

THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

No. 22—April, 1895.

I.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE EXPERIMENTAL METHOD.

IN a scientific age like ours, something will be gained if we can show that Christianity is amenable to the Experimental Method. This method has very largely made the modern world. It received its great exposition and impulse from Lord Bacon, and is sometimes called the Baconian method. It consists of three stages: first, the collection of all the facts procurable upon the subject in hand; secondly, the casting about for some happy hypothesis to explain the facts; and, thirdly, the verification of the hypothesis by experience or experiment.

Now it so happens that Christianity may be made amenable to this method; and, that there may be no mistake about this being the Founder's intention, let us look at one declaration He made in the days of His flesh. His enemies had, strange to say, argued themselves into the idea that He deserved to be killed because He had made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day (John vii. 23). They illustrated in doing so the fact that, if we only set ourselves to it, we can argue ourselves into anything. The history of human thought shows that there is nothing too absurd, nothing even too diabolical, to be reached by argument. But Jesus has a better method to suggest than this one of everlasting discussion; and it is contained in the words, "If any man will [*'willeth to'*—Revised Version] do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John vii. 17). He does not say, "If any man will *discuss* God's will in all its length and breadth, he shall know of the doctrine;" but if he will *do* it, he shall reach

ring that therefore Christians must be "living under a sacrificial system of religion," and that only through sacrifice can sinners ever approach God. He is right in contending that Christ at the Passover feast substituted the symbols of bread and wine for the Passover lamb, and so continued the Passover in His Church, with only this change of symbol—retaining all its sacrificial import. He is undoubtedly right in pointing out that in 1 Cor. x Paul parallels the Eucharist with the sacrifices of both Jews and heathen in such a way as to demonstrate its sacrificial significance. We might even adopt with him Chrysostom's words (p. 99), and say that "we offer in every Eucharist the one eternal sacrifice offered on Calvary," if what we might be supposed to mean by that, might be that, by partaking of the Eucharist, we become the offerers of that one great sacrifice, to whom its benefits therefore accrue. Where he is wrong is in seemingly a very little matter; but it is a matter which misleads him—as it has misled nearly everybody who has gone wrong as to the nature of the Eucharist—in well-nigh everything. He misses exactly what place the Eucharist takes in the complex act of sacrificial worship. He imagines that it is the offering itself in the active sense, that is, that it repeats or continues the act of offering up the victim. What it is, however, is the offering in the passive sense—it presents to us the victim already offered. The Eucharist is not the "sacrifice" in the sense of the act of sacrificing: but the Eucharistic elements are, in symbols, the "sacrifice" in the sense of the victim sacrificed. Exactly what the Eucharist is, is the *sacrificial feast*. The paschal lamb, whose place bread and wine were hereafter to take, was that lamb, not on the altar in act of being sacrificed, but on the table after having been sacrificed. It is hence absurd to speak of the Eucharist as a continuation of the sacrificing, of the offering: it is the permanent continuation of the sacrificial feast that succeeds the actual sacrificing. And this is what is asserted by Paul in 1 Cor. x, and what is there drawn out in its precious implications—the chief one of which is this great one, that he who partakes of the victim is a coöfferer of the sacrifice, and therefore a sharer in its benefits. The errors that have grown up concerning the Eucharist, we repeat—whether Romish, Anglican, Lutheran or Zwinglian—are errors which could never have arisen so long as sacrificial worship was a living memory of Christians, and the significance of the sacrificial feast was an element of personal knowledge with the worshipers. The key to the Eucharist lies in the significance of the sacrificial feast, succeeding the sacrifice and presuppositive of it: and only by approaching it from this point of view can it by any possibility be understood.—*Sacerdotalism*, if rightly understood, the teaching of the Church of England: being four letters originally addressed, by permission, to the late Very Rev. William J. Butler, D.D., Dean of Lincoln. By W. J. Knox Little, M.A., Canon Residentiary of Worcester and Vicar of Hoar Cross. 12mo, pp. xxiv, 318. (London and New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1894.) We confess with a feeling of half-shame that we have read every line of this thoroughly unprofitable book. We do not know when there has come into our hands a completer example of all that is unhappy in controversial writing. There are few devices of the hard-pressed controversialist which Canon Knox Little shrinks from imputing to his opponents or from exemplifying in his reply to them. We open the book at random and we find him accusing them, on p. 154, of "shuffling and Jesuitry, and casuistical assigning of non-natural meanings to words;" on p. 155, of "astonishing shifts in order to 'wriggle out' of plain teaching;" on p. 157, of "juggling with words;" on p. 158, of "a miserable subterfuge;" on p. 161, of "Jesuitical and casuistical and non-natural twistings;" and so on *ad nauseam*. Yet his own work exhibits one of the purest examples of non-natural interpretation of plain statements known to us. Canon

