

passages in the Talmud, such as treatises Sabbath 116<sup>a</sup> and<sup>b</sup> and Midrash Koheleth, *vocē* כל הדברים, we notice an active and intimate intercourse between Jews and primitive Christians. Friendly discussions as to the relative merit of the new doctrine are held, and in the treatise of Sabbath there is actually a quotation from the New Testament, Matt. v. 17, 18, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished."

Since the Jews came in contact with the Romans under the rule of Judas and Simon Maccabeus, the former of whom made an alliance with the Romans in 160 B.C., more especially after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, 70 A.C., their relations to Gentiles became continuous and very friendly. We find Jews settled in Asia Minor and in Greece, and a great number of them residing in Rome. The Talmud reports many incidents, from which we gather that not only early Christians, but Jews too, were zealous in making proselytes; often

Christians and Jews were taken for one and the same sect. In Talmud Yerushalmi Megilla, i. 72, and Babli Abhoda Zara, p. xi, the conversion and circumcision of a Roman senator and a considerable number of soldiers are reported. From all we can safely infer that the table-fellowship of Jew and Gentile was no new thing during the time of the primitive Christian Church; and the sitting down of the Gentile with an Israelite to take meals together, either in the former's or latter's house, was an everyday occurrence.

In connection with this, it may perhaps be of interest to the readers of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES to mention that before and after a proper meal the Jew was enjoined to wash his hands. A short prayer was said before meal, and a longer grace after the meal. Passages relating thereto are 1 Sam. ix. 13; Luke ix. 16; John vi. 11; Deut. viii. 10; Talmud Chulin, p. 105; Shulchan Aruch, section Orach Chayim, p. 158; Matt. xv. 20; Luke xi. 38. The custom of washing hands also prevailed among the ancient Greeks; comp. *Iliad*, x. 577; *Odyssey*, i. 136; and Xenophon's *Cyrop.* i. 35.

## Horton's "Revelation and the Bible."

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"THIS book is the fulfilment of a promise made in the Preface of the second edition of *Inspiration and the Bible*. . . . The following pages are a series of suggestions towards this most helpful work of reconstruction." So says Mr. Horton in his Preface. We are glad he has fulfilled his promise. There was need for it. The former book left an uneasy feeling, and much dissatisfaction. This "pretends to be nothing more than a series of tentative suggestions," which must be kept in mind in our estimate of the book. Whether or not it is always wise to rush to print with "tentative suggestions," is a matter of opinion. Some might prefer to wait, and allow their thoughts to filter and clarify. Probably many, after reading *Revelation and the Bible*, will think that Mr. Horton would have acted wisely in waiting a few years.

It staggers one to be told at the beginning that "any one who, making use of the Index, puts

<sup>1</sup> T. Fisher Unwin. 1892. 7s. 6d.

together the definite statements about revelation may gather with some distinctness how the matter shapes itself in his (the author's) own mind." Readers should be saved such trouble. But the author is scarcely just to himself; for the Introduction clearly indicates his own creed, and strikes us as being the best part of the book. "My whole position," he says, "which is that of a settled faith in the revelation of the Bible, makes it a matter of secondary importance what the conclusions of the so-called Higher Criticism may be." Here we get the secret and purpose of the book. The author endeavours to bring others to the same position.

Revelation is defined thus: "By revelation is meant a truth or truths received from God into the minds of men, not by the ordinary methods of inquiry, such as observation and reasoning, but by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit." Again, "Revelation, in the strictest use of the term, is that body of truth which is made known in a special

way, because the ordinary methods of discovering truth would not suffice. Broadly speaking, then, revelation in the Bible is precisely that which apart from the Bible, not only would not, but could not have been known. Thus they are not far wrong who say that the only thing *revealed* in the Bible is God." The author further makes his meaning clear by drawing a line between revealed truth and ordinary truth thus: "There is no mistake commoner than that of mixing up the idea of revelation with a very different matter, viz. historical or scientific truth. . . . Historical facts are not a subject of revelation; for they are ascertained by the ordinary methods of human inquiry. . . . Scientific fact is not a subject of revelation." Does this not need qualification? If the revelation is embodied in the course of events, as Mr. Horton admits, then may it not be necessary to inspire the historian that his choice of facts may be correct? for it is evident that *all* has not been recorded. Further on it is said: "If the historical data should be so vitiated that the general results of these events were lost, then the revelation might be lost." But how is this vitiation to be avoided except by inspiration? Again, it may be right enough to lay down the general law that revelation is limited to that which is beyond human reason, etc. But we must remember that the powers of reason and observation are not the same in every age. The human intellect depends upon its environment. It is cultivated, strengthened, developed. We must be careful not to make the power of reason to-day the standard of the past. What is possible now may not have been possible to the writers of the Old Testament. We are told that "because this is the book of God, we have no reason to say that everything said about God in the book is true." The writer now gives a final definition of revelation: "When we say that the Bible is a revelation, what exactly do we mean? . . . but that it is a compilation of writings through which God is revealed to us, not in a moment of time, but in a historical evolution; not in a few proof texts, but in the whole connected mass of the two literatures of which the book consists."

