

The PERSON and
WORK *of* CHRIST

Revised and Enhanced

BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD

Edited by John J. Hughes



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For those who love the Lord of the Word

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FOREWORD TO THE REVISED EDITION

THE theological writings of Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851–1921) on the person and work of Christ are as timely today as they were when he published them in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The issues that he so competently addressed, created by scholarly attacks on orthodox Christianity and on Christ's person and work, are still with us, and their forms are not much altered. Warfield's meticulous, sometimes seemingly omniscient scholarship, coupled with his academic acumen, has long been regarded as exemplifying the finest that Princeton Theological Seminary produced, before its reorganization along modernist theological lines in 1929.

In his foreword to the first edition of these articles, Samuel G. Craig explains their value:

For the purpose of this volume these articles have been divided into two groups—one dealing with the person of Christ and the place he occupies in the Christian religion and the other dealing with the nature of his redeeming work. In other words, the first group deals mainly with the incarnation and the second mainly with the atonement.

His [BBW's] primary reason for holding both his view of Christ's person and his view of Christ's work was his belief that they and they alone are taught in Scripture. To the task of showing that a synthesis of the teaching of Scripture supports these views and these views alone Warfield devoted much effort. So well has he performed this task—so at least it seems to the writer—that those acquainted with his labors, whether or not they embrace his views, will find it impossible to deny that his view of the person and work of Christ is the biblical view.

One of the chief merits of these articles is the light they throw on the nature of Christianity and so the help they afford in distinguishing between genuine Christianity and its counterfeits and near-counterfeits. Every article contributes its quota but most of all the articles entitled “Christless Christianity” and “The Essence of Christianity and the Cross of Christ”—the former of which is aimed at those who deny that Jesus himself occupies an indispensable place in the religion he founded and the second of which is aimed at those that deny that the death of Christ as an expiatory sacrifice belongs to the essence of Christianity. Taken as a whole, it cannot be said that Warfield regarded one group of these articles as more important than the other. He constantly insisted that the object of our faith as Christians is never Christ *simpliciter*¹ but ever Christ as crucified and that it is no more possible to have a Christianity without an atoning Christ than it is to have a Christianity without a divine Christ.

During his more than thirty-three years at Princeton (1887–1921) as the Charles Hodge Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology, Warfield wrote the majority of the “more than forty books and booklets, nearly seven hundred periodical articles, [and] more than a thousand book reviews”² that were published during his lifetime. After Warfield’s death, his brother, Ethelbert D. Warfield, no mean scholar in his own right, working with William Park Armstrong and Caspar Wistar Hodge, selected eighty-nine of those articles and published them in ten volumes from 1927 to 1932 with Oxford University Press under the title *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*.³ These volumes were subsequently reprinted by Baker Book House in 1981, 1991, 2000, and 2003.

From 1948 to 1958, P&R Publishing⁴ published a five-volume collection of Warfield’s best theological articles under the titles *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, *The Person and Work of Christ*, *Biblical and Theological Studies*, *Calvin and Augustine*, and *Perfectionism*. In his informative, analytical forewords to the original volumes in this collection,

1. ED. NOTE. *Simpliciter*: simply, merely; in a simple degree or manner.

2. Fred G. Zaspel, *The Theology of B. B. Warfield: A Systematic Summary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 27.

3. Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, Ethelbert Dudley Warfield, and William Park Armstrong, *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927–32).

4. Then known as the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company.

Samuel Craig, P&R's first president and the series editor for the Warfield volumes, explained that with few exceptions all the articles were taken from various volumes in the out-of-print Oxford University Press edition of Warfield's works.⁵

The goal of this current project is to provide twenty-first-century readers—including scholars, students, and educated laypeople—with more accessible, readable, and useful versions of these books. To achieve these goals, I have made the following improvements:

- In the table of contents, I have listed each chapter's top-level outline, thus making it easy to see the main topics that Warfield covers, and I have noted whether a chapter is technical or nontechnical in nature.
- I have added a fulsome abstract at the beginning of each chapter, as well as study questions and a "For Further Study" section at the end of each chapter. The abstracts are designed to provide an overview and summary of the chapters, using Warfield's own words as much as possible. The study questions reflect the key issues that Warfield addressed in the chapters and should be beneficial for classroom use. The annotated "For Further Study" sections, created by Warfield scholar Fred Zaspel with assistance from fellow Warfield scholar Jeffrey Stivason, list works by Warfield and works by other authors related to each chapter's main topics. "For Further Study" selections are intended to illuminate the many topics that Warfield covers and to expand the reader's understanding of them.
- Within each chapter, I have broken excessively long paragraphs into shorter ones (assisted in this task by Scott Christensen, Karen Magnuson, and Amanda Martin), created internal A- and B-heads to serve as road maps,⁶ modernized footnotes and bibliographies (see below), created bibliographies for all the chapters,⁷ and when

5. ED. NOTE. A physical comparison of the original P&R articles with their OUP counterparts indicates that P&R reproduced the OUP articles using a photomechanical process.

6. Of the fourteen chapters in this volume, only chapter 2 ("The Person of Christ According to the New Testament") and chapter 10 ("The Chief Theories of the Atonement") had internal outlines.

7. None of the chapters in this volume originally had bibliographies.

possible supplied the actual information in places where Warfield used *ad loc.*, *in loc.*, *loc. cit.*, *op. cit.*, and *sub voc.* I have also conformed the use of italics and quotation marks to *The Chicago Manual of Style* (17th ed.). Additionally, except in quotations, I have followed CMS's recommendation to use shortened citations in place of "ibid." to avoid confusion—for example: "Monod, 357" instead of "Ibid., 357."

- I have provided complete bibliographical information in footnotes and bibliographies—information that should facilitate accessing the same texts that Warfield cited—including full author names when possible.⁸ As appropriate, I created proper footnotes from in-line citations, while leaving others in place for clarity of reading. By and large, I have not provided bibliographical information for the many classic commentaries that Warfield cites in this manner: "see Mayor on James 4:5, and cf. Lightfoot on 1 Cor. 2:9, Westcott on John 7:38, Godet on Luke 11:49." Most of these commentaries are well known and can easily be found in research libraries, in digital collections, and online.
- Throughout the chapters, I have conformed spelling and capitalization to *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (11th ed.), abbreviations for biblical books to P&R's house style, abbreviations for primary sources to those in *The SBL Handbook of Style* (2nd ed.), the citation style for primary texts to the decimal style advocated by the *SBL Handbook* (§ 8.3), and the citation style in footnotes and bibliographies to *The Chicago Manual of Style* (17th ed.). A table of abbreviations provides a guide to the many primary sources Warfield cites.
- To assist in navigation, throughout the book left running headers display the current chapter's title, and right running headers display the chapter's current main outline level.
- Scattered throughout the volume I have added 244 editor notes—indicated by "ED. NOTE." These provide translations of obscure

8. Many of the books listed in each chapter's bibliography can be found in full-text PDF format on the HathiTrust Digital Library site (<https://www.hathitrust.org/>). Articles in journals formerly published by Princeton can be found in full-text PDF format in "The Princeton Theological Seminary Journals" collection (<https://commons.ptsem.edu/pts-journals>).

Latin words and phrases, definitions of opaque English words, where the chapters in the volume first appeared (e.g., *Princeton Theological Review*), comments on bibliographical matters, and other pertinent information designed to help the reader. The “Glossary of Defined Terms” at the end of this volume lists the 144+ lexicographical editor notes.

- A comprehensive bibliography of 530 entries lists the books and journal articles cited in this volume. Three indices—Scripture and other works cited, names, and subjects—professionally created by John Muether, make it easy to locate various sorts of information.

To guide readers interested in studying Warfield and his theology, Fred Zaspel has provided a helpful annotated list of key titles—“Select Books on Warfield and His Theology”—for which I am grateful.

To help ensure the scholarly integrity of this volume, apart from conforming Warfield’s spelling and use of case to *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, I have not altered his words, including leaving “Holy Ghost,” rather than changing this to “Holy Spirit” (though Warfield uses both terms), and not changing “Jehovah” (= YHWH) to “LORD.”

This volume brings together Warfield’s best articles on the person and work of Christ—on his incarnation and on his atonement. In these articles Warfield expounds and defends the biblical teaching on these topics; shows that the church doctrine is the New Testament doctrine, which is built on Christ’s own teaching, as well as on that of the Scriptures as a whole; and demonstrates that “it is no more possible to have a Christianity without an atoning Christ than it is to have a Christianity without a divine Christ,” to quote Samuel Craig once more. Most of the chapters in this volume are nontechnical and should be accessible and profitable to the interested reader.

Warfield was a watchman on the wall of orthodoxy. His temperament, training, and talent, together with his deep love for Christ and his amazing knowledge and work ethic, resulted in his being the twentieth century’s greatest defender of the faith. His writings have been studied with profit for well over a hundred years—a tribute to his clear, careful, cogent, gospel-centered exposition of orthodox Christianity, which he called “the redemptive religion,” and to his fearless exposition and defense of it.

Foreword to the Revised Edition

My prayer is that this revised, enhanced volume will help foster an increased interest in Warfield's writings and that his words will continue to speak to the church across the coming decades with their original power and clarity.

John J. Hughes
Whitefish, Montana

FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

THIS volume contains the principal articles written by the late Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield having to do with the person and work of Jesus Christ.¹ All of its articles, with the exception of the one entitled “The Emotional Life of Our Lord,” were included in the ten volumes of his collected writings—all of which are out of print—published by the Oxford University Press subsequent to his death. To be more specific, two of the articles that compose the body of this volume have been taken from that one of the Oxford University Press volumes entitled *Studies in Theology*, five from the one entitled *Biblical Doctrines*, and six from the one entitled *Christology and Criticism*.

For the purpose of this volume these articles have been divided into two groups—one dealing with the person of Christ and the place he occupies in the Christian religion and the other dealing with the nature of his redeeming work. In other words, the first group deals mainly with the incarnation and the second mainly with the atonement. It is not alleged that these articles, written from time to time as the occasion seemed to require, treat these great themes in all their aspects. This is particularly true of those dealing with the work of Christ, inasmuch as they confine themselves almost wholly to his work as Priest with only incidental allusion to his work as Prophet and King. It is alleged, however, that they deal with that which is most central to an understanding of Christ’s person and work, with that apart from which there can be no adequate knowledge of who Christ was and is and what he did and does.

The view of the person of Christ set forth in this volume, namely, that he was perfect deity and complete humanity united in one person, has been

1. On the person of Christ see also Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *The Lord of Glory: A Study of the Designations of Our Lord in the New Testament with Special Reference to His Deity* (New York: American Tract Society, 1907), 332 (repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1950).

incorporated in one form or another in all the great creeds of Christendom—Greek Catholic, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, and Wesleyan—and confessed for nearly two thousand years by practically all of those calling themselves Christians, at least until the rise and spread of anti-supernaturalistic thinking in relatively recent times. What is true of this two-nature conception of the person of Christ is almost equally true of the view of Christ's work set forth in this volume. Every great branch of the Christian church has assigned to his death, regarded as an expiatory sacrifice, the place of primary importance. Greek Catholics, Roman Catholics, and Protestants unite in accepting the cross as the symbol of Christianity and in singing the praises of the "lamb that was slain." But while Warfield found confirmation of his view of Christ and his work in the fact that it has found expression in the great creeds of the church and even more, perhaps, in the fact that it has found expression in the great mass of the songs and prayers that have accumulated throughout the Christian centuries, yet it was not in these facts that he found his primary reason for holding it. For him such considerations were always secondary. His primary reason for holding both his view of Christ's person and his view of Christ's work was his belief that they and they alone are taught in Scripture. To the task of showing that a synthesis of the teaching of Scripture supports these views and these views alone Warfield devoted much effort. So well has he performed this task—so at least it seems to the writer—that those acquainted with his labors, whether or not they embrace his views, will find it impossible to deny that his view of the person and work of Christ is the biblical view.

We do not have to look far to discover why Warfield attached primary significance to the biblical data. It finds its explanation in the fact that the Bible, especially the New Testament, is the source of all the actual knowledge that we possess of Christ and his work. There is, as he is not slow to point out, but little to choose between those who deny the historicity of any Jesus and those who deny the historicity of the only Jesus of whom we have any knowledge. Moreover, he presents solid historical grounds for believing in the historicity of the Jesus of the New Testament, and as over against those who under the influence of hostility to the supernatural strip the Jesus of the New Testament of all that is miraculous, he maintains that it is "the desupernaturalized Jesus which is the mythical Jesus, who never had any existence, the postulation of the existence of whom explains nothing and leaves the whole historical

development hanging in the air.” It is no mere symbolic Christ who meets us in these pages, a Christ to whom men ascribe whatever thoughts and ideals they desire to commend to others, but an actual historical person who in the days of his flesh was seen with the eye, heard with the ear, and touched with the hand (1 John 1:1–3) and who risen from the dead abides the same through every change and chance of time, able because of what he experienced on earth to save unto the uttermost all those who come unto God through him.

One of the chief merits of these articles is the light they throw on the nature of Christianity and so the help they afford in distinguishing between genuine Christianity and its counterfeits and near-counterfeits. Every article contributes its quota but most of all the articles entitled “Christless Christianity” and “The Essence of Christianity and the Cross of Christ”—the former of which is aimed at those who deny that Jesus himself occupies an indispensable place in the religion he founded and the second of which is aimed at those that deny that the death of Christ as an expiatory sacrifice belongs to the essence of Christianity. Taken as a whole, it cannot be said that Warfield regarded one group of these articles as more important than the other. He constantly insisted that the object of our faith as Christians is never Christ *simpliciter*² but ever Christ as crucified and that it is no more possible to have a Christianity without an atoning Christ than it is to have a Christianity without a divine Christ.

Three of Warfield’s sermons have been included in the Appendix—sermons which deal in turn with Christ as risen, Christ as our Savior, and Christ as our example. The late Francis L. Patton, himself one of the most instructive as well as one of the most brilliant of preachers, in “A Memorial Address,” spoke of Warfield’s sermons as “models of the better sort of university preaching” and added that “they were the ripe result of religious experience and minute exegetical knowledge, and in their meditative simplicity reminded us of some of the best of the Puritan divines.” It is suggested that those unfamiliar with the writings of Warfield and the manner of man he was turn to these sermons first of all.

