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I.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF FAITH.

EVERY intelligent reader of the Scriptures has observed how much they have to say about faith; how prominent a place they give it amongst the other graces of the Spirit. They say we are united to Christ by faith; that we are justified by faith; that we live by faith; that we walk by faith; that we are sanctified by faith; that we are saved by faith. They thus give to faith a prominence and ascribe to it an efficiency such as are asserted of no other grace in the long catalogue of the graces. As grand summaries of their teaching on this subject, they say, "According to your faith be it unto you;" "without faith it is impossible to please him;" "he that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

There are many, however, who do not understand why it is that so much is thus said about this grace, and why there is ascribed to it so much importance in the plan of salvation. They think there is something strange about it; something arbitrary; something that needs explanation; something that very much needs explanation; something that is derogatory to religion in the view of the intelligent; for, as they suppose, the faith so much insisted on is, to some extent at least, a blind faith, an unintelligent faith, an unreasoning, and therefore an unreasonable, faith; and so a faith that inevitably brings about a conflict between itself and reason, and thus forces the intelligent into the dilemma of choosing in religion whether they will be controlled by knowledge or by ignorance; by reason or by mere credulity. There can be no doubt that there are many who

Part III. (pp. 457-656) is the more metaphysical portion of the work. Here the different schools of ethics are critically examined. The chapter on *Utilitarianism in Ethics* is especially fine as an acute piece of analysis and criticism. In this last part the author shows the absolute need for a metaphysics of morals. Other chapters are: *Legalism in Ethics*, *Idealism in Ethics*, *The Ethical Sciences*, *Morality and Religion*, *The Ground of Morality and the World-Ground*, *The Ultimate Moral Ideal*.

A general criticism of the book applies equally to all the recent works of the school to which Professor Ladd belongs: the ideal towards which we strive, the *summum bonum*, is left undefined and unanalyzed. It is true the author says we must act so as to most perfectly realize our fullest selfhood. But moral goodness, or the virtuous life, is a very complex conception. Just how we are to get the needed harmony in developing our myriad-sided self, it is perhaps impossible to know. There are certain minor faults one might instance, certain undignified slurs, that one wishes were not there; but the book is so excellent in many ways that one can easily forgive these minor blemishes. The author has often remarked that we need to get away from much of our modern sentimental ethics, and incorporate some of the rigor of Kantian ethics. One is struck, and moreover charmed, with the vigor of the system. The author thinks that "the ethical spirit is low and nerveless just now" in the church. The present work is a reaction against this present low standard of morals.

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WAITE'S "HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION."

THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION TO THE YEAR TWO HUNDRED. *By Charles B. Waite.* Fifth edition. 1900.

This is a most dangerous book for the uninformed. As it has been in circulation for more than twenty years, and has reached its fifth edition, it has probably been instrumental in turning many away from the belief of the truth, and served to confirm many doubters in infidelity. It seems to have been little noticed by those who are supposed to be "set for the defence of the gospel" (Phil. i. 17), while it seems to have attracted the notice of a large number of readers. The author, in his preface, announces, in quite a triumphant strain, that no serious attempt at refutation has been made. "In conclusion," says he, "we again call attention to the fact that none of the main propositions of this work have been in the slightest degree impeached; much less overthrown." The notice which drew my attention to the book, and led me to examine it, was in a very popular weekly, which lies on the study-tables of a large number of the reading ministers of the English-speaking world, and enters the homes of many of their educated hearers; and that notice stated the position of the book, which is entirely incompatible with the truth of Christianity—and, indeed, gave the gist of its argument—without a word of dissent or an intimation that there was any answer which could be made to it.

One might, ordinarily, hesitate before drawing attention to a book of the

kind, which it might be best to let die unnoticed; yet when he sees that it has been noticed in such a way, and that it is not proceeding to die, as one might hope it would, but is assuming new life and vigor for its deadly work, and when, moreover, it requires no skill in the reviewer to refute it, because he has only to stand by and point out certain events of providence which have already refuted it, his duty, it would seem, is to speak, and bid as many as he can reach look on and see how God has answered the accuser.

