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ICONOCLASTS.

BY J. W. LAPSLEY.

"YE shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves." This was the divine command to Israel as they invaded Canaan. Policy as well as reverence for the divine authority demanded strict obedience to the command. But it was not so obeyed as to put out of sight the temptations to idolatry; and again and again Israel sinned after the example of the heathen they had supplanted, became image worshippers, and suffered grievously for their apostasy. Hence image breaking was accounted a sign of devotion to Jehovah. Jehu said, "Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord," and he went and broke down the image of Baal, and the house of Baal, burnt his images with fire, and slew his priests and votaries with the sword. But this was as far as Jehu's zeal for the Lord carried him. While he had no real devotion to God, and, in fact, renewed the idol worship at Dan and Bethel, he made the divine commission an excuse for pursuing with lavish bloodshed his own schemes of worldly ambition. And there have been others besides Jehu in other ages who have trod in his steps. "Mohammed," says Dr. Schaff, "started as a religious reformer fired by the great idea of the unity of the Godhead, and filled with horror of idolatry." And he and his Caliphs, long after they became world-wide conquerors, full of ambition and given up to every cruel and sensual passion, continued to proclaim, "There is but one God," and continued to the last their warfare on image and image worship. They made their professed zeal for the one God a cover and ex-

“THE BUGLE FROM BERLIN.”

THE RETROCESSION OF HARNACK.

BY REV. PARKE P. FLOUENOY, D. D., BETHESDA, MD.

WHILE talking a short time ago with a successful lawyer, a man who had never enjoyed the advantages of a college education, I was surprised to hear him say that his belief in the Christian religion was fully established by reading *Paley's Evidences of Christianity*. I had not supposed that he was even acquainted with the book. My friend had gotten, without a college course, a most valuable aid, not only for the salvation of the soul, but for the training of the intellect in accurate and conclusive reasoning which many who have the fullest academic advantages, at home and abroad, often fail to secure. His experience, doubtless, accords with that of many others. It is doubtful whether any other uninspired book has ever helped more minds in attaining that great desideratum—“a settled religious belief.”

What is the secret of this old book's power to convince? and why is it that one remembers Paley when so many other authorities on evidences are forgotten? I think it is chiefly because Paley builds his imperishable structure on facts, and not on theories. He lays down this plain proposition: “There is satisfactory evidence that many, professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labors, dangers and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts; and that they also submitted, from the same motives, to new rules of conduct.”

His second proposition is: “There is *not* satisfactory evidence that persons professing to be original witnesses of other miracles, in their nature as certain as these are, have ever acted in the same manner in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and properly in consequence of their belief of those accounts.”

He proves the first proposition by innumerable facts related by the writers of the New Testament and of the profane literature of the times, and the second by examining the pretended evidence for other so-called miracles (especially those adduced by

Hume), and showing it to be entirely unreliable when tested by the rules of evidence applied to the accounts of the New Testament miracles.

He thus makes it plain by an appeal to our common sense that Jesus, a person entirely unique in history, fulfilling the prophecies concerning the Messiah, actually wrought the miracles, and showed that he is the Messiah—the Son, through whom God hath spoken to us.

Thus Paley founds his monumental proof of the truth of Christianity on such testimony of many witnesses as common experience and the ordinary rules of evidence show us that we cannot doubt. He lays the foundation, as it were, on the earth—on the natural—while the structure reared upon it pierces the empyrean and rises into the region of the supernatural.

But, just as the evolutionists have invented a theory by which they claim that they have sapped the foundations of Paley's argument from design in his *Natural Theology*, so rationalists have invented a theory by which they claim to have overturned this argument from the testimony of the evangelists in his *Evidences of Christianity*. Baur, applying Hegel's theory of the universe to Christianity, and claiming that it had its periods of assertion, difference, and reconciliation (thesis, antithesis, and synthesis), attempted to show that the first three Gospels could not have originated till toward the middle of the second century, and the last later still. By this, if established, he would remove the foundation of Paley's argument, for, on this supposition, the Gospels would not have been the testimony of *contemporary* witnesses, and chroniclers of events of the truth of which they had full evidence but false documents, and would have to be relegated to that limbo in which the great mass of apocryphal New Testament literature lies speechless and discredited.

Now, what has all this to do with the retrocession of Harnack? A great deal. It shows its significance. So popular was this theory of Baur about the origin of the Gospels a quarter of a century ago that an anonymous English writer, stating it in a taking way, in that notable book, *Supernatural Religion*, seemed to sweep the fields of theological discussion. Six editions were issued, it is stated, in about as many months. Now, God, in his providence, has thoroughly refuted this book and utterly overturned Baur's theory with it. Discoveries have been made which

make it not probable only, but absolutely certain, that the whole theory is false. As some one has expressed it, this theory may be spoken of now as having "died of insufficient nourishment from facts." To put it more truly, facts have risen up and slain it outright. These facts have caused the retrocession of Harnack, because they have led him to see that the Gospels were written by those who were contemporaries of our Saviour while he was "manifest in the flesh" and "dwelt among" them and their fellow-countrymen. Harnack, "generally considered the most influential theological teacher in the fatherland" and "acknowledged leader in critical thought," as he has been called, and most certainly is, tells us in his *Chronology of Early Christian Literature*¹ (Introduction, page 8, seq.) such things as these:

"There was a time—and, in fact, the general public is still living in it—when the oldest Christian literature, including the New Testament, was considered as a tissue of deceptions and falsifications. This time is now passed; for theological science it was an episode, in which much was learned, but of which much must also be forgotten. The results of my researches as laid down in this work are a step in the 'reactionary direction,' even beyond that which is generally considered the middle way in modern criticism. The oldest literature of the church, in all its chief parts and in the great bulk of its details, considered from a historical point of view, is thoroughly correct and reliable." . . .

