

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good

THE BIBLE STUDENT

AND

TEACHER

VOLUME V.—NEW ISSUE

JULY TO DECEMBER, 1906

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The Bible Student and Teacher

Volume V

JULY, 1906

Number 1

Unscientific Criticism of the Bible*

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COLLEGE, BELFAST, IRELAND

II. Unscientific Criticism of the Bible as a Book of Literature

But the Bible is a Book of Literature, and a scientific criticism of it should be in accordance with all we know of the methods and characteristics of literature. Perhaps no book in the world has higher claims to be regarded as literature than the Bible; certainly no Book has had so great an influence on the literature of the modern world. The "critics" are never weary of telling us that we should treat the Bible as any other book; and so we ask, Was ever any living book of literature composed as the analytical critics of the Old Testament say the Pentateuch was composed, or as the advanced critics of the New Testament say the Gospels and Acts and Pauline Epistles were composed?

Let me give a sample, taken almost at random from the Pentateuch, to show with what elaborate artificiality this Book of living literature is said to have been composed. Kautsch and Socin, agreeing with most of the critics of this school, divide a portion of the seventh chapter of Genesis in this way—v. 9. "There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark (J2), the male and the female (R), as God had commanded Noah (J2)". v. 10 is also from J2, v. 11 from P, v. 12 from J2, vv. 13, 14, and 15 from P; v. 16—"And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh as God had commanded him (P), and the Lord shut him in (J2)". v. 17—"And the flood was (P) forty days (R) upon the earth (P), and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth (J2)". And so on and so on.

Dr. Driver, in his recent commentary on Genesis, analyses v. 9 still more elaborately. 9—"There went in (J) two and two (R) unto Noah into the ark (J), male and female (R), as God commanded Noah (J)". In the last clause which is assigned to the Jehovist, the name of God is Elohim, and so Dr. Driver alters the text, and reads Jehovah with the Septuagint. He would also add to the verse the words, "and Jehovah shut him in", transposing them from v. 16. For, as Dr. Green had pointed out, it would be absurd for the Jehovah document, after it had said that "the waters of the flood were upon the earth and the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights", to then say, "and Jehovah shut him in". So Dr. Driver

*The concluding part of an address delivered at the close of the session of the College, April 12, 1906. The first part, on "Unscientific Criticism of the Bible as History", appeared in the June issue. President Leitch's position as Professor of Biblical Criticism gives assurance of peculiar qualifications for handling this theme.

The Modern Criticism of the New Testament*

REV. JOHN McNAUGHER, D.D., ALLEGHENY, PA.

Of late the criticism of the New Testament has made rapid strides. The spread of scientific modes of thought has stirred historical investigation generally, and this has covered the field of the Christian origins. In consequence such vital determinations as the date, authorship, unity, and reliableness of the several New Testament books have been subjected to fresh and penetrative study. And perhaps a stage has been gained where a report may be rendered about results.

Introductory

A preliminary sketch of the professional scholarship thus engaged will not be amiss. There is a deistic criticism the preamble of which is that miracles never happened. In a former day it grounded itself on metaphysical assumption. Now, in addition, it utilizes the evolutionary idea and the unearthing of higher potencies in nature, and avers that the doctrine of miracles has vanished like a ghost before the daylight of modern inquiry. Some of its exponents are so partisan that their work in New Testament Introduction is nihilistic—a reasonless anti-Christian crusade. Others of them are partly amenable to the force of facts, and their rationalism is more restrained, less corrosive. Even as modified, however, criticism conducted according to the requirements of this school is vitiated by its presuppositions. Instead of judging from the evidence, it comes into court an advocate armed with a brief and spectaclled with prejuidice.

The Various Schools of Critics

There is a second class of critics which would fain occupy a neutral zone between belief and unbelief. Without surrendering the distinctively supernatural, they crowd it into narrow limits. The miraculous is not impossible, but it is embarrassing, and they are suspicious and hesitant about it. The outcome of such a mediating role can be foreseen. Scholars of this stamp may be robed in reverence, but they are compromised against the inerrancy of Scripture and lend themselves to its disparagement. Often, indeed, their processes have the earmarks of skepticism.

At the opposite pole from the foregoing are the conservatives, who abide in the main by tradition, but are open-minded toward legitimate research and every tested discovery of truth. These are busy with those New Testament problems that are real and are not wantonly invented, while at the same time they hold the citadel of the faith against assault.

