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our infirmities because He was tempted in all points like as we are—doubts amongst the rest—and that experience He has not forgotten. It explains His Divine sympathy. Let us, when our youth lies behind us, resolve that we will be mind-

ful—humbly, wonderingly, gratefully mindful—of what we underwent, of the shadowed places in which God gave us light; praying that thereby we may be the better fitted to guide others whose feet are stumbling on the mountains of darkness.

An Urgent Need.

BY PROFESSOR P. DEARMER, D.D., LONDON.

THERE is a dangerous separation at the present day between the theologian and the ordinary educated public, between the intelligent preacher and those who listen to him. The theologian regards the Bible as a collection of documents, written at widely varying times, and from many points of view, inspired indeed, and the source of our highest knowledge about things divine, but differing greatly in their degree of inspiration and of exactness. To the great mass of the public, the little educated majority, the Bible is still just the Bible, an undifferentiated solid, or perhaps we should say an unrelieved superficies: such people fall easy victims to the crudest secularist, and having never learnt to regard the sacred books historically, they cannot distinguish between primitive and developed ideas of morality or between the poetry and the prose of the Old Testament. I doubt, indeed, whether the large multitude that reads the inferior newspapers—and nothing else—has greatly departed from the Biblical ideas of a century ago, except that a large and increasing number has acquired a vague notion that the Bible (and therefore religion) is not quite true. This, of course, is partly due to the failure of preachers to speak out plainly enough: they do not want to upset the older members of their congregations; and, when they do treat the Bible in a modern way, they often do so with so much discretion that only a brother theologian would know what they meant. What the public notion was a few years ago—and I fancy is still to-day—was shown by the newspaper headings when Dr. Barnes, as a Canon of Westminster, preached before the British Association—‘Courageous Utterance of a Canon,’ was the way they ran, ‘The World not Made in Six Days.’ Nobody worth mentioning had thought it was, for half a century; and for my own part, I had never heard a preacher say

that it was; but I must confess at the same time that I had seldom heard a preacher explain with unmistakable vigour that it was not.

All this is an old story; but I do not think the difficulty has yet been met in a practical way; and there is another problem, that of the well-educated layman, which has not yet been met either. Able men, famous and brilliant novelists (and it is the novelists who do the most successful part of the world’s preaching nowadays), as well as other writers, continually touch on matters of religion without apparently understanding the Synoptic problem and its solution in modern times. The educated laity have generally a rough idea of the development of Hebrew religion and of the relation of the Old Testament to the New; but they seldom exhibit any idea of the difference between the Gospels and the Epistles and between one Gospel and another.

Now all students of the New Testament know that the criticism of the last thirty years, by separating later first-century reflections from the actual teaching of Jesus Christ, has enormously increased our knowledge of His character and message. The difference can be compared with that which is seen in a picture which has been carefully cleaned and restored by a skilled expert. The portrait we have of Christ is far more vivid, and more adorable. The touches of sententiousness have gone, the suspicion of self-praise, the disturbing element of phrases here and there that seemed fierce or cruel—such things an impartial and strictly scientific scholarship has shown to be the natural additions of editors of different temperaments. Some were due to quite late alterations in the manuscripts, and disappeared in the Revised Version (a momentous example being the omission of the word ‘fasting’); though, indeed, the Revisers were over-conservative, and it may

be generally said that the readings they put in the margin scholars of to-day would more often put in the text.

1. *The Need of a Revised Version.*—This brings me to my first point: that preliminary clearing away of excrescences which was accomplished by the Revised Version can now be better done, because we have a greater knowledge of the MS. sources. It is surely a scandal that the Revised Version is now fifty years old, and that no steps have been taken to replace it by something more worthy of an age that has seen an unexampled increase of our knowledge, not only by more scientific study, but by the actual discovery of new books dating from the earliest periods of Christian history, and of papyri which enable us to understand as never before the Greek of the New Testament era. Moreover, the literary side of the Revised Version was always open to grave objection, partly because the great poets and prose writers of the day (and what masters there were then alive!) were not called in. What was needed then, and is needed now, was the old splendid Authorized Version, corrected but not rewritten.

A new revision would take time. It reflects little credit on us that the work has not yet been envisaged. We are now emerging from the discouraging and difficult post-war era. Cannot we determine to begin the work that will remove one of our religious difficulties by giving the public a Testament that is as true as possible to the best original texts? Translations like that of Dr. Moffatt are invaluable to the clergy and to a select laity; but the great public will not possess itself of any new version that does not come to it as an official and national Revised Version.

