

said. 'As soon doubt the verity of the gospel as the veracity of Richard Baxter.' That was Southey's splendid eulogy, and it was well deserved. Baxter's absolute sincerity and unflinching courage were beyond all doubt and above all praise. Strength and beauty are both befitting in God's sanctuary. If the poet-preacher had more of the winsome beauty of holiness, the faithful confessor excelled in the naked strength of truth and soberness, when unadorned adorned the most. In his treatise on Conversion, Baxter defends his great plainness of speech: 'Compliments are not needed when we run to quench a common fire.'

Both our divines were alike in their love for the fine analyses of *Casuistry*.

Principal Tulloch says it is not quite fair to say that the mechanical and unreal treatment of the Christian life as an uneasy routine of vices to be avoided and virtues to be learnt is characteristically Puritan. The Roman casuists carried the same mode of treatment to an even more unhappy excess. We must not forget that Jeremy Taylor wrote the *Ductor Dubitantium*, which Hallam praised as the greatest manual of casuistry in the English language; and Baxter's first impulse in that direction was derived from Bunney's *Resolutions*, a Puritan recasting of a Jesuit manual. Yet it must be owned that his subtle intellect revelled in fine analyses and thin distinctions with a zeal

worthy of a mediæval schoolman. In his *Christian Directory, or Sum of Practical Theology and Cases of Conscience*, the questions and cases are simply interminable.

After discussing 30 tongue sins and 20 questions for the conviction of drunkards; 18 necessary qualifications of lawful recreations, 18 sorts that are sinful; 12 convincing questions for those who plead for such pastimes; 36 questions about contracts; 174 about matters ecclesiastical, and so forth, he apologizes for the incompleteness of his list, regretting that the want of his library prevented him from enlarging the enumeration of cases!

It is scrupulosity gone mad! It is Rabbinical legalism *redivivus*, laying again an intolerable yoke of bondage on men's shoulders. Happily, we have learned to see that these crowds of casuistical rules are clean contrary to the principles of Christ. His principles were few and simple and broad and illuminating. And experience proves that casuistry is much more likely to suggest sophistical excuses for what is wrong than to give clear guidance to what is right. Duty is best discovered, not by the anxious weighing of pharisaic scruples, but by following those living instincts of right in the Christian soul which seize on the resources and opportunities of good which the moment offers, and use them to the utmost. The Christian is set 'free from the law,' that he may become 'a law unto himself,' because he is 'enlawed to Christ.'

## 'The Credibility of the Acts of the Apostles.'

BY THE REV. EDWARD R. BERNARD, M.A., CANON AND CHANCELLOR OF SALISBURY CATHEDRAL.

THIS is an apologetic work, but not in the ordinary sense of the term. The writer does not set himself the task of defence, but the task of investigation, the result of which proves to be the establishment of his thesis. He speaks in his preface of the narrow limit which he has marked out for himself, and it must be acknowledged that the treatment of the purely narrative portion of the book is slight

<sup>1</sup> *The Credibility of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles*, being the Hulsean Lectures for 1900-1901. By F. H. Chase, D.D., President of Queens' College, and Norrisian Professor of Divinity, Cambridge. Macmillan, 1902.

in comparison with the full examination of the reports of the speeches and addresses of St. Peter and St. Paul. It is this latter feature which gives the work its main value, and will ensure it the attention of all students of apostolic history. The first two lectures, however, contain much that is valuable. The first lecture touches briefly most of the important points relating to the text, authorship, and sources of the work. Dr. Chase, here and elsewhere in his earlier chapters, is largely indebted to Th. Zahn's *Einleitung in das N.T.*, an indebtedness which he would be the first to

acknowledge. He has in particular made excellent use of Zahn's<sup>1</sup> demonstration that the prologue to St. Luke's Gospel should be regarded as the prologue to both the Gospel and the Acts. It is indeed unfortunate, though perhaps unavoidable, that St. Luke's great historical work should have been dislocated for us by the insertion of St. John's Gospel between its two constituent parts. The prologue, thus understood, suggests the inquiry, Who were the eye-witnesses and ministers of the word from whom St. Luke received the accounts of the events in Acts of which he was not himself a witness? and this question is satisfactorily answered by our author. The latter portion of the first lecture is concerned with the events of Pentecost.

The suggestion that 'the Temple was the scene of the Pentecostal gift' (p. 31) is extremely interesting, and has everything to recommend it. The word 'house,' which seems to make against it, is shown to be evidence in its favour. But the suggestions which are made to enable acceptance of the miraculous element in the narrative do not commend themselves to our judgment. That the rays of the rising sun on the foreheads of the apostles should be what is meant by 'tongues as of fire,' and that reminiscences of liturgical expressions of praise in other languages, formerly heard by the apostles from foreign Jews, should have been recalled and repeated by them in a moment of spiritual exultation—both these explanations will seem to some at least harder to believe than the miraculous view of the same occurrences, that is, if miracles are admitted at all as occurring in this period. But the author desires to keep this crucial question in suspense (p. 301), and to investigate the credibility of St. Luke as a historian, with the question of the miracles recorded by him eliminated from the inquiry. Of course St. Luke must have believed in miracles being wrought in the apostolic Church if he was indeed the companion and disciple of St. Paul, whose Epistles leave no possibility of doubt as to his conviction. Can we inquire as to the credibility of St. Luke, making this reserve as to his disposition to ascribe to supernatural intervention what were really occurrences in the ordinary course of nature? Such a course is undoubtedly possible, and has in the work before us produced valuable

