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A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expository-times\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[Issue]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article].pdf

out, lies in the fact that 'no realization of the Kingdom of God under conditions of earthly space and time could be satisfying, and that any religion which made its chief concern an improvement of conditions on this planet would not meet the highest spiritual exigence of man.' The hope of 'a good time coming' in this world is too reminiscent of the materialistic dreams of some Jewish apocalyptic.

Yet Mr. BEVAN does not regard as absurd or unspiritual the hope that even on this planet man may be brought to a higher level of goodness or

happiness. But while that is not an unreasonable hope to entertain, for one who understands the Christian faith it can certainly never be the great consummation of history. That can only be found in 'a communal bliss, an existence of the Divine community of spirits in perfection and mutual love and joy.'

This fine lecture, with its wide outlook upon history, its brave faith, and its cheerful yet solemn hope, is at once an intellectual treat and a spiritual stimulus.

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## National Contributions to Biblical Science.

### V. The Contribution of Germany to New Testament Science.

#### I.

BY PROFESSOR MARTIN DIBELIUS, D.TH., D.PH., HEIDELBERG.

THERE is justification for considering the history of scientific study within national limits. To begin with, it has often been the case that there has been no association in work between the scholars of different countries, with the inevitable result that in many cases conclusions had to be sought and established more than once, quite independently in every nation engaged in scientific research. This failure to exchange ideas continued longer in theology than in other sciences, for the diversity of ecclesiastical affiliation and the want of reciprocal activities between Churches had necessarily an influence on theology. In the commentary on *The Epistle of James*, by August Rudolph Gebser of Jena, which appeared in 1828, the author at the close of his preface speaks of 'my esteemed friends in England,' 'who have had their attention drawn to me by the work on which I am engaged, the *Bibliotheca Latina poetarum veterum Christianorum*.' From this manner of speaking, as well as from the fact that Gebser took the opportunity afforded him of expressing his gratitude for literary gifts from England, one may infer how infrequent such relations must have been at that time. The necessity for an international interchange of views was recognized earlier by scientific theologians than by the Churches, but now that ecumenical

fellowship has to a very large extent begun among the Churches, scientific theology is bound to reap some benefit. To say the least, it will learn from ecumenical conferences that the most important condition of mutual understanding in every sphere is to be found in becoming acquainted with and in learning to appraise the intellectual forces of foreign countries. It is from this point of view that the following discussion should be understood; only so can the development of New Testament research in Germany have any claim on the sympathetic interest of English readers.

The restriction of one's view to the scientific development of a single people has an inner justification as well. For every separate branch of knowledge is dependent on the development of the intellectual life of the people, and that life again is the expression of the intellectual endowments of a nation in a definite historical situation.

How deeply influential these relationships are may be realized when one considers the two great achievements of German theology in the New Testament field, which, about the middle of last century, gave a decisive impulse to scientific research and provided the material for extremely fruitful discussions in the generation following—the *Life of Jesus* (1835-36), by David Friedrich

Strauss, and *Paul* (1845), the chief work of Ferdinand Christian Baur, the founder of the Tübingen school. Both these works were very deeply influenced by the philosophy of Hegel, which at that time was dominant in Germany. Strauss had learned from the great philosopher that no idea can realize itself completely in history, that accordingly the idea of incarnation in the value which it has is not dependent on the facts of the life of Jesus, and, that being so, that one may examine without the slightest prejudice, in a spirit of indifference even, under what conditions, in what way, and to what extent that idea has been realized in the Person of Jesus. Hegel's influence on Baur was mainly apparent in his delineation of primitive Christianity. His conception of the course of events was based on the presupposition that the Jewish-Christian Petrine party was in conflict with the Gentile-Christian Pauline party, and that by an immanent law the development was bound to lead to the harmonious adjustment of these opposites, the result of the process being the rise of the Catholic Church. The rhythm of the historical movement was thus described in Hegelian fashion as a sequence of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.

