

FEB 3 1
THEOLOGICAL SE

The Princeton Theological Review

JANUARY, 1915

CHURCH HISTORY AS A SCIENCE AND AS A THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINE*

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Board of Directors:

It is with mingled feelings that I rise to address you on this occasion. So strong, indeed, are some of the emotions which the solemn business of this hour reawakens within me, that it would be a sheer affectation on my part not to allude to them.

At your earnest solicitation I have exchanged the chair of Homiletics for that of Church History. In this connection I can only say—but thus much I must say—that as I was unable to make, so I have remained unable to review this decision, without many a secret pang alike of regret and of anxious solicitude. I should be untrue to myself, as I certainly should appear wanting in my obligations to your honorable body, if I should fail to take this opportunity of giving you the renewed assurance of my sincere and grateful appreciation of the privilege of working for three years in the Practical Department of the Seminary,—a service which many cherished testimonies have emboldened me to believe has probably been as useful as any of equal length that I may ever render, and which memory persuades me has been as happy as any that I have ever been permitted to undertake.

But on the other hand, as I face the new duties to which you have called me and to-day formally introduced me, I find much comfort and inspiration in the conviction that in your action I have heard the voice of the Lord,

* An address delivered in Miller Chapel on the occasion of induction into the Archibald Alexander Professorship of Church History, October 13, 1914.

The purpose of the book, we are told, is "to arrive at a knowledge of the psychological conceptions of the New Testament writers, by an inductive study of their teachings, looked at from their standpoint, but interpreted in terms of present-day psychology". For such a study there is need of a two-fold equipment, on the psychological and on the exegetical side, and Mr. Fletcher is equal to the task. He first examines thoroughly the N. T. use of the terms Soul, Spirit, Heart and Flesh; then treats the consciousness of Jesus (briefly), the conversion of Paul and N. T. conversion in general; and finally compares the Christian conception of personality with the Jewish and Greek, with a glance at some modern philosophical theories. The outcome of the discussion is to show the essential harmony between Scripture and the facts of human nature, and the adaptation of Christianity to human need.

A reverent and scientific study such as this may supply a corrective to theories which substitute the subconscious for the supernatural, or explain the origin and progress of religious experience as an effect of the emotional disturbance of adolescence, or as a response to a social environment of finite selves. We read: "The N. T. nowhere teaches that man can save himself from sin. If Jesus made men feel their sin, he made them feel at the same time that God was imparting to them salvation from sin in the person and work of His Messiah." (200, 201). "Side by side with this consciousness of sin there is this consciousness of something 'given' to actually save man from evil, supernatural in origin, coming from God, and manifested in the person and saving work of Christ." (This alike whether conversion is sudden or gradual.) "The self, according to the N. T., is not merely a social self developing in a community of other finite selves; it is a divine self realizing its ideal powers of service and fulfilling its destiny only in a fellowship 'with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ'." (245)

Readers of Mr. Fletcher's work will agree with his sponsor, Dr. Rashdall, that the book, originally written as a thesis, is well worthy of publication.

Lincoln University, Pa.

WM. HALLOCK JOHNSON.

Buddhistische und Neutestamentliche Erzählungen. Das Problem ihrer gegenseitigen Beeinflussung untersucht, von GEORG FABER, Dr. phil. Leipzig. J. C. Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung, 1913. Pp. 69. Mk. 2.50 geb. 3.50 (Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament herausgegeben von Hans Windisch, Heft 4)

This treatise investigates the hypothesis first advocated by Rudolf Seydel and more recently renewed in a considerably moderated form by the Dutch scholar van den Bergh van Eysinga, that the Gospel-narratives were influenced by Buddhistic stories. The author adopts the three methodological principles laid down by Clemen for this kind of investigation, viz. (1) that to warrant the assumption of a foreign source for any New Testament material it must be shown

