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I. THEOLOGY OF THE FUTURE.

Our age, on its religious side, has been characterized as an age of doubt. We are constrained to admit that there is a propriety in this characterization. Doubt with regard to religious matters is more widespread at present than it was in days gone by. This is not saying that the Christian religion has not a stronger hold upon men to-day than ever before, for it has. The mustard seed sown in the ground and springing up into an herb is growing yet, though already the greatest of all herbs. The leaven hid away in the meal is still permeating the mass, and will continue till the whole is leavened. The doubt of our age does not furnish sufficient ground to justify the believer in entertaining pessimistic views of the future. But there is none the less a widespread spirit of questioning and uncertainty concerning things religious. It is not confined to the student's cloister, but is found among the masses. It appears in a good deal of the popular literature of the day, and tends to create for itself a congenial soil, if that be not already found. But as has been remarked by those observant of the trend of theological thought in our day, while doubt is more general than it was in a former age, it is not of the same intensity. It is not so much a positive denial as it is an enquiry. A century ago unbelief was very sure of itself. It sneered at faith, and assumed a happy, even a lightsome attitude. But such self-complacency has largely disappeared from the theological world, and in its place there is more of earnest investigation.

VII. THE ORIGINAL FACTS OF CHRISTIANITY ; or, MRS. HUMPHREY WARD AND OUR GEN- ERATION *versus* PAUL.

[*The Outlook* of March 3rd, 1900, draws attention to a correspondence going on in the *Liverpool Post* on the subject of scientific study in the Anglican church. Mrs. Humphrey Ward takes part in the discussion, addressing questions to "A Curate."]

It seems strange to see the author of Robert Elsmere knocking at the door of the church and pleading for the right to enter its communion. It is the more difficult to explain, since she does not profess to have undergone any change in her views. Is it her woman's heart, ever more susceptible of religious influences than man's, drawing her toward the church as a haven for the soul? Or, is this another of the many examples of the meeting of extremes—skepticism merging into superstition? Her sun is westering, the evening is drawing on, and it may be that she is saying, with the inevitable awe of the thoughtful in looking to the future, "The night cometh;" and then, "What of the night? What experiences may it have for me?" The church may seem to her the likeliest place for calming rising fears and hushing anxieties.

It is to be noticed, however, that, in writing to "A Curate," so far from disavowing, she reiterates her unbeliefs. She seems to take as infallible the conclusions of the most radical rationalistic scholarship about the great facts and doctrines of Christianity, and yet thinks it a great hardship that she and such as she should not be welcomed to the communion of believers. She cannot see how the gratification of this yearning could do any harm. She holds that "the relief thus afforded to an educated minority would not in the least interfere with the beliefs of the majority."

But, what is most interesting in Mrs. Ward's case is the absolute certainty which attaches, in her mind, to the conclusions of the historical school to which she gives her adherence. "Germany, avers Mrs. Ward, still possesses the only scientific and only organized study of theology in Eu-

rope." (I am quoting from *The Outlook* of March 3rd.) "Mrs. Ward holds that, through the growth of the modern study of history, our generation has come nearer to the original facts of Christianity than the generations between us and the Synoptists have ever been; nearer even, it may be, than St. Paul himself."

Now when Mrs. Ward thinks it possible that "our generation" has come nearer to the original facts of Christianity than Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, she, of course, embraces under the wide phase "our generation" a very small company, a wonderfully favored few, of our contemporaries, and these, of course, are those who think with her.

It is well to remember just here that while radical criticism has made so much noise in our day and has laid claim to so much scholarship as to leave none for anybody else, and while Germany is always thought of as the land of the new infallibility, from whose fountains one must drink or famish in his ignorance, the radical critics are in the minority, even in Germany. Says Dr. Behrends in a notable article in *Christian Work*, written more than two years ago, "Among the most famous theological faculties in Germany are those of Berlin, Bonn, Breslau, Griefswald, Halle, Königsberg, Leipsic and Tübingen. In these universities there are seventy-three theological professors, of which number thirty belong to the radical school, while forty-three belong to the moderate and conservative ranks. Every one of these men is at home in the literature of his department, and is supposed to be an independent and well-equipped scholar. He could not hold his place if he were not." *

So we see that by no means all the well known scholars of Germany itself acknowledge the infallibility of this "only scientific, and only organized study of theology," the exclu-

* See also Ruppercht in his "Wissenschaftlicher Handbuch der Einleitung in das alte Testament," Introduction, p. 506, sq.

