

Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie
A. Schlatter and W. Lütgert
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The first of these three *Hefte* of the *Beiträge* is made up of five contributions. It opens with two addresses of Prof. Schlatter, one of which was delivered before the Swiss Preachers' Society on the theme "Christ and Christianity," the other before the University of Tübingen on the theological work of J.T. Beck. In the former the difference between those who make Christianity a system detached or detachable from a personal relation to the present living Christ, and those who place its essence in such a relation, is briefly discussed, almost too briefly for the requirements of such a fundamental and live issue. The author draws a striking parallel between ancient forms of ecclesiasticism or sacramentarianism on the one hand and modern forms of "essence of Christianity" religion on the other hand. He shows that, notwithstanding the great difference in content, they are formally alike in this, that they make Christianity independent of direct, personal connection and communion with the living Savior. In the other address we receive a vivid sketch of the personality and work of the well-known Biblicist theologian Beck. Prof. Schlatter especially emphasizes the intimate union upon which theological instruction and practical religion entered in his work with and relation to his students. In part this was doubtless favored by the ethical basis of Beck's system, but, however caused, it was a feature of his teaching which gave it, according to our author's testimony, exceptional value in a country and at a time where theological training seems to have been almost confined to the impartation of learning. Prof. Schlatter does not fail to point out the weak side in Beck's biblicism, its neglect of the factor of historical development as a necessary guide for the theologian in the interpretation of the biblical truth.

Of the three other contributions in this installment the first is by Prof. Lütgert on *Die Anbetung Jesu*. In a most lucid and convincing way the relation of Jesus' own teaching to the question of worship paid to Himself is here discussed. That, as a rule, the Savior does not directly demand worship for his own Person, is explained from the attitude of self-sacrifice and humiliation observed by Him during his earthly state. At the same time it is shown that by his acts and the whole tenor of his work He indirectly invites, nay compels, the attitude of worship in man. In conclusion the current modern objections to the worship of Jesus are answered. The article occupies a worthy place beside Zahn's chapter in his *Skizzen aus dem Leben der alten Kirche* and Schlatter's address on the subject, both of them bearing the same title.

Equally interesting and more fully elaborated is Pastor Ernst Cremer's discussion of the Parables of Luke 15 and the Cross. Cremer here meets the contention so much in vogue at the present time, that the parables of this chapter in Luke, especially that of the prodigal son, leave no room for any atonement as the basis of forgiveness, and in fact prove Jesus to have taught that forgiveness is solely suspended on free grace on God's and a sincere repentance on man's part. As Denney and others have done before him, so the author suggests, that the parable of the prodigal thus interpreted, not only eliminates the cross from the transaction of forgiveness, but the whole Person and work of Jesus as well, so that, in order to urge the above contention consistently, one ought to be willing to go the length of advocating a Christianity in which Christ occupies no longer a necessary place. He further urges that, read and interpreted in the light of their context, these parables do not in the first place illustrate the attitude of God toward the sinner, but that of Jesus, so that the absence of special

emphasis on the atonement for this reason alone can create no surprise. Finally, while admitting that Jesus in his attitude toward sinners must reflect the attitude of God, and that, therefore, indirectly the parables teach how God meets the repentant sinner, Cremer shows most skillfully that even so the parable of the prodigal favors the modern view less than the traditional Evangelical doctrine. For, according to the modern view, God in reality does no more than announce his willingness to forgive through the mission of Jesus as a prophet or assure the sinner of the fact of his forgiveness. All God's activity connected with the transaction remains within the sphere of instruction and explanation; nothing objective is done even to show the reality of forgiveness. This is the deistic conception of God in its modern guise, and the author well places over against it the true biblical conception of a God who does reveal Himself and does act on the sinner's behalf, and points out that this latter conception is in reality the conception embodied in the parables. The whole discussion admirably meets a present need, and we wish the article could be translated and offered to a wider public among us.

In conclusion Prof. Riggenbach strengthens his former opinion, to the effect that Origen knew and used the *textus receptus* of Matt. 28:19, by quoting two fragments from Origen's Commentary on the Fourth Gospel, which have been recently brought to light by Preuschen in his work *The Greek Christian Writers of the First Three Centuries*.

Heft 1 of the year 1905 brings two articles. The former of these is of a rather technical nature. It is an inquiry by Prof. Riggenbach into the relation of the various forms in which the commentary of Pelagius on the Pauline Epistles has come down to us. One of these forms is the exposition that long passed under the name of Jerome. A more original version than this has been recently recognized in a codex of the St. Gall Monastery. It has also been established that the commentary published under the name of Primasius is nothing else than a working-over by some unknown author in an anti-Pelagian spirit of the original work of Pelagius. To these three sources there are still to be added as a fourth the fragments from pseudo-Primasius which appear in the excerpts from the fathers collected by Smaragd, Abbot of St. Michiel in France, in the ninth century. Prof. Riggenbach notes the strange fact that these excerpts reveal in certain parts great divergence from the ordinary text of pseudo-Primasius, and on the other hand frequently approach closely to the text of Pelagius as found in pseudo-Jerome. He suggests the solution that the sections coinciding with the pseudo-Jerome text of Pelagius were originally in the manuscript of Smaragd marked by a P, and that this *siglum* was intended by the abbot for Pelagius, not for Primasius. Then the author of the first printed text of Smaragd in 1536 mistook the P for Primasius and thus the confusion was introduced. Prof. Riggenbach further suggests that a similar confusion of *sigla* may originally have caused the ascription of the anti-Pelagian work in which large pieces from Pelagius were quoted with the letter P to Primasius.