It must, however, be admitted that it is not the philosophical conceptions of Strauss and Baur which make them figures of such importance in the history of New Testament science. What lends significance to their names to-day is their attitude to history. Strauss was the first who, with complete freedom from prejudice, raised the question of the 'mythical' interpretation of the Gospels. In so doing he did not use the word 'myth,' as we do to-day, in the sense of significant stories of the gods; he called every tale 'a myth,' in which an idea was expressed. In its bearing on the life of Jesus, the question of myth, in the sense in which Strauss used the word, is equivalent to the question whether the stories related of Jesus are really history and not representations of an idea. The application of this question to the life of Jesus led at once to the refutation alike of supernatural and of rationalistic interpretations; it involved also the keenest historical criticism of that Gospel, which may most easily be conceived as derived from an idea, the Gospel of John. The simple practice of harmonizing, which, with little critical sense, combined the narratives of the four Gospels, became after Strauss scientifically impossible. Not less great is Baur's service to history. Since he sought to explain the whole of primitive Christianity by the opposition offered by Jewish Christians to Paul's conception

of salvation, and since he examined every New Testament writing with reference to its attitude in this conflict, all the writings of the New Testament became for him documents of the conflict. It was certainly an imperfect orientation, but there emerged the great and authoritative conception that these books, which were not written as 'books,' ought not to be regarded as books but as the sediment of an intellectual process. What, accordingly, the historian of primitive Christianity has to reconstruct is not only the world of ideas represented in these books but, above all, the historical process in which they originated. Baur was the first to take seriously the historical character of our work on the New Testament.

Both Strauss and Baur made many mistakes. But in their work they made use of principles which even to-day give guidance in the historical investigation of the New Testament. And through the new conclusions at which they arrived, they provided the scientific study of primitive Christianity with the decisive motives for further development. Consequently, a review of the more recent investigations into primitive Christianity must take their work as a starting-point.

## I.

Is the content of the Gospels in reality 'mythical' to the extent that Strauss assumes? Was the development of the earliest Christianity in reality so essentially determined, as Baur declares it to have been, by the conflict between Paul and the Judaists? These are the questions which have formed the subject of scientific discussion since the time of Strauss and Baur. In them we find the decisive impulses to the literary as well as to the religious-historical criticism of the New Testament. The discussion was bound in the nature of the case to lead to the investigation of particular historical questions; even although it yielded other results than those for which Strauss and Baur had contended, the work of research nevertheless took its direction from Strauss's statement of the problem and from the reconstruction of Baur.

Research, which in this way was confronted with particular problems, had to specialize accordingly. This, again, was quite in harmony with the spirit of the age. It was the epoch in which natural sciences and technical arts experienced an impetus hitherto unknown, in which life was increasingly mechanicalized, and in which particularly the German spirit more and more renounced its romantic dreams and turned to the actualities of

life. In the same way also the mental sciences were affected by a tendency to realism and—if one may use the expression in a figurative sense—to microscopic examination. Historical study was influenced less and less by the desire to search out laws of life which also govern our existence; it kept steadily in view the more realistic aim of showing how things actually were. Thus there began in the field of the New Testament an epoch of fruitful labours in literary criticism (I). When this had reached certain results, the endeavour was made to pursue farther the specialized work in Biblical theology; the undeniable risk thereby incurred of being bogged in details and of reaching a stage when (so to speak) the subject was resolved into atoms, one hoped to be able to overcome with the help of psychology (II). New texts were discovered and old ones were subjected to fresh examination; the knowledge of the environment of the New Testament which was thereby gained led to the religious-historical (III) and the sociological (IV) methods. The dialectic theology of the post-war period (V) appeared in this *milieu* as a fruitful and necessary reaction, which aimed not unsuccessfully at bringing theology back to a sense of her own peculiar task. It would, however, be false to characterize these movements as phenomena of epochs which followed one another in time. They cross one another and often overtake one another. The following discussion which, for convenience, deals with the individual phenomena separately is accordingly one governed by considerations of subject-matter, not strictly of chronology.

The questions which Strauss and Baur had bequeathed could be discussed and answered, only when the foundation on which they had built was subjected to fresh examination, that is to say, only when the question of Sources was dealt with anew. Criticism bearing on the life of Jesus could make no progress without the consideration of the Synoptic problem. Both Strauss and Baur considered Matthew to be the earliest Gospel. During the agitation which Strauss's *Life of Jesus* had occasioned, two books appeared, without attracting much attention, in the same year (1838), in which the opinion was advanced that Mark was the earliest evangelist (Chr. Herm. Weisse, *Die Evangelische Geschichte*, and Chr. Gottlob Wilke, *Der Urevangelist*). If later in the conflict of views about the Primitive Gospel theory, the Fragment theory and the Literary Dependence theory, the priority of Mark came to be almost universally acknowledged, that substantial gain must be placed to the credit