"Then, too, the number of theologians in England, America and Germany who are taking this conservative view with reference to Biblical criticism is constantly on the increase." The full quotation, which I take from the *Literary Digest* of March 25th, 1899, goes into particulars, and mentions prominent critics.

sive ownership of which Mrs. Ward allows to their country. Now, it would be very unwise and even wicked, for any church, especially in our day, of all times, to set itself against scholarship. This talent she has no right to fold in a napkin and hide, especially in these times of progress and of widening views in every department of learning; and if these scientific methods have really done for those who employ them, what Mrs. Humphrey Ward thinks they have, we ought if possible to adopt them and use them. The real facts about the coming, the character, the work, the death and resurrection, and especially, the person of Christ, are what, of all things, it is our highest concern to know; and if by the use of these scientific methods of investigation, we, with these favored ones of our generation, can really come "nearer to the original facts of Christianity than the generations between us and the Synoptists have ever been; nearer even, it may be, than St. Paul himself," then surely we should lose no time in joining the ranks of those who lead in this new renaissance, that we may gain a consummation so devoutly to be wished. If "our generation" has found a retrospective glass that will enable them to look over the heads of all intervening generations and will give us a clear view of these great facts of such surpassing interest to our world, we are surely to be much blamed if we do secure this wonderful optical instrument. What are all the telescopes that sweep the glorious fields of space and reveal the wonders of "the spacious firmament on high," and all the microscopes that open to our vision the arcana of the earth beneath, and of the waters under the earth, compared with this which will open to our view the great facts of Christ's embassy to our lost world? Just think of getting a clearer view than ever Paul had! Let us remember what sort of a person Paul was, and what sort of qualifications he had for investigating these facts, and what opportunities were presented to him for doing so. As to his mental abilities and moral character there can be little doubt. Perhaps no man within the past nineteen centuries has made so deep an impression upon our world. Its very physical features are

monuments to perpetuate his fame, and Geography is a witness of his greatness. Not only the natural features of the earth but political divisions, and cities bear his name. It is echoed from our beautiful St. Paul in Minnesota to the far off Sao Paulo in South America, while all the world over, thousands of churches, from the great Cathedral in London to the humble chapel of our far western wilds, record, in their names, their obligations to St. Paul, whose gospel to the Gentiles they have received and are still sending on to those who have not heard it. Every generation since his time—and ours is certainly no exception—has in many ways perpetuated his memory. This does not happen to inconsiderable men.

But we do not have to rely on such an inference even as this to form an estimate of his competency as a witness. A few letters were written, some of them probably under the depressing influence of long and unjust imprisonment, which though written to people of a very different sort from us and with surroundings in marked contrast to our environment after eighteen and a half centuries, and these letters are in our hands today.

Every thinking man who reads them understandingly is impressed as Coleridge was with their wonderful depth and force. They have undoubtedly exercised an immense—an almost immeasurable—influence on the world's thinking and on its morality, through these many ages. In innumerable Christian households they are still guiding the faith and strengthening the character, and consoling the sorrows of young and old, of rich and poor, of learned and ignorant, of prince and peasant. A great tide of an ever increasing volume of literature has swept by and around them for ages and then passed out of sight, only a work of unusual genius, here and there of all the vast number, lodging and staying on the shore, while these little epistles stand with the permanency of an immovable rock which promises to endure as long as the world in which it is embedded.

When we come to examine these letters, we find the evidences of the clearest insight, the calmest judgment, the

noblest courage, and the utmost truthfulness and candor in the author. These qualities no one can deny to the Apostle Paul. We feel as sure of his character as we do of that of a father or a mother.

Now with all these qualities of a reliable witness, Paul was a contemporary of Christ. It may be said that he was not a personal witness of the acts and deeds of Christ, though a contemporary. On the other hand, however, he was an enemy of Christ and his cause. He had the very qualification which is most highly valued by the radical critic. He did not believe in the supernatural element in his words and works. So sure was he of the absence of anything divine and supernatural about "this way" that he persecuted the advocates of it, following them even to strange cities, and in doing so, thought that he did God service. It is well known that in that school of scientific theology to which Mrs. Ward refers, whatever may be the differences between its various divisions, there is one thing on which they all agree, the absence of the supernatural. Whenever they come to measure and estimate the facts of Christianity there is one little foot-rule carried by every member of the fraternity—a very simple little thing with the very long name, anti-supernaturalism. If about any of these facts there is a claim that it is miraculous, that condemns it; for their postulate is that the miraculous is impossible. The "scientific theology" reduces everything to the realm of the natural.

