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ARTICLE IX.

# CRITICAL NOTES.

## NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM: AN ILLUSTRATION.

In *The Expositor* for March, 1915, Professor H. T. Andrews writes as follows:—

"We have discovered at last that the New Testament cannot be kept sacrosanct from criticism. For years the Church has comforted itself with the thought: 'Let criticism do its worst with the Old Testament — the New Testament at any rate is safe. Nothing can impugn its veracity or invalidate its authority.' That illusion is now completely dissipated. It has been a rude shock to those who felt that criticism would never violate the sanctity of the New Testament any more than Germany would precipitate a European war, to find a race of scholars suddenly spring up and assail the inner fortress of the Christian faith — the reality of the person of Jesus" (p. 13).

There was really no need for him or any one else to experience such a "rude shock"; because for a number of years past it has been patent to very many that criticism could not possibly be limited to the Old Testament, and that the idea that men could do what they liked with the Old Testament so long as they did not touch the New was absurdly impossible. It is well, however, that critical scholars like Professor Andrews should even now realize what conservative scholars have known for so long; and it is a great satisfaction that the "illusion," so characteristic of criticism, is "now completely dissipated."

But it is not the only danger that the reality of the personality of our Lord is called in question; for those who do not go so far as this, nevertheless deal with the New Testament with such remarkable freedom that they go far to make people wonder whether there is any authority left in the books connected with the new covenant.

One illustration of this tendency will be found in a recent

book, "The Beginnings of the Church,"[1] by Dr. Ernest F. Scott, Professor of New Testament Criticism in Queen's Theological College, Kingston, Canada. His object is "to investigate the aims and beliefs of the Christian community in the time preceding the advent of Paul" (Preface, p. vii); and he bases his position on the hypothesis that "Jesus imparted his message in the terms of Jewish apocalyptic" (Preface, p. viii). Now although his results are admittedly tentative, and many conclusions are still open, yet statements are made in the most unqualified way, which set readers wondering whether, after all, the hypothesis itself can be right. Thus, on the very first page, we are told that "within a generation the church had apparently lost the record of its earlier history and could only replace it by a few doubtful traditions." And there is so much darkness that

> "the Epistles of James and Peter can no longer be accepted as first-hand documents; the Johannine literature, whatever be its authorship, is certainly the product of a later time; and apart from these writings we have nothing that even pretends to represent the mind of the first Apostles" (pp. 5 f.).

For the purpose of showing what the New Testament means to Professor Scott we cannot do better than quote his very words on some of the more outstanding points. Thus he makes the following among other statements on the Gospels:—

> "....The Gospel narratives, in their present form, leave us with the impression that although the disciples fled they still remained in the city and there received the evidence that the Lord had arisen. But the evangelists wrote under various influences, which may easily have led them, at this point, to disguise or modify the facts" (p. 9).
>
> "....If we can attach any value to the solemnly repeated statements of the Gospels, the disciples were already prepared for the closing events at Jerusalem" (p. 11).
>
> "....'Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' These words, although they can hardly have been spoken by Jesus himself, afford us a vivid glimpse into the minds of his earliest followers" (p. 14).

[1] New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1914.

"....The authenticity of these predictions has often been called in question; and it may be admitted that they have not been reported literally. They follow one another according to an artificial scheme and bear evident traces of later theological reflection" (p. 17).

"....In two passages of Matthew's Gospel (Matt. xvi. 18; xviii. 17), Jesus himself alludes to the 'church.' We shall have occasion to consider these passages later and to question their authenticity — indeed, it is highly improbable on every ground that the name was ever used by Jesus" (p. 31).

"....A number of sayings in the Gospels undoubtedly seem to indicate that the church was directly contemplated by Jesus, and that he laid down rules for its guidance and administration. But it is more than probable that such sayings, as we now have them, have been adapted and modified" (p. 50).

The early chapters of the Acts come in for a great deal of severe treatment. Although they are primitive, they are said to have been composed, in great part, of legend; they are "idealised pictures" (p. 6). And there are passages "which bear the clearest traces of later manipulation" (p. 7). These are a few of the statements:—

"....It may be doubted, however, whether Luke has rightly appreciated the motive of this election. Its purpose, according to the speech attributed to Peter, was to provide another official missionary" (p. 22).

"In his account of this incident, and throughout the earliest chapters of his book, Luke has construed the facts according to a given theory, and by so doing has altered the historical perspective in such a manner as to mislead all subsequent investigation" (p. 23).

