—though even if they were, that fact would scarcely prove that Jesus never wrought miracles. So, it is not a natural interpretation which reduces Jesus' enumeration of His miraculous works in reply to the inquiry of John the Baptist's message (Mt. xi. 5, Lk. v. 22), to a series of figurative statements which mean only that He was exercising notable spiritual power among the people—though again, even were that the true interpretation, it would scarcely prove that Jesus wrought no miracles. At the most, it would suggest that He laid greater stress on His spiritual than on His physical miracles; and surely that is obvious enough in any case. It is unreasonable, further, to insist on an interpretation of Jesus' refusal to give a "sign" (Mk. viii. 12, *cf.* Mt. xv. 4, and further Mt. xii. 39, Lk. xi. 29) which makes it a categorical declaration on Jesus' part that He would work in no circumstances any sort of miracle, and therefore a confession by Him

¹¹¹ See *Das vierte Evangelium*, p. 22.

that He could work no miracle. The context suggests a very different interpretation, and Schmiedel himself is free elsewhere to point out a distinction between miracles as such and miracles as "signs."¹¹² Similarly, it is an unreasonable interpretation of Jesus' inability to work miracles at Nazareth (Mk. vi. 5: "He could not") to make it teach that it was never He that worked miracles, but the people themselves by the ardor of their faith; and to infer from this that the real Jesus wrought no other wonders than "faith cures."¹¹³ The narrative itself includes in the broader category of "mighty works", as of like supernatural character with them, these "faith cures" (if we insist on describing them by this name) which He worked also at Nazareth; attributes these "mighty works" to Him as ordinary acts;¹¹⁴ and leaves no other interpretation possible than that His "inability" to work these mighty works at Nazareth was a moral and not a natural "inability"; it was unsuitable for Him to do so.¹¹⁵ Even were it otherwise it still would not be clear why a limitation upon Jesus' power to work miracles imposed by unbelief should argue a general inability in Him to work miracles. Precisely what Jesus meant to imply when He declared that speaking against His person might be forgiven, while blasphemy against the Holy

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 15 ff.

¹¹³ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, §§ 141, 144; e.g. col. 1885: "It is quite permissible for us to regard as historical only those of the class which even at the present day physicians are able to effect by psychical methods" . . . ; *Jesus in Modern Criticism*, p. 17. The same conclusion is reached on the same grounds by W. Heitmüller, Schiele and Zscharnack's *Die Religion*, etc., III. 1912, p. 372.

¹¹⁴ Mk. vi. 2, 5: "Whence hath this man these things—and what mean such mighty works wrought by His hands?" "And He could there do no mighty work save that He laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them."

¹¹⁵ Cf. H. R. Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, 1912, p. 14: "The verdict passed on Nazareth to the effect that, owing to the unbelief He encountered there, Jesus could work no miracle (Mk. vi. 5), has often been misconstrued. The meaning is not that the people's mistrust deprived Him of Messianic power; it is rather that the ethical conditions of reception being absent, a moral impossibility existed that He should put His power in active operation."

Spirit would not be forgiven (Mt. xii. 31) may be an open question.¹¹⁶ But it is not obvious that He must have meant that His person was inferior in dignity to that of the Holy Spirit, as Schmiedel assumes;¹¹⁷ and if He did, it is not obvious that this implies a self-confession of His mere humanity. It may be plausible to argue that He refuses the address "Good Master" (Mk. x. 17) and in doing so spoke out of a human consciousness; but this interpretation of the passage is by no means to be accepted as certain, or even probable,—or, we might justly add, even possible.¹¹⁸ The cry of dereliction on the cross (Mt. xv. 34) certainly seems the expression of a human consciousness, though why of a merely human consciousness does not appear.¹¹⁹ If then recognition of Jesus as human is equivalent to denying Him to be divine, there is a single passage among Schmiedel's nine which clearly contradicts the ascription of deity to Jesus: and others of them may, no doubt, be put forward with more or less plausibility in the same interest, if we are set upon making out an argument *vi et armis*. But to advance these passages as definitely inconsistent with the attribution of deity or miracles to Jesus, so inconsistent that they must be recognized as remnants of a truer tradition of a merely human, non-miraculous Jesus, and able to bear the weight of a structure which must supersede the portrait of

¹¹⁶ W. Lütgert, *Die Liebe in N. T.*, 1905, p. 99, wishes to explain the passage from the general principle that Jesus' anger burns against offenses against God, never against offenses against Himself: "The same simple rule lies at the bottom of the declaration about the blasphemy of the Spirit. What is spoken against the Son of Man, that is, against Him personally, Jesus pardons; what on the other hand is spoken against the Spirit, that is, against God,—that is unpardonable."

