

THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

VOLUME VIII

APRIL 1910

NUMBER 2

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.

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

has unduly magnified or even deified the figure of the Messiah here depicted. While many excellent points are made and the discussion is very stimulating, we must confess that it leaves us unconvinced of the necessity or even possibility of such a conciliatory interpretation. Caspari endeavors to show that the Messiah is not conceived by the prophet as a king, but merely as a sort of administrator or vezir. This would, indeed, meet the critical objection derived from the polemic attitude of prophecy towards the idea of the kingdom. But in our view this critical contention has no basis in fact. And even if it had we could not see our way clear towards removing it after the manner proposed. Vs. 6 says in so many words that the promised one shall be upon the throne of David and over his kingdom. To put into this the sense that his rule, as something non-royal, shall take the place of the then superseded kingdom, seems a forced exegesis. Nor has the author successfully met the point that to describe the accession to office of a mere administrator or vezir the words "a child is born, a son is given" are unsuitable. The reference to a "birth" clearly indicates, that the Messiah inherits the dignity to which he is called. It is true that some of the expressions imply the subordination of the ruler, but they do this only with reference to God, so that royal sovereignty in other relations is not thereby excluded. We also hesitate to follow the author in his rendering of *El-Gibbor* as "God is a Hero", so that it ceases to characterize the Messiah, and makes him merely bear a name expressive of what God is. Caspari himself admits that this places it out of analogy with the other three names. To appeal to Jer. 23:6 (Jehovah Zidkenu) is useless, because here there are no accompanying names to raise the point of analogy. Interesting, but also short of carrying conviction, is the way in which the writer meets the critical objection that the prophecy, if Isaianic, ought to have left traces in subsequent prophetic literature. He finds such traces in the use of the word *Shalom* as characterizing the message of the false prophets in Jeremiah's time, on the view that their idea of *Shalom* was a misinterpretation and abuse of Is. 9:6. This occurrence of *Shalom* is, however, so natural under the circumstances that a derivation from some concrete passage is quite superfluous.

The second contribution of this "Heft" deals with the Old Testament phrase "the face of God". In regard to this a usage connected with the cultus, and an anthropomorphic usage are distinguished. The combination of "the light of the face of Jehovah" is traced back to the conception of God's *Kabod*, and the latter is said to be originally associated with the sun. In this is sought the explanation of the phrases "to lift up the face" and "to lower the face", of which the former, as taken from the ascent of the sun, is used *in sensum bonum*, the latter, as taken from its decline, *in sensum malum*". Both the cultic and the anthropomorphic significance of "the face of God" have their roots in this mythological identification of the deity with the sun. In Ex. 33:12-23, the author finds the actual hypostatizing of "the face of God", which in the last analysis this mythological origin of the

phrase makes intelligible. In his view, however, the present form of this pericope, is too confused to be accepted as a unit. Hence an attempt at dissecting and rearranging it. The text is admittedly difficult but we do not think that the difficulties are exegetically insolvable and such extreme measures necessary. Nor do we believe that "face" has actually become a separate hypostasis. It is simply Jehovah in revelation. It ought to be added that the author does not ascribe to the Old Testament consciousness in its higher and later levels any remembrance of the primitive mythological association of the phrases in use. They had become in course of time wholly spiritualized.

Princeton.

GEERHARDUS VOS.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT JESUS. By CHARLES F. DOLE, D.D. Chicago.

The Open Court Publishing Co. 1908. Pp. xiii, 89.

LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS. According to the Historical and Critical Method. By RUDOLPH OTTO, Lic.Th. Translated from the third unaltered edition by H. J. WHITBY, B.D. Chicago. The Open Court Publishing Co. 1908. Pp. 85.

These two little books might well be read consecutively; for in discussing much the same subject they afford interesting material for comparative study,—in point of view, in principles and spirit, in method, and in results. Both are fundamentally naturalistic in point of view, and both seek to conserve for the life and teaching of their human Jesus a certain ethical and religious value. Of the two Dr. Dole's book is the more subjective in method and reveals less direct acquaintance with the problems, evidence, methods, and results of the historical criticism of the Gospels. Both books follow the procedure, now familiar in certain circles, of setting aside the Fourth Gospel and of tracing the Synoptic Gospels back to their two principal sources (Mk. and Q.)—although Otto lays a firmer basis for the historical construction and its defence against the radical criticism in the explicit or inferential information which is contained in the major Epistles of Paul. In results Otto's book is the more positive, but in principle the two books do not differ,—seeking as they do to commend to modern religious faith a purely human Jesus.

The statement of Dr. Dole (p. 5) that "There is nothing to show that, growing slowly out of traditions and reminiscences more or less accurate, and possible early bits of memories of Jesus' sayings, the Gospels were not a hundred years in shaping themselves as we now have them" is somewhat striking in its negative form,—but the proof of the positive would be more instructive. Almost equally interesting is the note on the immaculate conception of the Virgin which the translator of Otto's book has added to the author's discussion of the birth of Jesus (p. 21). The translator seems also to be responsible for the rendering of "Auferstehungsberichten" (p. 18) by "account of the crucifixion (p. 12) and for rendering "Was über Golgatha hinaus berichtet wird" (p. 44) by "what is related concerning Golgotha" (p.