of two German scholars—Bernhard Weiss in Berlin and Heinrich Julius Holtzmann in Strassbourg—who, though differing from one another in detail, established the conclusion on philological grounds that Matthew is secondary as compared with Mark. Moreover, the second of these scholars, in a series of careful studies, combined the Mark-hypothesis and the hypothesis of the 'Sayings' source into a whole, which, as the Two Source theory, is still the sure foundation of the criticism of the Synoptics. The German studies, too, dealing with the history of literary forms as well as the English attempts, with Luke as the starting-point, to reach further sources of the Gospels, would have been impossible without the basic work of the German critic. Holtzmann also accomplished much that was definitive for the criticism of the Pauline Epistles. Baur and his followers of the Tübingen school had left undisputed only the four great Epistles, to Rome, Corinth, and Galatia; the others were regarded as spurious or, at least, doubtfully genuine. Through his criticism of the Pastorals, Holtzmann showed that the authenticity of these Epistles was very improbable, and in the case of the other lesser Pauline Epistles he at least so far clarified the critical questions that further research was confronted with the real problems. Research in this field was naturally carried farther, as was also the case in the field of Gospel-criticism, but it cannot be said that in Germany any substantial agreement has so far been reached as to the results of the Two Source theory.

It looked as if literary criticism had entered on a new and flourishing period, when round about 1910 it became the accepted practice with its help to seek a solution of the great problem of the Gospel of John. The new impulse was mainly due to the work of Julius Wellhausen, the distinguished Old Testament scholar and Orientalist, and of Eduard Schwartz, the philologist (both of them at that time in Göttingen). Numerous differences in the text of the Gospel seemed to them to prove that the book, as we have it, was the revision of an original document, whereas others like Hans Hinrich Wendt in Jena believed they could detect different strata in the Gospel. The lively discussion which ensued led, however, to the conclusion that the Gospel of 'John' as a whole represented a religious-historical unity, and that the difficulties and perplexities could not all be explained by means of literary criticism. But many of the suggestions which we owe to this late phase of literary criticism have still their value in setting the problem and task for future research.

For the rest, the high level in the history of the spirit attained by the critical work of Baur was never again reached by the detailed studies of the generation which followed. Baur's great achievement consisted primarily in this, that he arranged the results of his criticism in a coherent historical conception of primitive Christianity and so made every detail serviceable to the understanding of the whole. The Tübingen school made further contributions to the development of this conception, and in this connexion Holsten, Hilgenfeld, and Pfleiderer should be mentioned. The last of these had a remarkable gift for combining Baur's results with the suggestions and investigations of the succeeding decades and, thanks to his amazing adaptability, for modifying the Tübingen conception of primitive Christianity so as to bring it up to date. For Baur's old reconstruction which made Jewish and Pauline Christianity issue in the synthesis of early Catholicism was no longer tenable. Albrecht Ritschl's book on *The Origin of the Old Catholic Church* and Adolf Harnack's *History of Dogma*, by which whole generations were profoundly influenced, had furnished the proof that Jewish Christianity was not in the least entitled to rank as a decisive factor in the whole process, but rather that the foremost place in this respect was to be accorded to popular Gentile Christianity. This, it must be admitted, did not have the effect of clearing up all the particular questions relating to the New Testament. Moreover, the specialized studies of the period did not succeed in putting a new conception of primitive Christianity in the place of that formulated by Baur.

It is accordingly not a matter for surprise that soon after Baur's time, and repeatedly in the course of later decades, serious attempts were made to reconstruct an altogether different scheme of primitive Christianity. The basis for this reconstruction was provided in every case by a criticism of the sources, which extended to the other New Testament writings the doubts cast by criticism on the Gospel of John and the Pastoral Epistles, and thus ended in acting as a solvent on the historical figures of Jesus and the Apostle Paul. The opinion was expressed that, however matters might stand with respect to the existence of the persons who bore these names, the Gospels were full of myths, and the letters of Paul were the work of a radical of the second century! The true home of this 'radical' criticism, however, was not Germany but Holland. Germany had its share in it only in so far as a few advances in that direction which caused some stir originated there. The motives

which inspired this critical movement did not remain the same but changed as time went on. Bruno Bauer (not to be confused with Baur of Tübingen), who about the year 1850 occupied the standpoint of literary scepticism which to some extent was shared by the Tübingen school, later attempted in his book, *Christus und die Cäsaren*, a complete historical reconstruction. Influenced by the sociological knowledge and religious-historical investigations of a new age, Albert Kalthoff, at the beginning of the twentieth century, sought to explain Christianity as the result of the collision of Jewish Messianic expectations and the social movements of the Roman Empire. Finally, Arthur Drews took as his original starting-point a conception of the philosophy of history, in which the supra-historical idea of incarnation was the primary fact in Christianity; in the years after the war, however, he endeavoured to find a comprehensive interpretation of the story of Jesus as a myth derived from astral and Old Testament motives. The result of the controversy to which these theories gave rise was not the triumph of the 'mythical' theory but rather a sharper emphasis laid on definite questions still unsolved. Scholars became alive to the fact that the bridge had not yet been discovered which led from Paul and the questions with which he was concerned to the altogether different complex of problems associated with early Catholicism, and they began to realize how much work had been left over by the research of specialists in the closing century.

