

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THERE is no part of a book so useful as the preface for revealing the character of the author. We do not say the character of the book, we say the character of the author. We therefore wish to warn all those who desire to know the author of the latest and best *Commentary on St. Matthew's Gospel* not to skip Mr. Allen's preface.

The Rev. Willoughby C. Allen is Chaplain-Fellow, and Lecturer in Theology and Hebrew, in Exeter College, Oxford. Up till now he has published no great amount of work. But his contributions to THE EXPOSITORY TIMES and elsewhere, though unimpressive in bulk, have been of the finest quality. Dealing exclusively with the Synoptic Gospels, they have been felt by the student of these Gospels always to say the right thing and in the right way. This has been felt to be so whatever their particular topic might be, even though it should be so difficult a subject as our Lord's teaching on Divorce.

The choice of Mr. Allen to write the Commentary on the First Gospel was no leap in the dark. The First Gospel is, we believe, the most difficult book to edit of all the books of the New Testament. That may be why it has been so rarely edited. It demands scholarship and it demands character.

It demands scholarship that is never worried with minutiae, and yet keeps the whole field in sight. And it demands character that is modest enough to believe in the scholarship of others and yet independent enough to pass by all the editors and all the traditions, and ascertain what this First Evangelist actually wrote, and what meaning his words had to himself.

Mr. Allen has that scholarship and that character. The book reveals his scholarship; his character may be seen in the preface. It may be seen partly in the obligations which he owns. Among the rest, he owns a debt to Dr. Sanday, using these words: 'Of my obligations to Dr. Sanday I cannot write adequately. He is in no sense directly responsible for anything these pages contain, but if there be any sound element in method or in tone in what I have written, it is probably ultimately traceable to his influence and to that of his writings.' It may be, therefore, that he owes to Dr. Sanday that distinction which he has been able to make, and which we wish now to point out.

It is the distinction between the search for truth with a bias and the search for truth without it. It is easy enough in these days to interpret a Gospel in an anti-traditional sense,—with the deliberate

purpose, for example, of excluding or explaining away what the Church has called the miracles in it. Nor is it very difficult even yet to interpret a Gospel in the traditional sense—excluding, for example, or explaining away every sign of contradiction. But Mr. Allen's method is none of these. He has been able to see that it is no compliment to Science or the Church to twist the truth into their liking. He has written his commentary in the belief that there is a truth of the Gospels earlier than modern physical science, and earlier even than the traditional interpretation of the Church.

Is there anything more to be said about the New Theology? There is at any rate a new book to be noticed. It contains the best account of the subject we have seen. Its author is the Rev. T. Rhondda Williams, of Bradford. Mr. Rhondda Williams has been the evangelist of the New Theology for a good many years. His new book is entitled *The New Theology: An Exposition*.

Turn to the fourth chapter. The fourth chapter is on 'The Character of Jesus,' and the question is asked, Was He Sinless? That is a good question to ask. That is a question to test the New Theology. If the New Theology answers that question satisfactorily it will stand.

The New Theology has not been eager to discuss the sinlessness of Jesus. Mr. Rhondda Williams admits that. 'I think it is true,' he says, 'that New Theology men are largely silent about it.' He resolves to discuss it for once. But he discusses it with reluctance. And he tells us why. Now, why do you think the New Theology men are reluctant to speak about the sinlessness of Jesus? It is because they love Him so much. The late Carl Ullmann discussed the sinlessness of Jesus in a volume of 300 pages. He was a good man, and he loved the Lord Jesus Christ with all his heart. Was Ullmann one of those fools who rush in where the angels of the New Theology fear to tread? Dean Farrar, in his *Life of Christ*, speaks

of Ullmann's book. 'Ullmann,' he says, 'has studied the sinlessness of Christ more profoundly, and written upon it more beautifully than any other theologian.' How is it that the New Theology men out of love for Christ are reluctant to write about His sinlessness?

