

vestryman, whose aspirations are limited to a glorified vestry of atom and cell" (p. 150).

"The joys of earth are the throbs of God. We are dull enough to miss the supernatural in the natural, the holy which lies all around us" (p. 178).

"No such article exists as half religion; pronounce it wholly spurious, a sham of blackest dye" (p. 194).

"The idea of God is a pressure of ideals upon us" (p. 233).

"When you have learning, money, position above the average, consult the oracle within you, inquire at once in what service you can empty yourself of them, how carry them into an offering of God, what is the obedience in them by which to enrich the world, as Christ did by the Crucifixion" (p. 445).

"Keep the simple pieties of the soul pure, and they will hear the voice of Jesus as sheep hear the voice of the shepherd, and follow Him" (p. 495).

"As you hear the chimes of bells which have travelled from temples of the Infinite calling you to matins and vespers, as you hear the splash of oars round these time islands of yours, carrying the spirits of the dead to unknown shores of judgment, go into yourself and say to yourself, 'I am not enough in myself; I have not enough when I have myself; I am a barren half in self; a dangerous half in sense. My God, fill me with Thyself. Spirit of God, make me a Spirit. Spirit of Christ, give me Thyself within me'" (p. 225).

I trust enough has been said to draw attention to, and win readers for, as brilliant and character-marked a book as has appeared for many a day on the theological horizon.

The Gospels and Modern Criticism.

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I.

"We have been taught, and have subsequently studied and taught, from the standpoint, which we have assumed to be the one alone tenable, that the Gospels are to be divided into *the three* and *the one*—the three Synoptists being in some way related to one another (and here the theories have been many and conflicting), and the one, St. John, the supplement of the three" (THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, April 1892, p. 313).

Such, as defined by so representative a theologian as Mr. Gwilliam, is the position of modern criticism.

Taking this definition with what follows, it is clear that Mr. Gwilliam intends to make, what seems to me, the extraordinarily damaging admission that theologians have positively never thought it worth while to examine the constructive facts of the holy Gospels, *save on the basis of a foregone conclusion*, and that if such foregone conclusion can be shown to be unfounded, the whole fabric of modern critical opinion which has been reared upon it necessarily crumbles to dust. I do not, of course, admit that any considerations whatever can possibly justify the substitution of an imperfect, one-sided, and prejudiced examination of

evidence for that impartial and exhaustive examination by which alone in other departments of knowledge popular errors have been unmasked and an intelligent appreciation of the truth substituted for them. But the extraordinary peculiarity of the present case is that this foregone conclusion has not only dominated the examination of the great mass of evidential facts which the Gospels present. It has, as shown below, entirely obliterated those facts, so much so, that for all practical purposes they have come to be non-existent. Thus, whether the foregone conclusion be correct or incorrect, the effect of its universal acceptance is that the whole field of investigation presented by the Gospels, in spite of its facts being numbered by tens of thousands, is absolutely virgin soil. Mr. Gwilliam seeks in vain for the name of any one who has even attempted to enter upon it (Note, p. 313).

Mr. Gwilliam recognises the possibility of the opinion as to the late date of St. John's Gospel resting "on a mere tradition, and that, too, of uncertain value." But what I maintain is that, so far as early evidence is concerned, the opinion (*i.e.* the all-important foregone conclusion) not only

rests exclusively upon one eminently uncertain tradition, but is opposed to the whole current of ancient opinion as to the structure and interrelation of the Gospels.

I will take the few authorities which bear on this aspect of the subject, and, in order to show how the statements of these authorities combine into a whole, I will indicate, as I go on, the several points which, if correct, they would establish.

1. The complete gospel record is essentially four-fold in character, and not therefore, as modern criticism asserts, three-fold with an independent supplement. Irenæus, the modern critic's solitary champion, writes:—"For the living creatures are quadriform and the Gospel is quadriform . . . these things being so, all who destroy the form of the Gospel are vain, unlearned, and also audacious" (Book III. chap. xi. sec. 9).

2. The Gospels by apostles were written before those by disciples of apostles. Tertullian not only regards this fact as the first axiom of gospel criticism (*constituimus imprimis*), but confidently assumes that what he calls "the genuine text of the apostolic Scriptures" was "the enlightener of Paul, and, by his means, of Luke also," with much more to the same effect (*Against Marcion*, Book IV. chaps. ii.-vii.). *The Apostolic Constitutions* imply the same when they put into the mouth of St. Matthew the statement that he and St. John had conjointly delivered their Gospels to a particular Church ("the Gospels which we, Matthew and John, handed over to you"), a statement coinciding with Tertullian's assertion that the apostolic Gospels formed part of the dedication of the Churches (*cum ipsis ecclesiis dedicata*). The Muratorian Canon gives a graphic account of the way in which St. John was led to write his Gospel at a time when, as he implies, no other Gospel existed, and when the apostolic company was still undispersed. The wording of the Canon is second century evidence. The order of the clauses which places St. John last, is the evidence of a seventh century translation. For the sake of supporting a foregone conclusion, the evidence of the seventh century is as invariably as it is unreasonably preferred to that of the second.

