

The Rev. Samuel Hemphill, D.D., Litt.D., ex-Professor of Biblical Greek in the University of Dublin, has written a *History of the Revised Version of the New Testament* (Eliot Stock; 3s. 6d.). But there is more than one way of writing history, and Dr. Hemphill's is not the best way. For he thoroughly dislikes the Revised Version, and his history is really a depreciation. All the same, he has gathered into his book a great deal of interesting information and accurate reference; and future writers on the subject must see that they have it beside them.

Mr. Charles J. Thynne has published some Advent Addresses by Canon Garratt, under the title of *The Purposes of God* (1s. 6d. net); and 'The Soul-History of R. le Comte,' entitled *From Rome to Christ*, by the Rev. C. S. Isaacson, M.A. (6d. net).

We have two volumes this month by Professor Pfeiderer, the one published by Mr. Fisher Unwin, the other by Messrs. Williams & Norgate. Mr. Unwin's volume is entitled *Christian Origins* (5s. net). It is the outcome of a series of public lectures delivered at the University of Berlin last winter, lectures which a friend who heard them tells us drew immense audiences and roused immense enthusiasm. They are thoroughly Pfeidererian (if the word may be allowed in English), thoroughly popular in style, thoroughly radical in treatment, thoroughly loyal to all that is left of the Jesus of the Gospels after the Gospels themselves have been thoroughly handled, and

thoroughly satisfied with Dr. Pfeiderer's treatment of the whole subject. At the head of one of the Lectures, as they are now printed, stands the little word 'Jesus.' It is an interesting subject in Dr. Pfeiderer's hands. There is no hesitation. One lecture is enough. And Dr. Pfeiderer passes on.

The other volume, published by Messrs. Williams & Norgate, belongs to the Theological Translation Library. It is the first volume of a translation of Pfeiderer's *Primitive Christianity*. The translation is done by the Rev. W. Montgomery, B.D., and edited by the Rev. W. D. Morrison, LL.D. This is not a more serious work than the other, for Professor Pfeiderer is always serious, but it is a little more academic. The audiences were not so great, and the memory of them has passed away. There is remarkably little that is new in the book. For Professor Pfeiderer, although he reads the new literature as the years go by, and revises his thought in the light of it, has nevertheless moved very little indeed from the attitude which he adopted in his *Paulinism*. It may be said that the thorough student of that book is thoroughly acquainted with Pfeiderer. This volume contains four parts—The First Christian Community, The Apostle Paul, The Writings of Paul, and The Theology of Paul (10s. 6d. net).

The *Agnostic Annual* for 1907 (Watts; 6d.) has a number of short but substantial papers. Its strength is in religion and folklore. There is a paper on 'Bible Folklore,' one on 'Social Morality and Religion,' and one on 'Dr. Johnson and the Cock Lane Ghost.'

## The Christ of the Fourth Gospel.

BY THE REV. VINCENT M'NABB, O.P., ST. DOMINIC'S PRIORY, LONDON.

A CERTAIN attitude of thought towards the Fourth Gospel is summed up in the following paragraph:

'It is quite otherwise with the Fourth Gospel, in which, from the very first, the Christ astonishes Galilee and especially Jerusalem by the most astounding prodigies, whilst at the same time overwhelming them by a doctrine which no one can comprehend. The Johannean Christ is presented as a transcendent Being who is not of this earth, and who seems

to speak and to act only to satisfy the terms of His definition, to prove that He is God and one with God' (Loisy, *Autour d'un petit livre*, pp. 90, 91. Edit. 1).

It would be hard to state the theory more clearly or more pithily. But whilst there is undoubted evidence pointing towards the conclusions drawn by this school of criticism, it would be unscholarly to maintain that all the evidence points that way. Indeed, it may well be asked whether a patient and

unprejudiced study of the Gospel does not go to show that the conclusions of this school of criticism run a long way ahead of their premises.

