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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REFORMED THEOLOGY TODAY*

MR. PRESIDENT, GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, FATHERS AND BRETHREN :

I have a very profound sense of unworthiness in taking up the duties of the Chair to which you have called me—a Chair made famous by the illustrious men who have preceded me, and whose labours have helped to give Princeton Seminary a fame throughout the world for sound learning and true piety. We think today of Archibald Alexander, that man of God, the first Professor in this Seminary; of Charles Hodge, whose Systematic Theology today remains as probably the greatest exposition of the Reformed Theology in the English language; of Archibald Alexander Hodge, a man of rare popular gifts and of unusual metaphysical ability; and last, but not least, excelling them all in erudition, of Dr. Warfield, whose recent death has left us bereft of our leader and of one of the greatest men who have ever taught in this Institution.

I would pause a moment to pay a tribute to his memory. He was my honoured teacher and friend. For twenty years I had the privilege of helping him in this department, and drew inspiration from his broad minded scholarship. At the time of his death he was, I think, without an equal as a theologian in the English speaking world. With Doctors Kuyper and Bavinck of Holland, he made up a great trio of outstanding exponents of the Reformed Faith. His loss is simply irreparable. But he has gone to his reward, to

* An Inaugural Address delivered by Caspar Wistar Hodge on the occasion of his induction into the Charles Hodge Chair of Didactic and Polemic Theology, Miller Chapel, October 11th, 1921.

Zwingli, seems to have been the appointed prophet for that particular mission.

In Chapter III Dr. Good compares at some length the Lutheran and the Reformed Reformations up to the year 1525, and then (Chapter IV), covering much the same ground from a different point of view, traces the development of Zwingli's theology from the time of his pastorate at Glarus to the publication of his *True and False Religion* (1525).

In the brief second "Book" (pp. 105-143) the author shows how the Reformed supplemented and completed the Lutheran Reformation in the spheres of the cultus, ecclesiastical government, and doctrine. He further estimates Zwingli's contribution to "the spirit of the Reformation" from the standpoint of his services as a political, a humanistic, and a "redemptive" Reformer. The last chapter sets forth the "Contribution of the Reformed Side of the Reformation to the Spirit of Protestantism," in securing popular liberty, in developing practical ethics, in fostering pietism, and in promoting education.

With the author's positive treatment of his theme we find ourselves in substantial accord; but we cannot follow him in all his deductions from the facts, when he speaks comparatively of the two closely related reform movements. At the same time we heartily sympathize with him in his endeavor to secure a more favorable, because more just, appreciation of the work of Lefevre and Zwingli.

Finally, we are constrained to ask, Ought not the title of this book to have been limited, or else some of the other Reformed leaders—Calvin at least—been included in this estimate of the "Reformed Reformation"?

Princeton.

FREDERICK W. LOETSCHER.

EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY

A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians.

In *The International Critical Commentary*. By ERNEST DE WITT BURTON, Professor of New Testament Interpretation in the University of Chicago. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920. Pp. lxxxix, 541.

Professor Burton's long-awaited commentary on Galatians is perhaps the most elaborate New Testament exegetical work that has appeared within the past thirty or forty years. The author declares in his preface that he began work on Galatians in 1896, and the finished product bears abundant testimony to the diligence with which the twenty-four intervening years up to the appearance of the book were spent. Attainments in various fields, moreover, served to equip the author for his task; Professor Burton is a notable grammarian and lexicographer who had already—even before the appearance of this his most important work—placed students of the New Testament very deeply in his debt.

The method of the commentary allows free play for the exercise of the author's gift for analysis and classification. In addition to Professor Burton's own view, rival exegetical opinion with regard to all questions of any importance whatever is carefully noted, and minute differences of opinion are distinguished and classified. The result may at times make difficult reading, but only superficiality can ignore the value of such work. The Epistle to the Galatians is too a supremely important piece of writing that no amount of labor is too great if the exact meaning can finally be attained. And it may sometimes appear that the elaborate classification, the minute grammatical distinctions, may be an aid to common sense. The painful process of determining what a passage does not mean is often the very best way to determine clearly what it does mean, although after the result has been attained the process of its attainment may sometimes be forgotten.