"The presuppositions of the Baur school can now be fairly said to have been entirely discarded."

He also remarks: "In the entire New Testament there is probably but a single pseudonym writing in the strict sense of the word—namely, Second Peter."

Harnack undertakes to date, approximately, many of the books of the New Testament, while he considers all as the product, not of the second century, but of the apostolic age. His approximate dates are as follows: Mark, 65-70; our Greek Matthew, 70-75; Luke, 78-90; John, not later than the beginning of the second century (he speaks of it as "the Gospel of John, the apostle through John the Presbyter"); Acts, 78-93; Epistle to the Hebrews, 65-95; Apocalypse, about 98.

It must not be imagined that Harnack has become orthodox. He is evidently far from that. Though he has felt bound to give

¹ *Die Chronologie der Altchristlicher Literatur, etc.* (Leipsic).

up his old position with the school of Baur as to the dates of the books of the New Testament, he evidently clings to his Ritschlianism. But this makes him all the better witness as to the facts in the case. If he had become an orthodox believer, it might have been charged against him, as it is charged against all orthodox believers, that his presupposition of the divine authority and inspiration of the New Testament had warped his judgment as to the genuineness of these writings. But when we see him, in spite of his Ritschlian theory, making such a retrograde movement from his old position, thereby leaving his much-loved hobbies exposed and in great peril, we may be sure that the evidence that forced him back is good and reliable; yea, that it is entirely irresistible to the honest mind.

Space will allow little more than a passing reference to those discoveries which convinced Harnack of his error and led to his retrocession. His book containing his later views and the reasons for them, though issued from the *Leipsic* press more than two years ago, seems not to have been translated and published in this country, so that I have only stated his conclusions as given in his introduction and translated by Dr. Geo. H. Schodde. There is before me, however, Harnack's articles in *Preussische Jahrbücher* for May, 1898, in which he speaks of the evidential value of recent discoveries which influenced his conclusion. The title of his article is "The latest discoveries in domain of the earliest church history." In it he speaks of *The Apology of Aristides*, discovered by Prof. Rendel Harris at St. Catherine Convent, in 1887, a defence of Christianity delivered to the Emperor Hadrian, at the same time with another by Quadratus, according to Eusebius, in the year 125 A. D.; *The Diatessaron of Tatian*, a harmony of the four Gospels; and *The Syriac Palimpsest*, containing our four Gospels, which was discovered by Mrs. Agnes Smith Lewis, of Cambridge, England, in 1892.

Of the last Harnack remarks: "But of still greater value was the find which we owe to a learned Scotch lady, Mrs. Lewis. She found, in the year 1892, in the Convent of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, the place where Tischendorf discovered the celebrated Greek Bible codex, a palimpsest Syrian MS. of about the year 400, which contains the four Gospels, and is translated from a Greek original that can hardly be later than the second century. As the text is almost completely preserved,

this *Syrus Sinaiticus* is one of the most important witnesses; nay, it is extremely probable that it is the most important witness for our four Gospels." . . . "Any one who reads the Gospels in this form has them before him just as the Christians read them 1,700 years ago. It is remarkable that Tatian's text bears the closest relation to this text, and that both texts prove the essentially unimpaired condition of our Gospels since the time of Marcus Aurelius."¹

It is very significant that, while still under his Ritschlian prejudice, Harnack has practically come back to the traditional dates of the New Testament books. As Dr. Behrends expressed it on the appearance of *The Chronology of Early Christian Literature*, "While our American preachers and editors are celebrating the triumphs of literary criticism, and busying themselves with getting out a new Bible, the bugle from Berlin is sounding a retreat all along the line."

And now Harnack's great antagonist comes to the front. Prof. Theodor Zahn, the greatest among those whom the Germans call conservative critics, has also issued a great work on the same subject—*Einleitung in Neue Testament (Introduction to the New Testament)*—and his conclusions as to the dates of the New Testament books, with the exception of some changes as to the order in which different books were produced, show that the researches of, perhaps, the most thorough and pains-taking scholar in the world in this department confirm in the fullest way the dates which have been handed down through the ages. He thinks the Epistle of James (as many others do) the oldest New Testament book, and dates it about 50 A. D. The Epistle to the Galatians comes next, early in the year 53. The rest he dates as follows: First and Second Corinthians, 57; Romans, 58; Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon, 62; Second Epistle of Peter, 62; Matthew in Aramaic, 62; Philippians, 63; First Epistle

¹ For a discussion of the evidential value of *The Apology of Aristides*, the reader is referred to an article in *The Religious Outlook* for May and continued in the June number; for that of *The Diatessaron of Tatian*, to one in the numbers of *The Presbyterian Quarterly* for October, 1898, and January, 1899, and for that of the *Levite Palimpsest*, to *The Contemporary* for November, 1894; *The Interior*, March 8, 1897; *The Central Presbyterian* and *Christian Observer* in November and December, 1895.

of Peter, 64; Mark (prepared), 64; 1 Timothy and Titus, 65; Second Timothy, 66; Mark (published), 67; Jude, about 75; Luke and Acts, 75; Hebrews, 80; Greek Matthew, 85; Gospel and Epistles of John, 80-90; Revelation, 95.

Let us thank God that, in our day of doubt and strife, the two most noted New Testament scholars in the world, the leaders of the two great opposing schools of criticism, have united in the conclusion that what we have written in the New Testament about our blessed Lord is the testimony of contemporaries. The great fact thus fully attested is, that "God . . . hath . . . spoken unto us by his Son."