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THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION¹

ARTHUR CUSHMAN MCGIFFERT
Union Theological Seminary, New York City

The present is a time of widespread confusion in theological education. Until a comparatively recent date there was general agreement among our theological schools as to the kind of course needed to prepare men for the Christian ministry. The curricula of all of them were much the same and were practically what they had been from the beginning. Every student was expected to study the Old and New Testaments in their original tongues, church history, apologetic and dogmatic theology, homiletics, and the pastoral care. Beyond these time-honoured subjects no one thought of going. But within the last few years a great change has taken place. It has come to be widely felt that the traditional course is inadequate and ill-adapted to the needs of the ministry in this modern age. On every hand we are hearing criticism of the old order of things and the demand that theological education be radically reconstructed in order to bring it into closer touch with existing conditions. No one can deny that there is justice in the criticism and that the demand for reconstruction has at least some warrant. In many of our theological institutions change has already come on a larger or smaller scale. New subjects undreamed of by the fathers have been given a place in the curriculum and are engaging a large share of attention. But the immediate result has been serious confusion. It was

¹ Address given at the Meadville Theological School (June, 1909).

church—union? Mr. Barry thinks there is such a possibility, and the union he has in mind is a very deep, satisfactory, and abiding unity—a unity consistent with the truest, most variegated individual and corporate freedom; a unity meeting all the requirements of an ever-growing civilization. But the basis of this unity rests very far back in the spirit. This basis is ultimate—in it there is no variableness or shadow of turning. All good, benevolent, beneficent people ought to be able to unite on this basis.

If, then, we are to have a unity that leaves us free, many of our advocates of church union must give up as basal the ideas on which they have been putting the emphasis. They must begin anew and reconstruct on the primitive model. It goes without saying to all those who know the history of doctrine that there can be no unity in relation to doctrine. Such a unity would be a unity without unanimity and so defeat its own end.

Moreover it is equally futile to think about unity in polity. The different forms of church polity are practically certain to continue as far as we can look into the future—perhaps to the end of time—or at least as long as human nature shall remain the same.

The objective unity that Mr. Barry thinks possible would put far less emphasis on doctrine and polity and far more emphasis on social and economic relations.

The reviewer has dealt rather freely with the book. He believes, however, that the lamented author would accept this interpretation of his work. If this review shall lead some to a careful reading of the book it will not have been written in vain.

J. W. MONCRIEF

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE THEOLOGY OF REFORMED JUDAISM

Dr. Kohler has produced a book of quite exceptional interest for the Christian theologian.¹ It is, so far as the reviewer is aware, the first example in any language of a systematic theology of Reformed Judaism. While written by an American, the book is published in Germany and appears as Vol. IV of the *Grundriss der Gesamtwissenschaft des Judentums*, a series published by the *Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Thoughtful observers of the religious

¹ *Grundriss einer systematischen Theologie des Judentums auf geschichtlicher Grundlage*. Von Dr. Kaufmann Kohler. Leipzig; Gustav Fock, 1910. 383 pages. M. 7.

life of Judaism have long been aware that its leading representatives have been powerfully influenced by the modern philosophical and scientific movement. The same influences which have wrought so great a transformation in the theology of Protestantism and which appear in the Roman Catholic church in Modernism, have been at work in Jewish thought as well. Books like Montefiore's *Hibbert Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion, as illustrated by the religion of the ancient Hebrews*, have given Christian students a new conception of the ideals and aspirations of modern Judaism. But hitherto there has been no single work covering the entire ground of religious thought which has summed up in concise compass the present beliefs of the more advanced representatives of this ancient and honored faith. For this reason Dr. Kohler's book deserves a hearty welcome and a careful study, and it is to be hoped that it will soon be made accessible to wider circles in an English translation.

I have spoken of the book as evidencing the influence of the modern scientific movement in Judaism. This appears in the very structure of the book itself. The way in which the problem is conceived, the order and the divisions of the treatment, show an acquaintance with the best work that has been done in contemporary Christian theology. Substitute the word Christianity for Judaism, and the captions of the first three divisions of the book might be transferred almost unchanged to a Christian dogmatics.

Nor is the influence one of form only. In substance of teaching also the author is profoundly influenced by the modern spirit. He accepts unreservedly the modern critical position. The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is denied. Instead of preceding the prophets, the law follows them, and, in its present form, sums up a long development which culminates in the exile. Miracle, in the old sense, is rejected. Dr. Kohler's world is the world of modern science where law reigns universal, and apparent exceptions are such only because of our ignorance.

Even more important, however, is the wide humanity of the book. While a loyal Jew, profoundly convinced of the divine mission of his people and the peculiar place assigned to them by God in the history of revelation, Dr. Kohler believes that the God of Israel is at the same time the God of all mankind. The individualistic elements in the Old Testament are carried by him to their legitimate conclusion, and we are told, quite after the fashion of contemporary Christian theology, that the special revelation in Israel was simply the means to a wider

end, namely, the establishment of the kingdom of God in all the world through a brotherhood of righteousness, sympathy, and service.