"....the meagreness and confusion of the narrative" (p. 25).

"....But there can be little doubt that the narrative, as we find it in the Acts, is mainly legendary. For one thing, it is incredible that so marvellous an extension of the church (three thousand converts in one day) should have taken place at that early time" (p. 59).

"....It is the manifest purpose of the writer of Acts to make out that Christianity had always suffered persecution at the hands of the Jews, but he has to admit that during the first critical years it was left at liberty" (p. 116).

"....Nor can we accept Luke's explanation, embodied in the speech ascribed to Gamaliel" (p. 117).

"How far the incident is historical we cannot now discover, and for our present purpose the question is of minor importance" (p. 141).

"....The facts, however, as given by Luke are meagre at the best and cannot be accepted without careful sifting ....

"....he thus adapts the facts to a given theory" (pp. 144 f.).

"What, then, was the position occupied by the twelve in this self-governing community? It is evident that they were invested with no formal authority, as Luke would appear to suggest" (pp. 146 f.).

"The episode of Stephen is the more instructive as it is recorded for us in sources which we can employ with some degree of confidence .... not only unduly long but irrelevant" (p. 225).

"....There appears, indeed, to be good ground for the conjecture that the speech ought properly to have been connected with Stephen's disputing in the synagogue as described in the previous chapter. Luke either failed to apprehend its true setting or purposely transposed it to its present place in order to invest the abstract discussion with a more human interest" (p. 226).

"....The argument, irrelevant to its circumstances, is itself obscure" (p. 226).

"In view of these various indications we may be reasonably confident that in the speech of Stephen we have an early document incorporated, not altogether skilfully, in the book of Acts" (p. 227).

"The procedure against Stephen is described in a confused and contradictory manner, owing to the attempt to blend together two different accounts" (p. 232).

"We pass, then, to the consideration of the speech itself, which cannot, as we have seen, have been delivered at the trial in answer to the given charge. ... We may even doubt whether it is a transcript of any definite speech. ...

"....It is difficult to believe that the original document stopped short at this point, and the probability is that Luke himself abridged it in order to enhance the effect of the scene that follows" (p. 236).

"....the attempt to explain the speech in its bearing on the charges only serves to make evident its hopeless irrelevance. ... When we neglect the artificial setting of the speech and take it by itself as a Christian manifesto, the point of its teaching is still far from clear" (p. 238).

Dr. Scott's view of Christology illustrates the same rationalizing tendency:—

"....it does not appear that the immediate interest of the primitive church was in the person of Jesus. The attempt to discover the source of our religion in the loyalty of the disciples and their anxiety to vindicate the claims of their beloved Master has in two ways proved seriously misleading" (p. 85).

"....It may be true that in the early Christology, especially that of Paul, the Jewish speculations on the Messiah are simply transferred to the exalted Jesus; but the abstract Jewish Messiah could never have become the object of a religion" (pp. 91 f.).

"Such, in broad outline, were those conceptions which Jesus took over from the thought of his time and which formed the background of his purely religious teaching. For us they have become largely unintelligible" (p. 258).

"There is no ground, then, for the hypothesis, often assumed as self-evident, that after the death of Jesus his message was practically forgotten and he himself became the one interest of faith. It may be gathered, rather, that personal devotion to Jesus was a later development" (p. 267).

Naturally Dr. Scott has a good deal to say about the Sacraments:—

"It may be accepted as certain that the rite of baptism was not instituted by Jesus" (p. 164).

"It is apparent, from the evidence of the New Testament itself, that the doctrine of the Supper underwent profound changes in the course of the first century. The fourth evangelist conceives of the ordinance in a different manner from Paul, and the interpretation of Paul can hardly have corresponded, in all points, with that of the primitive community" (p. 194).

"....the Synoptic writers may likewise have been influenced by a theological motive. Luke, more particularly, does not conceal his anxiety that the Supper should be regarded as the meal in which the Passover found its true fulfilment" (p. 205).

"....Paul's reference to the 'one loaf' as typical of the unity of all Christians is dependent on his peculiar doctrine that the church is the body of Christ. By a turn of fanciful imagery he finds this doctrine implied in the ritual of the Supper, but he does not intend his words to be taken literally" (p. 210).

"It cannot be denied, however, that this part of the Supper tradition is beset with grave difficulties, so much so that we can hardly accept it without some misgiving" (p. 216).

