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I.

JAMES McCOSH AS THINKER AND EDUCATOR.*

I.—AS BELFAST PROFESSOR.

A SCOT, born in Ayrshire, on the banks of the "Bonnie Doon." of sturdy and God-fearing ancestry, who had played the man more than once in the struggle of the Covenanters against oppression—a scion of the great middle class of Scotland, made up so largely of cultivators of the land, who through the exercise of the proverbial thrift and intelligence of the "canny Scot" had forced an unwilling soil into fertility and had achieved easy circumstances—James McCosh inherited all the virtues of his class and ancestry. These formed the basis of his character, and held the secret of his unvarying success in the larger spheres in which he was destined to become an actor. Born of highly intelligent and conscientious parents, who possessed in full measure that tough moral fibre and that firm adherence to high ideals of religion and duty so characteristic of the Scotch, the parental traits entered as so much clean grit into the constitution of the boy and gave a pledge of the force he was to become in later years in his own and other lands. Young McCosh was fortunate in his home-life and training, thanks to a

* The sources from which the materials used in the following article have been obtained are (1) *The Autobiography of James McCosh*, so ably and gracefully edited by William M. Sloane; (2) the works of McCosh, including books, pamphlets and addresses, a complete bibliography of which has been made out by Joseph H. Dulles, Librarian of the Princeton Theological Seminary, (3) and most important of all, a personal acquaintance ranging over twenty years, in which, as pupil and later as teacher in the department of Philosophy at Princeton, the writer had abundant opportunity to study McCosh's many-sided life.

Church, but use the Lord's Supper twice every Sunday, with unleavened bread and mixed wine. They baptize for "sealing" and by it can assure salvation to the dead, in literal application of 1 Cor. xv. 29. In 1901 alone 1115 deceased persons were thus *saved*. They retain, at least in the main, the Evangelical Lutheran offices of confirmation and marriage. They have no burial service, as they have no individual cemeteries.

They retain the seven spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Cor. xii—*wisdom, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, the gift of proving spirits and tongues*. The author traces all these pretended "gifts" and clearly disproves their existence. A legalistic tendency prevails: faith no longer saves, but *life, acts, doing*.

The author finally outlines their eschatology, disproves their claims of exemplary brotherly love and describes the attitude of the sect to the Church, whose missionary and philanthropic work they bitterly villify or haughtily ignore. The book is written in a judicial vein; and though, as is natural, it is not free from bias, it honestly tries to minimize this defect. The author has himself well in hand and has written something which is worthy of more than passing recognition. It is an actual contribution to the science of Church history.

HENRY E. DOSKER.

WEIHNACHTEN IN KIRCHE, KUNST UND VOLKSLEBEN. Von Prof. GEORG RIETSCHEL. Mit 4 Kunstbeilagen und 152 Abbildungen. Large 8vo, pp. 160. Bielefeld und Leipzig: Verlag von Velhagen und Klasing, 1902.

This comprehensive treatise on "Christmas," beautifully illustrated with a profusion of half-tone and colored plates, is the fifth volume of a "*Sammlung illustrirter Monographien* herausgegeben in Verbindung mit Anderen von Hanns von Zobeltitz." It is from the very competent pen of Prof. Rietschel of Leipzig and gives a *précis* of the whole subject, drawn from the best authorities. After a short introduction it treats in turn of the Christmas Festival of the Church, Christmas and Pictorial Art, the Christmas Grotto, Christmas Songs, Christmas Plays, Various Christmas Customs, Christmas Presents and Christmas Markets, and the Christmas Tree. A useful bibliography and an index close the volume. The illustrations are numerous, well chosen and beautifully reproduced: they provide in themselves a pretty full history of Christmas ideas and usages as well as presenting a very rich series of reproductions of masterpieces of Christian art.