that such material cannot by any possibility be explained from indigenous primitive Christian ideas; (2) that the presence of ideas derived from a foreign source within the milieu whence they are supposed to have come should be clearly demonstrated; (3) that it should be made intelligible how an actual transmigration could have taken place. With this third requirement in mind the author first takes a thorough survey of the intercommunications that have existed in historical times between India and the nearer Orient and Occident up to the date of composition of the New Testament narratives. In the contact with the Babylonian civilization which is proven to have existed from the seventh century B.C. onward, India appears to have played a purely receptive part. Through the Persian occupation of the Indus valley the possibility of India influencing the West was undoubtedly given, but no proofs can be furnished that such a result actually followed. Even the expeditions of Alexander the Great are declared to have remained of small importance for the intercourse between India and the West. As concerns Buddhism in particular this was not at the time existent in Taxila, which was the center of all Brahmanic Indian learning and where the campaign of Alexander reached its limit. The region where Buddhism at that time flourished lay far to the East. After the death of Alexander a Greek embassy from the Seleucidian ruler was established at the court of Chandragupta at Pataliputra, but Megasthenes, the first ambassador, does not so much as mention the name of the Buddhists in his "Indica". While the Orientals showed in various ways their interest in Greek ideas, the West seems to have been entirely engrossed in its material relations with India. The first likelihood of the absorption of Buddhist ideas arose through the intercourse established with the Indian court by Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt. This has a special bearing on the subject of enquiry, because in the commerce thus created Jews of Alexandria cannot have failed to participate. It was just at this time also that the ruler of Pataliputra became hospitable to the influence of Buddhism, which had meanwhile found its great Apostle in Asoka and developed an intense missionary propaganda. Notwithstanding all this the author thinks that at this juncture there is no sufficient ground to assume the entrance of Buddhist legend or doctrine into the West, because Asoka's interest was centered upon the propagation of the practical rules of Buddhist piety, and even in this latter respect his missionary efforts are claimed to have made no impression. More value is attached to the campaigns of Antiochus the Great, who also, it will be remembered, had considerable dealings with the Jews in the Western part of his dominions. Of the greatest importance, however, were the (re-)discovery of the Southwest Monsoon, shortly before the opening of the Christian era and the acquisition of Egypt by the Romans, both of which gave a new vigorous life to the trade between the West and India, and assured the extensive participation of Jews in this commercial movement. But as this trade lay almost entirely in the hands of the westerners the

author draws the conclusion that in whatever movement of religious ideas took place India was the receptive party. While not denying the possibility of the opposite he is only inclined to assume during this period the migration of Christian stories to Southern India. He also gives credence to the ancient accounts of the activity of "the Apostle Thomas" *i.e.* some early Christian missionary in Northwestern India. The much later stories about a similar work attributed to Thomas in Southern India he holds to be entirely without historical foundation.

From the above survey it will be seen that in Dr. Faber's opinion the successive historical situations were more favorable for an influence exerted from the West upon the East, from Christianity upon Buddhism, than for the reverse. Still the possibility of the latter is not denied. Whether it is more than a possibility the author proceeds to test by a careful inquiry into ten subjects in regard to which Buddhistic influence upon the New Testament representation has been alleged. These are: (1) the supernatural birth; (2) the prophecy of Simeon regarding the infant Jesus; (3) the visit of the boy Jesus to the temple at the age of twelve; (4) the baptism of Jesus; (5) the temptation; (6) the blessing pronounced by a woman upon the mother of Jesus; (7) the mite of the widow; (8) Peter's walking on the sea; (9) the Samaritan woman; (10) the eschatological world-conflagration. In close adherence to the first two canons above laid down the author shows that the idea of the supernatural birth is fully explainable from Old Testament representations even as to its very form of expression, and that on the other hand Buddhism does not actually teach a virgin-birth of the Buddha. As to the parallel between Simeon in the temple and the prophecy of Asita concerning the infant Buddha, it is pointed out that the resemblances are superficial and so far outweighed by the difference that all interdependence must be denied, and on both sides the differently oriented stories can be explained each from its own milieu to full satisfaction. The boy Jesus in the temple conversing with the Rabbis is again *toto genere* different from the young Buddha falling into a trance under the rose-apple tree, and the search of his parents for the former bears no particular similarity to the summons of the Buddha's father to find and fetch his absent son. The slight trace of Buddhistic influence which van den Bergh van Eysinga has discovered in the synoptical narrative of the baptism of Jesus depends on an arbitrary combination of part of the text of Matthew with the well-known fragment of the Gospel according to the Hebrews in which Jesus admits the possibility of ignorance in regard to his own sinlessness. Even if the combination could be allowed it is clear that Matt. iii. 15 does not fit into the situation thus created, because it implies the most absolute consciousness of sinlessness. Thus all the parallelism with the story of the carrying of the infant Buddha to the temple and his expression on that occasion of superiority to all the gods, and resolve to conform nevertheless to the custom of the world,