After all this, we are not surprised to be told that, assuming the correctness of the results of the inquiry, "the ordinary estimate of the beginnings of Christianity stands in need of considerable revision" (p. 271). The more important points in which a modification is necessary are thereupon given.

It will be seen, from what has been said, that Dr. Scott's view of the New Testament documents is decidedly novel, not to say startling; and his book prompts three questions which seem to call for special attention: (1) What value can we attach to the documents known as the New Testament? (2) What, on this interpretation, are we to understand as the real dynamic of Christianity? What are we to think of a Theological College which presumably gives its students teaching of this kind?

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## AN ANCIENT LATIN SERMON FOR CHRISTMAS DAY.

[IN the *Journal of Theological Studies* for January, 1915, Mr. C. H. Turner and Dom Antonio Spagnolo publish the first installment of a Latin Homiliary, or Sermon Book, of the sixth century, which is preserved in the Cathedral Library at Verona. This first installment gives us seven sermons, viz., for Christmas Day, for Epiphany, for Easter, for Ascension Day (three sermons), and for Whitsunday. The MS. has a great interest textually, as it exhibits many Old-Latin readings; but it has also a high exegetical value, and represents the work of an anonymous Christian thinker of much power, who taught in the fourth century; for the citations in the first sermon from the Nicene Creed seem to forbid us to ascribe to the sermon a date earlier than 325 A.D.

With the belief that a specimen of this ancient Christian preaching would be of interest to those students of the Bible who are not familiar with Latin sermons (of which Augustine is the great master), I have translated the first sermon into English. The sermon is highly intellectual and controversial, and reflects the ferment of an age when the supreme quest was for a satisfying mental solution of the problem of the Person of the Son of God.

**The transcribers of the MS. are in no way responsible for the Translation. The MS. was often seen by me in Verona, when I was transcribing the Codex Veronensis of the Gospels, and it is a great personal satisfaction, as well as a great gain for students of the Sacred Text, that these Sermons should now be so carefully and exactly edited.—E. S. BUCHANAN.]**

[. . . . Sarah brought forth Isaac, the Virgin Mary brought forth the Christ;] the former, in her old age; the latter, in the old age of the world. Isaac is a type of the Lord Christ; Isaac is by interpretation "joy," and our Lord Christ hath been proclaimed to be "great joy." For thus the Angel spake, *I proclaim to you great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born to-day the Saviour of the world, which is Christ the Lord.* To-day, therefore, the Lord is born in Bethlehem of Judæa, according to the saying of the Prophet, *And thou, Bethlehem, art not the least among the thousands of Judah, for out of thee shall come a King to rule my people Israel.* Bethlehem is by interpretation "city of bread," for there *the heavenly bread descended, which giveth life to the world.*

*And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.* God, being made man, is *Emmanuel, which is, by interpretation, God with us.* Oh, wondrous fact! For us, the Lord of all sucked the paps of a chaste Virgin, and from the sacred breast of a mother, drew sweet streams as from a milky fountain, in order that He might give us to drink of the fountain of His righteousness, and of the rivers of His heavenly teaching. He is fed by His handmaiden, who herself was being fed by His bounty. He is laid in a manger, He is wrapped in swaddling clothes; and that manger was a type of His burial, and the swaddling clothes were our sins. For *for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich.* The Lord, then, is born, and enters the world as a little child, and in humility, that He may be medicine to a sick people, and restore to captive man a better liberty than that which he once lost. *Great is the Mystery which was kept secret from ages and from generations, but*

***hath now been manifested in flesh,*** that He, by Whom all things were made, should Himself redeem all men.

He is born, therefore, of a virgin, born man for man's sake; and the Son of God becomes the Son of man, that He might make the son of men *to become the sons of God.* The Virgin Mother carries in her hands the little Child by Whose power the whole world was being supported: and she, who knew no marriage, neither had known intercourse with man. yet knew how to bring forth: and now embraces and kisses and worships Him Who is the mighty Lord. She had heard it from the Angel and had learned it from the birth itself, that such a birth as we have spoken of none could provide for himself, save the Only-Begotten in heaven, the Only-Begotten on earth. He is "God from God," He is born from a virgin; He is God without mother, He is man without father; for He has God for Father, a virgin for mother, being "born of the Father before all worlds," of a mother in the world.