## II.

We have, however, anticipated the order of events. The careful investigation of particular literary and theological questions which has been described was, and continued to be, the characteristic of the decades subsequent to the critical work of the Tübingen scholars and to the fundamental studies of Holtzmann. The intellectual conditions in the new German Empire bore the same character as that which dominated the economic situation—accumulation of wealth and division of labour. To-day it has become the fashion in Germany to speak disparagingly of this specialization. But it ought not to be forgotten that the careful individual studies of the New Testament, of the environment and teaching of Jesus and of particular ideas in the Pauline Epistles, laid the foundation on which all later writers, including the critics of the past, take their stand, and that that period has achievements to its credit which will always evoke admira-

tion for their insight and amazing erudition. In this connexion special mention should be made of Schürer's *History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, of Jülicher's *Parabolic Sayings of Jesus*, of Adolf Harnack's and Theodor Zahn's works on the Apostolic Age. It was due to the character of the age that there was an abatement of the inclination and consequently of the capacity for historical synthesis and construction which alone could have combined the parts into a whole.

There was, however, a consciousness of this defect, and attempts were made to remedy it. Assistance came from reconstructive psychology. Endeavours were made to solve the problems of the life of Jesus as well as the questions of Pauline theology by substituting the subjective unity of the spirit for the unity of structure which was no longer discoverable. That applies above all to the life of Jesus. It seemed impossible to write a real history of Jesus with the aid of the Synoptics. Their diversity in the manner of arrangement excluded all knowledge of a chronological sequence of events; the peculiarity of the Biblical account explained nothing, revealed no causal connexions,

supplied no bond of unity. A true presentment of the purpose and activity of Jesus seemed possible only when these omissions were made good with the help of psychology. Thus there were produced the more or less critical portrayals of the life of Jesus by Bernhard Weiss, Willibald Beyschlag, Oscar Holtzmann, and P. W. Schmidt; these had been preceded, still to some extent on the basis of older presuppositions, by Strauss's *Life of Jesus for the German People*, and by the works of Schenkel Keim, and Hase. There was a desire to explain and to understand; the result was interpretations of miracles and reconstructions of the purpose of Jesus. The questionable element in all this was the subjectivity of the criticism of history, and what aroused still greater misgiving was the subjectivity of the psychological reconstruction, which frequently was in closer correspondence with the author's own ideas than with the picture in the New Testament, and thus, in spite of the author's desire to deal honestly with his material, gave a false drawing of the life of Jesus through representing it as that of an upright man of the peasant class or as an example of an interesting career.

(To be continued.)

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## Literature.

### RABBINIC LITERATURE AND GOSPEL TEACHINGS.

UNDER the above title Mr. C. G. Montefiore, D.Litt., D.D., has published a book of four hundred and forty-two pages (Macmillan; 15s. net), which he describes as a sort of supplement to his 'Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels,' the second edition of which appeared in 1927. The book is enriched by interspersed criticisms and comments from the pen of Mr. Herbert Loewe. The average Christian scholar is notoriously ignorant of the Talmud, and is therefore strongly tempted, in his ignorance, to depreciate the teaching of the Rabbis; in any case, as Dr. Montefiore says, you can fish out from the Talmudic sea what suits your purpose, and it should mean much to the New Testament student to have the evidence of the Talmud, at points where it has any bearing upon the teaching of Jesus, presented by a mind so eminently fair as that of Dr. Montefiore. He has no desire either to depreci-

ate Jesus or to exalt the Rabbis; his only ambition is to discover and interpret the facts and their relation to one another, so far as that is possible.

The exhaustive nature of the discussion will be seen from the fact that no less than two hundred and one pages are devoted to the Sermon on the Mount. The rest of Matthew is disposed of in one hundred and forty pages, and the remainder is given to Luke. The value of the book is enormously enhanced by its continual reference to and occasional challenges of Strack and Billerbeck's monumental volumes which can hardly be familiar in this country except to expert students of the New Testament. Dr. Montefiore pays more than one compliment to the accuracy of Billerbeck, and Moore's 'Judaism,' with its magnificent mastery of the facts and its serene objectivity, commands his admiration. But the writer goes his own way, often a delightfully chatty way, to which, perhaps, he is encouraged by the large number of illustrative anecdotes he has to narrate from his sources.