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I.

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND THE TRUTHFULNESS OF BIBLE HISTORY.*

IT will be generally agreed that the above subject has the merit of timeliness. For some time past the assertion has been made, and it is being made in our own day with greater confidence and insistence than ever, that our Christian faith and historical facts have very little or nothing to do with each other. Most frequently this assertion is made with reference to some one particular event of Sacred History, which has for the time being become the subject of debate from the point of view of its historicity. Those who incline to doubt the historical truthfulness of some such narrative as, *e.g.*, that of the supernatural birth or the resurrection of the Saviour, or at least incline to consider it an open question, are, when their skepticism awakens remonstrance from the conservative side, ever ready with the answer that Christianity is something too great and too deep, too inward, ideal and vital to be dependent in its essence on this or that single occurrence in the world of history. They protest that their own faith lives far superior to the level where such questions are discussed and decided, as to whether Christ was supernaturally conceived by the Virgin Mary or rose bodily from the grave on the third day. And they are not slow to make their own subjective faith in this matter the standard of

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division of the book. As to the name Min, Herford is of the opinion that it can be explained from the common Hebrew word Min, denoting kind, species (cfr. "sect," "hairesis"), but that through the similarity between its synonym Zan ("kind") and Zannah, "to commit whoredom," Min obtained the connotation of one who commits religious adultery. The Minim are not heretics in general, but a peculiar kind of heretics coördinated with other kinds. They are as a rule Jews by birth, and their specific difference seems to be that they are false at heart and do not necessarily proclaim their apostasy, because they continue to mingle with the Jews in their religion. The author reaches the conclusion that in most cases the Minim of the Talmud are Jewish Christians. In this he takes issue with Friedländer, who in a series of writings has advocated the view that the Minim are mostly Gnostics, and built on the references to them the theory that there was Gnosticism among the Jews of a præ-Christian date. Herford adduces many convincing reasons for reducing the extravagant claims of Friedländer, and exposes in not a few points the inexcusable carelessness of the latter's method of argumentation. He shows that what is said about the belief of the Minim in "the two powers" cannot relate to the Gnostic Demiurge and the highest God, because these two powers are associated in the creation of the world, in which the Supreme God of the Gnostics had no share, and that therefore there must be a reference in these "two powers" to the Christian association of Jesus as divine with the Father. Still, it remains somewhat doubtful in our mind whether our author has not run into the opposite extreme to Friedländer's contention, by hardly allowing any place at all for the Gnostics among the Minim. In his recent work, *Die religiösen Bewegungen innerhalb des Judenthums im Zeitalter Jesu* (1905), Friedländer emphatically repudiates the view imputed to him, as if all Minim were without exception Jewish Gnostics. Some reserve may also be in place with reference to the peculiar form in which Herford carries out his hypothesis of the Jewish-Christian character of the Minim. He thinks that the references to "the two powers" presuppose a knowledge of the Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and makes this Epistle mark a crisis in the history of Jewish Christianity, viz., the definite separation of the Jewish Christians from the synagogue, by which they became Minim. The question of the nationality of those to whom the Epistle is addressed is still *sub judice*, and in simply taking for granted that the first readers were Jewish Christians in Palestine the author gives the impression of dealing too easily with a difficult problem simply because it fits in with his hypothesis. But apart from this, we believe that the whole tenor of the Epistle is against the view that the readers were now first awaking to the consciousness of their religious distinctness from Judaism. Nor is it necessary to account for the Talmudic references to the Christian Christology and other points by assuming knowledge of this one particular writing of the New Testament. We certainly may believe that in the time spoken of there were Jewish Christians in Palestine who believed in the divinity of Jesus.

A slip is the statement on page 106 that James the brother of Jesus was put to death 44 A.D.

Princeton.

GEERHARDUS VOS.

BIBLISCHE ZEITSCHRIFT. In Verbindung mit der Redaktion der "Biblischen Studien" herausgegeben von Dr. JOH. GÜTTSBERGER, Professor an der Universität München, und Dr. JOS. SICKENBERGER, Professor an der Universität Würzburg. Dritter Jahrgang. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersche Verlagshandlung. 1905. St. Louis, Mo.: 17 South Broadway. Quarterly. Price, \$3.50.

This periodical, published by Roman Catholic scholars, has during the past year fully maintained its previous high character both for learning and conserva-

tism. A glance at the contents and the perusal of a few articles will convince the unprejudiced reader that the Romanist position does not *de facto* render participation in the work of modern Biblical scholarship impossible. The repertoire here offered us is most varied in its character; philological articles alternate with historical and exegetical ones, such as that of Prof. Bardenhewer on the Annunciation to Mary, in which the recent attacks upon the historicity of the Virgin-birth are ably criticised, a subject since more extensively treated by the same author in Heft 5 of Vol. 10 of the *Biblische Studien*. All the articles give evidence of a thorough acquaintance with the work of modern Biblical scholarship and of, what is often missed in Protestant periodicals of the same grade, full appreciation of its theological and religious trend. A very valuable feature is the Bibliography at the close of each number, which includes not only books but also the periodical literature, and, instead of giving mere titles, orients the reader at once by briefly stating the content, scope and conclusions of each book or article. This Bibliography, in point of view of completeness and instructiveness, ranks with the best. Protestant workers in the field of Biblical learning, especially of the conservative corps, cannot afford to ignore the *Biblische Zeitschrift* or the work of these Catholic scholars in general. That there is reason to think they sometimes do so, appears from the following sentence, taken from the bibliographical note on Zahn's Commentary on Galatians: "We hope that this excellent commentary will not be ignored by Catholic theologians, in the same way as it (Zahn's Commentary) ignores the Catholic literature."

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III.—HISTORICAL THEOLOGY.

A. H. FRANCKES BRIEFE AN DEN GRAFEN HEINRICH XXIV j. L. REUSS ZU KÖSTRITZ UND SEINE GEMAHLIN ELEONORE AUS DEN JAHREN 1704 BIS 1727. Herausgegeben von Dr. BERTHOLD SCHMIDT und Lic. theol. OTTO MEUSEL. Leipzig, 1905. 8vo; pp. iv, 170. Price, 3 Marks.

This collection of ninety-eight letters by Francke to Count Henry XXIV of Reuss and his wife, together with a number of related documents, is of considerable interest and value as a contribution to our knowledge of the early history of Pietism. It had been surmised over a decade ago that success would sooner or later attend a diligent search for epistolary evidence of the intimate relations known to have existed between Prof. Francke and the reigning house of Reuss. In the year 1903, accordingly, two bundles of documents were found in the archives of Köstritz, one labeled "Original letters of the sainted Prof. Francke, written for the most part *ad Illustrissimum XXIV*," but containing also hints for the replies by the Count, as well as other notices, all of the year 1714; and the other consisting chiefly of autograph letters of Francke to the same Count and his wife, but containing also letters to and from other persons.

The present volume is devoted primarily to the letters written by Francke. The "Introduction" gives the necessary information concerning the leading personages named in the correspondence, especially the deeply pious and the enthusiastically pietistic prince himself, while the voluminous notes throw all possible light upon the biographical and historical problems raised by these new documents. The editorial work has been done with great thoroughness. On the whole, the letters tell us more about the prince and his influential labors in behalf of Pietism than of the character of their author. It is, indeed, a pleasing revelation here given us of a singularly devout, benevolent and broad-minded ruler. The letters also clearly show how speedily Pietism became a