

between Christ and His Church which enables it to manifest Him : but he has scarcely reached the high level of the Evangelist in realizing the real kinship between the Divine and the Human, which makes it possible that God can be manifested through the Son of Man and the sons of men.

WALTER LOCK.

### THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM.

*The Human Element in the Gospels* : A commentary on the Synoptic Narrative. By GEORGE SALMON, Late Provost of Trinity College, Dublin. (John Murray, London, 1907.)

DR SALMON'S contribution to the Synoptic Problem, which has been published since his death under the title of *The Human Element in the Gospels*, must come as a surprise to many who were brought up on his *Introduction to the New Testament*. There are probably many of us who would gladly recognize the debt which we owed to that book in the beginning of our attempts to study. It helped us to think at a time when the danger was great of taking a line of less resistance, and accepting as infallible 'results', orthodox or critical, as the case might be. It added a call to thought in the dreary processes of loading the memory for competitive examinations. And its humour lightened the darkest hours of cramming up the facts. But whether we were persuaded by its arguments or not, we could not long escape the conviction that there was something of the advocate about it, though the advocate was pleading with conspicuous fairness a case of the truth of which he had convinced himself by weighing its merits rather than by accepting them on authority. In the later volume the change of attitude is remarkable. As the result of an enquiry begun late in life it is very remarkable indeed. It is perhaps the greatest sign of intellectual vitality for a man to change his mind in the declining years of life, when the majority even of able men would find little to say but that the old is good. We owe a real debt of gratitude to the executors of Dr Salmon for their decision to publish the striking proof of the power of a very able mind to continue the search for truth to the very end.

The volume consists of a series of notes on all the parallel passages in the Synoptists both of the triple and of the double tradition, and also the few incidents peculiar to St Mark. Dr Abbott's mechanical process, which he persuaded Mr Rushbrooke to carry out in his costly Synopticon, and its underlying assumption that 'a writer who derives his information from another, would not venture to deviate in the slightest degree from the very words in which the information had been conveyed' are justly criticized. It is rightly suggested that the safest method of study is

first to write out the parallel passages, then to consider the agreements in order and substance, and the similarities or identities of expression afterwards. The aim of each note is to determine what light the passages concerned throw on the mutual relations of the evangelists. Space is given to exegesis and textual criticism only in so far as they help to determine this question. The result is a series of *obiter dicta* rather than a reasoned exposition. Naturally the notes differ considerably in their importance, and power to convince, and also in the directness of their bearing on the subject. But they are always interesting, and can hardly ever be safely neglected. The work is incomplete, but it is work of the first order.

The views which Dr Salmon's investigation has led him to adopt involve some important modifications of the usual two-document theory. He holds that St Mark was used by both the later Synoptists, and that they also drew upon another common source, which, like other investigators, he finds it convenient to call Q. But he also holds that this source was known to St Mark, who draws upon it, especially in those parts where the information which he derived from St Peter failed him. And he thinks that the chief source of St Luke's knowledge of the history of our Lord was the public recital of the history in the Church of Antioch, 'of which all the evidence leads me to regard him as a member'. His views are thus similar to those of Weiss. And perhaps the most interesting sections of his notes are those which attempt to indicate St Mark's knowledge of Q. He has rightly called attention to the meagreness of Mark's narrative till he comes to the call of St Peter. But the positive proofs that his information is curtailed from the document or 'source' known to St Matthew and St Luke are slight. St Peter may well have told more shortly the story of events of which he was not himself an eyewitness, and many other explanations are at least as probable. But Dr Salmon has done good service in again reminding us that the final answer to the Synoptic Problem is not Mark + Q. This answer leaves indeterminate the mutual relations of these two documents. And it tells us nothing about the general character of Q. Dr Salmon believes it to have been a 'Gospel' and not a collection of sayings, or *λόγια* Ἰησοῦ according to the language of the latter part of the nineteenth century. But as he has clearly summed up his own results, it is best to quote (p. 405) 'We may place the Gospel records in chronological order as follows: First must have come the lost Aramaic by St Matthew, which is the basis of all three Synoptics; next would come Mark, whose Greek appears to have been used both by "Matthew" and St Luke. As between the last two, the Greek St Matthew seems to shew more signs of posteriority; but until I am shewn more satisfactory proof of acquaintance by either with the work of the other, I must hold that the

interval between their dates of composition was not so long as to allow time for the earlier of the two to pass from being the local form in which in a particular district the history of our Saviour's life was told to become the property of the whole Church, and thus arrive at such general circulation as necessarily to become known at a distance from its place of composition.'

We cannot but regret that Dr Salmon was not able to deal more fully with the questions connected with the Fourth Gospel. There are several hints that in this matter his change of attitude was even more complete. He makes it quite clear that he hesitates to accept its testimony against that of the Synoptic Gospels. Cf. among other passages, p. 512, where he suggests the possibility that 'the evangelist John is not a historian on whose accuracy we can rely'. But there are equally clear indications that he is not prepared to reject its authority altogether. Cf. p. 290, 'I believe that that Gospel has preserved for us some valuable traditions'; p. 429, 'However useful the Fourth Gospel is as a commentary, *written by one with special sources of information*, it is certainly of later date than the Synoptics.' In spite of his first title, 'the human element in the *Gospels*', the scope of his enquiry, which is limited to the investigation of the mutual relations of the Synoptists, did not allow of any adequate treatment of the Fourth Gospel. Its credibility 'requires separate examination' (p. 429). It would have been a great gain to us if he had had time to carry out such an 'examination'. Recent criticism of the Fourth Gospel groans under the weight of critical authority. He might have done much to free us from the '*entweder—oder*', beyond which so much of it seems unable to get. The conclusions of so candid an enquirer, who could keep his mind open even to the very last hour of his work, would have been of the greatest value.

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### THE EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS.

*St Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians.* By G. MILLIGAN, D.D.  
(Macmillan & Co., 1908.)

BISHOP LIGHTFOOT'S contemplated Commentary on the Epistles to the Thessalonians was never completed, and only saw the light in an inchoate form, embodied in his posthumous volume entitled *Notes on Epistles of St Paul*. Now we have a volume by Dr Milligan evidently intended to supply its place, conceived on the same scale, arranged in the same way, printed in the same type, bound with the same binding. Does it really supply the gap? Scarcely that: Dr Milligan has not the bishop's command of patristic knowledge, nor that originality and power of initiative which enables a commentator