The Magi come, who are a type of the various nations. *They offer gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.* These Magi, then, as we have said, are a type of the nations. They offer gold, that is faith, *precious, resplendent and chosen;* frankincense, that is the incense of prayers *of a sweet savor, acceptable to the Lord;* myrrh, that is a sign of the Lord's future burial, which also indicates that they themselves, for love of their Lord, will meet their death.

All things, therefore, were done under a veil, because even the Word of God Himself was the Veiled One, hidden from the ages, Who came in the flesh. *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,* as *Emmanuel,* as hath been said, *which is, by interpretation, God with us.* Therefore the Word of God came in the flesh. What then doth Christ say to thee, O church? What doth He say? Do not know Me only according to the flesh, inasmuch as for thy sake I took the form of a servant. Understand that I am the Lord of Angels. I was born of Mary, He saith to thee, but I Myself created Mary, My mother; for if by Me all things were made, He

saith to thee, even My mother was made by Me. For she is the mother of My flesh, yet the creation of My Godhead.

Listen, my brethren. He that made Angels, the Same made also men. He that made heaven, the Same made also earth. He that made sun and moon and stars, the Same made all living creatures, and all flesh on the earth — things great and small, things above and things below. The Same is He Who *bowed the heavens and came down*, in order that His descending might be our ascending. He came down, according to the word of the Prophet, *like rain upon a fleece*. Behold the mystery: *as rain*, he saith, *upon a fleece*, so the Lord descended in the flesh. Rain that comes upon a fleece comes silently — not proclaiming by force its power. Thus the Lord, coming in the body in silence and humility, took to Himself human flesh from the Holy Virgin, and like a bridegroom came out of His chamber; for thus it is written, *Like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber*. From what chamber was it then? From the womb of the Virgin. The Virgin's womb is Christ's chamber, where are joined Bridegroom and bride, where are joined Word and flesh; the Word being the Bridegroom and the flesh the bride. He came out of His chamber that He might gather together the other members of His bride, and rejoice over a united church.

What then, my brethren? Before the Lord Jesus in the chamber, that is, in the Virgin's womb, was united to the bride, was He not *the Word with God?* and was He not *God the Word?* So when He began to be in the womb of the Virgin, was He not then *with God?* Were not the Angels then rejoicing in Him, by Whom the heavens were being ruled? At the time when He was in the Virgin's womb, was He not the Word with the Father? Yes, He was both with the Father, and in the womb of the Virgin: He was wholly with the Father, and wholly in the Virgin's womb, because our Lord, the Word, Who is God, is wholly with the Father, wholly in heaven, wholly with the Angels; and at the same time wholly in the womb, wholly in the church, wholly in the flesh. Of Him in a certain place the Scripture saith, *My be-*

*loved is white and ruddy,* — "white," because He is the Word of God; "ruddy," because He is the birth of the Virgin.

To-day, then, as a little child and in humility, He entered the world, and to-day, in human fashion, He was born man of a virgin, but "He was begotten of the Father before all worlds." To represent His mother by His body, His Father by His power, the Only-Begotten on earth, the Only-Begotten in Heaven, God from God, is also born from a virgin. Therefore to this Lord, even to Christ, our Redeemer, Who for us took flesh, drawing its origin from Adam, that *being made sin He might condemn sin in the flesh,* and hath brought to all men the gfts of His holiness and sanctification, to Him let us give thanks, and through Him let us ascribe praises to God the Father, *Whose is the glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

## THE NASH PAPYRUS.

I HAVE been asked for a note on the Nash papyrus to enable American readers to refer to it. The *editio princeps* is Mr. S. A. Cook's paper entitled "A Pre-Massoretic Biblical Papyrus," in the Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology, vol. xxv. (1903) pp. 34–56. This was supplemented by an article "A Unique Biblical Papyrus," from the pen of the same writer, in the *Expository Times,* vol. xiv. (1903) pp. 200–203. Professor F. C. Burkitt edited the papyrus in the *Jewish Quarterly Review,* vol. xv. (1903) pp. 392–408, under the title "The Hebrew Papyrus of the Ten Commandments," and published a new photograph of it in Volume XVI. of the same periodical (pp. 559–561).

In 1905 Dr. Norbert Peters issued a German edition in pamphlet form. It is called "Die älteste Abschrift der zehn Gebote, der Papyrus Nash" (Freiburg im Breisgau Herdersche Verlagshandlung). I am not acquainted with any more recent editions.

HAROLD M. WIENER.