**John Mackinnon Robertson 1856 – 1933**

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Mackinnon_Robertson>

**John Mackinnon Robertson** (14 November 1856 – 5 January 1933) was a prolific journalist, advocate of [rationalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rationalist_movement) and [secularism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularism), and [Liberal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberal_Party_%28UK%29) [Member of Parliament](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Member_of_Parliament) in the [United Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) for [Tyneside](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyneside) from 1906 to 1918.

Robertson was born on the [Isle of Arran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isle_of_Arran) and left school at the age of thirteen to become a clerk and then a journalist. In 1878 he became a follower of secularist leader [Charles Bradlaugh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Bradlaugh) and became active in the [secularist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularism) cause in [Edinburgh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh), before moving to [London](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London) to become assistant editor of Bradlaugh's paper [*National Reformer*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=National_Reformer&action=edit&redlink=1), subsequently taking over as editor on Bradlaugh's death in 1891. The *National Reformer* finally closed in 1893. Robertson was also an appointed lecturer for the [freethinking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freethought) [South Place Ethical Society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Place_Ethical_Society) from 1899 until the 1920s.

Robertson's political radicalism developed in the 1880s and 1890s, and he first stood for [Parliament](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament_of_the_United_Kingdom) in 1895, failing to win Bradlaugh's old seat in [Northampton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northampton) as an independent radical liberal.

Robertson was an advocate of the [Jesus-Myth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus-Myth) theory, and in several books he argued strongly against the [historicity of Jesus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historicity_of_Jesus). According to Robertson, the character of Jesus in the New Testament developed from a Jewish cult of [Joshua](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joshua), whom he identifies as a [solar deity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_deity). [Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Cornwallis_Conybeare) wrote a book *The Historical Christ* directed specifically against Robertson and two other Jesus-myth advocates.

## Selected works

* *History of Freethought in the Nineteenth Century*, (1899)
* John Mackinnon Robertson (1900). [*Christianity and mythology*](http://books.google.com/books?id=dPqDy6FFO68C&dq=Christianity+and+Mythology+Robertson&as_brr=1&ei=s50HR8ymNYP06wLBqoCHAg). Watts. <http://books.google.com/books?id=dPqDy6FFO68C&dq=Christianity+and+Mythology+Robertson&as_brr=1&ei=s50HR8ymNYP06wLBqoCHAg>.  (1900)
* John Mackinnon Robertson (1902). [*A Short History of Christianity*](http://books.google.com/books?id=bAQ_AAAAIAAJ&dq=History+of+Freethought+in+the+Nineteenth+Century+Robertson&as_brr=1&ei=YZ0HR72cHIi67gLu66mDAg). Watts & Co.. <http://books.google.com/books?id=bAQ_AAAAIAAJ&dq=History+of+Freethought+in+the+Nineteenth+Century+Robertson&as_brr=1&ei=YZ0HR72cHIi67gLu66mDAg>.  (1902)
* *Pagan Christs* (1903)
* John Mackinnon Robertson (1902). [*Letters on Reasoning*](http://books.google.com/books?id=fuI0AAAAMAAJ&dq=Letters+on+Reasoning++Robertson&as_brr=1&ei=EJ4HR6_MBoTg6wK42pmDAg). Watts. <http://books.google.com/books?id=fuI0AAAAMAAJ&dq=Letters+on+Reasoning++Robertson&as_brr=1&ei=EJ4HR6_MBoTg6wK42pmDAg>.  (1905, 2nd edition)
* John Mackinnon Robertson (1906). [*A short history of freethought ancient and modern*](http://books.google.com/books?id=ZpjjMAax_3MC&dq=John+Mackinnon+Robertson+inauthor:John+inauthor:Mackinnon+inauthor:Robertson&as_brr=1&ei=bZkHR6zWOJOK7AKQ1qSDAg). Watts & co.*.* [*http://books.google.com/books?id=ZpjjMAax\_3MC&dq=John+Mackinnon+Robertson+inauthor:John+inauthor:Mackinnon+inauthor:Robertson&as\_brr=1&ei=bZkHR6zWOJOK7AKQ1qSDAg*](http://books.google.com/books?id=ZpjjMAax_3MC&dq=John+Mackinnon+Robertson+inauthor:John+inauthor:Mackinnon+inauthor:Robertson&as_brr=1&ei=bZkHR6zWOJOK7AKQ1qSDAg).  (2 vols, 1915)
* *The Historical Jesus* (1916)
* *The Jesus Problem* (1917)
* *Short History of Morals* (1920)
* *Jesus and Judas* (1927)

## References

* J. M. Robertson (1889). [*Miscellanies*](http://www.archive.org/details/miscellanies00robeuoft). Essays. From [Internet Archive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Archive).
* Dekkers, Odin: *J. M. Robertson*. Ashgate, 1998.

## External links

* [Works by John Mackinnon Robertson](http://www.archive.org/search.php?query=creator:%28robertson+john+mackinnon%29) at the [Internet Archive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Archive)

[The Jesus Problem - Robertson, J M) Works by John Mackinnon Robertson](http://www.pedar.net:%28about) at the [Internet Archive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Archive)