Prof. Rietschel tells us that no other Christian festival has so intimately wedded itself with the family life and the life of the people as Christmas. Nevertheless, for more than three hundred years the Church got along entirely without it. The primitive Church did not even possess a distinctively Christian Easter or Whitsunday. By the middle of the second century we find, however, Easter celebrated and soon afterwards Whitsunday; and by the end of the third century, or the beginning of the fourth, a third festival begins to appear in the East by the side of these. But this third festival was not Christmas but Epiphany; and it was celebrated on the sixth of January, along with which there gradually came to be made remembrance of the birth of Christ also. The idea that Christ was born on the 25th of December seems to appear first early in the third century as the result of a calculation from the 25th of March, the New Year's day of that time, which had come to be looked upon as the anniversary of the Annunciation. But there is no trace of the celebration of this day until the middle of the fourth century: Prof. Rietschel thinks indeed that we can fix confidently on 354 (or possibly 353) as the exact year of its first celebration. This occurred at Rome; and

thence the new festival spread—reaching Constantinople in 379, Cappadocia in 382, Antioch in 388, Egypt in 432; but Palestine not until the seventh century, while the great Armenian Church has resisted the innovation up to our own day.

If the celebration of the twenty-fifth of December as the birthday of the Lord dates thus only from the later Patristic age, the modes of its celebration most common among us are of yet more recent origin. The custom of giving presents upon Christmas Day is of mediæval invention; the Christmas-tree a modern extension. We first hear of Christmas-presents late in the fourteenth century: and the usage made its way only slowly and against much opposition. It was even made the subject of legal enactments; and as late as 1661 and indeed as 1735 the Saxon "Policey-Ordnung" sought to regulate and provide against the abuses of this custom. The Christmas-tree seems to have come in through a confusion of the festival of Christmas with the observance of "the day of Adam and Eve," which fell on December 24th, and a feature of which was the erection of a "Paradise," in which were planted the two trees of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and of Life. We appear to hear of our distinctive "Christmas-tree" first at Strassburg, at the opening of the seventeenth century. The "burning Christmas-tree," that is the Christmas-tree adorned with candles, we meet with first about 1737. It was not until the nineteenth century that it began to spread very widely even in Germany. Neither in the North German States of Holstein, Mecklenburg, Pommerania and the Provinces of Prussia, nor in the Rhine-land in the West, nor in Bavaria in the South, was it in use until towards the middle of the nineteenth century. Outside of Germany it has appeared only as a German importation. Oddly enough the first Christmas-tree was set up in France and England in the same year, 1840, by the Mecklenburg Princess Helen, Duchess of Orleans, in the former, and by the Saxe-Coburg Prince Albert in the latter. "Thus the Christmas-tree," smilingly remarks Prof. Rietschel, "has held its conquering way over the earth."

It goes without saying that we have adverted only to a few of the numerous interesting facts brought out in this wide survey of Christmas usages. We have, indeed, confined ourselves to such as furnish a compressed account of the origins of the customs now most common in American families. The book is crammed full of other lines of investigation of equal inherent interest. Even such as we have briefly reported may supply us, however, with some food for thought. There is a certain passionate intensity in the way in which Christmas is now celebrated among us. But after all, what can be said for the customs to which we have committed ourselves? There is no reason to believe that our Lord wished His birthday to be celebrated by His followers. There is no reason to believe that the day on which we are celebrating it is His birthday. There is no reason to believe that the way in which we currently celebrate it would meet His approval. Are we not in some danger of making of what we fondly tell ourselves is a celebration of the Advent of our Lord, on the one side something much more like the Saturnalia of old Rome than is becoming in a sober Christian life; and, on the other something much more like a shopkeeper's carnival than can comport with the dignity of even a sober secular life?

Princeton.

BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD.

MARY GRIFFIN AND HER CREED. By EGBERT C. SMYTH. From Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, at the Semi-Annual Meeting held in Boston, April 30, 1902. Worcester, Mass.: Charles Hamilton, 1902. 8vo, pp. 18.

On looking over certain extracts from the records of baptisms in the First