



The Princeton Theological Review

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York, expressing his hope, at the same time, that Vane may be ultimately cleared of complicity in this discreditable proceeding. But the chief claim of the volume upon attention is its lucid and well-ordered narrative of the whole story of Vane's career. As is usual in Dr. Willcock's books the volume is well illustrated. It is also provided with a useful index.

Princeton.

BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

What is the Truth about Jesus Christ? Problems of Christology discussed in six Haskell Lectures at Oberlin, Ohio. By FRIEDRICH LOOFS, Ph.D., Th.D., Professor of Church History in the University of Halle-Wittenberg, Germany. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1913. 12mo; pp. vii, 241.

There are few men better equipped than Friedrich Loofs to give an illuminating survey of recent christological discussion. He is handicapped, of course, by his own dogmatic point of view. His dogmatic point of view is that of right-wing Ritschlianism. As a right-wing Ritschlian, Jesus is to him the unique Revealer of God and Mediator of Redemption. From this standpoint he looks out upon all recent discussion, and by its standard he estimates the value of its contribution to thought. Whatever is less than this, and, equally, whatever is more than this, he condemns; and he so conducts the survey of the progress of discussion as to lead up with apparent naturalness to the conclusion that it is thus and not otherwise that we must think of Christ. It is only at the end of the volume, therefore, that we learn Loofs' own Christological opinions; and they are given to us there less as the constitutive elements of his own Christology than as the residuum of the Christological discussion of recent years. "For us," says he (p. 236), "the three following thoughts, held out by these views, are the most valuable: first, that the historical person of Christ is looked upon as a human personality; secondly, that this personality, through an indwelling of God or his Spirit, which was unique both before and after, up to the end of all time, became the Son of God who reveals the Father and becomes also the beginner of a new mankind; and, thirdly, that in the future state of perfection a similar indwelling of God has to be realized, though in a copied and therefore secondary form, in all people whom Christ has redeemed." Here are just the familiar forms of right-wing Ritschlianism: Jesus Christ is only a man; but in this man God dwells uniquely and by this unique indwelling of God, He is made the Revelation of God and the Mediator of redemption; and the redeemed are to be brought in their measure into a relation to God similar to that in which He stood. When Loofs, then, speaks of Jesus being something more than man—as he sometimes does in the course of his lectures,—it is this that he means: not that Jesus is in

Himself more than a man, but that God dwells in Him more fully than He dwells in other men. "The conviction that God dwelt so perfectly in Jesus through his Spirit, as had never been the case before and never will be till the end of all time," he says, "does justice to what we know historically about Jesus, and may, at the same time, be regarded as satisfactorily expressing the unique position of Jesus which is a certainty to faith" (p. 238-9). We know "historically" that Jesus is a man. We are sure with "the certainty of faith" that Jesus has in Him something more than we can find in other men. When we speak of Jesus as the man in whom God uniquely dwelt we are doing justice to both facts. "It also," he even adds, "justifies our finding God in Christ when we pray to him" (p. 239). That is to say, although He is only a man in whom God dwells in a measure superior to that in which He dwells in other men, we are justified, because we can thus find God "in Him", in praying to Him. What it means for God to dwell in Christ; and what it means to say it is by His Spirit that He dwells in Christ; and indeed what it means to speak at all of God's "Spirit" remains meanwhile uncertain (p. 239). "My last refuge, therefore is," he says, "the term which Paul sharply emphasizes in the epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians, *the mystery of Christ*" (p. 209). "We can never penetrate so deep as to learn how God made Him what He was" (p. 241). This is Loofs' Christological standpoint.

From this standpoint Loofs is sure that Jesus, the man Jesus, existed. And therefore he opens his course of lectures with a refutation of the modern radicalism—the most important representation of which he finds (p. 6) in William Benjamin Smith—that denies the existence of the man Jesus. It is the extra-canonical testimony and the witness of Paul to which he gives his chief attention. He concedes—we think improperly—"that the historicity of Christ cannot be conclusively proved by the non-Christian sources"; though he contends that they give weighty evidence for it, such as to render it very difficult to deny His existence (pp. 30-31). The stress of the argument is therefore thrown upon the shoulders of Paul; and, of course, Paul can bear it.

From the same standpoint Loofs is equally sure that the life of Jesus was not a natural human life, and he devotes three of his six lectures (the second, third and fourth) to making this clear against the current "Liberal" contentions. The "Liberal" thinkers, he shows, starting with the presupposition that Jesus' life must needs have been a purely human life have found it impossible to sustain themselves on that ground. They come in the end inevitably to one or the other of these two conclusions—either that "we know next to nothing about Jesus", or that "Jesus was a religious enthusiast". And neither conclusion is tenable in the face of what we most surely know about Jesus, namely that "there was a growing community shortly after the death of Jesus which highly revered Jesus, and which must, therefore, have had a lively interest in his words and deeds", and that the most surely genuine words of Jesus that have come down to us are certainly not the words of a fanatic. Then taking up the "Liberal"

assumption that Jesus exhibited nothing above the measure of a man in life on its merits, Loofs shows that Jesus certainly was conscious of something that was more than human within Him; that His immediate followers recognized something that was more than human in Him; and that this faith of the earliest community has been verified by the experience of multitudes since. "History", he says impressively, "does not know of any community in those primitive times that saw in Jesus merely the teacher and the exemplar of Christian faith. To the earliest Christians too, Jesus was an object of their belief. Paul also assumed that all Christians prayed to Christ. He characterized the Christians as people *who call upon the name of Jesus Christ*" (p. 148). Still more impressively, he says: "Science has to respect realities. And it is a reality that the faith in Jesus the Saviour has been a power in history, and still is a power in the world up to the present day. Historical science cannot do justice to the sources with its assumption that the life of Jesus was a purely human life. It cannot draw a credible picture of Jesus. But the faith of all time carries a picture in its heart which has its prototype in the Jesus of the Gospels and in his own self-consciousness" (p. 160).

But from his standpoint Loofs is also bound to declare that the conviction of His church that Jesus Christ is really (*realiter*) God as well as man is also untenable. He argues against this conviction in his fifth lecture,—on three grounds: first, "rational logic" condemns it; secondly, it is not in accord with New Testament views; and thirdly, it is a product of Greek philosophy. Under the first of these heads he urges that the incarnation of only a single person of the Trinity is unthinkable, that it is meaningless to say God could become flesh, that incarnation of a person of the Trinity breaks up the Trinity—if there be such a thing as a Trinity. Under the second head he pleads that the Scriptures know nothing of a Son of God before the incarnation; that they know nothing of the Trinity; that they give to Jesus a human, not divine personality; that they attribute to Him a human development; and that they present Him as in organic connection with the human race. Under the third head he endeavors to trace the origin in the church of the doctrines of the Trinity and the Two-Natures of Christ as the product of philosophical thought impressing Greek conceptions upon the simple Christian facts.

Having thus disposed of all possible rival views, Loofs has little difficulty, in his last lecture, by means of a rapid survey of the efforts of recent theorizers in this field to present a valid conception of Christ—from the Kenotists, of whom he speaks with deserved contempt to their opposites, the Dörnerites—in arriving at last at the enunciation of his own right-wing Ritschlianism as the pure product of the age-long thinking of the church concerning the nature of its Lord. He is not a God who has been made into a man and He is not a man who has been made into a God; He is a man in whom God so dwells that in Him we see the unique revelation of God and through Him we are redeemed to God. It is to Loofs' credit that he does not seem fully

satisfied with this formula, as we certainly are not; he seems to hold to it only as a kind of safe middle-way, walking in which he may avoid the crass humanizing of Christ and the crass deifying of Him which he conceives is done respectively by the "Liberals" and the "Orthodox". Perhaps we may admit that it is as near the truth as one can come who has lost the guidance of the authoritative Scriptures and is thrown back for the conception he will form of Christ upon general considerations, interpreted under the guidance of modern chariness of the supernatural.

There are many points which are incidentally discussed in the course of Loofs' argument to some of which we would like to advert.

There is, for example, the picture of the state of present-day German thought in the field of Christology which he gives, in allusions throughout the lectures indeed, but chiefly in the last lecture. He tells us that the doctrine of the Two Natures has perished out of German academical circles (p. 202); Philippi (†1882) was the last recognized theologian who taught it. He tells us again that the Kenotic speculation, if it has not yet quite died out, has nevertheless "been pushed pretty far back" (p. 223). He expresses wonder that it has been taken up by English writers just as it is dying out in Germany; "in Sweden too", he slyly remarks, "it was confidently defended as late as 1903 by Oskar Bensow",—as, we may add, it was in Germany too as late as 1902 by Alexander von Oettingen. Other mediating views, whether, like those of Johannes Kunze and Erich Schäfer, echoes of Kenoticism, or, like those of Martin Kähler and Reinhold Seeberg, echoes of Dornerism, he evidently thinks have no general significance. All "learned" Germany is given over, in a word, to humanitarianism and divides only on the question whether the man Jesus shall be thought of as a special organ of God (the "Mediatorial Christology", in the nomenclature of Otto Kirn), or merely as a God-seeking man (Kirn's "Prophetic Christology"). Loofs' own view is the former; but he does not glose the wide extension of the latter, to which Jesus Christ is but the first Christian. It will be well for us to bear in mind that thus "learned" Germany has pretty much as a body fallen away from the Divine Christ.

It is interesting to observe the decision with which Loofs wishes to separate himself from the extreme schools of "Liberalism", as in their Christology, so also in their methods of criticism. He recognizes that their aim is to prove the life of Jesus to be a merely natural human life (p. 3), and he fully recognizes that this aim is not only wrong in itself but has been sought by most reprehensible critical methods. He thus sweeps the extreme radical criticism out of the way at one blow, as thoroughly prejudiced and untrustworthy: "judging by what I understand by historical method", he remarks, "such criticism is historically unjustifiable because it violates the sources instead of doing justice to them" (p. 112). It is particularly interesting to observe the judgment he passes on the currently employed canons of historical criticism, as they are enunciated say, by Heitmüller or somewhat more extremely by P. W. Schmiedel. "Critics", says he (pp. 114 sq.), "have

tried to introduce rules for picking out the genuine words [of Jesus]. As a basis, says Heitmüller, we have to take all the materials that are not in accordance with the belief, theology, worship, and customs of the ancient Christian community, or, at any rate, do not completely agree with it. We may absolutely trust all this and everything that is organically united therewith. On the other hand, we must pass the verdict 'not genuine' whenever a story or a word agrees too obviously with the thoughts and customs and the dogmatic and eschatological wants of the later community. This sounds very circumspect, and certainly contains correct ideas. . . . Yet we cannot make use of this canon as a general rule. For, in the first place, if we consider with how much freedom tradition treated the words of Jesus (as we can see on many occasions) we shall not at all expect a word of Jesus in the Gospels which does not agree with the belief of the reporter. If we interpret any word in this way we have to fear that we misinterpret it. And, secondly, it would be contrary to all sound knowledge if we suspected those words of Jesus which agree most obviously with the belief of the ancient Christians simply for this reason. For there was no greater authority for these Christians than Jesus. We are also in practice brought to evident absurdities if we apply this rule . . ." Of course this deliverance is not free from the "halbheit" which is inherent in Loofs' whole attitude—as it is in that of the entire school to which he belongs. But on account of this very "halbheit" of his attitude, his adverse judgment on the validity of the critical canon upon which, in point of fact, the entire case of the reconstruction of the evangelical narrative in the naturalistic interest hangs, is valuable (*cf.* THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW, April, 1913; pp. 254 *sq.*).

But perhaps the most interesting element in these lectures is the intimation given, in suggestions here and there, of the basis on which Loofs founds his historical judgments on the one hand and his dogmatic conclusions on the other. There are involved here a doctrine of the nature of historical science, and a doctrine of the validity of judgments of faith, both of which attract attention and perhaps also criticism.

Loofs commits himself to a purely naturalistic conception of History. "History", says he ((pp. 81 *sq.*) "has to reckon with the analogy from other experience. . . . Everything that is impossible according to all our experience is to be put aside as being unhistorical. For historical research has to make clear in its genetic connection what happened in the past; and, as measure for what is possible, it has to employ our experience. . . . Where we cannot find any cause which, according to our experience, is possible, then every conscientious historian is prevented from speaking of a historical fact. Hence, when historians are forced by credible reports to recognize a fact as having really occurred, they must assume causes lying within the sphere of our experience." This is the precise position relatively to "history" which our naturalists occupy relatively to "science". "Nature", for example,

says Huxley (*Hume*, p. 129), "means neither more nor less than that which is; the sum of phenomena presented to our experience; the totality of events past, present and to come. Every event must be taken to be part of nature, until proof to the contrary is supplied. And such proof is, from the nature of the case, impossible." "In truth," he adds, applying his doctrine, "If a dead man did come to life, the fact would be evidence not that any law of nature had been violated, but that these laws, even when they express the results of a very long and uniform experience, are necessarily based on incomplete knowledge, and are to be held only on grounds of more or less justifiable expectation." We do not know what may happen to-morrow but we know that whatever happens—either to-day or to-morrow—is "natural", and we must simply assume for it and search out its appropriate natural cause. So, Loofs intimates, we do not know except by testimony what happened yesterday; but as historians, we must assume that all that happened yesterday happened in accordance with "nature" as known to our experience, and we must seek a cause for it "lying within the sphere of our experience". This is a purely naturalistic conception of "history", and will permit "history" to record as fact only the "natural".

This naturalistic conception of history Loofs of course applies to the history of Christ. "From this," he writes (p. 83), "it follows that historical science, when investigating the life of Jesus, must take into consideration the supposition that it was a purely human life and that nothing happened in it which falls outside the sphere of human experience. Giving up this supposition would mean admitting that the life of Jesus, or this or that event in his life, is incommensurable for historical science." "Historical science, therefore, is not only allowed, but also obliged, to explain the conviction of the resurrection of Jesus from causes lying within the sphere of natural human experience" (p. 84). "As long as a historian does not declare his science incompetent, he must look for a natural explanation of the faith of the disciples. No description of the life of Jesus that recognizes supernatural factors is purely historical" (p. 84). If this means anything, it means that from the point of view of "historical science", Jesus *must* be explained, in all the elements of his manifestation, as a purely natural phenomenon, transcending in nothing the experience of ordinary men. Loofs does not in the least, however, believe that Jesus can be so explained. But instead of inferring from this that his definition of historical science is wrong and correcting it accordingly, he simply proclaims Jesus as a "supernatural" phenomenon. The "unhistorical" can, it seems, have been actual, because we elect to define the "historical" as the "natural", and to remove out of the province of historical science all that is above nature. Thus "the science of history" is set upon a task which is *ab initio* proclaimed impossible: it *must* explain all that has occurred on natural grounds; but all that has occurred is, in point of fact, not explicable on natural grounds. The fundamental assumption on which "the science of history" proceeds is therefore false, and history is necessarily in conflict with faith.

To avoid this conflict, Loofs demands that in a case like that of Jesus historical science, instead of pressing its claims, must just abrogate its function. That Jesus as He was manifested in the actual life He lived lies outside the sphere of history, Loofs is therefore explicit in affirming. Before Him "historical science" must declare itself incompetent. If we undertake to write a life of Jesus, we are "forced to suppose that his life was a purely human one". Since His life, however, in point of fact was not a purely human one, all that "historical science" can do with respect to Him is to stand aside (p. 88). It may give from its sources evidence to this or that of the doings and sayings of Jesus, but it is beyond its power to give us an account of Jesus. When it attempts to give an account of Jesus it finds itself, with its instrument of research, viz., the analogy of our own experience, before an impossible task: the Jesus of the sources is not a purely natural Jesus. There is nothing for historical science to do, therefore, but to draw back from the problem of Jesus and to hand it over to the judgment of faith. The one thing that must not be done is to mix the two matters. "An author treating his subject in some chapters as a historian would do, but elsewhere emancipating himself from the analogy of human experience, will produce a mixture of history and assertions of faith. And in my opinion this combination of heterogeneous modes of consideration is to be welcomed neither by a believing Christian nor by a scholarly historian" (pp. 84-5). It is then not on the ground of historical science but solely on the ground of the assertions of faith that we know that there is something divine about Jesus. This is not to be taken as meaning, however, we are assured, that we can affirm on the ground of faith that which historical science declares not to have been actual: though how "historical science" as defined can refrain from declaring all that transcends the natural not actual it is hard to see. What it means, we are told, is only that we may, or must, affirm on the ground of faith what historical science is incompetent to declare on the ground of experience to be actual. "Historical science can as little conceive Jesus correctly as natural science can appreciate God correctly. Its method cannot reach up to Him" (p. 100). Historical science stands before Jesus therefore helpless and we must call in the judgments of faith or remain forever incapable of understanding Jesus. We have no other instrument.

Nevertheless we do not thus escape after all wholly from history. The judgment of faith as to Jesus, we are told, is given to us partly in the records of the New Testament: for the records of the New Testament are testimonies of the faith of primitive Christian times. Their records, however, combine historical facts about Jesus and beliefs of the community which He founded concerning Him. They already mix, therefore, historical knowledge and the assertions of faith. We cannot, of course, accept that mixture out of hand as the truth. Historical knowledge and the assertions of faith must indeed be combined in our conclusions as to what Jesus really was and is: but this combination must be of our own—not of another's—convictions of

faith with historical truths if it is to be valid (p. 205). "Historical research shows us a number of traits in the historical Jesus which it cannot combine into a homogeneous picture on the basis of its pre-suppositions." "Historical science, which is forced to recognize the analogy of human experience, is therefore, in the case of Jesus, placed before a dilemma. It must either reduce the notices about the self-consciousness of Jesus to such an extent that they fit into the frame of a purely human life; or it must declare itself incompetent to speak the last word on this question; that is, it must be satisfied with a frank acknowledgement of the existence of these heterogeneous elements which it cannot combine, and must then leave it to the other, not purely historical, observation to unite the heterogeneous elements into one uniform whole" (p. 207). It is faith and faith only which can effect this combination. The experiences of faith which are "the common property of riper Christians of all ages" become thus the key to the interpretation of Jesus. These experiences certainly include the ineradicable conviction that in Jesus Christ we have a unique revelation of God: and with it a revelation of what we may through His revelation of God to us, become. "Faith will, therefore, have to oppose the science of history, if the latter, unwilling to recognize that Jesus stands beyond the reach of its standards, thinks it has to eliminate those traits in the picture of Jesus which surpass the ordinary bounds of human life. Faith will have to claim—and it has a right to do so—that historical science shall acknowledge that it cannot say the last word about Jesus. Faith and the seemingly contradictory traits in the picture of Jesus which historical science can show—those truly human and those surpassing human bonds—these two support one another" (p. 218). Here is the triumph of faith over "historical science" manifested.

In reviewing this statement of principles we cannot fail to marvel at the sharp discrimination between the science of history and the assertions of faith which it insists upon. There is no reason whatever for defining history at the outset naturalistically and therefore committing it to the discovery of a purely natural Jesus. It is surely the function of history to discern and portray what actually was, not to describe the past in terms of natural law. There is no more reason for describing the judgments of faith in so exclusively a subjective fashion, lest we sublimate them into mere fancies. We should be the last to deny that Christian experience has its convincing testimony to bring to the deity of the Lord. But we think it important to make it clear from the outset that Christian experience is an experience of realities. I may well doubt whether I am not trusting to a fevered dream when a wild-eyed starving man tells me of the feasts that have been spread for him and which he is daily enjoying; but when, amid a starving population, one who is obviously sleek and well-fed tells of the provision made for our needs by good people to whom he would direct us, the benefits he has already received become the best evidence of the truth of his story. The effects of Christ in the world and in the individual, in the regulation

of lives and society, are valid proofs of His claims and power. No one would neglect them. But there is no need—or propriety—in setting them in opposition to the “historical evidence” of His claims and power, as the sole proof of their truth. In point of fact they are themselves just historical evidences, along with the other forms of historical evidence, and lead us not merely to a conviction of faith, but to a historical judgment. That is no true “historical science” which in forming its historical judgments fails to take account of the effects of historical events or personalities. And if these effects are of a supernatural order it belongs to historical science to assume for them a supernatural cause emerging in history, on pain of ceasing to be historical *science*. For science means causal thinking, and causal thinking means the discovery and validation of *adequate* causes. The Divine Christ is not merely a fact of faith, but a fact of history; and it is not history but a *a priori* reconstruction of history in the interest of an erroneous world-view which would eliminate Him from history and relegate Him to the realm of faith alone. That Loofs reacts from this extreme view is to his credit: that he reacts only partially is only a part of that fatal “*halbheit*” which vitiates all the reasonings of the whole school to which he belongs and of which he is one of the chief ornaments. The “assertions of faith” are not to be set over against the findings of “historical science” to correct them; they are to be made part of the evidence on which “historical science” depends for its findings and are to coöperate with whatever other evidence “historical science” has at its disposal in rendering beyond all question the historical fact of the Divine Christ, who is given to us on the ground of a great variety of historical evidence, only one item of which is found in our own experiences of His reality and power.

Princeton.

BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD.

The Rule of Faith, being the Baird Lecture for 1905. By the Rev. W. P. PATERSON, D.D., Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh. London and New York: Hodder and Stoughton. 1912. Crown 8vo; pp. x, 439.

The range of Dr. Paterson's discussion in his Baird lectures, now published in this attractive volume, will scarcely be suggested to the average reader by the title he has given them,—*The Rule of Faith*. He considers himself entitled to subsume the whole under this title, however, because of a certain ambiguity attaching to it, due to its divergent use in Patristic and in Protestant Theology. In the early ages of the church “the Rule of Faith” (or “the Rule of Truth”) was the designation given to the common fundamental faith of the Church, as drawn out from Scripture and expressed in a succinct formula, say for example, the Baptismal Creed. By their harmony with this standard of teaching the orthodoxy of all theological constructions was estimated. In the Post-Reformation controversies, on the other hand, “the Rule of Faith” is the designation given to the proximate authoritative source of Christian knowledge, from the