

**THE ESCHATOLOGICAL
QUESTION IN THE GOSPELS:
AND OTHER STUDIES IN RECENT
NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM**

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The eschatological question in the Gospels: and other studies in recent New Testament criticism
by Cyril W. Emmet

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CYRIL W. EMMET

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QUESTION IN THE
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*And other Studies in Recent
New Testament Criticism*

BY THE REV.

CYRIL W. EMMET, M.A.

VICAR OF WEST HENDRED

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PREFACE



THE subjects of these essays, though they all deal with recent New Testament criticism, are a little miscellaneous. But the first four, which comprise the bulk of the book, have in common one feature which may perhaps be of value to the busy reader. In discussing the views of Schweitzer, Loisy, and Harnack, the attempt has been made to give verbatim extracts from their works to an extent sufficient to enable him to judge for himself the merits of their respective positions, apart from any gloss put on them by the critic.

A few words of explanation may be useful as to the general standpoint adopted in this book. New Testament critics would seem to be divided just at present into the two camps of which Father Tyrrell has spoken in *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*. On the one hand there is the familiar Liberal and

Protestant criticism, of which Bousset and Harnack are generally taken as examples; on the other there is the newer and more radical type, represented by Loisy and Schweitzer, and endorsed by Tyrrell. The paradox is that this latter has found not a few of its exponents and supporters in the ranks of those who hold more closely to the Creeds and the fuller faith of historic Christianity, than does the older Liberal school.

If a more or less personal note may for a moment be allowed, I myself in each case approached the writers of this second school with every possible prejudice in their favour, and with the hope that I should find at length that reconciliation of faith and criticism for which so many are looking. Perhaps the somewhat unreasonable nature of this hope may, by the law of reaction, be responsible for the ultimate impression made upon me. However that may be, the feeling of dissatisfaction deepened at each reading. I found myself continually contrasting the impressions made on me by the Harnack-Bousset school, to which at an earlier period I had come fresh from the sincere milk of a less critical teaching. There, there had been

but little to repel. Rather, I was amazed at the tone of reverence pervading a literature which was supposed to be "dangerous." It might present what Dr. Sanday has lately called "a reduced Christianity," but it was Christianity, and it seemed to offer a foundation on which a fuller Christianity might safely be built.

On the other hand, it became impossible to resist the conviction that the newer school, though as a whole it cared more for the superstructure than did its predecessors, was yet in fact busily engaged in removing every stone of the foundation on which alone that superstructure can rest. In particular, the figure of the historic Jesus receives a treatment which either practically banishes Him from the stage of history, leaving Him as a Great Unknown of whose life and teaching we can affirm almost nothing, or else strips Him of nearly every attribute which has hitherto attracted the love and admiration of the world. That when this is done, the Christ, who somehow springs from His ashes, can retain the worship of the world, it is difficult to believe.

Such, at any rate, is the position reached in the following pages; and I hope that the touch of autobiography will have made it

clear that, whether it be right or wrong, its adoption is at least not due to any *a priori* prejudice. The conclusion was not ready formed before the books in question were opened, but was forced upon me as a result of their study, against my will and expectation. If something is done to remove the widespread impression that the position of Loisy and Schweitzer is somehow more compatible with a full and Catholic Christianity than is that of the "Liberal Protestants," this little volume may perhaps justify its existence.

It remains to offer my grateful acknowledgments for permission to reprint articles, granted by the editors and publishers of the *Expository Times* (Essays II. and IV.), the *Contemporary Review* (Essay III.), the *Expositor* (Essays V. and VI.), and the *Interpreter* (Essay VII.). A reference has been added here and there to subsequent literature, but the papers remain substantially unaltered.

CYRIL W. EMMET.

WEST HENDRED VICARAGE,
September 17, 1910.

CONTENTS



PREFACE	PAGE V
-------------------	-----------

I.

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL QUESTION IN THE GOSPELS AS INTERPRETED BY SCHWEITZER.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

"Eschatology"—Some recent English literature : Sanday, Tyrrell, etc.—Schweitzer's <i>The Quest of the Historical Jesus</i>	3
---	---

CHAPTER II.

SCHWEITZER'S POSITION.

Problems raised by the Marcan narrative—Wrede's solution—The eschatological solution—Nearness of the end—Predestinarianism—The mystery of the Parables—The Mission of the Twelve—Retirement to the

	PAGE
North, Transfiguration, and Caesarea Philippi—The quest of death—The Son of Man—The Messiah of the future and His secret—Elias—The entry into Jerusalem—What did Judas betray?—The end . . .	10

CHAPTER III.

SOME PRELIMINARY CRITICISMS.

Attractions of the theory—Does it do justice to the Gospels?—Reading between the lines—Modernising—Sacraments and the Five Thousand—The Church . . .	29
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

THE POLITICAL MESSIAH.

Unproved assumptions—The political element in the Messianic hope—Old Testament ideas and the new Apocalyptic—Evidence of the Psalms of Solomon and the New Testament—The Messianic secret—Why should Jesus "play with it"?	40
--	----

CHAPTER V.

[THE ESCHATOLOGY OF JESUS.]

The uncompromising character of the theory—Can we dispense with "buts"?—Interpretation of eschatological language, qualified by (i.) possible spiritualisation ; (ii.) later additions ; (iii.) its subsidiary place—Analogy of St. Paul—Are the ethics eschatological?—Predestinarianism—Jesus as a teacher	49
--	----