These writings of Warfield have been republished—in response to widespread requests—in the belief that in their particular field they have not been superseded by any subsequent writings. No brand-new theories of the person

2. ED. NOTE. *Simpliciter*: simply, merely; in a simple degree or manner.

and work of Christ have appeared since Warfield wrote. At the most there have appeared modifications or combinations of previously existing ones. No doubt if Warfield were writing today, he would not overlook or ignore the writings of John Knox, D. M. Baillie, Martin Dibelius, Anders Nygren, and Gustaf Aulén, not to mention others, but we may be sure there would be no change in his affirmative teaching regarding the person of Christ and his redeeming work, grounded as it was on the teaching of the New Testament. However long or short the period during which these writings retain their eminence, they have been reprinted in the belief that the person with whom they concern themselves will ever remain the central fact in human history. Certainly if Jesus Christ be what Warfield with those calling themselves Christians throughout the centuries, including the first century, have all but universally believed, at least until relatively recent times, namely, “the eternal Son of God who became man, and so was, and continueth to be God, and man, in two distinct natures, and one person, forever,” it cannot be that men’s attitude toward him is a matter of indifference. It must be that it is a matter of eternal significance and hence that every theory of thought and life that competes for the allegiance of men, as age succeeds age, into which he does not fit or rather in which he does not occupy a central place is thereby revealed as fatally inadequate if not as wholly false. Wherefore tragically as well as gloriously the prophecy of Simeon finds continued fulfillment: “Behold this child is set for the falling and rising of many in Israel.”

This is the second volume of the writings of Warfield published by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company. The first under the title *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* contains his major articles in exposition and defense of the Bible as the written Word of God and as such the only infallible rule of faith and practice with an important introduction by one of the ablest of living scholars. That this company expects to republish more of the writings of Warfield (DV)³ is indicated by the fact that it has obtained the publication rights in all of the ten volumes of the collected writings of Warfield published by the Oxford University Press.

Samuel G. Craig

3. ED. NOTE. DV: *Deo volente*—God willing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank the following people for their help with this project.

Bryce Craig, P&R Publishing's president, envisioned the project, asked me to head it up, and has encouraged me along the way, for which I am most grateful. Bryce's grandfather Samuel G. Craig (who along with J. Gresham Machen founded P&R) was a student of Warfield's at Princeton and later his good friend—so much so that P&R has the very desk at which Warfield studied and wrote, as well as many of his armchairs. The articles in this book may well have been written at that desk! The theology of Warfield—the twentieth century's greatest expounder and defender of the Reformed faith as embodied in the Westminster Confession of Faith—has been inextricably entwined with P&R's publishing vision for over ninety years, since the company was founded in 1930.¹

Sinclair Ferguson, an expert on Warfield's theology, graciously lent his expertise and reputation to this project by writing the excellent "Introduction to Warfield's Works," which follows these acknowledgments and for which I am most appreciative. In his introduction, Dr. Ferguson aptly explains why Warfield's theological writings have a timeless quality that makes them as valuable today as when they were first published:

Warfield's perspective was that of a biblical theologian, and there is therefore a kind of timelessness and constancy about much of his writing. In

1. Samuel Craig was also on the organizing committee for Westminster Theological Seminary and a trustee (1929–36). In 1934 he delivered the commencement address to the seminary's fifth graduating class, referencing Warfield no fewer than nine times. See Samuel G. Craig, *Westminster Seminary and the Reformed Faith* (Philadelphia: Hathaway & Brothers, 1934), republished in *Christianity Today* 5, no. 5 (October 1934): 108–12. In May 1930, P&R launched the magazine *Christianity Today*, and Dr. Craig served as its editor until 1949. In 1956 the journal's name was acquired by the company now known as Christianity Today International.

Acknowledgments

addition, he was, in the most fundamental sense, a radical theologian. He penetrated to the *radix*, to the root, of the issues with which he dealt, as he also did with the doctrinal positions of the theologians whose work he analyzed. He penetrated to, and formulated his thought based on, first principles. And it is these qualities that make so much of his work ongoingly relevant, even in a world where much has changed. So while in his writings a modern reader may occasionally encounter a name now largely forgotten, his positive exposition of Christian doctrine has a perennial quality about it. The way he thinks, the approach he adopts to theological questions, the profound biblical orientation of what he writes, the theological principles that he brings to light, coupled with his elegant writing style, all combine to give his work a lasting quality that can be appreciated just as much in the first decades of the twenty-first century as it was in the parallel decades of the twentieth century.

Fred G. Zaspel, author of the magisterial and highly acclaimed *The Theology of B. B. Warfield: A Systematic Summary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), graciously spent hours creating the “For Further Study” sections that appear at the end of each chapter. He was assisted in this task by Jeffrey A. Stivason, also a Warfield scholar, whose *From Inscrutability to Concursus: Benjamin B. Warfield’s Theological Construction of Revelation’s Mode from 1880 to 1915* P&R published in 2017 as part of our Reformed Academic Dissertations series. Dr. Zaspel also contributed the helpful annotated “Select Books on Warfield and His Theology,” which is part of this volume’s end matter. A hearty thanks to both these men for their invaluable contributions to this volume and for their many encouraging words.

Thanks also to these Warfield scholars who provided valuable advice and suggestions about various matters, along with welcome encouragement and enthusiasm for the project: Kim Riddlebarger, author of *The Lion of Princeton: B. B. Warfield as Apologist and Theologian, Studies in Historical and Systematic Theology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015); Bradley J. Gundlach, author of “B. B. Warfield (1851–1921): Evolution, Human Origins, and the Development of Theology,” in *Science and the Doctrine of Creation*, eds. Geoffrey Fulkerson and Joel Chopp (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021), 59–83; and David P. Smith, author of *B. B. Warfield’s Scientifically Constructive Theological Scholarship*,

Acknowledgments

Evangelical Theological Society Monograph Series 10 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011).

So that we could retypeset the Warfield volumes, we had the text professionally keyboarded, and this included having the Greek keyed in Beta code.² To convert the Beta-coded Greek to proper Greek, Christopher J. Samuel at SIL kindly provided a Beta-Code-to-Unicode converter, as well as a converter that changed Roman numerals to Arabic ones in biblical citations. Jeffrey Jou carefully entered the Hebrew into the chapters, using an electronic copy of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, thus helping to ensure the highest degree of accuracy, and he proofread the Greek and Hebrew in the typeset copy. John Muether created three indices—Scripture and other works cited, names, and subjects—that make it easy to locate various sorts of information. Thank you Christopher, Jeffrey, and John.

To make Warfield's writing more inviting and easier to read, my friend and P&R author Scott Christensen,³ one of the best writers I know, assisted me in carefully dividing many of Warfield's huge paragraphs into smaller ones.⁴ For Scott's painstaking help I am truly thankful.

As editing progressed on this volume, my P&R colleague Amanda Martin provided valuable advice in response to various questions, helped with the task of creating more paragraph breaks, and made excellent suggestions for improving the readability of the text. I am most grateful for her assistance.

Karen Magnuson assiduously applied her amazing copyediting skills to this volume and graciously answered my many editing-related questions; I am deeply indebted to Karen for her excellent work. Mary Ruth Murdoch meticulously proofread this volume with eagle-eyed precision, and for her careful work I am also grateful. Karen's and Mary Ruth's expertise has helped to ensure that this volume meets the highest standards of professionalism in academic book publishing.

Finally, I am thankful to my wife, Claire, a former fellow Westminster Theological Seminary student who is also a Warfield reader, for her patience

2. "Beta Code," last accessed April 24, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beta_Code.

3. *What about Free Will? Reconciling Our Choices with God's Sovereignty* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2016); *What about Evil? A Defense of God's Sovereign Glory* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2020).

4. ED. NOTE. Frequently in the original P&R books, Warfield's paragraphs are over two pages long. One sentence alone was over 300 words!

Acknowledgments

with me as I disappeared for many hours and many days to work on this volume and for her consistent encouragement to do so.

May the Lord of Glory be glorified by this volume, and may it serve to help build up his church throughout the world.

John J. Hughes
Whitefish, Montana

INTRODUCTION TO WARFIELD'S WORKS

SINCLAIR B. FERGUSON

IT is a privilege to introduce this new edition of collected writings of B. B. Warfield. Behind the privilege lies a personal narrative.

While I can pinpoint the first time I heard of B. B. Warfield, it was not my first encounter with the surname. For *Warfield* was the maiden name of “that woman”—the description of choice employed by my mother’s generation for Mrs. Wallis Simpson. Her entrance into the life of Edward, the Prince of Wales and heir to the British throne (upon the death of his father, George V), precipitated a constitutional crisis and led to his abdication in December 1936.

The twice-divorced Mrs. Simpson was always known to me as Wallis *Warfield* Simpson. Little did I know in my childhood that in due season the writings of one of her distant cousins, Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, would come to mean so much to me. But so it proved to be. Years later, in my very first days at university, an older student referred me to the writings of “B. B. Warfield” in such reverential tones that I realized that whoever he was, and wherever his work was to be found, he was clearly an author who merited careful attention.

In those days, however, apart from a small collection of his essays entitled *Biblical Foundations*,¹ Warfield’s works were virtually nowhere to be found in Scotland. Thankfully for me, I was surrounded by older students in our

1. B. B. Warfield, *Biblical Foundations* (London: Tyndale Press, 1958).

Inter-Varsity Fellowship group who read serious Christian books as well as contemporary paperbacks. And these senior students had somehow discovered an organization known as The Craig Press Agency through which books published in the United States were imported into the country. Its catalogue listed a five-volume set of Warfield's works—and even better news, they were available at highly discounted prices (an irresistible combination to a young Scottish student). And so as a teenager I eagerly purchased five volumes that became familiar companions.

It is these volumes that are here republished. They have been freshly edited and formatted in a user-friendly form in this new edition and include new material. Now a new generation can enjoy this enhanced presentation of the work of a genuinely great American theologian.

B. B. Warfield died in 1921. Since then, the output of literature in theological scholarship, not least of a conservative variety, has increased exponentially. So it might be assumed that the republication of material more than a century old has only antiquarian value.

In Warfield's case, however, there are reasons why this is far from the truth. For one thing, Warfield's perspective was that of a biblical theologian, and there is therefore a kind of timelessness and constancy about much of his writing. In addition, he was, in the most fundamental sense, a radical theologian. He penetrated to the *radix*, to the root, of the issues with which he dealt, as he also did with the doctrinal positions of the theologians whose work he analyzed. He penetrated to, and formulated his thought based on, first principles. And it is these qualities that make so much of his work ongoingly relevant, even in a world where much has changed. So while in his writings a modern reader may occasionally encounter a name now largely forgotten, his positive exposition of Christian doctrine has a perennial quality about it. The way he thinks, the approach he adopts to theological questions, the profound biblical orientation of what he writes, the theological principles that he brings to light, coupled with his elegant writing style, all combine to give his work a lasting quality that can be appreciated just as much in the first decades of the twenty-first century as it was in the parallel decades of the twentieth century.

In addition, while the names change and the contexts differ, the basic theological issues with which Warfield had to deal frequently reappear

under a different name, only thinly disguised as something new and different. And one of the virtues exemplified in his work—first observed by him, he believed, in his own revered teacher Charles Hodge—is that he has the capacity to make his readers *think*.

Scripture

Warfield continues to be best known today (and most frequently quoted across the board) for his work on the doctrine of Scripture, much of which is embodied in this set in the volume titled *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*. Indeed, if we were looking for tributes or memorials to him, one would be found in the tendency of modern Bible translations to render *theopneustos* in 2 Timothy 3:16 as “God-breathed” or “breathed out by God” rather than (as in the older, King James tradition) by “inspired.” This reflected Warfield’s discussion of the term and his argument that Scripture is not “breathed into” (in-spired) by God but rather “breathed out” by God. It is, to echo Jeremiah 1:9, God’s words in man’s mouth, not man’s words then given the character of being “inspired.” In this way, Warfield was able to emphasize both the divinity and the humanity of Scripture.

Warfield expounded not only the nature of Scripture as “God-breathed,” but also its self-referential consciousness that what “it said” was what “God said.” Thus, what Scripture says should be heard, received, and obeyed as what “God says.” He thus shared John Calvin’s famously stated view that because of this, believers reverence the Scriptures aright only when they “regard them as having sprung from heaven, as if there the living words of God were heard.”²

In fact, relatively few theologians have breathed the spirit of Calvin’s combination of doctrine and devotion as did Warfield. This is in large measure the reason that so much of his work that was originally written for academically oriented journals has been read with such pleasure and profit by Christians beyond the academy. That said, contemporary seminary students who come to Warfield in this new setting of his work will doubtless breathe a sigh of relief that the editor has judiciously broken down Warfield’s extensive paragraphs

2. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1.7.1.

into lengths digestible by us moderns. Warfield lived in a day—remembered now only by the elderly—when students were taught that a paragraph began with the introduction of a new idea or development in thought and closed when it in turn had been fully developed and exhausted. It was not unusual for Warfield to sustain a thought he wished to expound for more than three pages! But while the format is now more user-friendly, the substance remains unchanged. These pages remain genuine BBW!

What marks out Warfield's contributions to the doctrine of Scripture, but also all his other work, is that it is so biblically erudite. His own career path, providentially, imitated that of his teacher the elder Hodge. Like him, he was first a professor of New Testament. He thus was equally at home in the pages of Scripture as he was in the pages of the great works of theology.

What is more, his assessment of the writings emerging from the guild of systematic theologians was always the result of viewing their teaching through lenses crafted to a biblical prescription. Doing theology for him was never a matter of merely comparing the opinions of other theologians and choosing the best available option (with perhaps the occasional reference to Scripture). That modern form of the older scholastic methodology (which the Reformers found so stultifying) was far removed from his own approach. Even after his appointment to teach theology at Princeton Seminary, he could produce the kind of work illustrated by *The Lord of Glory*³ that demonstrated his detailed and patient attention to the text of Scripture. And although he did not follow Hodge's example of writing biblical commentaries, he was perhaps an even richer exegete than his teacher. He admired Hodge's scholarship as well as revering him as a person (he thought he had never made a major decision without asking himself, "What would Dr. Hodge think about this?"), but believed that although he had a Calvin-like instinct for getting to the meaning of a passage, he had a relative disinterest in fine exegetical distinctions.

Christology

Warfield's significance has perhaps been slightly distorted in theological circles by a somewhat monolithic interest in his work on Scripture. Important

3. B. B. Warfield, *The Lord of Glory: A Study of the Designations of Our Lord in the New Testament with Especial Reference to His Deity* (New York: American Tract Society, 1907).

though that is, it represents only one element in his contribution. The availability of these five volumes should help to prevent the first of them from obscuring the others. In fact, Warfield was equally insightful, and perhaps we could say even more “at home,” when he was writing on Christology, as *The Person and Work of Christ* illustrates.

