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I.

DR. MCGIFFERT'S HISTORICAL METHODS.

PROFESSOR MCGIFFERT'S *History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age* came before the world with more than ordinary claims to attention. It had the novelty of being an original contribution to the literature of the subject by an American scholar, and the further novelty of reaching its results by methods hitherto more familiar to the German than to the English reader. It was issued as a volume of the "International Theological Library" and deemed worthy to be associated with the other works of that series emanating from well-known theologians and designed for the use of theological students on either side of the Atlantic. As such, it was ushered into the world with the apparent sanction of those who, as editors of the series, are presumably responsible for the selection of the writers, if not for the indorsement of their general views. And it was sent forth under the imprint of an eminent publishing firm long and honorably known for its services in introducing to the English public translations of Continental theology and not less enterprising of late in the publication of new works, English or American, in that domain.* It is a book, moreover, marked by freshness, vigor and adequate scholarship as well as by readiness of resource, power of ingenious combination, and ample license of conjecture, discarding commonly received opinions and advancing others with singular freedom and self-confidence.

* [Dr. Dickson's allusion is to the well-known publishing house of Messrs. T. & T. Clark, of Edinburgh, by which the work was issued in Great Britain. His words of praise would, however, apply equally well, *mutatis mutandis*, to the American publishers, Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons.—EDITORS.]

Tractarian leader than as the Christian apologist: even as it was as Tractarian leader that he elected to be a Christian apologist. A certain moderation attended him, no doubt, in his advances toward what he called "Catholic" doctrine and practice, a moderation suited to the sober mind of a genuine scholar and the heart of an earnest man, and making the extravagant assertions and doings of the "Ritualists" distasteful to him. But, after all, where his heart was most engaged, was in schemes for "reunion" with Rome and efforts to imprint on the Church of England the stamp of outgrown superstitions. It is with nothing short of amazement that one reads the details of his visits to France and his correspondence with Romish ecclesiastics, prior to the Vatican council, with a view to some official recognition of the Church of England on the part of the "See of Peter." One must have been blind indeed to the temper of both Rome and England who could have cherished such hopes as Pusey seems to have warmed his heart with. It is a high encomium on Pusey's real character that every reader of the volume will feel that he has before him the figure of a sincere and earnest man whose one unchanging ideal was to serve God and propagate the truth committed to him by divine hands. We cannot fail to note his mistakes—for they were glaring: but we can as little fail to recognize the man of God unsparing in labor and unwearied in devotion, whose whole life is an example and encouragement to those who like him would fain serve God ungrudgingly in their generation.

—**The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon.** Compiled from his Diary, Letters and Records, by his Wife and his Private Secretary. Vol. i: 1834-1854. 4to, pp. vii, 373. (Chicago, New York, Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1898.) No servant of God in our generation better deserves an enduring monument than Charles H. Spurgeon, probably the most effective preacher of the Word of his time; and few better services could be rendered to the Church of God than making widely known the wonderful career and the sources of the marvelous power of this true man of God. The so-called "Autobiography" being published by his wife and secretary, the first volume of which now lies before us, is well fitted to serve both functions. It loses somewhat in readableness and force from the manner of its composition—being pieced together from the fragmentary records of his life left behind him in one form or another by Mr. Spurgeon, but it contains the materials by which every reader will be able to enter into a sympathetic understanding of the man, and it is sumptuously published in large quarto form with elegant paper and typography and with adequate illustration. The present volume covers the first twenty years of the great preacher's life and leaves him firmly established in the London pulpit which he was to adorn for the rest of his days and for a generation to make the tribune of the most powerful commendation of the pure Gospel of the blood of Christ our century has perhaps known. The deepest impressions the reader receives from the narrative of these early years turn on the marvel of his first appearance, the secret of his remarkable power as a preacher, and the origin of his doctrinal views. He appeared on the scene, a boy of sixteen, the fully furnished preacher of the cross, with his power already developed, his message already on his lips, and no marked signs of immaturity about him. From that day on he was—Mr. Spurgeon. There was meteorlike brilliancy in his apparition, but no meteorlike transitoriness: he shone with the solidity of a fixed star in the heavens from the first. From the very beginning he had found himself, and his development after that was but a steady growth in power through experience. The secret of this miraculous phenomenon lies uncovered for us, in this volume, in his sound Calvinistic conversion. Mr. Spurgeon's power did not lie in his oratory or in his gifts as a mover of men,

notable as these were ; it lay distinctly first of all in his attitude to God and next in that conception of the Gospel which underlay and accounted for this attitude. He rested for himself and all he hoped for on the sole arm of the Most High, and he preached consistently and persistently what he himself phrased "the marrow and fullness of the faith which some call Calvinism, but which we trace back to our Lord Himself and His apostles" (p. 275). From the first he embraced with all the force of a strong and enthusiastic nature the essence of the Gospel (which is Calvinism), and it was this that he ever preached ; and therein lay his power. This is the Gospel which burns into the souls of men, and it was just because this was the Gospel that fired his own heart and that flashed from his lips that he became the greatest preacher of his generation. This volume is filled with the indications of his sound apprehension of the Gospel truth at its core, even from a child. We read of his browsing among the Puritan books of his grandfather's library (p. 22), of his many conversations with the godly Calvinistic poor (p. 54), of his distaste for Arminian teaching (pp. 95, 158), of his equal reprobation of Antinomian and perfectionist tendencies (pp. 250 *sq.*, 310 *sq.*)—everywhere of his love for the salvation of *God* through the blood of Christ, graciously bestowed on the sinner in love. His conversion to the views of the Baptists he himself always attributed to the effects of being taught the catechism of the Church of England at school: its teaching of the requisition of faith and repentance for baptism, he said, opened his eyes. As was the case with him in all doctrinal matters, he held these views from the first with firmness and decision, but with moderation in practical application, and with charity. We lay aside this account of his wonderful youth with the profoundest conviction that he was moulded by the hand of God for the great work he performed, and with a clear apprehension that in his case, perhaps more visibly than in most others, the child was father to the man. Let those who would understand Mr. Spurgeon by all means read these memorials of his childhood.—

Lawlessness in the National Church. Reprinted from *The Times*. By the *Right Hon. Sir William Vernon-Harcourt, M.P.* 8vo, pp. vii, 156. (London: Macmillan & Co.; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1899.)—

The Rights of the Church of England Under the Reformation Settlement. A Letter to the Lord Bishop of Winchester. By *Viscount Halifax*. 8vo, pp. 62. (London, New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green & Co., 1899.)—

The Present Crisis in the Church of England. By the *Rev. Charles A. Salmond, M.A.*, Edinburgh. 16mo, pp. 24. (Edinburgh: Scottish Reformation Society, 1899.)

Out of the numerous publications called out by the controversy now vexing the Church of England, perhaps the three pamphlets mentioned above may be selected as peculiarly fitted to guide us to sound conclusions as to the rights of the case. Mr. Salmond's is a clear and calm review of the whole situation from the point of view of an instructed and observant Presbyterian. It should be read in connection with the paper bearing the same title, contributed to the number of this REVIEW for last July by Dr. Meade C. Williams. From the two a very complete account may be derived of the causes of the present distress, the condition of affairs in the Church of England, the character of the disputants, and the possible issues. Nothing has been published during the whole course of the disturbances more incisive, more direct or more telling than the admirable letters to *The Times* by Sir William Vernon-Harcourt. They were well worth the republication in pamphlet form that is now given them, and stand before us as models of the literature of "agitation." They are in every respect strong, straightforward and apparently conclusive within the limits of their contention. The centre of their position lies in this: That the Church of England,