

# The Bible Student.

CONTINUING

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## Convinced Against Its Will.

If there are any who still think the destructive criticism of the Bible can be abolished by refuting it, the recent history of New Testament criticism must provide them a very interesting spectacle. The work of refutation was not only objectively, but seemed also subjectively, complete. There had been a time when the chief results of Tuebingen criticism ranked in all "scholarly" circles as permanent historical gains, which only "apologists"—a very unsavory variety of the human species—could profess to doubt. That time had passed away. The destructive critics had been driven to their wits' end and found themselves split into two camps. The one had been compelled to yield point after point until they had practically yielded all, and were confronted on all sides by triumphant "conservatism." The other had been compelled, in order to avoid this fate, to advance to ever wilder and wilder assumptions, until they had passed beyond the limits of even the *vraisemblance* of romance, and had put themselves confessedly out of court. Everywhere it was acknowledged that the battle had been fought to a finish and had been

won. The "traditional view" of the origin of the New Testament had been passed through the fire, and when the heats had subsided it was found to be just what it was before: it had come out unharmed, and the whole "scholarly" world was ready to admit it.

## Fifteen Years Ago.

Let us recall a couple of incidents which illustrate the universal sense of, say, fifteen years ago, of the final victory of "conservatism" in the sphere of New Testament criticism. The one was a public fact and caused much comment at the time. We refer to the reception given by the best and most trusted New Testament critics to the destructive methods and results of Old Testament criticism just then becoming thoroughly understood and arousing wide-spread uneasiness. It was precisely in the ranks of the New Testament critics of credit and renown, that the Old Testament criticism found itself met with, we do not say the most distrust, but rather with the most decisive rejection. Dr. T. K. CHEYNE, in his characteristic manner, made this the subject of explicit remark

and pathetic complaint. Students of the two Testaments, he said, in effect, were facing kindred problems, and were engaged in similar tasks: they should mutually esteem and support one another. But that was just the trouble: these students of the New Testament had tested the methods now being resorted to by the students of the Old Testament, on far more favorable ground for attaining solid results than the Old Testament afforded, and had found them wanting. It was precisely because the problems were kindred and the tasks similar, and they had attacked the problems and worked through the tasks in their more favorable circumstances, that they felt authorized, or rather compelled, to come forward in protest against the methods and so-called results of the fashionable criticism of the Old Testament. Across that pathway they felt that their hard-bought experience required them to nail up the placard: *Impasse*. Could they who had tried it, sit still and see the public led into a blind-alley?

**Dr. C. W.  
Hodge's  
Conviction.**

The other illustrative incident was private to the present writer. He well remembers how, some fifteen years ago, when holding converse with one of the wisest men he ever knew, a man whose minute and comprehensive learning in all the byways of the New Testament criticism was equalled only by the honesty of his mind and the judicial balance of his judgment,—the late Dr. CASPER WISTAR HODGE,—he met with a considerable rebuff. The fear was expressed that the growing popularity in the sphere of Old Testament criticism of methods of research which had been discredited in the New Testament, portended a recrudescence of the same outworn methods on New

Testament ground. "It is inevitable," he ventured to argue, "that, if these very same methods are now tolerated in the Old Testament,—where there is so much less opportunity for subjecting them to stringent tests,—they will thereby receive a certain rehabilitation, and as a result will be revived in the New Testament also, in entire and blissful forgetfulness that they have already been fully tested there and found wanting." "And so," he added, doubtless somewhat wearily, "we shall have to fight the same old battle all over again: and that without the exhilaration of novelty or the hope of finality." The look of astonishment and almost of scorn which he received, had nothing pleasant about it except the apparent implication embodied in it that better things had been expected of him. "Nonsense!" said Dr. HODGE in effect: "that battle has been fought once for all: and the fight has been won for all time. There can be no longer rational dispute as to the validity of the so-called 'traditional' view of the New Testament." This judgment unquestionably fairly expressed the objective fact. It also fairly expressed the subjective position of scholarly opinion fifteen years ago.