Meanwhile there are certain other things that need doing for the popularization of religious knowledge. Let me give an example from my own experience. In writing a book recently about *The Legend of Hell*, which involved also the rebutting of the charge that our Lord was deluded into accepting the crude contemporary apocalyptic ideas, I had among other things to point out that the phrase about the 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' is an editorial gloss of what we are obliged (owing to a patristic mistake) to call the First Gospel, though it is the last but one, and possibly even the last. This phrase, a quotation from the Old Testament, occurs only once outside 'Matthew,' and in a context which gives it a different meaning. Even the most conservative and cautious commentators now take it for granted that it is an editorial addition. Now this not only removes

from the sayings of Jesus a phrase that our moral conscience finds it difficult to accept or to defend against the opponents of Christianity; but also it provides an illuminating instance of the fact that the Christian Rabbi who compiled this Gospel felt that the sayings of Jesus were not severe enough for his taste, and therefore very naturally felt himself justified in adding fiery touches (in this phrase and in others) from those Hebrew scriptures which he accepted as the very utterance of the Most High. Students may not have always noticed this conclusion or have been alive to the difficulty which such fierce and apparently cruel phrases offer to the simple layman; but it is a commonplace to them that the words were not part of the parables as Jesus told them. The layman does not know this; and (as I discovered) he almost inevitably suspects one of special pleading when the fact of interpolation is pointed out; and of course the secularist who fastens on such sayings as this is still harder to convince. Moreover, it must be confessed that there are many preachers who read but little, and who preach sermons without the help of commentaries—and some who cannot afford to buy any but such obsolete works as may float up on cheap bookstalls.

Contenting myself then with one simple instance, I ask, How is the difficulty, gravely serious as it is, to be met? A Revised Version on the old lines would probably not help us, because it would not concern itself even with the more obvious details of criticism. Possibly a new Revised Version might go so far as to add such a footnote as 'Not in Luke or Mark' to phrases that are peculiar to the 'First' Gospel. That might well be done, and it would be a great help; for all one would then need to say in such cases as I have mentioned would be, 'Look at your Revised Version.'

And one would suppose that a new official Revised Version would have the courage to print the Gospels in their proper order beginning with St. Mark. This alone would have a deep cumulative effect upon the public, who would come to understand, as they can hardly be expected to at present, that in Mark we have the most primitive and authentic picture of the actual historic Jesus.

2. *A Cheap Parallel Version.*—And while a new official version was preparing, what should we most need from individual scholars—and need afterwards also and always? I would venture to suggest three other books which would not be bought perhaps in such enormous numbers as a Revised Version by the general public; but which would be bought by the clergy, and church-goers, and would

be used also in very large numbers by Bible classes. The sales of these books would thus be very large—and therefore they could be published at a low price, if two precautions were observed. First, they should be adopted and recommended by a number of responsible bodies, colleges, faculties of theology, and if possible by Churches and denominational Federations, so that they might have something like a semi-official character. Secondly, they should not be printed or bound in the dismal and repellent way usual with Biblical publishers, but should have an appearance as interesting and comely as is usual with secular books.

The most urgently needed of the three books is, I venture to suggest, an edition of the Synoptic Gospels in parallel columns, like that of J. M. Thompson, but simplified and costing half a crown at the most. (Surely if properly supported in the way suggested, the sale would be large enough to make a shilling edition possible.) The ordinary reader, when once he has had simple ocular demonstration of the various versions in the three Gospels, understands at once without further demonstration. He perceives at a glance, both how slight the differences generally are, and also, that in the case especially of 'Matthew,' there *are* differences due to a particular point of view. He sees—probably for the first time—that when a saying occurs in three varying versions, they cannot each be an exact rendering of the words used. Also, to take an instance that has often troubled Christians and has been constantly objected to by widely read modern writers, that 'Matthew' was very fond of finding a fulfilment of prophecy in the events of our Lord's life, sometimes by an exegesis which is not convincing.

So much for the first book. But here let me ask that to this book (and to the other two) there shall be a preface explaining the Synoptic position in simple language. As it is, when one writes about religion for the general public, if the teaching of Christ is mentioned, one has to devote pages (as I did in the book I have mentioned) explaining once again the difference between the evangelists, the priority of Mark, and what is meant by 'Q.' The task could be done, lucidly and interestingly, once for all, and in this readily accessible form.

3. *A Combined Version.*—The next book that we need has been provided so far as schools are concerned, and for that matter in a form that will serve the general public excellently as well, at least until a complete unabbreviated book is published. The Leicestershire Education Authority has just produced, as I write, a *Little Bible*, which among

other things gives the Gospel record on the method of choosing from the Gospels the best version of each incident. My desiderated second book would be similar to this; but it would give the Synoptic record in full, only observing the rule of repeating nothing and of choosing so far as is possible always that version which seems to be the most authentic. Such a choice would not be infallibly right; but the picture would be a true one, although there might in our present state of knowledge be differences of opinion about details.