Surveying next the critical movement in all its latitude, it may be said that on documentary questions the tide has turned shoreward. During

*An address delivered at the Pittsburgh Conference on the afternoon of May 1, 1906. Rev. Dr. McNaugher is Professor of New Testament Literature and Criticism in the Allegheny Theological Seminary (U. P.), and is manifestly perfectly at home in handling his theme.

*The Turn in the
Critical Movement*

the last thirty years many extravagances have been discarded and there has been some approach to the affirmations of the past. Harnack, the brilliant Ritschlian and the ablest living representative of negative tendencies, owns that the Tübingen theory ended in a fiasco and that, with exceptions, traditional dating and authorship have steadily grown stronger with the advance of knowledge. It is true that a minority criticism, of which Cheyne's *Encyclopedia Biblica* is the mouthpiece, has made a clean sweep, claiming that the entire New Testament Canon is a second century yield; but its drastic methods and bald sophistries have condemned it with the more reasonable of all schools. In important respects Christian tradition has been rehabilitated in the esteem of liberal thinkers. Yet the bettered situation, whatever its promise, must not be misunderstood. After the recent gratifying concessions of leading Germans the confidence was freely expressed that the conflict which had raged for so long was well-nigh over. But appearances were deceiving. In the desertion of the old battle ground and the retreat from the positions of Baur destructive criticism lost prestige, but already it has found a new alignment on literary issues, and in its hostility to supernaturalism it presents an unchanged front.

*The Present
Controversy*

The controversy of to-day centers still about the credibility of the New Testament books and the personality and teaching of the Master. Its dimensions can be caught by a glance at the reconstructed Christianity proposed by the dominant rationalistic party. The supernatural factor is eliminated. Miracles absolutely and the dogmatic element largely are rejected as accretions to what is original and valid. A revised Jesus, stripped of Divine attributes, is brought forth, a Christ without Christology. He was a providential man in the highest sense, close to God through religious susceptibility and fine ethical discernment, a teacher who, though not infallible, could stir conscience and heart. But this was all. Glorified by a holy mission He aroused resistless enthusiasm among his followers, and later reflection heightened the story so that He soon became haloed. His incarnation as the Eternal Logos is poetic; His virgin-birth, the signal of theanthropic character, is legend, and so are the temptation and the transfiguration; His prophecies and eschatology are an after-growth; His miracles are the echo of Old Testament wonder tales, or exaggerated occurrences, or translations into reality of parable and metaphor; His sacrificial death is a survival of Judaism; His bodily resurrection is a figment which is replaced by reference to spiritual apparitions. With a non-miraculous Jesus the doctrinal possessions of the Church go by the board, and the rise of the Church itself lies within the natural domain. Christianity is but an aggregate of "value judgments" and is emptied of redemptive virtue. Its merit lodges in its code of morals. The adoption of the Nazarene as exemplar and the cultivation of the ethical habit are all it asks. Such, in terse outline, is the meager and cold reconstruction of a school which pits itself against the evangelical faith and flouts the credenda of Christendom. Peering into

a long-past world it pretends to a divining power by which verities, as distinguished from false augment, are rediscovered.

Of necessity the New Testament is opened with a nebulous notion of inspiration. Ritschlianism permits no more. Here is a volume whose base may be regarded as a roundabout message from God, but there must be constant allowance for the intrusion of the extraneous. Of oracles proper, having imperative-ness, there are none; of the lucubrations of gifted but errable men there are a plenty.

*Theory of
Inspiration*

In the procedure followed there is a large reliance on the theory of sources. Behind certain of the leading New Testament writings it is held that there is a complicated pedigree running back a generation or two. This must be ferreted out, so as to separate what is primitive from what is second-rate or dubious, and that the personal equation of the redactor may be known. Much ingenuity accordingly has been expended in tracing the supposed documents which have been pieced together, and how they have been remodeled and embellished. Other books not of compilatory structure but single in genesis are yet similarly laden with what was accidental and temporary in the period of their origin. They also, therefore, must be winnowed and sifted for the substantive truth. In short, the conceptions of the first and authoritative Christian teachers are obscured on the New Testament page, and the veil is taken away by dissection and disintegration. Sometimes a partial acceptance of what is written results, sometimes a wholesale interdict.

