

ALL OR NONE ?

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THERE is a story told of Dr. Whewell, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. When some function was being held at the Lodge, an undergraduate came along with a pipe in his mouth, thus breaking the rule by which smoking was forbidden in the College courts. Whewell pounced upon him, asking, "Do you deliberately intend to insult me, sir, or are you lost to all sense of decency?" The poor man, eager to disown any deliberate intention of insulting the Master, impaled himself on the other horn of the dilemma: "Please, Master, I'm lost to all sense of decency!"

This is simply a somewhat crude case of what often happens. People frightened of one horn of a dilemma impale themselves on the other, forgetting that this other is usually not really the only alternative. It is, in fact, not uncommon for advocates of some particular view to attempt to compel assent to it by setting it forth as the only alternative to some extravagant position which few can admit. Some German theologians are fond of this, but it is not confined to them. It is a good working rule to suspect argumentative dilemmas, and not to choose either side till we are quite clear that there is really no other alternative.

One common form of this dilemma is "All or None?" This is specially common in theological controversy. Either you accept some particular theory of the Sacraments, or you don't believe in the Sacraments. Either Verbal Inspiration in some form (at least complete literal accuracy throughout); or absolute uncertainty and unreliability of everything. But this is treating the Bible in a way one would not treat even a newspaper. No educated man holds that everything he reads in the paper is necessarily true; yet the fact of his reading the paper at all implies that he regards, provisionally at least, the bulk of its statements as substantially true. Those who take the above line as regards the Bible usually hope to force people to accept the first alternative from repulsion from the second; but there is appreciable risk of people accepting the second, if they recognize great difficulties

in the way of the first, and are led to believe there is no other alternative. The dilemma "All or None?"—either *complete* literal and historical accuracy, or else all is unreliable and uncertain—is a dangerous one.

And it is not supported by historical criticism in other departments. Between absolutely accurate history and absolute fiction there are many grades. A story is not proved to be absolutely historical in all details because some historical personages are mentioned in it; nor proved to be sheer fiction just because of some minor mistakes. A narrative with some admitted errors may yet be a valuable historical source, provided the errors are not too many or too bad. But in Biblical criticism this is too often overlooked on both sides. To take illustrations from the Book of Daniel: the perfect historicity of the account of Belshazzar's Feast was not proved by Belshazzar being discovered to be a historical person; nor is the substantial truth of Chapter III disproved if some of the musical instruments there mentioned bear names which they can hardly have had in Nebuchadnezzar's time.

An objectionable line of argument is to magnify the differences between two accounts, giving the name of "discrepancy" to any fact recorded by one writer and not by another, however well it may fit in; and then to regard the fact that the accounts do not precisely agree as casting doubt not only upon the disputed point, but on the whole narrative. If the two accounts agreed precisely they would almost certainly not be independent; we should really have only one source, not two. Their variety shows their independence, unless we can show that the differences of the later one have arisen from sheer misunderstanding of the earlier, in which case it drops out altogether. The main points in which two independent narratives agree are not shaken by difference in minor points; on the contrary they are supported by double the amount of evidence. The details in which the two authorities differ are, however, less supported; we may find it hard to say which of the two is to be followed, and whichever we follow may not in this detail inspire the same confidence as if it had stood alone.

There is a good note on this subject, with special reference to discrepancy in the Gospels, in Fisher, *Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief* (Note 20, p. 413). He gives several examples of

variations in detail not affecting the substance of the narrative ; e.g., the different accounts of the death of Cicero. I give a few from English Church History.

(1) Who read the Declaration of Indulgence in Westminster Abbey in 1688 ? The usual view, presented e.g. by Macaulay, is that the Dean, Bishop Spratt, read it himself. This is based on several good authorities, including the second Lord Dartmouth, who was himself present at the service as a Westminster scholar. But Bishop Patrick, then Canon of Westminster, who ought to have known the facts, says that the Dean sent it to one of the Minor Canons to read. Whatever we follow, or however we may try to reconcile, the fact remains that the Declaration was read there ; this is not affected by the doubt who the actual reader was.

(2) The Church of South Ockendon, near Upminster, in Essex, is an interesting one with a round tower and a fine Norman doorway. There is among the State Papers of 1657-8 a petition from the parishioners asking for a Brief to authorize collections to aid them to rebuild their church. This states that on June 21, 1652, the steeple was fired by lightning, the bells and leads totally melted, and the church consumed to ashes, except the chancel which is much defaced. The estimated cost of repairs is £2,200, as appears from a certificate of Quarter Sessions, January 10, 1653. Along with the petition is a certificate from the Quarter Sessions, not of the above date but of July 14, 1657 ; it however dates the fire July, 1653. It is also clear from an inspection of the church that little damage can have been done to the walls, though the roof and interior was destroyed. If we had this discrepancy of date in a Biblical question, we might find extreme Liberals denying that the church was ever fired at all, and supporting the position by archæological evidence ; while some Conservatives would hold it was burnt down twice, in successive years ! Whichever date we accept, one of the two accounts must be inaccurate here ; but this does nothing to discredit the main fact.