¹¹⁷ *Das vierte Evangelium*, p. 33. Cf. the good reply of Karl Thieme, *Die christliche Demut*, I. 1906, p. 139, who says that the clause "and whosoever shall say a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him" here has the same effect as the clause "nor yet the Son" in xxiv. 26, and is "less an offensive minification than a great glorification of Jesus."

¹¹⁸ Cf. what Karl Thieme has to say, as cited, pp. 106 ff.

¹¹⁹ Schmiedel himself will not admit that it was a cry of *despair* (*Jesus in Modern Criticism*, p. 50).

the divine, miraculous Jesus drawn in the Synoptic tradition, and in all other extant tradition, can strike us as nothing but a counsel of despair.

A further consideration, which has already been hinted at in passing, requires emphasizing at this point. W. B. Smith has urged with some persistency that if these "pillar-passages" are really inconsistent with the Synoptic tradition, the writers of the Synoptic Gospels are strangely unaware of it. That the Synoptic Gospels record these statements must, he thinks, at least be recognized as evidence that their asserted inconsistency with the fundamental tendency of the Synoptic Gospels, is imaginary. And then Smith adds with force:¹²⁰

"They may seem to us what they will; in the view of the authors of the Gospels, who were worshippers of Jesus, they certainly were *not* incompatible with that worship. The ground of this contention is obvious. Had these passages been felt as irreconcilable with worship of Jesus, with the cult of Jesus as a God, they would have been altered, and their disharmony corrected."

It is easy, no doubt to rejoin that it is by no means inconceivable or even unexampled that inconsistent elements of fact should be preserved in a growing legend; this is, as Bernheim expresses it,¹²¹ the 'homage which legend pays to truth, and it may easily occur without consciousness, or at least clear consciousness, of it on the part of the writer. As to the harmonizing of these statements with the legend, why, is it not part of Schmiedel's contention that this is precisely what was done, and that we can trace the process in the Synoptic record itself?¹²² This rejoinder scarce-

¹²⁰ *Ecce Deus*, etc., p. 179. Cf. the summary on p. 181: "I permit myself to repeat: The mere fact that a declaration or an act is ascribed to Jesus by the author of a Gospel is a positive proof that it did not stand in conscious contradiction to the conception of Jesus held by that author; and it is moreover not probable that an unconscious contradiction is present, for these Gospels are very unusually well thought-out works".

¹²¹ *Lehrbuch der historischen Methode*, p. 523 (see above pp. 234-5).

¹²² Preface to Neumann, p. xi.: "I, of set purpose, selected only those passages in which it is possible to show from the text of the Gospels themselves that they are incompatible with the worship in

ly, however, meets the objection. The Synoptic Gospels are not simply sections of a growing legend, gradually working its way to the consistent presentation of a germinal conception. They are, each of them, the careful composition of a thoughtful, alert writer alive to his purposes to his finger-tips. And the method by which the supposed progressive harmonization of the incongruous elements of truth with the demands of the legend is detected, is one of extreme untrustworthiness, in the conclusions of which, to speak frankly, no dependence whatever can be placed. The general canon which governs it is justly challenged as without foundation in fact;¹²³ and the processes by which under this general canon findings are reached in individual cases are fatally mechanical and confessedly capable of making out an equally plausible case for any finding desired.¹²⁴ After all said, we must revert to the fundamental canon of all criticism of this order, emphasized as such by all the Methodologists.¹²⁵ We must not impute ourselves to the writers we are criticising, but

which Jesus came to be held. Thus, they are all of them found only in one Gospel, or at most in two; the second and third, or the third, either omits the passage in question, although by universal consent, the author who omits must have known at least one of the Gospels in which it occurs, or the source from which it was drawn; or, alternatively, he turns it round, often with great ingenuity and boldness, in such a manner that it loses the element which makes it open to exception from the point of view of a worshipper of Jesus." Cf. *Jesus in Modern Criticism*, p. 16; *Das vierte Evangelium*, p. 17; *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1872.

¹²³ Thus, for example, Franz Dibelius, *Das Abendmahl*, 1911, remarks that the canon of literary criticism, which is uniformly followed, runs: "Where there are differing accounts, that one deserves the most credit which is the simplest, that is, commonly, which is the briefest; where important elements of the one are lacking in another, they are later, interpolated additions" (p. 2); and then he criticises its validity sharply (p. 7).

¹²⁴ Schmiedel himself remarks (*Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1846) that "every assertion, no matter how evident, as to the priority of one evangelist and the posteriority of another in any given passage, will be found to have been turned the other way round by quite a number of scholars of repute.