In the elaborate "detached notes on important terms of Paul's vocabulary" which follow the commentary proper, the author has exercised his notable gifts as a lexicographer. The results are at times destructive of conclusions which in the modern school of comparative religion have attained almost to the position of dogma. Particularly refreshing are the notes on Πνεῦμα and Σάρξ and on τὰ Στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου. In the former note, which is an abridgment of part of the author's admirable monograph (*Spirit, Soul and Flesh*, 1918), Professor Burton exhibits the basis in the Old Testament for the Pauline use of the term "Spirit," and the lack of basis in Greek writers. By a careful exhibition and classification of the actual usage, which is in marked contrast to the unmethodical roamings of certain recent writers, the conclusions of Reitzenstein and others are tacitly but convincingly refuted. In the latter note, Professor Burton is bold enough to reject the current interpretation, almost hallowed with the sanctity of a modern exegetical tradition, which finds personal beings in the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου and attributes to Paul all kinds of strange opinions about the identity of the heathen gods with the angels of the Old Testament dispensation. For very good and cogently presented reasons, our commentator returns to the sensible view which makes of the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου simply "the rudimentary religious teachings possessed by the race." Somewhat related to this conclusion is the author's insistence that the implied contrast with εἰς in Gal. iii. 20 is duality, not plurality, and his rejection of any interpretation which makes Paul's argument turn on the view that the angels, and not God directly, were the givers of the Law. On the positive side, Professor Burton's treatment of this passage is less satisfactory. He is inclined to treat Gal. iii. 20 as rabbinical, and to question whether either this verse or Gal. iii. 16b belongs really to Paul.

It is impossible, here, to follow any further the lexicographical investigations of Professor Burton. Enough has perhaps been said to show that the commentary, with its detached notes, is valuable not merely as an aid to the understanding of Galatians, but also as a mine

of information about the entire history, both profane and Biblical, of New Testament words.

Nevertheless, despite the many virtues of Professor Burton's great work, despite the gratitude which all students of the New Testament must feel toward the learned author, it must be confessed with sorrow that this most recent and most elaborate commentary marks distinctly a backward step in the history of New Testament exegesis. For the plain fact is that the method of grammatico-historical exegesis is here actually though not consciously abandoned. The author does not present to his readers the real Paul as he actually lived in the first century, but a strangely modernized Paul, who will subserve the interests of the current liberalism.

This modernizing of the apostle runs all through the commentary. It appears in many directions.

In the first place, the Paul of Professor Burton presents a totally un-Pauline view of the seat of authority in religion and of the validity of the gospel message. In the year 1921, after all the boasted development of modern historical method, it is nothing short of amazing to find Professor Burton writing as follows (p. lxi): "Thus Paul neither approves nor disapproves all that the Jewish church had canonised, but assumes towards it a discriminative attitude, finding much in it that is true and most valuable, but denying that being in the Old Testament of itself makes a teaching or command authoritative. This discriminative attitude towards the Old Testament, coupled with the apostle's clear recognition of its value as a whole and his insistence, despite his dissent from many of its precepts, upon connecting the Christian religion historically with that of the Old Testament, is most significant. Though he has left us no definite statement to this effect, possibly never formulated the matter in this way in his own mind, he in effect accepted the principle that while each generation is the heir of all the ages, it is also the critic of all, and the arbiter of its own religion." No doubt these sentences correctly represent the views of Professor Burton. But to think of them as representing the views of Paul is to fall into an error so preposterous as to make all refutation needless. It is surely difficult to recognize a "discriminative attitude towards the Old Testament" in the way in which Paul—as did Jesus before him—appeals again and again to Scripture as the absolutely final instance. No doubt Paul did not inculcate the continued observance of the ceremonial Law. But that does not mean that he regarded the ceremonial Law as of lesser authority than any other part of the Old Testament. Indeed it is just in the Epistle to the Galatians that Paul makes his attitude perfectly clear. The Mosaic Law, he says in effect, was given by God, and was of absolute authority. It could never be set aside, even in its minutest particulars, by any merely practical considerations. It could only be set aside by an act of God. But such an act had actually been accomplished in the redemptive work of Christ. The Law served a divine purpose. But the divine purpose was

a temporary purpose. The Law was a schoolmaster to bring Israel to Christ, and when Christ appeared the work of the schoolmaster was done.

