



The Princeton Theological Review

JULY, 1915

HISTORY AND FAITH*

The student of the New Testament should be primarily an historian. The centre and core of all the Bible is history. Everything else that the Bible contains is fitted into an historical framework and leads up to an historical climax. The Bible is primarily a record of events.

That assertion will not pass unchallenged. The modern Church is impatient of history. History, we are told, is a dead thing. Let us forget the Amalekites, and fight the enemies that are at our doors. The true essence of the Bible is to be found in eternal ideas; history is merely the form in which those ideas are expressed. It makes no difference whether the history is real or fictitious; in either case, the ideas are the same. It makes no difference whether Abraham was an historical personage or a myth; in either case his life is an inspiring example of faith. It makes no difference whether Moses was really a mediator between God and Israel; in any case the record of Sinai embodies the idea of a covenant between God and His people. It makes no difference whether Jesus really lived and died and rose again as He is declared to have done in the Gospels; in any case the Gospel picture, be it ideal or be it history, is an encouragement to filial piety. In this way, religion has been made independent, as is thought, of the uncertainties of historical research. The separation of Christianity from history has been a great concern of modern theology. It has been an inspiring attempt. But it has been a failure.

Give up history, and you can retain some things. You

* An address delivered May 3, 1915, by John Gresham Machen on the occasion of his inauguration as Assistant Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis in Princeton Theological Seminary.

investigators in connecting the language of the New Testament primarily with the non-literary development of the Koiné, but also admits, perhaps more adequately than some investigators, the influence of the Semitic languages.

Dr. Robertson has in this book made the most elaborate single contribution to New Testament grammar which has yet appeared; the work is the product of a vast deal of industry and reflects credit upon American scholarship. If the vastness of the material has strained the author's powers of arrangement and classification, such difficulties were perhaps unavoidable in so unprecedented and so comprehensive a work. Finally the thoroughly reverent attitude of the grammarian and his sensible views with regard to the authorship of the New Testament books must be noticed with special satisfaction.

The book seems to be admirably printed; such a high degree of accuracy could not have been attained without the most conscientious attention to details.

Princeton.

J. GRESHAM MACHEN.

Friedrich Blass' Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch. Vierte, völlig neugearbeitete Auflage besorgt von ALBERT DERBUNNER, Dr. phil., Lehrer an der evangelischen Predigerschule in Basel. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. 1913. Pp. xvi, 346.

Despite recent researches, the well-known work of the late Professor Blass is still the best New Testament reference grammar, at least for the average student. The appearance of a new edition, therefore, is to be greeted with satisfaction. Dr. Debrunner has undertaken an extensive revision, and thus helped to preserve the usefulness of the admirable book.

Princeton.

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The Gospel according to St. Mark. Edited by the REV. A. PLUMMER, M.A., D.D., formerly Master of University College, Durham, and sometime Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, Oxford. With Maps, Notes and Introduction. Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges. General Editor: R. St. John Parry, D.D., Fellow of Trinity College. Cambridge: at the University Press. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1914. Pp. lvi, 392. Price 4/6 net.

Dr. Plummer's qualities as an expositor of the Gospels are well known from his commentaries on Matthew and Luke. This edition of Mark, though limited by the purpose of the series, is useful and instructive. It contains an introduction, the Greek text—in general "the text of Westcott and Hort", "but not quite exclusively"—expository notes, an appendix on the addition to Mk. xvi. 14 in the Freer MS (W), indices, a plan of Herod's Temple, and two maps,—one of the Sea of Galilee and