

PREFACE.

This republication of Essays which were written several years ago has no reference to any present controversies. Its justification is the fact that strangers and friends in England and America alike had urged me from time to time to gather them together, that they might be had in a more convenient form, believing that they contained some elements of permanent value which deserved to be rescued from the past numbers of a Review not easily procurable, and thus rendered more accessible to students. I had long resisted these solicitations for reasons which I shall explain presently; but a few months ago, when I was prostrated by sickness and my life was hanging on a slender thread, it became necessary to give a final answer to the advice tendered to me. This volume is the result. The kind offices of my chaplain the Rev. J.R. Harmer, who undertook the troublesome task of verifying the references, correcting the press, and adding the indices, when I was far too ill to attend to such matters myself, have enabled me to bring it out sooner than I had hoped.

When I first took up the book entitled 'Supernatural Religion,' I felt, whether rightly or wrongly, that its criticisms were too loose and pretentious, and too full of errors, to produce any permanent effect; and for the most part attacks of this kind on the records of the Divine Life are best left alone. But I found that a cruel and unjustifiable assault was made on a very dear friend to whom I was attached by the most sacred personal and theological ties; and that the book which contained this attack was from causes which need not be specified obtaining a notoriety unforeseen by me. Thus I was forced to break silence; and, as I advanced with my work, I seemed to see that, though undertaken to redress a personal injustice, it might be made subservient to the wider interests of the truth.

Paper succeeded upon paper, and I had hoped ultimately to cover the whole ground, so far as regards the testimony of the first two

centuries to the New Testament Scriptures. But my time was not my own, as I was necessarily interrupted by other literary and professional duties which claimed the first place; and meanwhile I was transferred to another and more arduous sphere of practical work, being thus obliged to postpone indefinitely my intention of giving something like completeness to the work.

In republishing these papers then, the only course open to me, in justice to my adversary as well as to myself, was to reprint them in succession word for word as they appeared, correcting obvious misprints; though in many cases my argument might have been strengthened considerably. Recently discovered documents for instance have established the certainty of the main conclusions respecting Tatian's *Diatessaron*, to which the criticism of the available evidence had led me. Again I have since treated the Ignatian question more fully elsewhere, and satisfied myself on points about which I had expressed indecision in these Essays. On the other hand on one or two minor questions I might have used less confident language.

What shocked me in the book was not the extravagance of the opinions or the divergence from my own views; though I cannot pretend to be indifferent about the veracity of the records which profess to reveal Him, whom I believe to be not only the very Truth, but the very Life. I have often learnt very much even from extreme critics, and have freely acknowledged my obligations; but here was a writer who (to judge from his method) seemed to me, and not to me only [Footnote: See Salmon's *Introduction to the New Testament* p. 9.], where it was a question of weighing probabilities, as is the case in most historical investigations, to choose invariably that alternative, even though the least probable, which would enable him to score a point against his adversary. For the rest I disclaim any personal bias, as against any personal opponent. The author of 'Supernatural Religion,' as distinct from the work, is a mere blank to me. I do not even know his name, nor have I attempted to discover it. Whether he is living or dead, I know not. He preferred to write anonymously, and so far as I am concerned, I am glad that it was so; though, speaking for myself, I prefer taking the responsibility of my opinions and statements on important subjects.

In several instances the author either vouchsafed an answer to my criticisms, or altered the form of his statements in a subsequent edition. In all such cases references are scrupulously given in this volume to his later utterances. In most cases my assailant had the last word. He is welcome to it. I am quite willing that careful and impartial critics shall read my statements and his side by side, and judge between us. It is my sole desire, in great things and in small, to be found [Greek: sunergos tē alētheia].

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DISCOVERIES ILLUSTRATING THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

SUPERNATURAL RELIGION.

I. INTRODUCTION.

[DECEMBER, 1874]

If the author of *Supernatural Religion* [Footnote 1:1] designed, by withholding his name, to stimulate public curiosity and thus to extend the circulation of his work, he has certainly not been disappointed in his hope. When the rumour once got abroad, that it proceeded from the pen of a learned and venerable prelate, the success of the book was secured. For this rumour indeed there was no foundation in fact. It was promptly and emphatically denied, when accidentally it reached the ears of the supposed author. But meanwhile the report had been efficacious. The reviewers had taken the work in hand and (with one exception) lavished their praises on the critical portions of it. The first edition was exhausted in a few months.