A miracle then, is thrown aside without further examination as no fact, or a distortion of some natural fact; and if any writing contains a prophecy which has been fulfilled, that fact proves to the advocates of scientific theology that it was written after the event said to have been predicted, because real prophecy is in the realm of the supernatural. Now, Paul had just this qualification so dear to those who have come so near to the "original facts of Christianity." How is it that they have gotten at them so accurately? Why, by simply applying to them this rule and by measuring them carefully, stripping off all the supernatural garb

in which they appeared to the wondering eyes of ignorant and unlearned men, and in which they have come through the intervening generations to ours which has applied to them this little instrument, and divesting them of their disguise, presented them in the nakedness of mere naturalness. This none of the former ages have had either the courage or the skill to do. But are we to forget that Paul began his investigation with this wonderful instrument of the scientific theologians? That he had the courage and the ability to apply it to the facts, no one can deny; and these facts were very near at hand. They had occurred in his own day as he was coming to the full maturity of his powers.

He has, for us, an additional qualification as a witness in that he was not associated with Jesus so as to have his judgment warped by any personal influence. He first appears as a determined opposer who would not stop even at the shedding of blood to stamp out what he believed to be not divine and supernatural, but so pestilent a heresy, that he was justified in taking part even in the death of its advocates. We see this man who was to win the world to Christ, perhaps in larger measure than any other, with the clothes of the hostile witnesses lying at his feet while they stone Stephen, Christ's first martyr, to death. He begins his critical examination as a hostile witness, and as fully divested of any idea of the existence of the supernatural about Christianity as Mrs. Ward or any of our favored generation can be, and yet he came to believe the supernatural facts of this religion, spent his life in proclaiming them and laid it down in attestation of them.

This most decided disbelief of the truth of Christianity and of its supernatural origin and character was overcome in a strange way. It was by a most startling experience of the supernatural presented to his own sight and hearing.

Peter, as he was about to "put off this tabernacle"—an honest time with most men—took special pains to assure those for whom he labored that in respect to all the wonderful things he had told them about our Lord Jesus Christ—and we can well believe that his reminiscences were given

very vividly—"We did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and presence (marg.) of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice from the excellent glory, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,' and this voice we ourselves heard come out of heaven when we were with him in the holy mount." (R. V.)

Paul had a somewhat similar experience, beholding Christ, not, as in this case, in anticipatory presentation of the glory to which he was going; but in a return from it to the earth which he had left. Many questions may be asked about this event which we are unable to answer. There are insoluble mysteries in the natural world, and greater ones may be expected in the realm of the supernatural. Whatever else may be said, it is certain that Paul believed that he had been face to face with Christ, that he had "seen the Lord," and was therefore a competent personal witness of the cardinal fact of Christianity, that Christ, who was crucified, dead, and buried, had risen from the dead. He had no more doubt of it than he had of his own existence. He was a changed man from that moment. Through long years of toil, suffering, danger and destitution he testified of this Jesus whom he had persecuted in the persons of his followers, as the divine Saviour to whom every human being is invited to look for eternal life. He witnessed before the people of various lands and languages, before kings and councils, of the reality of what he had seen and heard, and attested the truth of what he asserted by giving up all that, up to that moment, he had sought with intense eagerness—his high position as a distinguished counsellor and leader among his own people, all earthly ease and emolument, and hardest of all, that way of obtaining the favor of God and salvation in which he had believed with all the intensity of his fervid nature.

He now became thoroughly convinced that through Christ alone was the way of salvation, and through all the many years of varied experience, and of calm thought, he

never wavered in his testimony. After all the life of labor, sacrifice and suffering, after all the journeys and imprisonments, when he had stood his trial before Cæsar's judgment bar, "the trial ended, Paul was condemned and delivered over to the executioner. He was led out of the city with a crowd of the lowest rabble at his heels. The fatal spot was reached; he knelt beside the block; the headsmen's axe gleamed in the sun and fell; and the head of the apostle of the world rolled down in the dust."

Such is the vivid portrayal of the event as it presents itself to the imagination of Dr. Stalker. We may doubt in some points the accuracy of the picture, but the event itself no one doubts.