It is because they do not believe in it. Mr. Rhondda Williams does not believe in it. And now we shall see why.

The first reason why Mr. Rhondda Williams does not believe in the sinlessness of Jesus is that we have no complete biography. For the first thirty years of His life, he says, we know practically nothing about Him. Does Mr. Rhondda Williams say that Jesus sinned during that period? He does not say that He sinned. He does not even suggest that He sinned. At least he says that he does not even suggest it. But in saying that he does not even suggest that Jesus sinned during the first thirty years of His life, there is just the suspicion that he has succeeded in making the suggestion. It would have been better to leave the first thirty years alone, until he saw whether Jesus sinned during the years of which we know. If He sinned during the years of His ministry, it would be reasonable to say that He probably sinned during the thirty years before it. But if He was sinless in public life, it is but fair to believe that He was sinless also in private life.

But when Mr. Rhondda Williams comes to examine our Lord's public ministry to see if He was sinless, he almost dispels the slight suspicion which he raised at the beginning. He is straightforward with every event of it. His first act, it is true, is to dismiss the Fourth Gospel. In dismissing the Fourth Gospel he gets rid of the direct claim which Jesus seems to make to sinlessness in the words, 'Which of you convicteth me of sin?' But we shall let it pass. There is enough in the Synoptic Gospels to bring the sinlessness of Jesus and the New Theology to the test. Let us come to the Synoptic Gospels.

Now there is no record in the Synoptic Gospels that Jesus ever made confession of sin. There is no hint that he ever felt the weight of it. The answer which Mr. Rhondda Williams makes to that (he admits the fact of it) is that John the Baptist never made confession of sin, and that there is no confession of personal sin in the Book of Amos. That is one half of the answer. The other half is that if Jesus never felt the weight of sin upon Himself, neither did He make much of it in other people. Mr. Rhondda Williams recalls the story of the adulterous woman, to whom Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more.' We may take these arguments for what they are worth. So far, Mr. Rhondda Williams has not discovered any sin in Jesus, or the suspicion of it.

Then Mr. Rhondda Williams comes face to face with the matter, and directly asks the question, 'So far as Jesus appears in history, is He sinless?' Before answering it he reminds us of what sin is. 'Sin,' he says, 'is the choice of the lower alternative.' We may have inclinations to this lower alternative. These inclinations in themselves, he says, are not sin. But if we choose the lower when we are in sight of the higher, then we sin. 'Now,' says Mr. Rhondda Williams, '*I know of no instance in which Jesus chose the lower in place of the higher alternative; therefore I know of no sin that He ever committed.*'

We have thrown the last sentence into italics. Does Mr. Rhondda Williams, then, believe in the sinlessness of Christ after all? We thought for a moment that he did, and were astonished, considering the way we had come to it. But we soon found that, after all, he does not.

'The figure before me in the Gospels,' he says, 'is sinless.' But it seems that Mr. Rhondda Williams cannot attribute sinlessness to Christ though he finds Him sinless. For His sinlessness was not 'an endowment of nature,' but 'an achievement of character.'

We must not call this theological hair-splitting. We must not forget that the New Theology men have the utmost contempt for theological hair-splitting. Their appeal is to the plain man. Mr. Rhondda Williams seems to think that when the plain man has discovered one who never sinned, he still would call him a sinner, because he had not inherited his sinlessness, but—simply had never sinned.

And how does Mr. Rhondda Williams know that this sinlessness 'is very far from being an endowment of nature'? He does not know. He simply says so. He says that if Jesus had been sinless by nature it would have been no virtue in Him, and of no use to us. But the question before us is neither what would be virtue in Jesus, nor what would be of use to us. The question is, Was Jesus sinless? and Mr. Rhondda Williams admits that He was.

