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DR. HORT'S LIFE AND WORKS.

IN the year 1857 an article appeared in the *Westminster Review*, from the pen of the late Mr. Mark Pattison, on 'Theology in Germany.' The writer spoke severely, indeed contemptuously, of the then condition of the study of Theology in England; Dr. Pusey, the author's former leader, is personally assailed, and it is implied that there is no reasonable and intelligent interest in the subject in England, but that in Germany alone Theology is freely and scientifically studied. An account is given of the various schools of theological thought then prevailing in this most favoured nation, and an estimate is made of their various characteristics. The one to which of all others the term scientific is said to belong rightly is the school of Tübingen, under the leadership of F. C. Baur. To this school, Mr. Pattison tells us, has fallen the noble task of continuing the work of the Reformation. Baur and those who work with him, or on his lines, have to determine the meaning and force of the claim of Scripture, upon which the Reformers had taken their stand; to separate the true from the false in the traditional lists of Church writings, and to reproduce by simple and unbiassed attention to proved fact the real history of the origin and early developments of Christianity. It is therefore to Baur—'unquestionably the first of living theologians'—that Mr. Pattison, in 1857, exhorted his readers to look for real theological advance. Though he criticizes his hero with great candour and discrimination, yet he regards him as the representative of a true and valid historical method: and therefore he can only despair.

It is probable that, owing to the despairing view which Pattison took of the prospects of learning in England, and the comparatively impressive effect of German scholarship, he overlooked the University of Cambridge. And yet at the very time that he was writing, the questions raised by the Tübingen school of

theologians were already being dealt with in a fashion characteristic both of the English mind and especially of the traditions of Cambridge scholarship. Already by the year 1857 Dr. Westcott had produced his *Elements of a Gospel Harmony* and the first edition of his work on the Canon of the New Testament. Already the edition of the text of the New Testament had been projected by Dr. Westcott and his friend Dr. Hort. And though Dr. Hort himself had published nothing directly referring to the Tübingen discussions, yet the Preface to the first edition of the History of the Canon, read in the light of the correspondence in Dr. Hort's *Life*, shows plainly the spirit in which the questions were being approached at Cambridge. Dr. Westcott claims to have dealt 'with the New Testament as a whole, and that on purely historical grounds.'

This phrase might stand as a motto for the main part of the work which Dr. Hort has left behind him. He dealt with the New Testament as a whole, and on purely historical grounds. He was a man who combined, in a rare degree, width and depth of knowledge. Though he spread out his energies over an extraordinarily wide field, he is never superficial, never contents himself with the first glance or first impression, but always penetrates to the heart of the matter before him, so far as his materials enable him to go. And as his learning was thus singularly wide and exhaustive, so he contemplated giving it expression in a remarkable variety of shapes. The larger number of these schemes were never carried out; they appear and disappear in his correspondence: Natural Science, Philosophy, Classical Scholarship gradually give way before the overmastering claims of theological learning; and it remains that all the printed work that has yet appeared under his name (with the exception of a few essays and articles) is connected more or less closely with the New Testament, or with the history of the Church. It will be, therefore, on this work mainly that those will rest their opinion who lived outside the range of his personal influence. But the Letters will make it plain even to these what a privilege it must have been to know Dr. Hort and be guided by his learning. Whatever special interests people had they were sure to find some echo in Dr. Hort: he would be sure to see their position in an original and characteristic way, and throw new

light upon it from the wealth of his knowledge. Though the works on philosophy and natural science of which he dreamed never saw the light, yet the learning which was to express itself in them was not wasted. It contributed to the unique position which Dr. Hort occupied, and accounts for the profound veneration which the best of his contemporaries always felt for his judgement. Thus while Pattison was despairing, Hort and his Cambridge friends were setting to work: and it is of Hort's contributions to this work that we have now to speak—so far as may be allowed to one who writes from the point of view of tolerably 'intelligent ignorance.'