¹²⁵ Cf. Bernheim above, p. 235; Seignobos, above, pp. 235-6.

must judge of alleged contradictions occurring in their narratives not from our own point of view but from theirs. We cannot avoid raising the question, therefore, whether the statements declared in Schmiedel's "pillar-passages" to be inconsistent with the historical tradition embodied in the Synoptic narratives merely seem to us incompatible with the fundamental tendency of that tradition, or are such as must have been felt by the authors of the Synoptic Gospels themselves to be contradictory to their fundamental conception of Jesus. In the former case we may perhaps be in a position to pronounce the legend of Jesus, as presented in the Synoptic Gospels, not quite self-consistent; that is our own affair and concerns only our personal attitude towards the figure of Jesus. It is only in the latter case that we should be in a position to point to such passages as evidence of the existence of a better tradition underlying the Synoptic tradition on the basis of which the latter should be corrected. When this only relevant question is fairly faced it is by no means impertinent to point out that if the statements of the "pillar-passages" are really inconsistent with the historical tradition embodied in the Synoptic Gospels, it is strange that these Gospels are so completely unconscious of it.

In point of fact the argument based on the "pillar-passages" has been pushed through with very little consideration for the point of view of the Synoptic Gospels, or of the historical tradition they represent. It has been made to run much as follows. The Synoptic Gospels represent a tradition in which worship of Jesus is the dominating feature: they make it their business to present before adoring eyes the figure of a divine, miraculous Jesus: but we find embedded in their narrative statements which present to us the figure of a human Jesus, a Jesus with the limitations that belong to a man: these statements must be as yet unassimilated fragments of a truer tradition: otherwise their presence in this tradition of a divine Jesus would be unaccountable: we must, therefore, base our conception

of the real Jesus on these unassimilated fragments, and reject all in the tradition embodied in these Gospels which is inconsistent with them. The underlying assumption is that Jesus must have been either divine or human; so that the discovery of a Jesus who was human abolishes the legend of a Jesus who was divine. The question is never once raised whether, in the sense of the Synoptic tradition, Jesus might not have been both divine and human. If that question were raised and answered in the affirmative, then the inconsistency with the Synoptic tradition of the statements alleged to be found in the "pillar-passages" would at once vanish, and the whole argument founded on it evaporate. At best it would remain only a new mode of putting the common "Liberal" procedure of setting over against one another the divine and human traits ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels and, on the assumption that both cannot be true, choosing the human and rejecting the divine.¹²⁶ Its only advantage over the ordinary presentation of that argument would be in its concentration of the evidence of a human Jesus into a few passages, set forth as its quintessence. It could claim superior validity over the common "Liberal" argument only if it could be shown that the passages in which it concentrates the essence of the argument for a human Jesus present to our view an exclusively human Jesus, that is, a Jesus who is in such a sense human that He cannot also be divine. These matters will require some brief consideration.

That the Jesus of the Evangelists, while truly God and as such claiming our worship is not exclusively God, but also man, ought not in these days to require argument to prove. Certainly for those who hold the position of Schmiedel with respect to the origin and dating of the Synoptic Gospels, all motive for failure to recognize the

¹²⁶ Thus, for example, Johannes Weiss (*Jesus von Nazareth*, pp. 132-133) enumerates first the divine traits attributed to Jesus in Mark, and then the human traits—and concludes that the divine traits belong to the Jesus of legend and the human to the Jesus of fact. See *The American Journal of Theology* xv. (1911), pp. 553-5.

divine-human character of the Jesus of these Gospels would seem to be removed. To say no more, the Jesus of Paul is distinctly conceived as a divine person who became man on a mission of mercy for men,¹²⁷ and His true humanity is as persistently presupposed as His deity itself. If He is in His essential nature rich, He became poor that by His poverty we might become rich; if He subsists in His proper nature "in the form of God," He did not consider His being on an equality with God so precious but that for the good of men He was willing to take "the form of a servant:" He was no less, as concerns His flesh, of Israel, of the seed of David, than He was in His higher nature "God over all, blessed for ever." And Paul does not present this conception as a novelty, a peculiarity of His personal thought, an invention of His own. He tells us distinctly, on the contrary, that it was the common faith of the Christian communities among which he moved: "*for ye know,*" says he, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that although He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor." What reason is there for doubting that it was the conception of the writers of the Synoptic Gospels, and is the account to give of their frank representation of Jesus now as divine, and now as human, with inextricable intermixture of the traits of deity and humanity? Consider only that "pillar-passage," Mk. xiii. 32, which in one breath ascribes to Him an exalted being above all creatures and ignorance of so simple a matter as the time of the occurrence of an earthly event. In point of fact, the historical tradition of Jesus of which the Synoptic Gospels are the bearers, and which stretches back of them as far into the past as literary criticism enables us to penetrate, is the tradition of an exclusively divine Jesus as little as it is the tradition of an exclusively human Jesus; it is distinctly the tradition of a divine Jesus who is living and moving in the flesh. To represent statements in this tra-

