

True, the criticism of the Biblical writings, and the handling of the Gospel narrative, is as destructive as even the author of "Supernatural Religion" could desire, yet a vein of loving sympathy is felt all through, and the moment an ethical or spiritual truth is touched, there is helpfulness at once charming and healthful.

The canons of interpretation used by Dr. Martineau in his treatment of the synoptic gospels may indicate at once the strength and the weakness of his negative position. They are three:

1. Whenever, during or before the ministry of Jesus, any person in the narrative is made to speak in language, or to refer to events, which had their origin at a later date, the report is incredible as an anachronism.
2. Miraculous events cannot be regarded as adequately attested, in presence of natural causes accounting for belief in their occurrence.
3. Acts and words ascribed to Jesus which plainly transcend the moral level of the narrators, authenticate themselves as His, while such as are out of character with His Spirit, but congruous with theirs, must be referred to inaccurate tradition.

We readily make canons to suit ourselves. Looking at the first, the question at once arises: How are we to decide upon the date at which events had their origin, unless from the very history itself? *E.g.*, Dr. Martineau taking the Gospel of Mark as the best representative of the earlier tradition, refers to chapter i. 14, 15, and suggests that "Jesus did but take up the message of the Baptist and proclaim and unfold the 'Gospel of the kingdom' about to come; that He made no pretension to be Himself the personal head of that kingdom; and that His investiture with that character was the retrospect work of His disciples, who, once assured of His heavenly life, solved the mystery of the cross by drawing from the prophets the doctrine of a suffering Messiah." But surely this is the old and most complete *petitio principii*. If the passage thus commented on is to be accepted as substantially historical, can there be any reasonable ground for rejecting as an anachronism chapter viii. 27-32? And by what fair rules of exegesis can the prohibi-