<sup>1</sup> Zahn himself does not claim this view as original, but in an interesting note shows it is as old as St. Augustine (*Einleitung*, ii. p. 386).

results; but it would have been better and more logical to have left the miraculous events alone, instead of attempting to deal with one or two of them, while the whole mass of the rest which occur throughout the narrative are entirely untouched. In short, the credibility of St. Luke,<sup>2</sup> and the credibility of the Book of the Acts, with all its contents, are two different matters, though we must confess that the course of the narrative appears to us so closely to depend upon, and grow out of, the various miraculous events, that the acceptance of the former involves the acceptance of the latter; in fact the consistency of the story goes far to prove the miracles, to a mind which is not already closed to evidence in that direction.

Before leaving the subject of the 'tongues' we must acknowledge the soundness of the view which Dr. Chase takes of the character of the gift. The utterances were utterances of praise. We may go on to say that there is no hint of their having, except incidentally, any evangelistic character, and thus their unity with the same gift as described elsewhere in Acts, and in 1 Co is not really open to question. It was a symbolic gift, not a utilitarian one. It signified the unity of all peoples and languages in the Christian Church, and the insufficiency of any one human tongue to express the praises of God.

In the second lecture the real theme of Acts, namely, the expansion of the Church, is admirably dealt with, and the reticence in the earlier chapters as to its mission to the Gentiles is brought into service as a proof of the genuineness of the narrative. In Dr. Chase's own words, 'the apparent casualness of the history, its fragmentariness, its retrogressions, are a strong guarantee of the substantial truth of the record.' These characteristics are not due to any want of historical lucidity and arrangement on the part of St. Luke, as may be seen in Blass's admirable analysis (*Acta, Prolegg.* § 6), but to the actual sequence of the events. Something more might have been said by our author as to the threefold repetition of the narrative of St. Paul's conversion. Why does St. Luke relate it again in the apologies to the Jews and before Festus? Because both these apologies were in the highest degree important and valuable

<sup>2</sup> Ipse has res ad theologos relego . . . sedeant pro tribunali, vetent angelos esse: quod decretum quam coercedi vim 'habere possit, ipsi videant. Sed quid id ad Lucam?' (Blass, *Acta, Prolegg.* § 4).

for practical purposes. Both of them from the circumstances must necessarily turn upon the events of St. Paul's own life. St. Luke could not omit either of them, and he would have reduced them to shreds if he had torn out the personal narrative. We cannot think that there is any occasion to suggest that the sail (*δθόνη*) in which St. Peter, in his trance, saw the living creatures brought before him, was suggested by the sight of a sail approaching from seaward. This is to mix up waking experience with the experience of a trance. It would have been enough to point out the inaccuracy of the A.V. and R.V. rendering 'sheet.' The conjecture to account for *καί* in Acts 11<sup>20</sup> is interesting and ably argued for (p. 82 ff.). The very slight treatment of the apparent inconsistencies between Acts and Galatians (p. 91 ff.) is rather disappointing, as here is a matter in which the credibility of the narrative in Acts is at stake.

We now come to the main portion of the work, in which the author has allowed himself to deal fully with his subject, namely, the recorded speeches and addresses of St. Peter and St. Paul. Nothing can be better than the way in which *primâ facie* difficulties as to the preservation of the speeches and as to their historical character are dealt with in pp. 106-122. A point in the second address of St. Peter (Acts 3<sup>19-20</sup>), which is an evidence for its genuineness, might well be added to those enumerated by the author, namely, its intense hopefulness, a feature very unlikely to appear in a composition of a later date, when Judaism had proved irreconcilable. The tone leads us to suppose that the apostles were at this moment expecting nothing less than the winning over of the whole Jewish nation to faith in Jesus, and then the Lord's return, and the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. The absence of the higher Christology, which is so marked a feature in the two addresses, is implicitly dealt with in pp. 144-159.

The fourth and by far the longest lecture deals with 'the witness of St. Paul.' This is investigated in three relations (1)—What is the relation of the Pauline to the Petrine speeches in the Acts? (2) What is the relation of the Pauline speeches to the Pauline Epistles? (3) What is the mutual relation between the Pauline speeches? With these questions in view the author examines successively the apostle's witness to Israel at Pisidian Antioch, to

the heathen world at Lystra and Athens, and to believers at Miletus. The address at Antioch receives the fullest investigation, and especially in its relation to the O.T. One excellent point should be noticed, namely, the reason which suggested to St. Paul the choice of Hab 1<sup>5</sup> as his concluding quotation (p. 195). It might be added that Ps 89 seems to have been in St. Paul's mind. His 'song is of the loving-kindness of the Lord.' The purpose of his historical review is to put into close connexion the former mercies to Israel, and the newest, greatest mercy of salvation through Jesus. There is the same prominence in psalm and speech of the mercies in David, and one clause (v. 22) is virtually quoted from Ps 89<sup>20</sup>. In the closing portion of the psalm the perplexity was that God appeared to have rejected Israel. Now the perplexity is inverted, how is it that Israel has rejected God?

