

# 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](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[Issue]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article].pdf

because taxes and rates are high that the right things are necessarily being most effectively or most economically done. What is needed is reappropriation, not increase; less on war, for instance, and more on things like health and education. Safeguards should be taken against abuse. Other humane services depend on voluntary gifts. They are one

of the splendid aspects of our age. Never was there in any age such a variety and multiplicity of service for the handicapped and unfortunate. Their maintenance depends on the development of a high sense of responsibility, remembering the right of the less privileged to glean in the harvest fields of our lives.

---

## Recent Foreign Theology.

### *The Kingdom of God and the Church in the New Testament.*

WHEN in the latter part of last century the social problem was forced on the attention of the Christian Church, and some advanced thinkers began to realize the social applications of the Christian gospel, the term, *The Kingdom of God*, so common in the Gospels, and yet so largely neglected in Christian theology, was revived as the standard around which these new interests might be gathered. The ardent champions of this revival did not pause to ask themselves whether their interpretation of the term was the same as the intention of Jesus. Some of the social reformers from Great Britain and America were not a little disconcerted to find that their use of the term was challenged by the German scholars at the Stockholm Conference. To their confident conviction that the Kingdom of God might be advanced and hastened on earth by human endeavour, there was opposed the charge of an optimism and an activism, inconsistent with that humble sense of man's insufficiency and that submissive dependence on God's sole sufficiency which was put forward as the distinctively Christian piety by the Lutheran speakers. For them the Kingdom of God meant a transcendent, catastrophic Divine intervention in human history, and not an evolutionary human moral and religious progress. The eschatological school of critics gave to this exclusive interpretation the authority of Jesus Himself. While mutual intercourse may have done something to modify the opposition, the contrast of conception still remains. It is in the circumstances an interesting and important contribution to the treatment of this question which is offered in the volume before us.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Reich Gottes und Kirche im Neuen Testament*, von Dr. theol. Gerhard Gloege (C. Bertelsmann, Gütersloh, 1929; Mk. 12.50).

For thoroughness of treatment, orderliness of arrangement, clearness of exposition, and, in my judgment, persuasiveness of reasoning, it would not be easy to find a match to this volume; and the author has deserved well for what must have been an immense labour, but evidently a labour of love. As one might have expected, he goes to the very roots of the question.

In the first part he discusses the royal rule (*Königsherrschaft*) of God. In the first section here there is an historical survey of the Old Testament; the second deals with the fundamental character of the New Testament proclamation of the rule; what is emphasized is its dynamic character. God is constantly, supremely active. 'Jesus' deed is God's deed, that means nothing else than that His person is inseparable from His work.' 'Jesus no more *teaches* about the Kingdom, but He *brings* it in His Messianic dealing actually into the present, as well with His doing as with His word, which above all is the creative principle of His total activity.' . . . 'Only one Messianic figure remained open to Him for realization, that of the Servant and the Son of Man Messiah of Deutero-Isaiah, and of Daniel' (pp. 61-62). This conception of the Divine rule gives consistency to the New Testament representations. In the following sections the characteristics of the kingly activity of God are very fully discussed. (a) It is *above time*: linked as it is to Jesus' conception of God, it leads us to set aside evolutionism and synergism. 'The Divine rule,' he maintains, 'is nowhere thought as a developing one, to say nothing of a realm to be reached by human activity, but is always constituted by God's action, which is likewise an *a priori*, that is, an operation carried through outside of all human activity' (pp. 71, 72). This Divine activity is the motive of human repentance and faith. This interpretation the author seeks to justify by a careful exegesis both of the parables and of the letters. (b) It is *opposed to*

