

**CHRIST AND CRITICISM;
THOUGHTS CONCERNING
THE RELATION OF CHRISTIAN
FAITH TO BIBLICAL CRITICISM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649386956

Christ and criticism; thoughts concerning the relation of Christian faith to Biblical criticism by
Charles Marsh Mead

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

CHARLES MARSH MEAD

**CHRIST AND CRITICISM;
THOUGHTS CONCERNING
THE RELATION OF CHRISTIAN
FAITH TO BIBLICAL CRITICISM**

CHRIST AND CRITICISM

THOUGHTS CONCERNING THE RELATION
OF
CHRISTIAN FAITH
TO
BIBLICAL CRITICISM

BY
CHARLES MARSH MEAD, PH.D., D.D.
PROFESSOR IN HARTFORD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

NEW YORK
ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & COMPANY
(INCORPORATED)
182 FIFTH AVENUE

PREFACE.

THE following treatise is in part an expansion of the last chapter of my work on *Supernatural Revelation*. I have been the more moved to write it inasmuch as, in spite of what might well seem to be clear enough statements, my views have been misapprehended by some, and have been represented as hostile to the higher criticism. Lest the present work should make the same impression, let me at the outset emphatically say that I regard the higher criticism as not only entirely legitimate, but as very useful, and indiscriminate condemnation of it as foolish. Genuine criticism is nothing but the search after truth; and of this there cannot be too much.

On the other hand, higher critics and their champions are scarcely less foolish when they denounce every animadversion made on their methods or their alleged results as an illicit infringement on freedom of research. Surely the right to criticise a critic's theories is as sacred as the right of the critic to propound them. The higher criticism, like all other good things is capable of abuse; and every one has a right to say when he thinks such an abuse has been committed.

The special object of the following discussion is to aid in the general work of getting at the truth as regards the Bible, by setting forth how far the authority of Jesus Christ should properly be allowed to modify, or to regulate, the process of Biblical criticism. Whatever may be thought of the result which has been reached, it should be distinctly understood that the object has been, not to oppose criticism, but to help it.

Inasmuch as it has now become known to the public that the pseudonymous work, *Romans Dissected*, by E. D. McRealsham (in German, *Der Römerbrief beurtheilt und geviertheilt* von Carl Hessedamm), was written by myself, I may properly here say a word concerning the object of it. Though some friendly critics have spoken of it as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the analysis of the Pentateuch, I can hardly assent to such a judgment. The fact that the Epistle to the Romans may be dissected in an ironical way does not *prove* that a similar dissection of the Pentateuch, seriously undertaken, is equally baseless. It is possible that there are more cogent reasons for postulating the composite character of the Pentateuch than that of Romans. This is itself a matter for candid critics to consider.

Other critics of the book have regarded it as aimed solely at the radical critics of the New Testament, such as Professor Steck, who denies the genuineness even of the Epistle to the Romans. This is also only in part correct. Over against those who seriously contest the genuineness of the book an ironical essay to prove its spuriousness can obviously have little weight. The real object of *Romans Dissected* was not so much to refute any particular theory concerning either the

Old Testament or the New, as to show in general that a critical disintegration of a book by a mere inspection of its contents, style, and linguistic characteristics, unconfirmed by external testimony, cannot be depended on as giving us the truth — or, in fact, anything more than plausible conjecture — concerning the date and authorship of the book. And this object may, I think, be regarded as gained.

December, 1892.

THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SEARCH AFTER ASSURANCE.

The tendency to search for grounds of full confidence in matters of religious faith. I. The various methods pursued. 1. The Roman Catholic doctrine. The alleged authority of councils and Popes. Objections. Relation of ecclesiastical infallibility to the Scriptures and Christ. 2. The rationalistic doctrine. How far it is justifiable. Fallacy of it. 3. The mystical doctrine. Objections to it. 4. The Protestant doctrine. Authority of the Bible. Biblical infallibility. Difficulties of the doctrine. Christ the superior authority. 5. Christ as the ground of assurance. Faith in him considered as outranking faith in the Bible. But why accept Christ as infallible? II. General answer to the question, how Christians can justify their faith. 1. Tradition first brings Christ before the mind. The presumption in favor of tradition. 2. Christian experience confirms the report of tradition. 3. Historic records sanction the testimony of tradition and experience. These three grounds of assurance belong together and confirm one another. pp. 1—20

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM.

Faith in Christ considered as independent of Biblical criticism. The question presented, How do we know Christ to be

worthy of faith? The evidence is that of history, and the historical evidence is found in the New Testament. The invalidation of the New Testament would overthrow the foundations of the Christian faith. Reconciliation of this principle with that which makes faith in Christ prior and superior to faith in the Bible. Not accomplished by insisting that criticism confirms the authenticity of the Gospels. The problem illustrated by the history of Washington. Faith in the man and faith in the written history of the man go together and cannot be disjoined. Faith, therefore, not independent of criticism.

How far is criticism limited by faith? Prepossessions unavoidable. 1. Christian faith involves faith in the general truthfulness of the New Testament portraiture of Christ. Not necessarily in the absolute inerrancy or supernatural inspiration of the book. But if so, how far may one go in the rejection of Biblical statements? One must recognize the community of the Christian faith. The common faith involves a common acceptance of the New Testament. A radical departure from the common faith destroys one's claim to be a Christian. What is a radical departure? Impossibility of supposing that Christendom has in general misconceived the meaning of the New Testament.

2. In interpreting the New Testament doctrine of Christ it is unwarrantable to make use wholly or preponderantly of a particular part of the New Testament. The Epistles as legitimate sources of information as the Gospels. Paul in no way inferior to Luke as an informant. The Fourth Gospel and the Synoptists. Unreasonableness of eliminating the evidence of John, Paul, and Peter, and taking only that of the Synoptists. Such a method presupposes that Christ is known before the sources of the knowledge are consulted.

3. Faith in Christ inconsistent with a general doubt or denial of the supernatural. The presumption which lies against stories of the miraculous in general cannot be pleaded against the New Testament accounts of Christ without abandoning faith in the only Christ that we know about. Miracles considered as historical events. The resurrection of Christ cannot be denied consistently with Christian faith. Martineau's effort to discredit the New Testament narratives of the resurrection.

4. Christian faith forbids in general the adoption of purely