Of more general interest is the second contribution in this *Heft* on "*Prophecy in the Time before Amos*," from the hand of Lic. Theol. Franckh. Over against the depreciating view of its character current in the modern evolutionary school, prophetism is here upheld as a phenomenon peculiar to Israel, at least in its essential features. The prophets were not the enthusiastic dervishes or fakirs that the critics make them out to have been. The very etymology of Nabhi, which means properly "speaker," bears witness against this. The author institutes an interesting inquiry into the merits of this etymology, especially in connection with the revelation-character of the Babylonian god Nebu, and the occurrence of this same name in geographical names of Palestine. It is plain, however,

that on this particular point nothing more than probabilities can be attained. Nevertheless it is true, as the author pointedly observes, that the etymology of Nabhi from “to speak” is rejected by modern writers chiefly on account of their preconceived notion as to the enthusiastic character of the first prophets. Prophetism on the whole is depicted as a conservative, even reactionary, force, and this is worked out in the sense that for the higher ethical and religious principles which they represented the prophets could appeal to a legitimate traditional religion in which these principles were at least latently inherent. Samuel was by his activity the cause and afterwards the leader of the prophetic revival that arose in his lifetime. Though the name Nabhi may have been new in his day, the phenomenon itself was not new. The movement had two sides, political and religious, intimately combined. Between Samuel’s time and the time of Ahab prophetism continued as an uninterrupted development. During this intervening period, however, the movement became divided, some of its representatives carrying on the political side in a manner which involved a departure from its original religious principles. Thus false prophecy arose, which sided with the kingship in the latter’s conflict with the true prophets. In connection with the designation “Sons of the prophets” the author makes the observation that the singular of this phrase is not Ben Nebhiim, but Ben Nabhi. This would show that in the later period of the tenth century the relation between the members of the prophetic order and some eminent leader was still the same as in the day of Samuel. Ben Nabhi would be the follower or disciple of such a Nabhi-leader, and Amos 7:14 (“I was no Nabhi, neither was I a Ben Nabhi”), would have to be interpreted in the sense that Amos disclaims being either a leader or a disciple in any prophetic organization.

The treatise of Lic. Emil Weber on “*The Relations of Rom. 1-3 to the Missionary Practice of Paul,*” which makes up *Heft 4* of the year 1905, may be counted among the best that has been of late contributed towards an appreciation of the manner and extent of the influence of Paul’s missionary activity upon his teaching. The author strictly confines himself to the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. These chapters are both by their contents and their form of presentation marked off from the remainder of the Apostle’s writings, in that they suggest the presence of a missionary motive. Not in the sense, of course, as if they were written with the purpose of gaining new converts among the readers, for the readers were Christians. Weber’s understanding of Paul’s purpose is rather this, that by seeking to reproduce and reawaken in the readers’ minds the fundamental process, which first made them Christians, he endeavors to strengthen their hold upon the faith. Hence the missionary modes of approach naturally reflect themselves in these chapters, and we are enabled to form a fairly complete idea of the Apostle’s missionary practice in general. According to our author, the missionary propaedeutic was directed towards the main purpose of impressing both Jews and Gentiles with the conviction of the divine judgment as a present reality and an approaching certainty. Through the conviction of judgment the mind was made ripe for the reception of the gospel. In general, this agrees with the traditional doctrinal understanding of these chapters, which finds in them the exhibition of the universal and absolute sinfulness and condemnation of mankind, as the basis for the positive structure of the doctrine of salvation in the later parts of the Epistle. But the new aspect of Weber’s treatment is that he finds this idea expressed, not in the forms of theological demonstration, but of practical missionary appeal. And the writer claims that the carrying out of the idea in the exegesis of our chapters leads in several instances to the solution of difficulties which even modern exegesis has not been able to overcome. Thus Weber argues, that in Chap. 1:28-32, and especially in Chap. 2:1-8, the reference is to the philosophical element in the Gentile world, which, while theoretically standing above the common immorality, yet as a matter of fact was deeply immersed in it practically. The pagan

philosopher judges the other and doth practice the same things. The favorite exegesis of the opening verses of the second chapter, according to which the one who judges is the Jew, is combated on what appear to us strong grounds. In Chap. 2:14-16, Paul's intent is assumed to be this: he seeks to show to the Jew that even among the Gentiles the ultimate effect of the law written upon their hearts is that it issues into judgment, so that both among Jews and Gentiles this is the common function of the law. And this appears, thus the author interprets the words of Paul, when in the crisis brought about by the gospel-preaching the consciences of the Gentiles bear witness, and their thoughts one with another accuse them. Attaching himself to the reading of the Present tense κρινει and to the clause "according to my gospel by Jesus Christ," he finds here the present judgment, not that of the last day, and seeks to show that elsewhere also this thought is not unfamiliar to Paul. Undoubtedly this exegesis would furnish a most interesting instance of the missionary trend of Paul's thought in the context; we have not been able, however, to convince ourselves of its correctness. Especially the εν η ημερα stands in the way. Somewhat peculiar, also, but perhaps less open to objection, is the author's understanding of the difficult verses 3:1-4. The main point to be noticed here is, that he refers the faithfulness of God, which fulfills the content of the λογια του θεου not to any national privilege of Israel, as if the problem were identical with that discussed in Chaps. 9-11, but to the gospel-salvation in its universalistic scope as such. We confess that we have not been able clearly to apprehend how the author, in connection with this idea, conceives of the nexus of thought. For the average reader a more explicit and detailed exposition would here have been desirable. But on the whole the treatise is lucidly written and may be commended to those who are interested in the section it deals with, either from a purely exegetical or from a missionary point of view.