

**A HISTORIC VIEW
OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT**

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A Historic View of the New Testament by Percy Gardner

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PERCY GARDNER

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Wm. Barclay

A HISTORIC VIEW
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See Survey in Big Fish Lake

see Survey 10/12

A HISTORIC VIEW
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT

THE JOWETT LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE
PASSMORE EDWARDS SETTLEMENT
IN LONDON, 1901

BY
PERCY GARDNER, LITT.D.

"It has to be considered whether the intellectual forms under which Christianity has been described may not be in a state of transition and resolution, in this respect contrasting with the never-changing truth of the Christian life."

"Before we can make the Old and New Testaments a real part of education, we must read them, not by the help of custom and tradition, in the spirit of apology or controversy, but in accordance with the ordinary laws of human knowledge."
BENJAMIN JOWETT.

LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
1901

PREFACE

FOUR years ago the Council of the Passmore Edwards Settlement in London founded a lectureship in memory of the late master of Balliol College, Benjamin Jowett, for the promotion of "the study of the Bible and the history of religion, in the light of the best available results of criticism and research." The present set of lectures is the third delivered on the Jowett Foundation; the previous lecturers being Professor Charles of Dublin and Professor Adam Smith of Glasgow.

The quotations on the title-page are sufficient proof that the method and the objects of the lectures here published would have commended themselves to Mr. Jowett.

These lectures are printed as they were delivered, with a few slight alterations and expansions. Since I wrote them I have read Professor Harnack's *Wesen des Christenthums* (*What is Christianity?*) It is to me a great satisfaction to find that my historical views in most cases closely agree with those of so eminent a historian—notably my views as to the miraculous element in the life of Jesus,

the origin of the Fourth Gospel, and the relation of Greek to Hebrew elements in the early Church. Where I most completely differ from Professor Harnack is in the view of inspiration.

It is obvious that in eight lectures it is possible only to give a slight outline of so vast a subject as the origin of the New Testament. Most of the positions here taken are supported at greater length in my *Exploratio Evangelica* (1899), to which work I must needs refer readers who find the exposition now placed before them too slight.

PERCY GARDNER.

OXFORD, August 1901.

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LECTURE I

HISTORIC METHODS AND CHRISTIAN DOCUMENTS

Some preliminary discussion of method is necessary: that which we shall adopt is the method of historic science, 1.—Science is *ordered knowledge*, 4.—Scientific method as applied to history consists mainly in three things: (1) rigorous criticism of ancient authorities, 5; (2) the comparison with existing fact whenever possible, whence arises the comparative method in historic investigations, 7; (3) the acceptance of evolution. But in history the theory of evolution cannot be so strictly applied as in biology, nor is law so rigid because of the disturbing force of human personality, and the Divine power which works through it, 12.—Historic science destructive of many existing beliefs, such as those of a physically miraculous origin of Christianity and the infallibility of the Bible, 16.—It tells in different ways, but with equal stress, against the doctrines of the Roman and the Reformed Churches; but the latter are more flexible, 19.—The Reformed Churches will be obliged to trust to their citadel of Christian experience, and reconsider their views of Christian origins, 21.—The task of these lectures is not merely destructive but constructive, 28.—The first step is to lay down a psychologic view as to the rise and intellectual embodiments of religion, after which we will proceed to consider the facts of the Christian origin in a broad historic fashion, not in the way of special or textual criticism, 29.—We shall find in sum that the writings of the New Testament are based upon Christian experience, but often debased by an admixture of false theory. Recent work on historic lines in Germany, France, and England, 32.