Ah! it is hardly probable that with all the paraphernalia of the modern school of scholarship, our generation has gotten quite as near the main facts on which Christianity is founded as the Apostle Paul, Mrs. Ward herself being witness; for she insists on "personal experience" after the manner of Ritschl, as the only absolutely reliable evidence. "The recovery of the primitive fact; the return to the undenyng realities of conscience, love and faith; the replacing of the argument from miracle and Scripture and tradition by the argument from moral and personal experience," etc.

Paul had the "personal experience;" but it was not only that of "the realities of conscience, love and faith," but a personal experience of miracle and the fulfillment of Scripture, too.

When we come to the facts of our Saviour's ministry, his works and words, I think we can hardly conclude that Mrs. Ward, or any of our generation enjoys quite as near an approach as Paul. It is indeed probable that he was absent from Jerusalem and from Palestine during our Saviour's ministry and at the time of his trial and death. But it is certain that he was in the midst of the scene where the most stirring events had occurred, very shortly after the crucifixion. It is quite probable that he had graduated from the celebrated school of Gamaliel before the beginning of our Saviour's public ministry, and gone back to Tarsus, his

father's home, "no mean city," and a celebrated seat of Greek learning and culture, where in his youth he had unconsciously received many touches that moulded him for the great work he was to do and the great place he was to fill in the world's history. It is not improbable that the distinguished young scholar was called to the synagogue of his own city of Cilicia as its rabbi. At any rate, when soon after the crucifixion, probably not more than two or three years, when we first hear of him in Jerusalem, it is in connection with the synagogue of the Cilicians, among others there, that his name is mentioned. He may have been one of these first accusers of Stephen, relying on the testimony of others who were witnesses. "At all events, when the argument of logic was exchanged for that of violence, he was in the front. When the witness who cast the first stones at Stephen were stripping for their work, they laid down their garments at his feet. There, on the margin of that wild scene, we see his figure standing a little apart and sharply outlined against the mass of persecutors unknown to fame. The pile of many-colored robes at his feet, and his eyes bent upon the holy martyr, who is kneeling in the article of death and praying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."*

Here was another proof presented to his very eyes and ears, of the power of this new and hated religion, not only to sustain in death with a most blessed hope, but to replace natural revenge and hatred with tender love for enemies, and to fill dying lips with words of prayer for them—an experience which doubtless had its weight in the decision to which he was finally brought, though it had no immediate influence on his conduct.

Stephen had gone, it would seem, from synagogue to synagogue in the city proclaiming Christ as the Messiah, "and they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake." In his arguments he must have given the evidence of the fulfilment of the prophecies in Christ, by

* Stalker,

telling of the miracles and teachings by which He did the work of His ministry, and then, of His death and resurrection by which he accomplishes the atonement. Paul, the alert scholar, so prominent at Stephen's martyrdom, probably having given his vote for his death in the Sanhedrin which condemned him to death, and then witnessing in such a way as he did the execution of the sentence, could hardly be supposed to have been ignorant of these disputations. He, in all probability, took a prominent part in them.

Of these arguments of Stephen we have what may be considered a specimen in part (though it bears the additional character of a defence) in his address before the Sanhedrin recorded in the 7th chapter of the Acts. The question naturally arises, "From whom among those who heard it did Luke receive the report of it which he gives?"

Paul seems to have been present and, if so, heard it.

Was it his report that Luke has preserved? We cannot know with certainty; but when we consider that Luke was Paul's companion in labor and in suffering, and the recorder of that account of his missionary labors which we have in the Acts of the Apostles, and that Paul's argument from the Old Testament, like that addressed to the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia, bears a striking resemblance to that of Stephen, it seems highly probable that this argument on this occasion of Stephen's trial before the Sanhedrin, and others in the synagogues, remained in the retentive memory of Paul his opposer, and though at first rejected, were afterwards accepted as thoroughly convincing, when the appearance of the glorified Saviour had broken down the barrier of his unbelief.

Now, to this testimony of Stephen about "the original facts of Christianity," it would seem that Paul was nearer than Mrs. Ward or any of our generation can claim to be.