The "discriminative attitude towards the Old Testament" which Professor Burton attributes to Paul is of a piece with the principle—also supposed to have been accepted, at least in effect, by Paul—"that while each generation is the heir of all the ages, it is also the critic of all, and the arbiter of its own religion." Such a Paul would have been perfectly at home in modern committees on Church union, with their indifference toward truth and their politely veiled skepticism. But it is a little difficult to recognize here the Paul who pronounced anathemas upon the very angels in heaven if they proclaimed a different gospel, and who withstood Peter to his face. Professor Burton believes that what Paul "claimed for himself, viz., a divine commission and a corresponding responsibility, he freely admitted might be possessed by other men who did not wholly agree with him. Sitting in council with them he neither consented to conform his own course of action or message to their practice nor demanded that they should conform their to his. The gospel of the circumcision and the gospel of the uncircumcision had certain elements in common, but they were by no means identical. Yet he claimed for himself the right and duty to preach his gospel, and admitted the right and duty of the other apostles to preach theirs" (p. lxiii). Such words have a familiar sound. They are heard everywhere at the present day. They are an expression of that "undogmatic Christianity," which is really a veiled agnosticism. But certainly they are not Pauline. Paul defended his right to preach his gospel not because every man has the right to formulate a gospel on the basis of his experience, but because by a unique interposition of God he had had revealed to him the gospel which was true. Professor Burton says on page 380: "Limiting his own efforts to Gentile lands (Gal. 1¹⁶ 2^{8, 9}) and within these lands to fields not already occupied by others, he disclaimed all intention of repopulating to his own conception of Christianity converts already made by others (2 Cor. 10¹³ Rom. 15²⁰), and equally denied the right of others to attempt to win his converts to their views (Gal. 1^{8, 9} 5¹²)."

Such exegesis as this ought not to need refutation in detail. Paul is here reduced to the level of a modern "practical" Christian—putting life above principle and practice above truth. The real Paul was vastly different.

Of course Professor Burton fails to recognize the historical character of the Pauline gospel. He seems to regard the Epistle to the Galatians merely as a plea for "spiritual religion." There could be no greater error. The gospel of Paul did not consist in the enunciation of eternal truths—the truths of an underlying, ideal religion—but in the proclamation of something that had happened, namely the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Without that happening, according to Paul, the truth about "religion" would have brought nothing but blank despair. The gospel, according to Paul, as indeed the very word

for "gospel" implies, was not the discovery of what had always been true, but the proclamation—with explanation of the meaning—of something new. It is no wonder that Professor Burton is very much puzzled by Paul's emphasis upon the physical evidence of the resurrection. "On the one side," he says (p. 374), "the general type of his thought, his emphasis on the purely spiritual as against the physical in religion, would favour the view that he did not attach vital importance to his having seen Jesus." But as a matter of fact, our commentator is obliged to admit that Paul apparently did attach importance to his having seen Jesus. The Paul of Professor Burton never ought to have done so. But the real Paul believed that the resurrection was a plain fact of history.

But the most fundamental error of all has not yet been mentioned. That error consists in a total misunderstanding of the purpose of the Epistle. In the last sentence of the commentary proper (p. 362), Professor Burton characterizes the Epistle to the Galatians as "one of the noblest pleas ever written for Christian liberty and spiritual religion." These words might be interpreted in a way consonant with the truth. But unfortunately, the entire book renders it only too plain that "spiritual religion" is here regarded as an explanation of "Christian liberty." Professor Burton regards the Epistle to the Galatians as directed against ceremonialism and externality and a piecemeal morality which divides the Law of God into separate rules. There is of course a certain measure of truth in this opinion. In one passage, somewhat obscure it is true, Paul does apparently characterize the Jewish forms which the Galatians were adopting as belonging to the period of childhood from which the Christian man has emerged. But in the Epistle as a whole the thought of externalism, as against spiritual religion, is entirely subordinate. The real point of the Epistle is quite different. What Paul is really attacking in Galatians is not ceremonialism in religion, or a divisive morality, but the principle of merit. The real controversy in Galatia was not between outward works and inward works, but upon human merit however attained and the divine grace.

The question between these two conceptions of the purpose of the Epistle is highly important to Professor Burton. For if the Epistle is directed against externalism in religion, then Professor Burton belongs, in the controversy in Galatia, with Paul, whereas if the Epistle is directed against a religion of merit, Professor Burton belongs with the Judaizers. And as a matter of fact the latter alternative is correct. Modern liberalism is clearly a religion of merit, which brings satisfaction to its adherents only because they hold a lax view of sin and of the law.