**Recrudescence  
Of Destructive  
Criticism.**

Nevertheless the impossible has (as usual) happened: and all the old wounds of the New Testament criticism are reopened. We are somewhat secluded in America. But even here, a book like Dr. A. C. MCGIFFERT'S *A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, or like Dr. G. H. GILBERT'S *The Revelation of Jesus*, or like Dr. B. W. BACON'S *An Introduction to the New Testament*, had become possible before the nineteenth century ended. And what do these show, except that nothing

has been settled in the forum of the type of "scholarship" represented by these writers, and that the most extreme hypotheses of negative criticism are still lying in their critical pigeon-holes to be produced on any occasion that seems to call for them? Things have come to a very low state indeed when it is possible for Prof. LEVI LEONARD PAINE to turn gratuitously aside from his proper subject in order to incorporate into his *Critical History of the Evolution of Trinitarianism* such a summary of New Testament pseudo-criticism as that included in its first chapter, or to venture to adjoin to the book such a discussion of "The Johannean Problem" as that which constitutes his first appendix. Meanwhile, however, the opening twentieth century brings us two British books in which what is impending in the sphere of New Testament criticism is made as plain to any seeing eye as plain can be. Here at least are works of the first quality of scholarship and vigor: and they open all the old questions with a sublime unconsciousness that they have been all "settled" and with an evident intention that they shall not ever be settled, favorably to "traditional" ideas. We are referring to the two most notable discussions of New Testament critical problems of the opening year: that embodied in Mr. JAMES MOFFAT'S *The Historical New Testament*, and that contained in the New Testament articles included in the second volume of Prof. CHEYNE'S *Encyclopedia Biblica*, particularly those from the hand of Prof. PAUL W. SCHMIEDEL of Zurich. In "principle," we do not think there is much to choose between the two writers: if we discriminate between them in "spirit," that is very much a matter of taste; and if we marshal their "results" comparatively that raises a question not of kind

but of degree. What is of importance to note is that all the old New Testament problems are reopened, and that the "battle of criticism" is as truly as yet to fight in the New Testament as in the Old Testament.

#### The Condescension Of Critics.

We have, indeed, even reverted to the age when people sneered at "conservative" conclusions in the New Testament, just because they were "conservative." A notable case is just now before us. There never was a more prudently or solidly wrought out picture of the Apostolic age drawn up, than that set forth in Dr. GEORGE T. PURVES' *Christianity in the Apostolic Age*. Adequate scholarship, clear historic sense, balanced judgment, eminent constructive ability shine out on every page: and no man need seek a safer guide to the history of the days of the apostles. Yet the book has been received by the self-esteeming "scholarly press"—from *The Hartford Seminary Record* (November, 1900, p. 49), and *The Biblical World* (January, 1901, p. 72-73), to *The Expository Times* (March, 1901, p. 266), and even *The American Historical Review* (April, 1901), with little better than a sneer. Dr. PURVES it seems "accepts nothing new;" he stands "just where our fathers did;" he has such a way of "ignoring things" that "it is difficult to say if he knows,"—though "on the whole, it is probable that he does,"—which certainly, however, "does not make him less a transgressor." So, it seems, even the old reign of terror is to be revived,—when one dared not disagree with Tuebingen on pain of being "no scholar." Dr. PURVES will doubtless console himself with the reflection that it is better to be true than new. And we will meanwhile note that in the sphere of the New Testament criticism, it is quite

clear that adequate refutation has not adequately refuted. Men are still spending their days and nights "in nothing else but either to tell or hear some new thing."