*Critical
Procedure*

Appreciating the range of criticism and where the boundary stakes are set, it is now in order to review the New Testament section by section and scan the findings. The Gospels are in the premier place. Confessedly they are the mainstay of the Christian system. If they can not be shaken, all mythological and legendary hypotheses are dispersed into thin air.

The Gospels

On them, therefore, rationalism has focused its searchlights, and their genuineness and historicity have been the target for its heaviest fire.

By some the Fourth Gospel is made of no reputation as being a treatise rather than an epitome of fact. From prologue to epilogue it is full of idealism. Biographically it is honeycombed with palpable error. Its pseudonymous author is bent on promoting cherished Christological tenets, and in doing this he recasts events, elaborates discourses, and paints imaginary pictures. The Jesus of record, therefore, is a mere personification of principles evolved in the early second century. This is the dictum of the extremer critical wing. The strictures of others are moderated somewhat, and the Gospel is recognized as inclosing a small fund of likely memorabilia.

*The Fourth
Gospel*

To an extent the Synoptic Gospels are countenanced by a large contingent of those who are commonly called the higher critics. Yet these there

*The Synoptic
Gospels*

Gospels likewise teem with misstatement, and there must be discrimination between what is trustworthy and what is not. Harnack, speaking for many, concedes that they are reliable save where they register miracle—an inconsistency explained by observing that when they were written men were believers in the miraculous through shallow insight into nature. By the more radical theorizers, however, the Synoptics are practically tabooed as unworthy of credence. Schmiedel, of Zurich, who represents the *ne plus ultra* of destructive endeavor, consents to but nine scant passages as the sum of real Synoptical information about our Saviour, five of these being self-depreciatory sayings of Jesus. All besides is chaff.

*Intermediate
Criticism of
the Gospels*

Intermediate criticism, since it is not wholly hypnotized with the idea of the anti-supernatural, does some justice by the Gospels as an exhibit of Christ's individuality and doctrine. And yet in certain respects it lags little behind the more forward school. It either dissociates the Gospels from direct apostolic relationship, or has no visible concern in the matter; it magnifies the differences between them into contradictions, and will not hear of harmonistic; it joins in the hue and cry concerning alleged anachronisms, apocryphal elements, crudities, and other faults. Thus it weakens the sense of their historical accuracy.

*The Conservative
View of the
Gospels*

On the other hand orthodox scholars agree that the four Gospels are bound to have an increasing reception in all circles as the products of the men named in their superscriptions. They are able to assert that every item of evidence gleaned in recent years, such as Tatian's Diatessaron in Arabic and the so-called Gospel of Peter, has gone to ratify the distinctive status of our Gospels in the Church of the earliest Fathers and to locate them in the proper epoch, that no fact contrary to their traditional authorship has been established, and that adverse theories have destroyed one another or have been swamped by the emergence of new data. They point also to the grudging admissions of negative critics themselves, by which the once imperious dogma of the lateness of the Gospels has been relegated to the waste-heap of exploded speculations. Under the compulsion of unmistakable testimony, there is a large consensus in rationalistic and liberal quarters that the mass of the Synoptic narrative took shape before the downfall of Jerusalem, and that the Synoptics themselves were current in the first century—which consists with their being attributed to contemporaries of Christ. So with the Fourth Gospel. Baur taught that before A. D. 175 no reference to it could be found; but the pillars of his contention have fallen one after another with every discovery in patristic literature, and his successors are driven into a corner. Harnack and Jülicher can not date it later than A. D. 110, and the former grants that the publication may be pushed back to A. D. 80, which satisfies abundantly the time requirement for Johannine authorship. Under pressure, therefore, neocritical opinion concerning the Fourth Gospel has been trending toward conservatism. For the present, however, it halts at half-way conclusions

which are purely hypothetical and arbitrary. Some, in defiance of its unity, partition the Gospel, and assign a portion to John directly and the remainder to an editor; other find a Johannine base that Gnosticism has reworked; others risk the conjecture that it was framed by a friend of John from reminiscences of his teaching; others ascribe it to John the Presbyter, a supposed associate of the Apostle.

The significance of all the foregoing is patent. When a hostile criticism is led to remit the four Gospels to such early days and to connect them with the Apostles in the measure that it does, the candor and equity of its reserve argument may be doubted. It has quit the territory in which it had any fighting chance with the tradition of the age-long Christian society, and its continued stand against the historical origin of the Gospels is but the forlorn attempt of rooted prejudice to postpone defeat.

