

The Religion of the Post-Exilic Prophets  
W.H. Bennett  
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The contents of this volume are largely biblico-theological. The first section, of 130 pages, is devoted to the isagogical problems connected with the post-exilic prophets and to a religious appreciation of the work of these prophets, individually considered. Post-exilic is taken in the sense of after the beginning of the exile, so that Ezekiel is included. The book opens with a brief sketch of the religion of Israel at the beginning of this period, in which the general positions of the Graf-Wellhausen school are adopted and the main elements entering into them succinctly and lucidly stated. In regard to the literary questions the following are the most outstanding points in the author's conclusions: Ezekiel is recognized, in spite of the recent proposals of Zunz, Seinecke, Geiger, Vernes and Havet, as still one of the fixed points of Old Testament criticism, and a genuinely exilic product. The sections in the book of Isaiah, usually designated Deutero-and-Trito-Isaiah, are discussed separately, the former being assigned to the exile, the latter to the time of Malachi-Ezra-Nehemiah, because the situation is judged to be the same. Only it is held that the Trito-Isaianic chapters are not connected portions of a single work, nor homogeneous in tone and spirit. Even apart from editorial additions they are not the work of one author, but composite. On page 103, where reference is made to the view that these chapters reflect pre-exilic conditions, the work of A. Rutgers, *De Echtheid van het Tweede Gedeelte van Jesaja*, 1866, might have been named. A special chapter deals with the Servant-of-Yahweh passages; the author formulates his conclusions to the effect that "the balance of evidence and the weight of authority seem to indicate that these passages are an exilic work written by some one other than the writer of the text of Isaiah 40-55, and that the Servant is Israel." The difficulty which arises on this view in regard to Chap. 49:6, where the Servant's mission is represented as in part a mission to Israel, is scarcely met by paraphrasing the statement in question, "the nation is (not merely) elect for its own sake." Among the anonymous prophecies of the exile are named Isaiah 13:1-14:23; Jer. 50-51, and Zech. 2:6-13. Of Zechariah's book, Dr. Bennett takes the current view which assigns only Chap. 1-8 to the prophet and places 9-14 in the Greek period. The hypothesis of Kosters in regard to the unhistorical character of the return from Babylon under Cyrus is rejected, and the old view adhered to. Here reference might well have been made to the careful and illuminating discussion of Dr. Boyd in the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* for 1900. The view is adopted that originally in Zech. 6:12, Zerubbabel's name stood side by side with Joshua's, and was erased by a later hand to glorify the ecclesiastic at the expense of the civil head of the community. Of the three views concerning the exact date of Malachi's activity that is favored which makes him prepare the way for the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah, rather than cooperate with them or carry on their work after the final departure of Nehemiah. The discussion of the Greek period comprises Joel, Zechariah 9-14, Jonah and Isaiah 24-27. As to the unity or duality of the authorship of Zech. 9-11, and 12-14, Dr. Bennett is non-committal. Only a passing reference is made in a footnote on page 130 to the burning question of the redaction or interpolation of the earlier prophetic writings in this period, although in the later pages of the work, where the development of doctrine is discussed, the hypothesis of such a redaction is accepted, but not carried to the extent of eliminating with Volz all the Messianic elements from the pre-exilic period.

The biblico-theological discussion consists of thirteen chapters on the nature and attributes of God; God and the World, Nature; God and Man, the Gentiles; God and Israel; Revelation, Nature of

Man; The Normal Religious Life; Righteousness and Sin; Rewards and Punishments; Atonement and Final Reprobation; The Future of Israel and the World; The Kingdom of God; The Messiah; The Individual after Death. As may be surmised from these headings, what is given here is a complete theology of the Old Testament; at least, of the prophetic teaching as a whole, rather than an exposition of the teaching of the post-exilic prophets only. We have here one more demonstration of the impossibility of giving an intelligible account of the theology of a segment of the course of revelation by itself. In every chapter, in connection with every topic, we learn practically as much concerning the earlier development as concerning that stage with which the book properly deals. In itself this is no disadvantage but in a series planned with reference to periods, it must involve needless repetition. One thing, however, can be fairly asked, viz.: that in a work of this kind the individual and new aspects of the teaching of the several organs of revelation shall not be lost sight of for the effort to place their teaching in the light of common prophetic doctrine. We are not sure that Dr. Bennett has entirely escaped this danger. Especially from his own standpoint, which does not involve the absolute agreement of all Scripture, he seems to us to combine too easily statements of the several prophets so as to make out of them a sort of *consensus* or *analogia fidei*. One might ask whether, apart from the strict theory of inspiration, with its assumption of the unity of all Scripture teaching in the mind of God, the *auctor primarius*, such a combination had any real existence in a concrete consciousness. On the whole, however, the author's treatment of the whole range of teaching has many excellent qualities. It is always clear and instructive, and even where it leans to the modern hypothesis, remains free from the ultra-doctrinaire excrescences of the latter; e.g., in its refusal to consider the prophets on account of the demand of conversion, as thorough-going Pelagians (p. 274). There are, of course, many points to which expert readers will take exception. For instance, we must differ from the view expressed on p. 161, that the ascription of holiness to the deity is a later development than its ascription to the entourage of the deity. An exaggeration is the statement on p. 194 that in the description of Israel as it will exist in the ideal future, the holy nation "attains to divine attributes, it shares the eternity of Yahweh. We might almost say, to use the Nicene terminology, that Israel becomes of one substance with God." In discussing the mode of prophetic revelation on p. 215, Dr. Bennett correctly emphasizes that the prophets had an absolute conviction of receiving communications from God, but then proceeds to compare this conviction to the reliance of the modern preacher or hymn-writer on the inner life or guidance of the Spirit. Is it true, that the psychology of the prophets did not distinguish between the sensation caused by a voice from without and the impression due to the operation of a spiritual influence on the soul? Or was it at all necessary to the recognition of both modes of revelation as equally authoritative, that the distinction between them should not have entered into their consciousness?

The clause, "He declareth unto man what is his thought", of Amos 4:13, is explained on p. 160 of the thought of man, and quoted to illustrate the divine omniscience; and on p. 200 of God's thought, to illustrate the divine self-communication. On p. 114, Antiochus III should be Artaxerxes III.

A fairly representative list of literature and index of subjects, and index of Scripture passages, are appended.