The notice referred to was in *The Literary Digest*, which described the author as "said to be a man of learning, who has spent many years in an exhaustive non-partisan study of the history of the early Christian church," and, moreover, speaks of him as a "judge." The conclusion of many readers would naturally be that here is an entirely disinterested and judicially fair view of the great subject.

The author's great object is to prove the late date, and consequent unreliableness, of the gospels. In the endeavor to prove this late date of the gospels, he broaches the theory that there were earlier gospels than ours which were "suppressed" by church authority, our present gospels being put in their place.

All who are informed on this subject know that in the second and the following centuries pretended gospels were published, generally by sects of heretics who tried by means of them to form a support for their peculiar views. Indeed, the publication of apocryphal gospels continues even to our own day, one purporting to be the report of Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius on the trial of our Lord having been extensively advertised only a few years ago, and sent abroad over our country to deceive the ignorant and fill the pockets of the man who pretended to have discovered it. The publication of such frauds began as early as the second century; but at no time was any one of them accepted as true by the church in general, though the deception was successful in certain localities—as is the case with the recent one just mentioned.

The author of this book bases his theory upon three writings which he claims were the original gospels, and which he avers were "suppressed," that the four gospels of the "New Testament might be put in their place, namely," *The Gospel of Paul*, *The Gospel According to Peter*, and *The Logia, or Oracles*, attributed to Matthew, which he thinks was the germ of *The Gospel According to the Hebrews*.

The author is so possessed with his theory of the "suppression" of earlier, and the substitution of later, gospels that, in his preface, he makes a considerable journey down through the centuries to find, in the fifth, what he considers a very striking instance. On page vii., Preface, he says:

"The fact is, there were various instances of the displacement of older gospels, and the substitution of the canonical in their stead. Even as late as the fifth century Theodoret found it necessary to suppress the gospel of Tatian, and substitute in its place the four gospels. 'I found, myself,' says Theodoret (A. D. 430), 'upwards of two hundred such held in honor among your churches, and collecting them all together, I had them put aside, and instead introduced the gospels of the four evangelists.'"

This was, for the author's purpose, a most unfortunate selection. This

book, *The Diatessaron of Tatian*, here represented as an *older gospel*, which was "suppressed" that the canonical gospels (of later origin in the author's opinion) might be put in its place, has been discovered, and instead of sustaining this "suppression" theory, demonstrates the priority of our gospels.

"Judge" Waite, the author of this so-called *History of Christianity to the Year Two Hundred*, read, many years ago—and made his text-book—a work published in England at the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, entitled *Supernatural Religion*, a book which sadly misled many educated Englishmen, and has contributed to the making of an American a false guide for many uninformed readers. His book is evidently an echo of *Supernatural Religion*. The author of the latter work combined with a one-sided and superficial knowledge of patristic literature the set purpose to "down" Christianity by destroying confidence in the New Testament.

When, a quarter of a century ago, interest among scholars was awakening about *The Diatessaron of Tatian*, which was said to be a harmony of our four gospels, and on which Ephraim, the Syrian, wrote a commentary, he ventured to say that "no one seems to have seen *Tatian's Diatessaron*, probably for the simple reason that there was no such work."¹

After it had become very evident that there *was* such a work, he said in an edition of *Supernatural Religion*, published in 1879, "It is obvious that there is no evidence of any value connecting Tatian's gospel with those in our canon."²

