

THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

No. 21—January, 1895.

I.

ORIGIN AND COMPOSITION OF GENESIS.

HISTORY OF THE CRITICISM TO THE RISE OF THE GRAFIAN HYPOTHESIS.

THE first book of the Bible, perhaps equally with the last, deserves the title of Revelation. The revelation of the past alone furnishes the key to that of the future. Genesis is second to no book of the Old Testament in its announcement of great truths. These truths are confessedly fundamental; hence the book itself is fundamental. During the last century and a half critics have been busy with it, as with other books of the Bible. They have started concerning it many questions which perhaps will long await an answer. At the same time, continuous and brilliant discoveries in the sphere of Biblical science are quickening the hope that the fascinating problem of the origin of Genesis in history is approaching a solution.

The true point of view in investigating the subject should be the scientific. By this we do not mean that, for the time, we should lay aside our faith in Christ or denude ourselves of every prepossession. Clearly that would be impossible, were it desirable. We simply mean that we should make an honest, and, as far as the circumstances will permit, a thorough study of the facts involved, and let the facts determine the conclusions reached. This might seem, perhaps, an unnecessary statement or at least a matter best assumed and left unsaid. Under some conditions this would be true; but so many assumptions enter into the critic's work, and the result is such a variety of types of criticism, that it has become customary

an impossible thing to do. We are glad to see the untechnical student thought enough of to bring such a scholarly book as this to issue, and we believe the student will acknowledge the compliment by making himself more scholarly in the work which he does by this help.

Hartford, Conn.

M. W. JACOBUS.

THE EPISTLES TO THE COLOSSIANS AND TO PHILEMON. With Introduction and Notes. By the Rev. H. C. G. MOULE, M.A. Cambridge University Press; New York: Macmillan & Co.

This recent addition to the Cambridge series of commentaries more than maintains the high character of these invaluable aids to the study of the Scriptures. Among the volumes dealing with the New Testament the first place must, we think, be accorded to those edited by Principal Moule, viz., those upon the Romans, the Ephesians, the Philippians, and now upon the Colossians and Philemon. They are devout, scholarly, tersely and clearly written, full of information expressed in the most condensed form, but without obscurity, thoroughly evangelical and catholic in their tone and sympathies. For the Sunday-school teacher, in fact for every intelligent Christian seeking to secure a real living knowledge of these Epistles, there exists nothing comparable to these brief and admirable treatises. And while professedly written for schools and colleges, the most advanced New Testament scholar will find in them much of the greatest value and suggestiveness. It is strange that in two guides to New Testament study recently issued, those by Thayer and Vincent, no mention whatever is made of Moule's invaluable contributions to the study of the Pauline Epistles.

The new volume on the Colossians is specially timely and valuable. On this profound and difficult Epistle there previously existed but one really adequate commentary in the English language—that of the lamented Bishop Lightfoot, at whose feet Mr. Moule sat, and to whom he gladly acknowledges his indebtedness both for inspiration and for guidance. But while Mr. Moule has been influenced, he has not been overpowered by his great master. This is an independent work, constructed upon the lines along which Mr. Moule had already achieved distinguished success. It is characterized by thoroughness of research and accuracy of scholarship. In completeness and adequacy of treatment it leaves nothing to be desired. The deeply interesting questions involved in the study of this Epistle and bearing so closely upon the speculative and ritualistic tendencies of our own days, are very fully and luminously dealt with. Difficulties are not evaded. The notes throughout give just that kind of assistance which the intelligent Bible student requires and for which he will often vainly look in larger and more pretentious works. Not only is the scholarship of a high order; it is pervaded and controlled by a devout and reverent spirit, which imparts warmth and spirituality to the comments, and makes them subservient to edification and practical godliness.

Toronto.

J. P. SHERATON.

THEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. By CH. PIEPENBRING, Pastor and President of the Reformed Consistory at Strassbourg. Translated from the French by H. G. MITCHELL, Professor in Boston University. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co. 8vo, pp. 361.

