

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

Professor Burkitt on the Bospel History.

BY PROFESSOR THE REV. W. SANDAY, D.D., LL.D., LITT.D., OXFORD.

PROFESSOR BURKITT has done a great service by his new book, exactly the service that a lay theologian should do; he has imparted a surprising amount of freshness to old themes. His book is delightful reading. It rests on close observation of details vividly conceived; and yet the selection of points is so admirable, and the touch so light and so rapid-never a word wasted, and always, as it would seem, the happiest word chosen-that the reader is carried over subjects that he will be apt to think of as dry and severe with the ease and zest of a romance. There is just one section that I should have to call in question, and the treatment of which I believe to be less satisfactory than it is elsewhere; but there is not a page from first to last that is not bright and interesting.

There are really two elements in the book, which together give it its special character. One is the scientific study of detail, which is always kept well under control and is more often beneath the surface than upon it.

The other is a kind of impressionism, which often does but bring to a head and sum up with singular felicity of phrase the results of this scientific inquiry, but which is sometimes less trustworthy in its methods, and then becomes somewhat misleading. This is all the qualification that I should wish to make. I will try to point out where it comes in before I have done. But, taken as a whole, the book is not only very enjoyable, but a contribution to the subjects with which it deals of striking independence and of permanent value.

Professor Burkitt writes very frankly; he is far from being an apologist; and yet he tells us in his preface that his researches have led him to believe that there is a much larger element of genuine history in the Canonical Gospels, than a general view of the tendencies which influenced Christendom during the first century and a half of its existence might have led him to anticipate. These words, perhaps, represent the most prominent

¹ The Gospel History and its Transmission. By F. Crawford Burkitt, M.A., F.B.A. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906.)

general result of his investigation. The course of lectures which follows illustrates this result, and enables us to see the grounds on which it is reached.

The main object is to enable the hearers or readers 'to reconstruct the Portrait of Jesus Christ' for themselves; to teach them how, not only to hear the witnesses, but also to crossexamine them, so as to learn from the documents more than the writers directly aimed to tell us.

At the outset an interesting calculation is made which makes us see at a glance why this crossexamination of the witnesses is necessary. The materials are insufficient for a biography after the modern pattern.

'On the very shortest estimate the length of the Ministry must have extended to about 400 days, and I doubt if our Gospels contain stories from 40 separate days. So that nine-tenths at least of the public life of Jesus remains to us a blank, even if we were to take every recorded incident as historical and accurately reported. And all the recorded sayings of Christ, how long would they take to pronounce? With due gravity and emphasis they might take six hours, —hardly, perhaps, so much. In other words, they would take no more than two great political speeches, and a considerably less time than this present course of Lectures' (p. 20).

The reckoning as to the length of our Lord's ministry is a minimum reckoning, and is expressly given as such. I should be myself inclined to estimate the length at quite twice 400 days, though in this Professor Burkitt would probably not agree with me. That would, of course, only heighten the effect of his argument. We may, however, note that this kind of relation is characteristic of the Biblical writings generally. The public work of Isaiah extended over more than forty years; that of Jeremiah, over quite as long a period; and yet of how many actual days have we record in the prophecies of either? How many separate discourses or incidents do their books contain? Very few in proportion to the length of time covered.

Professor Burkitt remarks very happily that the

real effect of a Life does not depend upon the multiplicity of details.

'How often it is one story, one letter, one illuminative saying or judgment of the subject of a bulky modern biography, which tells us more than all the rest what the real meaning of the life was. The part of Lady Macbeth is just 250 lines long; how many a biography in two large volumes tells us less of what is really essential about its hero !' (p. 21).

The Gospels really belong to this latter class of document. We may well try to get from them the most we can. And we need not be afraid of applying criticism, because we know beforehand 'that the events of the first century produced the second and succeeding centuries.' There must be something more in this than the reproduction of 'the picture of unbelieving crowds.'

