

Bethany, announced Himself as the Resurrection and the Life, and bade Lazarus come forth from his tomb, and whose own resurrection is not merely an outward power to mould our thoughts, but an inward power to transform our very souls and characters? When the old Christians whom Saul of Tarsus had so cruelly wronged beheld his converted life, his clear intelligence, his warm affections, his true and strong will all placed at the service of the Saviour whom he but now had persecuted, what did they do? He himself shall answer: 'They glorified God in me.' And when in the Church of our day a soul rises from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, there goes forth—oh! be sure of it—into hundreds and

thousands of consciences around the proclamation of the Divine power of the Son of God.<sup>1</sup>

In one corner of my garden there is a rubbish-heap; it is away out of sight, because it is not pleasant to look at. Yet more than once in that rubbish-heap I have seen a beautiful flower spring up and bloom; some hyacinth bulb or rose-tree root which has been thrown there by mistake will rise out of the midst of the decay into fresh and beautiful life. The true nature of bulb or root is proved by this resurrection. There could be no flower if there were no capacity for the flower. So it is with the children of the All-Father in this strange, bewildering world of ours. Despair of none: God indwells all; at the worst and darkest it is still possible for the Divine Sonship to arise in power.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. P. Liddon.

<sup>2</sup> R. J. Campbell, *New Theology Sermons*, 42.

## The Doctrine of the Incarnation in the Creeds.

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### III.

(1) When we approach the creeds from the standpoint of historical fact, we discover that they include what for some Christian scholars is doubtful, and what for the Christian scholar to-day is most certain in the historical reality of Jesus. (i.) While I myself have not found adequate reason for rejecting the tradition of the Christian Church regarding the virgin-birth, I must admit that literary and historical criticism does not allow the same degree of certainty as regards the healing and teaching ministry, the death and rising again of Christ. It is certain that a creed drawn up to-day would not demand acceptance of the fact as a necessary part of a Christian's confession of Christ as Saviour and Lord. (ii.) As regards the descent into Hades and the Second Advent, the Christian scholar could not insist on their acceptance literally as essential articles of the Christian faith, although in each the Christian thinker, even of to-day, may find a suggestion of Christian truth. (iii.) About the death of Christ by crucifixion under Pontius Pilate there is to-day no doubt or question deserving any attention from the historical student. The Resurrection is a fact which unbelief challenges to-day as in every age; but this fact is one which, on the one hand, the

Christian Church must assert, and may assert on the ground of personal experience of Christ's presence and power, and of the general history of Christendom as inexplicable without the guidance and guardianship of its Living Head; and which, on the other, historical and literary criticism cannot disprove. The literature of the New Testament and the history of the Christian Church are both unintelligible if this fundamental reality is an illusion. The fact of the Resurrection of Christ has a legitimate and unavoidable claim to be included in any Christian Confession.

(2) The question may, however, be raised, whether faith should be burdened with the demand to assert historical fact at all. Is not faith concerned solely with ideas and ideals? Can faith in eternal reality rest on historical fact? The answer to the question is that the Christian religion is an historical religion with a personal founder. It is not a conception of God, man, and their mutual relation reached by speculative thought or mystical intuition; but it is a personal relation between God and man constituted in the historical reality of Jesus Christ; it is a revelation in time of the eternal God; it is a redemption in time of man unto eternal life. Idea and ideal are

not only revealed, but realized in history, God's fatherhood and man's sonship in Christ's Sonship and Saviourhood. Faith in Christ as bringing God to man, and man to God, is faith in historical fact. But this is so, not only actually but necessarily; for faith is exercised by man who lives in time, who is conditioned morally and religiously by the history of mankind; and so God must deal with him in time through history. The needs which Christ meets, the aims He fulfils in man, are facts of history. The sin to be forgiven, the sorrow to be comforted, the death to be robbed of its terror, the moral and religious good to be gained, are facts; and God deals with facts through facts. The Father Christian faith reaches in Christ is not an absentee Deity, dwelling in the eternal realm alone, but a God present in, through, and over all nature and history alike. From whatever point of view we look at Christian faith as it is actually exercised in the Christian Church, it is inseparable from historical reality. The objection to including facts in a creed falls to the ground.

(3) Have the creeds, however, included all the facts that are significant and valuable for Christian faith? While the conditions of their origin as a protection against heresy explain their incompleteness; yet what they omit deserves notice, as it will bring us face to face with the most marked contrast between the fourth and fifth centuries and the nineteenth and twentieth. The historical reality of the earthly ministry of Jesus, and the grace and truth therein manifested, are not only unmentioned in the creeds, but the Christological controversies show that the living image of Jesus was not present to Christian thought; and thus while the completeness of the humanity was asserted in abstract terms, it was not so concretely realized as to prevent an actual absorption of the humanity in the divinity. To-day, on the contrary, it is this historical reality of the earthly ministry which is the starting-point of most modern thinking, which, therefore, demands a Christology that will do full justice not to an abstract humanity, but to a concrete manhood of Jesus Christ.

## The Writings of John.

IMPORTANT OVERLOOKED EVIDENCE.

BY THE REV. J. AGAR BEET, D.D.

In this paper, I shall adduce evidence, touching the authorship of the Fourth Gospel and the Book of Revelation, which has not yet received the attention it deserves; and especially evidence independent of authorship which goes far to prove that the distinctive teaching of the Fourth Gospel came from the lips of Christ and is supported by His divine authority. This evidence will also shed light upon the authorship of both the above books.

### I.

It is needless to reproduce the abundant evidence, so ably set forth by Bishop Westcott in his invaluable commentary, published in 1880, touching the authorship and historical truth of the Fourth Gospel; and by Professor Swete for the authorship of the Book of Revelation, in another admirable commentary published in 1906. The evidence I shall adduce is the profound harmony,

underlying conspicuous differences in phrase and in modes of thought, between the Fourth Gospel and the letters and addresses of St. Paul, in their presentation of the message of Christ, in contrast to His teaching as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels.

Our earliest and surest evidence touching the actual teaching of Christ is to be found in the four undisputed letters of St. Paul; and especially in that to the Romans, as being an orderly statement, to men whom he had never seen, of the gospel of Christ as understood by the greatest of the Apostles.

The writer begins it by announcing himself as a 'servant of Christ,' to whom he pays homage as the Son of David and of God; and then expresses his eagerness to go to Rome, there to reap a harvest of blessing and to discharge an obligation, by preaching the gospel. This last, he then describes as 'a power of God, for salvation, to every one who