

called the dualistic point of view. Without doubt dualism as a personal condition was practically possible, and was met with among eminent men. But with regard to philosophical criticism it had not so much weight, because a belief which had no connection with science would always run the risk of being charged with arbitrariness by those who did not share it. He proposed to examine if the thesis which was the point of departure from this dualism had any foundation, if it was true that, according to modern philosophy and science, nature, in the empirical and phenomenal sense of the word, was self-sufficing and sufficed for us. The lectures of the present year, he explained, would be devoted to the criticism of naturalism in philosophy and in science. Those of next year would have as their subject the life of the spirit itself, in the moral, philosophical, and religious sense.

Scholastic Philosophy.

Dealing with "Scholastic Philosophy," Professor Boutroux said that the distinctive characteristic of the philosophy of the Middle Ages, which had its culminating point in the philosophy of the scholastics, was the attempt to establish by the reason a collection of metaphysical doctrines fitted to weld together in the highest degree the Greek philosophy of Nature and Christian theology. While the philosophy of Greece was part of the idea of a Nature wholly informed by the divine spirit, and had given way the separation of these two things, the scholastic philosophy, for which the divine was in its essence an infinite personality and an infinite perfection, distinguished radically, in the first instance, between God and Nature, and only accorded to the latter the indispensable attributes of an accidental existence. Thereafter nothing stood in the way of the conception of a perfect and divine spirituality co-existing with an imperfect Nature. Transcending things, God was untouched by their imperfection. The very imperfection of Nature furnished the reason, with a ground for those arguments by which it established the philosophic verities—implicit in the supernatural Verity, and thus the conditions of a natural philosophy and those of a religious were reconciled with each other. This philosophy, however, in its turn disappeared, stifled between a mysticism which found incompatible with a divine imminence the theory of rising by the reason from this world to God and a materialistic naturalism which set out to explain, without any recourse to the supernatural, a world in which the tendency was to regard as an inert thing lacking a true causality.

Modern Rationalism

The fourth lecture dealt with "Modern Rationalism." Professor Boutroux said that modern philosophy represented in the first place a reaction against the philosophy of scholastics, which it charged with having rendered sterile the natural sciences by its appeal to transcendental causes. The main problem became the conditions of science, and the desire was to obtain a science which was certain of the reality given. It was shown by Descartes that the origin of such a science could only be found in ideas which were at the same time innate in the reason and valid in regard to things, and thus rationalism, which seemed to him to give assurance of the intelligibility of nature, while it also guaranteed the reality of the spiritual world, became the governing principle of philosophy. The material and the spiritual were united by idea of the infinite. Upon this basis were founded the philosophies of Descartes and of Spinoza, of Malebranche and of Leibnitz. From the

beginning, however this philosophy presented a difficulty. How was the passage from thought to being accomplished? How could it be shown that the ideas of the reason were valid for the objects of experience? As a matter of fact, it became evident, with the progress of the sciences, that the reason could not by itself prescribe the constitutive laws of nature. Kant, however, showed that if all our knowledge was derived from experience, experience, on the other hand, could not be self-sufficing from the point of view of philosophical analysis, and that its form and authority could only come to it by the co-operation of the reason. Experience engendered all our knowledge of things, but it presupposed reason. This result of the Kantian critique had never been seriously shaken by later criticism. It remained firm to day.

The Most Acute Question in New Testament Criticism.

A. T. ROBERTSON, D. D., IN BIBLE STUDENT.

The trend of criticism is not in one direction for a great length of time. Action and reaction have full force in this realm as in all others. The pendulum swings back and forth all the way from the sober scholarship of Sanday and Zahn to the widest vagaries of Schmiedel and Van Manen. There are real principles of historical criticism. The trouble is not with the principles, but in the application of them. When a Van Manen can by critical processes to his own satisfaction dispose of Paul, and Schmiedel can likewise reduce the genuine words of Jesus to a handful that answer to his tests, criticism becomes an absurdity. But this very extreme is of service. It marks out the road all the way to the end.

