

The Princeton Theological Review

OCTOBER, 1915

JESUS' MISSION, ACCORDING TO HIS OWN TESTIMONY

(SYNOPTICS)

Under the title of "*I came': the express self-testimony of Jesus to the purpose of His sending and His coming,*" Adolf Harnack has published a study of the sayings of Jesus reported in the Synoptic Gospels, which are introduced by the words "I came" or, exceptionally, "I was sent", or their equivalents.¹ These, says he, are "programmatic" sayings, and deserve as such a separate and comprehensive study, such as has not heretofore been given to them. In his examination of them, he pursues the method of, first, gathering the relevant sayings together and subjecting them severally to a critical and exegetical scrutiny; and, then, drawing out from the whole body of them in combination Jesus' own testimony to His mission.

It goes without saying that, in his critical scrutiny of the passages, Harnack proceeds on the same presuppositions which govern his dealing with the Synoptic tradition in general; that is to say, on the presuppositions of the "Liberal" criticism, which he applies, however, here as elsewhere, with a certain independence. It goes without saying also, therefore, that the passages emerge from his hands in a very mauled condition; brought as far as it is possible to bring them, even with violence, into line with the "Liberal" view of what the mission of Jesus ought to have been. It is reassuring, however, to observe that, even so, they cannot be despoiled of their central testimony. That Jesus proclaimed Himself to have come—to have been

¹ *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 1912, xxii, pp. 1-30.

to believe that the writer was confronted not merely with pagan enemies but also with apostate paganized Hebrews, who joined in the persecution of their own race. That the difference between the parties coincides more or less with that between Pharisees and Sadducees, need not cause wonder, for to a considerable extent the Sadducaic position approximated that of paganism.

Attention should be called to two special conclusions of the author which are interesting from a theological point of view. Focke combats the almost commonly-accepted view that Wisdom marks an earlier stage in the development of that Alexandrian Hebrew-Greek religious philosophy of which Philo is supposed to be the consummate representative. A philosopher the author of Wisdom was in no sense. The Hellenistic coloring and the few philosophical phrases that have entered into his work he derived not from the study of the schools but from the common atmosphere of culture in which he lived. As to Philo he cannot have back of him such a continuous development as nowadays is frequently assumed, because in that case his isolation at the time and subsequently becomes unintelligible.

The second point relates to the alleged influence of Wisdom on Paul. The author devotes considerable space to a close examination of the evidence adduced in support of such dependence by Grafe and others. His conclusion is that in no case can direct dependence be demonstrated. The cases most frequently adduced appear to be largely cases of common borrowing from the Greek Bible and show, as *e.g.* the handling of the figure of the potter, side by side with the unavoidable similarities, such differences of application, as positively to exclude the thought of Paul having borrowed from Wisdom.

Princeton.

GEERHARDUS VOS.

Zur Geschichte der alttestamentlichen Religion in ihrer universalen Bedeutung. Zwei akademische Reden von Wolf Wilhelm Grafen Baudissin. Berlin: Verlag von Georg Stilke. 1914. Pp. 56.

The common title under which the author has joined these two rectoral orations describes more accurately the purport of the second than that of the first. In the first entitled "Old Testament Science and the History of Religion" the problem of universality emerges only towards the end. The larger space is given to a retrospect of the development of Old Testament science in the direction of a history of the Old Testament religion and to a review of the more modern discussions concerning the influence of other religions upon that of Israel. In regard to the former point the author calls attention to the predependence of theology in this field. Classical science made the transition from the study of mythology to a scientific treatment of religion as a historical growth later than and perhaps in partial dependence on the pursuit of this new method by biblical scholars with reference to the Old Testament. To be sure in its older form this method was vitiated by the rationalistic misconception that the historical development to be

