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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

## Recent Foreign Theology.

### Varia.

THIS volume<sup>1</sup> belongs to the new series in which Professor Van der Leeuw's volume, recently reviewed in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, has already appeared. It is a compact, ample treatise, including some account not merely of the Pseudepigrapha and 'Apocryphal' books, but of the Canon and the Text. To exhibit all this material in little over seven hundred and fifty pages, without being scrappy, is a feat. But Professor Eissfeldt's scholarship has been equal to it. More than that, he has shown literary as well as historical judgment in dealing with so great a literature as that of the Old Testament. The religious content is to be handled in a separate volume, but meantime Professor Eissfeldt has worked not only with that in view but with an appreciation of the literary and religious qualities of the Hebrew scriptures which helps to make his book good reading.

Rightly he begins by analysing the pre-literary period out of which the books arose, that is, primitive strata like the legend, the myth, the anecdote, the maxim, the 'mashal,' the song, the proverb, the elegy, and so forth. This provides a correct avenue for approaching the later and composite books in their present shape; it suggests the sources of the historical, prophetic, didactic, and lyrical literature, and vivifies the subsequent discussion by maintaining the close connexion between the books and the history of the people. It is plain that the tendency to connect worship with primitive literature is as strong in Old Testament criticism as in the New Testament *Formgeschichte*.

Applying such a genetic method, he then enters upon the Old Testament itself, in the third section of the treatise. Here we discover the advances made by criticism during the last twenty-five or thirty years. For example, in the criticism of the Hexateuch, the sources in chronological order now turn out to be no fewer than seven, L, J, E, B, D, H, and P. This particular problem has been one of Dr. Eissfeldt's special interests, and though his restatement of the whole subject is intricate, it is illuminating. It throws light upon the modifications of the Graf-Wellhausen theory which have been necessitated by recent criticism, and at the same time shows how that theory holds ground still

as the most satisfactory explanation of the problem, despite the efforts of some scholars to undermine it. Of the seven sources, L is the oldest; it is held to be a primitive set of stories, written from the point of view of the laity (hence its title), interested mainly in the nomadic setting of the Hebrews, and compiled somewhere between the fall of the Davidic kingdom and the emergence of Amos and Hosea, possibly reflecting the spirit which under Elijah and Elisha led to Jehu's successful revolution. Its material used to be ranked mainly under J. Thus, the stories of Cain and Abel, of the tower of Babel, and of Sodom and Gomorrah, and passages from Numbers like 10<sup>29-38</sup> 12-14, most of 20-21, and 32, form its first and last extracts. B, the book of the Covenant (in Ex 20-23), was used and replaced by D, the Deuteronomic code. As for H, the Holiness code, Dr. Eissfeldt hesitates to admit that its author was Ezekiel, though he agrees that its exilic spirit tallies with much in Ezekiel's regulations. These sections are an outstanding feature of the book. Yet one wonders, after reading the exhaustive discussion, whether we have sufficient data for identifying the sources so precisely or for postulating any literary ties between them.

Among the prophets, it is Ezekiel who has received most attention of late, and no better section in the book occurs than that upon this perplexing personality. An ecclesiastical figure or a sensitive, imaginative soul, a pioneer of ritualistic Judaism or a fantastic poet? Both, and yet much more (p. 427)! Dr. Eissfeldt is not moved to side with such recent theories as those of Hölischer and Torrey. His final judgment on the literary problem of the book is that the secondary oracles against the foreign powers were originally separate from those upon Jerusalem and Israel, that they contain some unauthentic material, that they, as well as the authentic core of the earlier oracles, have been repeatedly edited, but that we have no reason to doubt that there was an Ezekiel who, after the catastrophe of 587, came forward with prophecies which are embedded in the present book.

One result of investigation is an increased sense of the extent to which not only historical sources but original oracles of a prophet were evidently expanded, edited, and altered, by subsequent writers, especially in the post-exilic period. In this connexion, by the way, Dr. Eissfeldt agrees that a prophecy like that of universal, international peace, was neither borrowed by Micah from Isaiah, nor by

<sup>1</sup> *Einleitung in das Alte Testament, unter Einschluss der Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen*, by Otto Eissfeldt (Mohr, Tübingen; M.15.50).

