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I. THE NEW CHRISTOLOGY.

THE completion of Dr. Gerhart's *Institutes*¹ prepares the way for a full consideration of the theory which the distinguished author sets forth and maintains. The volumes give us a new work on systematic theology. They emanate from the Reformed (German) Church. They are able and entertaining. The spirit of their author is calm and reverent; his mind is broad and grasping; his method is positive and constructive rather than polemical and controversial; his style is plain and vigorous. The work possesses great value, but that value is chiefly negative, because these volumes are a concrete demonstration of the utter inability of modern progressives to fulfil their promises of a new theology and to make good their criticisms upon the old. Others of this school have written incisively upon topics in theology, and have had the polemical advantage of having that particular topic separated to itself, so that it could not be reinforced from the general system of truth to which it belonged; but Dr. Gerhart, bolder, braver, fairer, and truer than all his school, undertakes the construction of a system. His mind sees, and his heart feels, that, if the new principle be

¹ *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. By Emanuel V. Gerhart, D. D., LL. D., Professor of Systematic and Practical Theology in the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church at Lancaster, Pa. Complete in two octavo volumes, 1744 pages; per volume, \$3.00. New York, London, and Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls Company. 1894.

VIII. CRITICISMS AND REVIEWS.

BEYSCHLAG'S NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY.

NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY, OR HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE TEACHING OF JESUS AND OF PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY, ACCORDING TO THE NEW TESTAMENT SOURCES. *By Dr. Willibald Beyschlag, Professor of Theology at Halle; Translated by Rev. Neil Buchanan.* Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark. Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Two Volumes. Pp. xxiii., 419, and xii., 517. Price, \$6.00.

In many respects this is a great treatise, and from some points of view it is a good work. Its author has been Professor of Theology at Halle since 1860, and he is now past seventy years of age, so that we have in this work the ripest results of a life-long study of this particular field. His *Das Leben Jesu*, in two volumes, published in 1885-'86, indicated great ability in arranging the materials, and in powerful delineation. In the volumes before us these qualities, and others to be presently noticed, come very prominently into view. The literary style at once arrests attention. With but few exceptions it is written in an exceedingly simple and lucid manner. To say this is to say much, for to the English reader the German style of writing is often obscure and involved. This treatise is a notable exception, and consequently any ordinary English scholar can read it with delight. It is proper to add in this connection that Mr. Buchanan, the translator, has done his work exceedingly well, and has preserved the life and movement of the original in an admirable manner. As we have not a copy of the German original by us as we write, it is not possible to institute careful comparisons between it and the translation, but we can testify to the attractive and evidently accurate manner in which the translation has been executed. The task of the translator in putting such a work as this into an English dress is by no means an easy one, and when well done it deserves to be commended.

A comparison of this treatise with the able work of Dr. Bernhard Weiss, Professor of Theology in Berlin, on the *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, also published in two volumes in 1879, and translated into English nine years later, would be an interesting and instructive undertaking. In some respects the two works resemble each other, but in others they are quite different. Both are partly exegetical and partly historical. In Weiss the historical is subordinate to the exegetical, while in Beyschlag the historical is made quite prominent. It may be added that Weiss is less destructive and less constructive than Beyschlag. By this we mean that he does not run counter of dogmatics nor make an effort to construct any system, while our author does much of the former and attempts something in the latter task. There is room, however, for both treatises; and while that of Weiss will always be a valued book of reference, we are inclined to think that Beyschlag's will be read more continuously. The introduction of the

historical element in larger measure gives movement to the presentation, which attracts and holds the reader.

