

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

Recent Foreign Theology.

French Theology.

WITHIN recent years researches have been made into the ceremony of the Laying on of Hands, which appears both in O.T. and N.T. in connexion with various religious acts. It is not easy to grasp the complex ideas which underlie this primitive symbol, but the whole ground, so far as N.T. usage is concerned, has been carefully examined by Dr. J. Coppens in a thesis presented to the University of Louvain.¹ The author discusses the ceremony as an act of benediction, a sign of healing, and a rite of ordination and confirmation. The treatment is exhaustive, unless we see in 1 Ti 5²², as Hammond, Ellicott, and Hort do, a reference to the imposition of hands in the reconciliation of penitents. One would have been glad to have the question more fully discussed from the point of view of the O.T., where the ceremony occupies a large place in the sacrificial system of P, but the author has only referred to the older customs where necessary to explain the later ones. He traces the Christian rite of ordination to contemporary Jewish ceremonies, based upon the traditions of the ancient law, but regards the rite of confirmation as specifically Christian and apostolic, distinct from baptism and producing special effects. In treating of the imposition of hands as a healing act, he deals with the details of the N.T. cures, which he regards as authentic, and has much to say on the cult of Æsculapius and medical methods in ancient times.

Old Testament students will be interested in a thoroughly up-to-date little book on the comparison of the Biblical and Babylonian stories of the Creation.² The author, Le Guen, takes first the Biblical passages, namely, Gn 1-2^{4a} (P) and Gn 2^{4b-25} (JE or J); next the Akkadian texts, including the poem *énûma elish* and other pieces of literature; then the Sumerian texts (particularly two, the one from Ashur, published by Ebeling, and the other from Nippur, published by Poebel); and lastly the Greek versions of Berossus, Damascius, and Abydenus. He carefully analyses, annotates, and compares these, dealing successively with the creation of inanimate things, plants, animals, and man, and presenting the comparison in an instructive

¹ *L'imposition des mains et les rites connexes dans le Nouveau Testament et dans l'église ancienne* (431 pp. De Meester, Wetteren; Gabalda, Paris).

² *La Création dans la Bible et les inscriptions akkadiennes et sumériennes* (140 pp. L'Université, Angers).

synoptic table. The Biblical version, it is pointed out, has no trace of any theogony, though Gunkel has claimed to find a primitive genealogy in Gn 1².³ whereas the Babylonian one is based on grotesque mythological ideas. The latter is also strongly coloured with astrological views and the worship of the heavenly bodies (especially in the *énûma elish*), while the O.T. regards these things as enemies of monotheism. The comparison of the accounts as to the creation of the first man (in Sumerian *lilû*, in Babylonian *awîlu*) is particularly well done. The general conclusion (pp. 133 ff.), which is moderate and avoids the extreme of Pan-Babylonianism, is to the effect that the Sumero-Babylonian primitive tradition is grossly tainted with myth and polytheism, and is inferior to the Hebrew one. The author, however, does not venture into the question as to how the latter, if originally emanating from Babylonian or collateral sources, came to be modified and stripped of its mythological features.

An excellent critical study of Is 56-66, in the form of a translation and commentary, has been given by Pasteur Jacques Marty,³ though many scholars will disagree with his views. Duhm maintained at least the unity of authorship of this third section of Isaiah, but Marty is not prepared to accept this. He regards this section as a collection of prophetic discourses, emanating from several authors, and mostly brought together without any appreciable connexion. With the exception of a short, obscure fragment (63¹⁻⁸) and an appendix of uncertain date (66¹⁸⁻²⁴), he takes them as reflecting the troubled condition of Judaism between the return from Exile (538), and the foundation of the new community in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (458-445). On this basis he assigns dates and authors to each of the component parts. The fragment 63⁷⁻⁶⁴¹¹ is attributed to a writer of the Deutero-Isaiah School, about 538-520. Chapters 60, 61, 62, and 66⁵⁻¹⁸ have come from this source between 500 and 445, and chapters 65 and 66¹⁻⁴.¹⁷ may be traced to the same origin. Chapters 59, 58, and 56¹⁻⁸, which show similarities with Haggai and Zechariah, are placed between 480 and 445. Chapters 56⁹⁻⁵⁷²¹ have issued from the school of Ezekiel, about 450, and the fragment 63¹⁻⁸ is an apocalyptic one of uncertain date (? 532-332). Marty seems aware of the difficulties resulting from such a dismemberment, and appears well acquainted

³ *Les chapitres 55-66 du livre d'Esaië, traduits et commentés* (196 pp. Geuthner, Paris).

with critical works on the subject. He is more conservative, however, than Cheyne, who saw in the Trito-Isaiah a collection of ten compositions, all of them from the age of Nehemiah, except 63⁷-64¹¹, which he assigned to the reign of Artaxerxes Ochus, or about 360.

