

from "The Bible Under Trial." (1906AD.)

by

James Orr

Professor of Apologetics and Systematic Theology
in the United Free Church College, Glasgow.

Chapter 2

An Instructive Object-Lesson

THE past is a great instructor as to the power that resides in the Bible to survive the assaults made upon it even by the most skilful adversaries. I referred in the previous paper to the keen literary attacks made on Christianity by its pagan opponents in the second century. A special object of assault was the Gospels. One of the most keen-witted of these assailants was the clever Epicurean,

CELSUS,

of whom the German Baur does not hesitate to say: "In acuteness, in dialectical aptitude, in many-sided culture, at once philosophical and general, Celsus stands behind no opponent of Christianity."¹ His book called *The True Word*—abundant extracts from which are preserved to us by Origen—is, in its way, a masterpiece of attack upon the Evangelic records. It is the book of a man of undeniable acuteness, of wide reading, of philosophic culture, of exceptional literary ability, who, after a minute study of the Christian writings, of deliberate purpose sets himself to assail, undermine, and overthrow Christianity by all the resources of knowledge, argument and raillery at his command. Scarcely anything escapes his eye of which a point could be made against the new faith. Yet the book failed! So far as we can see, it had absolutely not the slightest effect in stopping the triumphant progress of Christianity in the Empire. It is doubtful if we should ever have heard of its existence but for the fact that Origen in the following century composed a reply to it.

And the reason is not far to seek. Mockery and ridicule were no effective weapons against the holy power which men felt had entered the world in the religion of Jesus Christ. Christian men and women needed no argument to refute Celsus. They knew from their own experience that he did not do justice to their books, their religion, their morality, and their lives. He might see nothing of the transcendent moral and spiritual glory of the Christian Gospel, but others were not so blind. His spirit would not attract them where Christ's failed. He might cavil and misrepresent, but he had no substitute to offer for the salvation which men knew Christ had brought them.

The case of Celsus is typical, and precludes the whole history of the conflict of faith with unbelief.

VOLTAIRE

was the keenest and most unsparing assailant of the Bible in the eighteenth century. He is credited with the saying that it took twelve men to found Christianity, but he would show the world that one man was sufficient to overthrow it. Proud but vain boast! The Bible which Voltaire laboured to destroy holds on its career of conquest unchecked. The records of Bible societies show that last year (1905) was actually the largest in the circulation of the sacred volume ever attained. But Voltaire's own books—some score or two of them—stand piled, dust-laden, on the shelves; and save for some literary or historical purpose, who ever thinks of consulting them? Why, again, this difference? Simply because the Bible has a message for the world, which the world feels it needs; Voltaire's books have not.

I.

These are instances from centuries gone by. I propose now in this paper to sketch the history of

a school of criticism in the immediate past, which has, I think, valuable instruction for us in the present time of trial for the Bible, and is, besides, in important ways, linked with living controversies. I refer to the famous historical and critical school commonly known as

THE TUBINGEN SCHOOL,

from its connection with Ferdinand Chr. Baur, Professor in that University. It was a New Testament, not an Old Testament, school, but its lessons are as applicable to the one school of criticism as to the other. It had a great prestige about the middle of last century, attracted to itself a band of able scholars—men like Schwegler, Zeller, Hilgenfeld, and A. Ritschl—and ruled the critical world for over a generation. Dr. Samuel Davidson became a convert to it, and advocated its theories in this country. It proclaimed itself, in the usual style, to be the “critical,” as opposed to the “uncritical” view², and looked with scorn on those who rejected its conclusions. Its temporary vogue markedly resembled that of the Wellhausen school to-day. Yet little by little its influence ebbed, till now the tide is completely turned, and hardly any among critical writers is found so poor as to do it reverence. A glance at the fortunes of such a school can scarcely fail to be educative.

Baur, the founder of this school, was a man of great learning, ability, and conscientiousness, and had a power which few have surpassed of giving a novel theory a look of plausibility, and even of demonstration. His theory, like Wellhausen’s, fascinated by the skill with which it grouped its materials in support of a central thesis, and by the easy key it seemed to afford to many difficult phenomena in the Apostolic and post-Apostolic ages of the Church.

