

THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

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I.

GROWTH OF PRESBYTERIAN SABBATH- SCHOOL POLITY.

IN this paper it is not intended to discuss particular methods or even general principles of Sabbath-school work. The object is to set forth the course taken by the "Presbyterian Church of the United States of America," through her General Assembly and otherwise, with a view to the development, government, improvement and extension of Sabbath-schools. So far, this paper will, it is hoped, serve a useful historic purpose. But there is another purpose in view. Our people do not, as a rule, fully understand the important sphere occupied by the organized Sabbath-school work of the Church, as distinct from the work of the individual Sabbath-school. I wish to make this clear—to bring out the purpose of the Church on this particular point, to show the magnitude of the work and its complex and manifold features, correcting erroneous impressions, and demonstrating the necessity of maintaining the work in full efficiency.

The "Form of Government" of our Church does not mention Sabbath-schools. The reason is plain. When that document was originally drawn up there were—in our present-day use of the term—no Sabbath-schools. With the advent of these schools questions arose, from time to time, as to their sphere, status and government. These questions were answered, as they arose in the General Assembly, by formal acts and deliverances of that body. Therefore, to find out the view and intention of the Church in regard to Sabbath-schools we must study these acts and deliverances. The subject is much wider and more interesting than at first sight it may appear.

unflagging enjoyment. They seem to the casual reader to have little more in common than that they come from a single hand and deal with allied themes—the Homeric Hymns, the Italian Poets, Shakespeare, Browning, Whitman, Emerson. But the author informs us that they embody also a single idea—the idea, to wit, that “religion and poetry are identical in essence and differ merely in the way they are attached to practical affairs.” “Poetry is called religion,” he adds, “when it intervenes in life, and religion, when it merely supervenes upon life, is seen to be nothing but poetry.” The book as a whole thus has a mission and a message. This message is that religion is merely part of the poetry of life; the mission, to persuade mankind “that religious doctrines would do well to withdraw their pretension to be dealing with matters of fact.” In this aspect of it, the book may be thought to culminate in its essay on “The Poetry of Christian Dogma.” Christianity overcame the world because there “was in it a new poetry, a new ideal, a new God.” Its moving power was a fable—but it carried the imagination into a new sphere. “The system was a great poem: it contained nothing empirically real: but it appealed to man as a poetic transformation of experience. It will live as long as it does not entangle itself with a particular account of matter of fact and does not intrench itself in an inadequate regimen or a too narrow imaginative development—thus putting its ideal authority in jeopardy by opposing it and other intuitions and practices no less religious than its own.” The upshot of all is that Christianity is a dream—but it is a pleasant dream: and as pleasant dreams are pleasant things to have, let us not wake too roughly to the hard reality.—**Schepping of Ontwikkeling**, door *Prof. Dr. H. Bavinck*. 12mo, pp. 57. (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1901.) In this eloquent lecture Prof. Bavinck outlines the great conflict facing the Church of the twentieth century—the conflict with the so-called scientific method, which is determined to explain the whole world and all that is within it without God, without any unseen, supernatural, spiritual element, out of the simple data of stuff and force. He uncovers with great skill the inconsistencies of the evolutionary philosophy and exposes its vast assumptions; and sets over against it the creationism or supernaturalism of the Biblical world-conception. The address divides itself into three parts, in which are contrasted the two views of the world successively with reference to the questions of the origin, nature and end of things, the result being to show that the evolutionary scheme stands helplessly before each of the three problems. It is a very thorough and very telling exposure of the essential atheism of evolutionism, considered as a philosophy of being.—**Individualität und Persönlichkeit**. Rectoratsrede gehalten am 66. Stiftungstage der Universität Bern den 17. November, 1900, von *D. Hermann Lüdemann*, ordentlichem Professor der Theologie. 8vo, pp. 24. (Bern: A. Benteli & Co., 1900.) A searching study of the value of Personality and its relation to the individual and the community on Christian ground.—**Outlines of Christian Dogma**. By *Darwell Stone, M.A.*, Principal of Dorchester Missionary College. 12mo, pp. xx, 351. (London, New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green & Co., 1900.) We have had recent occasion to notice Mr. Darwell Stone's comprehensive treatise on *Holy Baptism*, which forms one of the volumes of the “Oxford Library of Practical Theology,” and is, like all the volumes of that series, frankly “Catholic,” that is, mediævalizing (see this REVIEW for April last: xii, 327). The present admirably conceived and equally admirably executed volume is written of course from the same standpoint. What it essays is “to supply such an account of the Christian religion”—as conceived by the high Anglican party of course—“as may afford to those who are not students of technical theology a clear and systematic idea of the chief tenets of the Faith.” The simply written