traced was a matter of doctrine, a misconception to which the name Biblical Theology still bears witness. Even under the wrong name, however, much was done to clear the way and lay the foundations for the work which now under a better nomenclature the History of the Old Testament religion may take in hand. In his discussion of the comparative problem Baudissin evidently means to make a generous allowance for the elements that the religion of Israel had in common with the religions of the surrounding nations and for the influence exercised from various quarters upon the Old Testament religion. On the latter point his statements are not so much along the line of positive opinion as of a mere objective review of possibilities. Even on so fundamental a question as to whether the primitive Semitic religion of Israel was like that of the Arabs, or partook of the astrological character of the Babylonian religious system, he remains non-committal. And, what is most important, he refuses to admit that the key for our historical understanding of the biblical religion can be found in anything that was borrowed from outside. The specific character of Israel's religion must be due to something indigenous. Baudissin finds the source of this first of all in the intense Semitic consciousness of the greatness of the deity and in the unique position and prestige enjoyed by the deity in consequence of the intertwining of religion and tribal organization. This reminds of the view developed some decades ago from a more positive standpoint by Grau in his book "*Gottes Volk und sein Gesetz*." Next to monotheism, and far outweighing it in religious importance, stand the ethical conception of God and the unique estimate put upon personal spiritual communion with Him as the highest possession of man. These two features the writer derives from the inner religious experience of the heroes of Israel's religion, the prophets. It will be noticed that thus the monotheism and the ethico-religious spiritualization are made to appear as two coördinate strands in the development, whereas the representatives of the Graf-Wellhausen school generally represent the monotheism as the result of the ethicizing of the prophetic conception of God.

In the second oration entitled "Nationalism and Universalism" these two aspects are not merely considered in their contrast but also as to the dependence of the latter upon the former. Baudissin subscribes to the paradox of Kuenen, that Israel has given to the world the most universalistic religion, because its religion was most intensely national in character. This is affirmed on the principle that in the most national and specific traits, the universal and generic is apt to find its strongest expression. It is not made clear, however, how in the concrete case of Israel, the element which chiefly made for universalism, the ethico-religious conception of religion, is connected with the national consciousness. For this element according to Baudissin himself was born in the inexorable depths of the prophetic consciousness. It is true the prophet did not lack the national spirit. Only, by taking recourse to the region of psychological mystery, as a sort of modern substi-

tute for the old factor of revelation, the writer at the outset surrenders the possibility of historically explaining the unique prophetic consciousness either from national factors or otherwise.

Princeton.

GEERHARDUS VOS.

Das Antisemitische Hauptdogma, beleuchtet von EDUARD KÖNIG, Dr. Phil. et Theol., Ord. Professor und Geheimrath in Bonn. Bonn: A. Marcus und E. Weber's Verlag. 1914. Pp. 64.

The doughty Bonn Professor, who has fought for the good rights of the Old Testament on so many fronts, in this brochure takes up its defense, and incidentally also the defense of Old Testament science, against the attacks of a certain type of Antisemitism. There is one extreme wing of the Antisemitic propaganda which does not hesitate to decry and reject the biblical religion, including Jesus and Christianity, in toto, on the plea of its being so typically Semitic as to be irreconcilable with and injurious to the national Germanic aspirations. Others however go less far in their condemnation of the biblical teaching. Loath to cut themselves loose from the Bible and Christianity after so radical a fashion, and yet desiring to put the social, political and economic objections raised to the influence of the Hebrew element in modern civilization on a broad basis, they distinguish between two strands in the biblical development, one of which they attack as the root of all that appears to them at the present day offensive and dangerous in the activity of the Jews, whilst from the other they derive all that is good and noble in the Old Testament religion and in Christianity. In part the distinction is drawn between Judaeic and Israelitish elements, in which case the northern tribes are idealized at the expense of Judah; in other cases, and alongside of this, however, the claim is made that Aryan elements were present and influential among ancient Israel, and that to them is due the production of what it is still possible to cherish as a valuable inheritance from that ancient source. Dr. König is, as usual, very methodical in his presentation of the polemic material that has been advanced along both lines and in the reply to its main arguments. It is amazing to learn what shallowness of biblical scholarship, what cheap, journalistic credulousness in regard to the wildest and most baseless speculations, the rabid Antisemites display in their writings. One cannot help suspecting that to a considerable extent it is not with them a case of honest conviction but of unscrupulous use, regardless of historical support, made of any material that may suit the purpose of their propaganda. An amazing feature of the situation is that the anti-Semitic writers do not hesitate on their part to accuse Old Testament scholars of incapacity in understanding the true trend of the biblical development and introduce themselves as discoverers and liberators in a field enslaved to blind traditionalism. In exposing the fatuousness of all this the author renders a valuable service. At the same time his work, although of small compass, gives a good summary of what has been written of recent years in support