It is natural, in endeavouring to form some general estimate of the achievement of any great man, to inquire what his education was, and for what he was fitted by it. The question is a simple one in Dr. Hort's case. He was at Rugby under Arnold first, and then under Tait; and already at school began to display the universal desire for knowledge which was so characteristic of him in later life. Classics were, of course, his main pursuit: but he occupied himself with botany and any other form of scientific knowledge that came in his way. But it was at school that he decided to seek Holy Orders, and it was at school, under Bonamy Price's directions, that the foundation was laid of his love for textual criticism and New Testament scholarship. In like manner at Cambridge he followed no narrow or limited course. In those days it was necessary to attain honours in Mathematics as a condition of entering for the Classical Tripos. But Dr. Hort did not confine himself even to this sufficiently extensive course, but when he had finished and taken his degree in these two subjects, he entered again the examination-room in Natural Science and Moral Philosophy.

There was some danger, no doubt, that so extended a range might have implied some superficiality of treatment. It seems almost incredible that any one mind can have worked over so much ground with any real completeness. And, indeed, there are signs in later days that Dr. Hort's friends feared the effect of his width of interest upon his powers of concentration. Thus Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Westcott seem to have expressed some alarm at the energy with which he was studying the Geology of the Cheltenham district, and to have hinted at a closer pursuit of the

Commentary on St. James. But it should be noted that this was not because they feared his losing thoroughness, but because they knew so well his determination to be thorough even in the outlying subjects of his interest, that they felt obliged to protest in the interest of his New Testament work. In spite, therefore, of the wide variety of his studies, Dr. Hort clearly did not fall into the besetting danger of such a mind, but contrived to retain over the whole field the same characteristic thoroughness of which the Introduction to the Text of the New Testament is so conspicuous an instance. So far as may be gathered from the *Life*, this unusual success seems to be due partly to a great seriousness of temper, and partly, of course, to the special conditions of the education at Rugby and at Cambridge. The teacher's task is half done if he has to deal with a mind in which there is a real reverence for truth and a real passion for accuracy. Men often talk as if this were to be assumed as the natural property of every rational being: as if there were no real division among men based upon the presence or absence of this quality. As a matter of fact, as any teacher can tell with very short experience, a real and serious desire to know, a real reverence for a fact as such, quite apart from its commercial or controversial value, is a comparatively rare gift. Many people have intelligent interests, but those who have nothing more will not take the trouble to acquire real and deep knowledge. They will be contented with the aspect of things that strikes their attention first, and will not care to inquire how far the first impression truly and exhaustively corresponds with fact. To possess the true desire for knowledge constitutes a fundamental division between man and man, and it was one of the most significant of Dr. Hort's endowments.

The best powers, however, need training, and it is important to notice some of the salient features of the education at Rugby and at Cambridge. It is clear that to be at Rugby in Arnold's day was to be in the very front of educational progress. And this meant that, together with many other changes, Arnold put real intellectual learning into a new position. Even in the bad days for public schools, Eton and Westminster, in spite of their hopelessly antiquated methods, continued to supply men 'qualified for the service of God in Church and State.' Somehow men con-

trived to get themselves educated there in no mean fashion. But the result of the school life was irregular and uncertain, and it is not easy to see traces of a real enthusiasm for intellectual truth. But Arnold, while he breathed a new spirit into the social and moral side of public-school life, did not fail also to develop a true desire for knowledge. He, and those whom he influenced, put learning into a new position: he made it a thing of life and interest, instead of a task unaccountably imposed. For a person with endowments like Hort's to come in contact with teaching like that of Arnold and his colleagues was to have an original tendency of mind turned into a vital practical principle.

School life, however, even under an Arnold or a Tait, is necessarily restricted in area. It is the University which affords the fullest opportunities of research in the various fields of knowledge. We have already indicated the fields in which Hort obtained distinction: we must now endeavour to point out their fitness for developing the innate character of his mind. If we have been right so far in our conception of his mental progress, it would seem that the special value of these studies to him was their *scientific* character. They led to wide and general views of things through the medium of hard facts. The rule which compelled classical men to enter for the Mathematical Tripos was to Hort's mind an infinite advantage to classics (*Life* vol. i p. 109), and he was careful to spend his full powers upon these subjects considered 'as a discipline of the mind.' The classical course, so far as can be gathered from the allusions to it in the Correspondence, consisted of a careful study of certain books, which did not, however, imply an exemption from the duty of wide and exhaustive study of literature. Even the Moral Philosophy Tripos, so far as the list of papers enables us to judge, was less concerned with the actual discussion of problems than with the history of them. Thus his education was severely concrete, dealing with facts rather than theories: and it seems to have produced in his mind a definite ideal of knowledge. Before he took his degree he 'takes his stand on Bacon's glorious words, "Nos . . . templum sanctum ad exemplar mundi in intellectu humano fundamus. Itaque exemplar sequimur. Nam quicquid essentia dignum est, id etiam scientia dignum; quae est essentiae imago."' This standpoint gives a kind of sacredness to truth as