As to the author's general *standpoint*, he might almost be described as a critical and dogmatic Ishmaelite. In other words, he can scarcely be said to belong to any distinct school of critics or theologians. He confesses that to a certain degree he follows his great teacher, Dr. C. J. Nitzsch, but he at the same time claims to write with entire freedom. He expects to excite equal displeasure alike with advanced criticism and traditional dogmatism. In regard to the former he admits that he regards the standpoint of historical criticism as the only one for scientific theology to occupy at the present day in dealing with the Scriptures, but he has no sympathy with that type of radical criticism which scouts the conservative position but puts nothing better in its place, and which seems more anxious to say something new than something tenable. In regard to traditional dogmatism he takes a stand which may be not inappropriately described as *dogmatic* opposition. In the *Preface* he says that the would-be orthodoxy of to-day is "like a somnambulist going with his eyes closed on the housetops of the century." And all through the treatise the "traditional," the "scholastic," the "dogmatic" theologian is often treated with scant civility. He thinks that the biblical method is richer and deeper, and more satisfying to the intellectual and religious life. There is no doubt some truth in this as against certain types of dogmatic theology, but the severe language of our author, and the indiscriminate manner in which his scoldings are administered, and, above all, the fact that he is often threshing a man of straw, and going out of his way to do it, considerably weakens his defence of a sound view of the value of biblical theology. If one were to mention Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* to our author, no doubt he would rank it among the traditional dogmatism which he denounces, while, in the judgment of any one who reads Calvin's great work with care, we are sure that the conviction will be fixed that the *Institutes* are distinctively biblical, while severely systematic.

In order fully to understand our author's *standpoint* it should be added that "he unreservedly renounces the inferences drawn from that antiquated theory of inspiration which has done more to encumber the Bible than to illumine it." (P. xx. What that particular doctrine which he renounces is, he does not inform us, nor does he define in what sense he regards the Bible to be inspired. From the free manner in which he deals with the Scriptures it is evident that his doctrine of inspiration is by no means definite, but to us quite inadequate. He makes little difference between the New Testament canonical books and the writings of the early Christian church, and about the only kind of inspiration he appears to hold is a subjective illumination of a high order.

We have been thus at some care to indicate the critical and dogmatic attitude of our author. Against radical criticism he does good service, but his attitude in regard to the Scriptures scarcely satisfies us. Against what he calls traditional dogmatism he is too severe and indiscriminate; and, in some cases, his weapons here used might be turned fatally against himself. In a general way our author may be said to belong to the *mediation school* in Germany, and yet he is too independent at times to escape being regarded as an Ishmaelite even in that school. But we proceed to give some account of the book itself. It is evident that we cannot go into details of any kind with nearly one thousand pages of compact and scholarly writing before us.

A brief outline of the plan of the treatise may be helpful at the outset. In the first volume, after an Introduction, which deals mainly with the *problem*, the *standpoint*, and the *method* of the work, the discussion is divided into three books. In the first, "The Teaching of Jesus according to the Synoptics" is set forth. In the second, "The Teaching of Jesus according to John" is unfolded. In the third, "The Views of the First Apostles" as found in the Acts of the Apostles are exhibited. In Book I. there are eight chapters, with the following titles: Introductory, The Kingdom of God, The Son of Man and the Son of God, The Heavenly Father and the World, The Way of Righteousness, The Messianic Salvation, The Church, and The Judgment of the World. In Book II. there are five chapters, as follows: Introductory, God and the World, The Testimony of Jesus to Himself, The Founding of Salvation, The Development of Eternal Life. In Book III. there are three parts. The first part deals with the First Apostles in four chapters: The Standpoint of the First Apostles, The Preaching of the Original Apostles, The Life of the Primitive Church, Further Developments. The second part treats of the Epistle of James in six chapters, as follows: Introductory, God and Man, The Salvation that is in Christ, Faith and Works, Justification, The Christian Life. In the third part the First Epistle of Peter is the theme in five chapters: Introductory, God the Father and the People of His Inheritance, The Person and Sufferings of Christ, The Pilgrim State and Walk of the Christian, The Preaching to the Dead, and The Judgment of the World. Let it be noted here that our author does not admit the canonicity of the Second Epistle of Peter.

In the second volume there are also three books. The first (Book IV.) deals with the Pauline System, the second (Book V.) treats of the Primitive Apostolic Method of Teaching, and the third (Book VI.) takes up the Common Christian and Post-Apostolic Modes of Teaching. In each of these the treatment is entirely complete and exhaustive, as the following headings will fully show. In Book IV., which treats of the Pauline System, the headings of the nine chapters are as follows: Introductory, Flesh and Spirit, Adam and Christ, God and the World, The Establishment of Salvation, The Way of Salvation, The Life in the Spirit, The Christian Church, The Consummation of the Kingdom. In Book V. there are three parts. In Part I., which deals with the Epistle to the Hebrews, the following are the titles of the five chapters: Introductory, The Covenant God and His Promises, The Son of God and Mediator of the New Covenant, The High Priesthood of Christ, Means and End of Salvation. Part II. treats of the Apocalypse, and has five chapters, as follows: Introductory, Heaven and Earth, The Lamb of God, The Community of the Saints, The History of the End. In Part III. there are six chapters, dealing with the following topics: Introductory, The Only-Begotten, God and the World, The Work of Salvation, Faith and Love, The Church and the Consummation. In Book VI. there are only three chapters, and they have for their consideration the following topics: The Synoptic Gospels, together with The Acts of the Apostles, The Epistle of Jude, The Second Epistle of Peter, The Pastoral Epistles. In each chapter there are several paragraphs.