¹²⁷ Even B. W. Bacon (*Fifth International Congress of Free Christianity and Religious Progress*, 1910, p. 268) can speak briefly of "Paul's Christology of incarnation and atonement."

dition which emphasize the humanity of Jesus as on that account contradictory to its fundamental tendency is nothing short of absurd. Only if they could be shown to ascribe to Jesus a clearly exclusive humanity could they run athwart the drift of the tradition in which they are embedded.

We are not forgetting the currency of the representation that the two-natured Jesus is a contribution of Paul's to Christian thought. That the Synoptic Gospels are "Pauline" in their conception of Jesus scarcely anybody doubts now-a-days. But it is still widely held that they are Pauline because their conception has been moulded by Paul, not, as is more nearly true, because Paul was moulded by the historical tradition of which they are the repositories. In point of fact, however, the two-natured Jesus is aboriginal to Christian thought; and the proof of this lies in that very failure of literary criticism to find a tradition of a Jesus different from its own back of the Synoptic record, which has provoked Schmiedel into seeking such a tradition by the more direct path of immediate historical criticism. The assumption that has ruled "Liberal" criticism for a generation that between Paul and the primitive community there lies a deep gulf and again another between the primitive community and the actual Jesus, must give way before this fact. It is already giving way. Franz Dibelius is but voicing a growing better understanding of the state of the case when he declares roundly that it is quite unjustified, and altogether contrary to historical reality, to assume, as has so long been assumed, "that there are two deep clefts in the history of primitive Christianity, one between Jesus and the Jerusalem community, and the other between the primitive community and Paul; that the theology of Paul—Paulinism—is substantially different from the theology of the primitive community and the theology of the primitive community substantially different from the faith of Jesus; that our whole tradition as to the life and words of Jesus is strongly influenced—'painted over'—by the conceptions of Christ of the primitive community and of Paul."¹²⁸ Even

¹²⁸ *Das Abendmahl*, 1911, p. 8.

an Adolf Harnack warns us that the place of Paul in the history of Christian thought was not that of a creator, and that the gospel Paul preached was already preached by the primitive community and coalesces in substance with that of Jesus Himself; so that a crass contrast between what he calls "the first" and "the second" gospels can by no means be erected.¹²⁹ It will be observed that the effect of this revulsion from the current opposition of Paul and the primitive community, or of Paul and Jesus, is not exhausted in wiping out the difference between Paul and Jesus which it has been the custom to emphasize; it also wipes out the difference between the early community and Jesus which it has been equally the custom to emphasize. That is to say, it sets aside the canon on which "Liberal" criticism has been accustomed to act when it has assigned a large part of the Gospel tradition to "the Christian community," whose faith, it has been asserted, has been carried back into the historical tradition and imposed on Jesus. There is no evidence, as Dibelius rightly insists, that any such process took place, and, in the absence of that evidence, we may claim even a Weinel as a witness to the impropriety of assuming it. He is telling us how the work of criticism is to be prosecuted. Literary criticism, he says, must first be carried to its utmost extent. Its business is to make clear what the oldest sources contain. After that has been ascertained, historical criticism is to be called in. Its business is to determine what has been added to the true tradition in the course of oral transmission. He adds:¹³⁰

¹²⁹ "Das doppelte Evangelium im Neuen Testament" (1910) in *Aus Wissenschaft und Leben*, ii., 1911, p. 216 (E. T. in *The Proceedings and Papers of the Fifth International Congress of Free Christianity and Religious Progress*, 1911, p. 101). Cf. *What is Christianity?* E. T. 1901, pp. 153-4. Also H. Weinel, *Ist das "liberale" Jesusbild widerlegt?* 1910, pp. 15-16; "Seven Oxford Men," *Foundations*, 1912, pp. 77, 157.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31. Weinel presents here the common "Liberal" canon of criticism in its most reasonable form. He rejects it in the sweeping positive form that everything is to be rejected which can be explained from the "interests" of the early Christian community, and validates it only in the narrower negative form that only that is to be rejected which cannot be explained from an "interest" of Jesus but only

"For this, now, the sole canon for distinguishing the genuine from the non-genuine is the principle that only such traits of the tradition are to be excluded as not genuine which *can* not come from an interest of Jesus, but only from an interest of the community. This principle—as was shown above against Wrede—is not to be stretched into the different one that wherever the community has an interest—where, however, no reason forbids that Jesus may have also had it—the tradition is to be rejected as wholly un-genuine. Rather—since here it is always a matter of exclusion—proof must first be adduced that the interest in question can have arisen only later."