(3) An interesting story of an interview between Archbishop Bancroft and Chaderton, the Cambridge Puritan, has reached us by two lines of transmission. It will be remembered that Bancroft did his best to suppress Puritanism, and in his speeches against the Puritans at the Hampton Court Conference went further than even James I approved. On the other hand Chader-

ton, Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, was one of the Puritan representatives at that Conference, though he did not take a prominent part. In fact the Puritans complained at the time that Rainolds was insufficiently supported by his colleagues ; one of them was " as mute as a fish," and others not much better. But this ecclesiastical quarrel did not stand in the way of personal friendship.

One version of the story comes from Thomas Woodcock, ejected in 1662 from St. Andrew Undershaft, London. He had been Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, and Proctor. His stories, though of various types, help to show that the common idea that all Puritans were gloomy is a very partial one. Calamy repeatedly speaks of this or that Nonconformist of 1662 as " facetious," even when, as Dr. Stoughton says, their portraits show them as solemn as the grave. It seems then to have been the fashion for divines to look as solemn as they could when sitting for their portrait ; now, the proper thing is to put on a smile. Woodcock's account¹ is as follows :—

" Chaderton having business with him (Bancroft) when he was at Lambeth, sent in his name. The Bishop dismissed all the company with him, sends for him in, asks him his name, if it was Chaderton. He replied, ' Yes.' ' I shall know that presently,' says he ; shuts the doors, pulls off his gown ; ' if you be Chaderton, then you can wrestle ; and I will try one fall,' (as they had often done at the University). The Doctor flung the Archbishop. ' Now,' said he, ' I know thou art Chaderton,' dismisses him with handsome kindness. It was somewhat ominous that the Puritan should fling the Archbishop. This both Dr. Tuckney and Dr. Horton told Mr. W., and said they had it from Dr. Chaderton's own mouth."

The other version of the story comes from a collection of anecdotes made by Dr. Plume, Archdeacon of Rochester, and preserved in his Library at Maldon.²

Dr. Chaderton was persuaded to come up one time to London to visit Archbishop Bancroft, who had suffered him to enjoy his Lecture all his time at Trinity Church in Cambridge. Chaderton was loth to go, for fear Bancroft would not look upon him. He went, however, to the Archbishop's Hall at Lambeth, and waited till he came home from Whitehall. The Archbishop passed by and saw him there among many others, but said nothing to him.

¹ *Camden Miscellany*, XI.

² *Essex Review*, XV, 22.

"Look you there," says Chaderton, "I told you how he would serve me," and so was going away to Lambeth stairs to take water. A gentleman came and called him, and brought him up to the gallery where Bancroft was walking. "Lawrence," says the Archbishop, "I am as glad to meet you here as ever I was upon Jesus Green or Christ's in my life"—they had been the two cocks of game. "Come," he went on, "we must have a fall the first thing we do ; pull off your cloak," and he threw off his own gown. "Now do your best." Mr. Chaderton, after a little excusing it, fetched up his heels for him. "Well, Lawrence," says the Archbishop, "I see the cares of the Council Table are greater than the lectures of the Round Church or Trinity Church in Cambridge. If one should report it as an omen, I see Bishops may fall and Puritans rise."

Notice the many discrepancies, real or apparent, between the two accounts of this interview. ("P." = Plume ; "W." = Woodcock.) (1) W. says nothing about Bancroft appearing at first to ignore Chaderton, who starts to go away. (2) P. makes Bancroft welcome Chaderton before suggesting the wrestle ; W. makes Bancroft propose it as if not sure it was really Chaderton. (3) Bancroft's final words are in P. only. (4) The "Omen" is in P. suggested by Bancroft, in W. it is a comment by Chaderton, or Woodcock, or his informant. Yet it is clear that all the main features of the story—that Chaderton visited Bancroft at Lambeth, that Bancroft welcomed his old Cambridge friend and challenged him to a friendly wrestle in memory of old times, in which Chaderton had the best of it, are much more fully attested by the existence of the second version of the story than if the first had stood alone. The Plume version, as well as the Woodcock one, must go ultimately back to Chaderton, but must have branched off pretty high up. Chaderton died at a great age in 1640.