Briefly stated, the theory turns on

ONE GREAT ANTITHESIS,

which is the pillar of the whole—the alleged existence of Petrine and Pauline parties, in conflict with each other, in the early Church. We look in vain, Baur thinks, for a correct picture of early Christianity in the Book of Acts, which is a composition of the second century, written expressly for the purpose of glossing over the differences between the original Apostles and Paul. The true state of matters is mirrored in the contemporary, and undoubtedly authentic, Epistles of Paul—of which he acknowledges four, the Epistles to the Galatians, I. and II. Corinthians, and Romans—just as, in the Old Testament school, we are taken for our starting-point from the historical books to the prophets, or such portions of them as the critics are pleased to allow to be genuine. Here, and in the Apocalypse, accepted as a work of the Apostle John, we see the Church rent by a schism which threatened its very existence. The primitive believers at Jerusalem were far from having the enlightened views ascribed to them in the Book of Acts. They were rather Jews of the most exclusive type, who differed from the rest of their countrymen only in believing that the Messiah had already appeared in Jesus of Nazareth, and who thought of nothing less than of breaking with Judaism or relaxing the obligations of the Mosaic law.

When now, Gentile Churches were founded, it was inevitable that a conflict should arise. Stephen, the Hellenist, was the precursor of the new doctrine: but it was

PAUL’S LABOURS,

and his success in founding churches among the Gentiles, which brought matters to a crisis. Jews came from Judæa to Antioch, insisting on the circumcision of the new converts as a condition of salvation (Acts xv. 1). This Paul and the Gentile Christians strenuously resisted. To try to come to some understanding on the subject, Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to meet with the original Apostles. The Book of Acts, in the account it gives of the great Council at Jerusalem (Acts xv.), represents the older Apostles as on the side of Paul in principle—a representation, according to Baur, completely contradicted by the narrative in Gal. ii., which, besides, knows nothing of a public meeting, and speaks only of a private interview with the three of chief repute, Peter, John, and James, the Lord’s brother. It is quite a mistake, Baur holds, to suppose that the so-called “Judaizers” were only a troublesome party or faction in the Church, and that the original Apostles had no sympathy with their movement. The real heads of

THE OPPOSITION TO PAUL,

according to his reading of facts, were the original Apostles themselves. In his own words: "Who were had to offer so strenuous a resistance? Who else than the elder Apostles themselves."³

The result of the conference with the Three, on Baur's theory, was a patched up agreement, according to which each went his own way, without any real harmony in principle. This became evident shortly after, when Peter came to Antioch, and a collision occurred between him and Paul. Peter, influenced by his surroundings, had so far modified his Jewish strictness, and had begun to eat with the Gentiles. This continued till a deputation came from James at Jerusalem (Gal. ii. 12), when he at once returned to his former practice, and drew down upon him the sharp rebuke of Paul. According to Baur, Peter and Paul never after this were reconciled, and the Jewish legalists, on their side, never forgot the slight put on their great Apostle.

From this conflict at Antioch dates

THE FINAL BREAK

of Paul with the Jewish party. Thenceforth they set themselves, still with the concurrence of the older Apostles, to oppose and frustrate Paul wherever he went. In Galatia they succeeded in subverting his work, and in bringing back his converts to circumcision and the law. In Corinth they introduced divisions, and set up a Petrine as against a Pauline party, which boldly challenged Paul's right to regard himself as an Apostle at all. These opponents, as Paul admits, brought with them "letters of commendation" (2 Cor. iii. 1). The Apocalypse is interpreted as breathing throughout an unmistakable spirit of hostility to Paul, who is declared to be expressly excluded in the mention of "the twelve Apostles of the Lamb," whose names are in the foundations of the holy city (Rev. xxi. 14). The Book of Acts, written towards the middle of the next century, seeks to conceal this chasm; but even in it, it is said, the traces of this fierce controversy cannot be altogether effaced. According to its own showing, the first Apostles made no attempt to carry out any mission to the Gentiles; Paul met with keen opposition in his work at Antioch and elsewhere; and when at length he returned for the last time to Jerusalem, he was met by the statement of James: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of them which have believed; and they are all zealous for the law" (Acts xxi. 20). Here, it is contended, we have pictured the true state of the case: a church at Jerusalem composed of zealots for the law; Paul, on the other hand, preaching freedom from the law; and between the two parties, a bitter and irreconcilable opposition!