The most attractive feature of this book is lucidity of statement; and it is natural to ascribe somewhat of this virtue to its French origin. We have not met with a single obscure or ambiguous sentence in its pages. It is a

cause for regret that this clearness of form is not equalled by depth of treatment. The discussion is almost throughout confined to the bare phenomena of the Old Testament in a positivistic not to say in a superficial manner. Undoubtedly it is of the greatest importance to acquaint the reader with the data on which every attempted solution of the problems must rest, but, after all, this is merely preparatory to the real task of Biblical Theology, which consists in pointing out the leading principles and the historic nexus between the facts. In many cases the author contributes but little to this part of the work. For example, the discussion of the contents of Prophetism opens with a paragraph on the unity of God. The author follows Baudissin in describing the various stages through which the religious belief of Israel passed in regard to this question. Next he examines the various documents belonging to the prophetic period on the subject. Finally he states as his conclusion that from the time of Amos and Hosea, perhaps an earlier date, certain minds had risen to the idea that Jehovah alone is truly God. But not a word is said in explanation of the manner in which the Israelites came to pass from one of these stages into the other. Again, treating of the attribute of holiness, in another passage, the author tries to show that this word almost invariably conveys the idea of majesty, greatness, matchlessness, and then goes on to remark that holiness in the sense of the English word, the opposite of moral evil, is seldom expressed by the Hebrew term. On the next page we are told that the holiness of God bears a close relation to His jealousy, His wrath and His vengeance. Now we certainly are justified in expecting some explanation of the interdependence of these various modifications of the one idea of holiness. But we look for it in vain. On p. 82, such a fundamental and far-reaching fact as the distinction between true prophecy and false prophecy is disposed of in a few passing remarks. And it would be easy to quote other examples of a similar nature.

After all, however, these are objections made from a more or less formal point of view, and, for this reason, they are of less weight than others that bear directly against the contents. As his division into the periods of Mosaism, Prophetism and Levitism shows, Piepenbring is an adherent of the views of Wellhausen and Kuenen in regard to the religious development of Israel. On one of the very first pages we read, that to derive the Pentateuchal legislation from Moses may be compared to the fond belief of the Protestant Churches that their dogmas are a faithful expression of the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles. After this we are prepared for very frank and outspoken statements concerning the difference between the Church Theology and the Bible Theology. On p. 173, Traditional Theology is referred to in the following words: "The principal fault of this Theology is that it has found in the Bible precisely what it does not contain, and has not been able to discover what is clearly taught therein." This is not so much to the discredit of the Church as it might at first seem, since Piepenbring finds among the Biblical teachings such things as the following: "In all the books of the Old Testament there are references to oaths of God, to repentance on his part, to his jealousy, to his anger, to his vengeance. But moral imperfections even more shocking were attributed to him. It is related that he incited Moses and the Israelites to cheat and rob the Egyptians, and that he assisted them in this attempt" (p. 28). The Israelites "certainly gave God a body, and did not regard him as a pure Spirit" (p. 172). "The original ground for sacrifices—is the thought that the Deity takes nourishment" (p. 62). "It is only necessary to read a few pages of the Prophets or the Psalms to be convinced that God is regarded as possessing all the members and functions of the human body. He is even said to hiss, to cry, to laugh, to sleep and awake." Although the author grants that in the Prophets and

Psalms these expressions belong to the poetic style, he maintains that in the mouth of the people they were not merely rhetorical (p. 26).

The subject of revelation especially receives very unsatisfactory and inadequate treatment. We have already noticed that the distinction between true and false prophecy is not appreciated in its high importance. But on p. 327 we find the remarkable statement, that "in Israel no distinction was made as there is among us, between natural and supernatural revelation . . . between the products of an unassisted and inspired reason; they thought that everything in the world depended absolutely and directly upon God." On p. 87, on the other hand, we learn that in ancient times God was conceived of as speaking to men in the most literal sense of the word. But the prophets, the author hastens to add, did not understand the matter in this sense; for them the divine word was an internal word. Some references in proof of this assertion would not have been out of place, the more so as the same sentence contains the admission that the prophets continued "to use the language that had been adopted, when it was believed that God spoke after the manner of men." If this be so, either the prophets meant what this language expresses, and then the modern theory of the internal word is contradicted by the prophetic consciousness, or the prophets used language which they could not use with truthfulness, and in this case the critical opinion about their high moral standing will need modification. From Piepenbring's standpoint we cannot but admit the truth of a recent remark of Oort's to the effect that the formula "Thus saith the Lord" had from the beginning, even with the greatest prophets, the taint of unveracity, and that of this taint, wherewith it was born, prophetism died in the end.