*The Weakness of
Hostile Criticism
of the Gospels*

For the credibility of the Gospels, which is the essential question, the cumulative guarantees usually adduced are still intact, notwithstanding the learned and laborious investigation that has been had—
The Credibility of the Gospels are stronger for that reason. The Higher Criticism, by its assignment of the Gospels to the first century, has so far, justified their trustiness, owing to the relation between date and value. Chronologically, indeed, its view borders on the Church account of the originators of the Gospels as being eye-witnesses or companions of such. And then no iconoclast has done hurt to the marvelous delineation of the Divine Christ, has spoiled His mysterious loneliness or wrested away His sceptre of spiritual ascendancy. The four-fold sketch, with its limpid spontaneity remains self-evidencing as at the first, makes compelling appeal to "the intuitions and pieties" of all but those blinded by invincible prepossessions. Regarding the miracles, their authenticity rests in present polemics on their verisimilitude, on the truthfulness, largely acknowledged, of the history into which they are woven, and on their being normal phenomena of the incarnation.

In the literary sphere the Synoptic Problem, after a hundred years of discussion, continues to be the crux of New Testament students. The familiar Two-Document theory* is now most widely accepted, but there are signs that it is to be exchanged for something more complex and artificial. The oral theory, † which has always had intrinsic merit, but which has been shunted to one side, is modernized so as to include a larger use of auxi-

*The Synoptic
Problem*

*This theory is to the effect that two fundamental documents constitute the main sources of the Synoptic Gospels. These are the canonical Gospel according to Mark (or a previous Gospel which our canonical Mark reproduces) and the alleged Logia of Matthew, viz., a collection of the sayings of our Lord written in Aramaic.

†The Oral theory as originally presented was that the Synoptic Gospels embody a fixed oral tradition concerning the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. This apostolic tradition, admitting both of a general uniformity and of minor variations, was looked upon as the archetype of the Synoptics, and was taken to account sufficiently both for their coincidences and differences.

liary documents. As thus presented it furnishes an adequate key to the coupled affiliations and differences of the first three Gospels.

The specialties of the Gospel according to John, clustering around the aspect of Christ which it embodies, deserve a word, for criticism has been industrious in making capital out of them. Sober writers who defend the Gospel as Johannean provide the following solution: that it is a mature but uncolored memoir, written by the beloved disciple after a life-long meditation on his Lord and in answer to peculiar conditions which had arisen; that the utterances referred to Jesus were delivered in surroundings and to audiences other than those in and to which the Synoptic discourses were delivered; that, though for substance Christ's, these utterances are not reported with stenographic precision, but are clothed partially in the style and phraseology of the inspired evangelist; that John's Gospel is supplemental to the other three, differing in its recital just as Plato's account of Socrates differs from Xenophon's, the Christ whom it depicts being essentially the Christ of Matthew, Mark and Luke, with only a prolonged dwelling on the mystery of His person.

Leaving the Gospels for the Acts, it is to be observed here too that ultraism is spent. The day was when the Acts was appraised as substantially a fiction, manufactured to span a chasm between primitive and Pauline Christianity. That idea is antiquated. Prevaillingly the book is attributed to Luke. Of course, even with this divers estimates of its historical value are possible, and occasionally Luke is taxed with defective knowledge and insight. The school which rejects Lucan authorship asserts that the Acts is a patchwork of lesser documents; that within it, especially in the account of Paul's journeys, are embedded memoranda that are correct; but that, particularly in the early chapters and the speeches, the unknown compiler has inserted chronicles unworthy of belief. All this criticism has had sharp rejoinder from eminent students, and staggers under a burden of improbabilities. The reply submitted is that examination demonstrates the solidarity of Acts, while not curtailing Luke's liberty in the use of good helps; that the simplicity of the account tallies with the spirit of the apostolic age and gives the impression of veracity; that archæological research is corroborative of the narrative, never contradictory; that there are many undesigned coincidences with Paul's Epistles; that the identity of Luke as author is proved beyond peradventure; and that the objections of those who would impugn the book are of an *a priori* kind, and are *ipso facto* of no force.