The tension thus created, however, could not remain permanent, and we have next, according to Baur,

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

tending to lessen the sharpness of the opposition, and to draw the parties closer together. Approximations began to be made on either side, the stages of which reflect themselves in the literary products of the time. Gospels and Epistles were composed from a party point of view, each seeking to commend its own standpoint, and to conciliate opponents. The Gospel of Matthew, *e.g.*, represents a modified Jewish standpoint: the Gospel of Luke and the Acts are Pauline, but written in the interests of conciliation; Mark is a neutral Gospel, based on Matthew and Luke (the newer criticism precisely reverses this relation); Epistles like Ephesians and Colossians represent the same conciliatory tendency; while, finally, the Gospel of John brings up the rear, with its Christian Gnosticism, pointing to a date somewhere between A.D. 160 and 170. I need not follow the further steps by which, in Baur's view, after mutual concession, Jewish and Gentile Christianity got blended together towards the end of the second century in the unity of the Catholic Church.,

Such in its main features was Baur's theory of the Apostolic age, stated and defended with marvellous acuteness, and wrought out with undeniable plausibility and skill. For a time, as I have said, it

QUITE CAPTIVATED

the advanced spirits in theology, just as the Wellhausen theory is doing now. The method seemed the right one—to start, not with documents of a later, or at least uncertain age, but with undoubtedly contemporary, first hand writings; the proofs seemed clear—the contradictions between Acts and the Epistle to the Galatians; the antagonism of Paul to the Three, as shown in the same Epistle; the emissaries who came from James to Antioch, and compelled Peter to renounce his more liberal practice; the conflicts with the Judaizers in Galatia and other churches; the Petrine party in Corinth, and the “letters of recommendation” they brought with them, evidently from some influential quarters; the fact that the early Apostles themselves never attempted a Gentile mission; the thousands of Jews who believed, who were all zealous for the law, in Jerusalem—how could it be doubted that the true key had been found to the many perplexing phenomena in the Apostolic age which the old theory ignored, and that the eyes of the world had at length been opened to the actual course of events in that greatly misunderstood period? The Wellhausen theory of “the three Codes,” as the key to the religious history of Israel, could not be clearer!

II.

What now, it is instructive to inquire, has been

THE VERDICT OF HISTORY

on this ingenious and imposing theory, promulgated by Baur with so much *éclat*? I have already hinted that it has not been favourable, but it is well to watch the process. The theory, as above sketched, was not long able to hold the field in its integrity. After a little time had been given for consideration, it became evident to unprejudiced minds that it had at least been pushed much too far, and that, in the form in which Baur had presented it, it was little more than a caricature of early Christianity. Some of Baur’s ablest disciples, accordingly, ere long felt themselves compelled to part company with their master on essential points, and gradually the party was under the necessity of greatly retracting its position as a whole. Two causes, mainly, led to this result:—

(I) It was soon seen, and had to be acknowledged, that, granting him his own data, Baur had greatly over-driven the evidence, and that

ON PURELY HISTORICAL GROUNDS

his contentions could not be maintained. It was early pointed out, *e.g.*, by Lechler, that the text in Gal. ii. 1, 2, so far from confining Paul’s visit to a private conference, expressly implies the larger meeting with the Church. “I went up again,” Paul says, “to Jerusalem ...and laid before them the Gospel which I preach ...but privately before them of repute,” &c. Here “them,” in the connection, can only be the believers in Jerusalem, the Church itself, and the “but” marks the transition to a private interview. Lechler in this had the rare good fortune of convincing his opponents, for the point he raised has been conceded by Zeller, Hoisten, Ritschl, Pflleiderer, Reuss, and most others.

It is not otherwise with the alleged opposition between Paul and the Three in Gal. ii. It has long been shown that this chapter, so far from proving antagonism in principle, proves agreement. Paul speaks of “*false brethren privily brought in*” (ver. 4), but the very mention of “privily” shows that they were not a majority in the Church; and the express statement of the chapter is that when the Three heard Paul’s account of his work, they gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship (ver. 9). Here again there has come about a consensus of leading critics, as Holsten, Ritschl, Reuss, Pflleiderer, &c.