In the first place, we are confronted with the historical fact that the Arians based their denial of the divinity of Jesus Christ chiefly on the Fourth Gospel; if we except the famous passage from the Book of Wisdom. But this passage, which was more quoted than any other, was seriously weakened by its position in the Old Testament. It needed strengthening by some New Testament text. The Arians were not slow to see that the Fourth Gospel was not only a very important part of the New Testament, but was the accredited work of an apostle whose intimacy with Christ was a guarantee that its Christology would not keep to a low level. Their keen insight soon detected certain phrases wherein the beloved disciple seemed to make his Master, if somewhat more than the angels, at least a little less than the King of angels. The long stubborn fight, lasting several centuries before the overthrow of Arianism, goes no little way towards showing either that the Johannine Christ was not the 'transcendent Being' of our critics, or that the authority of St. John was not all that every school of critics would admit.

That this opinion of the Arians fully bore out their character of well-informed exegetes and keen dialecticians may now be established by examining the

A. admissions, and

B. omissions

of the Fourth Gospel. In dealing with these we may be helped towards a true judgment by recalling that this Gospel, written against the gnostics who denied or attenuated the manhood of Christ, would seem to lay stress upon facts showing that the Word became *flesh*.

A. The admissions of the Fourth Gospel are very significant; and not in the direction of the above-mentioned thesis. The Christ does not seem to have met with the success that would necessarily have attended such a display of transcendent power. Hardly any one believed in Him. The Synoptics are nowise so insistent on the irresponsiveness of all classes to Christ, as the Fourth Gospel appears to be. Indeed, the Marcan document leaves us with the impression that Jesus met with an enthusiastic reception upon His first beginning His public ministry. The Fourth Gospel, on the other hand, gives a different impression. Its

author admits that the Jews did not believe in Jesus Christ; 'the darkness did not comprehend' (1<sup>5</sup>); 'the world knew him not' (1<sup>6</sup>); 'there hath stood one in the midst of you whom you know not' (1<sup>26</sup>).

Again, even after a prolonged discussion with Jesus, Nicodemus remains unconvinced. He is even reproached for his blindness, 'Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?'

Another group of texts bearing in the same direction constitutes a problem in Christology. During our Lord's first visit to Jerusalem, after His public ministry, His strength of character in driving the money-changers and sellers from the temple had brought Him before the eye of the city. 'Many believed in his name. . . . But Jesus did not trust himself unto them' (2<sup>23, 24</sup>). It is a singular course of action for a 'transcendent Being who is not of this earth.' The argument becomes stronger when the Fourth Gospel is found to repeat this statement twice more. 'After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for he would not walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him' (7<sup>1</sup>). 'He himself stayed in Galilee. But after his brethren were gone up, then he went up to the feast, not openly, but in secret' (7<sup>9, 10</sup>). These three passages constitute one of the most serious problems in Christology. For the moment we must deal with other topics. But we may be allowed to remark that whatever they may prove or disprove, they would seem fatal to any theory of a 'transcendent Being who is not of this earth.'

Hitherto we have found the Fourth Gospel admitting in no uncertain terms that the common run of Jews to whom our Lord spoke, and before whom He wrought His signs, did not believe in Him. The matter is taken still further by another group of texts. Not only did the Jews as a body remain indifferent to Him, but those nearest to Him in kindred and calling are represented by the Fourth Gospel as unmoved by His transcendental attributes. St. John Baptist naively confesses, 'I knew Him not' (1<sup>33</sup>). And, though it is anticipating, we may remark that the Fourth Gospel omits the miraculous welcome given by John to Jesus when Mary visited Elisabeth.

That the text, 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not' (1<sup>11</sup>), was no mere generalization is witnessed by the perplexing text, 'His brethren said to him, Pass from hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see thy

works. . . . For neither did his *brethren* believe in him' (7<sup>3-4</sup>).

Even those who had been witnesses of His going out and coming in from the beginning 'went in . . . to the sepulchre, and saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not that he must rise again from the dead.' Almost the last scene of the Gospel is given to the doubt and subsequent faith of one of the apostles.