Lecture II. is devoted to the literary problem of the Gospel of St. Mark. Professor Burkitt has no doubt that our Gospel of St. Mark supplied the common groundwork of St. Matthew and St. Luke; he calls this (quite rightly) 'the one solid contribution made by the scholarship of the nineteenth century toward the solution of the Synoptic Problem' (p. 37). He is also, I believe, quite right in maintaining that the document used by the other two evangelists was our present St. Mark, and not a so called Ur-Marcus. At the same time there seems to me to be a slight flaw in the reasoning employed to get over the difficulty caused by the cases-small in themselves but rather numerous-in which the texts of St. Matthew and St. Luke agree against St. Mark. Mr. Burkitt seems to think that these cases are due to accidental coincidence; and I allow that that might well account for a few cases here and there, but not, I think, for so many as the critic has to deal with. I believe that a satisfactory solution may be found in the history of the text of our St. Mark. The text used in common by St. Matthew and St. Luke was not identical with that which became the parent of all the extant copies; and, as is apt to happen in such cases, sometimes one text preserves the reading of the original, and sometimes the other. I may before long have the opportunity of explaining this more fully.

I must allow myself the pleasure of quoting a passage which forms a sort of transition from the literary problem of the Gospel of St. Mark to the historical problem—the problem of its value as history. I desire to do this not so much because of its bearing upon the question of an Ur-Marcus, —which I do not think that I feel quite so strongly as Professor Burkitt, and I take it that the problem is practically settled without it,—but because of its value as a sketch of the background of the age in which the Gospels were composed, a sketch that seems to me quite admirable.

'The most convincing argument against postulating a literary source behind our Mark remains to be noticed. It is this-that the hypothesis of an 'Ur-Marcus' presupposes an interest in the biographical details of the public life of Jesus Christ, of which there is little trace elsewhere. In the extant remains of very early Christian literature we find the doctrines of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection; we find the arguments from prophecy; we find the ethical teaching of the Sermon on the Mount; and as early as the middle of the second century we find copious references to the stories of the Nativity. In other words, we find what corresponds to the rudiments of the Creed, together with a real and vivid interest in Christian morality. But the details of the Galilean Ministry of Jesus Christ are hardly mentioned. It is not a mere chance that the fragments of non-canonical Gospels discovered in recent years-the Oxyrhynchus Logia (socalled) and the Gospel of Peter-concern themselves the one with detached Sayings of Jesus, the other with the Passion. It is the peculiar merit of S. Mark's Gospel, from the point of view of the historical investigator, that it deals mainly with a cycle of events foreign to the life and interests of the growing Christian communities. The Gospels according to Matthew and Luke represent far more nearly than the Gospel according to Mark the temper and the preferences of the early Churches' (p. 60 f.).

The next lecture (III.) goes on to treat of the degree of trustworthiness of this fundamental Gospel (St. Mark). The test applied is that of the consistency of the Gospel with itself as an historical construction, and the way in which it fits in with what we know from other sources as to the conditions of the time. All this is very skilfully and satisfactorily done. On the main point I am inclined to think that Professor Burkitt just a little overstates his case for the Gospel. He tries to get from it rather more than I think can

be got; and then he utilizes his conclusion to the disadvantage of the Fourth Gospel in a way that I should deprecate. I quite agree that, broadly speaking, the Marcan construction of the history is good and reliable. But, after all, St. Mark was not an eye-witness, or only at most an eye-witness of a tiny bit at the end (the young man with the linen cloth). He had to do the best he could in piecing together the history from the reports of others. We are expressly told that the preaching of St. Peter, his main source, was 'not in order.' I suspect myself that his knowledge of the topography of Galilee was rather imperfect, and that this accounts for a certain vagueness and want of precision in his descriptions. But if that is so, I doubt if we can lay quite so much stress upon minute details of text as is done on pp. 96, 97. Mr. Burkitt himself speaks very tentatively as to his new theory of the route followed by our Lord on His last journey from Capernaum to Jericho. The theory is thoroughly interesting and very acute, and I am glad that it has been put forward. I should like to accept it if I could; but, as at present advised, I am afraid that, even more than its author, I must regard it as 'not proven.'

I wish that I could stay to discuss some of the points of detail that arise from time to time: such, for instance, as the treatment of the reading $\delta\epsilon\nu\tau\epsilon\rho\sigma$ - $\pi\rho\omega\tau\omega$ in Lk 6¹, which seems to me quite a triumph of textual dexterity. I am in hearty agreement with all that is said about the vexed passage Mk 4¹⁰⁻¹², and in criticism of Professor Schmiedel. But I am afraid that I must confine myself to leading points, and so pass on to the examination of the two other Synoptics.

