

A

RELIGIOUS ENCYCLOPÆDIA:

OR

DICTIONARY

OF

BIBLICAL, HISTORICAL, DOCTRINAL, AND PRACTICAL THEOLOGY.

BASED ON THE REAL-ENCYKLOPÄDIE OF HERZOG, PLITT, AND HAUCK.

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W. S. TYLER.

PLITT, Gustav Leopold, one of the editors of the second edition of Herzog's *Real-Encyclopädie*: b. at Genin, near Lübeck, March 27, 1836; d. at Erlangen, Sept. 10, 1880. He studied theology at Erlangen and Berlin, was in 1867 appointed extraordinary, and in 1875 ordinary, professor of church history and encyclopedia in the former university. In 1872 he was given the degree of D.D. by Dorpat. His studies were chiefly historical, and concentrated on the period of the Reformation. After a number of minor treatises (*De auctoritate articulorum Smalcaldicorum symbolica*, Erlangen, 1862; *Desiderius Erasmus*, 1863, etc.), followed, in 1867-68, his chief work, *Einkleitung in die Augustana*, 2 vols., of which the first contains the history of the evangelical church till the diet of Augsburg; and the second, the origin and development of the doctrinal system of the evangelical church. In 1873 he published *Die Apologie der Augustana*. In 1875, *Grundriss der Symbolik für Vorlesungen*: in 1876, *Jodokus Trutfetter*; in 1879, *Gabriel Biel*: and at his death he left a nearly finished *Luthers Leben und Wirken*, which has been finished by E. F. Petersen (chief pastor in Lübeck), and appeared at Leipzig in 1883. Although popular, it is scholarly; for Plitt was regarded as one of the best Luther scholars in Germany, and especially fitted to answer Roman-Catholic slanders against the Reformer. He also edited the Correspondence of Schelling, the great philosopher (*Aus Schellings Leben, in Briefen*, Leipzig, 1869, 1870, 3 vols.), whose granddaughter he had married. When Dr. Herzog undertook the second edition of his *Real-Encyclopädie*, he asked Professor Plitt, his colleague, to join him, as one eminently qualified by general learning, tireless energy, executive ability, and catholic sentiments. He lived, however, to see only six volumes through the press, dying before Dr. Herzog.

Professor Plitt, was, however, no mere student and writer. He frequently preached with acceptance, and took great interest in missions, foreign and domestic. In 1867 he succeeded Professor Delitzsch as president of the Bavarian Society for the Conversion of the Jews. He took a prominent place in philanthropic work and in the organization of the Christian Commission in the Franco-Prussian war (1870-71). Consumption first showed itself in the winter of 1874-75; and, although able to work at times, he gradually succumbed to the disease.
F. FRANK.

PLUMER, William Swan, D.D., LL.D., Presbyterian divine; b. in Greersburg (now Darlington), Penn., July 26, 1802; d. in Baltimore, Md., Oct. 22, 1880. In the nineteenth year of his age he was a pupil of the venerable Dr. McElhany of Lewisburg, W. Va., with whom he pursued his studies until he was prepared to enter Washington College, Lexington, Va., where he graduated. He received his theological training at Princeton Seminary; was licensed to preach by the presbytery of New Brunswick in 1826, and was ordained by the presbytery of Orange in 1827.

After several years of evangelical labor in North Carolina, he returned to Virginia; and, after a short term of service in Prince Edward

County, he was called to Petersburg in 1831. He removed to Richmond in 1834, to become the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church. In the thirteenth year of his labors in Richmond, he accepted a call to the Franklin-street Church, Baltimore, of which he had pastoral charge from 1847 to 1854, when he was elected to the chair of didactic and pastoral theology in the Western Theological Seminary at Alleghany, Penn. Owing to complications caused by the civil war, his connection with the seminary having been severed, in 1862 he supplied the pulpit of the Arch-street Church, Philadelphia, until 1865, when he accepted a call to the Second Presbyterian Church of Pottsville, Penn. In 1867 he was elected to the professorship of didactic and polemic theology in Columbia Seminary, South Carolina; and, after filling that chair for eight years, he was transferred, at his own request, to the chair of historic, casuistic, and pastoral theology, which position he continued to hold until 1880, when he was made professor *emeritus* by the board of directors. After his connection with Columbia Seminary closed, he continued to supply different churches in Baltimore, and other cities and towns in Maryland, until his labors were terminated by death.