As long, then, as evidence is lacking that the conception of Jesus as divine was the product of the faith of the community, we are not only justified in holding that the claims to a divine nature attributed to Jesus by the historical tradition are genuine, but we are bound so to hold.

But, it may be demanded, is not, as Bousset phrases it, faith the foe of fact?¹³¹ And are we not justified in discounting the claims to a divine nature placed on the lips of

from an interest of the community. In this form, however, it remains still unworkable. It involves, indeed, circular reasoning: we are to determine what is true of Jesus by omitting all that is not true of Jesus; and of course we must know what is true of Jesus before we can determine what is not true of Jesus. We may search the literature of criticism almost in vain for workable *formal* canons of criticism. E. A. Abbott does indeed suggest one (*Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col 1782, note 2; cf. col. 1788, note 2 and Schmiedel's allusion to it, col. 1872) in the form that "the presence of stumbling-blocks in a narrative is proof of an early date"; and this is a canon which is recognized in general by the methodologists (cf. E. A. Freeman, *The Methods of Historical Study*, 1886, pp. 128, 136; H. B. George, *Historical Evidence*, 1909, p. 165) as analogous to the rule in Textual Criticism that "preference should be given to the *difficilior lectio*." But this canon is very plastic in its application as may be observed from Abbott's exposition of it on the one hand, and Schmiedel's reading of it as equivalent to his canon of contradiction on the other (cf. *Das vierte Evangelium*, etc., p. 86 bottom). Bernheim (*op cit.*, p. 507) remarks on the slowness of the emergence into recognition in general historical science "of the great simple maxims of investigation."

¹³¹ *Was wissen wir von Jesus?* 1904. p. 56: "It has been rightly emphasized that in this regard our first three Gospels are distinguished from the fourth only in degree. Must there not, then, have taken place here a complete repainting from the standpoint of faith? For there is a certain propriety in saying that faith is the foe of history. Where we believe and honor we no longer see objectively."

Jesus by the Christian community, by the mere fact that this community was a worshiper of Jesus and therefore predisposed to represent Him as making the claims which would justify that worship? This is, however, precisely what we have just seen Weinel telling us it is illegitimate to do. The fact that the community believed Jesus to be divine is no proof that Jesus did not Himself also believe that He was divine. It must first be proved (assuming it, is not enough) that Jesus could not have made a claim to divinity, before the otherwise credible representation of the community that He did make such a claim can be set aside. We must not fall into the banality of pronouncing the testimony of earnest men to facts within their knowledge untrustworthy, just in proportion as they have themselves believed these facts and yielded themselves to their influence. Rather, their adherence to these facts, and their manifest profound belief in them, is the strongest testimony to their actuality which they could give us. So far from faith being the foe of fact, faith is the correlate of fact and its proper evidence. "Faith," in other words, as a recent writer puts it,¹³² "did not incapacitate the evangelists as narrators; it showed them, rather, how infinitely the life of Jesus deserved narration." "What mandate of historical method," exclaims Johannes Weiss,¹³³ "tells us that the interested parties [*die Betheiligten*] are to be distrusted under all circumstances? . . . The truly unprejudiced man will say: 'With reference to the nature of a personality we shall always reach ultimately a clearer notion along with these who have surrendered themselves to his influence

¹³² Hugh R. Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, 1912, p. 8. He continues: "The impulse to select, to fling upon words or incidents a light answering to the later situation of the Church, is natural and intelligible; what is not so is an impulse to deform or to fabricate. 'Fidelity to the historical tradition', a sympathetic writer [it is of E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 2 that he is speaking] has said, 'was undoubtedly the chief aim of the Synoptic writers. Their work may here and there bear traces of theological coloring, but their first interest was the facts. Their part was not to interpret, but simply to record.'"

