

THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

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I.

THE FUTURE OF CALVINISM.*

THE year 1892 was a year of great importance for the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. Two influential groups of Churches, both originating in a secession from the Established Church, the one in 1834, the other in 1886, were, after long negotiations, brought together, and in June of that year held their "First General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands." For various reasons this event has excited considerable interest. It was something unforeseen and unexpected. Both groups, to be sure, were one in their confession and form of government, and both shared the conviction that a Reformed Christian was in duty bound to his Bible and his confession to break with the Established Church. Still, concerning "the method of reformation," *i. e.*, the manner in which this breach ought to be brought about, there existed an appreciable difference of opinion. This difference in method gave rise to the different attitudes which the two sides assumed in relation to the property of the Established Church and the civil authorities. The Christian Reformed Church, originating in the secession of 1834, had gradually come to consider itself as an entirely new Church, and as having broken off all connection with both the governing bodies and the individual members of the establishment. Consequently it raised no claim in the civil courts to retain or recover the property of the Established Church, and presented itself to the civil authorities as a new and different organization. On the other hand, the so-called

* [Our readers are indebted to Prof. G. Vos, Ph.D., D.D., of Princeton Seminary, for the translation of Dr. Bavinck's paper.—EDITORS.]

deny the genuineness of all the literature traditionally attributed to it. "Heaven only knows what has become of all the gold."

Bender, in speaking of "the Idealist," or the anonymous author, according to the critics, of the later and some of the earlier prophecies in the Book of Isaiah, expresses just surprise that no name should be given to him, seeing it is a peculiarity of the Old Testament to lay great weight on names; and he is able to tell us that the unity of Isaiah is becoming more widely recognized.

Well does the author remark at the close that "the critical investigation makes a chaos of the literature of the people of Israel. More than a thousand years the spirit of revelation works in the people without any literary success, and when at last it begins to be productive, we have for the most part only fragments which a later compiler glues together. Authors are robbed of their books, books come and no one knows whence, the oldest is made the latest, and books appear in a multitude at a time when the prophetic spirit had long ceased."

It is a defect of the work that the extermination of the nations of Canaan is not adequately vindicated. Our author hardly allows a sufficient use of the Old Testament for the establishment of religious doctrines. Our Lord and His apostles employed it for this purpose. He should not have asserted, pointing to the thirty-nine different writings comprised in the Old Testament, that the Hebrews had an affluence of sacred literature such as no other old nation possessed. How insignificant in quantity does the Old Testament appear in comparison with the enormous multitude of the Hindu Shasters! But we have read Pastor Bender's book with peculiar pleasure, and are of the opinion that its appearance in an English translation would serve the cause of truth.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

DUNLOP MOORE.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE PROPHETS. The Warburtonian Lectures for 1886-1890. By A. F. KIRKPATRICK, D.D. London: Macmillan & Co., 1892. Pp. 540.

Prof. Kirkpatrick's book may be called a combination of general and special introduction to part of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. The lecture form, in which these essays were originally delivered, has imparted to them a freshness and clearness, a freedom from all unnecessary detail, which will make them attractive even to the unprofessional reader. We have found the perusal not only enjoyable, but also highly instructive; and were confirmed in our opinion that the study of Isagogics would profit much if a joint treatment of the external questions and of the contents of Scripture could be more largely applied.

The Introduction gives information about the critical views presupposed in the lectures. The human side of prophecy is strongly emphasized and in words that might make us fear more serious results than the author has in reality reached with these maxims. As it is, Obadiah and Joel are given the earlier date and treated as the oldest of the prophets. The contents of Isaiah are divided over three periods, that of Isaiah proper, that of the exile, and that of the postexilic period, in which last chap. xxiv-xxvii are claimed to have originated. The minor portions of the Book of Isaiah, the genuineness of which is denied, are left undiscussed. Zechariah ix-xiv as a whole is assigned to the times after the exile. Far more serious, however, than these particular conclusions seems to us the general statement "that it is difficult to see how our Lord and His apostles (with reverence be it said) could have done otherwise than accept the current nomenclature of the time. The critical ques-

tions and the issues which they raise were not before them, and their acceptance of what was then universally believed, cannot be legitimately regarded as precluding critical inquiry. . . ." This does not cut so deeply as the appeal to the doctrine of Kenosis that has lately come into vogue. It is merely a revival of the old rationalistic principle of accommodation. It does not even say that Christ was ignorant in matters of criticism. Still such a view cannot but work a complete revolution in our whole conception of Christ's prophetic office.

That Hosea and Amos and the oldest prophets in general do not create or introduce new religious ideas, but simply call back the apostate people to the old, is duly insisted upon. Too indiscriminate, we think, is the repeated statement that all prophecy is conditional. In other passages the author admirably states how the prophets declare even in times of the greatest apostasy that Jehovah will nevertheless remember His covenant for His name's sake, or for David His servant's sake. There is an absolute as well as a conditional element here. If the author's interpretation of Isaiah vii, making the virgin either a young woman of that time or a freely chosen figure, be correct, the New Testament is incorrect in connecting this prophecy with the virgin-birth of our Saviour. A slight modification in the direction of Orelli, who understands by the virgin the congregation of Israel, and finds the element corresponding to the virgin-birth of Christ in the miraculous rise of the typical Immanuel, would have avoided this implied assumption of error. Occasionally exception might be taken to the literary judgment expressed, as, for instance, when it is said of Jeremiah, that he was a man of no great intellectual power as a poet. But these are isolated cases. As a whole the book is a model of appreciative and sympathetic treatment of the subject.

Princeton.

G. Vos.

THE APOSTLE PAUL. A Sketch of the Development of His Doctrine. By A. SABATIER, Professor in the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Paris. Translated from the French. Edited, with an Additional Essay on the Pastoral Epistles, by GEORGE G. FINDLAY, B.A. New York: James Pott & Co., 1891. Pp. xix, 402.

THE PAULINE THEOLOGY. A Study of the Origin and Correlation of the Doctrinal Teachings of the Apostle Paul. By GEORGE B. STEVENS, Ph.D., D.D., Professor of New Testament Criticism and Interpretation in Yale University. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892. Pp. xi, 383.

THE GOSPEL OF PAUL. By CHARLES CARROLL EVERETT, Professor of Theology in Harvard University. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1893. Pp. xiii, 307.

DIE ESCHATOLOGIE DES PAULUS in ihren Zusammenhängen mit dem Gesamtbegriff des Paulinismus, dargestellt von Lic. RICH. KABISCH, o. Lehrer am königl. Seminar für Stadtschullehrer zu Berlin. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; New York: B. Westermann & Co., 1893. Pp. viii, 338.

The first two of these works are already known to the public. The last two are recent publications. When taken together, they not only show the interest which the great apostle has for modern students of very different types, but they present a singular variety in the interpretation of his teaching.