No words can be too strong to condemn the heartless cruelty of this imputation. The venerable prelate, on whom the authorship of this anonymous work was thrust, deserved least of all men to be exposed to such an insult. As an academic teacher and as an ecclesiastical ruler alike, he had distinguished himself by a courageous avowal of his opinions at all costs. For more than a quarter of a century he had lived in the full blaze of publicity, and on his fearless integrity no breath of suspicion had ever rested. Yet now, when increasing infirmities obliged him to lay down his office, he was told that his life for years past had been one gigantic lie. The insinuation involved nothing less than this. Throughout those many years, during which the anonymous author, as he himself tells us, had been preparing for the publication of an elaborate and systematic attack upon Christianity, the bishop was preaching Christian doc-

trine, confirming Christian children, ordaining Christian ministers, without breathing a hint to the world that he felt any misgiving of the truths which he thus avowed and taught. Yet men talked as if, somehow or other, the cause of 'freethinking' had gained great moral support from the conversion of a bishop, though, if the rumour had been true, their new convert had for years past been guilty of the basest fraud of which a man is capable.

And all the while there was absolutely nothing to recommend this identification of the unknown author. The intellectual characteristics of the work present a trenchant contrast to the refined scholarship and cautious logic of this accomplished prelate. Only one point of resemblance could be named. The author shows an acquaintance with the theological critics of the modern Dutch school; and a knowledge of Dutch writers was known, or believed, to have a place among the acquisitions of this omniscient scholar. Truly no reputation is safe, when such a reputation is traduced on these grounds.

I have been assuming however that the work entitled *Supernatural Religion*, which lies before me, is the same work which the reviewers have applauded under this name. But, when I remember that the St Mark of Papias cannot possibly be our St Mark, I feel bound to throw upon this assumption the full light of modern critical principles; and, so tested, it proves to be not only hasty and unwarrantable, but altogether absurd. It is only necessary to compare the statements of highly intellectual reviewers with the work itself; and every unprejudiced mind must be convinced that 'the evidence is fatal to the claims' involved in this identification. Out of five reviews or notices of the work which I have read, only one seems to refer to our *Supernatural Religion*. The other four are plainly dealing with some apocryphal work, bearing the same name and often using the same language, but in its main characteristics quite different from and much more authentic than the volumes before me.

1. It must be observed in the first place, that the reviewers agree in attributing to the work scholarship and criticism of the highest order. 'The author,' writes one, 'is a scientifically trained critic. He has learned to argue and to weigh evidence.' 'The book,' adds a second, 'proceeds from a man of ability, a scholar and a reasoner.'

'His scholarship,' says this same reviewer again, 'is apparent throughout.' 'Along with a wide and minute scholarship,' he writes in yet another place, 'the unknown writer shows great acuteness.' Again a third reviewer, of whose general tone, as well as of his criticisms on the first part of the work, I should wish to speak with the highest respect, praises the writer's 'searching and scholarly criticism.' Lastly a fourth reviewer attributes to the author 'careful and acute scholarship.' This testimony is explicit, and it comes from four different quarters. It is moreover confirmed by the rumour already mentioned, which assigned the work to a bishop who has few rivals among his contemporaries as a scholar and a critic.

Now, since the documents which our author has undertaken to discuss are written almost wholly in the Greek and Latin languages, it may safely be assumed that under the term 'scholarship' the reviewers included an adequate knowledge of these languages. Starting from this as an axiom which will not be disputed, I proceed to inquire what we find in the work itself, which will throw any light on this point.

The example, which I shall take first, relates to a highly important passage of Irenæus [3:1], containing a reference in some earlier authority, whom this father quotes, to a saying of our Lord recorded only in St John's Gospel. The passage begins thus:—

'As the elders say, then also shall those deemed worthy of the abode in heaven depart thither; and others shall enjoy the delights of paradise; and others shall possess the splendour of the city; for everywhere the Saviour shall be seen according as they that see Him shall be worthy.'

Then follows the important paragraph which is translated differently by our author [4:1] and by Dr Westcott [4:2]. For reasons which will appear immediately, I place the two renderings side by side:—

WESTCOTT. | SUPERNATURAL RELIGION. | 'This distinction of dwelling, | 'But there is to be this they taught, exists between | distinction [4:4] of dwelling those who brought forth a | ([Greek:

einai de tèn diastolên hundred-fold, and those who | tautên tês
 oikêseôs]) of those bearing brought forth sixty-fold, and | fruit the
 hundred-fold, and of the those who brought forth | (bearers of) the
 sixty-fold, and of twenty-fold (Matt. xiii. 8)... | the (bearers of) the
 thirty-fold: of | whom some indeed shall be taken up | into the
 heavens, some shall live And it was for this reason | in Paradise,
 and some shall the Lord said that *in His | inhabit the City, and for that
 Father's House* ([Greek: en | reason ([Greek: dia touto]— tois tou
 patros]) _are many | *propter hoc*) the Lord declared mansions_ (John
 xiv. 2).' | many mansions to be in the (heavens) [4:3] | of my Father
 ([Greek: en tois tou | patros mou monas einai pollas]), etc.'