Here, again, there is a great amount of excellent matter, that in the main I should quite endorse from my own studies. Nearly all English scholars rejoice over Professor Harnack's adhesion to the view that St. Luke himself was the author of the Third Gospel and the Acts. It is a special pleasure to me to see Dr. Moffatt on the same side. I should have expected Professor Burkitt to be with us, and I am glad that he is. For myself, however, I do not think it necessary to combine St. Luke's authorship with the condition, adopted by Professor Burkitt, that both the Third Gospel and the Acts were written in old age, *circa* 100 A.D. All turns on the question whether St. Luke made use of the Antiquities of Josephus. Professor Burkitt thinks that he did, basing his argument on Schmiedel's articles 'Theudas' and 'Lysanias' in *Encycl. Biblica.* I prefer to go to Schürer, who, I venture to think, is more really impartial. In the case of Theudas, St. Luke has an important detail that must have come from some other source than Josephus. In the case of Lysanias, there is good reason to think that there were others of the name besides the one who died in $_{36}$ B.C.

In regard to the relations of St. Matthew and St. Luke to the Synoptic problem, I agree generally with Professor Burkitt, who has adorned this part of his subject too with many of his fresh, neathanded, original touches. There is only one point. on which I think that he and-shall I make bold to say it ?---the Cambridge school in general (I am thinking especially of the Dean of Westminster) might well make more use of a factor which for them is very much in the background--I mean what I am in the habit of calling the Special Source or Sources (but I incline to Source) of St. Luke. It seems to me, if I may be forgiven the criticism, that both the Dean and Mr. Burkitt try to put toomuch into the second document, which we will agree to call O. I willingly admit that, although no doubt the nucleus of Q is to be sought in the common matter of St. Matthew and St. Luke, it. by no means follows that single sections in each of those Gospels may not have originally belonged to the same document. But I do not think that there are many of these. Many reasons, which I cannot enter into now, induce me not only to believe in the existence of a Special Source of St. Luke, but to look to it for the real key to the characteristics of the Gospel. The source is one that St. Luke did more than use; he preferred it,1 where it was extant, to his other sources. But I am getting on to debatable ground that I must leave for the present.

We have seen how the historical value of St. Mark was tested by comparison with what is otherwise known of the contemporary history and conditions of Palestine. The groundwork of our knowledge of the teaching of Christ is ingeniously tested in another way, by taking as a standard the 'doublets,' or doubly attested Sayings, *i.e.* those that are found both in Mark and in Q. I must not delay over this topic.

¹ This is an important point to which my attention was first called by Mr. C. Badcock, a valued member of a Seminar on the Synoptic Problem which I have held for some years. Having in this manner verified his documents, Professor Burkitt sketches from them an outline of our Lord's teaching. Of this part of the book I should like to give two specimens.

The first does not quite strictly belong to it. It is a comment that occurs in the discussion of St. Luke's Passion Narrative upon the passage about 'the two swords' (Lk 22^{38}). The words are taken as ironical, and there is sadness in the irony.

'They are sad enough indeed; but if they are historical, as I believe them to be, they afford us a very welcome glimpse into the mind of our Lord. They show us that there was in Him a vein of what I have no other name for but playfulness, a tender and melancholy playfulness indeed, but all the more remarkable that it comes to outward expression in moments of danger and despondency. We feel that we are listening to the words of the same Master who excused the woman for the waste of her precious ointment that might have been so profitably spent in works of charity. This kind of playfulness is totally alien from ignorant fanaticism. and indeed it is totally alien from the general spirit of early Christianity. That it appears at all in the Gospels is in itself a proof that the Evangelists and the sources from which they drew sometimes remembered better than they understood ' (p. 142).

This may give some idea of the charm of style and thought that runs through the book.

The other passage, which I shall be tempted to quote at some length, has reference to a subject on which I think that many of us will be glad of help; and it seems to me that it is really helpful. The opening sentence is expressed rather more strongly than I should express it; and perhaps in this respect illustrates a temptation to which the writer now and then succumbs. But the balance is redressed by the saving clause 'not in our time.' The rest is modern; and Professor Burkitt is nothing if not modern; but it is writers of this type who very often point the way—or at least a way—for those who lag somewhat behind them.