It is evident again, in Gal. ii. 11, 12, that in withdrawing from eating with the Gentiles, Peter was acting in weakness, against his own better convictions; and the after hostility of Peter to Paul is a simple myth, now also generally abandoned. Among other indications in the history, an undeniable evidence of the good feeling which subsisted between the Church at Jerusalem and the Pauline Church is the collection for the poor saints in Judea, with which Paul so honourably busied himself.⁴

But (2) there was yet another cause which inevitably led to the abandonment of the extreme positions of Baur, *viz.*,

THE PROGRESS OF CRITICISM

itself. Baur's School was nothing if not critical.⁵ It was with critical weapons its battles were fought, and on critical grounds it claimed acceptance. But it was just here, by the continuous application of the same methods, that the leading postulates of the school were overthrown. It was an easy way to gain a victory to make a clean sweep of nearly all the books of the New Testament, thrusting them down to the second century—Old Testament criticism substitutes the Exile—and accounting for them by deliberate use of fiction. Yet if this was not done, the theory would not stand for an hour. The late date of the New Testament writings is not an accident, but an essential part of Baur's theory—so, too, in Old Testament theories—yet the progress of the same careful, thorough criticism which, be it conceded, his own school did so much to foster, has rendered it impossible to maintain this late date for the documents on which he founds. With this, as an invaluable auxiliary—the Old Testament parallel here is archæology—has gone

THE PROGRESS OF DISCOVERY,

compelling in many instances the driving back of the date of the New Testament books to a much earlier period than Baur would allow. Baur, in other words, needed for his purpose to make a clean sweep of the great bulk of the literature of the New Testament; criticism and discovery combined to show that this could not be done. One by one Paul's Epistles have had to be given back to him, till it is chiefly on the Pastoral Epistles, in whole or part, that, in advanced circles, doubt is permitted to rest; the first three Gospels have been carried back by stringent processes of criticism to dates well within the Apostolic age; even the Gospel of John is put by the opponents of its genuineness—a diminishing number—fully half a century earlier than Baur would acknowledge. More will be said of this revolution in opinion immediately; I take here only an instance or two in illustration of the effect of discovery.

Baur would fain put the

GOSPEL OF JOHN

down to about A.D. 170. But in 1842 discovery was made of a long-lost book of Hippolytus (about A.D. 200), *A Refutation of All Heresies*, which dealt specifically with the Gnostic systems of Basilides and Valentinus, and made it perfectly clear that these systems were founded on the teaching of the Fourth Gospel. As Basilides flourished as early as A.D. 125, the inference was obvious. Here is one passage: "And this he [Basilides] says is that which has been stated in the Gospels, 'He was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'" No candid mind will deny that this quotation is from John i. 9. Another example. In a curious heretical production of the middle or latter part of the second century, *The Clementine Homilies*, there were numerous clear references to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and some which any ordinary mind would have thought clear enough to John also. It did not, however, suit the critics to admit this, and the alleged absence of any references to John was turned into an argument against the existence of the Gospel before A.D. 160. Up to this time the MS. was imperfect, the last homily, and half of the one preceding, being wanting. In 1853 a complete MS. of the *Homilies* was discovered, and there, in the part formerly missing, was a reference so clear to the story of the man born blind in John ix, that doubt was no longer possible, and the critics yielded up the point. The more recent discovery of translations of Tatian's famous *Diatessaron*, or Harmony of the Four Gospels, made soon after the middle of the second century, at once establishes the existence of that Harmony—which had been keenly disputed⁶—and the place of John's Gospel in it. It begins with the sentence, "In the beginning was the Word" (John i. 1).

III.

It will hardly, now, be wondered at, that, pressed by these difficulties, the school beat a retreat. A. Ritschl, at first an expounder of its critical views (he wrote to prove that Marcion's mutilated Gospel of Luke was probably the original—a position afterwards surrendered), gradually broke

with its positions, and finally, in 1857, in the second edition of his book on *The Origin of the Old Catholic Church*, wrote one of the ablest refutations of it.

The full extent, however, of the

BREACH OF CRITICAL SCHOLARS

with this once-honoured school, is only seen when we come down to recent times.