This condensed enumeration of dates, and fields of labor, illustrates not only the vicissitudes of Dr. Plumer's life, and the versatility which characterized him, but the important positions and responsible trusts committed to him by the Great Head of the church.

Dr. Plumer was a man of commanding personal appearance. His manner in the pulpit was peculiarly impressive. There was a dignity, and even a majesty, in his presence, that commanded attention.

He was a voluminous writer. He wrote a Commentary on the Psalms, a Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, another on the Epistle to the Hebrews, many practical works calculated to establish the faith of believers, or to awaken the impenitent, besides innumerable tracts for the Presbyterian Board of Publication, for the Methodist Book Concern of Nashville and of New York, for the Board of Publication of the Reformed Dutch Church, for the Baptist Publication Society of Philadelphia, for the American Sunday-school Union, and for the Presbyterian Publication Committee of Richmond.

Some of these works were republished in Europe: others were translated into German, French, Chinese, and modern Greek. While professor in the Western Theological Seminary, he was also the successful pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church of Alleghany. While professor in Columbia, the church to which he ministered steadily grew in numbers, and was blessed with precious revivals. While pastor in the city of Richmond, he edited *The Watchman of the South*.

The presidency of several colleges, and the secretaryship of several of the boards of the church, were at different times offered him; but he never saw his way clear to accept any of these appointments. In 1838 Washington College (Pennsylvania), Lafayette College (Pennsylvania), and Princeton College, conferred upon him the title of doctor of divinity; and in 1857 the University of Mississippi conferred upon him the degree of

doctor of laws. In 1877 Dr. Pluner was a delegate to the council of all the Presbyterian churches of the world, which met in the city of Edinburgh.

For more than forty years he was a contributor to the periodical press, writing for reviews, for magazines, for many of the religious newspapers North and South, besides conducting a private correspondence which to most men would have been burdensome in the extreme. Perhaps no man of his time, not in political life, knew more people, or wrote a larger number of letters on subjects so varied and important. MOSES D. HOGG.

PLURALITIES, a term (*pluralitas*) in canon law for the holding, by a clergyman, of two or more livings at the same time. The canon law forbids it; but Catholic bishops granted dispensations to commit the offence, until the general council of 1273, when the right was taken from them. The popes still claim this right. In England the power to grant dispensations to hold two benefices with the care of souls is vested in the monarch and in the Archbishop of Canterbury. By 13 and 14 Victoria, c. 98, the benefices thus held must not be farther apart than three miles, and the annual value of one of them must be under a hundred pounds.

PLYMOUTH BRETHREN, so designated in the British Empire and America, upon the European Continent generally named "Darbyites" (see App., DARBY), are by themselves styled "Brethren." The characteristic of this school is an *endeavor*, in view of divided Christendom, to keep the *unity of the Spirit*. "That which characterized their testimony at the outset was the coming of the Lord as the present hope of the church, and the presence of the Holy Ghost as that which brought into unity, and animated and directed, the children of God. . . . The heavenly character of the church was much insisted upon" (Darby's *Collected Writings*, vol. xx. p. 19). The prophetic inquiry at the beginning of this century would explain their origin. Powerscourt Mansion, County Wicklow, Ireland, was a centre of such inquiry. It is to Ireland that we trace them earliest. About 1827 an ex-Romanist, the late Edward Cronin, gathered some sympathizers, ultimately at his residence in Lower Pembroke Street, Dublin, for "breaking of bread" every Sunday morning. Shortly afterwards another company was formed, which Cronin joined, at 9 Fitzwilliam Square: in this group, nucleus of the Brethren, the most prominent figure was the Rev. J. N. Darby. A pamphlet by Darby, *On the Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ* (1828), disturbed many minds in the Protestant churches, and swelled the Brethren's ranks; so that in 1830 a public "assembly" was started in Aungier Street, Dublin. Amongst those early joining the movement was "the noble-hearted" Groves (Newman's *Phases of Faith*), who, however, left for Bagdad in 1829. To promulgate his views, Darby in 1830 visited Paris, afterwards Cambridge and Oxford. At the last place he met with B. W. Newton, at whose request he went to Plymouth. "On arriving," Darby writes, "I found in the house Capt. Hall, who was already preaching in the villages. We had reading-meetings, and ere long began to break bread." Their first meeting-place was called "Providence Chapel;" the Brethren, accordingly, "Providence People;"