Moving in such a world of thought, and dealing with conceptions with which he has himself long been familiar, it is something of a shock to the Christian reader to find the author minimizing, if not altogether ignoring, the universal elements in Christianity. We are so accustomed to contrast Christianity as the universal religion with Judaism as a national and therefore limited religion, that it is with some surprise that we find Dr. Kohler representing the true relation as just the reverse.

To him Judaism is the universal religion, and Christianity, like Islam, her younger sister, a Jewish sect which has limited and perverted the freedom of the older faith. Judaism is the religion of the free spirit, knowing no creed or dogma, open to receive the truth of God from any source and therefore capable of infinite progress, whereas Christianity, committed from the start through its false conception of faith to a narrow and dogmatic creed, is incapable of assimilating the new truth which God is ever revealing, or, if at all, only through a reinterpretation which is in fact an abandonment of its own fundamental convictions.

Christian theology [so we read] is concerned with articles of faith which were prescribed by the founders and leaders of the church as conditions of salvation and can admit no change in the interest of free thought without undermining the plan of salvation of the church. Judaism, on the other hand, recognizes only such articles of faith as are taken over freely from the Jewish religious consciousness without compulsion, and which therefore at any time admit of union with sound reasoning. . . . He who denies the dogmas of the church ceases to be a Christian. In Judaism, on the other hand, the race relationship constitutes the foundation of religious fellowship in such a sense that even the unbelieving Jew is still a member of the religious organization. It is not faith but birth which lays upon the Jew the duty of laboring and fighting for the eternal truths, whose bearer Israel is called to be (p. 6).

But one might ask, even granting the justice of this picture of Christianity, wherein the superior freedom of the Jew consists? What does one gain by substituting the relation of birth for that of faith as the condition of religious fellowship? Do we not merely substitute one limitation for another?

Dr. Kohler's treatment of this difficulty is interesting. It has to do with his conception of the function of Israel in the divine economy of the nations. The truth which she possesses is held not for herself,

but in trust for all mankind. It is a pledge of the wider humanity which is some day to be realized upon earth.

Not the salvation of the soul—a purely individualistic conception—but that of humanity is the aim of Jewish theology. It is therefore interwoven most intimately with the historical progress of the human spirit. Jewish theology does not profess to offer the perfect or absolute truth, as does Christian theology, whether it calls itself conservative or liberal, but only to point the way to the highest and most perfect truth as the goal of human history (p. 7).

It will not surprise us, in view of such sentences, to find that the author consistently subordinates the legal element in the religion of Israel to the prophetic. He regards the identification of Judaism with legalism as a perversion going back originally to the apostle Paul, the first great opponent of Judaism, to whose misrepresentation much of the later understanding is due. He does not deny indeed that there is a legalistic element in the Jewish religion, but he maintains that it has never held the dominant and exclusive place which is given to it in Christian theology. Ever side by side there has existed in Israel the free prophetic spirit, in which the true genius of the religion is to be found. The doctrine of the fatherhood of God in the individual as well as in the national sense, the conviction of his care for and sympathy with each human soul, the thought of his nearness, as expressed in the divine immanence—all these truths which Christian theologians are accustomed to appropriate as distinctively Christian, Dr. Kohler finds characteristic of his own faith.

It would be interesting, if there were time, to follow Dr. Kohler's treatment in detail. The book falls into three main divisions, preceded by an introduction. In the latter he discusses the conception of theology, the idea and the essence of Judaism, and the nature of its articles of faith. The first division of the theology proper treats of God under the following three captions: (a) God in his self revelation; (b) the idea of God in Judaism; (c) God's relation to the world. The second main division treats of man, and discusses such questions as the nature of man, moral responsibility, sin and guilt, and immortality. The third and last section treats of Israel and the kingdom of God, and discusses the world mission of Israel, the messianic hope, the relation of Israel to the heathen and particularly to Christianity and Islam, the two "daughter religions."

The trained theologian will find many interesting points over which to linger in the course of these richly-filled pages. It is an illuminating

and inspiring experience to find the subjects of one's own long meditation discussed by one who approaches them from a different experience and a new point of view. The reviewer has been surprised and gratified to find with what large measure of sympathy he could follow the greater part of Dr. Kohler's treatment. It has confirmed an opinion to which his own studies have increasingly led, that the disposition to exaggerate the contrast between Christianity and its preparation in the Old Testament has been carried too far, and that most of the great distinctive truths of our Christian faith are to be found already rooted in the prophetic teaching.

One disappointment must frankly be registered, and that is that the author, writing as a Jew of the religion of his own people, should not have felt constrained to make wider use among his sources, of the teaching of that great son of his people, from whom the first of the two daughter religions has taken its name. So far as the reviewer is aware, the only reference to Jesus in the book save a passing mention on p. 279 of the misfortune brought upon the Jewish people by the Christian identification of the crucified Jesus with the Suffering Servant of Isa. chap. 53, occurs on p. 318. It is so interesting and so illuminates the author's point of view, that I shall be pardoned for quoting it in full.