Most disappointing of all is the concluding paragraph of the book. After having completed his task as historian, the author adds some remarks "in response to the religious interests, the interests of faith." Once the Bible was studied exclusively from the dogmatic standpoint. There is now danger of going to the opposite extreme, *i. e.*, of studying it only from the historical and critical standpoint, losing sight of its religious value. But will not this historical study of the Bible, by showing divergencies and errors, unsettle faith? This is the momentous question, which the conclusion of the book tries to answer. And the answer amounts to this, that faith as "the product of Jewish Rabbinism and Christian dogmatism" is shaken indeed, but not faith in the Biblical sense, true faith. By true faith in the Biblical sense is meant faith in the manifestation of God in history, faith in the interference of God in the world for the salvation of humanity, faith in the living word of the prophets. This, we are told, is the unalterable element in the Bible, which historical study cannot shake. Is it really so? It would seem to us that the whole tenor of Piepenbring's book is remarkably well adapted to drive out this last remnant of supernaturalism, diluted as it is. The only thing on which the author bases his right to retain it, is that in the élite of the Israelitish nation we meet with a superior ethical life. "Behind these writings we feel the beat of the hearts that inspired them, and behind these hearts we feel a higher power, a divine, regenerating, sanctifying influence" (p. 349). But this, it seems to us, is utterly inadequate to support the structure that Piepenbring would raise on it. We might ask the author how high a degree of ethical life he thinks the natural development of humanity sufficient to produce, and where is the exact point where the supernatural must be called in to explain the ethical phenomena. The old supernaturalism of the Church, of which the author speaks so deprecatingly, had at least something more tangible and convincing to offer in the line of evidence, for miracles are facts which no process of natural development will account for. It is not so with the ethical life of a class of men, who on the author's own pre-

mises, can perhaps not be entirely acquitted of the charge of untruthfulness.

Princeton.

G. Vos.

Der Apostel Paulus und das Judenthum. By F. R. Steinmeyer. 8vo, pp. 107. (Berlin: Wiegant & Grieben; New York: B. Westermann & Co., 1894.) All who have had the pleasure of following Dr. Steinmeyer's "studies" in John's Gospel will be glad to see this first number of his series of studies in Paul's Epistle to the Romans. The author follows the same method and we think with equal helpfulness. This first study covers chaps. ix to xi of the Epistle, and expounds Paul's words regarding the Jews and Christianity. The method is to give us a careful expository analysis of the section, and then taking up each division to show, both by word studies and detailed exposition of the connection, the bearing of it upon the main theme. It is more than commentary; rather the work has the unification of exposition. The great divisions of the section are: 1. The introduction. 2. Paul's sorrow of heart. 3. The prospect of an apostle. 4. The ideal of a prophet. The whole is devout and pains-taking and helpful. There is the same combination of scholarliness and spiritual earnestness which marked the author's earlier studies.—*In the Time of Jesus.* Historical Pictures by Martin Seidel, D.D. 8vo, pp. 192. (New York: A. D. F. Randolph & Co.) This valuable little book will be welcome to many a student of the New Testament. It shows that mastery of the "circumstances and conditions of the times in which Jesus and His Apostles lived," that has enabled the author to give us in miniature a very satisfactory series of pictures—such as in larger form are put before us in Schürer and Hausrath. The chapters on "The Land and People of Israel," "The Political Government of Palestine," and "The Religious Parties among the Jews," are notably good. With the careful work that is coming to us from the study of the land of Palestine, and with such books as these opening up the human relationship of Christ's life, one ought to be able more and more to look out upon the days of the Gospels with sympathetic and appreciative vision, and that is one of the requisites of right interpretation.—*The Dawn of Christianity; or, Studies of the Apostolic Church.* By Henry C. Vedder. 8vo, pp. 208. (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society.) The purpose of this book is given in the Preface, viz.: "That it should be at once an account of the origin and progress of the Apostolic Churches and a practical treatise on their polity." In clear, succinct and thoroughly readable form this aim is carried out. The book is meant for "laymen, young people and students," and its value has been tried, for the greater part of it was published as a series of studies in *The Baptist Union* and found many readers. At the end of its brief, compact chapters references are made to the literature of the topics discussed and questions asked for review. Mr. Vedder takes no notice of the "South Galatian" theory. He may not have accepted it, but it surely is worthy of statement in connection with the account of the first missionary journey. That the Baptist doctrine regarding baptism should have some emphasis was to be expected.—[*Kurzgefasster Kommentar zu den heiligen Schriften Alten und Neuen Testaments, sowie zu den Apokryphen:*] *Das Evangelium nach Johannes und die Apostelgeschichte.* Ausgelegt von Dr. Ernest Luthardt, Ord. Professor der Theologie zu Leipzig, und Dr. Otto Zöckler, Ord. Prof. der Theologie zu Griefswald. Zweite neubearbeitete Auflage. 8vo, pp. 323. (München: Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1894.) It is not surprising that a second edition of this valuable commentary should be issued. Eight years ago, when the first appeared, it immediately gained a flattering recog-