We have been at some pains to set down this inventory of these two comprehensive volumes. Our main object in placing it before the eye of the reader in this formal way is to show how comprehensive and thorough the plan of our author is. To read such a treatise, even though one is often compelled to dissent from the views expressed, is a fine educational exercise. The *method*, we may add here,

seems to us in every way admirable, even though in many instances we would not agree with our author in the way he applies his method, and with the results which he obtains. We are inclined to think that this treatise presents as good a *method* of biblical theology as any work yet published. This causes us all the more to regret that our author had not made a better use of such an excellent method: a good example, so far as method is concerned, to some competent English-speaking scholar with sound doctrinal views to go over the ground substantially as our author has done, and to give us better exegetical and theological results.

In what we have further to say upon this work we shall be content to indicate our author's dogmatic position in regard to several important doctrines of the Christian system. In general it will appear that there is a decided departure from the evangelical Reformed faith at several crucial points, and there are not wanting indications that our author seeks to conform his exegesis of Scripture texts to his views quite as much, if not more, than the scholastic theologians with whom he has a standing feud.

In regard to the divinity, and specially to the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, he holds peculiar views. In the synoptic Gospels he says that there is no trace of pre-existence in the case of Jesus. In the fourth Gospel he admits that at the outset this idea comes in by reason of the pre-Christian Logos idea of the Alexandrian philosophy. In the Christology of Paul he admits that there are statements which imply pre-existence, but he makes frantic exegetical efforts to explain them away. Some of the texts which we have been accustomed to regard as very plain, he says are "remarkable and enigmatic." Others teach a sort of ideal pre-existence, where by reason of the influence of the Logos idea the distinction between ideal and real pre-existence has been lost. Still other texts are explained by "the general notice of a heavenly pre-existence, just as the Israelites regarded all their sacred things as originally pre-existing in heaven." As a sort of summary on page 78, Volume II., we have the following "remarkable and enigmatical" statement: "The apostle nowhere really establishes or teaches the pre-existence of Christ, but, specially in his earlier epistles, pre-supposes it as familiar to his readers and disputed by no one. It must, therefore, have been a notion which was not in the least strange even to the primitive apostolic Christians before Paul. But, on the other hand, it clearly added nothing essential to the simple Christology of the primitive apostles, so that not a trace of it can be found in the first three Gospels, in the speeches of the Acts, in the Epistle of James, or in 1 Peter."

In regard to the doctrine of the two natures in one person, he asserts that even Paul knew nothing about it. The Son of God on coming into the world assumed only the *sarx*, which was exchanged for the spiritual body at the resurrection. In short, the Christology of the apostle is anthropocentric, not theocentric.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews and in John's writings our author admits that a higher type of Christology appears, but he stubbornly refuses to admit that it is original or that it is to be regarded as carrying with it the idea of the two natures or the notion of proper pre-existence. Then the pre-Christian Logos is the scape-goat upon whose head the blame is laid, so as to have it borne away out of sight for ever. But the *scape-goat* method is scarcely sound exegesis, nor in harmony with the historical method which our author professes to constantly pursue. It need only be added in justice to our author that he does not in the least degree favor the kenotic doctrine in any form. But what his own doctrine is we can scarcely

gather. In John he finds the highest form of Christology, and it is thus expressed: "The eternal self-revelation of God became in Jesus an object of sensuous perception, so that the disciples could see it with their eyes and handle it with their hands." There is no "incarnation" and no "kenosis." (Vol. II., p. 425.) Again: "In Jesus of Nazareth there appeared personally the self-revelation and the self-communication of God; in him it entered into a human life; so that we may certainly speak of its God-like character, though we do not mean that a divine was added to a human or a human to a divine personality." There was "a real entrance of a divine life and being into humanity, and if Christ is not of us, a true member of our race, then what is his is not ours, but Godhead and humanity are separated by the same distance as before." (P. 426, Vol. II.) May we not properly call this monophysite socinianism in modern attire?