But we are not by any means to suppose that Paul had no opportunities of learning from personal witnesses of the original facts of Christianity except those which were furnished by his coming in contact with the followers of Christ whom he persecuted while he "made havoc of the church,

entering into every house and haling men and women, committed them to prison." During this time he must have heard many noble testimonies, as we know he did that of the first martyr, if, as a member of the Sanhedrin, he sat in judgment on Stephen and took part in dooming him to death. After that personal experience on the way to Damascus by which his unbelief was replaced by the faith which endured, faithfully "kept," till he laid down his own life for Christ, Paul made visits to Jerusalem. After a period of preparation for his great works in Arabia, he visited Jerusalem, and especially went "to see Peter." At least five times after his conversion we find the Apostle of the Gentiles at Jerusalem, but this first visit to the scenes of his student life, and of his subsequent cruel career as a persecutor, must have been in some respects the most interesting and important of all. We may not be able to say just how the fifteen days with Peter were spent, as to all particulars, but we may be sure that he to whom these two had given their hearts and devoted the service of their lives was not left unmentioned in their conversations, which could not fail to have been long and earnest. Paul could not fail to have told Peter of the revelation of Christ to himself, not simply as in some vision of the night, but with blinding glory to his very eyes and with audible voice to his very ears; and we cannot imagine the warm-hearted Peter as keeping silence about the words and deeds of him whom he with the fullest conviction had acknowledged as "the Christ, the Son of the living God."

It is true that Paul did not need, and did not seek, that Peter, or any of the apostles, or all united, should "add anything" unto him to give him apostolic authority. He had been ordained by his Lord and "not of men neither by man." Yet he doubtless learned the great facts of Christianity by the use of his mental faculties in the ordinary processes of investigation. There need be no "revelation" to him of those facts which he could learn of from many witnesses, though he was doubtless divinely guided in his selection and arrangement of them in preaching the gospel.

Luke, his companion in many labors and journeys, and sufferings, was, as we believe, divinely guided in writing his Gospel, and yet he himself tells us that he used the greatest care in ascertaining the facts of Christ's life and work of which his gospel gives the account. Divine inspiration does not preclude the use of the ordinary sources of knowledge and means of investigation.

One of the most interesting of Moody's discourses contains his very vivid and moving conception of the events of this visit of Paul to Peter. Many readers will, perhaps, remember how he told of Peter's suggesting to Paul to take a walk with him, and how they went down through the valley of the Kedron and to the garden of Gethsemane, and how Peter told, with deep emotion, of all the events of that sad scene in the garden where the Saviour was bowed in agony unutterable under the burden of the terrible sorrow that was drawing on, and how, afterwards, they walked together to Calvary, the scene of the "World's Tragedy," and how Peter, with tears flowing again, as they did in his bitter grief outside the High-priest's palace, told of his base denial, and following afar off, and how the innocent Sufferer endured alone, apparently deserted of God and man, that agony at which even nature dimmed her light and shook with strange throes. Memory does not fully reproduce Mr. Moody's vivid word-paintings, and this is not necessary for the present purpose. As his strong common sense concluded that during this fifteen days visit to Peter, Paul, who had received his call as the Apostle to the Gentiles would certainly not fail to visit each scene of interest connected with the wondrous life and death and living again of him whom he was to proclaim as the Saviour of a lost world, so we may safely conclude that Paul became thoroughly informed about "the original facts of Christianity" which it was to be his life-work to tell others, as well as the foundation of that faith and hope which upbore and carried him through all the dangers and difficulties of that great career, which to its tragic and yet glorious end, is a standing witness of the truth of Christianity.

Historians, if possible, visit the scenes amid which the events they relate took place, and the biographer of Macauley gives us a vivid picture of his earnest investigations on the spot where a siege was long resisted, or on fields where great battles were fought. But Macauley walking repeatedly around the walls of Londonderry enjoyed small advantages as a historian compared with those of Paul in learning "the original facts of Christianity." Even after centuries have rolled by, and besom after besom has swept with destructive force over the holy land, so that though once flowing with milk and honey, a land of olive groves and vineyards, it has become almost a desert, yet even now this country so illustrates the events narrated in the Gospel that many cross the ocean to gaze on its hills and valleys, and especially its Jerusalem, that they may have brought more vividly before them the events of that most wonderful of lives which was lived

"In those holy fields
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet
Which [many] hundred years ago were nailed,
For our advantage, on the bitter cross."

Paul was familiar with the land and the city, and there, the scenes of our Saviour's life, unchanged—for that life had been laid down but five or six years before this visit—could all be pointed out by those who witnessed his deeds and heard his words.