Let us look for a moment at an event which showed the utter falsity of this. There had been for more than a century in the Vatican library an Arabic manuscript, which had been brought from the East, numbered XIV. At the instance of Prof. Theodor Zahn, who had some knowledge of it, it was translated into Latin and published in 1888. It proved to be the long lost *Diatessaron of Tatian*, and was seen to be no "suppressed" gospel at all, but a *harmony of our four gospels*, so woven together as to give a continuous account of the life and the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. To the Tübingen School, of whose theory of the late origin of the gospels *Supernatural Religion* was an English presentation, it was like the stone from David's sling to the forehead of Goliath. The contention of this German rationalistic school that the gospels were not all written till 170 A. D. has vanished as completely as a pricked bubble. No self-respecting, well-informed scholar would now uphold it. Even such a leader among the former followers of Baur, the founder of the Tübingen School, as Adolf Harnack, of Berlin University, has said,³ "The presuppositions of the Baur School can now be fairly said to have been entirely discarded," and adds, what is very significant as bearing on the present case, "Yet there is left in biblical criticism, as an inheritance from that age, an undefined suspicion [captiousness!] of a kind practiced by a trickster lawyer, or, at least, a petty fault-finding method, which still clings to all manner of minor details, and from these argues against the clear and decisive facts in the case."

¹ Our author echoes: "We have come to the conclusion that it is extremely doubtful whether Tatian, the Syrian, ever wrote a Gospel."—Page 497.

² "The fact that Theodoret felt obliged to suppress it is inconsistent with the theory that it was a harmony of the four Gospels"—page 326—another echo.

³ *Die Chronologie der Altchristen Litteratur*, Introd., page 8 and following.

The *Diatessaron of Tatian* is so purely a harmony of the four gospels, without a shred of any of the many apocryphal gospels, that I have known it to be used in daily reading at family prayers as a "Life of Our Lord in the Words of the Four Evangelists." The differences in the forms of expression from those to which the hearers have been accustomed in reading our authorized version—differences due to translation from Greek into Syriac, and from Syriac into Arabic, and from Arabic into English, as well as some variations of text—enhance the interest without destroying the impressiveness of the narrative. The inevitable mistakes of copyists through seventeen hundred and fifty years are a matter of course, but are surprisingly few considering all the circumstances of the case. No one hearing this harmony read doubts that it was made up out of the very words of our four gospels, that of John being more largely drawn on than any other. What becomes of the theory of our author that the *Diatessaron*—the through four—is an *older gospel*, "suppressed" to give place to ours? *A shoe cannot be older than the leather of which it is made.*

Considering his object, it is not very strange that, in a fifth edition of the book, published in 1900, the discovery of the *Diatessaron* is not even mentioned, though it was published and in the hands of scholars in 1888. The same significant silence is maintained also about the discovery of *The Apology of Aristides*, in 1889, and that of *the new Syriac Gospels*, or *Lewis Palimpsest*, in 1892.

But what of the author's three "suppressed" gospels of the first century? Other discoveries have cleared up this whole matter, just as that of the *Diatessaron* wrecked the whole fabric which the Tübingen School of criticism had built up; but it may be safely affirmed that there will never be a discovery of the *Gospel of Paul*, since it never existed, except in so far as the *Gospel of Luke*, the companion of Paul's travels and imprisonments, is the *Gospel of Paul*, and that has never been lost. The author's contention here is too puerile to need refutation.

As to *The Gospel According to the Hebrews*, which the author thinks is a sort of second edition of the *Logia*, or *Oracles*, attributed to Matthew by Papias, the twenty-three fragments of it preserved in ancient authors show that it is made up of statements of *our four gospels*, with fanciful and heretical additions,¹ so that it is a valuable witness for our gospels. The illustration of the leather and the shoe is applicable here too. Materials must be older than the articles manufactured out of them.