Passing next to the Pauline letters, we see that inquiry has been working toward the acceptance of their professed authorship. Hebrews is barred from the list, though it is all but universally acknowledged as hailing from the apostolic era. This masterpiece of sacred literature is referred to an unknown penman, some yoke-fellow of the great Tarsian and of kindred type. Of the group of thirteen Epistles which bears Paul's name the major

*The Specialties of
The Fourth Gospel*

The Acts

*The Run of Opin-
ion Regarding the
Pauline Epistles*

members are practically undisputed, and, excepting the Pastorals, the run of opinion favors the genuineness of the rest. Some stray critics of note hesitate about Second Corinthians and the interrelated letters to the Colossians and the Ephesians, but they are a decreasing number.

The Pastoral Epistles remain in the arena of debate. Because of special style and tone, their church order, the heresies combated, the failure to find room for them in the Acts, they have suffered perennial attack. There has been, however, a gradual return toward the traditional view by the opposition. The extreme verdict, once spoken so assertively, that the Pastorals are spurious, born of the struggle with Gnosticism, has sunk into abeyance. The substitute which by degrees has come to the fore accounts that these Epistles are of mixed origin. They incorporate fragments that are indubitably Pauline, but in their extant form they are the work of early editors, having been drafted to aid ecclesiastical discipline. This claim, based on merely subjective considerations, creates more difficulties than it removes, and must be given up eventually. Its weakness appears in that all efforts to disengage the authentic passages from the alleged additions have lost themselves in a hopeless tangle, no one analysis commanding anything like general assent. The negative argument in its most recent phases has been completely countered, and the confidence of its adherents is being undermined. The Pastorals can be located easily in an unrecorded period of Paul's career, and the reasons cited for their entire genuineness preponderate and are decisive.

*The Pastoral
Epistles*

The twentieth century, then, opens with a very widely spread agreement as to the genuineness of the Epistles of Paul. This fact is important for the purposes of Apologetics. These writings, thus admitted as from the very chiefest Apostle, bring powerful reinforcement to the proof for Christianity. They give consenting witness to the Gospels as history, and show that within the lifetime of men who had companied with Jesus the doctrines which the Church holds fast were taught and cherished.

*The Pauline
Apologetic*

While remarking a notable growth of faith in the genuineness of the Pauline Epistles, it should be said that a small coterie of radicals, headed by Van Manen, have impeached the whole of them, not sparing the four indorsed by Baur,* have wiped Paul and Paulinism off the slate together. These eccentrics regard Paul as a literary fiction and Christianity as the product of Roman popular philosophy. They have not won any following among serious investigators, nor will they, for their vicious principles sap the very foundations of criticism itself.

*Some Extreme
Pauline Criticism*

In the same connection mention may be made of the insidious attempt of Clemen and others to lower the credit of these Epistles by tracing more or less extensive interpolation in their transmitted text. This contention also, with

*First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans.

its erratic method and its variety of result, has but limited currency, and it will proceed no further. It abounds in the unverifiable, and is wrecked upon the testimony of the manuscripts and a candid, discerning exegesis.

As a last resort the Pauline Epistles are disvalued just because of their Paulinity. It was no other than Paul himself, it is said, who took the initiative in formulating the fictitious Messianism and soteriology of the New Testament. Responding, unconsciously in part, to his environment, and controlled by a dogmatic mood, he drew aside from the teachings of Jesus and construed Christianity under the categories of Rabbinism, Alexandrian speculation, and Greek philosophy. All this body of private theologizing must be subtracted from his Epistles, and only the residuum that answers to the so-called Synoptic standard is admissible. To this conservatives make the return that the rudimentaries of the Pauline system are taken from the common apostolic storehouse; that hallucination regarding the One Whom his kinsmen according to the flesh crucified is forbidden by Paul's strong mentality; that there is no reason for rejecting Paul's teaching because of its abstractions and its reference to prevailing philosophical and rabbinical ideas, these being matters of form; that Paul's witness-bearing competency is upheld so far as the experimental test applies, and that this creates a presumption in favor of what transcends human experience; that, while there is doctrinal development in the Pauline Epistles, the account of it given by the Dutch critics involves glaring non-sequiturs, it being sufficient to note that in the very nature of things Christ could utter but seed thoughts about Himself and the end of His mission, and that after His death, resurrection, and ascension there were new facts at command from which Paul could unfold as he does the profounder truths of the Christian religion; and finally, though supernatural influence is under the critical ban, that these Epistles are God-breathed and their infallibility thus insured.