Isaiah from Micah, but was an anonymous piece which was attached to both, a post-exilic rhapsody which perhaps belonged to a collection of liturgical songs (p. 357). Was it originally the sequel to Jl 4<sup>21</sup>, as Budde argues? 'This is possible, but not more than possible.' Even the post-exilic novel of Jonah had a similar liturgical piece inserted by some late editor.

Incidentally, we may note that Dr. Eissfeldt adheres to the collective or 'ideal' view of the Servant of Yahweh, to the view which attaches more importance to Greek than to Egyptian influence upon Ecclesiastes, and—in an unduly brief section on the Psalter—he is of opinion that there is not any cogent evidence for ascribing a single psalm to David himself. In its present form, apart from some additions like 9<sup>4-20</sup>, the Book of Daniel is to be definitely dated between 167, when Antiochus returned from his campaign against Egypt, and 163 when he died. As for Esther, another religious novel, while recognizing its æsthetic merits, Dr. Eissfeldt frankly allows that it is the most secular book in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, as he pleads in a short final chapter, the Old Testament is not to be disparaged, even by Christians. 'There has never been any form of the Christian religion which has not been shaped by the Old Testament,' and he hints, significantly, there never will be. The Old Testament as a whole is charged with religious power. 'This book deserves to be investigated with indefatigable zeal, and to be read with grateful affection.' So the treatise closes.

It is dedicated to Bertholet, Von Dobschütz, and Professor T. H. Robinson. There are repeated references to English as well as to other foreign scholars, though one would have liked to see account taken of a book like Dr. G. B. Gray's on Hebrew metre, for example. The volume is clearly printed, well arranged, and sufficiently provided with the kind of 'perhaps' which is an indication of the desire to avoid over-precision, even in a scholar who knows his own mind, as Dr. Eissfeldt does. What we have in the volume is a remarkably judicial survey of criticism upon the Hebrew scriptures in the light of modern research. Neither in French nor in English is there anything so comprehensive and stimulating, so objective and yet so full of good guidance, amid the currents which are at present running within the literary criticism of the Old Testament.

Professor Bauer's able, challenging monograph <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*, by Walter Bauer (Mohr, Tübingen; M.14).

is a plea for the duty of listening to the other side. He has driven this home. He thinks that ordinary estimates of the first three centuries presuppose an orthodox position which really did not exist, or at least not to the extent which is commonly supposed, and that the impartial historian ought to recognize more sympathetically the so-called 'heretical' movements, in the sense that he should not rule them out as unimportant. For this much evidence is forthcoming. No one who studies a writer like Tertullian, for example, can fail to realize that he should be approached from the standpoint of the second century, not of the fourth; in other words, that one should come up to him out of the previous age, instead of judging him by the standards of a definitive, later orthodoxy. But Dr. Bauer digs up more detailed facts, and adduces wider proofs still. Thus he seeks to show that the first Christians at Edessa were Marcionites, and that the earliest Christians in Egypt, of whom we have any record, were heretical rather than orthodox. This is the theme of his first two chapters. After two chapters on Ignatius, he proceeds to claim that the orthodox position was first asserted by the Roman Church, and then discusses acutely the forms of controversy between orthodoxy and heresy, with a special chapter (the ninth) upon the problem raised by the Marcionites, namely, the place of the Old Testament in the Christian catholic scheme.

The proofs, I think, are sometimes forced. Dr. Bauer, for instance, has to be unduly sceptical about later records of Edessene Christianity. Here as elsewhere he tends to take the position of the barrister rather than of the judge. It is undoubtedly true that we do find queer, uncatholic movements very early, and that the first written fragments, which are extant, happen often to voice their faith instead of the catholic. But this does not imply that the latter was non-existent. And, as for the Gnostics, they were perhaps more Christian than their later critics allowed, or than even Dr. Bauer believes. Even though one may not agree fully with Dr. Burkitt's estimate of Valentinus, it presents a case which requires to be more carefully handled than Dr. Bauer's thesis would suggest. Certainly there was no orthodox writer who had the mind of Valentinus or of Basilides, except perhaps Justin, and he is not a real exception. Thinkers like these great Gnostics were indeed in advance of the catholic Church for the time being. Yet a historian must be sensitive to what we may call the sense of the Centre in early Christianity. I should prefer that term to 'orthodoxy.' And although it took the Church long to

