

contained sumptuous rooms, they were incapable of adaptation to modern comfort. Yet the tourist in England, if he has a historical turn, ought to know something about the castles, and to be able to trace the series from the grim keep of the Norman Conqueror to the castle palace such as Bodiam, where the transition to the manor-house is visible. We are surprised, by the way, to learn from Mr. Clark that under the Norman castles there are no dungeons or subterranean rooms of any kind. This seems to cast doubt on some of the terrible legends about Front de Bœuf.

### EARLY CHRISTIAN HISTORY.\*

If we cannot say that controversy is at an end respecting the "origins" of Christianity, at least we are getting pretty thoroughly acquainted with the conditions of the problem, and certain tangible results have been attained. Nay, more, the results of a thoroughly scientific handling of the books of the New Testament, and the other early documents of the Christian Church, are growing increasingly favourable to what used to be called the orthodox view.

It was something that the founder of the Tübingen School left us at least four epistles of S. Paul, "incontestable and uncontested," as Renan observes. It is something more that his successors have, in various ways, conceded more to the advocates of the traditional view of the Scriptures. Hilgenfeld, the present acknowledged head of the Tübingen School, and Baur's most notable living representative, concedes some other epistles as Pauline: so does Renan; and these and others of the same school have pushed back the dates of the four Gospels to a period considerably earlier than that arrived at by their master.

Even Strauss did not leave the world—hearing, as he said, a voice calling him to give an account of his stewardship, a strange experience for one who professed himself an atheist,—without doing something towards building up that which he had previously, with too large a measure of success, overthrown. It was Strauss who laid it down as a certain fact that the disciples of Jesus did certainly believe that their Master had risen from the dead, and that it was impossible to account for their conduct or their work apart from this belief.

A Christian teacher would not be badly equipped for his work who should start with this stock-in-trade: The sincere belief of men who had been in near and constant contact with Jesus that He had really risen from the dead; and, as material for doctrine, the Epistle to the Romans, that to the Galatians, and the two to the Corinthians. It would not be difficult to evolve from those documents what are commonly called the essentials of the Christian religion.

But we need not stop here. A reasonable faith has been making further conquests. Until lately, it was somewhat widely believed, and it is still believed by Renan and writers of his school that there was an insurmountable difficulty in the way of reconciling the authoritative teachings of the various members of the apostolic body. Peter and Paul represented conflicting "tendencies" in the Church, each taking the teaching of Christ, and giving it a colouring from his own prejudices, habits, circumstances, "tendencies."

Orthodoxy replied (sometimes not quite willingly) that the representations of the truth by the different writers differed with their different points of view, their different aims at the time of writing, and so forth; but sturdily maintained that there was no real discord, that a complete understanding of the truth which they declared would be the revelation of a perfect harmony between them. Orthodoxy, on this point, seems to be having the best of it, and greatly to its credit, in regard to that very important document, the continuation of S. Luke's Gospel, which is known as the "Acts of the Apostles."

According to Baur, to his disciple Zeller in his remarkable commentary, written before he abandoned theology and finally took to philosophy, to Overbeck in his edition of De Wette's commentary, and others, the "Acts" was a document of conciliation, written by one who was a friend of both parties, and was bent upon showing that there was really no disagreement between them. The absurdity of this theory is becoming more and more conspicuous, as the authorship and date of the volume have been more clearly seen, and more undoubtingly admitted. No sane critic now doubts that the Acts is a continuation of the third Gospel, written by the same hand, that the writer was a companion of S. Paul, and that he was S. Luke. Few doubt that we possess the work substantially as it came from the writer, although various theories are held as to the sources of those parts of his narrative concerning the contents of which he had not personal knowledge. Still we have his own account of the matter in regard to the earlier writing, and there is no reason to doubt that, in composing the later book, he equally drew his information from those "which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word;" and that in this, as in the other part, we have a faithful "narrative concerning those matters which" were "fulfilled among" them. As to the latter part of the Acts, there is now hardly any difference of opinion; it is the simple, unvarnished narrative of one who was, for the most part, a witness of the occurrences which he relates.

The Acts of the Apostles is a book as free from any consideration of "tendencies" of any kind as can well be imagined. And its simplicity is illustrated, not only in the incidents related, in the discourses recorded—

harmonising, as they do, so perfectly with the characters and positions of the men by whom they are delivered—but, if possible, even more so by the manner in which the leading men in the apostolic Church are represented in the history.

For example, the representation of S. Peter's conduct is so far from being coloured to make it fit in with the statements in one of the acknowledged epistles of S. Paul that it actually presents some special difficulties in view of the account given by S. Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians; and yet a full consideration of the whole subject satisfies us that there is not the least contradiction between the two representations. It was with difficulty that S. Peter came to the conclusion that a Gentile, as such, could be received into the covenant body just as a Jew was; and when he afterwards acted in a manner inconsistent with this conclusion, it was certainly not because he had not made up his mind in the matter of Cornelius, nor because he had changed his mind, but simply from moral cowardice.