If Mr. Rhondda Williams believes that Jesus was sinless, we ask again, Why does he not believe in His sinlessness? Because it would be a miracle. 'To build up a theory of sinlessness,' he says, 'preserved intact from cradle to cross, sinlessness which not only does not belong, but which cannot belong, to any other man either here or in eternity, which makes Jesus a miracle, and demands a miraculous birth as its explanation; to do this, I say, is entirely unwarranted by the facts.'

So if we find that Jesus was sinless, we must believe that He was sinless, for that is warranted by the facts. But we must not believe in His sinlessness, because that would be unwarranted by the facts.

The late Dr. George Salmon, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, whose *Introduction to the New Testament* gave some of us our first taste of the delights of critical scholarship, wrote another volume of Introduction in the very end of his life, and left it to be published posthumously. It has been edited and seen through the press by

Professor Newport White. It is a volume of criticism of the Synoptic Gospels. Its title is *The Human Element in the Gospels* (Murray; 15s. net).

Dr. Salmon was led to a new and critical study of the Gospels in the end of his life by the condition of Old Testament criticism. The results of that criticism greatly disturbed him. It seemed to him to be at variance with the views in which he had been brought up. It seemed to be at variance with the doctrine taught in the Christian Church ever since the time of the Apostles. It was suggested to him (he does not say by whom) that he should take part in the controversy, by writing in defence of traditional opinions on the Old Testament. But he did not do so. The Old Testament was not his subject. His knowledge of the Hebrew language and literature was the knowledge of an amateur. Wisely (and yet wonderfully, for he was an old man by this time), he left the Old Testament to experts.

He turned to the New Testament, with which he had long been familiar. He turned to the Synoptic Gospels. For he felt that he could criticise the Gospels impartially. He could not impartially criticise the authorship of the books of the Old Testament. For he held the view that in calling certain books of the Old Testament by their reputed authors' names, Christ had settled their authorship for ever. To question the authorship of the 110th Psalm was to question the authority of our Lord. So he understood the matter. But with the books of the New Testament it was otherwise. Our Lord had said nothing of the authorship of the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, or Luke. And Dr. Salmon felt that he was absolutely free and unfettered when he entered upon an investigation of the origin and authorship of the Synoptic Gospels.

But the investigation astonished and distressed him. It astonished him. He had no idea that he would have to surrender so many of the beliefs

he held about the Gospels. It distressed him. For although our Lord had said nothing about the authorship of the Gospels, and therefore had not closed inquiry, the Gospels themselves had a sacredness to Dr. Salmon's own feelings which the Old Testament books had not. And 'it was painful to me,' he says, 'to lay aside those feelings of reverence which had hitherto deterred me from too minute investigation. I felt as if I had been set to make a dissection of the body of my mother; and could not feel that the scientific value of the results I might obtain would repay me for the painful shock resulting from the very nature of the task.'

Dr. Salmon confined himself to the Synoptic Gospels. He could not, however, omit all reference to the Fourth Gospel. And our purpose is to touch his book at two places at which reference to the Fourth Gospel comes in.

The first place refers to the raising of Lazarus. Readers of recent books on the Gospels have been astonished to find that both Professor Burkitt and Mr. Ernest Scott reject the historicity of the narrative of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. They will be more astonished to learn that the Provost of Trinity College rejected it also.

It was not easy for Dr. Salmon to reject it. He regarded our written Gospels as records of the narratives delivered *viva voce* by the first witnesses. He felt no distress, therefore, at ordinary omissions or discrepancies. He thought they were sufficiently accounted for by the fragmentary character of the narratives which have been preserved. But the omission from the Synoptic Gospels of the raising of Lazarus is not an ordinary omission. It was an event which under any circumstances was bound to make a great impression. According to St. John's account, not only did it make a great impression, but it was the turning-point in the life and ministry of our Lord. Dr. Salmon could not understand the omission of it, and of all reference to it by the Synoptics. With painful reluctance he came to

the conclusion that it had not occurred. And in order to account for the story of it in St. John, he resorted to the somewhat desperate theory that St. John used a *hermeneutes* or secretary; that the secretary is the actual author of the Fourth Gospel; and that he did not scruple to make additions of his own to the narratives with which the Apostle supplied him, the story of the raising of Lazarus being one of these additions.

