

THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

No. 40.—October, 1889.

I.

THE REVISION OF THE WESTMINSTER CON- FESSION OF FAITH.

REVISION is in the air. Some years ago it was the revision of the Bible ; now it is the revision of the creeds. The former has been successfully accomplished without doing any harm either to the Bible or to Bible readers ; the latter will be accomplished at no distant day, with the same result of sundry improvements in minor details without detriment to the substance. The Bible revision movement extended over the whole Protestant world, and resulted in a material improvement of the Authorized English, German, Dutch, Swedish, and Danish versions ; the Creed revision movement so far is confined to the Presbyterian churches of America and Great Britain, but may soon spread to other evangelical denominations which have formulated confessions of faith.

We live in an age of research, discovery, and progress, and whosoever refuses to go ahead must be content to be left behind and to be outgrown. Whatever lives, moves ; and whatever ceases to move, ceases to live. It is impossible for individual Christians or churches to be stationary : they must either go forward or go backward.

Revision of creeds is not a new thing. It runs through the history of Christian doctrine. Creeds are the mile-stones which mark the stages of development in the knowledge of revealed truth. Every creed is the result of preceding theological controversy. The Confession of Peter and the baptismal formula are the basis of the

he is necessarily dumb. With many protestations of the absoluteness, finality, and bindingness of "oughtness," yet the only reply to the direct demand is: "In fact, there is no answer; there are no sources for that supreme authority. We cannot go beyond the law of right; God is not more ultimate; human reason is but that which perceives it. It indeed has no origin; its source is not in the heavens or the earth; it is final, irrevocable, uncreated law." In a word, morality is the Nature of things, and though we are responsible, we are responsible only to the Nature of things. Mr. Salter does scant justice to Christianity, ever falling, in his account of it, into a false antithesis between prayer and effort; between trust in God and activity; between salvation and sanctification. His historical judgments are often very shrewd, and the book abounds in quotable apothegm. Such an one, for example, as this may be commended to many professed theologians for their meditation: "When Jesus ceases to be an authority, Christianity in any distinctive sense ceases to be" (p. 253).—*The Human Moral Problem*, an Inquiry into some of the Dark Points Connected with the Human Necessities for a Supernatural Saviour. By R. R. Conn. (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Co., 1889.) Pp. 69, 12mo. The author is a layman who has evidently thought much on the problem of sin, its origin, nature, and remedy. He rightly emphasizes man's need of salvation from sin as well as from its penalty; and he says many things strongly and well. But the book inevitably illustrates anew the dangers of treating such subjects with inadequate acquaintance with what has been already thought and said about them; and does not escape the crudities and errors inseparable from such a situation.—*Dr. Girardeau's Anti-Evolution: the Logic of his Reply*. By James L. Martin. (Columbia, S. C.: Presbyterian Publishing House, 1889.) Pp. 65, 8vo. Dr. Martin pursues here with the utmost logical keenness, the controversy which he raised in a former pamphlet, entitled *Anti-Evolution*, which found its occasion in Dr. Girardeau's paper on *The Contra-Natural Character of the Miracle* in the *Presbyterian Quarterly* for July, 1888. With the logical and local elements in the controversy we have nothing to do. We see no gain in exchanging "supernatural" for "contra-natural" in the definition of miracle; and fear that the ambiguity of the new term would lead to more confusion than it would obviate. The sufficient mark of a miracle is that it is an event in the external world to the production of which second causes are *inadequate*, and which therefore requires for its account the immediate intrusion of the first cause; and this points us to the preposition *super* as the natural one to describe its nature.—*A Defence of the Catholic Faith Concerning the Satisfaction of Christ, against Faustus Socinus*. By Hugo Grotius. Translated with Notes and an Historical Introduction by Frank Hugh Foster, Ph.D. (Leipzig), Professor of Church History in the Theological Seminary at Oberlin. (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1889.) Pp. lvii., 314, 12mo. This excellent translation of an epoch-making treatise in the history of the doctrine of the Atonement first appeared ten years ago in the pages of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, and requires on its own account no words of ours to convince students of the history of this doctrine, that they cannot afford to neglect it. The new portion of the present volume consists of an interesting historical introduction of about fifty pages length, in which Professor Foster explains the origin and traces the influence of Grotius's treatise. This work he does sympathetically, as one who looks back to Grotius as the originator of a type of thought on this high theme, which in its New England modification commands his own allegiance. In the course of his remarks he criticises the Church doctrine of satisfaction, not always soundly. We are particularly grateful for the clear exhibition of the channels by which the Grotian influence flowed into New England.

BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD.