

THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

No. 41—January, 1900.

I.

DR. MCGIFFERT'S HISTORICAL METHODS.

PROFESSOR MCGIFFERT'S *History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age* came before the world with more than ordinary claims to attention. It had the novelty of being an original contribution to the literature of the subject by an American scholar, and the further novelty of reaching its results by methods hitherto more familiar to the German than to the English reader. It was issued as a volume of the "International Theological Library" and deemed worthy to be associated with the other works of that series emanating from well-known theologians and designed for the use of theological students on either side of the Atlantic. As such, it was ushered into the world with the apparent sanction of those who, as editors of the series, are presumably responsible for the selection of the writers, if not for the indorsement of their general views. And it was sent forth under the imprint of an eminent publishing firm long and honorably known for its services in introducing to the English public translations of Continental theology and not less enterprising of late in the publication of new works, English or American, in that domain.* It is a book, moreover, marked by freshness, vigor and adequate scholarship as well as by readiness of resource, power of ingenious combination, and ample license of conjecture, discarding commonly received opinions and advancing others with singular freedom and self-confidence.

* [Dr. Dickson's allusion is to the well-known publishing house of Messrs. T. & T. Clark, of Edinburgh, by which the work was issued in Great Britain. His words of praise would, however, apply equally well, *mutatis mutandis*, to the American publishers, Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons.—EDITORS.]

emphasizes the fact that all the various elements of the kingdom-idea find their unity and basis in the conception of God, and points out how, notwithstanding the relative disappearance of the name and its restriction to eschatological usage, the substance of Jesus' teaching on the kingdom in its dual form underlies the entire development of doctrine in the apostolic Church.

Princeton.

GEERHARDUS VOS.

A Dictionary of the Bible, dealing with its Language, Literature, and Contents, including the Biblical Theology. Edited by *James Hastings, M.A., D.D.*, with the Assistance of John A. Selbie, M.A., and, chiefly in the Revision of the Proofs, of A. B. Davidson, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Hebrew, New College, Edinburgh; S. R. Driver, D.D., Litt.D., Regius Professor of Hebrew, Oxford; H. B. Swete, D.D., Litt.D., Regius Professor of Divinity, Cambridge. Vol. ii: Feign—Kinsman. 4to, pp. xv, 870. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899.) The first volume of Dr. Hastings' new *Dictionary of the Bible* appeared a couple of years ago and was reviewed in this journal in its issue for July, 1898, (Vol. ix, 515); to this review we must refer the reader for a general account of the enterprise and an estimate of the lines on which it is being carried through. The present volume fully sustains the high standard as to fullness of contents, richness of treatment, and thoroughness of workmanship, that was set by its predecessor. In some senses, indeed, it marks an advance upon it. This is partly due to the portion of the alphabet it covers, within which there happens to fall a disproportionate number of the great Biblical topics. It is also in part due, however, to the way in which its writers have risen to their higher opportunities. There is no topic in all the rest of the alphabet, for example, which is as great as the topic, "Jesus Christ." And there is no such article in the first volume as the comprehensive, thorough, reverent and learned article that Dr. Sanday has written on that topic—a little over-cautious at points, of course, for that is Dr. Sanday's besetting fault, but putting the reader abreast of the whole body of modern thought and investigation on this greatest of all subjects that can engage a Christian's mind. No less than fifty pages are given to this article alone, and as they contain between fifteen hundred and two thousand words apiece, that means that the paper would make a volume were it printed in that form, of about the average size of those of *The Expositor's Bible*. It is, in other words, a treatise, and perhaps it is the best succinct treatise on its subject accessible. Along with this great article there are a series of others cognate with it, which fall but little below it in value, such as Dr. Stanton's on the Gospels, Dr. Reynolds' on the Gospel of John, Mr. Ottley's on the Incarnation, and Dr. Orr's on the Kingdom of God. Others equally important concern other Bible topics. The first series of great articles one turning over the pages of the volume lights upon is that which relates to the Epistle to the Galatians, written by Profs. Ramsay and Dods—the former with his accustomed freshness, the latter with his accustomed discretion. Then comes Galilee by Dr. Selah Merrill, and every one knows beforehand how admirably this is treated. A large number of the names of Bible books fall in this section of the alphabet, and critical introductions to them are here provided—those of the Old Testament, we are sorry to say, entirely from the point of view of the destructive criticism; those of the New Testament from a less extreme standpoint. Here fall the important papers, for example, on Galatians, Genesis, Gospels, Habakkuk, Haggai, Hebrews, Hexateuch, Hosea, Isaiah, James, Jeremiah, Job, Joel, Jonah, John (Gospel and Epistles), Joshua, Jude, Judges, Kings. Among these are interspersed such other important discussions as those given to Flood, Galilee, Herod, Israel, Jerusalem,

John (the apostle), Juda, Joseph, and of course the great Biblico-theological articles, such as those on God (divided between Drs. Davidson and Sanday); Grace (Dr. Stewart); Hades, Heaven and Hell (Dr. Salmond); Holiness (Profs. Skinner and Stevens); Holy Spirit (Dr. Sweet); Incarnation (Mr. Otteley); Justification (a thoroughly misleading article by Dr. Simon), and the Kingdom of God (a thoroughly good article by Dr. Orr). Here is assuredly a feast! Nor in our engagement in these major articles will we miss noting (as the editor seems afraid we may) the general excellence of the shorter articles. In these, indeed, lies the test of a *Dictionary of the Bible* and this *Dictionary* bears the test thoroughly. The short articles, in fact, may even be said to be as a class better than the long ones. The amount of the information they pack in a few words is often astonishing, their accuracy and up-to-dateness a constant marvel. In some cases, in fact, what may be called without offense the minor features of the *Dictionary* seem even overdone. Is not this true, for example, in the case of the explanations of the language of the English version, in which sphere of useful knowledge the editor is showing himself such a master? This is a most useful feature of the *Dictionary*, and it is admirably worked out. But when we find four columns on "For," and ten on "Go," and the like, we begin to ask whether compression might not have been wisely studied in these matters. Does the editor realize the amount of space given to these articles in sum, when the whole compass of the *Dictionary* is considered? And has he estimated what proportion that bears to the whole, and what effect this large engagement with the language of the English version will have on the scope of the book? After all, the basis of the work is not supposed to be the English version, and it would seem to be disproportioned to give to the mere language of that version an amount of space and labor which is denied to the languages of the original. If such extended studies as these had been expended on the Hebrew and Greek terms, also, the book would have become a thesaurus of the Biblical languages. This is, after all, however, a small matter; and we are certainly grateful for Dr. Hastings' rich discussions of the little understood words and phrases of our English Bible. It is a more serious matter that confronts us in the dominant critical tone of the Biblical discussions. The Old Testament articles are frankly given over to the Wellhausen school; the analyses of that school are everywhere treated as "facts admitting of no reasonable doubt;" and it is even repeatedly asserted as the characteristic fact as to the Biblical books, that they have come down to us in fundamentally reworked and reëdited forms. The historical results of this view are also frankly accepted: we are continually told that we have no trustworthy account of the history of Israel:—

"That the writers and compilers of Genesis sincerely believed the story [of the Flood] we need have no doubt, but in the light of scientific and historical criticism it must be frankly recognized as one of those many stories or legends which are found in the folk-lore and early literature of all peoples" (p. 17a). "The evidence at our disposal does not at present justify us in claiming more than that the general outline of the narrative [of Genesis] is historical, and that the Mosaic epoch presupposes the patriarchal age. 'The historian may complain with Kuenen (see *The Religion of Israel*, Vol. i, p. 113) that the strictly historical kernel which can be safely extracted from such a book as Genesis is vague and more or less indefinite. The fact is that the great figures of the patriarchal period are presented to us in narratives "of which," says Prof. G. A. Smith, "it is simply impossible for us at this time of day to establish the accuracy." We have simply to accept the fact that in the present state of our knowledge there are no clear *criteria* by which to distinguish precisely the historical nucleus contained in the patriarchal narratives from the idealized picture.' . . . (Otteley, *Bk.*, p. 130f)" (p. 17b). "It is of course obvious that the Hexateuch as it stands is not strictly a historical work. It did not need criticism to discover this, but criticism makes it absolutely certain. It shows that the most definite and statistical details . . . are the least to be depended upon. . . . Regarded as a history of the ancient migrations of the Israelites, their establishment as a religious community, and their settlement in Canaan, the Hexateuch contains little more than a general outline on

which to depend " (p. 375b). "The view which on the whole may be said best to satisfy the circumstances of the case is the view that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are historical persons and that the accounts which we have of them are *in outline* historically true, but that their characters are idealized and their biographies in many respects colored by the feelings and associations of a later age . . . Says Mr. Ottley . . . 'We have here to do with the earliest form of history—traditional folk-lore about primitive persons and events, worked up according to some preconceived design by a devout literary artist.' The basis of the narratives in Genesis is in fact *popular oral tradition*, and that being so we may expect them to display the characteristics which popular oral tradition does in other cases " (p. 534b).

The generation of Christian teachers trained by the articles of this *Dictionary* is very apt, then, to sit very loosely to the historical character of the narratives of the Bible. The portentous character of the effects of this on their construction of Christianity itself are not always, we fear, fully realized. Of course it will be a desupernaturalized Christianity which they will teach, and that not only because of the anti-supernaturalistic heaven which lies at the basis of the whole system of destructive criticism here deferred to, but even more directly (in the pupils' case) on account of the necessarily desupernaturalizing effect of the doubt thus thrown on the historicity of the whole body of Biblical narratives. The late Prof. Jowett suggests in one of his early letters to Stanley: "If there is such uncertainty about the common facts, you cannot possibly have evidence sufficient to warrant you in believing the miracles." It is certainly a just remark. The presently fashionable attitude toward the character of Old Testament history renders it absurd to take at the foot of the letter its accounts of marvelous occurrences, theophanies, acts and words of God; and at once requires the reader to reduce all to the level of "reasonable presumption," that is, to the "natural." This inevitable elimination of the supernatural occurrences from the history of Israel, by which Moses, for example, will be reduced more and more completely to "a pre-Christian Mohammed with [possibly] a more fruitful revelation [save the *word* at least!] in his hand," and the exodus to the profession on the part of Israel of *Islām* and their preparation for a *Jihād* (p. 509), while the patriarchal narratives are more and more conceived as myths and folk-lore—will as inevitably produce in its turn a more or less naturalized Christianity. We are not in the least soothed by the suggestion that the "spiritual lessons" remain. Is it "spiritual lessons" that man is most in need of? Or is it an *actual redemption*? Viewed as history of events that actually occurred, the Biblical narratives give us an account of how God has intervened into human history to save sinful men. Viewed as a vehicle of a series of "spiritual lessons," they give us some knowledge of what it would be well for men to think or perhaps even to do. This is what is at stake in the historicity of the Biblical narratives. Is our religion a religion of redemption by the mighty hand of God, or is it a religion of development by means of "spiritual lessons?" It is, in other words, the very essence of Christianity that is at stake—that fundamental essence of Christianity, assaulted now only in another way by its perennial enemy known in the different ages as Naturalism, Rationalism, Pelagianism. It is the old antithesis between a religion offering a Divine redemption and one calling on man to save himself, which faces us in the present critical conflict. And this new *Bible Dictionary* is on the wrong side in this struggle. The part taken in this volume by American scholars is comparatively unimportant. No topic of first-rate significance has been entrusted to an American writer. Of those of the second importance, only the New Testament portion of the paper on "Holiness," by Prof. G. B. Stevens; the paper concerning "Galilee," by Dr. Selah Merrill; and that on "Genealogy," by Prof. E. L. Curtis, have been placed in American hands. Looked at absolutely, the American contribution is in mass, however, not inconsiderable and in quality certainly