The other matter is the cleansing of the Temple. According to the Gospels there were two cleansings of the Temple, one at the beginning of Christ's ministry, and the other at the end. St. John records the former, the first three evangelists record the latter.

Now there was a time when Dr. Salmon was ready to resolve every contradiction in the gospel history. But in his old age, the time when men grow more conservative, he, through the closer study of the Gospels which he then undertook, was led to accept contradiction in the Gospels, and calmly to ask, why not? There was a time when he would have held that there were two cleansings, one at the beginning of the ministry, and one at the end; that St. John describes the one, and the Synoptics the other; and that there is no contradiction between them. But at the end of his life the opinion that there had been two cleansings did not commend itself to him. He did not say that our Lord might not on a second visit have found the same improprieties which had shocked Him before, and expressed His indignation in the same way. But the evidence seemed to point to only one cleansing of the Temple. And if there was only one cleansing, then the right time was clearly at the end of the ministry, where the Synoptics place it.

But no sooner did he say this, and prove the impartiality which he claimed at the beginning, than he set himself to remove the contradiction in another way. He noticed that in speaking of the cleansing of the Temple St. Mark uses imperfect

tenses. He says, 'began to cast out them that sold and them that bought'; again he says, 'would not suffer (*οὐκ ἤφιεν*) that any man should carry a vessel through the temple'; and again, that Jesus 'was teaching (*ἐδίδασκεν*) and was saying (*ἔλεγεν*) unto them, My house shall be called a house of prayer.' St. Luke copies him in this. St. Matthew turns the imperfects into aorists, thus making the history one merely of a single act of authority, which is to Dr. Salmon a plain sign of posteriority in St. Matthew.

It was not merely once, then, that Jesus said, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but frequently. He habitually did not permit vessels to be carried through the Temple. 'Now,' says Dr. Salmon, 'we are not bound to believe that this continuous course of action lasted only four or five days.' St. Luke helps us to the meaning when he says, 'He was teaching daily in the temple' (*ἦν διδάσκων τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ*). We are therefore at liberty, he concludes, to accept St. John's account, that our Lord made His first protest against temple profanation on an earlier visit to the sacred House, and to believe that after an absence of a year or more, coming back with a number of Galilæan disciples, He enforced His requirements more vigorously.

Messrs. Watts & Co. have begun to publish a new edition of Mr. F. J. Gould's *Concise History of Religion*. We say they have begun to publish it. As yet only the first volume of the revised and enlarged edition has appeared. This volume describes the chief religions of the world, with the exception of Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism. And because Judaism and Christianity are kept out of this volume, some of us will reach the comfortable conclusion that we have nothing to do with it.

The book is divided into sections, which are numbered right on to the end. Each section has a conspicuous thick type heading. Turn up the

nineteenth section. Its title is 'Secondary God-making.' 'Secondary God-making,' says Mr. Gould, 'signifies the process by which a heroic person is evolved into a "Son of God," and then becomes, in effect, a new object of worship, as Saviour and Mediator.'

Now we must not shut our eyes to what follows. We may shrink from the reading of it. We shall shrink from it. But if we profess to be teachers in Israel, we must know what the people have already been taught. We must know what they are learning every day. And then, if it is the truth, let us confirm them in it. But if it is not the truth, but a fearful travesty of the truth, it is simple madness on our part to shrink from it, to shut our eyes to it, to pretend that we do not believe that the people are reading and believing it.