Another important doctrine where our author's views may be tested at a crucial point relates to the personality of the Holy Spirit. He terms the personality of the Holy Spirit "a vague traditional conception," and he rejects it at once. (P. 206, Vol. II.) "The Spirit of God is God himself in his living presence in the world, in his holy self-communication to men, which everywhere wards off the assaults of sin." (P. 205, Vol. II.) "The Holy Spirit is the power of holy love with which God in Christ lays hold of the human heart." (P. 205, Vol. II.) Our author adds, by way of explaining the mode in which the Spirit comes to be spoken of as personal by Paul, "Our apostle has, indeed, poetically or rhetorically personified the Holy Spirit now and then, just as he has personified the flesh, sin and death." (P. 207, Vol. II.) But no more is needed to exhibit the views of our author, and we need do no more than add, that with his doctrine in regard to Christ and the Holy Spirit before us we can justly charge him with destroying the doctrine of the Trinity. At best there remains to us a sort of modal, temporal Trinity, while uni-personality is always asserted of the Godhead.

Another cardinal doctrine to be considered in the light of our author's teaching is that of the atoning death of Jesus Christ. At this point we regret to say that we find the views of our author sadly defective; and, what is, perhaps, worse, they are supported by such perverted exegesis of texts as to cause one to grow quite impatient with the efforts. All along the painful conviction is forced on our minds that he is among the dogmatists after all, and has brought his preconceived views to the Scripture, and then tried to make the Scripture fit the doctrine.

The vicarious nature of the satisfaction which Christ made is repudiated, and the sacrificial nature of his death is not admitted. There is no strict atonement, and, of course, no imputation, so that justification is in a vague way pardon and restoration in Christ. By faith grace is received, rather than Christ accepted. In a word, the whole of what may be called *objective* soteriology is repudiated, and we are left with only a sort of subjective aspect of the work. But upon all this we cannot now dwell. We simply point out the radical defect here.

Serious fault must also be found with much of the eschatology of our author. There shall be no real bodily resurrection: "The Holy Spirit is the divine principle of the life of believers, the living centre of their personality, and when this principle reaches its full development it finds its expression in a body which corresponds to the perfect inner life, and this is called *the spiritual body*." (P. 268, Vol. II.) Thus there is no resurrection save for the just. (P. 268, Vol. II.) Second probation and final restorationism are both found in Paul's teaching. A passage

like, "In the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, even of things under the earth," is taken "to pre-suppose a preaching of the gospel to those formerly dead." (P. 276, Vol. II.) This curious statement meets us on page 275: "If the apostle has nowhere expressed the possibility of conversion, and, therefore, of salvation after death, it is undeniably pre-supposed in his doctrinal system." We ask, How? Where? This passage indicates restorationism. "He (Paul) has rather taught a final redemption and deliverance of all." (P. 278, Vol. II.) Hence universalism is the final outcome of the consummation. But this must suffice to show the drift of the doctrine of our author here.

There are many other things we would like to say in reference to the doctrines which this scholarly work sets forth. It would be interesting to notice the views of our author in regard to predestination which are anti-Calvinistic, in regard to the monistic philosophy which underlies his doctrine, in regard to the views set forth in reference to the import of baptism and the Lord's supper, in regard to the church and the kingdom, and in regard to the second advent and the judgment, but we must not enlarge.

It would also be an interesting thing to point out how studiously the miraculous elements are avoided. In the Gospel narratives, and in the Acts, it is simply amazing how little is said in a work so exhaustive as this in regard to the miracle. The explanation is to be found in part in the way in which the supernatural factor is excluded or minimized all through the narrative. The views taken of inspiration, already referred to, harmonize with this attitude in reference to the supernatural. It is a source of deep regret that such an able treatise should so fail us at this important point. There is so much that we like about the author's method and style that our regret is all the greater on this account.