'The hope of the Second Coming of the Son of Man has faded with us into an unsubstantial dream. We are not expecting a new heaven and a new earth—at least, not in our time. And consequently all the thoughts-and the imagery which imply the near approach of a tremendous catastrophe have in them something strange and unreal to us. Yet it is imperative that we should realize the point of view of our Lord's contemporaries, if we are to understand His teaching about the approaching End. It is no use to allegorize altogether the idea of the Second Advent, still less to regard "The Kingdom of God is within you" as the only genuine teaching of Jesus, and all the rest as carnal misunderstanding on the part of the disciples. The true way is to accept the Coming of the Messiah upon the clouds of heaven to gather together His elect from every quarter as the natural picture, the natural way of expressing faith and hope in the triumph of good over evil, all that people mean nowadays by the vague word Progress. The age in which our Lord lived did not believe in Progress; it was too bad an age, at least for the class of people among whom Christianity grew up. . . . And, on the whole, men were justified in looking forward at that time to Catastrophe rather than Progress. The Tewish State and the Tewish Nation, as history had known them, did come to a violent end; and the survivors-Christianity and Rabbinical Judaism, however good a title they may make out for themselves to be legitimate heirs of the old order, are not the old order itself, but a new state of things. . . . Our Lord was proved right by the event, when He bade His disciples look forward to a time of trial and crisis, followed by a total change of the conditions of their life. The actual event was very different in detail from what had been expected, but the mortal shock was real enough. The Christendom of the second and succeeding centuries was a very different thing in almost every particular from the Kingdom of God that had been looked for by the disciples in Galilee and in Jerusalem. But it was, as a matter of fact, the line upon which the movement which our Lord started was destined to go; and that the Christian movement survived at all, or survived with a real memory of what it had started from, is a proof that the disciples had learnt their lesson. . . . A common accusation often brought nowadays against the early Christians is that their ethics and their morality are inappropriate for a stable society that hopes to attain a higher standard of comfort for its members by gradual amelioration. It is a sufficient answer to say that had the early

Christians devoted themselves to the well-to-do philanthropy of the nineteenth century, they never would have survived at all. But I venture to think that our answer need not stop there. We have learnt to see that the crisis which marks the conclusion of the old order is a continual process, that it is always in operation, and that what is unfit for the new order is being continually cast out' (pp. 179-182).

I do not put this forward as the complete account of the Eschatology of the Gospels, but it seems to me to be a contribution to the common stock of thought for which we may be grateful.

So far we have travelled together without serious dissent. My friend will know that dissent is coming; and it is part of my duty to give it reluctant expression. On the subject of the Fourth Gospel, Professor Burkitt and I take different sides. And here I cannot help saying that, apart from the difference of opinion between us, it seems to me that this part of the book is altogether inferior to the rest. No doubt I am prejudiced; and there will be readers who will not agree with me; but I must needs give the reasons for my opinion, for what they are worth.

In the first place, I am not at all satisfied with the treatment of the external evidence. I do not question the right of touching only upon one small corner of the evidence. I have done very much the same thing myself. In my book, *The Criticism* of the Fourth Gospel, I left on one side a great deal on which I did not think that I had anything special to add. But to single out Polycarp alone, to say about him a few words that I am obliged to characterize as inadequate and misleading, and then without more ado to jump to the conclusion that the external evidence is 'indecisive' and 'quite insufficient' seems to me to be going too far.

It is allowed that the belief that the Gospel 'was written by the Apostle S. John was fully established in most parts of the Christian world as early as the decade 170–180 A.D.,' and that 'clear indications of its use, especially among some of the Christian "Gnostics," can be traced back to a period some fifty years earlier.' But then the argument goes on :

'It is true that these indications are weak just where we might have expected them to be most precise; S. Polycarp, according to tradition a disciple of S. John at Ephesus, does not quote at all from the Fourth Gospel, either in his Epistle or in the prayer which he is said to have prayed at the stake, and the utmost that can be claimed is that certain phrases in a single passage in his Epistle are parellel to some leading phrases in 1 and 2 John. This passage in S. Polycarp is certainly important as shewing that Johannine watchwords, like "antichrist" and "confessing Jesus Christ to have come in the flesh," were actually used by orthodox circles in Asia Minor. But it is remarkable that S. Polycarp should exhibit nofurther trace of the influence of the Johannine theology" (p. 219 f.).