(4) Yet another example may be given—the prayer of Thomas Goodwin after Cromwell's death. Here, however, it seems on the whole more probable that we actually have reports of two different but parallel prayers, rather than two accounts of the same, one of them wrong in the date. There was a widespread feeling among some of the Puritans—the Independents and Sectaries, rather than the Presbyterians—that a thought or plan strongly suggested to the mind in or after prayer, came necessarily from God, and was certainly true or right. This view was shared by Cromwell. John Howe, who saw the danger of it, risked Cromwell's favour by

preaching before him a sermon against this idea. (It seems reviving now, as regards the convictions of Congresses and Conferences.) That Dr. Thomas Goodwin, President of Magdalen College, Oxford, fully shared this is shown by what he said, according to Woodcock, at Cromwell's death-bed ; according to Burnet, a week later.

Woodcock says : " In Oliver Cromwell's last sickness Goodwin prayed for his success and a great effusion of the Spirit upon him, saying, ' We do not beg his life, thou hast assured us of that already.' But when he died, the Doctor at prayer used these words, ' Lord, why didst Thou lie to us yesterday ? ' Mr. Howe, who heard it, told Mr. W."

The other story or version is recorded by Burnet on the authority of Tillotson (afterwards Archbishop), who had married Cromwell's niece, Elizabeth French.¹

" A week after Cromwell's death he (Tillotson) being by accident at Whitehall, and hearing that there was to be a fast that day in the household, he, out of curiosity, went into the presence chamber where it was held. On one side of a table Richard with the rest of Cromwell's family were placed, and six of the preachers were on the other side. Thomas Goodwin, Owen, Carrill and Sterry, were of the number. There he heard a great deal of strange stuff, enough to disgust a man for ever of that enthusiastic boldness. God was, as it were, reproached with Cromwell's services, and challenged for taking him away so soon. Goodwin who had pretended to assure them in prayer that he was not to die, which was but a very few minutes before he expired, had now the impudence to say to God, ' Thou hast deceived us and we were deceived.' "

It is in this case quite possible that Tillotson and Howe refer to different occasions. But even so there is strong corroboration of the fact that Goodwin had in prayer declared that God had assured him of Cromwell's life, and that he subsequently declared that God had deceived him. It is clear that the Nonconformists, Howe and Woodcock, liked this hardly more than the Conformists, Tillotson and Burnet. The extravagances of the extreme Puritans led straight to the Low Church reaction.

From these and many other examples we learn (1) not to expect perfect agreement in two or more accounts of the same event.

¹ *Own Times*, 82.

The real disagreement may be very little ; but at least it is clear that one or other of the writers has not been very exact. (2) Yet at the same time very commonly the discrepancies do not affect the main points, which are the more firmly established by two accounts differing somewhat than if we had only one account, or if the second appeared simply dependent on the first. This applies to Biblical criticism. We are justified in assuming as few discrepancies as possible between different accounts, and may feel that these would be much lessened if we knew all the facts. But we must not force the accounts into agreement by arbitrary assumptions, or maintain without good cause that they do not refer to the same event. Yet difference in minor detail does not unsettle the main points ; it helps to establish them.

PAMPHLETS ON PROPHECY.

The Rev. E. P. Cachemaille is well known as a diligent and trusted student of Prophecy, and his writings are always instructive and helpful. From Messrs. C. J. Thynne & Jarvis we have received several of his publications and, whatever view may be taken of his conclusions, no one will question the force and ability with which he presents his case. In *Palestine and the Warfare of the End* (4d.) he throws considerable light upon the interpretation of Daniel xi. 40-xii. 1, and Revelation xix. 3, 19, 20. The picture he presents " is woefully different from the present popular outlook and expectation ; and from an era of universal peace and brotherhood of nations and of reunion of Christendom, topics so prominent in public utterances and even in prayers put forth for public or private use." And then he adds a note which all will be glad to read : " It is amazing how in all this expectation, and with an end to its fulfilment, one rarely hears any reference whatever to the Personal Second Coming of our Lord, by which alone can these expectations be realized." The Personal Return of our Lord is, we fear, too little referred to in the pulpits of to-day. Another of Mr. Cachemaille's pamphlets, *The Three Angels and Their Parallels* (4d.), deals with Revelation xiv. 6-11 ; and some of his smaller pamphlets may be mentioned, such as *From Daniel to Revelation* (3d.), in which, in passing from the Visions of Daniel to those of the Revelation, he discusses principles of interpretation and historical and prophetic facts and foreshowings ; *Where is England in the Prophetic Visions ?* (3d.) ; and *Identification of the Antichrist* (3d.).