disappears. The temptation of the Buddha by Mara is essentially a temptation to abandon the life of asceticism. Insofar it differs fundamentally, from the principle at stake in the temptation of Jesus, and the six external resemblances adduced prove on closer investigation either unreal or valueless for historical comparison. The beatification of the mother of Jesus (Lk. xi, 27) is compared to a similar blessing reported to have been publicly pronounced on the relations of the Buddha by a rich young woman. There is, however, nothing unusual in this mode of expressing admiration for some extraordinary person, for which other parallels can be easily adduced, nor does the coincidence in the outward concrete circumstances under which it takes place or the way in which in both cases it is received compel us to assume historical dependence of one on the other. The story of the widow's mite likewise illustrates a widely-spread idea, at the coincident appearance of which in Buddhistic lore no one need wonder. That in both instances two pieces of money figure in the transaction might at first seem to prove interdependence, but this is only apparently so, because the "two mills" (lepta), represent in the Gospel-narrative, not two separate pieces of money, but one quadrans, the smallest piece of coin at that time in circulation. Hence Bengel's ingenious explanation that the introduction of the number two serves to enhance the completeness of the sacrifice of the woman, because she could have kept one, no less than the (unfounded) assumption of Plummer that it was not lawful to offer less than two seems to be beside the point. The very fact that the number two is thus naturally explained in the Gospel-situation and finds no explanation in the Buddhistic narrative leads the author to assume in this case an influence from the former upon the latter. The next parallelism concerns Peter's walking upon the sea. It is related of a Buddhist lay-brother that in a trance he began to cross a river walking upon the water, but that in the middle of the stream, when his thoughts were deflected from their trance concentration, he began to sink. Surely, faith as illustrated in the Gospel-account and the trance condition as illustrated in the Buddhistic story are states too dissimilar to allow any connection between the two narratives. The story of the Samaritan woman is found paralleled in the account of the meeting of Ananda, the favorite disciple of the Buddha, with a maiden from the despised caste of the Candala. The maiden on being asked for a drink of water warns Ananda of the defilement he incurs by coming in contact with her. Here again, it will be perceived, there is a very real difference between the motive which in each case underlies the situation, caste-distinction in the one case, national and religious antipathy in the other. Finally the eschatological world-conflagration (2 Pet. iii. 10) is rather unlike the fiery destruction of the present world-cycle predicted in the Buddhistic tradition as coming after 100,000 years. The latter rests on the idea of a ceaseless rotation of birth and death to which every world-order is subject. On the other hand the last day with its world-crisis of the Christian eschatology is absolute and in-

capable of repetition. And the admonition which is appended in each account to the prediction shows equally great difference. On the one side it consists of the demand for holiness and perfection, that the Christian may not perish with the collapsing world but have his part in the world to come; on the other side it is a call to the exercise of the Buddhist virtues of piety, sympathy, equanimity, reverence, etc., a call which moreover, sustains no perceptible casual relation on Buddhist premises to the predicted world-catastrophe. Hence at this point again Dr. Faber is led to surmise that a specific Christian idea has strayed into a Buddhist context.

If we may place reliance on the careful reasoning and the cautious conclusions of this treatise the originality of the Gospel-narrative is in no immediate danger from the hypothesis of Buddhist provenience.

Princeton.

GEERHARDUS VOS.

The Four Gospels from the Irish Codex Harleianus numbered Harl. 1023 in the British Museum Library. Now first edited with an introduction descriptive of the MS. and its correctors by E. S. BUCHANAN, M.A., B.Sc., Editor of *Old-Latin Biblical Texts*, Nos. V and VI; *Sacred Latin Texts*: Nos. I and II, etc. with two collotype facsimiles. *Sacred Latin Texts*: No. III. Heath Cranton & Ouseley, Ltd. Fleet Lane, London, E.C., 1914, pp. xxxii, 88.

The editor of *Old-Latin Biblical Texts V* and *VI* and of the series of *Sacred Latin Texts*, of which the present volume is the third, is well known and esteemed for the accuracy of his work and for the contributions he has made to the history of the Latin Version of the New Testament. This edition of the Codex Harleianus 1023 reproduces the text of the manuscript word for word and line for line, except that certain compendia are resolved. Two collotype reproductions show the character of the script and illustrate the work of revision by correctors. The introductory discussion contains an account of the manuscript, its relation to Harl. 1802 and the Book of Armagh, its correctors, spelling, the scribes and their archetype, the character of the text—adducing a number of extremely interesting variants, and concludes with a statement concerning the plan of the present edition. The editor traces the text preserved in this representative of the Old Latin to very early times and thinks that its readings in several instances explain and therefore are prior to certain variants in the other representatives of the Old Latin. His view of the early origin of Western variants is not new; but the evidence adduced for their very high antiquity will require careful testing, while the final judgment concerning their quality can only be reached on the basis of principles which must find their adequate grounding in a comprehensive theory of the history of the New Testament text.

Princeton.

WILLIAM P. ARMSTRONG.