Luke's narrative, so careful and accurate in its distinct statements of the dates of events of the titles and functions of civil and military officers, under the complications of imperial and provincial government, and the many changes of administration, is very suggestive of the accuracy of Paul's information. From all the circumstances, we can hardly doubt that he knew all that Luke knew about "the original facts of Christianity." Indeed, it is probable that he knew more than is recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke, while he must have had from the mouth of the beloved disciple some of those profound discourses which he alone could reproduce. These seem clearly the probabilities of the case. But reduce them to one-half or even one-hundredth, and we

think that even then we should find Paul nearer the original facts of Christianity than Mrs. Humphrey Ward or any who like her rejects the accounts in the Gospels. Whatever may be doubtful in the case, there are three things about which there can be no doubt. One is that Paul had the highest reasons for knowing these facts thoroughly. Another is that he had the fullest opportunity to give the information; and the third is that he had a mind of unusual perspicacity and logical acumen for the investigation of testimony. These three things being certain, there can be little doubt as to his knowledge of these facts. Add to these his moral honesty and truthfulness, and we have in him a witness whose testimony is unimpeachable.

Strong as these probabilities are, however, we are not dependent on them for our conclusion as to Paul's knowledge of the "original facts of Christianity." We have more direct evidence.

We may point in passing to the address which he made, according to the account of the accurate and careful narrator, Luke, before Festus and King Agrippa, before he, as a prisoner who had appealed to Cæsar, and Luke with him, set sail for Rome. Does the speech indicate an ignorance of these facts on the part of the speaker? Could such an argument from the fulfillment of the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah have been made to prove that Jesus was this Messiah, and that before a royal personage who well knew the prophets, if Paul did not know the facts about Christ which constituted the fulfillment? To ask the question is to answer it. But we have the answer, too, on the very face of the narrative. Not only the speaker, but the hearer, also, knew of these things. "The king knoweth of these things unto whom I speak, for these things were not done in a corner." If they were so noised abroad that King Agrippa knew them, can we imagine Paul saying this, and yet, not knowing them himself? But in this speech, Paul mentions the two most important of all these facts. Doubtless he had mentioned many others in his vivid and moving presentation which so agitated Kin

Agrippa and led the ignorant heathen Festus to attribute his fiery earnestness to madness. Christ's suffering and the necessity for it, ("must suffer"), and then his resurrection, are presented to his wicked, and yet deeply moved, audience. He announces that after the meeting of the first necessity, there is a second in order to the accomplishment of his work as the Messiah. He "must suffer;" but, after this suffering unto death as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, "He first, by the resurrection from the dead should proclaim light both to the people (of Israel) and to the Gentiles."

But there is more direct evidence of Paul's knowledge of these facts than such reports as this of his companion, Luke.

To use the words of Dean Howson, "In the wide waste of waters which modern criticism believes itself to have spread over the firm and fruitful ground of Divine Revelation there stands an island, the solid foundation and clear surface of which are not questioned. This is the portion of the New Testament which consists of the Epistles written to the Corinthians, the Galatians and the Romans."

He proceeded to point to the well known fact that while Baur and his Tübingen school have rejected almost the whole of the New Testament as a collection of genuine productions, there is an exception they have been constrained to make.

The first four epistles of Paul, even the skeptical Renan, who has so dared to travesty the whole Gospel account with his remarkable gift of speech and descriptive powers, says of these four Epistles of Paul, that they are "indisputable and undisputed," and that "the most severe critics, such as Christian Baur, accept them without objection."*

Now, it is well known that there has been a remarkable recession of these waters of late. Even Harnack, the Ritschlian and former leader in the Tübingen ranks, has felt constrained to take, as he expresses it, "a step in the 'reac-

*See Howson's "Evidential Conclusions from the Four Greater Epistles of St. Paul,"

tionary direction,' even beyond that which is considered the middle way in modern criticism." In the introduction to his late work, "Die Chronologie der alt christlicher Literatur." (The Chronology of Early Christian Literature), he says, "The presuppositions of the Baur school can now fairly be said to have been entirely discarded."

His conclusion is, "In the entire New Testament there is probably but a single pseudonym writing in the strict sense of the word—namely, Second Peter." (It is difficult to see on what ground he makes this exception when we see how early and how frequently Second Peter is quoted.)*

Mrs. Humphrey Ward puts close questions to the "Curate" as to whether he has read certain books—Harnack's History of Dogma among them. One would like to ask her, "Have you read Harnack's 'Die Chronologie,' and Zahn's "Einleitung," in which the two great leaders of opposing schools come together in the conclusion that the positions of the Baur school, which Mrs. Ward, Tolstoi, and other popular writers seem to consider infallible, are entirely false and without foundation ?