3. The Gospels are neither fragmentary, discordant, nor contradictory. Thus Chrysostom, condemning views which now represent leading axioms of modern criticism, clenches his argument by the following remarkable statement and illustra-

tion:—"The very fragments cannot be hid, but declare aloud their connection with the whole body. And, like as if thou shouldest take any part from the side of an animal, even in that part thou shouldest find all the things out of which the whole is composed,—nerves and veins, bones, arteries, and blood, and a sample, so to speak, of the whole lump,—so likewise in each portion of what is stated, one may see the connection of the whole clearly appearing" (*Hom. on St. Matthew*).

4. St. John systematically records "the first events" of the gospel history. Eusebius, after insisting upon and giving illustrations of this fact, goes on to explain how the constructive facts of the several Gospels may be reconciled with the assumption that St. John's was the last written Gospel: "The doctrine of the Divinity was," he considers, "a part reserved for St. John by the Divine Spirit as for a superior" (*History*, Book III. chap. xxiv.).

From the above it will be clear that the theologians of the early Church not only understood the constructive facts of the gospel record, but laid the greatest possible stress upon them, and even regarded them as tests and infallible proofs of the genuineness of the several documents. I do not rely on the fact that of the above six authorities only three place St. John last. I maintain that all six are in virtual agreement. For those who placed St. John last manifestly combined their assumption on this point with a concurrent assumption as to the extreme influence of inspiration. By a mental *tour de force* they were able to recognise and insist upon the constructive facts of the Gospels, without the smallest reference to the order in which they were written. Eusebius tells us that this was so in his case, and according to the canon laid down in Mr. Gwilliam's definition this view of the language of the other two is "the only one possible."

Manifestly the two assumptions are indissolubly united, and must necessarily stand or fall together. Eusebius supposed that, however necessary to the completeness and intelligibility of their histories might be any facts recorded by St. John, the Synoptists were miraculously hindered from recording them. The modern critic must either accept this theory or else abandon the only explanation which has ever been suggested, which would reconcile the assumption he adopts with the

constructive facts of the Gospel themselves, or render such language as that of Irenæus and Chrysostom possible. Unfortunately, the one assumption has come down to us separated from that which alone made it tenable. Whenever it may have been finally completed, this separation necessarily prepared as perfectly concealed a pitfall for the unwary as it is possible to conceive.

The effect of the separation was necessarily as follows:—

1. It broke up the connection of the constructive facts as completely as if the letters L A M B were written A M B L.

2. It removed beyond them, and therefore virtually obliterated the constructive facts which

directly or indirectly dominated all the constructive facts of the Synoptic Gospels.

3. It thus rendered the constructive facts of the Synoptic Gospels an insoluble enigma, the only possible clue to which was, as above, virtually obliterated and rendered as though non-existent.

4. It rendered the one-sidedness of St. John's Gospel as wholly enigmatical as it did the uniform one-sidedness of the other Gospels.

5. It destroyed the exquisite four-fold symmetry of the completed record, and substituted for it an ungainly and unintelligible *three-and-one-sidedness*.

6. It robbed the Gospels of all their self-attesting power, and therefore of all their defensive armour, and turned them out defenceless to make sport for the Philistines.

Requests and Replies.

Is it known when and how the burning bush with the legend "Nec tamen consumebatur" was adopted as a Motto by the Scottish Church?—G. S.

The burning bush was a favourite symbol among the early Huguenots of France.

The editor of the *Synodicon*, after telling how the Piedmontese had for their common seal "a taper burning in a golden candlestick, scattering its glorious beams in a sable field of thick darkness," goes on to describe "another seal, as illustrious an hieroglyphic as the former, appertaining unto the national synods of those renowned and once flourishing, though now desolate, Reformed Churches of France, which was Moses' miraculous vision when he fed the flock under the mount of God—viz. a bramble bush in a flaming fire, having that essential incommunicable name of God, Jehovah, engraven in its centre, and this motto, 'Combuero non consumere,' in its circumference. With this those venerable councils sealed all their letters and despatches."

The Scottish Church adopted, with some slight modification, the symbol of the Huguenots. It did so after the Revolution of 1690; but the precise date cannot now be ascertained.

When the second council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches met in Philadelphia, 1880, the hall in which the meetings were held was adorned with a series of historic decorations, in the form of brightly-coloured columns, intended to commemorate the Churches represented in the Alliance.

At the top of the French column was a large shield with a blue field, covered with golden *fleur de lis*, and in the centre the seal of the Reformed Church of France, as described above. The upper portion of Scotland's column was a shield whose background was a blue field, covered with golden thistles, and in the centre the burning bush, as the seal of the Established and Free Churches of Scotland. The shield in Ireland's column had a green field, sprinkled over with golden shamrocks. On the shield, in bronze colour, was the bush, substantially the same as that of Scotland, but more elongated, and the motto, "*Ardens sed Virens.*"

These and all the other historic decorations used in the hall were lithographed in colours, and a set of them prefixed to each copy of the proceedings.

In his *Lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland*, which drew forth Principal Rainy's famous reply, Dean Stanley has a felicitous reference to the Scottish ecclesiastical symbol. "The badge of the Church of Scotland—the Burning Bush, 'burning but not consumed'—is as true a type of Scotland's inexpugnable defence of her ancient liberties as it was of the ancient Jewish Church and people on their emergence from Egyptian bondage. And so the early history of the Scottish Presbyterian Church has been one long struggle of dogged resistance to superior power."

Ayr.

C. G. M'CRIE.