For of all the mistakes which the Church of Christ has made in our day, the greatest mistake is to have allowed the enemy of Christ to get in front of her in knowledge of the religious beliefs and practices of the world. She has the people first. She has them in the Day School and in the Sunday School. She has them in the home. If she had not been content to be ignorant of every religion but her own, she would have had them also as they entered the battle of life, as they faced its mental and physical temptations, as they became aware of its gross and subtle sins. But the book-stalls have been before her there. And the book-stalls have been piled with cheap reprints of what used to be called 'infidel' literature, for which the Sunday School has made no preparation, against which even the pulpit has uttered no warning. For the infidel literature of our day, the literature that tells most disastrously against Christianity, is the literature of Comparative Religion. And the Church knows nothing about it.

'The Khonds of Orissa (we return to Mr. Gould) used to offer to Tari, the Earth-goddess, a human sacrifice. For several days the "Meriah," or devoted person, was set apart, bathed and

anointed. The victim was so fastened that he could not resist, and he was drugged. Perhaps the legs were broken; and the body was torn to pieces, and the pieces were scattered over the fields to induce fertility. The victim was accounted divine. In the Christian story, the victim is offered a drug, and the legs are broken.'

We are quoting from this popular History of Religion word for word. Is there anything offensive in it? There is greater offence to come. And yet, you observe, not a word of rhetoric, not a word of denunciation of Christianity. All that is out of fashion now. There is nothing here but confident statement, the suggestion of sure footing. The writer writes as one who knows; he writes as if he were giving a complete account of the matter, as if the facts of historical Christianity were exactly on a level with the myth-making brutalities of the Khonds.

It will be observed, however, that Mr. Gould proceeds rather by suggestion than by open statement. Let us continue the quotation. 'Human sacrifice was in vogue till the Christian era, within and near the Roman Empire. It was practised by Lusitanians, Gauls, Teutons, and Scythians. In the island of Cyprus a human sacrifice was offered to Zeus till the time of Hadrian. A sacred victim was maintained luxuriously for a year by the Albanian tribe, near the Caspian Sea, and then transfixed with a holy lance.' The reference to the spear that pierced the side of Christ is obvious. Mr. Gould does not trouble to point it out. But he makes his quotations from the Gospels when necessary. Let us go on.

'In the worship connected with Dionysus a boy was originally put to death; but, for the human offering, a goat, bull, cow, or ox was substituted at a later stage. The death of the ox in the Athenian ceremony was treated as a murder, for which the slayers were put on trial, the ox being considered the delegate of divinity. The victim might be eaten, or the animal substitute might be

eaten; and in either case the worshippers believed they were coming into intimate contact with the god. The idea of such union is expressed in the Christian Fourth Gospel: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (Jn 6⁵⁶).

Mr. Gould proceeds. 'The sacred meal of the Mithraists consisted of bread and wine, or bread and water. Cakes and ale formed the religious food of the Egyptians. In ancient Mexico the body of a human sacrifice to the war-god was sacramentally eaten. The Jews ate the passover lamb, and this lamb was a firstling of the flock, put in place of a "redeemed" firstborn son. A significant clue to ancient human sacrifice is preserved in the story of Abraham offering up Isaac. Seven of Saul's sons were hanged "before the Lord"—that is, to placate the angry God. The ceremony of the scapegoat in Jewish ritual was probably a form of sacrifice that succeeded to a human sacrifice. As leading up to the Christian myth of the Crucifixion and the Eucharist, we note that the Hebrew history indicates a custom of eating religious meals.'

Up to this point Mr. Gould has been following Mr. J. M. Robertson. At this point he seems to hesitate. Is Mr. J. M. Robertson's anti-Christianity a little too strong even for Mr. Gould? He refers to what follows as a theory of Mr. Robertson's. He does not commit himself to it. All the same he gives the theory. And we must not shrink, but give it after him.