express that sense of the Centre, yet it was not absent from the early controversies. We need not read back a definite expression or consciousness of it. One merit of Dr. Bauer's treatise is that it enters a valid warning against such an unhistorical prejudice. Nevertheless, in his eagerness to press the point, he does not seem always to allow for such considerations as I have mentioned. And I have mentioned only one or two.

The estimate of the Church of Rome also raises questioning. Rome in Christianity did inherit something of the sense of order, something of the judicial and disciplinary authority which attached to pagan Rome in the world. But is it certain that orthodoxy owed everything to it? There is still a case for the other side here. Was not the Apostolic Canon of Scripture first formed, in its informal stages, in Asia Minor? Was not Asia Minor ahead of Rome in the formation of the Apostolic, Episcopal ministry? And does the Symbol not seem as likely to have emerged in Asia Minor as at Rome? Dr. Bauer's views to the contrary are sharply stated, but I do not detect any cogent, decisive arguments in support of his thesis at this point, beyond what other scholars have brought forward. The real thinking upon vital Christianity for centuries was done outside the Roman Church.

The serviceable feature of the book is its reminder that catholicism or orthodoxy took much longer to shape itself than is commonly supposed, and that centrifugal tendencies in the first three centuries were probably stronger than the later Church liked to admit. It is the particular deduction from all this that sounds less convincing here and there. Or, to be more precise, the estimate of the data from which it is deduced.

JAMES MOFFATT.

*New York.*

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One of the results of the Stockholm Conference (1925) on Christian Life and Work was the formation of a Christian Social Institute in Geneva, the Research Department of which has been doing a great deal of valuable work in gathering information about the social activities of the churches, circulating this to stimulate similar efforts elsewhere, and exploring the theological doctrines and social themes which lie behind these activities. Once a

year a small conference of experts is held. The Conference of 1933 dealt with the varying views of the different confessions in regard to the duty of the Church in dealing with the social problems of to-day, and the Report now lies before me.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Martin Dibelius deals with his usual critical competence with the 'Social Motive in the New Testament,' although in my judgment he exaggerates the dominance of the eschatological idea. Bishop Irenæ of Novi Sad makes as good a show as he can of the social ethics of Orthodox Christendom, but proves how backward all these churches are in social interest and service. Pastor Rudolf Keussen does the same for the Old Catholics, and proves that they have not developed any distinctive social ethics beyond their inheritance from Roman Catholicism. In the longest of all the contributions Dr. E. Wolf accomplishes little by attempting too much; he has theses, and comments on the theses, and notes to the comments, and by his meticulous thoroughness he leaves the mind in confusion as to what the social ethics of Lutheranism really is; we cannot see the wood for the trees, we can even scarcely see the branches for the twigs. Dr. Peter Barth by limitation and concentration on essentials brings out very clearly the destructive features of the social ethics of Calvinism. It is no national partiality, but an unbiassed judgment which leads me to commend the Rev. E. J. Hagan's contribution as the best in the volume. Briefly, fully, and clearly he describes the social ethics of Scottish Calvinism. Miss Ruth Kenyon writes with competent knowledge of the history of social ethics in Anglicanism; but she would have done better if she had dealt more briefly with the past, and at greater length with the present, as she could have done admirably. The report on the discussions, in summarizing both the agreements and the differences, shows the urgent necessity that the Christian churches should combine their best thought on a common social ethics, which will find solutions for the common problems which now confront them in the world-wide unity of mankind. This volume offers additional evidence of the need of fuller understanding and closer co-operation of all the Christian confessions in the interests of the Kingdom of God.

ALFRED E. GARVIE.

*London.*

<sup>1</sup> *Kirche, Bekenntniss und Sozialethos* (Furche-Verlag, Berlin, 1934; 4s. 6d.). To be obtained from Christian Social Council, 32 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1.