such, to the knowledge of any fact, and it is with this conviction that Hort sets out upon the life of a scholar. Truth, and that the full truth, is the object which he puts before him as his ideal; but yet this is not an abstract subject of mere speculation, but a vital force. The Fellowship at Trinity is 'not so much an honour as an acquisition of a vantage-ground from which whatever message may be committed to us is likely to be listened to with the more attention' (*Life* vol. i p. 230).

We have dwelt at some length upon these earlier facts of Dr. Hort's life because they seem to be typical of the whole history of the man. From beginning to end of his life Dr. Hort was a devoted follower of truth, and he sought truth always in the same way—i. e. by an exhaustive collection of facts which he bound together and co-ordinated by means of a singularly acute theoretic power. It is clear that this is a thoroughly scientific ideal of work, as science is ordinarily understood. Science aims at reducing to the minimum the subjectivity of the worker. Facts are allowed, as far as possible, to produce their effect simply by being recognized as facts. They are not, of course, simply amassed and left to arrange themselves: their affinities, similarities, and recurrences are all carefully noted; and a scheme is built out of them, of which the value will depend upon the accuracy and completeness of the observation used to produce it, and not upon any acuteness of anticipation of nature's processes. Of course, such a method does not proceed without the free use of the power of scientific imagination. A person who merely amassed facts without this would be wholly incapable of finding any use for them. And Hort was a conspicuous instance of an observer who was fully gifted also with the power of co-ordination. Thus Dr. Scrivener, whose views upon New Testament criticism were very widely different from Dr. Hort's, writes as follows on the *Dissertations* (*Life* vol. ii p. 177): 'You possess a gift of elaborating from your own consciousness theories which are never groundless, never visionary, beyond any man I ever had the happiness to meet with.' In spite of his laborious carefulness in investigation he never lost sight of the whole, or persuaded himself that an ascertained fact needs no interpretation.

We have already mentioned that Dr. Hort failed to produce

the work upon Philosophy which he projected. There are indications, to which we may have occasion to allude further, of his attitude towards some philosophical questions. But the main source of knowledge as to the general character of his philosophical outlook is the volume of Hulsean Lectures, *The Way, The Truth, The Life*: and we propose to take this work for our first illustration of the scientific method pursued by Dr. Hort in all his investigations.

The lectures are, in the first place, completely different in style from any ordinary philosophical work. They are in the strictest sense an exposition of a particular text, St. John xiv 5, 6; that is, the text is not used as a mere motto to express, summarily and in scriptural language, teaching of the author's own: whatever teaching comes from it is based upon an elaborately careful statement of the historical conditions and primary meaning of the words. Dr. Hort shows the meaning which the question of St. Thomas must have carried to his mind, and the great extension of his thought which the answer required. He shows how the history of the Church from the first to the last is the continual expansion and articulation of the exact meaning of Christ's words. When He says, 'I am the Way,' He does not mean merely, I will be your Guide, or your Example, but He means just what He says. The words 'convey a doctrine of Creation and Providence, not merely of historical mission; a claim on the part of the speaker to permanent supremacy in the whole manifold economy of circumstance. They are the practical and ethical expression of an all-embracing truth which we may perhaps apprehend best in the form of two separate doctrines; first, that the whole seeming maze of history in nature and man, the tumultuous movement of the world in progress, has running through it one supreme dominating Way; and second, that He who on earth was called Jesus the Nazarene *is* that Way' (pp. 20, 21). So again Christ *is* the Truth and the Life. 'The place which Christ holds in the movement of events as the Way implies, if we may venture to use such language, that He holds a corresponding place as the Truth in the permanent order of all things that exist. The Way lies most on the surface as presented to our faculties: further down lies the Truth, and beneath the Truth the Life. It is because the eternal Son of God is the Life

that He is the Truth; and it is because He is the Truth that He is the Way' (pp. 55, 56).