4. *The Sayings of Jesus.*—The fourth book I would ask for would be similar to this in principle, but it would be called 'The Sayings of Jesus,' and would be confined to that part of the Synoptists. The sayings in the Fourth Gospel would be printed as a separate section, with a brief preface on the difference between the Jewish method of carefully memorizing and reproducing the sayings of a teacher and the freer Greek manner of narration. A few of the better authenticated Agrapha might be added in a third section.

5. There is indeed another book which I think many like myself would greatly value, and that is a reconstruction of Q. Scholars shrink from appearing too positive, from the certainty that such an attempt would have to be revised as time went on, and that there would be some passages about which there were legitimate differences of opinion. But it would be good if some one would courageously take the risk: the few mistakes he made would do no harm, and would not seriously affect the value of the whole. If, as seems probable, we have practically the whole of Q imbedded in St. Luke, it would be of great educational value for the ordinary man to be able to read what is approximately the earliest Gospel that we know of. But is it not rather obtuse of us to call this rediscovered document by such an ugly name as 'Q'; and, if we ever hope to interest the educated public, ought we not to give the book I suggest some more interesting title, such as 'The Earliest Gospel?' Is it not worth while to risk a little future need for correction for the sake of such a book as that? Natural science would have made slow progress if its votaries had been afraid of publishing anything until no margin of error remained: they produce books as true as they can make them, and then frankly discard mistakes and produce better statements. Theologians might well do the same in such a case as this: the last word about the Synoptic position has not yet been written, and in the case of the Fourth Gospel our knowledge may be still in its infancy; but what a revelation it would be to the

intelligent layman (and parson too, for that matter), if he could read about Christ first in 'The Earliest Gospel,' then in Mark, and then proceed to the special contributions of Luke, 'Matthew,' and the Fourth Gospel.

6. But this brings me perilously near to suggesting yet another book! Well, I and many more would hurry to buy that also—a 'Gospel Story,' shall we call it? consisting of first, The Earliest Gospel; secondly, Mark; thirdly, the special contribution of St. Luke; fourthly, the matter peculiar to 'Matthew'; and fifthly, the Gospel according to St. John, with an appendix giving us the contributions to the facts made by St. Paul.

To sum up. (1) I submit that the need is urgent after fifty years for a new Revised Version to supplant the never quite first-rate and now out-of-date Version of 1881; and I would plead with any who may read these words to combine to press for this, an effective way of meeting the religious difficulties of our age. And I would ask those in responsible positions to consider the advisability of inviting suitable scholars to produce (2) a cheap and first-rate Parallel Version of the Synoptic record; (3) a book on the lines of the Leicestershire *Little Bible*, but dealing only with the Gospels, and that exhaustively; and (4) a Collection of the Sayings of Jesus taken from those versions that seem most likely to be nearest to the original. And I ask for these, and other books after them perhaps, to be done with such a weight of the combined authority of the Churches, and the Colleges and other Education authorities, that the vast majority of those who care about the Christian religion would naturally buy them, and their price would put them in every one's reach: Such a work would not only enlighten countless minds and help the cause of religion all over the world, but would also prove to be a practical step in the direction of the unity of the Churches, more effective perhaps than any that has so far been taken.

It would also surely be the prelude to that teamwork in the great theological reconstruction before us in this age. There have been already signal examples of such work; but they have come from the genius and labour of one or two individuals. While avoiding the danger of official theological books, which (as in the case of official hymn-books) can never reach the level of a new era, but must move at the pace of those who belong mainly to that which has passed, can we not devise a free method by which the official bodies could invite and encourage the best scholars to work in unison, and could then broadcast, as they have the power