The texts we have brought forward are not isolated sayings, to be explained by the fact that even the most cautious exponent of a thesis sometimes forgets premisses or his conclusion. St. John is not betrayed into these admissions; they are part of his plan. We may not at once see his thesis; but they are part of his thesis. To disprove or even to depreciate the manhood of Christ is not his aim. He gives convincing evidence that Jesus was flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, 'Jesus therefore, being *wearied* with his journey, sat thus on the well' (4<sup>6</sup>). The Synoptics have omitted this consoling witness to our Saviour's manhood. Again, the Fourth Gospel alone mentions the thirst of Jesus, 'Give me to drink' (4<sup>7</sup>), and the pathetic moan, 'I thirst' (19<sup>28</sup>). It is not, then, without significance that the Fourth Gospel alone has recorded the phrase, 'Behold the MAN' (19<sup>5</sup>).

But if the manhood of Christ is insisted on so forcibly, the Godhead is sometimes veiled behind phrases that have been the stronghold of heresy. 'I ascend to my Father, and to your Father; to *my God*, and to your God' (20<sup>17</sup>).

Lastly, we are brought to the text which, to some extent, formed the basis of the Arian denial of the divinity of the Son, viz. :—'The Father is greater than I' (14<sup>28</sup>).

Arianism was exaggerated literalism. It rested for its success on its keen instinct for difficulties arising out of the letter of Holy Writ; and never were its exegetical instincts keener than when it found in the Fourth Gospel admissions which made the divinity of the Son a matter to be solved, perhaps elsewhere than in the pages of Holy Writ itself. For if the texts quoted show anything, they would seem to show that part, if not the whole, of the plan of the Fourth Gospel was to demonstrate the manhood of Christ with a clearness calculated to refute any theory of 'a transcendent being who is not of this earth.'

*B.* Let us next turn to the *omissions* of the

Fourth Gospel, which have often been studied, though not always completely, nor ever, perhaps, in view of the present thesis. Three remarks must be made. First, that instead of the Fourth Gospel representing Jesus as astonishing every one with His wonders, the fact is that no Evangelist records so few miracles. Even St. Mark's Gospel, which is not more than half as long as the Fourth Gospel, contains more than twice as many miracles; St. Mark has eighteen, St. John eight.

Again, there were not a few miracles which would have recommended themselves to a writer whose thesis was that described above. For these miracles were especially calculated to help the thesis, by bringing out the transcendent character of Christ. Yet these miracles have been left out.

Thirdly, a group of miracles was witnessed by a select body of men, the Apostles, or a select body of the Apostles—Peter, Andrew, and *John*. Yet most of these are left unmentioned. Now, it can hardly be urged that this silence would go to show that St. John was not the author of the Fourth Gospel. If any other than he was its author, it is inconceivable that they would have dared to assume his rôle whilst seeming to be ignorant of some of his special privileges.

To come to the actual omissions. It has often been remarked that St. John nowhere gives the actual institution of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, though he was present on both occasions. Nor does he give the sweat of blood, though he was again one of the little group that witnessed what was looked upon as an astounding miracle. Whilst describing the storm on Lake Tiberia with all its details, he has omitted (6<sup>17-21</sup>) to state that no sooner had Jesus reached the boat than the wind ceased, though he was present at the miracle, and though it was calculated to support the thesis of a 'transcendent' Christ.

Again, he takes great pains to describe the attempt St. Peter made to defend his Master with the sword. Indeed, it is from the Fourth Gospel that we learn the name of the apostle (Peter) and of the servant (Malchus). Yet he omits the very striking and perhaps unique miracle of the cure of the servant's ear; though, again, he was an eye-witness of this miracle, which surely would have helped on the theory of a transcendent Christ.

Although he has given the raising of Lazarus, he has not given the raising of the daughter of Jairus, nor of the son of the widow of Nain, though he was an eye-witness of both miracles.

Again, he has not made any mention of the rending of the veil of the Temple. Yet he was 'known to the high priest'; and he must have been aware of the miracle. Had he been the only evangelist to record this dramatic fact, no doubt it would have been attributed by some modern critics to his theological reveries.