Here Warfield regularly engaged with the critical scholarship of his time. Indeed, as his many book reviews give evidence, he regarded it as part of his calling to interact with theological trends in Europe and to give guidance on them to the church in the United States. That scholarship is now over a century old, and not every reader will be immediately attracted to an essay entitled “The Two Natures and Recent Christological Speculation” or be familiar with names such as Johannes Weiss and Paul Wilhelm Schmiedel. But Warfield had an ability to penetrate to the underlying issues—surely a hallmark of all truly great theologians. This means that his discussion of what may now seem remote and doubtfully relevant views becomes a kind of heuristic tool in his hands by which we gain a deeper understanding of biblical teaching. He thus stimulates us to think reflectively and critically about similar (and sometimes the same) views when they are expressed in our own time. When we read Warfield, we can be confident that nothing, ultimately, will be wasted on us. He understood that David’s axiom “If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps. 11:3)⁴ is as true in contemporary theology as it was in ancient Israel.

But by no means does all of Warfield’s work on Christ engage head-on with critical scholarship. One of the glories of the first edition of this set was that it contained his magnificent essay “On the Emotional Life of Our Lord.” For reasons not immediately clear, this was omitted from the ten-volume Oxford edition of his works. It had been prepared as part of a multiauthor book that the Princeton Seminary faculty produced to commemorate the centenary of the institution in 1912.⁵

Landmark study though it was, “On the Emotional Life of Our Lord” was long a relatively unknown piece. Perhaps its existence was partly obscured by the assumption that everything of real merit from Warfield’s pen was to be

4. All Scripture quotations in this introduction are from the ESV.

5. B. B. Warfield, “On the Emotional Life of Our Lord,” in *Biblical and Theological Studies* (New York: Scribner, 1912), 35–90.

found in the “definitive” Oxford edition.⁶ Thankfully, in more recent years, its appearance online and as a separate publication has helped to restore it to the prominence it merits.

Here, in dealing with the humanity of Christ, we find Warfield at his best and most sensitive as he reflects carefully and reverently on the text of Scripture and on the person and experience of the incarnate Savior. It would be no exaggeration to say that if this essay appeared nowhere else, or if a reader pondered no other essay in *The Person and Work of Christ*, it would be worth the price of the whole volume. Warfield provides Christians of all levels of intellectual ability and theological interest with much to reflect on in his exposition of the experience of the Logos made flesh. More than that, he writes with such an evident spirit of devotion that these pages should lead to both admiration for Christ and a renewed spirit of love for him. This is theology in the tradition of Augustine and Anselm, of Calvin and John Owen.

Breadth of Learning

The same spirit of reverence will be detected throughout the essays in the volume of *Biblical and Theological Studies*.

One of the interesting features of the Warfield corpus as a whole is that no *book* comes from his pen that could simply be designated a work of systematic theology. As an author, he was chiefly an essayist. And yet when his essays are surveyed en masse, it is possible to run a systematic-theology magnet over them and extract at least the building blocks for a systematic theology.⁷ It is no surprise, then, that contained in this volume we find Warfield's expositions of the biblical doctrine of the Trinity and individual pieces on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as well as aspects of soteriology. All this is rooted in his article “Christian Supernaturalism”—which in some ways serves as a leitmotif for his theology as a whole and points

6. Further evidence that there was much more of abiding significance in the Warfield oeuvre was demonstrated by the publication of two volumes of *The Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*, edited by John E. Meeter (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970, 1973), containing over a hundred further essays.

7. As has been demonstrated in Fred G. Zaspel, *The Theology of B. B. Warfield: A Systematic Summary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

forward to the basic antithesis that his student J. Gresham Machen would later articulate in his powerful *Christianity and Liberalism*.

Warfield was, as is well known, a cessationist.⁸ But he would have vigorously repudiated confusing his view of the noncontinuance of the spiritual gifts associated with the apostolic ministry and period with a denial of the supernatural. For him, the Christian faith is through and through supernatural from start to finish, from creation, through providence, to redemption, to final consummation. Any other view for Warfield would be tantamount to practical atheism. Not only his understanding of Christian theology in general but his exposition of soteriology in particular gives eloquent testimony to his Jonah-like conviction that “salvation belongs to the LORD!” (Jonah 2:9).⁹ Yet supernaturalism and the sovereignty of God are carefully set within the biblical parameters that he believed were so well expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith to which he was so devoted: in God’s sovereign providence, “all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly; yet by the same providence, He ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently” (WCF 5.2).

It is impossible to survey these volumes without realizing that while Warfield’s learning extended to the great theological tradition, at the same time his interests focused on certain important individuals and moments in that history. He believed that it is true not only that we “comprehend with all the saints . . . and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge” (Eph. 3:18–19), but that it is in communion with saints who have been doctors of the church that we grow in our understanding of God and the gospel. Since he viewed the Reformed faith as biblical Christianity come to its most consistent and richest expression, it is not surprising that his work reveals a special concentration on the life and thought of Augustine of Hippo among the fathers, on John Calvin among the Reformers (as the volume *Calvin and Augustine* in this set indicates), and on the Westminster divines in the later Puritan era.

8. As he indicated at length in his Thomas Smyth Lectures given at Columbia Seminary in 1917–18, published as *Counterfeit Miracles* (New York: Scribner, 1918).

9. On this Warfield elaborated in lectures he gave at Princeton in 1914, published as *The Plan of Salvation* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1915).

Nor was Warfield's breadth of learning that of a dilettante. His articles in these areas are the kind that can be produced not by a search engine but only by careful study of the original sources. Warfield understood the big trends, but he also had an eye to detail. Not all theologians who grasp the big picture and are comfortable with great ideas and movements have the necessary patience for such close attention to detail. Warfield did.

In large part due to his wife's health, but perhaps also temperamentally, in the church at large Warfield never occupied the position commanded by Charles Hodge. In the providence of God, the Warfields had no children. He was therefore more often at home—reading, reflecting, writing, and developing his rare familiarity with the fathers, the Reformers, and the Puritans. His facility in ecclesiastical history operated in smooth tandem with his learning as a systematic theologian. And these were rooted in his foundational expertise as a biblical scholar. Both the teaching of Scripture and its spirit anchored the various dimensions of his thinking in a remarkable balance and harmony.

The Scholar as Theological Pastor

One further feature of Warfield's work should be mentioned here. As a scholar, he was a minister of the gospel. He understood that the theologian who has been ordained as a doctor of the church rather than a pastor of a congregation nevertheless shares the same calling, while employing gifts suited to his different sphere of ministry. Both are called, in their distinct yet intimately related spheres, to be shepherds of the sheep. This means feeding them on the one hand and guarding them on the other. The flock needs both nourishment and protection.

Warfield's writings exhibit his belief in God's common grace, and the conviction he shared with Calvin that therefore truth is truth wherever it is to be found. He could manifest a spirit of appreciation toward other authors for what was good and noble in their writings, yet at the same time dismantle errors that he believed were on a trajectory that distorted biblical truth and therefore would ultimately harm the people of God. To some extent he had learned this disposition from his beloved Charles Hodge, who could be generous even to a theologian such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, whose

preaching he had heard during his sojourn in Berlin, but whose approach to theology was almost a diameter removed from his own.¹⁰ Yet at the same time, many of his articles make it clear that Warfield was not slow to use the red ink of the corrector. He could, in Pauline style, express appreciation for what was good and thereafter carefully demolish everything that was not. He believed that false teaching is not only mistaken but spiritually noxious. He was therefore not slow to be critical when criticism was warranted. The intellectual scalpel he used was employed to cut away the harmful and dangerous and to make healing and sound doctrine possible.

One area in which Warfield's critique has sometimes rubbed against the evangelical grain both then and now is in his essays gathered in the volume on *Perfectionism*. Here he expresses some severe criticisms of the so-called Higher Life movement that had begun to flourish in the nineteenth century. He included in its various manifestations the teaching that had become associated with the Keswick Convention that was held annually in the English Lake District and with its various satellite conferences. While appreciative of its emphasis on devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, he was sharply critical of the way in which it separated sanctification from justification. These, for Warfield, as for Calvin, were seen as distinct aspects of salvation that must never be either confused with each other or separated, as if one could be justified by one act of faith while needing another act of faith in order to be sanctified. In Christ, and in union with him, both realities belong together.

But Warfield was nothing if not theologically prescient. He might not have been surprised to see the basic confusion at the heart of Higher Life theology morph into other forms of "higher life" in which the blessings offered to faith were abstracted from the Christ in whom they are found. This is not to say that he made the mistake of assuming that every individual who saw justification as being received by one act of faith and sanctification by another one would accept every mutation of that view. But the root of it he consistently opposed.

10. Perhaps the most striking footnote in all three volumes of Hodge's *Systematic Theology* is his reference to August Tholuck's comment that in his family Schleiermacher would say to his children, "Hush, children: let us sing a hymn of praise to Christ," to which Hodge adds: "Can we doubt that he is singing those praises now? To whomever Christ is God, St. John assures us, Christ is Savior." Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (New York: Scribner, 1871), 2:440n1.

Warfield's concern here indicated the extent to which he thought not only in terms of first principles, but also in terms of trajectories and logical and existential implications. Beyond the essays published in this set, one of the most striking illustrations of this in his writings was the trajectory he traced in the movement in the northern Presbyterian Church to ordain women to the eldership. At the root of this movement he detected the uprooting of basic biblical principles that, he believed, contained the seeds of a trajectory that, if followed through, would ultimately undermine the biblical teaching on marriage and family life.¹¹ He might have been saddened, but perhaps not surprised, by the way in which both the ordination of women and the establishing of "gay marriage" have emerged in mainline churches in the Western world. In his own view, what is present in the root (in this case a distortion of the creation order) has the potential to produce disease in the fruit. Again, it should be emphasized that he did not make the mistake of assuming that people either accept or follow through to the full implications of their presuppositions. But his analysis and warnings were surely given out of his concern as a doctor of the church to fulfill his responsibility to shepherd the flock of God theologically. Perhaps in the light of that conviction, as his response to criticism of his thoroughgoing supernaturalism, his cessationism, his critique of the Keswick movement,¹² he would simply have reminded himself that the Lord's words "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26) applied to theologians as well as all other Christians.

If one were to ask what drove Warfield on to produce such a significant body of work, perhaps the answer lies in a conviction that had developed as he moved from his late teenage years into his twenties. As he sat with his close college and seminary classmate Charles Barrett on the first Sunday evening of their seminary careers, Barrett asked his friend what had made him, in 1872, at the age of twenty, decide to enter the ministry. Warfield

11. It is worth noting, however, that in 1889–90 Warfield chaired the church committee that explored the question of women deacons in the church and recommended their appointment (but not their "ordination").

12. It should be said here that at least in its original location in the English Lake District, the teaching given at the Keswick Convention has decisively, if in an unheralded way, moved away from the earlier "higher life" emphasis.

replied quietly, "Because I think that in the work of the ministry I can do the most to repay the Lord for what he has done for me."¹³

But perhaps this introduction is best closed not by comments on Warfield's theology viewed from a century's distance, but with the testimony of two men who knew him. At his memorial service in the First Presbyterian Church, Princeton, on May 2, 1921, Francis L. Patton reflected on the man himself. His words give us a glimpse of what it must have been like to be his student:

In his young manhood of those days Dr. Warfield was a most imposing figure. Tall, erect, with finely moulded features and singular grace and courtesy of demeanor, he bore the marks of a gentleman to his finger-tips. There was something remarkable in his voice. It had the liquid softness of the South rather than the metallic resonance which we look for in those who breathe the crisp air of a northern climate. His public utterances took the form of a conversational tone, and his sentences often closed with the suggestion of a rising inflection, as if inviting a hospitable reception from his hearers. He lacked the clarion tones of impassioned oratory, but oratory of this kind was not natural to him. He kept the calm level of deliberate speech, and his words proceeded out of his mouth as if they walked on velvet.¹⁴

The five-volume collection of Warfield's works was the original brain-child of Dr. Samuel Craig, who with Dr. J. Gresham Machen founded the present publishers—and under whose auspices these volumes first reached Scottish shores. Perhaps, therefore, it is fitting that the closing words of this introduction should be left to Machen, once Warfield's student and later his colleague. In a letter to his mother the day following Warfield's funeral, the thirty-nine-year-old Machen wrote:

Dr. Warfield's funeral took place yesterday afternoon at the First Church of Princeton. . . .

13. Quoted from the *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 15, no. 1 (1921): 10–11, in David B. Calhoun, *Princeton Seminary*, vol. 2, *The Majestic Testimony* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1996), 117.

14. Francis L. Patton, "Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D.: A Memorial Address," *PTR* 19, no. 3 (July 1921): 370.

Introduction to Warfield's Works

I am thankful for one last conversation I had with Dr. Warfield some weeks ago. He was quite himself that afternoon. And somehow I cannot believe that the faith which he represented will ever really die. . . .

Nearly everything that I have done has been done with the inspiring hope that Dr. Warfield would think well of it. . . . He was the greatest man I have known.¹⁵

The republication of these five volumes of Warfield's works in this splendid new edition is surely a further confirmation of Machen's conviction that the faith Warfield represented will be nourished for yet another generation of his readers, and indeed can never really die.