The Gospel of Peter, the author thinks, was another first century gospel which was "suppressed," while the Gospel of Mark took its place in the second century. Unfortunately for this theory, a considerable part of *The Gospel of Peter* was discovered at Akhmin, in Egypt, a few years ago, and, as a result, another iridescent bubble bursts. It is found to be dependent on our four gospels, as an inspection of it makes quite evident, with some remarkable heretical additions. These additions to, and charges in, the gospel narrative, are such that we are not surprised that Serapion, Bishop of Antioch, forbade its use by the church of Rhossus. The question as to which

¹ See Dr. Bernhard Weiss' Introduction, Vol. I., page 80; Vol. II., page 232 and following, and especially the fragments themselves.

were the original writings in this case is no longer a subject for guessing. The discovery of the *Gospel According to Peter* has made it plain. We have the testimony of such a scholar as Dr. Sanday, of Oxford, for instance, to this effect:

"The apocryphal *Gospel of Peter* is based on our gospels." (See his Bampton Lectures, and especially page 301, note.) He gives a number of instances in which terms peculiar to our four gospels are used in this *Gospel According to Peter*, besides other evidences of its dependence on them; and, referring to the heretical changes and additions in this so-called gospel, says of the author of it, "It is very plain when he begins to walk by himself." Referring to these eccentric features of the forgery, he says, "In all these ways, the contrast between the apocryphal gospel and the canonical gospels is marked. The latter are really 'a garden enclosed.' Intrusive elements seem to be carefully kept out of them. They preserve the type of language, as it can be abundantly shown that they preserve the type of idea, which was appropriate just to the three years of our Lord's public ministry, and no more."

The evidence might be given in detail, but this can hardly be deemed necessary. The writer of the introduction to the recovered fragment of the *Gospel According to Peter* in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Vol. IX.), though evidently a "liberal," does not even raise the question as to the originality of our gospels. His only question is as to whether the forged writing does, or does not, draw its materials from other sources besides our gospels. His conclusion is that, "Whether the author used any *other* sources than the canonical gospels is a matter still in doubt." He has found no clear evidence that any writings other than, and in addition to, our gospels were used.

But the fragment of this so-called gospel discovered at Akhmin, if space could be allowed to introduce it here, would itself furnish the most convincing proof the reader could ask of the fact that it drew its materials from all four of the canonical gospels. While it would be clearly seen, at the first glance, that it drew upon the three synoptics, a closer examination would show an undoubted dependence on John also.

Thus it may be seen that the *Gospel of Peter*, so far from coming into competition with the four gospels as furnishing original accounts of Christ, becomes a valuable witness for the previous existence of our gospels, and of their origin in the apostolic age. The very weapon which our author has chosen for the discrediting of our gospels has blasted his own pet theory. He has been hoisted by his own petard, and the cause of the gospels has gained a new witness of no inconsiderable importance. Not arguments of men, but events of God's providence, have thus again furnished irrefragable testimony for his Word.

The man who has lived without the assurance of God's guidance and protection has walked his path very blindly, and also very unhappily, bearing the burdens of life unconscious of help and support, and going on to the unknown to-morrow without assurance against its possible disasters. But the full belief in the superintending providence which extends to trifles as small as the falling of a hair of the head, and includes the assurance of the co-operation of all circumstances for final good to ourselves, gives us the assurance also that all shall work together for the church of God, against

which, we have the promise, that the gates of hell shall never prevail. As we see continually how even comparatively trivial circumstances have brought us great good, or saved us from great evil, and thus have evidence of an all-wise guidance and the work of an all-powerful hand, for ourselves, so we are encouraged to believe that, for the church, there is a guidance and protection as efficacious as that of the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night. And in this, too, we often see great results turn on apparently trifling circumstances.

Now that steamships are constantly crossing the ocean, no one pays any regard to the calculations of the great English physicist and mathematician of the early part of the last century by which he proved conclusively, to his own satisfaction, that no vessel could be constructed to carry enough coal to propel it across the Atlantic. His arguments no longer need to be refuted by counter argument. They have long ago been refuted by events. The case of the author of *Supernatural Religion*, and his American follower, the author whose book we have been considering, is precisely the same. These books have been answered by events of God's providence. We can only stand by and reverently say, "This work was wrought of our God." (Neh. vi. 16.)

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