On this extract our author remarks that 'it is impossible for any
 one who attentively considers the whole of this passage and who
 makes himself acquainted with the manner in which Irenæus con-
 ducts his argument, and interweaves it with texts of Scripture, to
 doubt that the phrase we are considering is introduced by Irenæus
 himself, and is in no case a quotation from the work of Papias [5:1].'
 As regards the relation of this quotation from the Fourth Gospel to
 Papias any remarks, which I have to make, must be deferred for the
 present [5:2]; but on the other point I venture to say that any fairly
 trained schoolboy will feel himself constrained by the rules of Greek
 grammar to deny what our author considers it 'impossible' even 'to
 doubt.' He himself is quite unconscious of the difference between
 the infinitive and the indicative, or in other words between the
 oblique and the direct narrative; and so he boldly translates [Greek:
 einai tèn diastolên] as though it were [Greek: estai] (or [Greek: mel-
 lei einai]) [Greek: hê diastolê], and [Greek: eirêkenai ton Kurion] as
 though it were [Greek: eirêken ho Kurios]. This is just as if a transla-
 tor from a German original were to persist in ignoring the difference
 between 'es sey' and 'es ist' and between 'der Herr sage' and 'der
 Herr sagt.' Yet so unconscious is our author of the real point at is-
 sue, that he proceeds to support his view by several other passages
 in which Irenæus 'interweaves' his own remarks, because they hap-
 pen to contain the words [Greek: dia touto], though in every in-
 stance the indicative and *not the infinitive* is used. To complete this
 feat of scholarship he proceeds to charge Dr Westcott with what
 'amounts to a falsification of the text [5:3],' because this scholarly
 writer has inserted the words 'they taught' to show that in the origi-

nal the sentence containing the reference to St John is in the oblique narrative and therefore reports the words of others [5:4]. I shall not retort this charge of 'falsification,' because I do not think that the cause of truth is served by imputing immoral motives to those from whom we differ; and indeed the context shows that our author is altogether blind to the grammatical necessity. But I would venture to ask whether it would not have been more prudent, as well as more seemly, if he had paused before venturing, under the shelter of an anonymous publication, to throw out this imputation of dishonesty against a writer of singular candour and moderation, who has at least given to the world the hostage and the credential of an honoured name. It is necessary to add that our author persists in riveting this grammatical error on himself. He returns to the charge again in two later footnotes [6:1] and declares himself to have shown 'that it [the reference to the Fourth Gospel] must be referred to Irenæus himself, and that there is no ground for attributing it to the Presbyters at all.' 'Most critics,' he continues, 'admit the uncertainty [6:2].' As it will be my misfortune hereafter to dispute not a few propositions which 'most critics' are agreed in maintaining, it is somewhat reassuring to find that they are quite indifferent to the most elementary demands of grammar [6:3].

The passage just discussed has a vital bearing on the main question at issue, the date of the Fourth Gospel. The second example which I shall take, though less important, is not without its value. As in the former instance our author showed his indifference to moods, so here he is equally regardless of tenses. He is discussing the heathen Celsus, who shows an acquaintance with the Evangelical narratives, and whose date therefore it is not a matter of indifference to ascertain. Origen, in the preface to his refutation of Celsus, distinctly states that this person had been long dead ([Greek: êdê kai palai nekron]). In his first book again he confesses his ignorance who this Celsus was, but is disposed to identify him with a person of the name known to have flourished about a century before his own time [7:1]. But at the close of the last book [7:2], addressing his friend Ambrosius who had sent him the work, and at whose instance he had undertaken the refutation, he writes (or rather, he is represented by our author as writing) as follows: —

'Know, however, that Celsus has promised to write another treatise after this one.... If, therefore, he has not fulfilled his promise to write a second book, we may well be satisfied with the eight books in reply to his Discourse. If however, he has commenced and finished this work also, seek it and send it in order that we may answer it also, and confute the false teaching in it etc.' [7:3]

On the strength of the passage so translated, our author supposes that Origen's impression concerning the date of Celsus had meanwhile been 'considerably modified', and remarks that he now 'treats him as a contemporary'. Unfortunately however, the tenses, on which everything depends, are freely handled in this translation. Origen does not say, 'Celsus *has promised*,' but 'Celsus *promises*' ([Greek: epangellomenon]), *i.e.* in the treatise before him, for Origen's knowledge was plainly derived from the book itself. And again, he does not say 'If he *has not fulfilled* his promise to write', but 'If he *did not write* as he undertook to do' ([Greek: egrapsen huposchomenos]); nor 'if he *has commenced and finished*', but 'if he *commenced and finished*' ([Greek: arxamenos sunetelese]) [7:4]. Thus Origen's language itself here points to a past epoch, and is in strict accordance with the earlier passages in his work.