With regard to the same apostle, the view of his position in the early Church, which is presented in the Acts, is wonderfully in accord with that which is given in the Gospels and in the Epistles. It is ridiculous Protestant prejudice which attempts to deny the place of eminence occupied by S. Peter among the apostles; but it is not less ludicrous—and indeed it excites other emotions of a more serious kind—to note the desperate efforts made to show that Peter had some kind of authority in teaching and government over the other apostles. There is not a trace of anything of the kind: indeed there is satisfactory proof of the contrary. We say nothing now of the added difficulty of the Roman controversialist, to show how S. Peter's authority was handed on to the Bishop of Rome—a theory of which there is, if possible, less proof than of the supremacy of Peter among the apostles.

To take, again, the case of James, the Lord's brother, commonly known as Bishop of Jerusalem, apparently not one of the twelve, nothing can be simpler, nothing more credible, than the representation given of his position and work. Here we quite agree with Lechler that S. James was a person of the greatest influence at Jerusalem, although not exactly what we should now call diocesan bishop. Indeed it must be noted, whether we accept or reject the apostolic origin of the episcopate, that it did not come into existence as a distinct institution until long after the period of the Acts. We have heard of some Anglican clergymen (we really do not think, in this case, Dean Burgon could have been one of them) who were very angry because the word bishop had in some cases been translated "overseer" in the Revised Version. If these excellent and zealous persons had known the real force of the argument for episcopacy, they would have been well pleased that the word bishop should have disappeared entirely from the pages of the New Testament. Even at the period of the pastoral epistles, it had not taken its distinct form and consistency.

We have before us some books of very great value in relation to the subject we are now treating. Lechler's work is altogether excellent. The author is probably known to many of our readers, as having written by far the best extant "Life of Wiclif"—a truly learned, careful, and exhaustive production, and the work which he has now, after a long interval, republished in an improved edition, is the fruit of many years' conscientious and devoted study. Professed theologians will, for the theology of the New Testament, still have recourse to the admirable works of Weiss and Reuss—not forgetting Neander—but we could not name a book which dealt so well and so thoroughly, within comparatively contracted limits, with the history and teaching of the apostolic and post-apostolic age, as this work of Lechler's. His remarks on the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," and on Ignatius, with which his second volume concludes, seem to us excellent and judicious.

Thus he brings us to the great work which has been accomplished by Bishop Lightfoot—his new edition of the writings attributed to Ignatius of Antioch. If anything could now be said to be settled, the Ignatian controversy might be so described. Long ago, the larger Greek recension of the works of Ignatius was given up as spurious. Since the time of Bishop Pearson, however, the majority of critics have accepted the shorter Greek form. This conclusion was, in the minds of many, shaken for a time by the discovery of a still shorter form in Syriac, published by Mr. Cureton. In the judgment of most scholars, English and German, Bishop Lightfoot has settled the question in favour of the shorter Greek form of the epistles.

Dr. Killen, the title of whose little book we have placed at the bottom of the page, has boldly questioned this conclusion, and has declared these epistles "entirely spurious." Pearson and Zahn and Lightfoot have written in vain. Both the Greek forms must be condemned. Nay, even Cureton must retire, for the Syriac form must follow the Greek. This is a hard saying. Dr. Killen, with wonderful gravity, declares that Dr. Lightfoot comes to the inquiry with a prejudice. Now, we do not say merely that the bishop is universally acknowledged as not simply one of the finest scholars in Europe, as well as one of the most learned—facts about which there can be no question—nor even that he is known as a most simple-minded and ingenuous student. This is not all. Dr. Lightfoot undertook this investigation with a prejudice the other way. Stiff Episcopalians were much exercised by his well-known note in his commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians. He actually at one time rejected the shorter Greek form of the Ignatian epistles, believing in the Syriac version as the only genuine. This is a strange kind of prejudice.

Dr. Killen, it need hardly be said, does and must approach the subject with the very disqualification which he attributes to Dr. Lightfoot. On this point, however, we need say no more. It will be sufficient to say that, heavy and laborious and costly as this new edition of Ignatius is, no one will now think of seriously examining his works without taking Dr. Lightfoot as at least a provisional guide.

\* Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times, by Prof. G. V. Lechler, two volumes (T. and T. Clark, 1886). Apostolic Fathers: S. Ignatius, by Bishop Lightfoot, three volumes (Macmillan and Co., 1885). The Ignatian Epistles Entirely Spurious, by Prof. W. D. Killen (T. and T. Clark, 1886).