**Evolutionism  
versus  
Hegelianism.**

We are far from intending to suggest that the new destructive criticisms of the New Testament is an exact reproduction of the old Tuebingen criticism. It is nothing so little as that. The differences between the two are fundamental and pervasive. For one thing, the philosophy that underlies the new criticism is as unlike as possible that which gave body to the critical work of Tuebingen. Tuebingen criticism was a product of Hegelianism; and it owed the strength which gave it such immense and long-continued vogue, and as well the weakness on account of which it succumbed at last to refutation, to its connection with Hegelianism. So long as Hegelianism flourished, the Tuebingen criticism ruled the "scholarly" world with a rod of iron: when the Hegelian philosophy crumbled, the Tuebingen criticism did homage to the refutations by which it had long before been thoroughly refuted. Our newer criticisms is not Hegelian: it is "Evolutional." It owes its recrudescence to the dominance of evolutionary philosophizing, and it will live just so long as the conception of evolution is the determining force in thought. Men who persist in thinking that all that comes into being comes into being by virtue of the interaction of forces intrinsic in the universe, and without any intrusions from without, simply must explain the rise of the New Testament books and history also as natural products of precedent conditions. It is under the impulse of this inward necessity that they dissolve these writings into

elements which they can rearrange in a "natural" sequence; that they reconstruct this history after a fashion which will "account" for itself. You may refute the reconstructions all you please: either these or some other reconstruction *must* be true—if "evolution" is to remain the major premiss of the syllogism. This change of philosophical basis is the really significant fact in the recent history of criticism. And it is not a very reassuring fact. For, if we are not very much mistaken, it portends a far more serious struggle for the believer in supernatural revelation than the Tuebingen theories were able to impose upon him. There is something of aloofness in Hegelianism: it does not appeal to the masses; Hegelian criticism therefore could not be really popularized and always remained something of an accademic thing. But Evolutionism is the popular philosophy of the day: and evolutionistic criticism is apt to become the mother of the popular faith. We shall meet with it in the street as we never met Tuebingen criticism; in the churches; in the Sabbath-schools. It is not a thing that we can afford to dally with: and it would be wise if we should remember that it can be effectively met only in its roots. We may refute the "criticism" all we choose—it will never respond to refutation until we refute the "evolutionism" that lies behind it.

**Irresponsibility  
Of the Newer  
Criticism.**

The most striking point in which the new criticism differs from the old Tuebingen criticism, however, is what we may perhaps call its irresponsibility. There was a certain dignity in the Tuebingen criticism: if we may use such a phrase of so unfounded an assault in the Christian Scriptures, even to a certain de-

gree, an air of scientific restraint. This was due to the fact that it was a very serious philosophy which underlay it, and that the criticism itself was compacted into a system. It was in a word an eminently systematic criticism. The newer criticism is on the contrary, as yet at least, entirely sporadic, unsystematic,—as we have said, irresponsible. All the old expedients—of the older rationalism of Paulus, of the mythicism of Strauss, of the antitheticism of Baur,—and many new expedients of its own,—are freely drawn upon by it, as occasion serves, for individual explanations, without apparent care for consistency or regard for relations. The critic seems content if he can suggest a plausible reason for his present proceeding. This is no doubt a source of weakness in so far as no such massive impression can be made on the mind by the criticism as a whole, as was made by the systematic criticism of Tuebingen. But it is so far a source of strength as it conceals the fact that the whole impulse to criticism is the outgrowth here too of a philosophical principle, and the whole is already refuted when we refute its philosophical basis.

Let us illustrate this irresponsibility of the new criticism by a couple of examples from Prof. SCHMIEDL himself. Nearly a dozen years ago there was laid in our hands a remarkable book by a Mr. EDWIN JOHNSON, bearing the title: *The Rise of Christendom* (London: Kegan Paul, French, Trübner & Co., 1890). We hesitated a little whether we should not look upon it as a clever *jeu d'esprit* designed to bring "criticism" into contempt by showing to what uses its "principles" could just as well be applied as to the pulverizing

of early Christian literature and history—a companion-piece in a word of "Mr. McREALSHAM'S" *Romans Dissected*. It was obviously, however, seriously intended. And so we wrote of it in *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* for October, 1891 (p. 694), as follows:

