

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 5<sup>30</sup>, '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.

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[*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 18<sup>37</sup>), or who was 'ordained to eternal life' (Ac 13<sup>46</sup>), 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

these also there are no constraining proofs. Acceptance or rejection depends on something quite different.

Perhaps, however, some one may think ; it is quite true that there are no constraining proofs *for* the credibility of the Gospels, yet possibly there are proofs *against* it, because Science has something to say about it. Some writers appeal continually to Science, and make the same culpable misuse of the name as they do of that of Christianity. There is certainly an historical and literary science of these things and of these books, as there is of everything else. But to every other department of science, such as Mathematics and Natural History, there clings a certain amount of uncertainty, which in this case is considerably increased, because these books are isolated, and the events are outside the range of known historical correspondences. They happened in a corner of Judæa, and, though Paul says to Agrippa (Ac 26<sup>26</sup>), 'This thing was not done in a corner,' that was said to a Jew ; whereas to the heathen and to all the Roman Empire the whole Jewish land was an unknown corner. Nor have these books anything similar before, or beside, or after them. We possess incredibly little Christian literature from the times immediately succeeding the Apostles, nor has much of it ever been known at any time. May the amount be increased by new discoveries ! Every one who has any historical knowledge of these things must join in the wish, even although the things themselves are not indispensable for salvation. But isolation is not the only difficulty. He who wishes to write political history must understand something of politics ; and he who would write military history must know military science, preferably through its practice ; otherwise he will write badly. In the same way, he who wishes to write religious history must understand something of religion—above all, through its practice ; otherwise he will write badly. For no man is certified to have any knowledge of religion by having studied theology for three or four years ; or even by being a Professor of Theology, and in possession of the degree of Doctor of Divinity. All this does not prevent his being a profane person, with no organ and no receptivity for the heavenly. In short, with regard to the credibility of the events we are treating of, such as the Resurrection, it would be the grossest folly to suppose that the professor, on account of his science, has the slightest advantage

over the uneducated day-labourer. The latter also knows that, in the ordinary course of things, a dead man does not come to life again ; and it is on this fact of general knowledge that unbelief is founded, not on any special learned information. It is for this reason that the twentieth century has no advantage here over the first, notwithstanding the enormous progress of science ; for this progress has brought no new proofs of such an event, nor had that event itself the slightest need of any. 'Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?' says Paul to Agrippa (Ac 26<sup>8</sup>). Why? Well, because of ordinary human reason, with which this clashes. But belief in the Resurrection follows from belief in God, Paul thinks ; and therefore he upbraids the God-fearing Jews, because they would not accept it. Even the heathen judged in its favour ; and they were right in regard to the principle, if not always in their application of it. A Greek poet says that there is nothing beyond the care of the gods to accomplish ; and in a Greek story it is imposed on those who have been healed, that they should present a silver sow as a thank-offering, on account of their bestial stupidity, which had led them to doubt the miraculous power of the healer-god to heal everything. So what from one point of view seems reasonable and proper, from another point of view appears bestially stupid. Certainly, swine know nothing of God, and therefore we must not cast our pearls before them.

With the acceptance or rejection of the Gospel, therefore, Science has nothing to do. But it has to do with other things that are nearly related to this, and, amongst them, with this question of the origin of our Gospels. Now, it is with the Gospels as with all other writings. We examine the books themselves, first of all, with candour and confidence, as we always do, unless the stamp of untrustworthiness is very evident. There are untrustworthy writings in this department, as in others ; and there was a special tendency to fabrication amongst Orientals, which every one is spontaneously on his guard against. Take an illustration. Papias of Hierapolis in Asia Minor, the oldest Christian author, wrote *Expositions of the Oracles of the Lord* in five books, and related many sayings and acts of Christ and His disciples. He tells us, in the beginning, that he has carefully collected them from the lips of Apostles or their immediate followers. Yet he says that Christ had

thus foretold the glories of the Millennium: 'Vines would then grow, each with 10,000 branches, every branch with 10,000 bunches, every bunch with 10,000 grapes, and every grape so large that when pressed it would yield 1000 litres of wine. The corn should match them: from every seed 10,000 stalks should grow, every stalk should have 10,000 ears, and every ear yield 10 pounds of pure flour.' And not only this, which was certainly not meant to be symbolical, like some well-known passages in our Gospels; but he also says of Judas the betrayer, that his body swelled so much that he could no longer pass through a door wide enough for a waggon; he could not even put his head through; and his eyes lay so deep that he could neither see with them himself, nor could a doctor see them through a tube. Now we know that, of the death of Judas, Matthew and Luke have different accounts, and the latter's account is not very clear; but if we had not his story, we should not stumble at that given by Matthew, nor should we stumble at Luke's without Matthew's, except for its want of

clearness. Compare this with the story of Papias. The difference is enormous. The Church historian Eusebius says of Papias, that his understanding was small, and that he was ready to accept all that any impostor fabricated. The Talmud contains a great many similar stories, with still more unmeasured lies. Rabbi So-and-so saw a frog in the desert, which was as large as a village with sixty houses; then he saw a snake which swallowed this frog; then a bird that swallowed the snake, and then flew up on a tree. Now you may imagine, he concludes, how large this tree must have been! The Gospels, in spite of their Oriental origin, have none of these truly Oriental features. They must therefore be received in a very different way from the usual Oriental stories. For that matter, even Papias deserves ordinary confidence when he relates anything from his personal experience; for he is only accused of stupidity, not of falsehood. But the authors of the Gospels cannot be charged with stupidity, which would have been impossible to deny had it existed.

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## The Best Books of 1906.

BY THE REV. R. F. HORTON, D.D., LONDON.

If I am asked to say, which seem to me the best books of 1906, I reply with a full knowledge of the limitations under which I labour. It is possible that I may not have heard of, it is certain that I have not seen, all the books of the year. For one of the difficulties of our time is, that the broad stream of current literature, which once flowed between recognizable banks, is now, like the Euphrates of prophecy, smitten into many minor streams, and it is given to few literary navigators to trace all the channels in the course of the year. A writer, unless he be a novelist like Miss Corelli, or a theologian like Mr. Campbell, appeals only to a section of the public; and while a reader may know some or many of the books which come down his channel of the divided stream, he may very likely know nothing at all of equally good works which come down the other channels. I fear this divided stream is not very favourable for the production of good books. We have no Ruskin, or Carlyle, or Tennyson, or George Eliot to whom

every one listens; we only have writers who in their own coteries are placed higher than these authors, while outside their coteries they have no place at all. I give my opinion, therefore, very modestly, and shall not be offended if some one else says that my authors are unknown and their books are unread, while I have ignored the great writers and the literary masterpieces of 1906. But of the books which I was able to read in the year three stand out as pre-eminent and valuable, marked for re-perusal and future study. First, there was Mr. Stanyon's translation of Herrmann's *Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott*. I had not read the original, though the translation has driven me to it. The book is a landmark in one's study and in one's life. I am not asked to criticize or review the books which I mention. But the effect of this book on my mind is this: It shows how a man in these difficult times, confronted by science and criticism, can find a Christian faith and a Christian life, to which neither science nor criticism can