The national changes through which Yahwism passed, from the time of Moses to that of Christ, are discussed in *Israel et la vision de l'humanité*.¹ The author, Prof. A. Causse, deals principally with the development of Yahwism from a small clan religion, confined within the desert of Kadesh, to the world-wide one of the later Jewish prophets. The latter, he thinks, was favoured by the rise of the Persian empire, which helped to bring about a religious syncretism, owing to unity of language, religious tolerance, and the search for the supreme God. This syncretism was rather opposed, however, by the monotheism of the Deutero-Isaiah, and under Ezra and Nehemiah nationalism again triumphed, the *Torah* forming an insuperable barrier which made Israel a separate people. Joel denounced the *Goiim*, and the author of Chronicles confined his history to the House of David and the sanctuary of Zion. Still, a small number of Psalmists and prophets continued to predict the universal reign of Yahweh, and the Book of Jonah was a protest against dislike of other nations, such as the Book of Esther reveals. Is 19¹⁸⁻²⁵ predicted the conversion of Egypt and Assyria. The Book of Judith and the earlier apocalyptic writings sustained these immense hopes. The author of the Book of Wisdom proclaimed that every soul, immortal and beloved of God, could find a philosophy and religion in Israel. Philo endeavoured to reconcile Moses and Plato, and Jesus at length announced to the world a Kingdom of God for all men of goodwill. The value of the author's theory depends, of course, on his chronological views, and he does not always justify these, but the book in spite of its errors shows considerable scholarship.

Much has been written on the question as to whether the conception of a series of heavens is found in the Scriptures. The idea of a plurality of heavens, amounting in most cases to seven, prevailed among the Babylonians, Persians, and others, and occupied a large place in Rabbinical literature, and in the apocalyptic and other pseudo-epigraphical books. Even Clement of Alexandria and Origen seem to have upheld the idea, and it was not until Chrysostom declared it to be a human fancy that it was repudiated by the Church

¹ 152 pp. Istra, Strasbourg.

and adopted by Mohammedanism. The whole question was largely mixed up with that of Paradise, its location, its extent, its glories. Those who wish an 'exposé historique' of the Christian conception of the first centuries on these matters will find it in *Le Paradis terrestre au troisième ciel*, by De Vuippens.² The author deals with the cosmogony of the Hebrews and Greeks. For the former people, the universe included a subterranean region (sheol), a lower stage on earth, and a higher stage in the heavens (the abode of God). In the time of Paul the expression *τρίτος οὐρανός* designated the third planetary heaven according to a descending scale (first, the zone of Saturn; second, that of Jupiter; third, that of Mars, etc.). It was not until the eighth century that Christians began to place Paradise in the empyreal sphere. Scholars will not agree with some of the author's interpretations of the Hebrew text, but the volume, which is a thesis for the diploma of Doctor, is clearly written and based on good documentary evidences.

J. W. JACK.

Glenfarg.

Protestantism in Post-War Germany.

DR. JULIUS RICHTER, in an informing contribution to the *Christian Century* (Chicago), says: 'In all the strenuous days since the War the German churches did not lose their courage.' He describes their re-organization as entirely independent Free Churches on a 'presbyterial-synodal' foundation, and continues: 'they had the faith to envisage, beyond this, a more complete amalgamation of their forces in the shape of the German Evangelical Church Federation. It has, in important questions, executive powers, binding upon the allied churches. It is now possible to speak of the "German Evangelical Church" as an organic unity.'

It is a welcome sign of the times and a striking confirmation of Dr. Richter's estimate of the present situation that Protestant scholars and ecclesiastical leaders, of different schools of thought and belonging to different communions, have united in the publication of a handsome volume³ containing thirty

² 144 pp. L'Université, Fribourg.

³ *Der Protestantismus der Gegenwart*, unter Mitwirkung führender Persönlichkeiten des kirchlichen und theologisch-wissenschaftlichen Lebens. Herausgegeben von Stadtpfarrer Dr. theol. G. Schenkel. (Stuttgart: Verlag Friedrich Bohnenberger. Seiten xiv, 810. Rm. 38.50.)