"A delicious piece of critical reconstruction of history—not without its lessons. The author—out Hardouining Hardouin, and out Lomaning Loman on their own ground,—sweeps away all early Christian and even Jewish literature at one stroke, and elaborately defends, in this bulky volume, the thesis that Islam is the root out of which 'these mediæval movements' sprung. Islam, he teaches, arose about 800 A. D., and gave birth about two hundred years later to Judaism, which in turn gave birth about two hundred years later still to Christianity. All Christian records professing an earlier date are forgeries of 'the Basilian and Benedictine monks.' Thus, the Church is 'a purely mediæval institution, without literary or oral links with the past' (p. 16), its cradle period being 'the latter half of the twelfth century.' 'Listening to the preaching of the Moslem clergy (about 800-900), we are listening to the earliest form in which the substance of both the Old and New Testaments were known to our world' (p. 182). The Jews were a Spanish sect, separating from Islam: Obadiah xix. 20 clearly refers to Spain and France (p. 811); and the Old Testament probably began to be well known in the Synagogues about the middle of the twelfth century' (p. 888). The New Testament could not have been completed till the thirteenth century (p. 881). Not only did the monks forge the whole Christian literature—Eusebius dating with Nicephorus Callistus in the fourteenth century (p. 18), Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* long after Frederick II., and even Josephus about 1050-1150; but they interpolated also all the allusions to Jews and Christians into the classics, 'invented' inscriptions, forged all Christian imperial coins and all Papal coins prior to the fifteenth century,—and in general created the world. It is a comfort to know that in order to deny the claims of Christianity, it is no longer sufficient to sweep away all second century records with BAUR; we must also sweep away all records up at least to the twelfth century. The book will serve along with 'Mr. McREALSHAM'S' dissection of Romans, as an admirable *reductio ad absurdum* of certain forms of radical Biblical criticism, the methods of which it adopts with these pleasing and veracious results."

**The  
Recognition of  
Kinship.**

Now, it seems incredible that any one should take Mr. EDWIN JOHNSON seriously. Accordingly we have never heard of any one taking him seriously—with two exceptions. The first of these is Mr. RAFIUDDIN AHMAD, essaying in the number of *The Nineteenth Century* for January, 1901 (p. 80), to reply to Sir WM. MUIR's trenchant paper on "*The Sources of Islam*." "In a remarkable book called *The Rise of Christendom*," says this Mohammedan controversialist, "the author, Professor EDWIN JOHNSON (late Professor of Classical Languages, New College, South Hampstead), discusses with great ability, impartiality and unrivalled acquaintance with ecclesiastical history, the opposite side of the question, viz. how much the Jewish and Christian Scriptures owe to Islam." The other exception is no less distinguished a representative of the newer criticism than Prof. SCHMIEDEL himself. We could scarcely believe our eyes when we saw set down at the head of the article "Galatians" in the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, Mr. EDWIN JOHNSON's other book, *Antiqua Mater*, along with LOMAN, and STECK, as an example of the more serious opposition to the "genuineness of the four so-called 'principal' epistles of Paul." No doubt there is nothing in principle to choose between in the criticism of Mr. JOHNSON and that of LOMAN and STECK or indeed of SCHMIEDEL himself. And we suppose we ought to feel grateful for the recognition of this fact from SCHMIEDEL's own hand. But it brought us a shock, all the same, to see Mr. JOHNSON spoken of as a critic of whose presentation students of the New Testament should take account. Is there *no* point in this line—SCHMIEDEL, STECK, LOMAN, JOHNSON—where pure absur-

dity enters in?