¹³³ *Jesus von Nazareth*, etc., 1910, p. 93.

than with those whom hate has made blind, or who have simply taken no interest in him.' " The matter is placed in a fair light by some remarks of W. Heitmüller's:¹³⁴

"For all particular accounts we are indebted altogether to *Christian* sources, that is, to sources which come from followers of Jesus. It is a sign of the presently reigning anxiety with respect to the knowledge of Jesus and especially a proof of the defective training of the opponents of Jesus, that this fact is regarded as a ground of uneasiness, and, on the other side, as a weapon to be used against the historicity of the Nazarene. Who, on such grounds, doubts the historicity of Socrates, because we are indebted to his votaries (*Verehrern*), Plato and Xenophon, for the chief accounts of him? And whence do we have any knowledge of Buddha save from the Buddhist literature?"¹³⁵

In the absence of all positive proof that Jesus was not what His followers represent Him, we must accept Him as what they represent Him. To refer subjectively to the faith of His followers what they refer objectively to His person, for no other reason than that it would seem to us more natural that He should have been something different—what we choose to think Him rather than what they knew Him to be—is only to be guilty ourselves, in the portrait which we form of Jesus, in an immensely aggravated form, of the fault of which we accuse them.

We have allowed that Schmiedel's "pillar-passages" might be worthy of more consideration as evidence of a contradictory tradition underlying that which alone has

¹³⁴ Schiele und Zcharnack's *Die Religion*, etc., iii. 1912, p. 345.

¹³⁵ Cf. H. Weinel, *Ist das "liberale" Jesus widerlegt?* 1910, p. 28. "The whole tradition about Jesus is Christian,—Mark too, even Wellhausen's 'Primitive Mark,' has Christian traits; and what is Christian must be cleared away from the portrait of Jesus before He Himself is found. But, then, only what is in a particular sense Christian. Jesus was certainly no Jew, but something new; what is Christian is to be warded off from Him only so far as it concerns thoughts and ideas and tendencies which only the later community could have." The emphasis upon the word "only" here is strong; see p. 31 (quoted above, p. 260) and also p. 21 when in opposition to Wrede, Weinel declares: "We must give credit to a tradition so long as it is not clearly proved to be impossible." We must not reject tradition *in principle* and demand that historical facts be shown to be *necessary*, before we accept them as *actual*.

survived and become embodied in the Synoptic Gospels, if the Jesus which they bring before us was not merely a Jesus who possessed truly human traits and who sometimes would not work miracles, but a Jesus who was merely a human being and was quite incapable of working miracles in any circumstance. Of such an implication of these "pillar-passages," however, there can be no question, as has already sufficiently appeared. He in whom a truly human soul dwelt (though in conjunction with the Divine Spirit) might well—nay, needs must—have been the subject, as respects that soul, of ignorances (Mk. xiii. 32) and the sense of desolation in the throes of mortal agony (Mk. xv. 34); and might take a secondary place in comparison with the pure Divine Spirit (Mk. xii. 34). Refusal to work miracles in given circumstances and on particular demands cannot be held to carry with it sheer inability to work them in all circumstances (Mk. vi. 5; viii. 12). Even in the instances (Mk. x. 18; vi. 5) in which a certain surface plausibility may attach to the contention that a less than divine Jesus is implied, this plausibility depends upon a particular interpretation which does not do justice to the actual language of the passages. The chief interest which attaches to Schmiedel's "pillar-passages" accordingly lies in the exposure which they supply of the weakness of the case against the consistency of the portraiture of the divine Jesus drawn in the Synoptic narratives. Innumerable passages may be pointed out in which the true humanity of Jesus is presupposed and illustrated; but when passages are sought in which the true deity of Jesus is denied or excluded, they are discoverable with great difficulty and are verifiable only at the price of a method of interpreting them which does extreme violence to them.

Schmiedel is not alone in his failure to unearth such passages. Others too, have sought for them and have come forward with as meager a fruitage of their searching in their hands. For example, H. J. Holtzmann thought that he could adduce a few passages—they are five in all—in which

Jesus ranked Himself in dignity of being distinctly below the Divine. It may be worth while to place Holtzmann's passages by the side of Schmiedel's that the weakness of the general case may become more apparent. What Holtzmann is contending for, is that, however high the self-estimation may be which is involved in Jesus' claim to the Messiahship—a claim which Schmiedel also allows that Jesus certainly made, and against the "presumption" involved in which, to call it by no uglier name, he also strives to defend his Jesus¹³⁶—He nevertheless distinctly ranks Himself below the Divine in dignity and thus guards Himself against the imputation of claiming "superhumanhood" (*Ueberschmentum*). The central portion of his argument runs as follows:¹³⁷

"Let the title of Messiah betoken the highest exaltation of human self-esteem (*Selbstgefühl*), there is at least given in the unqualified subordination of the idea of the Messiah to the supreme idea of God an absolutely sufficient guarantee against a self-glorifying superhumanness. Immutable facts establish this, such as that sins against the Son of Man are adjudged pardonable, in contrast with sins against the Spirit of God (Mt. xii. 32 = Lk. xii. 10), and that He recognizes as His own not those that call on Him as Lord, but only those that do the will of His Father (Mt. vii. 21-23 = Lk. vi. 46, Mk. iii. 35 = Mt. xii. 50 = Lk. viii. 21).¹³⁸ He even indeed declines to be