On the actual situation I shall cite a few sentences from one who will not be regarded as unduly biassed towards conservatism—Prof. A. S. Peake, of the University of Manchester. In a recent inaugural lecture on “The Present Movement of Biblical Science,” Mr. Peake signalises as one of the two features in recent New Testament Introduction, “the general break with the Tübingen tradition.”⁷ He remarks: “All that profound learning and brilliant genius could do for the theory was done by Baur and the band of scholars he gathered round him.” But, “as is well known, this criticism has not held its ground. In the first place, it rested too much on a theory of what the history must have been not to have presented a distorted statement of what it actually is. In the next place the radical criticism of Baur has been almost entirely abandoned by those who would now be regarded as radical critics.” The theory is taken piecemeal, and almost all its contentions are shown to be now surrendered. *E.g.*, “With the exception of Hilgenfeld, practically all critics are agreed that Mark is the earliest of the synoptists; in other words, what Baur declared to be the latest, because the most neutral, of the Gospels is now placed first of all.” “The theory entertained by this school as to the Acts of the Apostles has also been abandoned; the conciliatory tendency which was detected in it is seen to have been greatly exaggerated.” It is added: “Apart from this abandonment of Baur’s New Testament criticism, there are other objections to the theory which have contributed to its surrender.”

In short, no shred is left that one can discern of the Tübingen theory at all. The few scholars that adhere to it, as Van Manen, have developed its criticism “into an extremely negative form,” leaving “not a single New Testament writing to its traditional author.”⁸ Their exploits—“the delirium of hyper-criticism”—awaken only “amazement.” I agree, but wonder in turn, that Mr. Peake, in view of all this, should write as confidently as he does of “assured results” in the field of Old Testament criticism (p. 32).

IV.

LATER DISCUSSIONS.

The Tübingen tradition is broken, but we have not yet reached the end of our developments. To abandon Baur’s view of Luke’s Gospel, and of the Book of Acts, was not yet to admit Luke’s authorship of these two works, or to concede to them a high historical value. It was a great step in advance when Prof. W. M. Ramsay, of Aberdeen, himself formerly an adherent of the Tübingen school, came out some years ago as a thorough-going defender of Luke’s title to the rank of a first-class historian. The Continent, however, seemed comparatively unmoved. Now there is a change, and within the last few months criticism has received

A NEW SURPRISE,

and something not unlike a shock to its nerves, by the entrance into this field of controversy of no less redoubtable a champion of the traditional view of Luke’s authorship of the Gospel and the Acts than the brilliant and learned Prof. A. Harnack, of Berlin.⁹

To realise the significance of this fact one has first to remember that the non-Lucan authorship of these two works was a point which “criticism” had entirely settled to its own satisfaction long ago—it was a “settled result” (as much so as the Old Testament J, E, and P); and, next, to hear what Harnack has to say, not only on this particular question, but on the value of “tradition,” and on modern methods of criticism in general.

On the first point it is worth while listening to a colleague of Harnack’s, Prof. Schürer, *apropos* of this same book, if only to note the reason he gives for rejecting the unity of the Acts, *viz.*, its unhistoricity. “The linguistic unity of the work,” he says, “has been already hitherto recognised,

and still all representatives of a critical view of things were at one in holding that the author of the 'We' source, and the author of the Acts, are to be distinguished, because the latter, on account of the glaring marks of unhistoricity in his work, cannot be a companion of Paul,"¹⁰ "All representatives"—at one—"cannot be," how familiar are the phrases! But Harnack is not dismayed, and does not bate his breath in speaking of the critics. He reckons up the forces against him, and thus pictures the temper of the reigning school: "In spite of the contradiction of Credner, B. Weiss, Klostermann, Zahn, &c., the untenableness of the tradition [of Luke's authorship] is held to be so completely established, that one hardly takes the trouble any longer to prove it, or even to give any attention to the arguments of opponents. Indeed, there seems no longer a willingness to recognise that such arguments exist. Jülicher believes he is compelled to see in the ascription of the book to Luke only 'an adventurous wish.' So quickly does criticism forget, and in so partisan a spirit does it stiffen itself in its hypotheses!" (p. 5). "Cannot," he says again, "Why not? Whence have we so sure a knowledge of Apostolic and post-Apostolic times, that we dare oppose our 'knowing' to surely attested facts?" (p. 87). He does not believe there ever was a separate "We" source at all.