**The New  
Canon of  
Historical  
Criticism.**

For our other example, we shall go to the article "Gospels" in the same *Encyclopedia Biblica*. This is the great article in the second volume of this work, occupying no less than 125 columns. The former part of it is the work of Dr. EDWIN A. ABBOTT, the latter of Prof. SCHMIEDEL. The problem of the composition of the gospels—and especially of the synoptics—of course receives the lion's share of the space. But interest in this somewhat fades when (at p. 1872) SCHMIEDEL drops the hint that the solution of the synoptic problem is perhaps hopeless, and then adds that it is certainly not necessary—inasmuch as the historical value of the gospels may be estimated without it. This is certainly to reverse the verdict of all previous criticism: the fundamental advance, we have been told, which BAUR made on STRAUSS consisted in just this,—the establishment of the canon that the criticism of the documents must precede that of their contents. It is not this, however, to which we wish to call attention. It is rather the nature of SCHMIEDEL's canon for separating the historical from the unhistorical elements in a historic narrative,—and especially in our Synoptic Gospels. It is briefly this,—that in a document whose narrative is conceived in the spirit of hero-worship, "first and foremost importance" is to be attached "to those features which cannot be deduced from the fact of this worship." That is to say, anything found in such a narrative that does not fall in well with the author's feelings was probably not invented by him, and hence may be considered to have been thrust upon him by what he at least deemed evidence. In this principle Dr. ABBOTT fully concurs,

continually pointing out that we can best trust as historic those elements of a document which were obviously "stumbling-blocks" to its writer. Operating on this principle, Prof. SCHMIEDEL reduces our really trustworthy data for a historical knowledge of Christ practically to five passages (Mk. x. 17 sq., Mat. xii. 31 sq., Mk. iii. 21, Mk. xiii. 32, Mk. xv. 34—Mat. xxvii. 46), which may be made to present Jesus as no more than man,—to which are added four more (Mk. viii. 12, vi. 5 sq., viii. 14-21, Mat. xi. 5—Luke vii. 22), which may be made to say that Jesus never wrought miracles. On these "foundation pillars for a truly scientific life of Jesus," Prof. SCHMIEDEL builds up a picture of a human Jesus—quite the opposite of the Divine Jesus the Gospels portray—and pronounces him the real Jesus.

**How to Write  
History  
Backwards.**

What most sharply attracts our attention in this, we say, is the nature of the critical canon by means of which it is wrought. It can be made, to be sure, to sound very plausible: whatever may be found in a historical document inconsistent with the point of view of the author of that document evinces itself as more original than the document itself. The use made of this principle, however, is certainly portentous enough to bid us pause and consider. If we are to take our sole knowledge of the history from these "stumbling-blocks," we have already absolutely condemned the author with whom we are dealing as entirely untrustworthy, and are discovered to be seeking to elicit the truth from his narrative by the very drastic process of rejecting absolutely all that he has himself any concern with. The process, in a word, is simply a neat receipt for obtaining as result of "criticism" precisely the op-

posite view of the history from that presented in all our sources! As a "critical" canon for dealing with "historical" sources, that is probably the most astounding one that ever was invented by man. Do you wish to know what Jesus really was? Do not ask those who companied with Him and really knew Him, to tell you what they found Him. But seek to discover some hints, in what they say, that Jesus sometimes did and sometimes said some things which may be forced into contradiction of the view of Him they themselves formed from their total impression of Him. Represent these as survivals of an older stratum of fact, recognized previously to the formation of their hero-worshipping idylls. And frame your idea of Jesus on these alone, so interpreted. Thus you may obtain a Jesus, to whom none of your sources witness,—against whom all your sources protest,—who is precisely the opposite of the Jesus that all your sources present. When history in general comes to be written on this method of dealing with the sources, we shall have "original" history indeed. It is the apotheosis of topsy-turvydom. This comfort may be found in it, however,—that it evinces to us that the Jesus of the historic testimony—"or the historic tradition," if you will,—is the Divine Jesus of our worship. Prof. SCHMIEDEL can obtain his human Jesus only by the process of *reversing* the whole historic testimony. B. B. W.

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**"Conscience"  
in Gospels  
And Acts.**

The word "conscience" does not occur in the Bible as often as might have been expected. It has become in modern theology and philosophy, as well as in the vocabulary of common life, a very familiar term. But