It is true, Professor Burton repudiates the "law in the legalistic sense," and believes that Paul repudiated it. But he believes that there is a higher sense of the word "law," in accordance with which it designates a complete expression of the will of God including mercy, and that Paul maintained the law when it is so considered. The mean-

ing seems to be that Paul supposed God to look with complacency upon the transgressions to which all men are subject if only there be a true effort on man's part to obey God's will. In other words, God is content with a relative goodness, and the mistake of the Judaizers was to suppose that he dealt with men on the basis of strict justice. There could be no greater error. As a matter of fact, the whole of Paulinism is founded not upon a lax interpretation of the law of God, but upon a strict interpretation. The demands of the Law could not be set aside in the interests of practical religion. And all were under the curse. But Christ took the curse upon Himself, and paid the Law's penalty for us. Such is the teaching of Paul. The Pauline doctrine of justification is absolutely unintelligible except upon the basis of a strict view of law; it is absolutely unintelligible upon the basis of "liberalism." It is because Paul was not a liberal Jew that he could be the apostle of Christian liberty.

Starting from a radically different view of sin and of the law of God from that of Paul, Professor Burton seeks to force the apostle into the modern mould. It might seem as though he would have been discouraged by the hopelessness of the task. It is rather difficult to make out of the writer of Gal. ii and iii a complacent believer in the religion of modern naturalism, who uses the term "justification" to designate the mere acceptance by God of a lower goodness than that which His law requires, and who regards faith itself as a meritorious work. With regard to the religion of modern liberalism as with regard to the teaching of the Judaizers in Galatia, the real Paul would have said: "I do not make void the grace of God: for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought" (Gal. ii. 21). But it is useless to quote individual verses to Professor Burton, no matter how plain they may seem. The ingenuity of our commentator is equal to any task. Thus the verse just quoted, the key verse of the Epistle, coming though it does after a glorious passage where even one who is unprepared to accept the gospel of Paul might be expected to understand something of what it meant to him, our commentator actually makes "the grace of God" refer to the giving of the law to Israel. Paul, he says, is answering an attack of the opponents to the effect that he was making of no account "the special grace of God to Israel in giving them the law." In the presence of such exegesis the reader may well stand aghast. Paul has poured out his soul before us. But all to no purpose.

Professor Burton, in other words, with modern liberalism in general, occupies in all essentials the position of the Judaizers. He believes that the grace of God is necessary in order to salvation. But human goodness, he believes, is also necessary; man keeps the law the best he can, and then God meets him half way. That was exactly the view of the Judaizers. They believed that in addition to the law it was necessary to have the grace of Christ, but that human merit, though not sufficient, was necessary. And it was against such a position that the Epistle to the Galatians was written. There are two possible ways, says

Paul, of attaining salvation—in the first place perfect obedience, and in the second place acceptance of the sacrifice of Christ. But the whole Epistle is directed against any mingling of the two.

What will Professor Burton do with Gal. vi. 14—"Far be it from me to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"? Will he recognize at least in the Pauline doctrine of the new creation the tremendous supernaturalism of the Pauline gospel? Not at all. "To this world [the world of earthly relationships]," he says, Paul "became dead by the cross of Christ, because in Christ's death on the cross he saw a demonstration that God's way of accepting men was not on the basis of works of law, but on that of faith in Christ." Our commentator then proceeds to speak of the evidence "that the significance of the cross is in what it proves respecting God's real attitude towards men." It would hardly be possible to get further away from any true historical method of exegesis. Modern naturalism may be true or it may be false—that is another question—but certainly Paul was not an adherent of it. And the death of the believer to the world, according to Paul, was certainly not an act of man, but an act of God.

In order to learn something of the true nature of Paulinism, Professor Burton would not have had to turn to "conservative" scholars who accept Paulinism as their own religion; he could have learned also from those who see Paulinism somewhat as it is and then reject it. He could have learned from Baur. He could have learned from Wrede, who with all his exaggerations at least faced the problem of Paulinism as a redemptive religion. He could have learned from Bousset. But Bousset's "Kyrios Christos," which appeared in 1914, is not even mentioned by our commentator. Professor Burton, in short, has hardly come to grips at all with the really great problems of the apostolic age.

The Epistle to the Galatians, "the Magna Charta of Christian liberty," has fallen again upon evil days. It had fallen upon evil days at the close of the middle ages. It was buried then under the Roman Catholic system of merits, and under the trivialities of mediaeval exegesis. And now again, in the pages of Professor Burton's commentary, it is buried under the neo-legalistic slavery of the modern "liberal" Church. But the message of the Epistle is essentially plain, and cannot permanently be obscured. It was discovered by Luther at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Will some man of God discover it again, and set humanity free?

Princeton.

J. GRESHAM MACHEN.

SYSTEMATICAL THEOLOGY

Grundriss der evangelischen Dogmatik. Von DR. MARTIN SCHULZE, ord. Professor an der Universität Königsberg. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung. 1918. Pp. 180.

Schulze has given an admirably compact outline of Dogmatics from