

# The Princeton Theological Review

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## THE BIBLE AS THE TEXT-BOOK IN SOCIOLOGY

We are accustomed to regard the Bible as *the* text-book, because the authority, in dogmatics and ethics. Our "Confession of Faith" (Chap. i. 10) says: "The Supreme Judge, by whom all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture." Our "Longer Catechism", in response to the inquiry, "What is the Word of God?" replies: "The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience." Our "Shorter Catechism", in answer to the question, "What do the Scriptures principally teach?" says: "The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man." Our "Form of Government" obliges all our church officers, ministers, ruling-elders and deacons, to affirm that they "believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice" (Chap. xiii. 4 and Chap. xv. 12). Our Book of Discipline says: "Nothing shall be the object of judicial process, which cannot be proved to be contrary to the Holy Scriptures, or to the regulation and practice of the Church founded thereon" (Chap. i. 4). Our "Directory for the Worship of God" in a footnote explanatory of its title is careful to state as follows: "The Scripture-warrant for what is specified in the various articles of this Directory, will be found at large in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms, in the places where the subjects are treated in a doctrinal form." These several

mentioned his name. A fuller discussion of the subject would have been welcomed.

Mr. Brooke needs to make no apology for the prominence he gives, in spite of the limitation of a critical commentary, to matters of edification. He believes that no other method of interpreting the Johannine Epistles is scientific or even possible. It is unfortunate that the general plan of the New Testament volumes of the International Critical Commentary did not include the printing of the Greek text.

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*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians.* By JAMES EVERETT FRAME, Professor of Biblical Theology, Union Theological Seminary, New York. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons. 1912. Pp. ix, 326.

Four important commentaries on the Thessalonian Epistles have appeared within the last six years: the commentaries of Milligan in Great Britain (1908), of von Dobschütz (1909) and Dibelius (1911) in Germany, and finally the present work of Professor Frame in America. Scarcely any portion of the New Testament has received more attention from the commentators. But despite the labors of others, Professor Frame has undoubtedly brought a real enrichment of the exegetical literature. His commentary, it is true, lacks the special interest which attaches to the work of Professor Milligan, which, as was pointed out in *PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW*, vol. vii, 1909, pp. 126-131, represented the first systematic attempt to apply the new knowledge derived from papyri and inscriptions to the exegesis of a continuous portion of the New Testament. Professor Frame is fully aware of the value of the new materials, and employs them with good effect. But for the most part, he is dependent in this field upon the researches of Deissmann and others. His use of the papyri, therefore, though thoroughly adequate, does not constitute a distinctive feature of his work. But, if a paradox may be permitted, it is just the absence of distinctive features that constitutes the peculiar excellence of the present commentary. Professor Frame has no particular thesis to defend, and just for that reason has been able to employ the available materials with the greater fairness and circumspection.

In accordance with the general tendency of recent investigation, Professor Frame defends both epistles as genuine works of Paul. The first epistle no longer requires elaborate defence. With regard to the second epistle, Professor Frame classifies the chief difficulties under two heads: (1) the alleged contradiction between the eschatology of the second epistle and the eschatology of the first, and (2) the close literary relation between the two epistles. Like most investigators since Wrede, Professor Frame regards the second of these two difficulties as the more serious. After an instructive review of the progress of criticism (pp. 40-43), he discusses the two difficulties

separately, and then proceeds (pp. 51-53) to point out (admirably) the counter difficulties which beset the hypothesis of forgery.

In discussing the occasion of the epistles, Professor Frame distinguishes three classes among the Thessalonian Christians: (1) "the weak", who had not quite abandoned definitely enough their former pagan conception of sexual immorality as a matter of indifference, (2) "the faint-hearted", "who were anxious not only about the death of their friends but also about their own salvation", and (3) "the idle brethren". All three classes are admonished in the first epistle; in the second, only the last two classes appear. With regard to this classification, as applied in detail to the material of the epistles, the reviewer must confess some of the doubt which besets any attempt at precise reconstruction of circumstances simply from the epistles to which they gave rise. But the observations of Professor Frame are both acute and cautious.

The discussion of the eschatological passage in 2 Thessalonians is characterized by a wise caution. The political interpretation of the *ἄνομος* is rejected, but on the other hand the commentator is not yet prepared to accept without question the views of Bousset with regard to the traditional origin of the Pauline eschatology.

The details of exegesis allow room for many differences of opinion. But with regard to the present commentary the differences of opinion can only rarely amount to definite contradiction. Such a rare case is to be found in connection with 2 Thess. i. 11. There Professor Frame interprets the *καί* before *προσενχόμεθα* as joining the writer of the epistle with the recipients—"we too as well as you pray". That interpretation may fairly be pronounced linguistically impossible. It would be correct only if an *ἡμεῖς* stood after *καί* as in 1 Thess. ii. 13 (a passage which Professor Frame compares). Such lapses are in the present commentary extraordinarily rare.

With the background of Professor Frame's thinking with regard to Paul, the reviewer is in certain important respects in disagreement—for example, with regard to the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles and with regard to the character of the early Christian expectation of the Parousia. But these questions emerge for the most part only incidentally, and do not affect the admirable sanity of the strictly exegetical work. The method of the commentary is deserving of especial praise. The author has succeeded in combining unusual richness of reference to the exegetical literature with satisfactory clearness in the expression of his own opinions. No careful student of Professor Frame's commentary can fail to receive genuine instruction.

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## SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

*The Christian Doctrine of Man.* By H. WHEELER ROBINSON, M.A.,  
Tutor in Rawdon College, Sometime Senior Kennicott Scholar in