These two examples have been chosen, not because they are by any means the worst specimens of our author's Greek, but because in both cases an elaborate argument is wrecked on this rock of grammar. If any reader is curious to see how he can drive his ploughshare through a Greek sentence, he may refer for instance to the translations of Basilides (II. p. 46) [8:1], or of Valentinus (II. p. 63) [8:2], or of Philo (II. p. 265 sq) [8:3]. Or he may draw his inferences from such renderings as [Greek; ho logos edêlou], 'Scripture declares,' [8:4] or [Greek: kata korrês propêlakizein], [8:5] 'to inflict a blow on one side'; or from such perversions of meaning as 'did no wrong,' twice repeated [8:6] as a translation of [Greek: ouden hêmarte] in an important passage of Papias relating to St Mark, where this Father really means that the Evangelist, though his narrative was not complete, yet 'made no mistake' in what he did record.

Nor does our author's Latin fare any better than his Greek, as may be inferred from the fact that he can translate 'nihil tamen dif- fert credentium fidei,' 'nothing nevertheless differs in the faith of believers,' [8:7] instead of 'it makes no difference to the faith of be- lievers,' thus sacrificing sense and grammar alike [8:8]. Or it is still better illustrated by the following example:—

'Nam ex iis commentatoribus | 'For of the Commentators
quos habemus, Lucam videtur | whom we possess, Marcion seems
Marcion elegisse quem caederet.' | (*videtur*) to have selected Luke,
Tertull. *adv. Marc.* iv. 2. | which he mutilates.' *S.R.*
| II. p. 99. [8:9]

Here again tenses and moods are quite indifferent, an imperfect subjunctive being treated as a present indicative; while at the same time our author fails to perceive that the "commentatores" are the Evangelists themselves. His mind seems to be running on the Commentaries of De Wette and Alford, and he has forgotten the Commentaries of Cæsar [9:1].

Having shown that the author does not possess the elementary knowledge which is indispensable in a critical scholar, I shall not stop to inquire how far he exhibits those higher qualifications of a critic, which are far more rare—whether for instance he has the discriminating tact and nice balance of judgment necessary for such a work, or whether again he realizes how men in actual life do speak and write now, and might be expected to speak and write sixteen or seventeen centuries ago—without which qualifications the most painful study and reproduction of German and Dutch criticism is valueless. These qualifications cannot be weighed or measured, and I must trust to my subsequent investigations to put the reader in possession of data for forming a judgment on these points. At present it will be sufficient to remark that a scholarly writer might at least be expected not to contradict himself on a high- ly important question of Biblical criticism. Yet this is what our au- thor does. Speaking of the descent of the angel at the pool of Be- thesda (John v. 3, 4) in his first part, he writes: 'The passage is not found in the older MSS of the Fourth Gospel, and it was probably a later interpolation.' [9:2] But, having occasion towards the end of his

work to refer again to this same passage, he entirely forgets his previously expressed opinion, and is very positive on the other side. 'We must believe,' he writes, 'that this passage did originally belong to the text, and has from an early period been omitted from the MSS on account of the difficulty it presents.' [10:1] And, to make the contradiction more flagrant, he proceeds to give a reason why the disputed words must have formed part of the original text.

It must be evident by this time to any 'impartial mind,' that the *Supernatural Religion* of the reviewers cannot be our *Supernatural Religion*. The higher criticism has taught me that poor foolish Papias, an extreme specimen of 'the most deplorable carelessness and want of critical judgment' displayed by the Fathers on all occasions, cannot possibly have had our St Mark's Gospel before him [10:2], because he says that his St Mark recorded only 'some' of our Lord's sayings and doings, and did not record them in order (though by the way no one maintains that everything said and done by Christ is recorded in our Second Gospel, or that the events follow in strict chronological sequence); and how then is it possible to resist the conclusion, which is forced upon the mind by the concurrent testimony of so many able reviewers, the leaders of intellectual thought in this critical nineteenth century, to the consummate scholarship of the writer, that they must be referring to a different recension, probably more authentic and certainly far more satisfactory than the book which lies before me?