These main positions are simply exegetical: as they stand, they state the bare meaning of the words addressed by our Lord to St. Thomas. But as we read the book we find that just because they are accepted thus literally, they prove to be philosophical principles. Philosophy aims at finding some universal formula which will make possible the complete explanation of the facts and history of the world. In this work Dr. Hort declares his conviction that in the apprehension of Christ by the true disciple the problems of human life are solved.

But it will be said that such principles as these are valueless because they are so remote. They do not reach the actual surface of ordinary life; they float loftily above it in a higher region. This is, without doubt, a difficulty to all thinkers of the type of Dr. Hort. We think that he would probably answer it in two ways. In the first place, he would maintain that it arises from the conviction that the knowledge and the interests of this world are in the highest and fullest sense real and final: and this he would deny (cf. p. 82). Secondly, he would appeal to the history of the Church as showing in experience how the main spiritual principle, that Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, is interpreted in practical life. A belief in the all-sufficiency of the knowledge bounded by the senses of course excludes any knowledge of God: but then it fails in the end as knowledge. 'The pursuit and hope of knowledge [in the Greek world] had wasted to a phantom, because it could not be at once comprehensive and consistent unless God had a place in it; and the hereditary religion gave no footing for a Divine Knowledge to be the crown of all other knowledge' (p. 64). So far knowledge had failed. 'No further progress in knowledge of truth, beyond what had been already gained and lost, was possible till [the Resurrection] that contradiction of average sensible experience was freely admitted' (p. 66). This was the point of St. Paul's preaching at Athens. Here, therefore, was a case in which Christ was declaring Himself as the Truth, and thereby giving new force, new dignity, and new reality to the whole conception of knowledge.

As the Way Christ dominates action, as the Truth He dominates knowledge; but there is yet a third stage; there is Life. 'Man and the universe surrounding man can by no means be resolved completely into a succession of acts and events and a constitutive order of permanent forms. The one most mysterious but most mighty factor of created things remains . . . even that which, generalizing rudely from a single conspicuous manifestation, we call life. . . . This life as it is in man . . . not only is the necessary latent base of human action and knowledge, but by their side and in their midst has its own proper manifestations in what is called in the widest sense emotion. Life is more than emotion, but the special expression of life is emotion' (p. 120), and Christ is the Life. This truth—which is in some ways the most difficult of all to express in words—is illustrated in the subsequent parts of the Last Discourses, and in the experience of the Church. As love is 'the highest manifestation of life,' so in the love of Christ and His Church the truth that He is the Life is most conspicuously set forth. It finds expression also in the triumph over death which the early experiences of the Church so painfully verified. It takes effect in the union, the love, the obedience, and the joy of all Christ's followers, and rests 'on the union and communion of the Father and the Son' (p. 125).

These three statements, thus interpreted, are in themselves a philosophy of life. But it must be admitted that they do not look like it. Philosophy, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, begins at the other end to this. It asks the question, What is real? or, How can we be sure that our senses tell us the truth? The final formulae into which all experience is ultimately to be swept are expected to rise out of these discussions. Dr. Hort's method is exactly the opposite. He does not aim, so far as this book would suggest, at a constructive system of metaphysics. Christianity, he knows, claims to be the final account of man's life and hopes. He therefore goes to the books in which Christianity finds its inspiration, seizes upon a critical declaration by the Founder of His claims: and then simply asks what these mean, how their exact historical interpretation suggests a significance that is for all time. In many ways he leaves himself open to assault. Some will say the authenticity of the record is not proved: others, that the critical

fact, the Resurrection, is neither proved nor probable, and that it is an error to assume these even provisionally. Upon these points, no doubt, he would have been prepared to expatiate at another time. But in spite of these omissions, as some will think them, what he has attempted is to have interpreted Christianity as it stands in the Gospels in a universal sense, to have shown—to use his own words—that 'the Gospel in all its parts and all its forms makes provision for the infinite future by giving answer to finite questions already asked' (p. 3). Christianity is not to be a separate study, beginning when philosophy has completed its work: it rather includes and transcends from the first all philosophy, and answers the questions which philosophy by itself can only ask. And this being so, the main source of the philosophy which rises out of Christianity is to be sought in an exact statement of the actual claims of Christ.