¹³⁶ *Die Person Jesu*, etc., pp. 10-18 (E. T. pp. 28-52). It was in no sense due to presumption (*Ueberhebung*, *pride*), he contends, that Jesus held Himself to be the Messiah. He reached that conception of Himself only through severe struggles (p. 16). Therefore, though in so thinking of Himself, He cannot be cleared of the charge of being a visionary (*Schwärmer*), if this means only that "He cherished expectations concerning Himself which go too high and are afterwards not realized," yet these too exalted expectations were not the product of pride (*Selbstüberhebung*) and He was not a visionary in this sense. "It certainly is a misfortune that the highest up to which Jesus reached out in order to fulfil His mission, His belief in His messianic dignity, led also to expectations such as these, which could never really be fulfilled; but I do not see that any shadow is cast by this upon His character or His purity" (p. 17: E. T. p. 51).

¹³⁷ H. J. Holtzmann: *Das messianische Bewusstsein Jesu*, 1907, p. 82.

¹³⁸ On these passages, cf. Karl Thieme, *Die christliche Demut*, I., 1906, p. 137: "But with reference to such judgments on such pas-

addressed as 'Good Master', because this would involve assumption of God's exclusive property (Mk. x. 18 = Lk. xviii. 19). It is not His but solely God's concern to dispose of dignities and honors in the Kingdom of Heaven (Mk. x. 41 = Mt. xx. 25). Jesus rather knows Himself (Lk. xxii. 27) with each of His followers as a servant, and when He enforces upon His disciples that all true greatness which avails with God reveals itself in service (Mk. x. 40-45 = Mt. xx. 20-28; Mt. xxiii. 11 = Lk. xxii. 20) this applies to Himself too. These are declarations incapable of being invented (*unerfindbare*), which surpass in eternal value all that is eschatological, in the mouth of Him whom nevertheless the very next generation exalted to the throne of the Judge of the world (Mt. xxv. 31-34) and in the end made equal with God.¹³⁰

It was not, however, the next generation which "exalted Jesus to the throne of the Judge of the world," but Jesus Himself; it is involved, to go no farther, in His favorite self-designation of Son of Man. Nor was it merely "in the

sages, the question is to be asked whether there are really set over against one another here God and Jesus' ego, a demeanor toward the one and a demeanor towards the other. What Jesus brings into opposition to one another is rather two kinds of demeanor towards Himself and His preaching—the one, calling Him 'Lord, Lord,' pleading rights of kinship with Him, giving Him extravagant admiration, envying His mother, and so forth, and not doing what He commands (*cf.* Lk. vi. 46); the other, according obedience to the word of God with which He comes forward, and doing what He announces as the will of God. The general meaning of these declarations is not that Jesus points in any way away from Himself to God, but that He deprecates every manner of relation to Him which does not include the doing of His moral requirements."

¹³⁰ It is interesting to observe how little advance has been made on the Arians in this method of argument. Athanasius (Migne, *Patr. Graec.* xxvi. col. 985c) tells us that in attempting to discover a less than divine Jesus in the Scriptures they said: "How can [the Son] be like [the Father] or of the Father's essence, when it is written, As the Father has life in Himself, so He has given also to the Son to have life in Himself? There is, they say, a superiority in the giver above the receiver. And, Why callest thou me good? they say, No one is good except one, God. And again, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And once more, Of the last day no one knoweth, not even the Son, except the Father. And again, Whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world. And again, Whom the Father raised from the dead. How, then, they say, can He that is raised from the dead be like or of the same nature with Him that raised Him?" This is to all intents and purposes Holtzmann before Holtzmann.

