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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

the Christian Church will gain, for the first time in its history, a consistent thought of God as love and nothing else; and it will recognize that this is due entirely to its Founder. The moral and social and international effects of such a revolution in the general conception of God are almost incalculable. As Miss Dougall says:

'Whatever a man thinks his God is and does, he seeks to be and do, and generally succeeds. If his gods are sexually immoral, such is he, and that even in his worship. If his God is a God of war, he is truculent. If God is one among many, and jealous, unable to abide other gods, His followers are jealous of the prestige of any nation but their own, unable to abide other nations. If God is conceived as the One Absolute Reality, rational but impassible, man holds himself above human

joys and sorrows in Stoic aloofness. . . . If God's holiness consists in the vindictive punishment of wrong, and His glory consists in the power to coerce His creature into obedience, human civilization will express itself in a penal code and will be founded on military force. . . . A penal code cannot command obedience, as the Jews discovered; but a Living Love, give it time and scope, does adapt men to the good life. Love is thus higher and more majestic than law, for it rules free spirits. It is the only power that can leave men free while yet it controls their actions.'

Jesus Christ met the evil of the world not by overwhelming it with supernatural force, but by going to the Cross. If He was really Divine, then His way of overcoming evil is God's way; and it must be man's way too.

Recent Foreign Theology.

A New Departure in the Investigation of the Synoptic Gospels.¹

It is difficult, in a brief review, to give an idea of the significance of this book. Professor Bultmann, whose reputation is established among the younger scholars of Germany, has here set himself to the important task of attempting to get behind the Synoptic Gospels as we have them and to analyse the process by which they reached their present form. The inquiry is one which must often have appealed to New Testament investigators, and, whatever may be thought of its results, it is at least a real advantage to be shown clearly the various difficulties involved.

Bultmann examines the material with extreme minuteness under two main headings, the 'Tradition of the Words of Jesus' and the 'Tradition of Narrative Matter.' The former division is subdivided into (a) a group which he names *Apophthegmata*, i.e. passages 'whose point consists in a word of Jesus apprehended in a brief

framework'; (b) words of the Lord (Logia in the strict sense, prophetic and apocalyptic words, legal words and regulations for the Church, I-words, and parables). The second division embraces (a) miracle stories, and (b) historical narratives and legends. Bultmann's standpoint is that the first Gospel writer, Mark, must have found a number of isolated traditions floating about, and he tries to show in detail how the evangelist constructed them into the form in which we have them in the Gospel. But he also analyses what he conceives to be those separate, isolated passages with the most laborious thoroughness. A glance at the register of passages from the Synoptic Gospels (for he applies a similar treatment to Matthew and Luke) reveals the astounding pains he has spent on the analysis.

It may at once be admitted that over and over again his analysis brings out most interesting and instructive results. Take, e.g., the very difficult passage, Mt 5¹⁷⁻¹⁹. Bultmann thinks that the passage goes back to the discussion between the more conservative (Palestinian) and the more liberal (Hellenistic) section of the early Christian community. 'μή νομίσητε shows that v.¹⁷ arose from debate. . . . V.¹⁸ in its formulation of principles and in its antagonism to primary tradition can

¹ *Die Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition*. By R. Bultmann, Professor in Giessen, Göttingen: Vanderhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1921. Pp. x, 229. Price 9s.

only be a Church-formation, and v.¹⁹ cannot be a polemic against Jewish teachers of the law, but only against the Hellenists' (pp. 83, 84). Note-worthy is the elaborate representation of the fundamental form of proverbs and Logia from the O.T., and the full tables which follow of parallels in the Synoptic Gospels. The remarkable kinship is unmistakable. But from beginning to end the analysis reveals an extraordinary subjectivity. Typical of the author's position is the statement, 'in general the words have created the situation, not vice versa.' The vast majority of the situations commented on are described as 'ideal,' *i.e.* the product of the earliest community. Now most students of the Gospels would be willing to admit that the dominant Messianic convictions of the early Church must often have coloured the accounts of events given in the Gospels. But Bultmann seems to set no bounds to his critical incredulity. He goes the length of regarding the story of the centurion of Capernaum (Mt 8⁵⁻¹³|| Lk 7¹⁻¹⁰) as a variant of that of the Syrophenician woman (Mt 7²⁴⁻³¹ and parallels). He shows the utmost scepticism as to all kinds of details. Thus, *e.g.*, the story of the call of the first disciples, placed at the Lake of Galilee, probably takes this form from the metaphor used by Jesus when He names them 'fishers of men.' The account of the call of Levi has no historical value: 'the only interest felt by the tradition was that a tax-collector was summoned from his occupation to follow Jesus: *where* Levi was tax-collector, we do not hear' (p. 35). This meticulousness is surely artificial.

What traditions in the world could submit to such a process? One cannot help feeling that the author ought to have laid down certain criteria for the testing of the material. Because he has not, his procedure is reduced largely to guess-work.

With justice Bultmann calls attention to the activity of the Church in the *redaction* of the material, 'a redaction which essentially, but by no means only, belongs to the period when it took shape in writing' (p. 89). He shows most instructively how the grouping of passages necessitated such redaction, pointing out the actual words and phrases used by the evangelists to accomplish their purpose. Indeed, we get a very vivid picture of the process of composition on pp. 200-204.

The volume closes with an exceedingly interesting characterization of the three Synoptic Gospels, in which the author gives it as his opinion that Mark used no source which could be called a Gospel, that Matthew adheres to Mark's fundamental picture of the life of Jesus, that Luke's main deviation is the large section beginning with chap. 9⁵¹, which he introduced both because he felt the need of illuminating Jesus' last journey to Jerusalem more clearly than Mark had done, and because he found in this an opportunity of recording all sorts of passages which had no particular situation.

We are more than ever convinced of the far-reaching problems which confront the investigator who enters the fascinating realm of the traditions behind the Synoptic Gospels.

H. A. A. KENNEDY.

Edinburgh.

In the Study.

Virginitus Puerisque.

Blasting without Powder.¹

'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.'—Ph 4¹³.

You know about the Roman Wall? You'll find it in the very first pages of your history book. No! no! before Alfred. No, further back than Mercia and all the other six of them, away back at the first three or four pages, it's there you'll come on the great wall built to keep out the wild

¹ By the Rev. Arthur J. Gossip.

northern clans and tribes ever so long ago, yet built so splendidly and solidly that there are bits of it there still, and you can follow it almost from sea to sea, and come upon the camps where the old battalions had their quarters, and see the ruts in the pavements made by the Roman chariots, and the baths where the great people used to bathe, and many another thing. I've never seen it, but I understand that there is a deep trench that runs along for many miles on one side of the wall; and at one place this trench comes up against a huge mass of rock, one of the very hardest kinds of rock,