We have quoted his exact words up till now; let us quote them still. 'Mr. Robertson then proceeds [the reference is to *Pagan Christs*] to explain his theory of a Crucifixion drama—that is, a popular drama (miracle-play, or mystery) in which the God-man is tried and executed; and from the traditional dialogue and, so to speak, stage-book of which was formed the narrative preserved in the Gospels. With the belief in the Crucifixion is associated the practice of the

Eucharist, in various forms of wine, water, wine and water, mixed broken bread, round cakes and wafers.'

There is an article in a recent number of the *Journal of Theological Studies* on 'Emphasis in the New Testament.' It is in the number for October 1906. The author of the article is Dr. Ambrose Wilson. We boast of the facility with which the Bible can be translated into any language upon earth, and the boast is not empty. But there are some things, especially in the Greek of the New Testament, which can scarcely be rendered into English. Emphasis is one of these things. A Greek scholar knows where the emphatic words are. But how often is he baffled in his effort to let the English reader know.

The Greek language has one way of expressing emphasis, and that one way is enough. It has the arrangement of the words in the sentence. What methods has the English tongue? Dr. Wilson can think of only two. One method is to begin with the phrase, 'it is' or 'it was'; the other is to use italics. But it happens that neither of these methods is available in the Bible. We translate the Bible too literally ever to dare a superfluous 'it is'; and we use italics for another purpose. So there is absolutely no way of expressing emphasis in the English Bible. The English reader must simply be told how to read, and do his best to remember.

The Greek is not confined to the order of the words. It can do much to express emphasis through the abundance of its particles and prepositions, and through the variety of its cases. There is a phrase in the New Testament which seems to stand for 'eternity.' It is usually translated 'for ever.' We do not discuss the translation at present. We notice that it appears in ten different forms, and that Dr. Wilson is able to arrange these forms in a rising scale of emphasis. What can the English translator do with that?

The least emphatic form is found in Jude ¹³ and elsewhere. The English is simply 'for ever.' The most emphatic occurs in Eph 3²¹. The Authorized translation is, 'Throughout all ages, world without end.' The Revised, 'Unto all generations for ever and ever.' But the Revisers felt the inadequacy of their English, and added the literal translation in the margin, 'Unto all the generations of the age of the ages.'

For the most part the English reader is content to let the emphasis go. And for the most part that is the wisest thing he could do. When he reads Mt 15³³, he reads, 'Whence should we have so many loaves in a desert place, as to fill so great a multitude?' and no word is more emphatic than another, unless he happens to know that the most emphatic word is *we*. But sometimes he cannot let the emphasis go.

Take Peter's question in the Upper Room: 'Lord, dost thou wash my feet?' (Jn 13⁶). It is impossible to read these words without putting emphasis on some of them. Upon which of them should the emphasis be put? There are many ways of it, and we have heard it all the ways. Sometimes it is, 'Dost *thou* wash my feet?' sometimes, 'Dost *thou* wash *my* feet?' sometimes, 'Dost thou wash *my* feet?'

Those who place the emphasis on *feet* have something to say for themselves. 'Not my feet only,' says Peter, very soon after, 'not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.' And this enables Jesus to point out the difference between the bathing of the whole body and the washing of the feet.

But the emphasis is not on feet. The washing of the feet was a courteous but customary act. On entering the supper chamber every guest expected it. He did not expect his hands or his head to be washed. That idea occurred afterwards to the impulsive Peter. Since it was the impulsiveness of love, Christ used it to bring forth

more love. As yet, however, when Peter says, 'Lord, dost thou wash my feet?' the contrast between his feet and the rest of his body has not occurred to him. His wonder is not that the Lord should wash his feet. It is either that Christ should do to him what he ought rather to do to Christ; or else it is that the Master should do that which was usually done by the servant.

Which, then, of these two is it? Most expositors say the first. They believe that Peter expresses his astonishment that Christ should do to him what it were more becoming for him to do to Christ. And then in the reading of the sentence they would place an emphasis both on 'thou' and on 'my': 'Lord, dost *thou* wash *my* feet?'