Such is Mr. Horton's answer to the question, "What is revelation?" He has done well to emphasise the distinction between what is revealed and what is known by reason, etc. But like every one else who attempts to draw a sharp line between the divine and the human elements, his teaching

is most vague and unsatisfactory. Indeed, the great defect of the book is that it does not give any clear and distinct statement of what inspiration is. Many parts would lead us to believe that Mr. Horton's view of inspiration is very low, and that he places the sacred writers on equality with profane writers. But this is not so; for he says, "But truth derived through the medium of the ordinary perceptions and judgments is not what we usually intend by revelation. If we were to give this loose and inaccurate connotation to the word, we should be obliged to include Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Confucius among inspired writers." Mr. Horton halts and hesitates a great deal, and it is evident that he has not allowed his thoughts time enough to clarify.

We agree with Mr. Horton, and would emphasise his words when he says, "But the scholar and the pietist must meet on the common ground of seeking to understand revelation; if either be absent, the investigation will halt; if either be absent, the investigation will halt; two keys simultaneously applied are needed to unlock this ancient casket." There must be sympathy between the critic and his work. The Bible is not to be placed before him like a dead body on the dissecting-table, that he may divide part from part simply to report thereupon. No such cold-blooded criticism can appreciate the Bible, or rightly interpret it. Mr. Horton does not lack sympathy. He is earnest and sincere, and desirous of so presenting the truth as to meet the difficulties of Bible-readers. The author proceeds to deal with the various books, following closely the method of Driver in his *Introduction*. He endeavours to show in what the revelation of each book consists. Of Genesis, he says, "There are two salient and striking elements of revelation in the book: first, a God dealing plastically with the world, with man, with history; second, a nation drawn out of remote and obscure beginnings by the will of God, and shaped by an unceasing discipline for a far-off destiny." So he runs through each book, pointing out what is distinctive, and that he marks out as the revelation. Space will not allow of our following Mr. Horton through the various parts of the Bible. He is not slow to point out and emphasise strongly, perhaps unduly, difficulties, mistakes, and contradictions, which are all made to tell in favour of his theory of revelation. True, he has not created these difficulties. But the way in which it is done gives one the impression that it is done for a

purpose, namely, to impress one with the need of the author's theory. This is the most unsatisfactory aspect of the book. The conclusions of the Higher Criticism are accepted unquestioned, as if they were the outcome of perfect agreement. Mr. Horton has read much, but assimilated little. There is a rawness about the book. The impression is given that the Old Testament is anything but reliable. I would not care to put the book into the hands of a young man troubled with doubts. It would not be very helpful; but probably hurtful: too much or too little is said. The treatment is scrappy; and the conclusions of criticism do not receive their proper and full setting, as in larger works. It is possible for the opinions of the Higher Critics to become traditional.

Here and there, we think, Mr. Horton is scarcely just and fair. He takes for granted that "the day of the captivity of the land" (Judg. xviii. 30) refers to the Exile, and concludes that the book was edited after 722 B.C. The conclusion may be true, but not for the reason asserted. Mr. Horton must know that others give quite another interpretation of the words, which would not justify such a conclusion. When speaking of the anachronism in Acts v. 36, he assumes that Luke made a mistake when he "makes Gamaliel refer to the uprising of the *sicarii* under Theudas—an event which did not happen until ten years after." And on what does he base his conclusion? On the word of Josephus alone, where a later date is given. Why should we believe Josephus rather than Luke, especially when Luke again and again proves himself trustworthy, whilst Josephus is untrustworthy? In speaking of the Epistle of James, he says, "But there is a feature of this letter more singular still. It teems with allusions to two books which we do not count 'Scripture' at all—Ecclesiasticus and the Book of Wisdom." Then a long list of passages is given in parallel columns to show the connexion; but the likeness is not very close. In many cases there is a closer likeness to the Scripture itself. Here is one as a specimen:—

Jas. i. 10, 11: "As the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

. . . The flower thereof falleth."

Wisd. ii. 7, 8: Let no flower of the spring pass by us; let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they wither."

v. 8: "What hath pride profited?"