After referring to the baptism of Jesus by John Dr. Kohler goes on as follows:

That which the gospels further relate concerning the workings of the Holy Spirit, in which all Essenes believe, and the miracles which accompanied the life of Jesus from the cradle to the grave, is mythology whose historical kernel may be thus summed up. Through his miraculous healings and his utterances filled with true human wisdom, the young Nazarene won among his simple countrymen, the fishermen and shepherds of Galilee, the reputation of a saint, a conqueror of Satan, and a prophet, and felt himself drawn by a mighty impulse of pure human love—a spirit which the community of Essenes in particular zealously fostered—to that class of men whom the proud Pharisees as well as the stricter Essenes repelled as impure and sinful. He felt called to become a preacher of salvation to the poor and sick, and to seek and to save the lost sheep of Israel. So there formed itself about him a circle of disciples who, in connection with a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, impelled him to make a public claim of Messiahship. Powerful attacks against the dominant party of the Sadducees, as well as against the self-satisfied Scribes, and finally, an expedition directed against the stalls and money-changers' tables of the greedy high priests in the temple, brought about the momentous decision, and the council of the high priests delivered the pretended Messiah (and that

meant for the Romans, the revolutionary) to the Prefect Pontius Pilate for punishment, and he was crucified by the mocking soldiers of Rome as "King of the Jews."

Yet, the influence of Jesus was far from ceasing with his death.

Too deeply had the crucified Messiah lived himself into the hearts of his disciples to make it possible for him, like so many other claimants to the messiahship in that stormy time, to fall a prey to forgetfulness. The disciples looked for the resurrection and the return of their Messiah in the glory of the heavenly Son of Man and their excited fancy saw his living figure still walking upon the sea or upon the mountain top, or in their nearest neighborhood. And this became the point of departure for a religious movement which at first laid hold upon the lower classes in Palestine and Syria and later, little by little, upon the same classes throughout the Roman Empire, until finally it so mastered the entire heathen world of antiquity that all the gods of heathenism yielded to the God of Israel, the Father of the crucified Saviour. The Jewish gospel for the poor and the lowly conquered the proud might of heathenism (pp. 309-10).

Thus, Christianity, according to Dr. Kohler, is in truth one chapter in the history of Israel's religion. It is a sad and melancholy chapter, for it involves perversions and misrepresentations of a lamentable kind. These perversions, as we have already seen, go back to Paul, who is the author of that identification of Judaism with an external legalism, which has endured until this day. None the less, Dr. Kohler recognizes the great services of Paul to the spread of the religious ideas of Judaism, and ends with this significant confession that "in spite of all, it must never be forgotten that Pauline Christianity, raised to a world-conquering church, has done for the propagation of the doctrines of Sinai what neither Judaism nor the Jewish Christian sects alone would ever have been able to do (p. 321).

Enough has been said to show the importance of Dr. Kohler's work for the Christian theologian. If the reader feels that in his emphasis upon the ideal and universal elements in his own religion the learned author has often overlooked, or at all events, underestimated the presence of similar elements in the great religion with which he contrasts Judaism, we must remember how often the faith which he defends has been subject to similar misrepresentation on the part of Christian theologians in the past. What is important for us as Christians is not that others should rightly understand us, but that we should rightly understand them; and as we enter into the breadth and richness of the hopes and ideals which Dr. Kohler has drawn for us from the records of his

own religion we shall be taking the first step toward that mutual understanding which will free the eternal message of him who is for us God's final word to his own countrymen as to all mankind, from those associations of narrowness and intolerance which have robbed it of its rightful hearing.

WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
NEW YORK CITY

THE CHRISTOLOGICAL PROBLEM

Professor Sanday's recent stimulating volume on Christology¹ falls naturally—but not formally—into two parts. The first consists of two lectures on ancient christology and the second on six lectures dealing with modern christologies, including that of author's, and concluding with a lecture on symbolism in which Professor Sanday presents a method of using the creeds without committing one's self to individual detailed belief therein.

The two lectures on ancient christologies are marked by Professor Sanday's characteristic judicial treatment, tolerance, delightfully liberal spirit, and engaging honesty. In them he points out the main line of christological development in the ecumenical church. His starting-point is what he calls "the net result of the Apostolic Age, namely, that the church at large thought of its founder as divine" (p. 6). Such a statement on its face is undeniable, but it by no means represents the entire situation, and so formulated is likely to lead the investigator to overlook the vital matter that another net result of the Apostolic Age was the belief that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah who was to return to establish his kingdom from heaven whither he had gone. If there is anything which appears in the New Testament or the early Fathers it is this messianic valuation of Jesus. Of course it is true that they regarded him as possessed of the Holy Spirit and in that sense divine. It is also true that he could be spoken of as God by an enthusiast like Ignatius. But the christology which the New Testament bequeathed the second century was essentially messianic, functional, and official, rather than ontological; Christ was the savior and his kingdom, into which men were to be saved through assimilating—to use Clement's

¹ "*Christologies Ancient and Modern.*" By William Sanday, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D. Lady Margaret Professor and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford. New York: Oxford University Press, American Branch, 1910. vii + 244 pages. \$1.75.