15. Ned B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 310.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.D.	<i>anno Domini</i> (“in the year of our Lord”)
ad fin.	<i>ad finem</i> (“to the end”)
ad loc.	<i>ad locum</i> (“at the place”)
AJT	<i>American Journal of Theology</i>
ASV	American Standard Version
AV	Authorized Version / King James Version
b.	Babylonian Talmud
BBW	Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield
B.C.	before Christ
bis	twice
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
ca.	<i>circa</i> (“about”)
cf.	<i>confer</i> (“compare”)
ch. / chap.	chapter
chs. / chaps.	chapters
col.	column
coll.	columns
comp.	compiler (<i>pl. comps.</i>), compiled by
cp.	compare
CR	<i>Contemporary Review</i>
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
d.	died
DCG	James Hastings, John A. Selbie, and John Chisholm Lambert, eds., <i>A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels</i> , 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1906–8)
ed.	edited by; edition

Abbreviations

e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> (“for example”)
Eng.	English
ESV	English Standard Version
ET	English translation
et al.	<i>et alii</i> (or <i>et alia</i> , “and others”)
EV	English Version
f.	and following (singular)
ff.	and following (plural)
GCS	Kirchenväter-Commission der Königl, Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, and Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, <i>Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte</i> (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1897–1969)
HE	Eusebius, <i>The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus</i> , trans. Christian Frederic Crusé, with notes selected from the edition of Henry de Valois (Henricus Valesius) (London: George Bell & Sons, 1897)
IAB	Benjamin B. Warfield, <i>The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible</i> , ed. John J. Hughes, rev. and enhanced ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2023)
ibid.	<i>ibidem</i> (“in the same place”)
i.e.	<i>id est</i> (“that is”)
in loc.	<i>in loco</i> (“in the place”)
inter alia	among other things
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KJV	King James Version
καὶ τὰ λοιπά	<i>καὶ τὰ λοιπά</i> —“and the remainder,” et cetera
loc. cit.	<i>loco citato</i> (“in the place cited”)
LXX	Septuagint
m.	Mishnah
Mangey	Thomas Mangey, <i>Philonis Judaei Opera quae reperiri potuerunt omnia</i> , 2 vols. (London: G. Bowyer, 1742)
marg.	margin, -al
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament

Abbreviations

n.p.	no place; no publisher; no page
n.s.	new series
NT	New Testament
op. cit.	<i>opere citato</i> (“in the work cited”)
OT	Old Testament
p.	page
PG	Jacques Paul Migne, ed., <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca</i> , 162 vols. (Paris: J. Migne, 1857–86)
PL	Jacques Paul Migne, ed., <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina</i> , 217 vols. (Paris: J. Migne, 1844–64)
pp.	pages
PQ	<i>Presbyterian Quarterly</i>
PRR	<i>Presbyterian and Reformed Review</i>
PTR	<i>Princeton Theological Review</i>
PWC	Benjamin B. Warfield, <i>The Person and Work of Christ</i> , ed. John J. Hughes, rev. and enhanced ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2023)
q.v.	<i>quod vide</i> (“which see”)
rev.	revised
rv	Revised Version / English Revised Version
§	Section sign; refers to individually numbered sections of a document.
SGC	Samuel G. Craig
sq.	sequence
SSW	John E. Meeter, ed., <i>Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield</i> , vol. 1 (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970)
s.v.	<i>sub verbo, sub voce</i> (“under the word”)
<i>Symm.</i>	Symmachus translation of the Septuagint
<i>Theod.</i>	Theodotion translation of the Septuagint
trans.	translated by
TSK	<i>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</i>
usw	<i>und so weiter</i> (German “and so forth; and so on”)
v.	verse
viz.	<i>videlicet</i> (“namely”)

Abbreviations

vol.	volume
vols.	volumes
vv.	verses
ZNTW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Apostolic and Church Fathers

<i>1 Apol.</i>	Justin, <i>Apologia i</i>
1–2 Clem.	Clement of Rome, 1–2 Clement
<i>Autol.</i>	Theophilus, <i>Ad Autolyicum</i>
Barn.	Barnabas
<i>Basil. hom.</i>	Rufinus, <i>Homiliae S. Basilii</i>
<i>Cels.</i>	Origen, <i>Contra Celsum</i>
<i>Coh. ad Gent.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Cohortatio ad Graecos</i>
<i>De Adver.</i>	Cyril of Alexandria, <i>De Adversus</i>
<i>Dial.</i>	Justin, <i>Dialogus cum Tryphone</i>
Did.	Didache
<i>Ep.</i>	Pliny the Younger, <i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Ep. ad Hier.</i>	Augustine, <i>Ad Hieronymum presbyterium</i> (letter 82, to Jerome)
<i>Ep. ad Manet</i>	Jerome, <i>Epistle ad Manet</i>
<i>Ep. encycl.</i>	Athanasius, <i>Epistula encyclica</i>
<i>Epistula</i>	Cyril of Alexandria, <i>Epistula</i>
<i>Fid.</i>	Ambrose, <i>De fide</i>
<i>Fr. Prov.</i>	Origen, <i>Fragmenta ex commentariis in Proverbia</i>
<i>Haer.</i>	Irenaeus, <i>Adversus haereses (Elenchos)</i>
Herm. Mand.	Shepherd of Hermas, Mandate(s)
Herm. Vis.	Shepherd of Hermas, Vision(s)
<i>Hom. Col.</i>	Chrysostom, <i>Homiliae in epistulam ad Colossenses</i>
<i>Hom. Gen.</i>	Chrysostom, <i>Homiliae in Genesim</i>
<i>Hom. Jer.</i>	Origen, <i>Homiliae in Jeremiam</i>
<i>Hom. Jos.</i>	Origen, <i>Homiliae in Josuam</i>
<i>Ign. Eph.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Ephesians</i>
<i>Ign. Magn.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Magnesians</i>

Abbreviations

Ign. <i>Phld.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Philadelphians</i>
Ign. <i>Smyrn.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Smyrnaeans</i>
Orat. <i>paneg.</i>	Gregory the Wonderworker (Thaumaturgus), <i>Oratio panegyrica in Origenem</i>
<i>Pan.</i>	Epiphanius, <i>Panarion (Adversus haereses)</i>
<i>Philoc.</i>	Origen, <i>Philocalia</i>
Pol. <i>Phil.</i>	Polycarp, <i>To the Philippians</i>
<i>Praef. Psal.</i>	Jerome, <i>Praefatio Psalms</i>
<i>Praep. ev.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Praeparatio evangelica</i>
<i>Praescr.</i>	Tertullian, <i>De praescriptione haereticorum</i>
<i>Princ.</i>	Origen, <i>De principiis (Peri archōn)</i>
<i>Quis div.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Quis dives salvetur</i>
<i>Ref. Haer.</i>	Hippolytus of Rome, <i>Refutatio omnium haeresium (Philosophoumena)</i>
<i>Strom.</i>	Clement of Alexandria, <i>Stromateis</i>

Classical Authors¹

1–3 [4] <i>Philip.</i>	Demosthenes, <i>Philippica i–iv</i>
<i>Anab.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Anabasis</i>
<i>Ann.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Annales</i>
<i>Apat.</i>	Demosthenes, <i>Contra Apatourium</i>
<i>Arat.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Aratus</i>
<i>Arch.</i>	Cicero, <i>Pro Archia</i>
<i>Av.</i>	Aristophanes, <i>Aves</i>
<i>Chers.</i>	Demosthenes, <i>De Chersoneso</i>
<i>Cho.</i>	Aeschylus, <i>Choephoroi</i>
<i>Cim.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Cimon</i>
<i>De divinat.</i>	Aristotle, <i>De divinatio per somnum</i>
[<i>De hist. phil.</i>]	Galen, <i>De historia philosophia</i>
<i>Div. somn.</i>	Aristotle, <i>De divinatio per somnum</i>
<i>Epigr.</i>	Callimachus, <i>Epigrammata</i>
<i>Eq.</i>	Aristophanes, <i>Equites (Knights)</i>

1. Abbreviations of spurious works are bracketed.

Abbreviations

<i>Eryx.</i>	Plato, <i>Eryxias</i>
<i>Eth. nic.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Ethica nicomachea</i>
<i>Geogr.</i>	Strabo, <i>Geographica</i>
<i>Hell.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Hellenica</i>
<i>Heracl.</i>	Euripides, <i>Heraclida</i>
<i>Herc. fur.</i>	Euripides, <i>Hercules furens</i>
<i>Hipp.</i>	Euripides, <i>Hippolytus</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	Tacitus, <i>Historiae</i>
<i>Il.</i>	Homer, <i>Iliad</i>
<i>Iph. aul.</i>	Euripides, <i>Iphigenia aulidensis</i>
<i>Iph. taur.</i>	Euripides, <i>Iphigenia taurica</i>
<i>Leg.</i>	Cicero, <i>De Legibus</i>
<i>Leptin</i>	Demosthenes, <i>Contra Leptines</i>
<i>Mulier. virt.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Mulierum virtutes</i>
<i>Nub.</i>	Aristophanes, <i>Nubes</i>
<i>Od.</i>	Homer, <i>Odysea</i>
<i>Oed. tyr.</i>	Sophocles, <i>Oedipus tyrannus</i>
<i>Pac.</i>	Aristophanes, <i>Pace</i>
<i>Phaed.</i>	Plato, <i>Phaedo</i>
<i>Phil.</i>	Demosthenes, <i>Philippica</i>
<i>Phoen.</i>	Euripides, <i>Phoenissae</i>
[<i>Plac. philos.</i>]	Plutarch, <i>De placita philosophorum</i>
<i>Plut.</i>	Plutarch
<i>Polyb.</i>	Polybius
<i>Pomp.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Pompeius</i>
<i>Rep.</i>	Plato, <i>Republic</i>
<i>Soph.</i>	Isocrates, <i>In sophistas</i> (Or. 13)
<i>Theaet.</i>	Plato, <i>Theaetetus</i>
<i>Thes.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Theseus</i>
<i>Timocr.</i>	Demosthenes, <i>In Timocratem</i>
<i>Var. hist.</i>	Aelian, <i>Varia historia</i>
<i>Vesp.</i>	Aristophanes, <i>Vespae</i>

Deuterocanonical Works

2 Esd.	2 Esdras
2 Macc.	2 Maccabees
4 Macc.	4 Maccabees
Ecclesiastic.	Ecclesiasticus
Sir.	Sirach/Ecclesiasticus
Tob.	Tobit
Wis.	Wisdom of Solomon

Josephus

A.J.	Josephus, <i>Antiquitates judaicae</i>
B.J.	Josephus, <i>Bellum judaicum</i>
C. Ap.	Josephus, <i>Contra Apionem</i>

Mishnah, Talmud, and Related Literature

b. Šabb.	Šabbat
m. Meg.	Mishnah Megilla

Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

<i>Sib. Or.</i>	<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>
T. 12 Patr.	Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs
T. Ab.	Testament of Abraham
T. Benj.	Testament of Benjamin

Philo

<i>Abr.</i>	<i>De Abrahamo</i>
<i>Agr.</i>	<i>De agricultura</i>
<i>Cher.</i>	<i>De cherubim</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>De confusione linguarum</i>
<i>Congr.</i>	<i>De congressu eruditionis gratia</i>

Abbreviations

<i>Contempl.</i>	<i>De vita contemplativa</i>
<i>Decal.</i>	<i>De decalogo</i>
<i>Det.</i>	<i>Quod deterius potiori insidari solet</i>
<i>Deus</i>	<i>Quod Deus sit immutabilis</i>
<i>Ebr.</i>	<i>De ebrietate</i>
<i>Fug.</i>	<i>De fuga et inventione</i>
<i>Gig.</i>	<i>De gigantibus</i>
<i>Her.</i>	<i>Quis rerum divinarum heres sit</i>
<i>Leg. 1, 2, 3</i>	<i>Legum allegoriae I, II, III</i>
<i>Legat.</i>	<i>Legatio ad Gaium</i>
<i>Migr.</i>	<i>De migratione Abrahami</i>
<i>Mos. 1, 2, 3</i>	<i>De vita Mosis I, II, III</i>
<i>Mut.</i>	<i>De mutatione nominum</i>
<i>Opif.</i>	<i>De opificio mundi</i>
<i>Plant.</i>	<i>De plantatione</i>
<i>Post.</i>	<i>De posteritate Caini</i>
<i>Praem.</i>	<i>De praemiis et poenis</i>
<i>Prob.</i>	<i>Quod omnis probus liber sit</i>
<i>Prov. 1, 2</i>	<i>De providentia I, II</i>
<i>Sobr.</i>	<i>De sobrietate</i>
<i>Somn. 1, 2</i>	<i>De somniis I, II</i>

PART I

The PERSON *of* CHRIST

I

THE HISTORICAL CHRIST

ABSTRACT

This chapter,¹ a nontechnical overview of the external and internal evidence for Christ as a historical figure who was worshiped by Christians as the divine Messiah, is divided into six parts: (1) The Testimony to “Christ” in Roman Writings, (2) The Testimony to Jesus the Messiah in Paul’s Letters, (3) Paul’s Testimony Supported by the Synoptic Gospels, (4) The Testimony of John’s Gospel, (5) The NT’s Portrait of Jesus Intrinsically Incapable of Invention by Men, and (6) Drawing Up a “Life of Jesus.” These six parts can be categorized in a fourfold manner: first, the testimony from sources external to Christianity about Christ (part 1); second, the testimony from primary Christian sources about Christ (parts 2–4), building out from Paul to Luke-Acts, then to Matthew and Mark, and then to John; third, the testimony from the impossibility of Christ’s life being a literary invention (part 5); and fourth, an outline of Christ’s life, using the Gospel of Luke (part 6).

In “The Testimony to ‘Christ’ in Roman Writings,” Warfield cites the Roman historian and senator Tacitus’ remarks in his *Annales* 14.44 that “a certain ‘Christ,’ who had lived in Judea in the reign of Tiberius (A.D. 14–37), . . . had been brought to capital punishment by the procurator, Pontius Pilate.” Warfield also mentions references to “Christ” in Suetonius

1. Originally published in George William Gilmore, Johann Jakob Herzog, Samuel Macauley Jackson, Charles Colebrook Sherman, and Philip Schaff, eds., *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, 12 vols. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1910), 6:150–60, s.v. “Jesus Christ.” Reprinted in Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Christology and Criticism*, ed. Ethelbert D. Warfield, William Park Armstrong, and Caspar Wistar Hodge (New York: Oxford University Press, 1929), 149–77.

(*Claudius*, 25) and Pliny (*Ep.* 96 [97] to Trajan). “The name itself by which he was known particularly attracts notice. This is uniformly, in these heathen writers, ‘Christ,’ not ‘Jesus.’” Warfield then points out that *Christ* is “the Greek rendering of the Hebrew title *Messiah*” and that “it was as the promised Messiah of the Jews that their founder was revered by ‘the Christians’” so that “the title *Christ* had actually usurped the place of his personal name, and he was everywhere known simply as *Christ*.”

In “The Testimony to Jesus the Messiah in Paul’s Letters,” Warfield states that “Christianity was from its beginnings a literary religion, and documentary records of it have come down from the very start,” citing the apostle Paul’s letters (“from twenty to forty years after the origin of Christianity”) as reflecting “the conceptions which ruled in the Christian communities of the time. . . . The testimony of Paul’s letters, in a word, has retrospective value, and is contemporary testimony to the facts.” Warfield’s excellent summary of Paul’s theology is worth quoting in full: “The person of Jesus fills the whole horizon of his thought, and gathers to itself all his religious emotions. That Jesus was the Messiah is the presupposition of all his speech of him, and the messianic title has already become his proper name behind which his real personal name, Jesus, has retired. This Messiah is definitely represented as a divine being who has entered the world on a mission of mercy to sinful man, in the prosecution of which he has given himself up as a sacrifice for sin, but has risen again from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God, henceforth to rule as Lord of all. Around the two great facts, of the expiatory death of the Son of God and his rising again, Paul’s whole teaching circles. Jesus Christ as crucified, Christ risen from the dead as the first fruits of those that sleep—here is Paul’s whole gospel in summary.”