A like combination of characteristics is to be found in the critical work left by Dr. Hort. The textual theory embodied in the *Introduction* is a remarkable union of minute and laborious examination of facts, with a bold and skilful interpretation of them. Dean Burgon wrote as though the theory were merely a web spun by the imagination of Dr. Hort and having the most feeble contact with fact. Nothing could have been less apposite. It is true that one of the main contentions of the *Introduction* was present to the minds of the two critics quite early in the history of their undertaking. In 1853 Hort writes to the Rev. J. Ellerton that 'he (Westcott) and I are going to edit a Greek text of the New Testament some two or three years hence, if possible. . . . Our object is to supply clergymen, schools, &c., with a portable Greek Testament which shall not be disfigured with Byzantine corruptions' (*Life* vol. i p. 250); and this passage looks as if a reading traceable to Constantinople had already begun to look suspicious. But the views finally adopted in the *Introduction* were not defined first and then imposed on the text: they were the gradual result of the exhaustive comparison and co-ordination of all the facts supplied by the MSS. No reading, however apparently unimportant, was thrown aside until it had given up under examination any indirect evidence of which it might be capable. Thus in 1862 he writes to his collaborator: 'For a great mass of the readings, if we separate

them in thought from the rest, the labour is wholly disproportionate. But believing it to be absolutely impossible to draw a line between important and unimportant readings, I should hesitate to say that the entire labour is disproportionate to the worth of fixing the entire text to the utmost extent now practicable. . . . Every right-minded person, I suppose, has a relative contempt for orthographic details. Their dignity comes from their being essential to complete treatment. And I confess, when once at work upon them, I find a certain tepid interest as in any research depending on evidence and involving laws' (*Life* vol. i p. 455, cf. p. 425). Such a passage as this implies that, however freely the authors interpreted the facts under their examination, they regulated their movements by a precise and exhaustive inquiry into the actual character of their facts. Their work differs from the work of others primarily in the number and variety of facts taken into account: if it differs also in the comprehensiveness of the theory expounded, that is not because they are more reckless or more imaginative than other critics, but because they have gone further towards a complete survey of what is a strictly finite class of facts, with a limited range of possibilities in the way of explanation.

The disposition thus to penetrate to the fundamental facts in any matter which he was investigating naturally gave an impression that he held slightly by tradition. This was certainly true, in the sense that he insisted on reopening questions which many persons regarded as closed, and it naturally resulted in a highly original mode of presentation. There is probably no part of his work, as it is represented in the printed volumes under his name (except perhaps the slighter series of popular Lectures on the Ante-Nicene Fathers), which does not embody an original view of some question that is entirely his own. The Lectures on Judaistic Christianity, for instance, deal with a subject on part of which Lightfoot had had much to say. Hort does not enter into controversy with Lightfoot, nor does he exhaustively criticize him. He goes back upon the texts, and illustrates them from his knowledge of cognate literature, and in the end we find ourselves presented with an account of the Colossian heresy which differs widely from Lightfoot's, especially in the fact that it requires no factors outside Judaism to explain the rise of the

particular type of doctrine. In like manner, the history of the Christian Ecclesia is set forth without any theoretical discussion of principles involved, but simply by means of a careful analysis of passages bearing on the subject. These works all suffer from the fact that they did not receive the final touches from the hand of their author. They are interesting and valuable specimens of his method, and there can be no doubt that they genuinely represent his mind: it is not possible to imagine that he would have given lectures with a less sense of responsibility than he would have felt for a printed book. At the same time, it is impossible not to regret that they did not receive his final polish and come out in his own lifetime. Even if, as is probable, the opinions remained the same, the fragmentary character which belongs to them would have been avoided, and the subjects would have been brought to the point indicated at the outset, with that completeness which was Dr. Hort's main characteristic.

Thus far we have endeavoured to let the life of Dr. Hort tell its own story within the limits of such an article as this. We have seen how the special character of Dr. Hort's mind, and the education under which it passed, took shape in a particular attitude towards truth and the process of inquiry into truth. We have seen that, though in no way afraid of the boldest theorizing, the main bent of Hort's mind was towards an unprejudiced and original inquiry into the facts. He utterly revolts at the very idea of being expected to prove a particular conclusion. Indeed, the unfounded fear that his two friends, Lightfoot and Westcott, were less independent than he, almost led to his withdrawal from the scheme of New Testament Commentaries (*Life* i 418–423). We have now to attempt the more difficult task of inquiring into the scientific value of this habit of mind, and considering to what degree, if any, it admits of modification, in what regions, if in any, it is liable to lead to error.

