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I.

RECENT DOGMATIC THOUGHT IN THE NETHERLANDS.*

THE Dutch theology of the nineteenth century has been discussed more than once by both foreign and native writers. The following is a list of the more important treatises on the subject: CHR. SEPP, *Proeve eener pragmatische geschiedenis der Theologie in Nederland van 1787 tot 1858*, 3d ed., Leiden, 1859; D. CHANTEPIE DE LA SAUSSAYE, *La crise religieuse en Hollande*, Leyde, 1860; Dr. G. J. VOS, *Groen van Prinsterer en zijn tijd 1800–1857*, Dordrecht, 1886; *Idem.*, *Groen van Prinsterer en zijn tijd, 1857–1876*, Dordrecht, 1891; Dr. J. H. GUNNING, J.Hz., *Het Protestantsche Nederland onzer dagen*, Groningen, 1889; Dr. J. A. GERTH VAN WYCK, art. "Holland," in Herzog und Plitt, *Realenc. für Prot. Theol. u. Kirche*, vi, s. 254–266; JOHANNES GLOËL, *Hollands Kirchliches Leben*, Würtemberg (1885); Dr. ADOLPH ZAHN, *Abriss einer Geschichte der Evangelischen Kirche auf dem Europ. Festlande im 19ten Jahrhundert*, 2te Aufl., Stuttgart, 1888, etc. As secondary sources of information all these and other works may render excellent service, but the works of the representative theologians themselves will alone give an insight into the principles and nature of the successive tendencies.

Dutch theology during the present century has been subject to various influences. Its character has been molded in turn not only by Calvinism, which has always continued to live among the

* [Our readers are indebted for the translation of Dr. Bavinck's paper to Prof. G. Vos, Ph.D., of Grand Rapids, Mich.—EDITORS.]

strong, learned and conclusive. We wish it could be had also in English.—*Dr. Briggs' Biblical Theology Traced to Its Organic Principle.* By Robert Watts, D.D. Reprinted from *The Presbyterian Quarterly*. 8vo, pp. 30. (Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson, 1892.) Dr. Watts was led by the widespread interest taken in Dr. Briggs' *Inaugural Address* on both sides of the sea, and especially by its republication with a commendatory preface for a British audience by Prof. A. B. Bruce, to make it the subject of his opening address at the Presbyterian College at Belfast this past autumn. His examination of it has all the point and vigor which usually characterize Dr. Watts' criticisms. He formulates his conclusion concerning its theology in these words: "It is un-Biblical, unscientific, uncritical, unethical and untheological, and rests upon a Pelagian fundamental as its ultimate organic principle" (p. 30). This looks sweeping. But the calm observer will justify it in every particular. The major portion of Dr. Watts' address is devoted to Dr. Briggs' anthropology, and especially to the implications of his assertion that original man "was innocent and sinless, but not possessed of that righteousness and moral excellence that comes only by discipline and heavenly training." This statement is, indeed, characteristically obscure, if not ambiguous; but in its context it can have but one meaning, that which Dr. Watts puts upon it, viz., that man was created innocent only and not positively holy and righteous. The Rationalism of making "ethical and religious philosophy" rather than Scripture the test of truth (and that in a professedly "Biblical theology"), and the Pelagianism of contending that "righteousness and moral excellence" can not be concrete but come only by discipline, are exposed by Dr. Watts with trenchant clearness.—*The Old Testament and Its Critics.* The Introductory Lecture delivered on Tuesday, November 3, 1891. By George C. M. Douglas, D.D., Principal of the Free Church College, Glasgow. 8vo, pp. 20. (Glasgow: John N. MacKinlay, 1892.) After thirty-five years' tenure of the chair of Hebrew and Old Testament Theology in the Free Church College at Glasgow, Dr. Douglas has intimated his purpose of retiring at the close of the current session, and has published his "address given at the opening of the present session, in order that the Church may know where I stand, and have stood, while occupying the posts to which I was appointed." The address itself is a most lucid and illuminating survey of the recent history of Old Testament criticism—a survey which is more than a survey, as it becomes an argument. The rise of the presently fashionable school is traced and its relation to the foregoing opinions pointed out, and then the recent rise of a new school is pointed to, which is more radical than the one now in vogue but bears essentially the same relation to it that it bore to its predecessors—equally inconsistent with it, and despised by it, as it was by its own forerunners, yet not without its attractions. "If I am to give myself over to any of these critical schools," writes Principal Douglas, "I think this thoroughgoing criticism of Vernes' would have attractions on the score of consistency and strength, which I never can feel for those speculations which are at present rampant" (p. 18). If the contentions of this new criticism are held to be incredible, it is easy to remark, (1) that the incredibility attaches to the older school as well, and (2) that "the extreme positions of Vernes and the others are defended by arguments the very same in style and nature as those of the followers of Kuenen and Wellhausen" (p. 20). Thus Dr. Douglas points out that the progress of Old Testament criticism is very much like that of the New during the first half of this century, when each new school executed justice on its predecessor. The presently reigning school is, indeed, in some respects, the analogue of the Tübingen criticism on the New Testament; it cannot abide, it must either return to soberer counsels or else wax even worse.—Séance de rentrée des cours de la Faculté de Théologie