In “Paul’s Testimony Supported by the Synoptic Gospels,” Warfield shows how Luke’s two formal accounts of Jesus’ words and acts fully support Paul’s teaching about Jesus. “The Jesus of Luke’s narrative,” Warfield writes, “is the Christ of Paul’s epistles in perfect dramatic presentation, and only two hypotheses offer themselves in possible explanation. Either Luke rests on Paul, and has with consummate art invented a historical basis for Paul’s ideal Christ; or else Paul’s allusions rest on a historical basis and Luke has preserved that historical basis in his careful, detailed narrative. Every line of Luke’s narrative refutes the former and demonstrates the latter supposition.” Regarding the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, Warfield states, “On comparison of these narratives with Luke’s, not only are they found to present, each with its own peculiar point of view and purpose, precisely the

same conception and portrait of Jesus, but to have utilized in large measure also the same sources of information. Indeed, the entire body of Mark's Gospel is found to be incorporated also in Matthew's and Luke's." Warfield goes on to sketch the two common sources to Luke and Matthew: a narrative source and a "Sayings of Jesus" source, concluding: "This is the fundamental fact about these two sources—that the Jesus which they present is the same Jesus; and that this Jesus is precisely the same Jesus found in the Synoptic Gospels themselves, presented, moreover, in precisely the same fashion and with the emphases in precisely the same places. . . . Its significance is that the portrait of Jesus as the supernatural Son of God who came into the world as the Messiah on a mission of mercy to sinful men, which is reflected even in the scanty notices of him that find an incidental place in the pages of heathen historians, which suffused the whole preaching of Paul and of the other missionaries of the first age, and which was wrought out into the details of a rich dramatization in the narratives of the Synoptic Gospels, is as old as Christianity itself and comes straight from the representations of Christ's first followers."

In "The Testimony of John's Gospel," Warfield states that John's Gospel is "another narrative of the teaching and work of Christ of equal fullness with that of the Synoptic Gospels, and yet so independent of theirs as to stand out in a sense in strong contrast with theirs, and even to invite attempts to establish a contradiction between it and them. There is, however, no contradiction, but rather a deep-lying harmony." Regarding Matthew 11:27–28 and Luke 10:21–22, Warfield writes, "All the high teaching of John's Gospel, as has been justly remarked, is but 'a series of variations' upon the theme here given its 'classical expression.' . . . John differs from the Synoptics only in the special aspect of Christ's teaching which he elects particularly to present."

In "The NT's Portrait of Jesus Intrinsically Incapable of Invention by Men," Warfield states, "The matter of primary significance is that this portrait thus imbedded in all the authoritative sources of information, and thus proved to be the conception of its founder cherished by the whole of primitive Christendom, and indeed commended to it by that founder himself, is a portrait intrinsically incapable of invention by men. It could never have come into being save as the revelation of an actual person embodying it, who really lived among men. . . . The conception of the God-man which is embodied in the portrait which the sources draw of Christ, and which is dramatized by them through such a history as they

depict, can be accounted for only on the assumption that such a God-man actually lived, was seen of men, and was painted from the life. The miracle of the invention of such a portraiture, whether by the conscious effort of art, or by the unconscious working of the mythopeic fancy, would be as great as the actual existence of such a person.” The NT portrays Jesus as a supernatural divine person, as the promised Messiah, and as a miracle-worker. “The central conception of this representation . . . turns upon the sacrificial death of Jesus to which the whole life leads up, and out of which all its issues are drawn. . . . It is the portrayal of a human episode in the divine life.” The supernatural is the “very substance” of the NT’s portrait of Christ. To eliminate the supernatural would cause “the evaporation of the whole. The Jesus of the New Testament is not fundamentally man, however divinely gifted: he is God tabernacling for a while among men, with heaven lying about him not merely in his infancy, but throughout all the days of his flesh.” In the remainder of this section, Warfield demonstrates the bankruptcy of attempts to demythologize Christ by reducing him to a mere mortal.

In “Drawing Up a ‘Life of Jesus,’” Warfield first states the difficulties of trying to draw up a proper “Life of Jesus”—the brief period in Jesus’ life covered by the Gospels, their not being biographies, the impossibility of writing a true biography of a God-man—and then uses the Gospel of Luke to map out “a clear and consistent view of the course of the public ministry of Jesus,” thus in a modified sense creating an outline of “the life of Jesus.”

The Testimony to “Christ” in Roman Writings

The rise of Christianity was a phenomenon of too little apparent significance to attract the attention of the great world. It was only when it had refused to be quenched in the blood of its founder, and, breaking out of the narrow bounds of the obscure province in which it had its origin, was making itself felt in the centers of population, that it drew to itself a somewhat irritated notice. The interest of such heathen writers as mention it was in the movement, not in its author. But in speaking of the movement they tell something of its author, and what they tell is far from being of little moment. He was, it seems, a certain “Christ,” who had lived in Judea in the reign of Tiberius (A.D. 14–37), and had been brought to capital punishment by the procurator, Pontius Pilate (q.v.; cf. Tacitus, *Annals*, 15.44).

The significance of his personality to the movement inaugurated by him is already suggested by the fact that he, and no other, had impressed his name upon it. But the name itself by which he was known particularly attracts notice. This is uniformly, in these heathen writers, "Christ," not "Jesus."² Suetonius (*Claudius*, 25) not unnaturally confuses this "Christus" with the Greek name "Chrestus"; but Tacitus and Pliny show themselves better informed and preserve it accurately. "Christ," however, is not a personal name, but the Greek rendering of the Hebrew title *Messiah*. Clearly, then, it was as the promised Messiah of the Jews that their founder was revered by "the Christians"; and they had made so much of his messiahship in speaking of him that the title *Christ* had actually usurped the place of his personal name, and he was everywhere known simply as *Christ*. Their reverence for his person had, indeed, exceeded that commonly supposed to be due even to the messianic dignity. Pliny records that this "Christ" was stately worshipped by "the Christians" of Pontus and Bithynia as their God (*Ep.* 96 [97] to Trajan). Beyond these great facts the heathen historians give little information about the founder of Christianity.

The Testimony to Jesus the "Messiah" in Paul's Letters

What is lacking in them is happily supplied, however, by the writings of the Christians themselves. Christianity was from its beginnings a literary religion, and documentary records of it have come down from the very start. There are, for example, the letters of the apostle Paul (q.v.), a highly cultured Romanized Jew of Tarsus, who early (A.D. 34 or 35) threw in his fortunes with the new religion, and by his splendid leadership established it in the chief centers of influence from Antioch to Rome. Written occasionally to one or another of the Christian communities of this region, at intervals during the sixth and seventh decades of the century, that is to say, from twenty to forty years after the origin of Christianity, these letters reflect the conceptions which ruled in the Christian communities of the time.

Paul had known the Christian movement from its beginning; first from the outside, as one of the chief agents in its persecution, and then from

2. In Josephus, *A.J.* 18.3.3; 20.9.1, "Jesus," "Jesus, surnamed Christ," occur. But the authenticity of the passages is questionable, especially that of the former.

the inside, as the most active leader of its propaganda. He was familiarly acquainted with the apostles and other immediate followers of Jesus, and enjoyed repeated intercourse with them. He explicitly declares the harmony of their teaching with his, and joins with his their testimony to the great facts which he proclaimed. The complete consonance of his allusions to Jesus with what is gathered from the hints of the heathen historians is very striking. The person of Jesus fills the whole horizon of his thought, and gathers to itself all his religious emotions. That Jesus was the Messiah is the presupposition of all his speech of him, and the messianic title has already become his proper name behind which his real personal name, Jesus, has retired. This Messiah is definitely represented as a divine being who has entered the world on a mission of mercy to sinful man, in the prosecution of which he has given himself up as a sacrifice for sin, but has risen again from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God, henceforth to rule as Lord of all. Around the two great facts, of the expiatory death of the Son of God and his rising again, Paul's whole teaching circles. Jesus Christ as crucified, Christ risen from the dead as the first fruits of those that sleep—here is Paul's whole gospel in summary.

Into the details of Christ's earthly life Paul had no occasion to enter. But he shows himself fully familiar with them, and incidentally conveys a vivid portrait of Christ's personality. Of the seed of David on the human, as the Son of God on the divine side, he was born of a woman, under the law, and lived subject to its ordinances for his mission's sake, humbling himself even unto death, and that the death of the cross. His lowly estate is dwelt upon, and the high traits of his personal character manifested in his lowliness are lightly sketched in, justifying not merely the negative declaration that "he knew no sin," but his positive presentation as the model of all perfection.

An item of his teaching is occasionally adverted³ to, or even quoted, always with the utmost reverence. Members of his immediate circle of followers are mentioned by name or by class—whether his brethren according to the flesh or the twelve apostles whom he appointed. The institution by him of a sacramental feast is described, and that of a companion sacrament of initiation by baptism is implied. But especially his sacrificial death on the cross

3. ED. NOTE. *Advert*: to call attention (to).

is emphasized, his burial, his rising again on the third day, and his appearances to chosen witnesses, who are cited one after the other with the greatest solemnity. Such details are never communicated to Paul's readers as pieces of fresh information. They are alluded to as matters of common knowledge, and with the plainest intimation of the unquestioned recognition of them by all.

Thus it is made clear not only that there underlies Paul's letters a complete portrait of Jesus and a full outline of his career, but that this portrait and this outline are the universal possession of Christians. They were doubtless as fully before his mind as such in the early years of his Christian life, in the thirties, as when he was writing his letters in the fifties and sixties. There is no indication in the way in which Paul touches on these things of a recent change of opinion regarding them or of a recent acquisition of knowledge of them. The testimony of Paul's letters, in a word, has retrospective value, and is contemporary testimony to the facts.

Paul's Testimony Supported by the Synoptic Gospels

Paul's testimony alone provides thus an exceptionally good basis for the historical verity of Jesus' personality and career. But Paul's testimony is far from standing alone. It is fully supported by the testimony of a series of other writings, similar to his own, purporting to come from the hands of early teachers of the church, most of them from actual companions of our Lord and eyewitnesses of his majesty, and handed down to us with credible evidence of their authenticity. And it is extended by the testimony of a series of writings of a very different character; not occasional letters designed to meet particular crises or questions arising in the churches, but formal accounts of Jesus' words and acts.

The Testimony of Luke-Acts

Among these attention is attracted first by a great historical work, the two parts of which bear the titles of "the Gospel according to Luke" and "the Acts of the Apostles." The first contains an account of Jesus' life from his birth to his death and resurrection; or, including the opening paragraphs of the second, to his ascension. What directs attention to it first among books of its class is the uncommonly full information possessed concerning its

writer and his method of historical composition. It is the work of an educated Greek physician, known to have enjoyed, as a companion of Paul, special opportunities of informing himself of the facts of Jesus' career.

Whatever Paul himself knew of the acts and teachings of his Lord was, of course, the common property of the band of missionaries which traveled in his company, and could not fail to be the subject of much public and private discussion among them. Among Paul's other companions there could not fail to be some whose knowledge of Jesus' life, direct or derived, was considerable; an example is found, for instance, in John Mark, who had come out of the immediate circle of Jesus' first followers, although precise knowledge of the meeting of Luke and Mark as fellow companions of Paul belongs to a little later period than the composition of Luke's Gospel. In company with Paul, Luke had even visited Jerusalem and had resided two years at Caesarea in touch with primitive disciples; and if the early tradition which represents him as a native of Antioch be accepted, he must be credited with facilities from the beginning of his Christian life for association with original disciples of Jesus.

All that is needed to ground great confidence in his narrative as a trustworthy account of the facts it records is assurance that he had the will and capacity to make good use of his abounding opportunities for exact information. The former is afforded by the preface to his Gospel in which he reveals his method as a historian and his zeal for exactness of information and statement; the latter by the character of the Gospel, which evinces itself at every point a sincere and careful narrative resting upon good and well-sifted information.

In these circumstances the determination of the precise time when this narrative was actually committed to paper becomes a matter of secondary importance; in any event its material was collected during the period of Paul's missionary activity. It may be confidently maintained, however, that it was also put together during this period, that is to say, during the earlier years of the seventh decade of the century. Confidence in its narrative is strengthened by the complete accord of the portrait of Jesus, which its detailed account exhibits with that which underlies the letters of Paul. Not only are the general traits of the personality identical, but the emphasis falls at the same places. In effect, the Jesus of Luke's narrative is the Christ

of Paul's epistles in perfect dramatic presentation, and only two hypotheses offer themselves in possible explanation. Either Luke rests on Paul, and has with consummate art invented a historical basis for Paul's ideal Christ; or else Paul's allusions rest on a historical basis and Luke has preserved that historical basis in his careful, detailed narrative. Every line of Luke's narrative refutes the former and demonstrates the latter supposition.

Trustworthiness of Luke Supported by Matthew and Mark

Additional evidence of the trustworthiness of Luke's Gospel as an account of Jesus' acts and teaching is afforded by the presence by its side of other narratives of similar character and accordant contents. These narratives are two in number and have been handed down under the names of members of the earliest circle of Christians—of John Mark, who was from the beginning in the closest touch with the apostolic body, and of Matthew, one of the apostles. On comparison of these narratives with Luke's, not only are they found to present, each with its own peculiar point of view and purpose, precisely the same conception and portrait of Jesus, but to have utilized in large measure also the same sources of information. Indeed, the entire body of Mark's Gospel is found to be incorporated also in Matthew's and Luke's.

This circumstance, in view of the declarations of Luke's preface, is of the utmost significance for an estimate of the trustworthiness of the narrative thus embodied in all three of the Synoptic Gospels. In this preface Luke professes to have had for his object the establishment of absolute certainty, with respect to the things made the object of instruction in Christian circles; and to this end to have grounded his narrative in exact investigation of the course of events from the beginning. In the prosecution of this task, he knew himself to be working in a goodly company to a common end, namely, the narration of the Christian origins on the basis of the testimony of those ministers of the word who had been also "eyewitnesses from the beginning." He does not say whether these fellow narrators had or had not been, some or all of them, eyewitnesses of some or of all the events they narrated; he merely says that the foundation on which all the narratives he has in view rested was the testimony of eyewitnesses. He does not assert for his own treatise superiority to those of his fellow workers; he only claims an honorable place for his own treatise among the others on the ground of the

diligence and care he has exercised in ascertaining and recording the facts, through which, he affirms, he has attained a certainty with regard to them on which his readers may depend.

