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MODERN POSITIVE THEOLOGY.

During the last few years considerable interest has been aroused in theological circles in Germany over a movement which goes by the name of "Modern Positive Theology" or "Modern Theology of the Old Faith". This movement has originated in the conservative camp. Its demand is for a theology which shall preserve the Gospel or the "Old Faith", and restate it in terms of modern thought. It is contended that the modern liberal theology has really destroyed the Gospel in its attempt to modernize it, while the old evangelical theology has erred in identifying the Gospel with worn out forms of theological thought in which from age to age the Gospel has found expression. The Gospel or the Old Faith, it is said, can be maintained in its integrity and given a theological formulation which shall render it intelligible to the "modern consciousness"—whatever that may be. The leaders of this movement are General Superintendent Theodor Kaftan, and Professors Seeberg of Berlin, Grützmacher of Rostock, and Beth of Vienna.

In order to understand this movement it is necessary to take a brief survey of the theological situation in Germany.¹

¹On this subject *vid.* F. Traub, *Aus der dogmatischen Arbeit der Gegenwart*, *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* XVI, pp. 429-483; also E. Troeltsch, *Rückblick auf ein halbes Jahrhundert der theol. Wissenschaft*, *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie*, Jahrg. 51, N. F. 16, Heft 2, pp. 97-135.

side the source, the original; in Israel only dependence and imitation. But it stands to reason that this is only *one* possibility. For whilst foreign influences may lead to imitation and adoption of what is foreign, they may quite as readily lead also to internal opposition, to reaction against the foreign, to the strengthening of what is individual and peculiar. Hence we must reckon as one outcome of the Babel-Bible controversy one that stands as firm as the former—that Israel developed its religious individuality in opposition to the religious culture around it, in particular to that of Babylon." Then, after a striking review of the history of the Jehovah-religion from Abraham through Moses, Samuel, Elijah, down to the prophets and Judaism, under the aspect of a protest against the polytheistic and immoral religions that surrounded it, the lecturer sums it up in two sentences: "The understanding of the history of this nation is impossible, if its religion is regarded as only a chapter in the general history of Asiatic religion, and if one overlooks the fact that Israel from the very beginning moves, or rather is led, in its religious development along peculiar and independent paths. It is not resemblance, the analogies and borrowings, but opposition, the rejection of influences issuing from the environment, that is here the characteristic thing".

With the following confession of his faith this champion of Israel's unique religion closes his lecture and his posthumous book—fit ending for a life that now has passed from faith to sight!—"Yet we regard these historical processes" (those, namely, through which Israel's religion developed) "from another point of view as well. They are for us not only a unique religious development, but more: we recognize in them the tone and actual guidance of God, His sway in history, and His real divine revelation".

Princeton, N. J.

J. OSCAR BOYD.

THE RELIGION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. Its Place Among the Religions of the Nearer East. By KARL MARTI, Professor of Hebrew and of Theology in the University of Bern, Editor of the "Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament". Translated by Rev. G. A. BIEREMANN, M.A. Edited by Rev. W. D. MORRISON, LL.D., New York: G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS. London: WILLIAMS & NORWICH. 1907 (Crown Theological Library, vol. xix.) Pp. vii, 251.

The aim of this volume is to give an account of the nature of the religion of the O. T., especially of those features which specifically differentiate it from the other religions of antiquity. This is done, however, in the form of a history of the religion, and the principles on which the history is constructed are those of the Graf-Wellhausen School. Hence we meet with the stereotyped division brought into vogue by this school: The Nomad Religion, the Peasant Religion, the Religion of the Prophets, the Legal Religion. Prof. Marti is well qualified to be the spokesman of this still widely-prevailing view of the religious history of Israel. His redaction of Kayser's "Alttes-

tamentliche Theologie", which in its later views became virtually an independent work under the title "Geschichte der Israelitischen Religion" and his authorship of several parts of the "Kurzer Handkommentar zum A. T.", of which he is the editor, are sufficient guarantees of a thorough familiarity with the field traversed both exegetically and constructively. For those who desire a brief and reliable statement of the hypothesis, the present volume will prove serviceable. It gives the Graf-Wellhausen tradition in its old unadulterated form. A few statements like "the thought of reward apart from the fulfilling of the divine will is altogether foreign to the prophets" (p. 157); "both (the Sabbath and circumcision) had been rejected by the prophets" (p. 208); "the real Messianic prophecies are to be declared as products of the legal stage of the religion" (p. 215), sufficiently characterize the author's position. The "pure ethical Monotheism" in which writers like Marti find the valuable essence of the O. T. religion, forms an antithesis to the principle of redemption, and that, apart from its naturalistic principles in the question of origins, is the main reason why this critical hypothesis is inconsistent with the historic faith of the Church.

The writer takes some account of the recent entrance of Assyriological and Babylonian research as a factor to be reckoned with in the controversy about the Old Testament. His conviction evidently is that it has left the central positions of Wellhausenianism untouched.

The translation is well done. On p. 49 "rights" is a misprint for "rites".

Princeton.

GERHARDUS VOS.

ECHTHEIT, HAUPTBEGRIFF UND GEDANKENGANG DER MESSIANISCHEN
WEISSAGUNG. Is. 9, 1-6. Von Lic. Dr. WILHELM CASPARI.

GOTTES ANGESICHT Von Lic. Dr. J. BOEHMER (Beiträge zur Förderung
Christlicher Theologie xii. 4).

Gütersloh: Druck und Verlag von C. Bertelsmann.

The former of these two pieces is a careful investigation of the Messianic prophecy, Is. 9: 1-6, whose genuineness has been denied by Hackmann, Cheyne, Marti, *a. o.* Caspari suggests that through the work of Gressmann and Procksch, eschatology and Messianism have been restored to their legitimate place in the older texts of the Old Testament, and that conservative criticism may revoke the concession it had already begun to make of placing the rise of Messianic prophecy in the post-Davidic, prophetic, if not in the legalistic period. Gen. 49, Numb. 24 and 2 Sam. 7 may be set down as material Isaiah could have built upon, if he actually penned our passage. Thus the discussion about the genuineness has entered upon a new stage. It is further the author's opinion that by way of more penetrating exegesis something can and should be done to mediate between the two opposing views. By this is meant that the objections to the genuineness have a certain basis of justification in the fact that the conservative exegesis