end" that He was made "equal with God:" Jesus Himself placed Himself not only "at the side of God" in contradistinction to all creatures, above the angels of heaven themselves (Mk. xiii. 52, one of Schmiedel's "pillar-passages"), and asserted for Himself an interactive reciprocity with God in knowledge of one another, such as implies His equality with God (Mt. xi. 27, a passage admitted by Schmiedel to be authentic), but also combines His own person as Son with the Father and the Spirit in the One Name which is above every name (Mt. xxviii. 19). The difficulty with Holtzmann as with Schmiedel is only that he cannot think in the terms of the historical tradition of Christianity and is consumed by zeal to get behind the tradition and impose his own forms of thought on the "real" Jesus. The marks of lowliness of spirit which he discovers in Jesus—who, being man, declared Himself to be meek and lowly in heart—seem to him to be inconsistent with a claim for Jesus of a Divine nature for no other reason than that he sets before himself the irreconcilable dilemma, either Divine or human, and never once entertains the wider conception of both Divine and human. And yet it is really undeniable that this is the conception which rules the whole historical tradition of Christianity, underlies the narratives of the Synoptic Gospels as truly as the reasoning of Paul, and provides the one key which will unlock the mysteries of the self-consciousness of Jesus as depicted in the earliest tradition known to us. To tear the elements of this self-consciousness apart, and assign fragments of it to Jesus and other fragments to the "faith of the community" on no other ground than that thus a view of Jesus and of the development of Christian feeling and thinking about Jesus is attained which falls better in with the paradigms of our preconceived conceptions of what were "natural," or even of what were possible, is utterly illegitimate criticism, in the complete absence of evidence for any such discrimination of facts in the tradition, or for any such development of feeling and thinking concerning Jesus, as is supposed. We

must awake at last to the understanding that the historical tradition of Jesus is of a Divine-human Jesus and that this tradition is copious, constant, and to all appearance aboriginal. To break with this tradition is to break with the entire historical tradition of Jesus, and to cast ourselves adrift to form a conception of the real Jesus purely *a priori*, in accordance with our own notions of the fit or the possible, unaided by the least scrap of historical evidence.

But surely, it will be exclaimed, we must exclude the impossible from our conception of the actual Jesus. Undoubtedly the impossible cannot have been actual. It is a reasonable custom of historians therefore to exclude the manifestly impossible from the constructions of the actual which they extract from the testimony before them;¹⁴⁰ though it is worthy of remark that they recommend a wise wariness in declaring attested occurrences impossible.¹⁴¹ Of one thing we may meanwhile be sure,—that what was actual can scarcely be impossible; and it is not a bad way—among others—of determining what is possible to observe what is actual. The testimony to the actual existence of the supernatural Jesus is simply overwhelming. Shall we set it all aside on the bald assumption that the supernatural is impossible? Two remarks fall to be made here. The first is that Schmiedel at least is committed not to treat the supernatural element in the Synoptical account of Jesus as *a priori* impossible. “It would clearly be wrong,” he says,¹⁴² “in an investigation such as the present, to start from any

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Langlois and Seignobos, *Introduction to the Study of History*, 1898, p. 206 ff; H. B. George, *Historical Evidence*, 1909, pp. 138-167.

¹⁴¹ H. B. George, for example wishes us to be chary of rejecting all miraculous accounts (though on grounds which only go part of the way) and not only enunciates the general proposition that “when a statement is made by a real contemporary it requires something beyond mere intrinsic improbability to lead us to disbelieve it” (p. 164), but, with his eye directly on miracles, declares that although when the document narrating them is of low credibility they may be safely neglected, yet when the general credibility of documents must be rated high, “it becomes more difficult to disparage any statement contained in them, whether it is called miraculous or not” (p. 169).

¹⁴² *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1877.

such postulate or axiom as that 'miracles' are impossible,"—though, as we have seen, if he does not start from this postulate he soon calls it in as the determining principle of his criticism.¹⁴³ The second remark is that the supernatural element cannot be excluded from the life of Jesus except on the ground of its *a priori* impossibility. To all critical efforts to exclude it, it proves absolutely intractable. The whole historical tradition testifies to an intensely supernatural Jesus. It is only on the ground of a philosophical presupposition that the supernatural is impossible that the supernatural Jesus can be set aside.¹⁴⁴ But thus the question as to the supernatural Jesus is shifted into a region other than the historical. Whether the supernatural is possible is a question not of historical criticism but of philosophical world-view. For the present it may be permitted to go at that. It is enough to have made it plain that if the supernatural Jesus is to be displaced from history, it is not on historical grounds that He can be displaced.

¹⁴³ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 1878: "Lk. xxiii. 44 expressly, and Mk. xv. 33, Mt. xxvii. 45 also to all appearance, allege an eclipse of the sun, a celestial phenomenon which, however, is possible only at the period of New Moon,—i.e., shortly before the 1st of Nisan—and cannot happen on the 15th or 14th of a month", that is to say the phenomenon of the darkening of the sun *cannot* have happened unless it happened *naturally*. Cf, above, note 13.

¹⁴⁴ "For," says Strauss (second *Life of Jesus*. I. p. 19), "if the Gospels are really and truly historical, it is not possible to exclude miracles from the Life of Jesus; if, on the other hand, miracles are incompatible with history, then the Gospels are not really historical records."