In the first place it should be noted that this ideal of scientific work comes as a heritage from Bacon and Newton. It is the modern expression of the Baconian principle, *natura parendo vincitur*. Bacon made it his aim—in the region of scientific method—to supersede the older plan of inquiring what nature might be expected to do, by the method of observation and

experiment. Though his own applications of his method were not largely productive of positive truth, yet he is the true father of the modern advance in the knowledge of nature. Further, the whole succession of thinkers who, in definite terms or by implication, assume that the mind is passive in perception, count their descent from Bacon. And thus his influence reaches into the present day through Locke, Hume, and Mill. To all of these, truth lies in the observation of facts, and the construction of general laws by induction from the facts observed. They are shy of the recognition of any universal elements in the simpler activities of thought: the universal from their point of view is attained through the more particular. And in the still later developments of this point of view, evolution has been pressed into the service. Where earlier writers were in difficulty, in regard to the explanation of such commanding universality as that which belongs to mathematics, Mr. H. Spencer makes, at any rate, an apparent escape by extending the process of acquiring universal ideas over as many generations as may be necessary to produce it.

We have already dwelt on the fact that Dr. Hort never succeeded in getting the books written which he contemplated in the region of philosophy. But there are signs that his sympathies (whether carefully criticized or not there is not evidence to show) were with the point of view which traces back its lineage to Bacon. We have already noticed that he rests his view of the importance of small things in knowledge upon words of Bacon's. And we find later on that his sympathies are with Mill as against the Scottish school of metaphysicians (*Life* vol. ii p. 38); also that he thus characterizes the Bampton Lectures of the unfortunate Mansel: 'it is clear, vigorous, and not often unfair; only a big lie from beginning to end' *ibid.* vol. i p. 402). But more decisive indications are supplied by two passages dealing definitely with problems of existence. Thus he writes (*ibid.* vol. ii p. 101): 'I do not see how a relation can ultimately be interpreted as anything but the sense of a relation. We all, consciously or unconsciously, mean by existence the sense of appearance.' And again, on p. 283, apparently in connexion with some discussion on the Proof of the Existence of God, he writes: 'While it is impossible for me

to think at all, except with reference to thinker and thought (about "existence" I say nothing), I cannot feel or understand any such necessity of (if the phrase may be forgiven) thinking God; belief in Him seems to me a secondary process, a result, capable of being either received or rejected.' Passages such as these seem to imply that the methods and philosophical axioms which are, consciously or unconsciously, at the root of most modern natural science, prevailed in great force over the mind of Dr. Hort. From this point of view, mind and its object stand over against one another, and in order to attain truth the mind has to empty itself, as far as possible, of all preconceptions, and passively accept that which is given from without.

Now it must be admitted that this attitude of mind is an ideal rather than a natural and necessary state. The demand for it is a more vivid and drastic form of Bacon's phrase already quoted, *natura parendo vincitur*. And it is also a less accurate form of the phrase; because, while Bacon leaves aside all the questions relating to the mode in which the mind apprehends existence, the modern form of statement assumes, consciously or unconsciously, a theory of knowledge which, to say the very least, is not proved. It is at least equally probable that the entirely unbiassed mind—the 'achromatic eye' with which M. Renan requires a true historian to be endowed—is not only not the necessary qualification for the purpose, but a sheer impossibility—a *chimaera bombynans in vacuo*. If there is any remote likelihood that this is true, then the scientific method requires careful scrutiny.

It is obviously at its safest when the subject-matter is purely abstract: in pure mathematics, or in abstract dynamics and in such regions, the analysis of the ideas dealt with is the less necessary, because, in the first place, the relation of the ideas to reality is comparatively unimportant; and, secondly, the ideas themselves being abstractions, the question of the mind's contribution to their formation requires no discussion. It would seem, to judge from such a work as Dr. Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, that the question of the value in terms of reality of such notions as these is becoming a pressing one, and that confusion has already been caused in the scientific region through the practical assumption of mechanical and dynamical principles as conveying

information as to reality. But we need not enter into this: the method of careful investigation, and passive acceptance of results, is at its safest in these regions.