Again, he has given us no miracle over the demoniacally possessed; he has omitted the withering of the fig-tree, and the passing of Jesus through the angry crowd at Nazareth, though it will be seen at once what support the thesis of a 'transcendent' Christ would have received from these striking wonders.

Lastly, there is one miracle, the Transfiguration, recounted by the Synoptics, which St. John omits. Yet again, he was one of the three privileged to

behold its transcendent glory. It is difficult to see how any miracle could have given greater support to the 'transcendent' Christ theory. Yet it is not even alluded to.

In thus summing up the various admissions and omissions of the Fourth Gospel we feel ourselves obliged to say that the thesis we have examined seems based upon imperfect observation. It is not a patient putting together of facts; but a brilliant generalization which is taken as true because it accounts for many texts, yet must be taken as untrue because it contradicts other texts. We need not add that for the moment we have no theory of the Johannine Christ, or of the literary character of the Fourth Gospel, except that it deals with the historic Christ, and that its witness is not to be dismissed at once as unhistorical. But whether this theory is true or false, the theory of 'a transcendent being who is not of the earth' would seem to be itself a transcendent exegesis which is not of the Fourth Gospel.

## The Great Text Commentary.

### THE GREAT TEXTS OF ST. LUKE.

LUKE VI. 12.

**'And it came to pass in these days, that he went out into the mountain to pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God.'**—R.V.

#### EXPOSITION.

**'In these days.'**—The date is vague, and may belong to any part of the period of our Lord's ministry now before us. I believe it to be a form of acknowledgment on the part of the Evangelist, that he did not determine exactly into what part of this period to bring the incident so introduced. Indeed, the whole of this paragraph is of a supplementary and indefinite character, serving more as a preface to the discourse which follows, than as an integral part of the narration in its present sequence. This, of course, in no way affects the accuracy of the circumstances therein related, which nearly coincide in this and the cognate though independent account of Mark.—ALFORD.

**'Into the mountain.'**—With special reference to the Kurn Hattin, or Horns of Hattin, the traditional and almost certainly the actual scene of the Sermon on the Mount.—FARRAR.

**'All night in prayer.'**—The Evangelists frequently call attention to the prayers of Jesus—(1) at His baptism (Lk 3<sup>21</sup>); (2) after this night of toil in healing (Mk 1<sup>35</sup>); (3) after

a day of like severe toil (Lk 5<sup>16</sup>); (4) before choosing the apostles (Lk 6<sup>12</sup>); (5) before Peter's great confession (Lk 9<sup>18</sup>); (6) when the people would have made Him king (Jn 6<sup>15</sup>); (7) at His transfiguration (Lk 9<sup>28, 29</sup>); (8) for Peter (Lk 22<sup>32</sup>); (9) in Gethsemane (Mk 14<sup>35</sup>); (10) for His murderers (Lk 23<sup>34</sup>); (11) at the moment of death (Lk 23<sup>46</sup>). 'Those that have most business in public, and of the best kind, must sometimes be alone with God; must retire into solitude, there to converse with God, and keep up communion with Him' (Matt. Henry). For prayer is a holy conference with God.—LINDSAY.

**'In prayer to God.'**—The expression used is peculiar. It is literally 'in the prayer of God.' Hence some have supposed that it should be rendered 'in the Prayer-House of God.' The Greek word (*προσευχή*) meant not only 'prayer,' but also 'prayer-house,' as in the question to a poor person in Juvenal, 'In what *proseucha* am I to look for you?' The *proseuchæ* were merely walled spaces without roof, set apart for purposes of worship where there was no synagogue, as at Philippi (Ac 16<sup>13</sup>). There is, however, here an insuperable difficulty in thus understanding the words, for *proseuchæ* were generally, if not invariably, in close vicinity to running water, for purposes of ritual ablution, nor do we ever hear of their being built on hills. On the other hand, if the Greek words (*τὸ ὄρος*) mean only 'mountainous district,' this objection is not fatal.—FARRAR.