but, preaching in country-places, they were there spoken of as "Brethren from Plymouth;" hence elsewhere, "Plymouth Brethren." The largest number ever in regular communion at Plymouth was a thousand, more or less. Amongst those that here embraced the "testimony" was the late S. P. Tregelles.

The title to communion originally, at Plymouth as in Dublin, may be gathered from Darby's Correspondence with Rev. J. Kelly (1839). He there writes of "real Christians," that "we should undoubtedly feel it wrong to shut them out," whatever their peculiarity of doctrine: "we receive all that are on the *foundation*, and reject and put away *all error* by the word of God and by the help of his ever-present Spirit." A notable instance had occurred of the excision of one, who, in the story of his religious opinions, has narrated his early connection with the Brethren amongst whom he sought to introduce heterodoxy as to Christ. The Brethren, however, have always restricted discipline, or departure from others, in respect of doctrinal error, to cases falling under 2 John. Darby had written of Sardis and Thyatira, that "degeneracy claimed service, and not departure" (*Ibid.*). But there is enough evidence of sharp discipline from the outset to forbid the notion that the so-called "Exclusives" have later employed more stringent measures than was the wont of the Brethren at first: they may have become more consistent and systematic.

The Brethren had given practical expression to their views of ministry ere Darby's *Christian Liberty of Preaching and Teaching the Lord Jesus Christ* appeared in 1834. In the same year was begun the *Christian Witness*, for which Darby wrote, *On the Character of Office in the Present Dispensation* (1835), uprooting all official appointment. In the same periodical he wrote, *On the Apostasy of the Successive Dispensations* (1836). We present an outline of these treatises:—

"The old economy had fallen by the unfaithfulness of the covenant-people. The whole people was placed under the law, made responsible for its observance. As a whole, it apostatized. The same happened with the New-Testament economy. Christians wholly apostatized in the apostolic age. Failure ever marks man placed under responsibility. The whole Christian system depended upon continuance in God's goodness. If Christendom depart from the divine path for this dispensation, *his goodness is abandoned*. This is 'the ruin of the church.' Every present ecclesiastical organization is abnormal; all Christendom obnoxious to judgment. According to Darby's tracts, *Sur la Formation des Églises* (1840) and sequel, there remains but *l'apostasie fatale et sans remède*. A new church organization supposes a new apostolate. Cf. his *Reply to the Zionstote* (vi. Jahrgang). All are rejected, Romanist and Protestant alike: they repose upon an unchristian sentiment. Unlike other separatists, Darby places dissenters' systems under the same ban as national churches; only he sees more corruption in the latter. He falls back upon *la promesse du seigneur* (Matt. xviii. 20), which provides a motto for the assemblies into which the church should resolve itself. Moreover, ecclesiastical office is impaired by the church's ruin. See a tract, *On the Apostasy—What is Succession Succession of?* (1840); also *Le Ministère considéré dans sa Nature*, etc. (1843), and *De la Présence et de l'Action du S. Esprit dans l'Église*, etc. The acceptance of official ministry as medium between God and man ignores the privilege, enjoyed by every believer, of access to the throne of grace. There are, nevertheless, *ministères* in the word; because, without such,