to do, their publications to the world? As it is, the mere finding out what are the essential books for a preacher—let alone a layman—to read is a task beyond any but specialists or those who are on the staff of a college. Most men, not buying, and often not being able to buy, a number of theological publications, miss books of great importance for them to read, and fall back on the interested advice of party societies and newspapers, some of which make a practice of quietly passing over books that do not voice their particular ideas. Casual visits to our parsonages reveal the fact that in many cases the religious books are of an antiquated character such as would never be tolerated among students of natural science. I know from my own personal experience how difficult it is to discover which books one ought to buy—and good books must be possessed and well marked. In the system of study now so effectively launched by our English Archbishops under the name of The Way of Renewal, the first task was to recommend books, the second is to pay for them. We must lower the price by increasing the sale of the essential theological books, so that the flood of pure knowledge may spread far more widely than heretofore. For at the present day the average intelligent man has no idea of what responsible and sensible ministers really think; the average congregation holds back the preacher because it is uninstructed, while too often it is true of preachers that, in the words of Professor J. B. Pratt, they would 'make a much greater appeal to stray visitors' (he is speaking of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, but our withers are not unwrung) if they 'would pay more attention to the intellectual content of their sermons and the moral significance of their themes . . . the clergyman too often appears to be satisfied with a deadly conventional treatment of an insignificant or antiquated subject, seems to be under the impression that the banality of his remarks may be hidden under a large use of the "chancel voice."'

We can, if we will but take the trouble to confer together and think the matter out, flood the Church, and the world, with sound theology and reasonable religion; and the age is ready for a great initiative. The first step must be, I believe, to make the record of Jesus Christ more intelligible to the average man, now that we have through the patient and candid labours of scholars during many decades a picture, such as the world has never had before, of Him as He really was when He walked upon the earth.

And that is what the people want, what the whole

world needs. Theologians sometimes say that the demand for the pure and simple teaching of Christ is not the same as a demand for Christianity, because that teaching involves theology. Yes, but the instinct of the average man is none the less right. He says (and the novelists who have so great an influence to-day, even when they seem to write against religion, say the same thing), that the plain teaching of Christ is what they can accept and what they want. If he objects to the theologies of which he has heard, can we wonder, when we remember what those theologies have been? We are indeed bound to think; and therefore there must always be philosophies and theologies. But the average man is right. We are Christians; and the root of our religion is and must always be the Person and the teaching of Jesus Christ; and therefore it must always be of supreme importance for us to know what He actually was, here on earth, and what He actually taught. And since this is very largely misunderstood, partly through ignorance of the Gospel records in their purity and completeness, and partly through these very theologies which have clouded the Good News of Christ in the past, it is true that our first task will be to spread a better knowledge about the historic Jesus throughout the world. As for our theology, we must indeed

develop it; and, like the scientists, must be ready to think out every problem afresh and frankly to discard whatever has failed to justify itself at the bar of reason. But what the world needs, and desires to find again, is religion. It asks, not for any system to-day, but for a message, profound, true, and simple; and this is what Jesus gave to the world. The world desires it again, after long ages of distortion and accretion. It wants neither Catholicism nor Protestantism, but just Christianity. And if we say, 'Well, this is Christianity,' people wish to see our credentials. That demand began at the Reformation. The world began to study the credentials of the Medieval Church, with astonishing results. But it was a Book supposed to be solid and homogeneous that was given them, and it was but imperfectly understood. Four centuries of scientific study have made a vast difference; but their result is even now little understood except in academic circles, and indeed the most important results are of recent acquisition. The sooner the cleaned and restored picture of the Kingdom of Heaven can be seen and studied by all, the sooner will Christianity recover its ancient power.

For our new knowledge of the Gospels will bring not only a Reformation but a Renaissance of religion.

Literature.

SCIENCE REDISCOVERS GOD.

THE sciences are to-day so ramified that it becomes increasingly difficult, almost to the point of impossibility, to take a comprehensive view. This is indeed a truism. Yet a comprehensive view is a necessity: analysis must be followed by synthesis. It is such a synthesis that Mr. Ronald Campbell Macfie, M.A., M.B., C.M., LL.D., has attempted in his *Science rediscovers God* (T. & T. Clark; 7s. 6d. net), and the title of the book suggests the direction in which this synthesis is sought: it is a synthesis which takes account of God and believes in His purpose. In other words, the solution of the problem presented by the universe is a religious solution.

Modern science seems certainly to be moving in this direction. The scientific dogmatism which reigned a generation ago and which complacently explained the universe on mechanistic principles

has been abandoned by the most distinguished exponents of science to-day. There is no cause whatever to censure the scientific thinkers of the last generation, or to accuse them of superficiality. To do this is to forget the conditions which govern all scientific progress. Hypotheses are necessary; but when further work and investigation on the basis of an accepted hypothesis reveal its inadequacy, it is naturally replaced by another which seems more adequate, though in the nature of the case no hypothesis is likely to be final. As new facts about the universe are revealed by finer instruments or more thorough observation, a hypothesis which has done good service in its time falls to be discarded. So, and only so, can truth advance. But it must be a real comfort to men of a religious disposition to find scientific men reverting to the old-fashioned belief in a Creator and in a purpose permeating His creation.

The titles of Dr. Macfie's chapters show how wide