

piled; but this substantial harmony as to the salient facts and maxims of the Gospel is certainly, as noteworthy as it is marked and indisputable. That no particular narrative was held in special reverence, or deemed of paramount authority throughout the churches, when each church or Christian community appealed to the one it happened to possess, was a matter of course, and would sufficiently account for the reference made not so much to books, as directly to sayings or acts of Christ. There is no analogy, it may be remarked, between the case of quotations from the Old Testament and references to the Gospel History. The former had long since been crystallized into permanent form. Wherever there were two or three Jews collected there was a copy of the Law, the Hagiographa and the Prophets, every letter of which was guarded with jealous and almost superstitious care. The stress which the author lays upon this point seems forced, not to say misplaced.

And now let us descend to one or two comparisons instituted in the work before us, selecting the earliest example cited. It is unnecessary to enter into the dispute about the date of Clement of Rome. It may not be amiss, however, to note that our author, as usual, strives to post-date even Clement's First Epistle to Corinthians. Whether the writer were the person of the same name mentioned in one of the canonical Epistles (Philippians iv. 3) or not, there seems to be no reasonable doubt that he was a contemporary of the Apostle Paul; at all events, the two epistles must have been written somewhere between A. D. 75 and A. D. 100. The very fact that they were originally included in the Canon, if it proves nothing else, attests their ancient origin. As it is admitted that Clement's works have suffered from interpolation, the allusion to 'the blessed Judith' after the 'blessed Paul,' although urged by Hitzig and Volkmar, of the Rationalistic school, proves nothing. Now in chap. xiii. of the First Epistle, although, as our author remarks, Clement nowhere refers to our Gospels by name, the substance is there. In *Supernatural Religion*, the passages are presented in parallel columns with the corresponding texts from Matthew and Luke. As the reader may be supposed to be acquainted with the latter, we may briefly cite the words of Clement: 'Especially remembering the words of

the Lord Jesus which he spake teaching gentleness and long-suffering: Be pitiful (or merciful) that ye may be pitied; forgive, that it may be forgiven to you; as ye do, so shall it be done to you; as ye give, so shall it be given to you; as ye judge, so shall it be judged to you; as ye show kindness, shall kindness be shown to you; with what measure ye mete, with the same shall it be measured to you.' Now it is quite true the form of the exhortations differs from that of Matthew or Luke; but there is no discordance in meaning whatever. Clement had probably never seen one of our Gospels, and had learned what he knew of the Sermon of the Mount from other sources. If our author, or the acute German critics, upon whose labours he draws so extensively, could have discovered any material discrepancy, whether dogmatical or historical, something certainly could be made of it. But from Clement down to Eusebius there are substantially the same history, the same moral and doctrinal teaching, the same story of miracle, culminating in the resurrection and ascension of our Lord. As against the theory of verbal inspiration of precisely four Gospels amongst so many, the argument may be conclusive; but as against the universal concord of all the writers, whether they were eye-witnesses, or received the facts at second-hand, it does appear to us that this method of mere textual criticism is futile. The crucial question is, can any material difference of opinion be proved, or even gathered by inference, between those who described the career of Jesus and his teaching during the first three centuries, whether they wrote in Syria, Asia Minor, Africa or Italy? If not, it is surely fair to conclude that the Gospel history is, as it now stands in the New Testament, substantially the same which was 'most surely believed' among Christians in the primitive age of the Saviour, His Apostles, and their early disciples. An objector may certainly be at liberty to protest against hearing any testimony in favour of a supernatural history if he pleases, and there the matter must rest; but to impugn the evident fact that the testimony was given with singular unanimity on all essential points, without urging any proof of material variance, is surely an untenable position. After a careful perusal of *Supernatural Religion*, both in an