Why Mr. Horton refers to the Book of Wisdom rather than to the Psalms, where words almost identical are found, we know not. Does this not look like the creating of unnecessary difficulties?

In passing over to the New Testament, Christ is pointed out as "the summit and crown of revelation." Here "the earthen vessel is intentionally imperfect in order that the excellency of the glory may be of God." The distinction between Christ and the memoirs is clearly set forth and emphasised in order to show that Christ Himself is *the* revelation, and indeed the proof of *their* inspiration. Some strong things are said about those who place the New Testament, rather than Christ, as the object of faith. It is a "kind of Bibliolatry which is irrational and indeed irreligious." We question if there be many to-day guilty of the charge. Nothing is easier than to overstate the position of others. Is not Mr. Horton fighting a ghost of his own imagination? We agree with him that Christ should be looked upon as *the* "supernatural fact," "*the* revelation," and the memoirs as only a witness; but there is no need to magnify the errors of the past. "Now," he says, "if it does not sound too paradoxical a statement, Christ does not depend on the New Testament writings, but the New Testament writings depend on Him." Yes and no, the New Testament derives its value from Jesus Christ; but the world gets its *first* knowledge of Jesus Christ from the New Testament. It may be true enough that had Diocletian succeeded in destroying the New Testament, Christianity would still have lived on, and Christ reigned in the hearts of men. But had the books been burned, we question if Christianity would have been what it is to-day. If we had nothing but tradition to guide us, what kind of a picture of Christ should we have? Those familiar with the history of the first century after Christ will know. We are ever in danger of pushing too far any new argument, or an old truth restated with freshness. And the "Christ of experience" is in danger of this just now. Let us be careful that we do not make it a half truth, which is the most dangerous of errors. We admire Mr. Horton's beautiful conception of Christ "as the redeeming and saving power of God . . . manifested in a human life of sacrifice and suffering, and operating now through a spiritual agency in the continual regeneration and perfecting of human souls." We are glad he insists that the truthfulness of a fact does not depend upon

agreement of details by various writers ; hence he says, "And so it is with the accounts of the Resurrection. The great fact is not disturbed by the somewhat incoherent description of its incidents." Again, "The truth of the picture is guaranteed, not by the writers who depict the life of Jesus, but by the picture itself."

Mr. Horton, in dealing with the Pauline Epistles, "thinks the fear of the apostle has been amply justified. Inconsiderate men have 'accounted of him above that which they heard from him.'" He is not so infallible as men make him to be. In estimating the revelation in the letters, he says, "The first, and in many ways the most important, significance of Paul's letters, is that they are the authentic picture of this Christ-filled personality, this personality in which Christ, no longer present in the flesh, is yet manifestly revealed." It "is that of the Christ living in a human heart, living and working, working and producing divine results, though the person in question knew Him not by sight, but only, as he would say, by *faith*." This revelation is mixed with much that is merely human, and Paul makes "actual mistakes." It cannot be said too often that, "above all things, Paul's revelation must be taken in its entirety." And Mr. Horton rightly calls attention to the contrast between Luther, who "seized some central and essential thought, and Calvin, who "seized on some incidental thought."

Mr. Horton's estimate of the Epistle to the Hebrews shows his view of revelation. The Epistle is not Paul's. It represents Alexandrine Christianity by an unknown author. "His letter is the beginning of Christian speculation. He no longer, like the apostles themselves, speaks what he has seen or what he has heard, but rather what he has thought . . . Thus the revelation of the Hebrews is a different quality from that of St. Paul ; it is not so verifiable ; it certainly rests rather on its probability to the individual reader than on the immediate witness of the Spirit."

Mr. Horton thinks well of the First Epistle of Peter. "Supposing it stood alone, the sole literary product of apostolic times, we could infer all the essential truths of Christianity from it. . . . It presents the ethics of the gospel in the purest and most beautiful light." Referring to Peter's mistakes, he says, "If St. Peter was wrong in supposing, as others did, that the end of the world was quite near, he may also have been wrong in

supposing that 'Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison.'" Just so ; and where will this doubting the authority and accuracy of the apostles end, if there is so little of the divine and so much of the human element in the New Testament, as Mr. Horton would have us believe? Whilst reading the book, again and again I found myself asking the question, What is revelation and what is not revelation in the Epistles? How am I to know? What am I to believe? "Judge by your conscience, and by the witness within," Mr. Horton will reply. But consciences differ ; the witness within is not the same in all. Then the unbeliever has not that witness within in the sense that the believer has it.