The Catholic Epistles, next in order, are on the firing line of criticism. By many these brief booklets are relegated to a secondary class in the Canon

*The Catholic
Epistles*

as the productions of anonymous sub-apostolic teachers. Their authority, however, can well stand in the light of the defence made.* First Peter and First John are more than certified, and James lingers but little behind.

Naturally the support for the lesser of the series is not so weighty, but it is enough with impartial inquirers to warrant their being reckoned among the authentic treasures of the primitive age. There is just one of them over which, from isolated points of view, there hangs the shadow of a plausible doubt. Of unique character, and with an external attestation which is comparatively scant, Second Peter has invited serious questioning. Rationalistic writers rate it as definitely apocryphal, and it is handled with reserve by men who ordinarily are ruled by caution. But conceding the peculiarities of the case, a respectable scholarship finds it allowable to insist that the objections filed are not so cogent as some would have them—are really indeterminate,

*They are upheld by such as B. Weiss, T. Zahn, Salmon, Sanday, Ramsay, Gloag, and the late F. Godet.

and that the balance of evidence inclines to the side of our Epistle because of a subtle affinity with First Peter and its non-conformity to second century conditions. Beyond this, the ultimate answer to the indictment that it is a falsely inscribed counterfeit is the judgment that it eclipses the best of the patristic writings and is stamped with the hall-mark of inspiration, that "in all parts of the Epistle", as Calvin remarks, "the majesty of the Spirit of Christ displays itself".

The newer criticism of the Apocalypse has wrought some strange reversals. The apostolicity and integrity of the book, loudly advertised by Tübingen, are now mooted problems. Again, almost all moderns have abandoned the once common postulate that the Revelation was published before the destruction of Jerusalem, about A. D. 68, and have adopted the Domitianic dating of Irenæus, about A. D. 95. The advanced representatives of critical science are agreed that it is a composite, but there is all manner of conjecture about what has been utilized. From Vischer's single Jewish source touched over by a Christian hand, re-edited documents of one kind and another multiply until six of them are told off, and back of these there are borrowings from ancient Babylonian or Akkadian mythology. In the wake of such speculation the Apocalypse is classified with extra-scriptural writings cast in the same mould. In no wise is it to be differentiated from these fantasies. Its ecstatic visions were not Divine disclosures, but the coinage of spiritual genius dreaming out the conflicts of the kingdom of God. This last pronouncement recalls the hasty action of two or three of the Reformers,* but it is not defensible on that score. As now voiced it is the fruit of naturalistic bias, and merits the flat denial which it has received. An extensive and ripe scholarship regards the Apocalypse as *sui generis*, lifting above all would be competitors as the Rockies lift above the prairie levels.

The divisive theory of the Apocalypse, which fascinates so many, has been challenged rightly as far-fetched and gratuitous. Instead of being a dualism or worse, it has been clearly proved that no book of the Bible is more obviously one in sentiment, language, plan and scope.† The direct apostolic authorship of the Revelation, so emphatically affirmed by the second-century Church, is granted by some of the negatively inclined, and dissent therefrom is becoming less clamorous. It is noteworthy that Harnack ascribes the Apocalypse to the author of the Fourth Gospel, whom he identifies with John the Presbyter. In doing this he shatters the old argument that the dissimilarities between the two writings demonstrate a diversity of authorship.

And now in conclusion, a comprehensive survey of New Testament criticism is reassuring and should be a tonic for impaired faith. There need

*Luther and Zwingli. Calvin is doubtful. His omission of the Apocalypse in his Commentary seems to have arisen rather from his conviction that he had not found the key to its interpretation, though there may have been some misgiving also as to its genuineness and proper canonicity.

†See article by Dr. B. B. Warfield in *Presbyterian Banner* for April, 1884, on "The Unity of the Apocalypse".

The Survey of New Testament Criticism Reassuring

be no disquietude concerning the charter of Christian doctrine or discipline lest in any part it be displaced or disparaged. The severest tests of genuineness and historicity justify the canon defined by the "selective instinct" of the ancient Church. At this essential point rationalistic scholarship has been met by a believing scholarship of equal information, culture, and acumen, a scholarship that has shown earnestness for truth, that has canvassed dispassionately every question presented, but that has refused to be frightened or cajoled into concessions to false philosophy, and that upholds an undiminished New Testament, authoritative throughout.

