

Christianity, as given in the so-called Gospels, were familiar to the Christian world within twenty-five years after his death. (Thayer, Professor J. Henry, of Andover, Boston Lectures, 1871, p. 372.) There is now, in the hands of scholars, incontrovertible evidence that even the Gospels had acquired authority with the earliest churches as early as A.D. 125. Schenkel, Renan, Keim, Weizsäcker, and others, widely removed from the traditional views, teach that the fourth gospel itself could not have appeared later than a few years after the beginning of the second century. (See Fisher, Professor George P., *Essays on Supernatural Origin of Christianity*, 1870; preface, p. xxxviii.)

"These discoveries explain the new attitude of German scholarship. They carry back the indubitable traces of the New Testament literature more than fifty years. They shut the colossal shears of chronology upon the theories of Baur, Strauss and Renan. They narrow by so much the previously too narrow room used by these theories to explain the growth of myths and legends. Strauss demands a century after the death of Paul for his imaginative additions to Christianity to grow up in. It is now established that not only not a century, but not a quarter of a century, can be had for this purpose. The upper date of A.D. 34, and the lower date of A.D. 60, as established by exact research, are the two merciless blades of the shears between which the latest and the most deftly-woven web of doubt is cut in two. [Applause.] There is no room for that course of mythical development which the Tübingen school describes. As a sect in Biblical criticism, this school has perished. Its history has been written in more than one tongue. (Thayer, Professor J. Henry, *Criticism Confirmatory of the Gospels*, Boston Lectures, 1871, pp. 363, 371, 374.)

"Chevalier Bunsen once wrote to Thomas Arnold this incisive exclamation:— 'the idea of men writing mythical histories between the time of Livy and Tacitus, and St. Paul mistaking such for realities!' (Arnold's *Life*, Letter exliv.) Paul had opportunity to know the truth, and was besides one of the boldest and acutest spirits of his own or any age. Was Paul a dupe?

"But who does not know the history of the defeat of skeptical school after skeptical school on the rationalistic side of the field of exegetical research? The naturalistic theory was swallowed by the mythical theory, and the tendency by legendary theory, and each of the four by time. Strauss laughs at Paulus, Baur at Strauss, Renan at Baur, the hour-glass at all. 'Under his guidance,' says Strauss of Paulus, 'we tumble into the mire; and assuredly dross, not gold, is the issue to which his method of interpretation generally leads.' 'Up to the present day,' says Baur of Strauss, 'the mythical theory has been rejected by every man of education.' And yet New York lips teach it here in modern Athens!

Appropriately there was carried on Richter's coffin to his grave a manuscript of his last work—a discussion in proof of the immortality of the soul; appropriately might there have been carried on Strauss's coffin to his grave his last work, restating the mythical theory; if only that theory had not, as every scholar knows, died and been buried before its author.

"The supreme question concerning the origin of the New Testament literature is now whether in less than thirty years intervening between the death of the Author of Christianity, and A.D. 60, in which Paul's Epistles are known to have become authorities, there is room enough in the age of Livy and Tacitus for the growth and unwreathing of mythical fictions around an idolized memory lying in the dim haze of the past. An unscholarly and discredited theory was presented to you yesterday, gracefully but not forcefully.

"Let us see what a vigorous and unpartisan mind says on the same topic;— 'I know men,' said Napoleon at St. Helena—the record is authentic; read it in Liddon's *Bampton Lectures on the Divinity of our Lord*, the best recent book on that theme— 'I know men, and I tell you Jesus of Nazareth was not a man.' Daniel Webster, on his dying bed, wrote on the marble of his tombstone: 'The Sermon on the Mount cannot be a merely human production.' Renan was par-