

THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

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I.

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WE gather this morning to begin the duties of another academic year. The beauty of a bountiful nature, coming with gifts of sunshine and perfumed breezes and variegated landscape, seems to us a type and confirmation of the glory of the kingdom we serve. As the greatest thing in our civilization is its store of moral ideals and productive moral forces, so the greatest among these are the inspirations communicated by Christianity. Above the State rises the kingdom of Christ, as the cathedral towers above the city. And the service of this kingdom, the illustration of its ideals, the communication to men of its moral forces, the advancement of its sweet and gentle control over the purposes and conduct of men, till the common life of the multitude, and even the public policies of the State, are swayed by its sceptre and made instrumental in the carrying out of its eternal and divine plans, seems to us the most glorious service in which a man can engage. The lofty conception of the whole design and the sweep of the whole onward progress glorify the commonest and most obscure service. The ministration by the bedside of some unknown and insignificant sufferer takes on meaning in our eyes under the interpretation given it by this larger view. We forget that most of us are called to the humblest labors. We view ourselves as parts of the most extended operations. We may be like the solitary picket, who waits in the darkness to repel some danger or notify some attack that never comes, or even

* Address at the opening of the session in the Pacific Theological Seminary.

exposition, and much more for a criticism, of Ritschl's system, from there coming into his hands "the master's" chief work in a new dress. All that is left for him to do is to welcome it in its new form. This we heartily do. It would have been little short of a disgrace to English letters to leave Ritschl's greatest work—as Schleiermacher's has been left—permanently untranslated. And this all the more because, in a sense true of few great thinkers, it was the work and not the worker that in Ritschl's case laid the foundations of the school that goes by his name. He had taught for nearly thirty years, at Bonn and Göttingen, and had made no "pupils." But as soon as his great work was completed, it at once began to attract to him followers. Ritschl produced not a "school" but a "theology": the "theology" then produced the "school." After much preliminary fragmentary publication the first volume of his definitive treatise was put together in 1870, and was promptly translated into English in 1872. It contained the historical survey. During the course of 1874 the two remaining volumes, dealing respectively with the biblical and dogmatic aspects of the subject, followed. After a quarter of a century the dogmatic volume is now tardily laid before the English public, while there is still no sign of a purpose to translate the biblical volume. It is to be hoped, however, that the work of translation will be completed and the whole treatise placed within the reach of those who are not prepared to entangle themselves in Ritschl's crabbed German periods. He himself warns us of the difficulties in store for those who elect to climb up some other way into his system, rather than to approach it through the stately historical and biblical portals which he has himself erected for its entrance. And justly. For both the history and the exegesis of Ritschl have striking peculiarities, and to meet with the results of his historical construction or exegetical processes merely as presuppositions of a dogmatical structure adds a puzzlement more to the apprehension of what is puzzling enough at its best. The present rendering of the closing volume of the series, we cannot but hope, therefore, will draw in its train a rendering of its predecessors, and thus the whole work be put before us at least in its final form. Perhaps it would be too much to expect that the changes made from edition to edition should be noted in the margin (it is not done in this volume)—though good editing would require this in a book whose chief claim on our attention is a historical one and in the case of which the alterations made from time to time have unusual significance. Pending the realization of this larger hope we accord a hearty welcome to what has been given us. We have not been careful to compare the translation with the original: it is from several hands, though apparently all revised by Mr. Mackintosh: and it reads smoothly and at first opening of the book attracts the reader. Let every one who wishes really to understand the new Socinianism—for it is decidedly to the category of Socinian thought that the Ritschlite system must be assigned—go to this fountain-head of the movement for it. He may need his Orr and his Garvie in his hand as guides through the morasses, but he will consult his advantage if he brings himself into contact with the ponderous and really illuminating mind of the great "master" himself, and by this volume he will be enabled to do this as no English reader has been heretofore able to do it.—**Christian Dogmatics.** By Rev. John Macpherson, M.A., Author of *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*. 8vo, pp. viii, pp. 467. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1898.) We owe our readers an apology for our long delay in calling their attention to this admirable guide to theological study. Meanwhile, however, its author has continued to commend himself to them not only in the extended list of solidly worked-out volumes by which he had earlier made us all his debtors—his thoughtful *Commentary on Ephesians*, his

careful expositions of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *Sum of Saving Knowledge*, and his informing primer on *Presbyterianism*—but also in more recent essays of importance published in the pages of this REVIEW itself. No one will have expected anything else but excellent workmanship in a volume on *Christian Dogmatics* from Mr. Macpherson's hand: and no one who has expected this will be disappointed in turning to the present volume. Mr. Macpherson has struck a happy mean as to compass: his book while distinctively a handbook is yet not so meagre as to disappoint those who turn to it for guidance. Its standpoint he himself rightly describes as that of a "moderate Calvinism." It exhibits a very wide and intimate acquaintance with modern work in its field and an unusual knowledge also of the older literature. A most useful feature of its plan is the very carefully prepared and judiciously selected lists of literature which are placed at the head of the several sections. The author explains that only such treatises have been mentioned in these lists as have been found distinctly helpful to himself in the discussion of the several sections. We can well believe it: for we have taken occasion during the time the book has lain upon our table to refer repeatedly to these "literatures" and have ever found them excellent guides to really good discussions. In the Introduction there is given a very informing sketch of the history of Dogmatics, in which, however, the main weakness of the book exhibits itself, viz., its disproportionate deference to the labors of recent German Lutheranism. All honor to the splendid work done for Dogmatics as in all other branches of theology by the German Lutherans of the nineteenth century: but something more than their guidance is needed for working out a sound Reformed Dogmatics, and we think that Mr. Macpherson's Dogmatics would have been improved had he read a little more deeply in, say, Voetius, and no less deeply in Schleiermacher, and had explored Bavinck with the same diligence which he has expended on, say, Kähler. The book bears traces thus of the syncretism which is so marked a feature of our times; it presents a Reformed system modified by Lutheran tendencies, and these drawn from the more recent currents of thought that have flowed up and down in the seething theological activities of modern Germany. It speaks highly for Mr. Macpherson's soundness of thinking and groundedness in the Reformed type of theology that he has not been swept off of his feet by the strong currents in which he has by preference immersed himself. He has given us a most meritorious compend, which can be read with pleasure and can never be consulted without profit. Sane, learned, careful, it provides a guide which no student of the subject should permit himself to be without.—

Catholic Faith and Practice: A Manual of Theological Instruction for Confirmation and First Communion. By the *Rev. Alfred G. Mortimer, D.D.*, Rector of St. Mark's, Philadelphia, etc. 12mo, pp. xlv, 340.—

Catholic Faith and Practice: A Manual of Theology. Part II. By the *Rev. Alfred G. Mortimer, D.D.*, etc. 12mo, pp. lxix, 519. (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1897 and 1898.) These two attractively written and thoroughly edited volumes—provided as they are with full analytical tables of contents, copious marginal analyses and complete indices—are designed to place and do place the items of what the author calls "Catholic faith and practice" within the reach of every one who can read and will take the trouble to read what is brought fairly within his reach. The author has intended his book especially for two classes—clergymen seeking matter for their Confirmation classes and other instructions, and laymen seeking a "simple but full and accurate statement of the Church teaching on all the chief points connected with the practical life of Catholics." It is thoroughly well adapted to supply the needs of both—provided they share Dr. Mortimer's standpoint of extreme