The hypotheses and criteria of the revolutionary wing of critics are psychologically and historically unreasonable, being dominated, as we have seen, by a latent or an avowed purpose to escape the supernatural and have everything square with axiomatic predilections. Under the sway of such subjectivism blank assertion, rash guesses, daring assumption have been taken often as a premise, and the outcome, whatever erudition enters into it, verifies Pascal's trenchant words about the fallibility of man's logic.* Indeterminateness, fluctuation, recantation are the tale. The record of New Testament criticism marks the rise and fall of a legion of shortlived theories, each adroitly stated, sometimes held with buoyant, even arrogant, confidence, each influential and ostensibly final for a brief space, and each forsaken in its turn.

The Higher Criticism as a whole, however, has been fruitful of positive and permanent result. It has accredited, directly or indirectly, what may be termed matters of substance. Even as a propaganda of free-thought it has been stimulative of research, a path-breaker into the wide field of New Testament Introduction, and thus out of the eater has come forth meat. An immense apparatus for New Testament study has been accumulated, and scientific methods have been evoked; each of the twenty-seven writings has been given a historical setting it never had before, and thus its intelligibility has been greatly increased and it has been raised to a higher plane of spiritual meaning; the old tortuous shifts of explanation in the handling of difficulties have been rendered obsolete; many puzzling problems have been grappled with and solved; traditional errors of interpretation, and no few of them, have been rectified.

For the future we should welcome the fullest light of the new learning, while chary of the merely tentative and watchful that the light is not darkness. We wish to know all that can be known. To fence the New Testament from scrutiny is disloyalty to the Holy Spirit under whose presidency it was formed. Rather should the attitude be that of courting the freest investigation. Nothing is surrendered in surrendering to what is solidly established. A criticism that is open to the facts of experience and

*Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts* (Bohn's Standard Library), p. 27.

history, while at the same time true to the inspiration of Scripture, the deity of Christ, and the gospel of grace, can not but promote evangelical religion.

A Destructive Critic's Perverse Interpretation of the Scriptures

THE LATE REV. FREDERICK LARUE KING, A. M.

A writer in "The Spectator" asserts that two Hebrew prophets, and one Hebrew poet denied the Mosaic institution of sacrifices. Upon asking him what he referred to, he answered, Jeremiah, vii. 22, Amos v. 25, and Psalm xl. 6.

It would seem to be time wasted to attempt a refutation of his interpretation of Psalm xl. 6, it is so plainly an acknowledgement on the part of the psalmist that no sacrifices or offerings would satisfy the claims of God on us for worship; that the ordinance of sacrifice was merely the external form which in itself was nothing at all; and that what God really meant by the ordinance of sacrifice was the devotion of the whole will and whole heart to Him (Psalm xl. 7, 8).

Interpretation of Jeremiah vii. 22

The second text, Jeremiah vii. 22, really amounts to the same thing; but the form in which the denial is couched is so specific that it requires some discussion.

It certainly denies in words, at least, that at the time of the Exodus any sacrifices were enjoined by God.

But we would make a great mistake if we should interpret what is written or said always literally. There are such things as figures of speech, and the Bible is full of them. Writers of a certain class are fond of recalling this fact whenever the Scriptures seem to set forth an unpalatable doctrine. Then we are told that the Bible is an Oriental book; that this or that statement is a figurative one, and means something different from what it appears to say. On the other hand, if the literal interpretation of a figurative statement will answer their distinctive purposes, they eagerly avail themselves of it.

The figure used here by the prophet, irony, is one common in literature and in daily life. It consists in saying the opposite of what is meant. One of Longfellow's poems is called "Birds of Passage". He describes the flocks of birds with their cries as they sweep through the air above his head, and then denies that they are birds, asserts that they are poets, and says that the cries they utter in their flight are the songs that the poets sing in the course of their intense and troubled lives. Now, having no purposes of destructive criticism to subserve, we readily understand that he merely means to say, that a poet's eager enthusiastic life may well be likened to the flight of birds. When Mark Anthony says, "Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up to such a sudden flood of grief and mutiny"! It is in form a dissuasion, but in reality a persuasion. And when he says, "I'd rather