In concluding this review we make a brief estimate of this work along some other lines, which may help its readers to a comprehensive view of the whole:

1, Critically, a good deal can be said in its favor, for our author takes firm ground against radical views and methods. This is a good sign for Germany, and is instructive for us. While at not a few points, as in regard to the synoptic problem, the Second Epistle of Peter, and the authorship of Hebrews, his views may be questioned, yet in regard to the Fourth Gospel, and the Pauline Epistles and the Apocalypse he deserves praise for his work and conclusions.

2, Exegetically, the work shows great ability. When his hands are not tied by the bonds of doctrinal prepossessions his exegetical work is of a high order, but when he wishes to explain away some traditional doctrine of the dogmatic theologian his very ability becomes a snare, and leads to most ingenious explanations of texts and facts. This is one of the features of the work which we are inclined to think most careful readers will be sure to notice. An anti-dogmatic bias may be quite as hurtful to the exegete as the dogmatic of which our author has so many hard things to say. The one extreme is quite as objectionable as the other. The centre of gravity and the emphasis should always be carefully regarded by the exegete.

3, Historically, the method of the work is a good one. To follow out the development of the various doctrines in the Scriptures from the proper standpoint in regard to their nature is a fruitful source of sound conclusions. In every case the nature of the Scriptures must be kept in mind as this method is pursued.

Save for the free way in which our author deals with the Scriptures we have much to say in praise of his general method.

4. Doctrinally, the conclusions as we have seen are not in harmony with the consensus of the Reformed creeds. The author concedes this, which does not help the case. For us, therefore, the doctrinal result is of little value at many cardinal points. Its chief benefit here is to put us on the defensive of our own doctrines, and for this purpose the treatise is worthy of careful study. Such a book from a sound, doctrinal basis would be invaluable.

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BRIGGS' THE MESSIAH OF THE APOSTLES.

THE MESSIAH OF THE APOSTLES. *By Charles Augustus Briggs, D. D., Edward Robinson Professor of Biblical Theology in Union Theological Seminary, New York.* Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Crown 8vo, pp. xv., 562. \$3.00.

In 1886 Professor Briggs published a volume on *Messianic Prophecy*; this was followed by *The Messiah of the Gospels*, appearing in 1894. Our present volume forms the third in the series, in the preface to which we have the promise of two additional volumes, to be entitled *The Messiah of the Church* and *The Messiah of the Theologians*.

The series evidently contemplates a thorough, systematic and exhaustive discussion of the development of the "Messianic Idea" from its germs in earliest prophecy down to the modern phases it assumes in the synthesis of philosophic theology of latest times. There is something inspiring in the scope of this scheme. We confess a keen curiosity as to the contents of the two volumes yet to appear; what contrasts they will present to the biblical conception treated in the preceding volumes, and what may be revealed as the difference between *The Messiah of the Church* and *The Messiah of the Theologians*; the very titles are suggestive and prophetic of much that may prove very interesting reading.

In his preface to the volume now under consideration the author says:

"No one who has studied through the literature of Christology can do other than say that the researches of recent scholars have put the whole subject in such new lights that the writings of the older scholars have become, for the most part, antiquated. There are doubtless many still living who are unwilling to accept any theological opinions which have not been stamped with the approval of the antiquarians. For such the author does not write. The readers he desires are the open-minded and truth-loving, who would see the Christ as the apostles saw him, and who will not be restrained from the heavenly vision by the pretended perils of the Higher Criticism and of Biblical Theology, or by the supposed safer paths of traditional and ecclesiastical theology. . . . The Christ of the New Testament appears in fresh lines of grace, beauty and grandeur with every fresh glance at him. The author has done his best to turn away from the Christ of the theologians and of the creeds and of the church, and to see the Messiah as he appeared to each writer in each separate writing. The diversity is great. It is not always possible to combine the diverse representations in a higher unity. It would have been easy to construct what some call a logical system. But it would not have been possible to constrain all the material into such a system of deductive logic. Such a method involves the sacrifice of material which is essential to the portraiture of the Messiah. . . . The summary statement in the concluding chapter gives the Christology of the apostles in quite different proportions to those familiar in the dogmatic systems. But these proportions are the proportions of the truth and facts of the apostolic writings. If I were writing the Christology of the church, or the Christology of the dogmatic system, other proportions would doubtless appear."