

an older oracle, the original of which is better preserved in Jer 49.' The question is a difficult one. A different view has been maintained by the present writer in Hastings' *D.B.*, art. 'Obadiah.' We are doubtful as to the validity of Dr. Bewer's argument that the references to the Day of Jahweh in chaps. 2 and 3 of Joel are interpolations, and consequently as to his

judgment on the question of the unity of the book. But we are quite at one with him in holding that Joel is post-exilic.

Though this volume has not the interest attaching to Professor Gray's on Isaiah, it contains excellent work, and will be found invaluable for the study of those of the Minor Prophets with which it deals.

Positive Theological Research in Germany.

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III.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY.

IN systematic work the feeling of progress on the side of conservative theology is very clearly expressed. In this connexion we would refer to R. H. Grützmacher, 'Die prinzipielle Eigenart der positiven Theologie,' in *Studien zur systematischen Theologie*, 1909, vol. iii., and in the reports of publications in the field of systematic theology in the separate volumes of the magazine *Die Theologie der Gegenwart*; A. W. Hunzinger, *Theologie und Kirche: Beiträge zum gegenwärtigen Kirchenproblem*, 1912; F. Kattenbusch, art. 'Theologie' in *PRE*³, 1908, vol. xxi. pp. 900-913; Horst Stephan, *Die neuen Ansätze der konservativen Dogmatik und ihre Bedeutung für uns.*, lecture to the 'Friends of the Christian World' in Goslar, on 2nd Oct. 1911, published in *Die Christliche Welt*, Nos. 44-48, 1911. The two first mentioned are representatives of the positive branch, the two last-named belonged to the school of Ritschl.

In Germany at the present day there are a great number of systematic scholars who are striving, with all earnestness and much intellectual power, to establish a synthesis between the old faith and the modern spirit. They are convinced that the ancient Christian faith has in no way been rooted out by modern science, but that it ought rather to be re-founded with the help of the scientific means and methods of the present day. These theologians have displayed great energy in penetrating into all the separate branches of knowledge which have any connexion with theology, have adopted their methods and principles, and have set to work on a discussion of these sciences in their bearings

upon theology. They have no intention of undertaking to restore ancient dogmas, but on the other hand they are firmly convinced that they have no need to give up, under the pressure of modern research, any of the essential truths of the Christian faith. On the contrary, they retain the firm conviction that theology will issue from this process of refining strengthened and deepened.

There is still considerable difference of opinion as to how this is to be worked out in detail. Programmes have been made out, and negotiations have been entered into about them. For a long time the demand for a 'Modern Theology of the Ancient Faith' and a 'Modern Positive Theology' has been exciting the attention of theologians. The first of these catchwords was introduced by Th. Kaftan, in his *Moderne Theologie des alten Glaubens*, 1906; the second by R. H. Grützmacher, in his *Studien zur systematischen Theologie*, vol. ii., and his *Modern-positive Vorträge*, 1906; and by R. Seeberg, in *Die Kirche Deutschlands*². Kaftan was closely connected with Kant and Ritschl; Seeberg and Grützmacher with Schleiermacher and the Erlangen school, and partly too with positive mediating theology. A third attitude, in close relationship to Cremer and the philosophical currents of the present day, is represented by Dunkmann, *Moderne Theologie alten Glaubens*, 1906, and 'Ueber Begriff und Methode einer kirchlichen Theologie' in *Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 1908, pp. 254-300. Another position is represented by C. Stange, a striking figure among modern German systematic scholars, whose studies are for the most part in the direction of the philosophy of religion. In 1907 Stange published his *Grundriss der Religionsphilosophie*, and in 1911,

Christentum und moderne Weltanschauung, and *Moderne Probleme des christlichen Glaubens*. According to his idea, the main task of the philosophy of religion is so to define religious experience as to guard against arbitrariness, while the whole content of experience will be included. In his opinion apologetic work at present has not to question the validity of science in the interests of religion, but rather to lay as much stress as possible on these claims. It is as much in the interests of science as of Christianity that the one-sided application of the religio-historical conception should be supplemented by the perceptive understanding of religion. Still another theory is advanced by E. Schäfer, *Theozentrische Theologie: Eine Untersuchung zur dogmatischen Prinzipienlehre*, 1909, i., and *Religiös-sittliche Gegenwartsfragen*, 1911. He reproaches the theology of the 19th and 20th centuries, introduced and influenced by Schleiermacher, with being unnecessarily anthropocentric. It tends, according to him, to lessen the majesty of God in its consideration for man and the purely human. Schäfer demands that the fundamental principle of dogmatics should be the majesty of God, because for Him all things exist and He through His Spirit is the sovereign Creator of faith and new life.