The examination of the speech at Athens is full of interest. Perhaps hardly enough recognition is given to the evident intention of St. Paul to word his address so as to conciliate all his hearers with the exception of the Epicureans. Though the Stoics would not acknowledge human responsibility and a Divine tribunal, such expectations were familiar to the school of Plato from whom the Stoics derived. The reminiscence of Ecclus. 28<sup>7</sup> (not noticed in R.V. reff.) is perhaps worth mentioning here. The author's suggestion that the depression of St. Paul at Corinth, and the nature of his preaching there as described in the earlier chapters of 1 Co, were due to a sense of having 'gone too far in the way of meeting philosophy with philosophy' (p. 234), is a reasonable one.

Next, we have the pastoral address at Miletus. While acknowledging the value of the parallels drawn between this address and the apologetic portions of the Epistles, as contributory to the author's purpose, we are disposed to think that he exaggerates the apologetic character of the address, or rather dwells on it too exclusively. We take it that here, as also in his Epistles, the really prominent thought in St. Paul's mind is to set forward the character of his own ministry as an example (*τύπος*) to those who also have a ministry to fulfil (cp. 2 Ti 3<sup>10</sup>). The parallel with 2 Co is well drawn out on p. 253; but the emphasis on the apostle's determination not to keep back anything, seems to imply that there had been some definite elements in his teaching which had given offence.

'Bound in the Spirit' might perhaps have been compared with a probable interpretation of 2 Co 2<sup>14</sup>. Dr. Chase's rendering of *τὴν ἀφιξίν μου* is striking and well supported by his note (p. 263), 'after my arrival, after my long journey is over, and I have reached my true home.'

The summary of results (p. 288 ff.) deserves to be quoted in full; and it certainly claims nothing more than the careful reader will be ready to allow as actually achieved. 'The foregoing investigation of these speeches has, I trust, been thorough; I have not consciously avoided any topic which might seem to draw doubt on the position that they are ultimately the product of St. Paul's mind. But in the course of the discussion nothing has been discovered in regard either to language or thought which under the supposed circumstances would have been unnatural in St. Paul as we know him in his letters. On the positive side, while these speeches are as far as possible removed from being mere centoës of Pauline expressions, their phraseology and their ideas present frequent and delicate points of contact with the phraseology and ideas of St. Paul's Epistles. We here handle threads which we trace woven into the doctrinal and devotional fabric of the apostle's writings.

We discover in these speeches conceptions in a general and elementary form to which in the Epistles a matured expression is given, and which are there found in their theological context.'

A little later, in reference to the speech at Miletus, he adds: 'In this speech and in the Epistles we discern the same religious temper and the same combination of human qualities—eagerness and tenderness, humility and self-assertion, steadfastness and awe in the face of danger' (p. 288 ff.).

We hope that enough has been said to show what an important contribution to the defence of the credibility of the book has been made, at least in respect of what has been hitherto freely assailed, namely, the speeches which it contains. The work has been done in the spirit and style of Lechler's *Apostolic and Post Apostolic Age*, and that is to give it very high praise. We shall look forward with renewed expectation to the appearance of Dr. Chase's complete commentary on the book, in which he will no longer be limited, as in the present case, by the narrow bounds of four lectures, and the necessary confinement to a single aim in his investigations, which has here been entailed by his subject.

## The Great Text Commentary.

### THE GREAT TEXTS OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

#### ACTS IV. 2.

'And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common' (R.V.).

#### EXPOSITION.

THIS passage is not a mere repetition of 2<sup>44</sup>, 45; there the author described the enthusiastic liberality which prevailed amongst the primitive Christians in general; here he exhibits the same spirit at work in an organized community at Jerusalem under apostolic direction some years later. The generous enthusiasm of Barnabas, the selfish hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira, the appointment of the Seven, are presented in succession, and illustrate the working of the system.—RENDALL.

'The multitude of them that believed.'—Rather the 'community,' according to a use of the word (*πληθος*) in

ancient religious associations, seen in the early inscriptions (Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, 232 f.).—BARTLET.

BELIEF as the act of embracing the faith is expressed here by the aorist participle; a present state of mind would be expressed by a present participle.—RENDALL.

'Were of one heart and soul.'—'In credendis et agendis: egregius character' (Bengel). So too others distinguish between the heart (*καρδια*), the seat of thought and intelligence, and the soul (*ψυχη*), the seat of the active affections and impulses. Such distinctions are, however, hard to maintain. The expression, with emphatic fulness, describes complete unanimity of thought and feeling, resulting naturally, and not as a matter of enforced rule, in their considering all believers as brothers, who could have no separate interests in heaven or on earth.—PAGE.

'Not one of them.'—Much stronger than *no one* (*οὐδεις*).—PAGE.

'But they had all things common.'—The text clearly describes the early believers as treating individual property as subject to the claims of all members of the community;