'The position of the pronouns (*σύ μου*) in the original,' says Westcott (the whole sentence is *Κύριε, σύ μου νίπτεις τοὺς πόδας;*), 'brings out the sharp contrast of the persons. The thought of the kind of service is subordinated to the fact of service rendered by the Master to the servant.' Plummer agrees. He compares the saying of the Baptist in Mt 3¹⁴, 'I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?' Dods is of this mind also; while Reynolds (in the *Pulpit Commentary*), and even Milligan and Moulton (in the *Popular*), print the pronouns in italics, and declare the importance of marking 'the strong emphasis belonging to *thou* and *my*.'

But the commentators are not all of this mind. Watkins says, 'The word *thou* is to be strongly emphasized, but the common error of reading *my* as an emphatic word is to be avoided.' And Alford long ago protested that the 'my' is *not emphatic* (and recorded his protest, as we have done, with italics).

For there is a difficulty. It is in the form of the Greek word for 'my.' If that word had been meant to be taken emphatically, it would certainly

have had its full form (*ἐμοῦ*). What it has is the enclitic or dependent form (*μου*), which never is and never can be used for emphasis. No doubt the word for 'my' is found very early in the sentence. But Blass, in his *New Testament Grammar*, points out that in Greek, as in cognate languages, the tendency existed from early times to bring unemphasized (enclitic) pronouns and the like as near as possible to the beginning of the sentence (though not to put them actually at the beginning); and he gives this very passage among his examples. Dr. Wilson's explanation is that the unemphatic pronoun is drawn by attraction to take its place beside the emphatic. He refers to a similar order of the pronouns in Mk 5³⁰, 'Who touched my garments?' (*τίς μου ἥψατο τῶν*

ἱματίων); where, as he safely says, the 'my' can hardly bear any emphasis.

So Peter's astonishment was that the Master should do the work of a servant. It is the very lesson which Christ proceeded to enforce—'If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him.' And henceforth when we read the passage let us remember to throw the whole of the emphasis on 'thou'—'Lord, dost *thou* wash my feet?'

The Origin and Character of our Gospels.

BY THE LATE DR. FRIEDRICH BLASS, PROFESSOR OF CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HALLE.

(Translated by MARGARET DUNLOP GIBSON, Hon. D.D. Heidelberg, LL.D. St. Andrews.)

[*Note by Translator.*—As I was about to commence my work, the news came of the gifted author's sudden removal by heart disease. He was a man whom to know was to love; to rare critical insight he added the sympathy with his text which is possessed only by the humble Christian; in temperament and character he resembled the disciple whom he believed to be the author of the Fourth Gospel; and the following lines are the last word of one of Germany's greatest scholars to his fellow-students.]

I.

This is the echo of a lecture which I gave in October of last year, and its object is not polemical. I have nothing to do with the authors of so-called popular books on religious history, nor with those who are led by these books, and to whom they are welcome; neither do I address myself to persons who are indifferent to such questions. My words are meant only for those who, while not assenting to certain modern criticisms

of the Gospels, feel a difficulty in repelling these criticisms.

This question differs from most others, because it goes deep down into our personal interests; and our agreement with this or that idea does not depend chiefly on the weight of the *reasons* for it. It is our *will* that decides first of all, and most of all, just as it did in the times of the Apostles. When Peter or Paul came into a strange town and told Jews or heathen of the Gospel facts, he had no really convincing proofs. He assured the people that he had seen and heard this, or received it from ear- and eye-witnesses; but who vouched for his credibility? Might he not be an eccentric man, who imagined that he had seen what never happened; or an impostor, like so many others? According to the New Testament idea, 'every one that was of the truth' (Jn 18³⁷), or who was 'ordained to eternal life' (Ac 13⁴⁶), believed what he heard; the others remained cold and unbelieving, or became hostile. So it happens now also, in presence of the written and read Gospels. For