Luke, Matthew, and Mark Embody a Common Narrative Source

Now, on comparing the narrative of Luke with those of Matthew and Mark, it is discovered that one of the main sources on which Luke draws is also one of the main sources on which Matthew draws and practically the sole source on which Mark rests. Thus Luke's judgment of the value and trustworthiness of this source receives the notable support of the judgment of his fellow Evangelists, and it can scarcely be doubted that what it contains is the veritable tradition of those who were as well eyewitnesses as ministers of the Word from the beginning, in whose accuracy confidence can be placed.

If the three Synoptic Gospels do not give three independent testimonies to the facts which they record, they give what is, perhaps, better—three independent witnesses to the trustworthiness of the narrative, which they all incorporate into their own as resting on autoptic⁴ testimony and thoroughly deserving of credit. A narrative lying at the basis of all three of these Gospels, themselves written certainly not later than the seventh decade of the century, must in any event be early in date, and in that sense must emanate from the first followers of Christ; and in the circumstances—of the large and confident use made of it by all three of these Gospels—cannot fail to be an authentic statement of what was the conviction of the earliest circles of Christians.

“Sayings of Jesus”: A Second Source Shared by Matthew and Luke

By the side of this ancient body of narrative must be placed another equally, or perhaps, even more ancient source, consisting largely, but not exclusively, of reports of “sayings of Jesus.” This underlies much of the fabric of Luke and Matthew where Mark fails, and by their employment of it is authenticated as containing, as Luke asserts, the trustworthy testimony of eyewitnesses. Its great antiquity is universally allowed, and there is no doubt that it comes from the very bosom of the apostolical circle, bearing independent but thoroughly consentient⁵ testimony, with the narrative source

4. ED. NOTE. *Autopic*: based on personal observation.

5. ED. NOTE. *Consentient*: united in opinion, judgment, or view; unanimous.

which underlies all three of the synoptists, of what was understood by the primitive Christian community to be the facts regarding Jesus.

The Two Sources Present the Same Jesus

This is the fundamental fact about these two sources—that the Jesus which they present is the same Jesus; and that this Jesus is precisely the same Jesus found in the Synoptic Gospels themselves, presented, moreover, in precisely the same fashion and with the emphases in precisely the same places. This latter could, of course, not fail to be the case since these sources themselves constitute the main substance of the Synoptic Gospels into which they have been transfused. Its significance is that the portrait of Jesus as the supernatural Son of God who came into the world as the Messiah on a mission of mercy to sinful men, which is reflected even in the scanty notices of him that find an incidental place in the pages of heathen historians, which suffused the whole preaching of Paul and of the other missionaries of the first age, and which was wrought out into the details of a rich dramatization in the narratives of the Synoptic Gospels, is as old as Christianity itself and comes straight from the representations of Christ's first followers.

Valuable, however, as the separation out from the Synoptic narrative of these underlying sources is in this aspect of the matter, appeal cannot be made from the Synoptics to these sources as from less to more trustworthy documents. On the one hand, these sources do not exist outside the Synoptics; in them they have "found their grave." On the other hand, the Synoptics in large part are these sources; and their trustworthiness as wholes is guaranteed by the trustworthiness of the sources from which they have drawn the greater part of their materials, and from the general portraiture of Christ in which they do not in the least depart.

Luke's claim in his preface that he has made accurate investigations, seeking to learn exactly what happened that he might attain certainty in his narrative, is expressly justified for the larger part of his narrative when the sources which underlie it are isolated and are found to approve themselves under every test as excellent. There is no reason to doubt that for the remainder of his narrative (and Matthew too for the remainder of his narrative) not derived from these two sources which the accident of their common use by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, or by Matthew and Luke, reveals, he (or

Matthew) derives his material from equally good and trustworthy sources which happen to be used only by him.

The general trustworthiness of Luke's narrative is not lessened but enhanced by the circumstance that, in the larger portion of it, he has the support of other Evangelists in his confident use of his sources, with the effect that these sources can be examined and an approving verdict reached upon them. His judgment of sources is thus confirmed, and his claim to possess exact information and to have framed a trustworthy narrative is vindicated. What he gives from sources which were not used by the other Evangelists, that is to say, in that portion of his narrative which is peculiar to himself (and the same must be said for Matthew, *mutatis mutandis*⁶), has earned a right to credit on his own authentication.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the portions of the narratives of Matthew and Luke which are peculiar to the one or the other bear every mark of sincere and well-informed narration and contain many hints of resting on good and trustworthy sources. In a word, the Synoptic Gospels supply a threefold sketch of the acts and teachings of Christ of exceptional trustworthiness. If here is not historical verity, historical verity would seem incapable of being attained, recorded, and transmitted by human hands.

The Testimony of John's Gospel

Along with the Synoptic Gospels there has been handed down by an unexceptionable line of testimony under the name of the apostle John, another narrative of the teaching and work of Christ of equal fullness with that of the Synoptic Gospels, and yet so independent of theirs as to stand out in a sense in strong contrast with theirs, and even to invite attempts to establish a contradiction between it and them. There is, however, no contradiction, but rather a deep-lying harmony.

There are so-called synoptical traits discoverable in John, and not only are Johannine elements imbedded in the synoptical narrative, but an occasional passage occurs in it which is almost more Johannine than John himself. Take,

6. ED. NOTE. *Mutatis mutandis*: lit. "things having been changed that have to be changed"; with the necessary changes having been made.

for example, that pregnant declaration recorded in Matthew 11:27–28,⁷ which, as it occurs also in Luke 10:21–22,⁸ must have had a place in that ancient source drawn on in common by these two Gospels which comes from the first days of Christianity. All the high teaching of John's Gospel, as has been justly remarked, is but “a series of variations” upon the theme here given its “classical expression.” The type of teaching which is brought forward and emphasized by John is thus recognized on all hands from the beginning to have had a place in Christ's teaching; and John differs from the Synoptics only in the special aspect of Christ's teaching which he elects particularly to present.

The naturalness of this type of teaching on the lips of the Jesus of the synoptists is also undeniable; it must be allowed—and is now generally allowed—that by the writers of the Synoptic Gospels, and, it should be added, by their sources as well, Jesus is presented, and is presented as representing himself, as being all that John represents him to be when he calls him the Word, who was in the beginning with God and was God. The relation of John and the synoptists in their portraiture of Jesus somewhat resembles, accordingly, that of Plato and Xenophon in their portraiture of Socrates; only, with this great difference—that both Plato and Xenophon were primarily men of letters and the portrait they draw of Socrates is in the hands of both alike eminently a sophisticated and literary one, while the Evangelists set down simply the facts as they appealed to them severally.

The definite claim which John's Gospel makes to be the work of one of the inner circle of the companions of Jesus is supported, moreover, by copious evidence that it comes from the hands of such a one as a companion of Jesus would be—a Jew, who possessed an intimate knowledge of Palestine, and was acquainted with the events of our Lord's life as only an eyewitness could be acquainted with them, and an eyewitness who had been admitted to very close association with him. That its narrative rests on good information is repeatedly manifested; and more than once historical links are supplied

7. ED. NOTE. Matthew 11:27–28 (ESV): “All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

8. ED. NOTE. Luke 10:21–22 (ESV): “In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, ‘I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.’”

by it which are needed to give clearness to the synoptical narrative, as, for example, in the chronological framework of the ministry of Jesus and the culminating miracle of the raising of Lazarus, which is required to account for the incidents of the Passion Week. It presents no different Jesus from the Jesus of the synoptists, and it throws the emphasis at the same place—on his expiatory death and rising again; but it notably supplements the narrative of the synoptists and reveals a whole new side of Jesus' ministry, and if not a wholly new aspect of his teaching, yet a remarkable mass of that higher aspect of his teaching of which only occasional specimens are included in the Synoptic narrative. John's narrative thus rounds out the synoptical narrative and gives the portrait drawn in it a richer content and a greater completeness.

The NT's Portrait of Jesus Intrinsically Incapable of Invention by Men

This portrait may itself be confidently adduced as its own warranty. It is not too much to say with Nathaniel Lardner that "the history of the New Testament has in it all the marks of credibility that any history can have."⁹ But apart from these more usually marshaled evidences of the trustworthiness of the narratives, there is the portrait itself which they draw, and this cannot by any possibility have been an invention. It is not merely that the portrait is harmonious throughout—in the allusions and presuppositions of the epistles of Paul and the other letter-writers of the New Testament, in the detailed narratives of the synoptists and John, and in each of the sources which underlie them.

This is a matter of importance; but it is not the matter of chief moment; there is no need to dwell upon the impossibility of such a harmony having been maintained save on the basis of simple truthfulness of record, or to dispute whether in the case of the Synoptics there are three independent witnesses to the one portrait, or only the two independent witnesses of their two most prominent sources. Nor is the most interesting point whether the aboriginality¹⁰ of this portrait is guaranteed by the harmony of the representation in all the sources of information, some of which reach back to the most primitive

9. Nathaniel Lardner, *The Works of Nathaniel Lardner*, 10 vols. (London: William Ball, 1838), 6:502.

10. ED. NOTE. *Aboriginal*: the quality or state of being the first or earliest known of its kind.

epoch of the Christian movement. It is quite certain that this conception of Christ's person and career was the conception of his immediate followers, and indeed of himself; but, important as this conclusion is, it is still not the matter of primary import. The matter of primary significance is that this portrait thus imbedded in all the authoritative sources of information, and thus proved to be the conception of its founder cherished by the whole of primitive Christendom, and indeed commended to it by that founder himself, is a portrait intrinsically incapable of invention by men. It could never have come into being save as the revelation of an actual person embodying it, who really lived among men.

"A romancer," as even Albert Réville allows, "can not attribute to a being which he creates an ideal superior to what he himself is capable of conceiving." The conception of the God-man which is embodied in the portrait which the sources draw of Christ, and which is dramatized by them through such a history as they depict, can be accounted for only on the assumption that such a God-man actually lived, was seen of men, and was painted from the life. The miracle of the invention of such a portraiture, whether by the conscious effort of art, or by the unconscious working of the mythopeic fancy,¹¹ would be as great as the actual existence of such a person. Of this there is sufficient *a posteriori*¹² proof in the invariable deterioration this portrait suffers in its secondary reproductions—in the so-called lives of Christ, of every type. The attempt vitally to realize and reproduce it results inevitably in its reduction. A portraiture which cannot even be interpreted by men without suffering serious loss cannot be the invention of the first simple followers of Jesus. Its very existence in their unsophisticated narratives is the sufficient proof of its faithfulness to a great reality.

A Supernatural Divine Person

Only an outline of this portrait can be set down here. Jesus appears in it not only a supernatural, but in all the sources alike specifically a divine, person, who came into the world on a mission of mercy to sinful man. Such a mission was in its essence a humiliation and involved humiliation at every step of its accomplishment. His life is represented accordingly as a life of difficulty and conflict, of trial and suffering, issuing in a shameful death.

11. ED. NOTE. *Mythopeic*: the ability to create myths; myth-creating.

12. ED. NOTE. *A posteriori*: relating to or derived by reasoning from observed facts; inductive.

But this humiliation is represented as in every step and stage of it voluntary. It was entered into and abided in solely in the interests of his mission, and did not argue at any point of it helplessness in the face of the difficulties which hemmed him in more and more until they led him to death on the cross. It rather manifested his strong determination to fulfill his mission to the end, to drink to its dregs the cup he had undertaken to drink. Accordingly, every suggestion of escape from it by the use of his intrinsic divine powers, whether of omnipotence or of omniscience, was treated by him first and last as a temptation of the evil one.

The death in which his life ends is conceived, therefore, as the goal in which his life culminates. He came into the world to die, and every stage of the road that led up to this issue was determined not for him but by him: he was never the victim but always the master of circumstance, and pursued his pathway from beginning to end, not merely in full knowledge from the start of all its turns and twists up to its bitter conclusion, but in complete control both of them and of it.

The Promised Messiah

His life of humiliation, sinking into his terrible death, was therefore not his misfortune, but his achievement as the promised Messiah, by and in whom the kingdom of God is to be established in the world; it was the work which as Messiah he came to do. Therefore, in his prosecution of it, he from the beginning announced himself as the Messiah, accepted all ascriptions to him of messiahship under whatever designation, and thus gathered up into his person all the preadumbrations of Old Testament prophecy; and by his favorite self-designation of "Son of Man," derived from Daniel's great vision (Dan. 7:13), continually proclaimed himself the Messiah he actually was, emphasizing in contrast with his present humiliation his heavenly origin and his future glory. Moreover, in the midst of his humiliation, he exercised, so far as that was consistent with the performance of his mission, all the prerogatives of that transcendent or divine Messiah which he was. He taught with authority, substituting for every other sanction his great "But I say unto you," and declaring himself greater than the greatest of God's representatives whom he had sent in all the past to visit his people.

A Miracle-Worker

He surrounded himself as he went about preaching the gospel of the kingdom with a miraculous nimbus,¹³ each and every miracle in which was adapted not merely to manifest the presence of a supernatural person in the midst of the people, but, as a piece of symbolical teaching, to reveal the nature of this supernatural person, and to afford a foretaste of the blessedness of his rule in the kingdom he came to found. He assumed plenary authority over the religious ordinances of the people, divinely established though they were; and exercised absolute control over the laws of nature themselves. The divine prerogative of forgiving sins he claimed for himself, the divine power of reading the heart he frankly exercised, the divine function of judge of quick and dead he attached to his own person.

Asserting for himself a superhuman dignity of person, or rather a share in the ineffable name itself, he represented himself as abiding continually even when on earth in absolute communion with God the Father, and participating by necessity of nature in the treasures of the divine knowledge and grace; announced himself the source of all divine knowledge and grace to men; and drew to himself all the religious affections, suspending the destinies of men absolutely upon their relation to his own person. Nevertheless he walked straight onward in the path of his lowly mission, and, bending even the wrath of men to his service, gave himself in his own good time and way to the death he had come to accomplish. Then, his mission performed, he rose again from the dead in the power of his deathless life; showed himself alive to chosen witnesses, that he might strengthen the hearts of his people; and ascended to the right hand of God, whence he directs the continued preparation of the kingdom until it shall please him to return for its establishment in its glorious eternal form.

The Sacrifice for Our Sins

It is important to fix firmly in mind the central conception of this representation. It turns upon the sacrificial death of Jesus to which the whole life leads up, and out of which all its issues are drawn, and for a perpetual memorial of which he is represented as having instituted a solemn memorial

13. ED. NOTE. *Nimbus*: an atmosphere about a person or thing.

feast. The divine majesty of this Son of God; his redemptive mission to the world, in a life of humiliation and a ransoming death; the completion of his task in accordance with his purpose; his triumphant rising from the death thus vicariously endured; his assumption of sovereignty over the future development of the kingdom founded in his blood, and over the world as the theater of its development; his expected return as the consummator of the ages and the judge of all—this is the circle of ideas in which all accounts move.