In spite of all this, in spite of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, New Testament criticism makes progress toward the apprehension of the historical origins of Christianity. The chaff is blown away and somewhat remains. It means much when, in contrast to the extreme position of Baur, Harnack admits the first century origin of nearly all of the New Testament books. It is a great point gained to see the battle won for the Pauline epistles, with the exception of the Pastoral Letters and fragments of them grudgingly acknowledged as genuine. It will be hard for the subtlest critic hereafter to confuse the world about Paul's Epistles. It means much to see Mark's Gospel put so commonly before the destruction of Jerusalem, and possibly also Matthew and Luke. But the Synoptic Gospels now holds the field with reasonable critics. They are put usually not far from the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. There are mazes yet in Synoptic criticism, but a general working basis is clear, the use of documents and the oral tradition as Zahn says in his Introduction.

The day was when Lightfoot, Abbott and others seemed to have settled the Johannine Question. The discovery of Tatian's Diatessaron and the recognition of the shorter Greek Ignatian Letters put the Gospel of John back to the time around A. D. 100 as being near the approximate time, what then? Gnosticism is now appealed to as the explanation of this most spiritual and lofty Gospel. See Prof. B. W. Bacon's article in the April "Hibbert Journal." True, the Gospel fights Gnosticism but that could be an interpolation, or maybe there is a Johannine base that Gnosticism has reworked.

The present temper of the anti-supernatural criticism is to compromise on the

Gospel of John—to say it belongs to the school of John, was the work of a disciple of John, but it is not the work of John himself. This position is a necessity in the light of the recession from the latter part of the second century to the end of the first, unless one admits the genuineness of the Gospel. The usual opinion has been that the Gospel of John was written by John at the close of the first century. External evidence has brought us right up to this period. But to surrender would be to give up the whole theology of the anti-supernatural position. The Gospel of John teaches beyond controversy the deity of Jesus. This fact is the crux of the Johannine problem. It is the Person of Christ. This is said with no purpose to impugn anybody's motives. Far from it. But none the less it is easier to suggest new hypotheses about the origin of John's Gospel than to change one's theological conceptions.

There are real difficulties connected with the Gospel of John, special difficulties that do not lie against the Synoptic Gospels. But these difficulties are not insuperable save to one with pre-judged theological conceptions. From a strictly logical point of view, the balance of probability is quite decidedly in favor of the Johannine authorship. The external evidence is conclusive. As matters now stand a stronger case can be made for the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel than can be made for the genuineness of the Synoptic Gospels.

But the Gospel of John is on the firing line of criticism to-day, not so much because of the critical difficulties involved as because of the view of the Person of Christ herein presented. There is no doubt of the outcome. The Ritschlian theology can not do what Baur failed to do. The Gospel of John will stand the test to the end of the chapter.

The Proposed Dominion Lord's Day Act

EDITOR DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN: Kindly allow me space to announce to our numerous friends among your readers that all Petitions, addressed to "The Governor-General-in-Council and the Parliament of Canada," signed by Pastors and Clerks of Churches, Presidents and Secretaries of Labor Organizations, Fraternal Societies, and other bodies co-operating with us in securing a Lord's Day Act for all Canada, reaching me at 133 Confederation Life Building, Toronto, any time up to and including the 8th of March, will be in time to be publicly presented.

In the Circular of directions sent out, request was made for these Petitions to be returned by Feb. 23rd, and an immense number of them were on hand by that date. The prompt action taken by our friends has already served the special purpose for which it was desired, but the general end sought will be as well served by all Petitions reaching us before March 9th.

There is no change in plan regarding the other Petitions to be signed by individuals.

Thanking our host of friends for their enthusiastic co-operation, and you, Sir, for the opportunity of making this announcement, I am, very truly yours,

J. G. SHEARER, Gen. Sec. L.D.A.

Toronto, Feb. 27th, 1904.

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