Knox Little has taken a brief to show that the Church of England inculcates three practices and three doctrines which constitute the core of the High Church teaching, and which he therefore is not unwilling to defend as together making up what may be known as "Sacerdotalism." The practices are: auricular confession, non-communicating attendance on the Eucharist or "hearing mass," and fasting communion. The doctrines are those of the Real Presence, the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and the Priesthood of the Clergy. Now it so happens that no one of these practices or doctrines is clearly and consistently taught in the formularies of the Church of England, and some of them are clearly and consistently repudiated by them. Canon Knox Little's methods in attempting to show that they are nevertheless the plain teaching of the Church of England involve, therefore, elaborate attempts to explain away solemn and formal declarations where they make against him, on the one side, and on the other equally elaborate attempts to exaggerate the importance and significance of casual phrases where they make for him. The whole constitutes, as we have already hinted, one of the least edifying (and yet not wholly uninteresting) spectacles with which recent controversial literature supplies us. Every clergyman of the Church of England declares: "I do assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion and to the Book of Common Prayer, and of ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons. I believe the doctrine therein set forth to be agreeable to the Word of God, and in public Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments I will use the Form in the said Book prescribed and none other, except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority." Here certainly assent to the doctrines taught in the Thirty-nine Articles is made a matter of profession by every clergyman of the Church of England: and if the Prayer Book is conjoined with them as a standard of doctrine, the order of enumeration at least determines the order of authority in a case of supposed conflict. *Lex orandi lex credendi*, Canon Knox Little cries, however, and fancies that by a misapplication of that fruitful proverb he is justified in overbearing the most formal definitions of the Thirty-nine Articles in favor of his own reading of the most doubtful hints of the Prayer Book. And when Articles and Prayer Book alike fail him, he has another formula ready: the Church of England makes appeal to the Primitive Church and therefore, whatever the Primitive Church taught and practiced the Church of England teaches and practices, and her own formularies must be overborne to accord with it. When the Primitive Church also fails him, then the formula is that the Church of England professes to be "Catholic," and whatever therefore is "Catholic" she professes, even though she has solemnly repudiated it; and her repudiation must accordingly be explained away. From all which it is quite evident that Canon Knox Little's zeal is not for the teaching of the Church of England, but is for a complex of doctrines and practices which he is determined that, despite the Church of England's teaching, he will teach and use in her bosom. The most specious cases are made out for auricular confession and the priesthood of the clergy: and we think it must be confessed that the language of the rubric in the "Visitation for the Sick" gives color to the contention that private confession and absolution is there recognized, while some of the phraseology of the Prayer Book on the priesthood is unpleasantly ambiguous. But the readers of Mr. T. Teignmouth Shore's paper in *The Nineteenth Century* for January, 1895, and of Archdeacon Perowne's Birmingham Church Congress paper, will know how to estimate even these most plausible sections in Canon Knox Little's book. Elsewhere the artificial construction falls of its own weight. The Church of England obviously does not teach "fasting communion," or "non-communicating attendance:" nor did even the Primitive Church practice either, as, with regard to the lat-

ter at least, Canon Knox Little is forced to allow. Equally obviously the Church of England not only does not teach but repudiates in so many words the doctrines of the corporal presence in the Eucharist and of the Eucharistic sacrifice, and Canon Knox Little's mode of dealing with her formularies on these subjects cannot but carry pain into every simple reader's heart. The clear Protestantism of the Church of England's teaching on the Eucharist is consistently retained in Articles, Prayer Book and Homilies and cannot be explained away. The interested reader may easily assure himself of this by consulting even so rapid a survey as that given in an address of Bishop Ryle's, published in *The Guardian* for January 23, 1889. The evil that has been done to the clergy of the Church of England—and unhappily beyond her borders—by the teaching and example of Tract No. 90 is incalculable: and only begins to be realized when one is brought into contact with a book like this. In the face of such an art of interpretation, language becomes incapable of expressing meaning: and the credit of the clergy in their most solemn assertions trembles to its fall. A robust, intellectual honesty in interpreting formularies is to-day the greatest desideratum of the Church: men zealous for the truth should also be especially sensitive to the claims of truth.

Princeton.

B. B. WARFIELD.

IV.—PRACTICAL THEOLOGY.

FESTKLÄNGE. Predigten über Festtexte des Kirchenjahrs von Dr. C. F. W. WALTHER. Aus seinem schriftlichen Nachlass gesammelt. St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1892. 8vo, pp. vii, 473.

This volume contains such of the sermons of Dr. Walther on the pericopes of the festival days of the Church-year as could be found among his literary remains. There are some fifty in all—the majority of them for Christmas, Easter and Whitsunday. We share the editor's grief that there are not more of them. For they are noble sermons, models of what sermons should be in elevation of thought and style, simplicity and chastity of diction, and faithfulness both in the proclamation and enforcement of truth and in the awakening of conscience. Our heart says Amen, when we read in the Preface: "Walther was great as a preacher, yes, he is one of the model-preachers of the Lutheran Church. His sermons are solid, profound, clear, instructive, popular, and edifying, and at the same time correct and exact in form." Wherever we have dipped into these festival sermons they deserve all this praise.

Princeton.

BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD.

Woman in Missions. Papers and Addresses Presented at the Woman's Congress of Missions, October, 1893, Chicago. Compiled by the Rev. E. M. Wherry, D.D. (American Tract Society). This volume does not claim to furnish all the papers read at the Columbian Exposition, but only a portion. They vary in character, but together give a full view of what has been the most important development of the home work of Foreign Missions in the last quarter of a century. Mrs. Moses Smith furnishes a very complete view of Woman under the Ethnic Religions. Mrs. Isabella Bird Bishop gives from personal observation in many parts of the world a just idea of the Importance of Medical Missions. Mrs. Darwin R. James tells of the Work of Woman's Schools and Colleges in Missions, and Mrs. A. F. Schauflier treats of the same work Among the Evangelistic Forces of the Church. The volume is a mine of trustworthy and well-digested information on the interest-