The Portrayal of a Human Episode in the Divine Life

It is the portrait not of a merely human life, though it includes the delineation of a complete and a completely human life. It is the portrayal of a human episode in the divine life. It is, therefore, not merely connected with supernatural occurrences, nor merely colored by supernatural features, nor merely set in a supernatural atmosphere: the supernatural is its very substance, the elimination of which would be the evaporation of the whole. The Jesus of the New Testament is not fundamentally man, however divinely gifted: he is God tabernacling for a while among men, with heaven lying about him not merely in his infancy, but throughout all the days of his flesh.

Supernaturalism Offensive to Anti-Supernaturalistic Age

The intense supernaturalism of this portraiture is, of course, an offense to our anti-supernaturalistic age. It is only what was to be expected, therefore, that throughout the last century and a half a long series of scholars, imbued with the anti-supernaturalistic instinct of the time, have assumed the task of desupernaturalizing it. Great difficulty has been experienced, however, in the attempt to construct a historical sieve which will strain out miracles and yet let Jesus through; for Jesus is himself the greatest miracle of them all. Accordingly in the end of the day there is a growing disposition, as if in despair of accomplishing this feat, boldly to construct the sieve so as to strain out Jesus too; to take refuge in the counsel of desperation which affirms that there never was such a person as Jesus, that Christianity had no founder, and that not merely the portrait of Jesus, but Jesus himself, is a pure projection of later ideals into the past. The main stream of assault still addresses itself, however, to the attempt to eliminate not Jesus himself, but the Jesus of the Evangelists, and to substitute for him a desupernaturalized Jesus.

Literary and Historical Criticism as Anti-Supernaturalistic Tools

The instruments which have been relied on to effect this result may be called, no doubt with some but not misleading inexactitude, literary and historical criticism. The attempt has been made to track out the process by which the present witnessing documents have come into existence, to show them gathering accretions in this process, and to sift out the sources from which they are drawn; and then to make appeal to these sources as the only real witnesses. And the attempt has been made to go behind the whole written record, operating either immediately upon the documents as they now exist, or ultimately upon the sources which literary criticism has sifted out from them, with a view to reaching a more primitive and presumably truer conception of Jesus than that which has obtained record in the writings of his followers.

The occasion for resort to this latter method of research is the failure of the former to secure the results aimed at. For, when, at the dictation of anti-supernaturalistic presuppositions, John is set aside in favor of the Synoptics, and then the Synoptics are set aside in favor of Mark, conceived as the representative of "the narrative source" (by the side of which must be placed—though this is not always remembered—the second source of "Sayings of Jesus," which underlies so much of Matthew and Luke; and also—though this is even more commonly forgotten—whatever other sources either Matthew or Luke has drawn upon for material), it still appears that no progress whatever has been made in eliminating the divine Jesus and his supernatural accompaniment of mighty works—although, chronologically speaking, the very beginning of Christianity has been reached.

It is necessary, accordingly, if there is not to be acknowledged a divine Christ with a supernatural history, to get behind the whole literary tradition. Working on Mark, therefore, taken as the original Gospel, an attempt must be made to distinguish between the traditional element which he incorporates into his narrative and the dogmatic element which he (as the mouthpiece of the Christian community) contributes to it. Or, working on the "Sayings," discrimination must first be made between the narrative element (assumed to be colored by the thought of the Christian community) and the reportorial element (which may repeat real sayings of Jesus); and then, within the reportorial element, all that is too lofty for the naturalistic Jesus must be trimmed down until it fits in with his simply human character. Or, working

on the Gospels as they stand, inquisition must be made for statements of fact concerning Jesus or for sayings of his, which, taken out of the context in which the Evangelists have placed them and cleansed from the coloring given by them, may be made to seem inconsistent with “the worship of Jesus” which characterizes these documents; and on the narrower basis thus secured there is built up a new portrait of Jesus, contradictory to that which the Evangelists have drawn.

Naturalistic Jesus Incapable of Explaining Supernatural Jesus of Primitive Christianity

The precariousness of these proceedings, or rather, frankly, their violence, is glaringly evident. In the processes of such criticism it is pure subjectivity which rules, and the investigator gets out as results only what he puts in as premises. And even when the desired result has thus been wrested from the unwilling documents, he discovers that he has only brought himself into the most extreme historical embarrassment. By thus desupernaturalizing Jesus he leaves primitive Christianity and its supernatural Jesus wholly without historical basis or justification. The naturalizing historian has therefore at once to address himself to supplying some account of the immediate universal ascription to Jesus by his followers of qualities which he did not possess and to which he laid no claim; and that with such force and persistence of conviction as totally to supersede from the very beginning with their perverted version of the facts the actual reality of things. It admits of no doubt, and it is not doubted, that supernaturalistic Christianity is the only historical Christianity. It is agreed on all hands that the very first followers of Jesus ascribed to him a supernatural character. It is even allowed that it is precisely by virtue of its supernaturalistic elements that Christianity has made its way in the world. It is freely admitted that it was by the force of its enthusiastic proclamation of the divine Christ, who could not be held by death but burst the bonds of the grave, that Christianity conquered the world to itself.

What account shall be given of all this? There is presented a problem here, which is insoluble on the naturalistic hypothesis. The old mythical theory fails because it requires time, and no time is at its disposal; the primitive Christian community believed in the divine Christ. The new “history of religions” theory fails because it cannot discover the elements

of that “Christianity before Christ” which it must posit, either remotely in the Babylonian inheritance of the East, or close by in the prevalent messianic conceptions of contemporary Judaism. Nothing is available but the postulation of pure fanaticism in Jesus’ first followers, which finds it convenient not to proceed beyond the general suggestion that there is no telling what fanaticism may not invent.

The plain fact is that the supernatural Jesus is needed to account for the supernaturalistic Christianity which is grounded in him. Or—if this supernaturalistic Christianity does not need a supernatural Jesus to account for it, it is hard to see why any Jesus at all need be postulated. Naturalistic criticism thus overreaches itself and is caught up suddenly by the discovery that in abolishing the supernatural Jesus it has abolished Jesus altogether, since this supernatural Jesus is the only Jesus which enters as a factor into the historical development. It is the desupernaturalized Jesus which is the mythical Jesus, who never had any existence, the postulation of the existence of whom explains nothing and leaves the whole historical development hanging in the air.

History of the Naturalistic Reconstruction of Jesus

It is instructive to observe the lines of development of the naturalistic reconstruction of the Jesus of the Evangelists through the century and a half of its evolution. The normal task which the student of the life of Jesus sets himself is to penetrate into the spirit of the transmission so far as that transmission approves itself to him as trustworthy, to realize with exactness and vividness the portrait of Jesus conveyed by it, and to reproduce that portrait in an accurate and vital portrayal. The naturalistic reconstructors, on the other hand, engage themselves in an effort to substitute for the Jesus of the transmission another Jesus of their own, a Jesus who will seem “natural” to them, and will work in “naturally” with their naturalistic worldview. In the first instance it was the miracles of Jesus which they set themselves to eliminate, and this motive ruled their criticism from Reimarus (1694–1768), or rather, from the publication of the Wolfenbuettel Fragments (q.v.), to Strauss (1835–36). The dominant method employed—which found its culminating example in H. E. G. Paulus (1828)—was to treat the narrative as in all essentials historical, but to seek in each miraculous story a natural

fact underlying it. This whole point of view was transcended by the advent of the mythical view in Strauss, who laughed it out of court.

Since then miracles have been treated ever more and more confidently as negligible quantities, and the whole strength of criticism has been increasingly expended on the reduction of the supernatural figure of Jesus to “natural” proportions. The instrument relied upon to produce this effect has been psychological analysis; the method being to rework the narrative in the interests of what is called a “comprehensible” Jesus. The whole mental life of Jesus and the entire course of his conduct have been subjected to psychological canons derived from the critics’ conception of a purely human life, and nothing has been allowed to him which does not approve itself as *natural* according to this standard. The result is, of course, that the Jesus of the Evangelists has been transformed into a nineteenth-century *liberal* theologian, and no conceptions or motives or actions have been allowed to him which would not be *natural* in such a one.

Reactions to the Naturalistic Reconstruction of Jesus

The inevitable reaction which seems to be now asserting itself takes two forms, both of which, while serving themselves heirs to the negative criticism of this liberal school, decisively reject its positive construction of the figure of Jesus. A weaker current contents itself with drawing attention to the obvious fact that such a Jesus as the liberal criticism yields will not account for the Christianity which actually came into being; and on this ground proclaims the liberal criticism bankrupt and raises the question, what need there is for assuming any Jesus at all. If the only Jesus salvable from the debris of legend is obviously not the author of the Christianity which actually came into being, why not simply recognize that Christianity came into being without any author—was just the crystallization of conceptions in solution at the time?

A stronger current, scoffing at the projection of a nineteenth-century liberal back into the first century and calling him “Jesus,” insists that “the historical Jesus” was just a Jew of his day, a peasant of Galilee with all the narrowness of a peasant’s outlook and all the deficiency in culture which belonged to a Galilean countryman of the period. Above all, it insists that the real Jesus, possessed by those messianic dreams which filled the minds of

the Jewish peasantry of the time, was afflicted with the great delusion that he was himself the promised Messiah. Under the obsession of this portentous fancy he imagined that God would intervene with his almighty arm and set him on the throne of a conquering Israel; and when the event falsified this wild hope, he assuaged his bitter disappointment with the wilder promise that he would rise from death itself and come back to establish his kingdom.

Thus the naturalistic criticism of a hundred and fifty years has run out into no Jesus at all, or worse than no Jesus, a fanatic or even a paranoiac. The liberal criticism which has had it so long its own way is called sharply to its defense against the fruit of its own loins. In the process of this defense it wavers before the assault and incorporates more or less of the new conception of Jesus—of the “consistently eschatological” Jesus—into its fabric. Or it stands in its tracks and weakly protests that Jesus’ figure must be conceived as greatly as possible, so only it be kept strictly within the limits of a mere human being. Or it develops an apologetical argument which, given its full validity and effect, would undo all its painfully worked-out negative results and lead back to the Jesus of the Evangelists as the true “historical Jesus.”

The Jesus of the Naturalistic Criticism Is Its Own Refutation

It has been remarked above that the portrait of Jesus drawn in the sources is its own credential; no man, and no body of men, can have invented this figure, consciously or unconsciously, and dramatized it consistently through such a varied and difficult life history. It may be added that the Jesus of the naturalistic criticism is its own refutation. One wonders whether the liberal critics realize the weakness, ineffectiveness, inanity¹⁴ of the Jesus they offer; the pitiful inertness they attribute to him, his utter passivity under the impact of circumstance. So far from being conceivable as the molder of the ages, this Jesus is wholly molded by his own surroundings, the sport of every suggestion from without. In their preoccupation with critical details, it is possible that its authors are scarcely aware of the grossness of the reduction of the figure of Jesus they have perpetrated. But let them only turn to portray their new Jesus in a life history, and the pitiableness of the figure they have made him smites the eye. Whatever else may be said of it, this

14. ED. NOTE. *Inanity*: the quality or state of being empty.

must be said—that out of the Jesus into which the naturalistic criticism has issued—in its best or in its worst estate—the Christianity which has conquered the world could never have come.

Drawing Up a “Life of Jesus”

The firmness, clearness, and even fullness with which the figure of Jesus is delineated in the sources, and the variety of activities through which it is dramatized, do not insure that the data given should suffice for drawing up a properly so-called life of Jesus. The data in the sources are practically confined to the brief period of Jesus’ public work. Only a single incident is recorded from his earlier life, and that is taken from his boyhood. So large a portion of the actual narrative, moreover, is occupied with his death that it might even be said—the more that the whole narrative also leads up to the death as the life’s culmination—that little has been preserved concerning Jesus but the circumstances which accompanied his birth and the circumstances which led up to and accompanied his death.

The incidents which the narrators record, again, are not recorded with a biographical intent, and are not selected for their biographical significance, or ordered so as to present a biographical result: in the case of each Evangelist they serve a particular purpose which may employ biographical details, but is not itself a biographical end. In other words the Gospels are not formal biographies but biographical arguments—a circumstance which does not affect the historicity of the incidents they select for record, but does affect the selection and ordering of these incidents. Mark has in view to show that this great religious movement in which he himself had a part had its beginnings in a divine interposition;¹⁵ Matthew, that this divine interposition was in fulfillment of the promises made to Israel; Luke, that it had as its end the redemption of the world; John, that the agent in it was none other than the Son of God himself. In the enforcement and illustration of their several themes each records a wealth of biographical details. But it does not follow that these details, when brought together and arranged in their chronological sequence, or even in their genetic order, will supply an adequate biography.

15. ED. NOTE. *Interposition*: the act of placing in an intervening position; intervention.

The attempt to work them up into a biography is met, moreover, by a great initial difficulty. Every biographer takes his position, as it were, above his subject, who must live his life over again in his biographer's mind; it is of the very essence of the biographer's work thoroughly to understand his subject and to depict him as he understands him. What, then, if the subject of the biography be above the comprehension of his biographer? Obviously, in that case, a certain reduction can scarcely be avoided. This in an instance like the present, where the subject is a superhuman being, is the same as to say that a greater or lesser measure of rationalization, naturalization, inevitably takes place.

A true biography of a God-man, a biography which depicts his life from within, untangling the complex of motives which moved him, and explaining his conduct by reference to the internal springs of action, is in the nature of the case an impossibility for men. Human beings can explain only on the basis of their own experiences and mental processes; and so explaining they instinctively explain away what transcends their experiences and confounds their mental processes. Seeking to portray the life of Jesus as natural, they naturalize it, that is, reduce it to correspondence with their own nature.

Every attempt to work out a life of Christ must therefore face not only the insufficiency of the data, but the perennial danger of falsifying the data by an instinctive naturalization of them. If, however, the expectation of attaining a "psychological" biography of Jesus must be renounced, and even a complete external life cannot be pieced together from the fragmentary communications of the sources, a clear and consistent view of the course of the public ministry of Jesus can still be derived from them. The consecution¹⁶ of the events can be set forth, their causal relations established, and their historical development explicated. To do this is certainly in a modified sense to outline "the life of Jesus," and to do this proves by its results to be eminently worthwhile.