All who are well informed know that the waters of this flood have receded and left the fruitful ground free to bloom and bear its fruit again; but many writers seem to be under a spell which causes them still to speak in a diluvian, if not antediluvian way. But this flood, at its highest, left these four hill tops uncovered—Romans, First and Second Corinthians and Galatians.† Now can any one open these Epistles and read them, and imagine that the writer, whom even the skeptics agree to have been the Apostle Paul, the contemporary of Christ, the persecutor of his first disciples, and

*Zahn dates it before First Peter.

†From the four principal Epistles of St Paul.

"Baur says, in his Apostle Paul, (i. 8): 'Not only has no suspicion of the authenticity of these Epistles (Romans, I and II Corinthians and Galatians) ever arisen, but they bear so incontestably the seal of the originality of Paul, that one cannot comprehend for what reason critics could raise any objection to them.' "

"Holtzmann (Einleit. in's. N. T. p. 224): 'These four Epistles are the Pauline Homologoumena (books universally received) in the modern

then the devoted preacher of his gospel, and martyr to his cause, did not know accurately and truly "the original facts of Christianity?" It is impossible. We find in these four Epistles, to go no further, that which everywhere presupposes these facts as their back-ground, and as the very reason for their production.

We find in these Epistles such cardinal facts as the death of Christ by the Roman capital punishment of crucifixion.

We find this continually referred to and dwelt on. We find the fact of Christ's resurrection not only spoken of but emphasized as essential to the believer's salvation—without which faith would be vain—(1 Cor. xv. 11-20).

We find doctrines as well as facts which bind these Epistles of Paul to the original facts as given in the four Gospels. For instance, justification by faith is the great theme of the greatest of these Epistles. It is through that very crucifixion and resurrection of Christ of which the Gospels speak that the possibility of it is gained; and all that Paul says about it is but an expansion of the Saviour's own words when he directed the eyes of Nicodemus back to the serpent lifted by Moses on the pole in the wilderness, and then forward to the cross where the Son of man should be lifted up "that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life."

The doctrines of the Trinity, of Redemption, culmination in the Resurrection of the Saints, of the Work of the Holy Spirit, of the Second Advent, to speak of no others, all presuppose the facts and promises contained in the Gospels.

Then when we come to examine into the idea of Christianity as a life, in these four Epistles of Paul, we find, in

acceptation of the word. We can realize with respect to them, the proof of authenticity undertaken by Paley against the free-thinkers of his time.' "

"Weizsaecker (Apost. Zeitalter, 1886, p. 190): 'The letters to the Galatians and the Corinthians are, without doubt, from the hand of the Apostle; from his hand also come incontestably the Epistle to the Romans.' "

Renan and DeWette are quoted to the same effect,

fuller development, as in the case of the doctrines, the same duties inculcated as the Gospels represent Christ as teaching. The things about these duties which are distinctively Christian, and different from the conceptions of the heathen and of the Jews of the day, are presented in the Epistles as well as in the Gospels. New motives, as well as new actions, and a different course of life from that led by the unregenerate—the triumph of love over self-seeking, the superiority of the worship of the Spirit to that which is tied to times, places and external rites—the spiritual nature of all holiness as the fruit of the Holy Spirit's work and indwelling, these and other traits, we find in the Epistles, as widening streams flowing from springs in the Gospels.

Then, as Dean Howson so well points out, the persons mentioned in the Epistles and Gospels have such recognizable traits of identity, as in the cases of Peter, James, John and others, that we find in the persons other links between the Gospels and these Epistles, and evidences of Paul's acquaintance with the facts of Christianity.

There is one person who is the chief subject of both the Gospels and the Epistles, and the portraiture in the one set of writings is identical with that in the other. The Epistles present Christ chiefly, as a crucified, risen, reigning Saviour, while the Gospels deal chiefly with his work and teachings on earth culminating in his crucifixion and glorification. But the Christ is the same in both.

When those who reject the Christ of the Gospels and imagine they can get back to the "original facts of Christianity," divested of the supernatural garb in which these appear in the Gospels, and give their portraiture of Christ, they lead us to say "Ye have taken away my Lord." The Christ of modern socialism, the shadowy Christ of Strauss, the merely human and erring Christ of Unitarians and radical critics, or "the hero of a village idyl" of Renan, is not the Christ whom Peter acknowledged as "the Christ, the Son of the Living God," and to whom Paul pointed as occupying the sublimest of all positions—"Head over all things for the Church." To this Christ, Paul, like Peter, bowed as

to his Lord. To him he devoted his whole being. He rejoiced to call himself his "servant," his "bond-servant." For him he laid down his life. Would Paul have done this for a mere phantom, or a mere man, or a village hero?