*this world.* It is the coming in contrast to the present æon. The opposition to the cosmos is of a moral religious character, and yet it has too a positive teleological character in relation to the world, as not only a universal cosmical, but also an ethical-soteriological completion. (c) It is accordingly *present in the world.* The eschatological explanation must be limited. Present and future are one in the dynamic conception of God's rule, for in the activity of Jesus God is active. In opposition to the eschatological school the author affirms confidently that the available sources prove that 'Jesus not only proleptically, but in the full sense of the word regarded Himself, and accordingly was active as the Christ' (p. 142). (d) It is *redemptive*; God's constant activity in Christ forgives and imparts new vitality (*Lebendigkeit*). (e) It is *unconditional*, as will be manifest at the *Parousia*. The doctrine of the Resurrection sets aside the spiritualism of the Greek hope of immortality, and is characterized by realism. 'In this word (1 Co 15<sup>20</sup>) not only is the final purpose, for which the (Christian) community expectantly waits described, but also that occurrence by which the whole history of the world and man flows into the rule of God, to become one eternally with His kingly activity' (p. 200).

The second part of the book deals with the Church; and we could only wish that all the discussions on the reunion of the Churches went down as deeply into the roots of the matter. The Church-consciousness of the primitive community is described, and the description firmly links the two parts of the book together. 'Primitive Christianity found its very existence, in all that marked it as Church, singly and alone in its dependence on the sovereign action of God. All its confessions about itself have their elementary formal unity in this, that it had the source of its life in God, who had created it through Christ, and the goal of its life in God, who by Christ would complete it' (p. 202). The New Testament conception of the Church is also based on the Old Testament. The significance of the term *ecclesia*, as the claim of the Church to be 'the true Israel,' is recognized by the author. He is not content with this verbal connexion, but seeks a more vital. As regards its source, limits, and purpose the Church is, as was Israel, determined by God's sovereign activity. The connexion is similar to that with 'the remnant' of the Old Testament, the community saved by God, and possessing the Spirit. Having thus shown the Old Testament roots, the author defines the nature of the Church. Christ is the Creator and

the Saviour of the community. It is the remnant, and this gives special significance to the circle of disciples. As regards the relation of the Church to the Kingdom, it is neither identical with the Kingdom nor yet a substitute for it; but it is the organ of the Divine action. 'This means: it owes its origin and its existence to the kingly act of God, but carries this at the same time forward independently by its own action, and exactly in this its own action has it its essential continuance' (p. 257). It is as both object and agent of God's activity that the Church is His organ. As such, the Church has the following characteristics: (a) it is *above the world.* Christ is 'the original element' of the Church, the foundation. God works in it by His Spirit. It is the body of Christ, and His 'bond-slave.' He is the Head of the Church, and it is His Bride. Close as is the relation of Christ and Church, yet it is not a mystical identity. That is excluded by the objective factor of the Spirit, and the subjective factor of faith. The relation always remains religious and moral. (b) It is *opposed to the world*, because holy, dominated by the Spirit, chosen and called of God, turned away from the world, as feeling itself a stranger and ready to suffer with Christ in the world. It is God's kingly rule that draws the Church towards Him, and away from the world. (c) It is *in the world.* Subject to the conditions of time and space, it is active in the world, and becomes an actuality in the world (*Dinglichkeit*), quantitatively as visible in the world and qualitatively as impure, and in conflict with sin. (d) It is *one.* The contrast of the total community and the local congregation is resolved in the thought of God's activity, which is the objective factor of its unity, while the subjective are the common faith, love, and hope. As a body the Church is unity-in-variety. As the one organ of God's activity on earth, the Church claims universality. As such a universal organ, its purpose is to bring about the human syntheses, not by merely proclaiming God's rule, nor by trying to establish God's rule, but by becoming the channel in the word of reconciliation in Christ of the kingly activity of God until the day when God shall be all in all. The careful exegesis on which the whole treatment is based is beyond praise. Sometimes the author inclines to be too meticulously critical of those who even in a small matter differ from him. His purpose is to give the New Testament teaching without any admixture of modern views; but he recognizes that some parts of the teaching of the New Testament, such as the eschatology, cannot be literally transferred to modern constructive

Christian thought. But no thought will remain Christian which neglects the New Testament. This volume as an informed, intelligent, and appreciative study of the New Testament deserves the warmest commendation.