The Epistle of Polycarp occupies rather less than six pages of Bishop Lightfoot's smaller edition; his prayer at the stake fills not quite sixteen lines. What is it reasonable to expect from scraps likethese? And yet the Epistle has what most peoplebelieve to be a clear quotation of I John $4^{2,3}$; which carries with it, so far as it goes, a substantial' presumption that the writer also knew the Gospel; and the prayer contains a phrase which Bishop-Lightfoot notes as quoted from St. John 5^{20} ; though this I would not press. In the face of these facts one is tempted to ask whether the last sentence of the paragraph can ever have been intended seriously. But, indeed, the whole modeof arguing is one that I would greatly deprecate.

The writings about which I cannot but think that Professor Burkitt was called upon to say. something, are the Ignatian Letters and the Didache. He himself dates the Epistles between 110 and 117; and he thinks it 'likely' that the writer had read the Fourth Gospel (pp. 275, 277). But, if Ignatius had read the Gospel, I feel sure that he must have done a great deal more. Either from the Gospel or from oral teaching of the same character I believe that he derived the very. foundations of his thinking. This can have been no matter of yesterday, no casual perusal, but thefruit of discipleship that must go back well intothe first century. The indications in the Didache, especially the remarkable phrase 'make perfect in love' (10⁵), are slighter, but they point in the same direction.

I should like, if I may, in passing to invite the attention of Mr. Ernest Scott to this subject. I desire to speak with all respect of his book, the earnestness of which I appreciate highly; but I hope that he will reconsider the relation of the writings just named to the problem of the Gospel, before he again relegates it to the first or second decade of the second century. I would also demur with some emphasis to the way in which on the very first page of his book he seeks to give objectivity to a purely subjective verdict. The state of competent opinion in these islands at least-and even in these islands there is such a thing as competent opinion-would be far from bearing him out. And yet by formulating his judgment as he does, he raises a *præjudicium* which affects, I must needs say unfairly, the whole discussion. If I could grant Mr. Scott the right to construct his picture of the author's position without regard to concrete details of time and place, there would be something impressive in his presentation; but I am afraid that I cannot grant him this.

To come back to Professor Burkitt: I gladly bear witness that his view of the authorship of the Gospel is by no means extreme. The discussion on pp. 250-255 of the tradition of John in Asia is the best thing in the lecture; especially the argument from the Syriac Martyrology is conducted with characteristic skill. I see that this point was noticed by Bousset (after Erbes in 1901) in *Theol. Rundschau* (1895), p. 229 f.; cf. p. 295, where Aphraates is also brought in. The evidence is given still more fully in the new edition of Bousset's *Commentary on Apoc.* p. 37.

I have already said that Professor Burkitt seems to me to press unduly the data that he derives from St. Mark. He treats the Marcan scheme as something far more fixed and rigid than it really is, or could be, under the conditions under which it was drawn up. May I remind Professor Burkitt that he himself has expressed a doubt, 'if our Gospels contain stories from 40 separate days.' He has also estimated the northern journey as taking 'many months,' or 'about eight months' (p. 93). If we apply anything like the same elastic measure to the last journey, there will be no difficulty in making room for the events recorded by St. John.

But it is really to the view of the Gospel as a whole that I take most exception. I must needs regard this as an example on an important scale of that second and lower kind of Impressionism that I described at the outset. Professor Burkitt does not like the Fourth Gospel. When he takes the eighth chapter as typical of the kind of ground on which he bases this dislike, I can understand and up to a certain point sympathize with him. The Jewish controversy is not presented by the Evangelist in an attractive form. Can we be surprised if some bitterness had lingered in the soul of one who had himself stood beneath the cross? I cannot be surprised at it; and it has always seemed to me that the attitude of the Evangelist towards the Jews is an argument for, and not against, the traditional theory. But the feeling expressed in the eighth chapter does not appear, *e.g.*, in the seventh, which I believe to be a splendid representation of what must have been the debates that really went on.

But what a mistake to allow a chapter like the eighth to dominate the whole judgment that is formed of the Gospel! I must needs say that Mr. Burkitt's treatment of it is gravely unjust. I hope that he will some day study the Gospel with the care that he has bestowed upon the Synoptics. If he would do that, I should not fear but that his verdict would come out differently.