Harnack claims, accordingly, in his Preface: "I hope to have shown in the following pages that criticism has gone wrong, and that

TRADITION IS RIGHT,

and he reminds his readers that ten years ago he told them that "in the criticism of the sources of the oldest Christianity we are in a movement backward to tradition." "Something," he says, "has certainly been won back in the fact that we are able to circumscribe more precisely the ground and the time of the oldest, foundation-laying formation of tradition; by which not a few wild hypotheses are excluded. In the years 30-70—and, indeed, in Palestine, more exactly in Jerusalem—everything really came into being and happened, of which what followed was simply the unfolding."¹¹ (Italics his.) The third chapter of his book is headed: "On the Pretended Impossibility of Vindicating the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles for Luke." Harnack was never a believer in the Tübingen theory,¹² and now he sees in it the fundamental error in New Testament criticism. "All mistakes which have been made in New Testament criticism gather themselves to a focus in the criticism of the Acts of the Apostles," and the root-error is Baur's theory of the relations of Jewish and Gentile Christianity (p. 87). One is reminded how certain scholars are now beginning to liken Wellhausen's dogma of "the centralisation of worship" to this exploded dogma of the Baur school!

All this is very instructive. The cry of "settled results!" The proof of how far criticism, when most sure of itself, can go astray! The certainty that a change will come, and flouted "tradition" will reassert its rights! How the credit of books most assailed is by and by rehabilitated! We seem to hear the echoes of Old Testament discussion at every step, and are grateful for the encouragement the retrospect yields.

LUKE AS HISTORIAN.

Yet Harnack, while assailing the critical views on Luke, is very cautious about committing himself to the entire historicity of the Book of Acts. He retains his liberty to pick what holes he pleases in the narrative on its historical side. His own demonstration of the Lucan authorship, and of the soundness of the sources Luke employed, will make it increasingly difficult for him to do this. Here, however, Prof. Ramsay comes to the rescue, and on the question of fact is much the better judge. It was not the application of literary criticism which convinced Prof. Ramsay that he had here a

FIRST-CLASS HISTORICAL SOURCE.

His calling took him to Asia Minor on exploration work, and in the course of his researches he was so much impressed with the minute accuracy of the Book of Acts that it led him bit by bit to recast his whole opinion, and he has now become one of the ablest defenders of Luke's accuracy as a historian. In addition to his works on Paul, he has written a very able defence of the narrative of the Nativity in the Gospel of Luke.¹³

V.

It would unduly extend this paper to go into many details, but one illustration may perhaps be given of

THE EXTREME CAREFULNESS

of Luke's statements in Acts. I choose the example of his references to governors. It will be remembered that, in giving an account of Paul's visit to Cyprus, Luke introduces us to a Sergius Paulus, "proconsul" of that island (Acts xiii. 7). A proconsul was a yearly officer, representing the Roman Senate. But Cyprus, in the time of Augustus, had been an imperial province, governed by a different class of officials, "proprætors." How, then, comes Luke to give the governor the title "proconsul?" An ancient historian solves the difficulty by telling us that Augustus handed Cyprus over to the Roman Senate in exchange for another province, so that, in the words of the historian, "proconsuls began to be sent into

THAT ISLAND

also."¹⁴ The fact is further established by a coin representing a Cyprian proconsul of this very reign of Claudius.

A similar, yet more singular proof of Luke's accuracy occurs a chapter or two further on. Luke calls Gallio "proconsul of Achaia" (Acts xviii. 12). Now Achaia had been governed by "proconsuls," but Tiberius had made it an imperial province, governed by "proprætors"; and so it had remained till five or six years before the time of which Luke speaks, when the Emperor Claudius restored the province to the Senate. Then proconsuls began again; and Luke is perfectly exact.

But may not the explanation be that Luke had the loose habit of calling all governors "proconsuls," and so got right by chance? No; for when we come to Thessalonica we find Luke using another name altogether, the name "politarchs" (Acts xvii. 6,8). The title, singular to say, is found nowhere in literature but in this chapter. But here discovery comes in to supplement what history does not tell. An inscription is still legible on an arch of Thessalonica, which gives this very title to the magistrates of the place, informs us of their number, and mentions the names of some who bore the office not long before the days of Paul.

The last example I take relates to Paul's stay in Malta. Here, Luke says, were "lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius" (Acts xxviii. 7). The word, translated "chief man" is literally "protos." Now, as has been ascertained from inscriptions found in the island, "protos" was the (probably) official title of the governor of Malta, and Luke designates him accordingly.¹⁵

Such instances of minute accuracy are worth a bushel of literary arguments in proof that the author of the Acts was a man well versed in the contemporary history, and had personal knowledge of the facts he wrote about.