For further proof there is no space, and surely no need. I think every one must agree that Paul must have had a nearer and a truer view of "the original facts of Christianity" than Mrs. Ward or any of our generation who decline to receive the testimony of the contemporaries and closest companions of our blessed Lord.

It is no small comfort to know that one whose character is so well known to us as is that of Paul—as well known as that of one's father or mother—a contemporary of Christ and of about the same age, of the same race, associated with those who personally knew most intimately the facts of Christ's ministry and death and resurrection and ascension, wrote letters in which the great facts are set forth—letters acknowledged to be his by "the most severe critics"—and that we have these Epistles in our hands? We may be very sure that in these matters, in which his own eternal interests were so deeply involved, he would be a competent and faithful historical witness.

The confidence and joy we experience in all this is by no means lessened when we are assured that Paul's portraiture is drawn with the guidance of divine inspiration and the enlightenment of divine revelation, so that his testimony concerning our Lord becomes a part of the Word of God which cannot be broken."*

As to the reliability of the "scientific theology" to which Mrs. Ward refers, two notable tests which have been made quite widely known may be referred to; namely, the mistake of Dr. McGiffert of Union Seminary, New York, in accepting the fraudulent "Acts of Pilate" as a document of a very early age, and superior to other frauds of the same

*For the evidence which these four Epistles, universally acknowledged as Paul's, afford of the genuineness of the other Pauline Epistles, see Dean Howson's *Evidential Conclusions from the Four Greater Epistles of St. Paul*.

name; and the revival, not long since, by a German critic,* of the absurd story of the determination of the New Testament Canon by the Council of Nice.

This "Acts of Pilate," made the occasion of a lecture to his class on the "Pilate Literature" by Dr. McGiffert, proved to be the trick of a fallen minister, afterwards a western hotel keeper, who had used it in connection with other similar matter to fill his pockets at the expense of the ignorant and gullible for many years; and the story of the formation of the Canon repeated lately by a German Critic, is absurd, since the Council of Nice did not deal with the question of the Canon, and his scientific historical method allowed him to repeat an old, long ago discredited story, originating late in the ninth century at the earliest, and revised by Pappus of Strasburg, in the 16th.

Ritschl's claim was that he had "shelled Christianity out clean and rejected all the chaff of human speculation which has, from the beginning, surrounded it and hid its real character from sight."† It is surely a good thing to strip off all the husk which Romanism, or Platonism, or a false theology or philosophy of any kind, may have covered it with; but it is a very different thing to go back to the testimony of the original witnesses, and assuming that God would accompany his great intervention for the salvation of lost men with nothing of a miraculous kind, to proceed to strip off all that savours of the supernatural in their testimony. Transferring into the figure the corn with which we are best acquainted, under that name, we would say, "Ah, dear friends, you who treat the works of Apostles and Evangelists not as the Word of God, but as your 'sources,' are doing a sad business for a famishing world. You are not only stripping off the husk, but shelling off the grain and leaving us nothing but the dry cob of your conclusions." This is poor eating, not sweet in the mouth, and the digestion, we fear, will be something indescribable.

*See *The Bible Student* for January, 1900.

†See Dr. B. B. Warfield's reviews of *The Ritschlian Theology*, *Pres. and Ref. Review*, Jan. 1898, p. 181.

No, we do not believe the stripped and manipulated facts are the original facts of Christianity. We believe Christianity to be supernatural and feel that it was reasonable and fitting that its introduction and establishment should be heralded by supernatural accompaniments. These original facts, fully witnessed by the most unimpeachable testimony, have come down to us through the ages robed with the royal livery of the King and bearing to us the sweetest sustenance and brightest cheer. They have gladdened the sad world wherever they have come, and filled with blessing every heart that has received them. A glorious train, they still go forth to every dark land and radiate the light of a new happiness and confer a new impulse and power for righteousness.

These unbelieving critics could strip off the robes with which the King has adorned them and send them forth naked, shivering, lifeless shadows, powerless to gladden or to save. These cannot be the original facts. They are simply the deceptive caricatures of them which skepticism could give to mock a lost world.

When the sun is westering, the evening is drawing on, and the shadows begin to fall, the glorious facts of our Christianity surround, sustain and soothe us. In them we find illumination for the dark valley, sustenance for the trying journey, weapons for the last conflict, assurances from the voice that never deceives, and the support of our Beloved who will lead us up out of the dark conflict to the peace and joy of his marriage feast.

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