On the great question of history or allegory, it seems to me that Professor Burkitt — rather involuntarily—helps us to make up our minds. He argues on the side of allegory; but it seems to me that his lucid, terse, epigrammatic style of writing only makes the weak places in that theory stand out more conspicuously. These, for instance, are the concluding sentences of the lecture:

'Other thinkers, more spiritual (as they would consider) than he, are saying that the Son of God was not a real man at all, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. This to the Evangelist was the greatest error: to deny the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh was the doctrine of Antichrist. The Fourth Gospel is written to prove the reality of Jesus Christ. But the Evangelist was no historian: ideas, not events, were to him the true realities, and if we go to his words to learn the course of events we shall only be disappointed in our search' (p. 255 f.).

Professor Burkitt emphasizes, rightly as I think, the Anti-Docetism that comes more to the surface in the First Epistle than in the Gospel. He tells us that 'the Fourth Gospel is written to prove the reality of Jesus Christ.' But then, almost in the same breath, he goes on to tell us that to the Evangelist 'ideas, not events, were the true realities'! Can anything be more inconsistent? This is a consideration that I would fain commend to Mr. Ernest Scott as well.

I have deliberately devoted so much of this article to the Gospel History that I have not left myself much space in which to speak of its Transmission. It seems to me that after Lecture VIII., Professor Burkitt soon recovers his balance. All that is said about the growth of the Canon is as interesting and as neatly and attractively stated as the rest. I only think that Professor Burkitt slightly underestimates the evidence for the existence of the collection of thirteen Pauline Epistles before Marcion. I note with special pleasure the incidental statement (p. 325) that he believes the famous passage about our Lord in Josephus to be genuine. This is a heresy in which—at least as to the substance of the passage—I am much disposed to join. I hope Professor Burkitt will some day discuss the point in print; he would do so admirably.

One parting word. Professor Burkitt is a writer of brilliant gifts and brilliant accomplishments, whose accession to the professoriate is to be warmly welcomed—and all the more welcomed because he is a layman. I should have every hope that this accession may bring with it the one desideratum of which I seem to be conscious a somewhat heightened sense of responsibility, just a little more of the *secundæ curæ*, just a little more self-criticism and power of discriminating between those impressions which are the offspring of the moment and those which have behind them a long train of scientific reasoning and observation.

Recent Foreign Theology.

O. Holtzmann's New Testament Times.¹

As the author indicates on the title-page, and states in the preface, this is really a new book. He has gone over the whole ground again, anew set forth what he believes to be the facts, and has considered every matter in the light of more recent knowledge. There is room for a new edition, for knowledge is really increasing over the wide field covered by such a text-book. For this text-book treats first of the historical foundations of the New Testament life. It casts a glance over the history of Palestine from the time of Alexander the Great to the downfall of the Jewish state. It deals with the political geography of the New Testament. Α section is devoted to the moneys and the measures of the New Testament. Chronology receives attention. Then the author passes to the life of the Jewish people in the time of the New Testament. Temple service, priests and Levites, synagogue and scribes, sects and parties, the high courts of

¹ Grundriss der Theologischen Wissenschaften. Achte Abteilung. Neutestamentliche Zeitgeschichte. Von Oskar Holtzmann, a.o. Professor der Theologie zu Giessen. Zweite vollständig neu bearbeitete Auflage. Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck). Price M.7. the Jews, are clearly and sufficiently described. Then follows a description of the Diaspora, and of the relations between it and the heathen world. Finally, there is a lucid and able description of the religion of the Jews in the time of the New Testament.

The book is somewhat dry reading, for the style of Professor Holtzmann is not a distinguished one. Nor is he a master of grouping and arrangement of topics. But he makes his meaning clear, and the reader may always read with intelligence, if not with interest. On the whole he is impartial, and objective. A reader may always know what his theological standpoint is. He is objective enough when he is dealing with matters concerning history, geography, and other topics of the same order. But, for example, when he touches on any topic connected in any degree, however remote, with the Fourth Gospel, he makes the reader know that his view is that the Fourth Gospel is not of any value as a source of history. Dealing with the topic of the Pharisees, he rather goes out of his way to say that the Fourth Gospel is wholly unhistorical in its treatment of the Pharisees. When that Gospel speaks of the Pharisees as having heard that Jesus was more successful than John, it falls into the mistake of thinking that the Pharisees were not