Thus much for Acts. I add one illustration, in conclusion, from

THE GOSPEL.

Perhaps the strongest case of inaccuracy objectors have ever been able to urge against the Gospels is the mention of Quirinius in Luke ii. 2: "This was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria" (R.V.). It is the same Luke who wrote the Acts who makes this statement, and the accuracy he shows on other occasions might warn us not to assume too hastily that he was in error here. Yet there did seem to be something like a mistake. It is quite true, as we know from Josephus, that Quirinius was governor of Syria, and that he conducted a census of Judæa, but this was ten years later (A.D. 6). It was, indeed, pointed out that Luke speaks of it as "a first enrolment," and this of itself suggested that he knew of a second; still the difficulty was not satisfactorily solved.

Meanwhile, in a German study, a learned author, Augustus W. Zumpt, was working away at a book on Roman antiquities, in the course of which he was led to investigate the subject of the Syrian presidencies. His treatment was purely antiquarian; yet Zumpt, working with his own materi-

als, made the interesting discovery, in which most now acquiesce, that Quirinius must have been twice governor of Syria, once in B.C. 4-1, and again in A.D. 6. This practically solved the difficulty, though it still put the first governorship a year too late, if Christ's birth is correctly dated in the end of B.C. 5; for the census may well have been begun by his predecessor, in the end of his term of office, and completed under Quirinius, with whose name it is connected. Indeed, Prof. Ramsay has now established the fact of such periodical enrolments, and census-papers from Egypt have actually been recovered.¹⁶

Footnotes

¹ *Church History of First Three Centuries*, II., p. 141.

² Baur says in a note in his *Church History* "Here, if anywhere, is a conflict of principles, which cannot be carried further. The two views simply confront each other as the critical view and the uncritical" (I., p. 53).

³ *Church History*, I., p. 52.

⁴ Difficulty has been raised as to the silence of the later history and the epistles on the "decree" of the Jerusalem Council (Acts xv. 23ff). A. Ritschl (in the work named below) has probably given the true explanation in showing that, in the conditions, the "decree" necessarily fell early into desuetude. The decision of the Council was of the nature of a compromise. It settled that circumcision was not to be enforced in the Gentiles; it was not settled whether *Jews* were at liberty to dispense with the customs of their nation. The difference on this point was one bound to emerge in mixed Churches—especially in *eating* (Gal. ii. 11-14). The question of principle, once raised, could only be settled in the interests of a liberty which made the "decree" obsolete.

⁵ In the opening of his book on *Paul*, Baur says: "it may be justly said of the present age that its prevailing tendency is critical...Thought has now, after the laborious toil of many centuries emancipated itself, and thrown away its crutches." This was in 1845.

⁶ As by the author of the book called *Supernatural Religion* (CW. R. Cassels).

⁷ In the volume entitled *Inaugural Lectures delivered by Members of the Faculty of Theology during its First Session, 1904-5*. Cf., pp. The other "feature" Mr. Peake discerns is "the break in England with the Lightfoot tradition," with respect, apparently, to the order of the Pauline Epistles, especially Galatians.

⁸ The tendency of advanced critics either to revert to a more conservative position or go off into extreme negation, receives continual illustration from the history of thought. As a recent instance, one reads that Dr. Lipsius, of Jena, has resigned his chair of theology, and accepted one in philosophy, on the ground that he has given up his belief in Christianity, and desires a position in which he will be free, if he chooses, to antagonise it.

⁹ In his book, *Lukas der Arzt der Verfasser des dritten Evangeliums und der Apostelgeschichte* (Luke the Physician, the Author of the Third Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles).

¹⁰ *Literaturzeitung*, July 18, 1906.

¹¹ The German is—"In den Jahren 30-70—und, zwar in Palästina, näher in Jerusalem—ist eigentlich Alles geworden und geschehen, was sich nachher entfaltet hat."

¹² Cf. his *History of Dogma*, I., p. 49

¹³ See page 45.

¹⁴ Dio Cassius, liii. i; liv. 9.

¹⁵ For details see Conybeare and Howson, or Ramsay's *Paul the Traveller*.

¹⁶ See his *Was Christ Born in Bethlehem:?* Prof. Ramsay has an ingenious hypothesis of his own about governorship and dates.