On the whole, however, there are two groups to be distinguished in the positive theology of the present day. The members of the one group are followers of Hofmann and Frank of Erlangen; that is, they are those who support the view of Divine redemption from personal experience of regeneration: the other group, among the older members of which is M. Kähler, take a firm stand on the Bible and desire to utilize its rich contents for personal faith. But on both sides a rapprochement has been made. The 'subjectivists' of Erlangen have learned to lay greater stress on the significance of objective Revelation, while the 'biblicists' recognize on their side the necessity of the inner experience of Scriptural truth. The former no longer seek to derive from personal Christian experience the certainty of the acts of salvation declared in the Bible and in dogma, but give more and more importance to the Bible, in which the revelation of God to man appears, and endeavour to exhaust the whole store of information regarding revelation contained in it. The 'biblicists,' on the other hand, have given up the old method of biblicism, by which the Scriptures were taken as

the standard for measuring all doctrine, and Biblical theology was turned into dogmatics; it is now admitted that the Scriptures are effectual only through religious experience. The Bible and revelation are not now accepted as simply identical. But there is an effort to make the contents of Scripture as fruitful for dogmatics as possible. Personal faith, as well as the faith of the Church, is more and more regulated by the Bible, and it is not so much doctrine as historical and personal life that forms the centre of interest.

Of the Erlangen school, the first in importance is L. Ihmels. Special consideration should be taken of his works, *Die christliche Wahrheitsgewissheit, ihr letzter Grund und ihre Entstehung*², 1908, and *Zentralfragen der Dogmatik in der Gegenwart*, 1912. Ihmels represents the view, so common at the present day in positive theology, that certainty about Christian truth is found within the limits of personal experience, i.e. it is individual certainty. The Bible, as the record of Revelation, furnishes its material in a dogmatic form. The important point, however, is that, by the way in which all new knowledge is disposed in order in the central declaration of faith, the impression is assured that faith necessarily depends on the evidence of Scripture. It is one of the fundamental tendencies of Ihmels' theology to let the word of God come to its own. At the same time dogmatics as a science has to satisfy the demand for unity of knowledge. The separate results, worked out by the various theological branches, must be brought together to build up a unified conception of Christianity, and that by bringing out the unity which is as a matter of fact already present in faith. The knowledge of faith, along with the entire scientific knowledge of truth, must be proved to Christians to be a unity. The conclusions of Ihmels' dogmatics approach fairly near to Church doctrine.

Further, we may mention A. W. Hunzinger, who has written for the most part apologetic works, e.g. *Probleme und Aufgaben der gegenwärtigen systematischen Theologie*, 1909; *Das Christentum in Weltanschauungskampfe der Gegenwart*, 1909; *Die religiöse Krisis der Gegenwart*, 1911; *Das Wunder: Eine dogmatisch-apologetische Studie*, 1912; *Theologie und Kirche*, 1912. Hunzinger desires to strengthen the relation to the Church, and to maintain the conformability to the Confession of Faith and the 'biblicity' of theology in the midst of all

the demands of modern life which have been called forth by the present position of science. He also strives to reconcile the extreme schools on a scientific-theological basis. He is strongly of opinion that to our age has God given the right and the duty, the task and the means, of making new settings for the gem of Christian faith, and he founds his opinion on a genuine and deeply religious faith in history, on the certainty that God works in and through history. In his work on miracles Hunzinger has made an exhaustive investigation of this fundamental dogmatic doctrine; he has laid bare in a most thorough manner the nature and meaning of miracles; and he has given a comprehensive exposition of the Christian faith in miracles in its relation to the natural and historical sciences of the present day.

We may also regard as belonging to the Erlangen group, R. Seeberg, who began in Erlangen, and R. H. Grützner, who was called a short time ago to fill Frank's chair there. Of Seeberg's writings we may mention *Grundwahrheiten der christlichen Religion*⁵, 1910; 'Der evangelische Glaube und die Tatsachen der Heilsgeschichte' in *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 1908, p. 405 ff.; *Offenbarung und Inspiration*, 1908; *Religion und Geschichte*, 1906 and 1909, 2 vols.; *Die Kirche Deutschlands im 19 Jahrhundert*³, 1910. The most important works of Grützner in this direction are *Studien zur systematischen Theologie*, vol. i.; *Die Quelle und das Prinzip der theologischen Ethik im christlichen Charakter*, 1898, vol. ii.; *Hauptprobleme der gegenwärtigen Dogmatik: Die Forderung einer modernpositiven Theologie*, 1905, vol. iii.; *Eigenart und Probleme der positiven Theologie*, 1909; *Modernpositive Vorträge*, 1906; *Gegen den religiösen Rückschritt*, 1910.

Seeberg has stated that the difference between his view and that of 'Modern Theology' lies in this, that for him the development of religious history is not purely immanent, but is conditioned by transcendent factors, and that religious experience takes place through the influence of God conjointly with the present Christ. Or, as he otherwise expresses it, Christianity for him is not only a psychological reflex of history, but the working of Almighty God; the series of facts of Revelation is not only a stimulus, but a means of establishing a new relationship between God and man. The connexion of evangelical faith with the facts of the gospel narrative he understands

thus: our faith fixes for us the reality of the narrative, but is itself at the same time founded upon it. Revelation is for him the sum of all Divine deeds and acts which have led men to salvation and the knowledge of salvation, while the Scriptures are the literary means of making those deeds and this knowledge known to us.

Grützner, in establishing Christian certainty, has followed Frank in so far as to hold that this certainty, which is allied in the first place to the fact of regeneration, comprises also the factors which bring it about. He attributes to historical revelation the character of progressive development, and to the question Where lies the object of this development? he replies, In establishing the authority of the Scriptures. The act which fixes the limit of revelation by the creation of documents describing it is inspiration. In this interest he has made an inquiry into the validity of the idea of the canon. With regard to the principles of the theory of knowledge he demands a return to the premises of Old Positive and Old Liberal dogmatics. If Seeberg utilizes his own religious experience on behalf of the authority of the Bible and of dogma in order to make a new structure which shall contain the essential elements of Christian dogma, so Grützner on his side aims at a similar result. It is characteristic that both have—like the theologically allied Kropatschek and Schäfer—handled in great detail the subject of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, and each seeks in his own way to keep hold of the main substance of dogmatic teaching.

Among the biblicists, the first to be mentioned is the venerable Martin Kähler of Halle. We would call special attention to the following works of his: *Die Wissenschaft der christlichen Lehre*³, 1905; *Dogmatische Zeitfragen*², vol. i.; *Zur Bibelfrage*, 1907, vol. ii.; *Angewandte Dogmen*, 1908; *Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche, biblische Christus*², 1896. The peculiarity of this theologian is that he emphasizes, without failing to recognize the right of historical research, the 'super-historical' contents of the Bible, and in particular the presence of the whole Biblical Christ. Scripture is the means of a true and direct Divine experience which brings about faith in us. That the Scriptures are able in this way to bring us into close connexion with God is the ever-repeated sovereign act of God, the 'super-historical' aspect of the Bible. We experience God in the words of

the Bible, when we experience the Christ belonging to Him, the historical Christ of the past, raised to His super-historical present state of being. Kähler's theology is Bible-theology, into which he introduces, it is true, the whole wealth of the historical activity of Christ, but it is at the same time Faith-theology. In personal experience the Biblical Christ becomes a reality to individual men. In his biblicism he has adopted a good many of the elements of Hofmann's conception of gospel narrative.

Another who belongs to the Bible-theologians is A. Schlatter. He has collected his views in the work *Das christliche Dogma*, 1911. Schlatter also represents a theology of certainty, and that on the basis of a religious anthropology. According to him, we need a doctrine of the person as the revelation of the Divine life, of nature as the revelation of Divine power, of society and the kingdom of God, of knowledge and the Divine truth, of feeling and Divine blessedness, of will and Divine love, of the worship of God and the community of God with us, of sin and Divine justice. Only then can we talk of the knowledge of God, when He reveals Himself to us through His working in us. We know God only through God Himself. If we ask for God, we ask for His revelation. The dogmatic question is, Where and how do we experience events which become for us a revelation of God? The Bible is, in Schlatter's opinion, not in the first place a means of gaining knowledge, but a means of changing our natural condition. Through the Bible God produces history, and through history He works on us so that our future history runs its course in communication with Him. This history worked out by God unfolds itself in the Christian community. The individuals are forged into this great chain of tradition and formed by this communal life. If any one understands the Scriptures in this connexion, he obtains knowledge. Through the religious life worked out in him man is raised to a divinely-induced independence of action. This is really surrender to the will of Almighty God, service of God in the highest sense of the word, but not indeed in the sense of absolute uniformity in every part of life; the resources and independence of the personal character must be observed. It is an essential characteristic of Christian dogma, that it recognizes the manifold diversity of the types which can come out of the relationship to Christ, and allocates to each one its place within the community.

Among those named we have taken into consideration the representatives of modern positive theology so far as they have in a wider connexion touched upon dogmatic questions. The work done by them has not been without result for dogmatic research as a whole. It may indeed be maintained that it was they who had the chief success in connexion with the attempt of Tröltzsch of Heidelberg to fix the philosophic principles of the religious-historical method. For it was they who showed that all the results which Tröltzsch thought he had obtained from objective and general philosophic considerations on behalf of religion or Christianity, were really anchored in his own subjective, personal attitude to religion, and that Tröltzsch's psychology of religion was a psychology of faith. Religious experience is not the necessary complement of a religious *a priori*, nor can historical supernaturalism and the recognition of miracles as the transcendent operation of the Godhead upon men's intellectual life be deduced from the philosophy of history with scientific evidence.

The lecture of Stephan, already mentioned, which he gave to the 'Friends of the Christian World,' *i.e.* to theologians who sprang from the school of Ritschl, is characteristic. He earnestly invites his friends—with all restraint in the recognition of the positive results of conservative theology—to learn from their opponents, whose work had called attention to some defects in their theology. In two points, in the opinion of their opponents, his friends had not succeeded in making Christian religion comprehensible in its deepest motives and thoughts: (1) with regard to the conception of faith as Divine experience or Divine emotion; (2) with regard to the method of their dogmatic judgments.

With reference to the first point, it was recognized that the decisive question was the one about the position of the historic Jesus. But here modern theology had only insufficiently solved the problems which had cropped up. For in the transition from the dogmatic to the historic Jesus, a gap had been opened up both between God and Jesus and between Jesus and man, and thus a great difficulty had been introduced into the experience of God through Jesus. Men like J. Kaftan and W. Herrmann had, it is true, continued to confess the Divinity of Christ, but their formulas had not done what they should have done. Still less had the weakened formulas attained this object by

calling Jesus Lord and Messiah, or the Son of God, or the representative of God. For all these designations were mere garlands of honour, which were hung on the person of the historic Jesus as a sign of His unique relation to God, or they were simply a distinguishing mark of man's inferiority to the historic Jesus. But it was necessary that expression should be given to the fact that this historical personality placed man in direct living communication with his God, that in this personality God at length won full power over us, and was in a more intimate and central way directly present to us. His friends, Stephan remarked, were still far from finding the true scientific designation for such experience. That was shown by the lack of impression made upon educated laymen by this part of their work. Here indeed positive theology may lay claim to having learned to consider the character of the person of Jesus more deeply, more fully, and in greater harmony with Biblical evidence.

With regard to the second point, the method of dogmatic judgments, Stephan recognized that the more modern conservative dogmatists combine in an inseparable way the fight for the immediacy, certainty, and fulness of the Divine experience and for the Biblical or dogmatic ideas of faith, especially for the Biblical or dogmatic judgment of Jesus. The conservative dogmatist sees, back through the history of mankind, a very close connexion between the present time and the earthly ministry of Christ; God has all the while been systematically exercising His powers, and working out His ideas of redemption according to His plan. Even ideas with regard to faith, confessions, and dogmas have their part in this divinely executed plan. They have the prejudice in their favour that their chief substance is eternal and may stand as the expression of our conviction of faith. This point of view is taken up by Ihmels, but more especially by Kähler. Kähler thinks the believer is always closely attached to the great course of Church History, but as a matter of fact the believer at his highest shows a triumphant faith in the 'full Biblical Christ' and in the Scriptures as a whole. The more completely the individual man strives to become a part of Him, the better he learns to appreciate the evidence of the Bible on revelation as truth.

Stephan warned his friends not to undervalue the power and the importance of this motive. Here there was, spiritualized and recast in an evangelical mould, something of what appeared with greater force, but

also with more superficiality, in the Catholic and Anglican valuation of Church unity and uninterrupted connexion with the whole history of Christianity.

He proclaimed, too, that modern theology had an absolutely personal view of Christian evangelical faith. The chief point was to place man over against the historical reality which according to the evidence of innumerable pious men was the intermediary between us and the Revelation of God. But only such motives and thoughts as developed organically from such a procedure had a right to be embodied in faith. Where possible each separate Christian was to be thrown on his own resources, so as to preserve the truth and the personally practical character of his faith. The believer was to be closely bound to Christ and God. All other history sank back into the unreal land of the past. Logically considered, the sacrifice of the historical community meant also that of the Church of to-day. Now Stephan asks if, in view of this, conservative Dogmatics is not preserving justifiable interests, and he gives this answer: Through the stress laid upon personal individual faith two things are pushed into the background—(1) the consciousness that the building up of our faith and its ideas is at the same time a work of history and of the religious community upon us; (2) the consciousness that individual faith as such is one-sided and limited.

The unfathomably deep and particularized dependence of individual faith on history and the community, and the need of perfecting and deepening individual faith through the realities which appear in history and in the community of the Church, appeared to the conservative theologians to be lessened in modern theology, and gave the impression that this position with regard to the Bible dogma and the Church was unhistorical, subjectivistic, inwardly poor and insufficiently provided with organs through which the manifestation of God might be more and more profoundly and perfectly felt. Therefore an attempt must be made to give to the individualistic and historical character of faith a different dogmatic stamp from what was now the rule with his friends.

Such a testimony, however, recognizes not only the energetic progress but also the scientific justification of the course followed by positive theology. Even those who are scientifically opposed to it cannot deny the importance of the work done by present-day conservative theology.