very creditable. First in both mass and interest must be placed the fifty or more short articles on subjects belonging to the natural history of the Bible, by Prof. George Post: Ferret, Figs, Fir, Fish, Fitches, Flag, Flax, Flea, Flock, Flowers, Fly, Forest, Fowl, Fox, Frankincense, Frog, Galbanum, Gall, Garlic, Gazelle, Gecko, Gier Eagle, Glede, Gnat, Goat, Gopher Wood, Gourd, Grass, Greyhound, Grove, Hare, Hart, Hawk, Hay, Hazel, Heath, Hemlock, Herd, Heron, Holm Tree, Hoopoe, Hornet, Horse, Horseeleech, Husks, Hyæna, Hyssop, Ivory, Ivy, Jackal, Juniper. Needless to say these are all that could be desired. To them is added an article on "Fishing" by Mr. W. K. Eddy, of Sidon, of the same character. Next in importance may be enumerated the eleven articles by Dr. Selah Merrill on subjects connected with his Galilæan studies: Galilæan; Galilee; Galilee, Mountain in; Galilee, Sea of; Gaulinitis; Genessaret, Land of; Gilead; Golan; Jabesh Gilead; Jazer; Kadesh-Naphtah. Dr. Willis J. Beecher has ten judicious articles, centring around his main article on "Giant:" Fence, Gerar, Giant, Gibbethon, Gob, Goliath, Hadrach, Hedge, Horites, Keilah. Dr. G. T. Purves has four excellent articles: Joseph Barrabbas, Judas Barrabbas, Judas of Galilee, Jude the Lord's Brother. Prof. F. C. Porter continues his work on the Apocrypha, with articles on Judith and the Book of Judith. Prof. W. Max Müller treats of Gozan, Halah, Hara. Prof. Ira M. Price deals with Hadradrinmon. There remain only five rather important articles contributed by five separate hands: Dr. G. B. Stevens' careful article on "Holiness in the New Testament;" Dr. G. Vos' thorough study of the Biblical idea of "Fool;" Prof. J. H. Thayer's interesting examination of the puzzling word "Hosanna;" and two papers, the spirit of which we cannot so highly commend, but which exhibit a full canvassing of the material: Prof. E. L. Curtis' paper on "Genealogy" and Prof. B. W. Bacon's on "The Genealogies of Christ." Repeating the phraseology now so familiar to us on the lips of the modern assailant of the trustworthiness of the Biblical record, Prof. Curtis tells us that many of the genealogical stories "originated evidently in folk-lore," that they present an inextricable "mingling of fact and fancy," and that they can be very little depended on. And Prof. Bacon applies these findings to the genealogies of Christ. "Hence," he says, "the light which modern research seeks from them falls rather on the century after than the centuries before the birth of Christ—on the history of the doctrine of His Davidic sonship rather than His actual descent."—

Theologischer Jahresbericht. Herausgegeben von Dr. H. Holtzmann, Professor in Strassburg, Elsass, und Dr. G. Krüger, Professor in Giessen. Achtzehnter Band, enthaltend die Literatur des Jahres 1898. Erste Abtheilung: *Exegese*, bearbeitet von Siegfried und Holtzmann. 8vo, pp. 190. (Berlin: C. A. Schwetschke und Sohn; London: Williams and Norgate; New York: Gustav E. Stechert, 1899.) This first part of this indispensable index to current theological literature reached us as usual about the middle of the year succeeding that with whose literature it deals. The Old Testament literature is cared for still—as it has been since 1881—by Siegfried; the New Testament, by Holtzmann. When we consider the multitude of titles adduced, we cannot wonder that signs of haste are observable, especially in the first portion of the volume; and we are not unprepared for Siegfried's apology, appended to the section cared for by him. Another less excusable fault mars the work: the incurable party spirit that colors the whole body of comment. One would be almost inclined to say that Siegfried is incapable of a generous appreciation of work done from a different standpoint from his own, were we not faced by the kind words spoken, say, of the Catholic Baumgartner's *History of the World's Literature* (p. 2). The