The Gospel of Luke and a "Life of Jesus"

A series of synchronisms with secular history indicated by Luke, whose historical interest seems more alert than that of the other Evangelists,

16. ED. NOTE. *Consecution*: a sequence or succession of events or things.

gives the needed information for placing such a "life" in its right historical relations. The chronological framework for the life itself is supplied by the succession of annual feasts which are recorded by John as occurring during Jesus' public ministry. Into this framework the data furnished by the other Gospels—which are not without corroborative suggestions of order, season of occurrence, and relations—fit readily; and when so arranged yield so self-consistent and rationally developing a history as to add a strong corroboration of its trustworthiness. Differences of opinion respecting the details of arrangement of course remain possible; and these differences are not always small and not always without historical significance. But they do not affect the general outline or the main drift of the history, and on most points, even those of minor importance, a tolerable agreement exists.

Thus, for example, it is all but universally allowed that Jesus was born ca. 5 or 6 B.C. (year of Rome 748 or 749), and it is an erratic judgment indeed which would fix on any other year than A.D. 29 or 30 for his crucifixion. On the date of his baptism—which determines the duration of his public ministry—more difference is possible; but it is quite generally agreed that it took place late in A.D. 26 or early in 27. It is only by excluding the testimony of John that a duration of less than between two and three years can be assigned to the public ministry; and then only by subjecting the synoptical narrative to considerable pressure. The probabilities seem strongly in favor of extending it to three years and some months. The decision between a duration of two years and some months and a duration of three years and some months depends on the determination of the two questions of where in the narrative of John the imprisonment of John the Baptist (Matt. 4:12) is to be placed, and what the unnamed feast is which is mentioned in John 5:1. On the former of these questions opinion varies only between John 4:1–3 and John 5:1. On the latter a great variety of opinions exists: some think of Passover, others of Purim or Pentecost, or of Trumpets or Tabernacles, or even of the Day of Atonement. On the whole, the evidence seems decisively preponderant for placing the imprisonment of the Baptist at John 4:1–3, and for identifying the feast of John 5:1 with Passover. In that case, the public ministry of Jesus covered about three years and a third, and it is probably not far wrong

to assign to it the period lying between the latter part of A.D. 26 and the Passover of A.D. 30.¹⁷

The material supplied by the Gospel narrative distributes itself naturally under the heads of (1) the preparation, (2) the ministry, and (3) the consummation. For the first twelve or thirteen years of Jesus' life nothing is recorded except the striking circumstances connected with his birth, and a general statement of his remarkable growth. Similarly for his youth, about seventeen years and a half, there is recorded only the single incident, at its beginning, of his conversation with the doctors in the temple. Anything like continuous narrative begins only with the public ministry, in, say, December, A.D. 26. This narrative falls naturally into four parts which may perhaps be distinguished as

- (a) the beginning of the Gospel, forty days, from December, 26 to February, 27;
- (b) the Judean ministry, covering about ten months, from February, 27 to December, 27;
- (c) the Galilean ministry, covering about twenty-two months, from December, 27 to September, 29;
- (d) the last journeys to Jerusalem, covering some six months, from September, 29 to the Passover of (April) 30.¹⁸

The events of this final Passover season, the narrative of which becomes so detailed and precise that the occurrences from day to day are noted, constitute, along with their sequences, what is here called "the consummation." They include the events which led up to the crucifixion of Jesus, the crucifixion itself, and the manifestations which he gave of himself after his death up to his ascension.

So preponderating was the interest which the reporters took in this portion of the "life of Christ," that is to say, in his death and resurrection, that about a

17. Ramsay, Sanday, and Turner prefer A.D. 29 for the date of the crucifixion. Turner's dates are: birth, 7-6 B.C.; baptism, A.D. 26; ministry, between two and three years; death, A.D. 29. Sanday's dates are: birth—baptism, late A.D. 26; ministry, two and a half years; death, A.D. 29. Ramsay's dates are: birth, autumn, 6 B.C.; baptism, early in A.D. 26; ministry, three years and some months; death, A.D. 29.

18. ED. NOTE. Some biblical scholars argue that Christ was born in the winter of 5/4 B.C. and crucified on Friday, April 3, 33 A.D. See, for example, "Chronology of Jesus," last accessed July 28, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronology_of_Jesus.

third of their whole narrative is devoted to it. The ministry which leads up to it is also, however, full of incident. What is here called “the beginning of the Gospel” gives, no doubt, only the accounts of Jesus’ baptism and temptation. Only meager information is given also, and that by John alone, of the occurrences of the first ten months after his public appearance, the scene of which lay mainly in Judea. With the beginning of the ministry in Galilee, however, with which alone the Synoptic Gospels concern themselves, incidents become numerous. Capernaum now becomes Jesus’ home for almost two full years; and no less than eight periods of sojourn there with intervening circuits going out from it as a center can be traced. When the object of this ministry had been accomplished Jesus finally withdraws from Galilee and addresses himself to the preparation of his followers for the death he had come into the world to accomplish; and this he then brings about in the manner which best subserves his purpose.

Jesus’ Ministry: To Lay the Foundations of the Kingdom of God in His Blood

Into the substance of Jesus’ ministry it is not possible to enter here. Let it only be observed that it is properly called a ministry. He himself testified that he came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and he added that this ministry was fulfilled in his giving his life as a ransom for many. In other words, the main object of his work was to lay the foundations of the kingdom of God in his blood. Subsidiary to this was his purpose to make vitally known to men the true nature of the kingdom of God, to prepare the way for its advent in their hearts, and above all, to attach them by faith to his person as the founder and consummator of the kingdom. His ministry involved, therefore, a constant presentation of himself to the people as the promised One, in and by whom the kingdom of God was to be established, a steady “campaign of instruction” as to the nature of the kingdom which he came to found, and a watchful control of the forces which were making for his destruction, until, his work of preparation being ended, he was ready to complete it by offering himself up. The progress of his ministry is governed by the interplay of these motives. It has been broadly distributed into a year of obscurity, a year of popular favor, and a year of opposition; and if these designations are understood to have only a relative applicability, they may

be accepted as generally describing from the outside the development of the ministry.

Beginning first in Judea Jesus spent some ten months in attaching to himself his first disciples, and with apparent fruitlessness proclaiming the kingdom at the center of national life. Then, moving north to Galilee, he quickly won the ear of the people and carried them to the height of their present receptivity; whereupon, breaking from them, he devoted himself to the more precise instruction of the chosen band he had gathered about him to be the nucleus of his church. The Galilean ministry thus divides into two parts, marked respectively by more popular and more intimate teaching. The line of division falls at the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, which, as marking a crisis in the ministry, is recorded by all four Evangelists, and is the only miracle which has received this fourfold record. Prior to this point, Jesus' work had been one of gathering disciples; subsequently to it, it was a work of instructing and sifting the disciples whom he had gathered. The end of the Galilean ministry is marked by the confession of Peter and the transfiguration, and after it nothing remained but the preparation of the chosen disciples for the death, which was to close his work; and the consummation of his mission in his death and rising again.

Instruments of Jesus' Ministry: Teaching and Miracles

The instruments by which Jesus carried out his ministry were two, teaching and miracles. In both alike he manifested his deity. Wherever he went the supernatural was present in word and deed. His teaching was with authority. In its insight and foresight it was as supernatural as the miracles themselves; the hearts of men and the future lay as open before him as the forces of nature lay under his control; all that the Father knows he knew also, and he alone was the channel of the revelation of it to men. The power of his "But I say unto you" was as manifest as that of his compelling "Arise and walk." The theme of his teaching was the kingdom of God and himself as its divine founder and king. Its form ran all the way from crisp gnomic¹⁹ sayings and brief comparisons to elaborate parables and profound spiritual discussions in which the deep things of God are laid bare in simple, searching words.

19. ED. NOTE. *Gnomic*: characterized by aphorism; concise statement of a principle; terse formulation of a truth.

The purport of his miracles was that the kingdom of God was already present in its king. Their number is perhaps usually greatly underestimated. It is true that only about thirty or forty are actually recorded. But these are recorded only as specimens, and as such they represent all classes. Miracles of healing form the preponderant class; but there are also exorcisms, nature miracles, raisings of the dead.

Besides these recorded miracles, however, there are frequent general statements of abounding miraculous manifestations. For a time disease and death must have been almost banished from the land. The country was thoroughly aroused and filled with wonder. In the midst of this universal excitement—when the people were ready to take him by force and make him king—he withdrew himself from them, and throwing his circuits far afield, beyond the bruit and uproar, addressed himself to preparing his chosen companions for his great sacrifice—first leading them in the so-called later Galilean ministry (from the feeding of the five thousand to the confession at Caesarea Philippi) to a better apprehension of the majesty of his person as the Son of God, and of the character of the kingdom he came to found, as consisting not in meat and drink but in righteousness; and then, in the so-called Peraean ministry (from the confession at Caesarea Philippi to the final arrival at Jerusalem) specifically preparing them for his death and resurrection.

Thus he walked straightforward in the path he had chosen, and his choice of which is already made clear in the account of his temptation, set at the beginning of his public career; and in his own good time and way—in the end forcing the hand of his opponents to secure that he should die at the Passover—shed his blood as the blood of the new covenant sacrifice for the remission of sins. Having power thus to lay down his life, he had power also to take it again, and in due time he rose again from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the majesty on high, leaving behind him his promise to come again in his glory, to perfect the kingdom he had inaugurated.

It is appropriate that this miraculous life should be set between the great marvels of the virgin birth and the resurrection and ascension. These can appear strange only when the intervening life is looked upon as that of a merely human being, endowed, no doubt, not only with unusual qualities, but also with the unusual favor of God, yet after all nothing more than human

and therefore presumably entering the world like other human beings, and at the end paying the universal debt of human nature. From the standpoint of the evangelical writers, and of the entirety of primitive Christianity, which looked upon Jesus not as a merely human being but as God himself come into the world on a mission of mercy that involved the humiliation of a human life and death, it would be this assumed community with common humanity in mode of entrance into and exit from the earthly life which would seem strange and incredible. The entrance of the Lord of Glory into the world could not but be supernatural; his exit from the world, after the work which he had undertaken had been performed, could not fail to bear the stamp of triumph.

There is no reason for doubting the trustworthiness of the narratives at these points, beyond the anti-supernaturalistic instinct which strives consciously or unconsciously to naturalize the whole evangelical narrative. The "infancy chapters" of Luke are demonstrably from Luke's own hand, bear evident traces of having been derived from trustworthy sources of information, and possess all the authority which attaches to the communications of a historian who evinces himself sober, careful, and exact, by every historical test. The parallel chapters of Matthew, while obviously independent of those of Luke—recording in common with them not a single incident beyond the bare fact of the virgin birth—are thoroughly at one with them in the main fact, and in the incidents they record fit with remarkable completeness into the interstices of Luke's narrative.

Similarly, the narratives of the resurrection, full of diversity in details as they are, and raising repeated puzzling questions of order and arrangement, yet not only bear consentient testimony to all the main facts, but fit into one another so as to create a consistent narrative—which has moreover the support of the contemporary testimony of Paul. The persistent attempts to explain away the facts so witnessed or to substitute for the account which the New Testament writers give of them some more plausible explanation, as the naturalistic mind estimates plausibility, are all wrecked on the directness, precision, and copiousness of the testimony; and on the great effects which have flowed from this fact in the revolution wrought in the minds and lives of the apostles themselves, and in the revolution wrought through their preaching of the resurrection in the life and history of the world.

The entire history of the world for two thousand years is the warranty of the reality of the resurrection of Christ, by which the forces were let loose which have created it. "Unique spiritual effects," it has been remarked, with great reasonableness, "require a unique spiritual cause; and we shall never understand the full significance of the cause, if we begin by denying or minimizing its uniqueness."²⁰

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Study Questions

1. What is the significance of Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny's referring to "Christ," rather than using his name "Jesus"?
2. What does Warfield mean by stating that "Christianity was from its beginnings a literary religion," and what primary evidence does Warfield offer to support that claim?
3. What does Warfield mean by stating that "the testimony of Paul's letters, in a word, has retrospective value, and is contemporary testimony to the facts"?
4. Summarize Paul's gospel as Warfield presents it in the section "The Testimony to Jesus the 'Messiah' in Paul's Letters."
5. Around what "two great facts" does Paul's "whole teaching" circle?
6. Warfield states, "The Jesus of Luke's narrative is the Christ of Paul's epistles in perfect dramatic presentation." What explanation does Warfield provide for that statement?

20. Benjamin B. Warfield, "Jesus Christ," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, ed. George William Gilmore, Johann Jakob Herzog, Samuel Macauley Jackson, Charles Colebrook Sherman, and Philip Schaff, 12 vols. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1910), 6:160.

For Further Study

7. What are “the two common sources” to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke?
8. What verses in Matthew and Luke does Warfield use to show that “Johannine elements” are “imbedded in the synoptical narrative,” what are these elements, and how do they relate to “all the high teaching of John’s Gospel”?
9. What arguments does Warfield develop in the section “The NT’s Portrait of Jesus Intrinsically Incapable of Invention by Men” to show that the Gospel portrait of Jesus Christ could not have been fabricated by men?
10. What does Warfield say is the “very substance” of the NT’s portrait of Christ, what specifically does he mean by this, and why is it important?
11. Discuss how Warfield demonstrates the bankruptcy of attempts to demythologize Christ by reducing him to a mere mortal.
12. What difficulties does Warfield outline in the section “Drawing Up a ‘Life of Jesus’”?

For Further Study

Related Warfield Works

Warfield, Benjamin B. *The Lord of Glory: A Study of the Designations of Our Lord in the New Testament with Especial Reference to His Deity*. New York: American Tract Society, 1907. Reprint, Port St. Lucie, FL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2003.

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Köstenberger, Andreas J., and Michael J. Kruger. *The Heresy of Orthodoxy: How Contemporary Culture’s Fascination with Diversity Has Reshaped Our Understanding of Early Christianity*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

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- McDowell, Josh. *Evidence That Demands a Verdict: Life-Changing Truth for a Skeptical World*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2017. Chaps. 6–8.
- Stonehouse, Ned B. *Origins of the Synoptic Gospels: Some Basic Questions*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963. Stonehouse's work on the Synoptics covers topics related to historical questions of tradition and transmission. This book, Richard Bauckham's *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, and Warfield's article make a great trio for study.
- . *The Witness of the Synoptic Gospels to Christ*. Twin Brooks Series. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979. Stands in the tradition of Warfield. Combines Stonehouse's *The Witness of Matthew and Mark to Christ* and his *The Witness of Luke to Christ*.
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