2. And the difficulty of the popular identification will be found to increase as the investigation proceeds. There is a second point, also, on which our critics are unanimous. Our first reviewer describes the author as 'scrupulously exact in stating the arguments of adversaries.' Our fourth reviewer uses still stronger language: 'The author with excellent candour places before us the materials on which a judgment must rest, with great fulness and perfect impartiality.' The testimony of the other two, though not quite so explicit, tends in the same direction. 'An earnest seeker after truth,' says the second reviewer, 'looking around at all particulars pertaining to his inquiries.' 'The account given in the volume we are noticing,' writes the third, 'is a perfect mine of information on this subject, alloyed indeed with no small prejudice, yet so wonderfully faithful and comprehensive

that an error may be detected by the light of the writer's own searching and scholarly criticism.'

Now this is not the characteristic of the book before me. The author does indeed single out from time to time the weaker arguments of 'apologetic' writers, and on these he dwells at great length; but their weightier facts and lines of reasoning are altogether ignored by him, though they often occur in the same books and even in the same contexts which he quotes. This charge will, I believe, be abundantly substantiated as I proceed. At present I shall do no more than give a few samples.

Our author charges the Epistle ascribed to Polycarp with an anachronism [11:1], because, though in an earlier passage St Ignatius is assumed to be dead, 'in chap. xiii he is spoken of as living, and information is requested regarding him "and those who are with him."' Why then does he not notice the answer which he might have found in any common source of information, that when the Latin version (the Greek is wanting here) 'de his qui cum eo sunt' is retranslated into the original language, [Greek: *tois sun autô*], the 'anachronism' altogether disappears? [11:2] Again, when he devotes more than forty pages to the discussion of Papias [11:3], why does he not even mention the view maintained by Dr Westcott and others (and certainly suggested by a strict interpretation of Papias' own words), that this father's object in his 'Exposition' was not to construct a new evangelical narrative, but to interpret and illustrate by oral tradition one already lying before him in written documents? [11:4] This view, if correct, entirely alters the relation of Papias to the written Gospels; and its discussion was a matter of essential importance to the main question at issue. Again, when he reproduces the Tübingen fallacy respecting 'the strong prejudice' of Hegesippus against St Paul [12:1], and quotes the often-quoted passage from Stephanus Gobarus, in which this writer refers to the language of Hegesippus condemning the use of the words, 'Eye hath not seen, etc.', why does he not state that these words were employed by heretical teachers to justify their rites of initiation, and consequently 'apologetic' writers contend that Hegesippus refers to the words, not as used by St Paul, but as misapplied by these heretics? Since, according to the Tübingen interpretation, this single notice contradicts everything else which we know of the opinions of Hegesippus

[12:2], the view of 'apologists' might perhaps have been worth a moment's consideration. And again, in the elaborate examination of Justin Martyr's evangelical quotations [12:3], in which he had Credner's careful analysis to guide him, and which therefore is quite the most favourable specimen of his critical work, our author frequently refers to Dr Westcott's book to censure it, and many comparatively insignificant points are discussed at great length. Why then does he not once mention Dr Westcott's argument founded on the looseness of Justin Martyr's quotations from the Old Testament, as throwing some light on the degree of accuracy which he might be expected to show in quoting the Gospels? [12:4] The former Justin supposed to be (as one of the reviewers expresses it) 'almost automatically inspired,' whereas he took a much larger view of the inspiration of the evangelical narratives. A reader fresh from the perusal of *Supernatural Religion* will have his eyes opened as to the character of Justin's mind, when he turns to Dr Westcott's book, and finds how Justin interweaves, mis-names, and mis-quotes passages from the Old Testament. It cannot be said that these are unimportant points. In every instance which I have selected these omitted considerations vitally affect the main question at issue.

Our fourth reviewer however uses the words which I have already quoted, 'excellent candour,' 'great fulness,' 'perfect impartiality,' with special reference to the part of the work relating to the authorship and character of the Fourth Gospel, which he describes as 'a piece of keen and solid reasoning.' This is quite decisive. Our author might have had his own grounds for ignoring the arguments of 'apologetic' writers, or he may have been ignorant of them. For reasons which will appear presently, the latter alternative ought probably to be adopted as explaining some omissions. But however this may be, the language of the reviewer is quite inapplicable to the work lying before me. It may be candid in the sense of being honestly meant, but it is not candid in any other sense; and it is the very reverse of full and impartial. The arguments of 'apologetic' writers are systematically ignored in this part of the work. Once or twice indeed he fastens on passages from such writers, that he may make capital of them; but their main arguments remain wholly unnoticed. Why, for instance, when he says of the Fourth Gospel that 'instead of the fierce and intolerant temper of the Son of Thunder, we find a