It is fairly safe, too, in all subject-matters of which the object is the mere collection of isolated facts, when the nature of such facts is not complex. For instance, the determination of the average rainfall in a given district needs only care in observation and accurate arithmetic. We may say, too, that such a method is generally free from danger in the examination of MSS with a view to the formation of a text. For in this matter the limits of possible variation are finite; the significance of the different variations is approximately known; and error would generally arise through lack of care in collecting the facts, or the importation of irrelevant ideas in the interpretation of them.

But when we come to historical inquiry the case has ceased to be simple, and it is here that we venture to think that Dr. Hort's reliance on the method usually valid in natural science has occasionally misled him. It is in this region that the purely passive attitude of acceptance seems to us most perilous; and this, not because it has ceased to represent a true scientific ideal, but because in this region it is an impossible ideal. It is, no doubt, of vital importance that when the history is conveyed through the medium of an ancient text, the words of the text should be interpreted with the strictest literalness. No true and historical interpretation can be based upon anything but a strictly literal translation. But when this is done, we have only reached the beginning of our real problem, and all its difficulties are still before us. If the text in question were a new discovery, a book arising, as it were, out of the grave, and detailing the history of an unknown and dead people, we should have nothing to do but to translate it, and leave it to tell its own story. But if the text itself is one among a number of related books, if it comes into contact with history of various kinds; still more, if it describes things which have been matters of controversy, then the difficulty of dealing scientifically with it is extreme. It is no longer to the purpose to wait and let the text, as it were, pour in its meaning upon a passive mind. Even the minute and careful consideration of a series of vital passages will give but a disjointed and incomplete result. The interpreter who will really reproduce the

whole meaning of the text before him will have to take more active measures. He will have to consider the isolated passages in relation to the whole; he will have to understand the successive events described, not as a mere series, but as an evolution, that is, as the gradual unfolding of an immanent idea. Above all, he will attempt to determine the principles which are involved in any interpretation of the particular kind in question: for this is the most trustworthy protection against hidden bias and unconscious prejudice, and offers an attainable ideal of accuracy in place of the impossible and fallacious ideal of the achromatic eye.

It is probable that those who knew Dr. Hort personally, and to whom he opened his full mind, will find it difficult to follow our criticism. But yet it remains that to many *The Christian Ecclesia* seems a 'minimizing' book. That is, it seems through its intense reserve, through the severe self-control with which the series of passages has been interpreted, to have lost, in some measure, the sense of the whole. Though we may know independently that the changes which are described were, in the mind of the author, governed by the Holy Spirit, yet the history as it is given leaves upon the mind a sense, not of an evolution, but of a series of accidental events. Though it is laid down that a society is not a horde of individuals, and that its actions will therefore differ from those of a mere horde, yet the description of the early days seems, not perhaps more amorphous than any single passage considered in isolation will warrant, but infinitely more amorphous than the general drift of the passages would suggest, if considered as a series. It is possible that if the Lectures had received their author's final revision some of this effect might have been modified. We might have looked to find in them an estimate of the relation of the Parables of the Kingdom, with their strong implications of order and organization, to the ideal of the Church at work in the Apostles. We might have looked, perhaps, for a more articulate account of the way in which the Apostles passed from the position of mere witnesses—if indeed that was the limit of their original function—to that of actual governors; or for a fuller exposition of the continuity of the Acts of the Church in the history given us by St. Luke. These things might have been supplied; but we cannot conceal our conviction that *The Christian Ecclesia* is

a case in which the method pursued with such brilliant success in other regions has revealed its inherent defect.

It is difficult to sum up in a few words what the outer world, apart from his friends and associates, owes to the work of this great scholar. Perhaps it may be expressed in these two sentences: he recalled us all to the free and exact study of the words of Holy Scripture; and, by the example of his unflinching gaze upon the truth as he could discover it, he vindicated many of the traditional beliefs which a more reckless criticism was assailing, and over which a world-weary pessimism had already despaired. A recent historian of the Universities of Europe has affirmed that Cambridge never produced a single first-rate Schoolman. If true, this is, doubtless, a serious misfortune for the University. But we venture to think that future historians will forget this lamentable omission, in view of the supreme greatness of some Cambridge scholars of this century; and of this class not the least will be F. J. A. Hort.

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