### Theology as Autobiography.

I HAVE in previous numbers of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES called attention to this valuable series, *Die Religionswissenschaft der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellung*,<sup>1</sup> edited by Dr. Erich Stange. The editor in the preface states that the publisher has decided that this fifth volume must be the last. This decision is to be regretted, as, while most of the leading scholars and thinkers of Germany have been included, the list of those worth knowing has not been exhausted; and theology outside of Germany has had only a few representatives. Nevertheless, the possessor of the five volumes will have a wide survey of German theology at least, presented in the autobiographies of those chosen for the distinction of inclusion. The selection has not been partisan, as one volume has been assigned to Roman Catholic theologians. In this fifth volume are included Martin Dibelius, Paul Feine, Ferd. Kattenbusch, Emil W. Mayer, Willy Staerk, Paul Wernle—a varied selection. 'The personal equation' is not obtruded at all; and the interest is concentrated on the subjects with which each theologian has been led to deal. For instance, Dibelius has something to say about the development of *Formlehre*, and about the wider contacts of German scholars since the War. Feine sketches his own inner development as a reaction from the extreme liberal to the central evangelical position. 'It is the aim,' he says, 'of New Testament scholarship, as I see its task, to draw a picture of Christ which seeks to keep itself free of the false ways, on which the nineteenth century entered, and of the modern and most modern theories, which lead away from the New Testament traditions' (p. 81). Willy Staerk represents a similar reaction from the too exclusive use of the religious historical method of dealing with the Old Testament. The problem he states as follows: 'What way of presentation will be most readily just to this *systematic-theological* aspect of the Word of God in the Old Testament, and at the same time to the *religious-historical* therein, which cannot be overlooked in view of the

<sup>1</sup> Verlag von Felix Meiner in Leipzig (Kartonierte; R.M.8.50, In Ganzleinen Geschenkband; R.M.12).

characteristic structure of the religion of Israel as a *complexio oppositorum*, and of the temporal differences, and differences due to the development of the piety of the Old Testament witnesses' (p. 196). While Staerk welcomes the work of the coming generation as building upon the historical foundations laid by the last, Paul Wernle rather plaintively states that he does not expect any understanding of his labours from them. 'I am,' he says, 'firmly convinced that the at present so loved on-sidedness can only be a passing solution, and that especially the striving after harmony will not allow itself permanently to be driven out of the human soul, and consequently out of the theologian's soul' (p. 249). The harmony he desires is of the three ways of reaching norms, 'authority, religious experience, and thought.' Ferdinand Kattenbusch states that his special interest has been in Symbolics generally, but he has found the Apostles' Creed alone a great enough task. 'A last secret hope still remains for my labour: *the problem of revelation*. There naturally it will be necessary to clarify the thought of the "Word of God." I stand very sympathetically towards the latest theological formulation, that led by Karl Barth, which has express reference to this, but I cannot conceal that it runs the danger of a false development, and of turning against Luther. Yet I hope that it will find the way from Calvin to him' (p. 118). One of the contributors, Emil Walter Mayer, has since writing passed away. His life itself has a special interest in two respects. He was born, and his school education was in France, and he functioned as a professor in Strassburg; but Germany was by his own choice his 'fatherland.' His work has been on dogmatics, apologetics, and ethics. It is interesting to note that he confines the task of the Christian Church to cultivate the Christian disposition (*Gesinnung*). Faith and Love as the most important; and declines its participation in external arrangements. 'For example,' he says, 'a League of Nations may be in itself able to do a great deal that is good; but what is the use of such an institution, when its agents are filled not with a truly Christian disposition, but a selfish one' (p. 156). That was written in 1926 by a very patriotic German. These are but examples of the varied living interests which pervade the whole volume. A more attractive way of studying theology cannot be imagined; and one must be deeply grateful to contributors, editor, and publishers for realizing their purpose so admirably.

ALFRED E. GARVIE.

London.