Mr. Horton deals, last of all, with the Johannine Writings ; and here he gives forth no uncertain sound. His conclusion concerning the Apocalypse must commend itself to all reasonable minds, that it was written many years before the other writings. This accounts for the difference of style and matter. It centres round the crucified Lord, who was at once "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" and "the Risen Judge of the earth which He died to save." He does not hesitate to accept the Fourth Gospel as John's. He thinks that the abuse of Paul's idea of the transcendental Christ, a Christ whom he did not "know after the flesh," called forth the writings of John. It was necessary "to bring the spiritual Christ and the historical Christ into a clear and manifest relation to one another. . . . This is the task of the Fourth Gospel. It is the rewriting of the earthly life of Jesus in the light of that divine and spiritual life which now for two generations He had been living in the hearts of believers." He holds fast to the Deity of Christ, and says, "Men who are determined to see in Jesus nothing but a human being will find the Fourth Gospel a sealed book." Nothing can be finer than the treatment of this Gospel, and the reverent spirit which pervades it is catching. We get nearer to Mr. Horton's heart, and we find him "better than his creed," as indicated in other parts of his book.

Certain defects are found in the book through what seems to be a want of care in expression. Of the Acts of the Apostles, he says, "The earliest reference to the book in ancient literature is made by Irenæus, writing toward the end of the second century (182-188 A.D.)." I suppose what he means is that this was the first time the name of Luke was

connected with the Acts, for the book itself had been referred to before. But even this is not true according to Mr. Horton's own statement further on (p. 383), where the Muratorian Canon is dated (168-170 A.D.), and it refers to Luke as the writer of the Acts. Again, "But the book (Acts) is history in the same sense that Thucydides is history, and probably no one would have been audacious enough to say that it was anything less if the Church had not been foolish enough to declare that it is something more." If he means what he says, then he does not believe that Luke was inspired. But lower down on the same page we read, "It is, as we shall see very soon, the history of a great revelation, and therefore, as a correct narrative, it is itself a revelation." We do not believe that "a man may tell the story of those wonderful years which saw the beginnings of the Christian Church without being himself any more than a painstaking and accurate observer, just as Boswell may give a faultless picture of Johnson." Such a man would not be able to understand the history so as to give a true story. He would lack that sympathy of the pietist which Mr. Horton demands in the critic. Again, "But what we may call the orthodoxy of the first Christian century—the century before the New Testament was written."

I suppose Mr. Horton means *a part* of the first century, for he believes that the New Testament was written during the first century. Such defects, we believe, are the result of haste in writing, but they may mislead those already doubting.

What of the book as a whole? Mr. Horton, in his summary at the close, seems to be conscious of the defect already named. He thinks "it not unlikely that a reader unacquainted with the results of biblical scholarship may feel that his view of the Bible has been destroyed, and may have the forlorn sensation that he is standing in the midst of ruins." We fear this is only too true. It is all very well to tell a man to come to Christ first, and accept Him and *then* judge of the Scriptures. If this were done, we should have no fear. But if a man be made to feel that the witnesses for Christ are untrustworthy, or at least very fallible, he will hesitate the more, and not be easily persuaded. To a man who has not yet accepted Christ as Lord and Saviour, I cannot imagine *Revelation and the Bible* being very helpful. But to those who, like Mr. Horton, already believe in Christ, and have "a settled faith in the revelation of the Bible," the book will be helpful, and may prepare them for, and save them from, a greater shock by criticism less devout and less reverent.

## The Origin and Relation of the Four Gospels.

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### ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

ST. JOHN was indisputably the one Apostle best qualified to be the first Evangelist. He had enjoyed our Lord's confidence and affection to an extent which in itself must have given him a perfectly unique position in the Apostolic body. More than this, at the very last Jesus had conferred upon him an honour which, involving as it did the residence of Jesus' mother in his house, would for some years at least be a standing memorial alike to the Apostles, to the outer circle of disciples, and to the Jewish rulers and public, of the preference which his Master had shown to him, and the consequent priority which such preference necessarily implied.

Thus, of those possessed of the primary qualifica-

tions for writing a Gospel, St. John would stand out *facile princeps*.

Hence, so far from requiring any explanation of St. John being the first Evangelist, rather, if he were not the first, we might fairly ask how it came to pass that any other of the Apostles was preferred before him?

Let us try for a moment to conceive under what circumstances St. John may have undertaken to write his Gospel?

The only trustworthy guide which we have to help us to such a conception, is what is termed the Muratorian Fragment or Canon, a document which cannot be later than the end of the second century, which may be earlier, and which has all the appearance of representing a tradition which had already become time-honoured.