

The Princeton Theological Review

JANUARY, 1917

“GOD OUR FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST”

In the opening sentence of the very first of Paul's letters which have come down to us—and that is as much as to say, in the very first sentence which, so far as we know, he ever wrote,—he makes use of a phrase in speaking of the Christians' God, which at once attracts our interested attention. According to the generous way he had of thinking and speaking of his readers at the height of their professions, he describes the church at Thessalonica as living and moving and having its being in God. But, as it was a Christian church which he was addressing, he does not content himself, in this description, with the simple term “God”. He uses the compound phrase, “God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” The Thessalonians, he says, because they were Christians, lived and moved and had their being “in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

It is quite clear that this compound phrase was not new on Paul's lips, coined for this occasion. It bears on its face the evidence of a long and familiar use, by which it had been worn down to its bare bones. All the articles have been rubbed off, and with them all other accessories; and it stands out in its baldest elements as just “God Father and Lord Jesus Christ.” Plainly we have here a mode of speaking of the Christians' God which was customary with Paul.

We are not surprised, therefore, to find this phrase repeated in precisely the same connection in the opening verses of the next letter which Paul wrote—2 Thessalonians—with only the slight variation that an “our” is inserted with “God the Father”,—“in God our Father and the Lord

Professor Gerould, a professor of English at Princeton, is already known among scholars by his publication for The Folk-Lore Society of "The Grateful Dead" a folk-story of special interest to lovers of literary legend. It is in this legendary area that the volume before us belongs, and it is so distinctly ecclesiastical in type as to meet the needs of "churchmen" as well as students of letters.

Its nine chapters are as follows:

- I. Definition and Use
- II. Origins and Propagation
- III. The Epic Legend in Old English
- IV. Prose Legends before the Conquest
- V. New Influences
- VI-VII. The Conquest to The Reformation
- VIII. Saints' Lives in Drama
- IX. The Reformation and Since.

As the author indicates, the book is without any forerunner which might serve as a model, Professor Gerould's work being that of a pioneer along this line. Herein lies much of its interest as, also, the difficulty of its correct interpretation, so that the reader is surprised to find with what substantial success the author has disentangled the "snarl of legends" with which he is dealing. Students of our earlier literature will be especially instructed by the vivid manner in which the author treats "The Epic Legend in Old English" and "The Prose Legends before The Conquest," while far on through the age of Chaucer and down to the Reformation of the sixteenth century the history of the legend in English is given with ever sustained interest.

Students of dramatic history and art will find valuable material in what the author calls—Saints' Lives in Drama, while students of church history will, also, find material of value relative to these legends as they bear upon the English Reformation and the monastic system that preceded it.

The pages are packed with instructive data bearing on religion, education, social life and ecclesiastical tradition, so that while appealing "to all intelligent readers", they should make a special appeal to Churchmen and men of letters.

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T. W. HUNT.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

The Compendium Explained. A popular Exposition of the Abridgement of the Heidelberg Catechism, known as the "Compendium of the Christian Religion," of the Reformed Churches of Holland, and of Holland Origin. By REV. HENRY BEETS, LL.D., with an Introduction by Prof. Dr. M. Kolyn. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans-Sevensma Co. 1915. 12mo., pp. 259.

The *Kort Begrip*, or, in English, *Compendium of the Christian Religion*, an abbreviation of the Heidelberg Catechism, has served much

the same purpose in the Dutch Reformed Churches, in Holland and America, as *The Shorter Catechism* in the Scotch Reformed Churches and their daughter churches in America. It has been the actual hand-book of religion for the people. Our Dutch churches have been our models in catechetical instruction: and naturally the commonly employed instrument of this instruction has been made the object of much careful exposition and adjustment to changing circumstances. One fruit of these activities was the publication by Dr. Beets, in collaboration with the Rev. M. J. Bosma, in 1913, of a volume entitled *The Compendium Enlarged*. Another lies before us in the volume named at the head of this notice, which may be looked upon as a Commentary on *The Compendium Enlarged*, but which is really an independent work and forms a handy text-book in the Christian religion for all who have the *Compendium* in their hands.

What the author has attempted to do is to make clear to the student the whole essential contents of the Christian religion as it is apprehended by Reformed Christians and brought to expression in the Reformed formularies, with an especial view to the oppositions actually at the moment pressing in upon the consciousness and disturbing the faith of the people. His main purpose is not polemic but constructive: he would build up the people in the faith of Christ. But in doing this it is inevitable and necessary that the fit word should be spoken here and there for the protection of the people under instruction from the assaults made upon the purity of their faith—grossly or subtly—by such “old foes with new faces” as Mormonism, Christian Science, Russelism, Evolutionism, Theosophy and the like. In one word, the instruction offered must be directed to men, not in the abstract, but standing in their actual environment. In prosecuting his task the author on the one hand has been careful to bring before his readers a large part of the actual text of the Reformed formularies in use in the Dutch churches, supplemented here and there with extracts from the Westminster Catechisms; and on the other hand he has been equally careful to explain the meaning of these formularies in clear and direct language and to point out the relation of their teachings to the current religious notions in circulation among the people. The result is what may fairly be called “a little Dogmatics” for the times, adapted to popular use, provided with all the apparatus necessary to adjust it for ready class-room employment, and admirable in both its conception and its execution.

No doubt Dr. Beets hopes that his book may come into use outside the limits of his own denomination. We might well rejoice to see it in use wherever the Heidelberg Catechism is the basis of religious instruction. But it is natural that he should write primarily to meet the needs of his own people. And it is natural that, in matters on which his own people have agreed to differ, he should not wish to take sides decisively. And it is natural further that in dealing with such matters he should take the “Utrecht Conclusions” of 1905 as his guide. We think that the attitude which he takes up under this guidance in the matter of the controversy between Infra- and Supra-

lapsarianism is wise. We cannot agree with Dr. Bavinck that the Scriptures are non-committal on this question, or rather that they offer a higher synthesis in which the differences are accorded. But we think it an *apex logicus* on which Christian men may agree to differ. On the other hand we think the differences allowed in the matters of Regeneration and Justification, while largely traceable to differences in definition of terms, on that very account require to be cleared up and not covered up; and that the more, that these differences in definition of terms are productive of grave confusion which may easily become serious error. Dr. Beets' own teaching on both Regeneration and Justification, we should add, is unexceptionable.

In his handling of "Calling" (pp. 146 ff.), we miss a little Dr. Beets' habitual precision. Two principles of division are confused. We may distinguish between the external and the internal call; or we may distinguish between the general and the special call; but we cannot combine these two modes of dividing the subject. "Effectual Calling" cannot be classed, as Dr. Beets classes it, under the head of "internal calling." It is the total "special call", and includes both the external call of the Word (*Vocatio verbalis*) and the internal call of the Spirit (*Vocatio Spiritualis*); and that is the reason that it issues in Conversion, not merely in Regeneration in what Dr. Beets calls "the narrower sense." Our fathers were well advised in framing their doctrine under the category of Effectual Calling and employing the term Regeneration somewhat sparingly. And much of the confusion which is troubling the Dutch Churches on these subjects today arises from the employment by preference of the ambiguous term Regeneration and failing to adjust it accurately by definition to the formerly more usual category of Effectual Calling. If we could agree to employ "Regeneration" only of the creative element in Effectual Calling, while we used "Conversion" of its total effects, we might escape many evils. No doubt it may be said that this is arbitrarily to give a narrow connotation to "Regeneration". But any exact definition given to "Regeneration" is necessarily arbitrary, because it is a plain fact that it occurs in Scripture in more than one sense, that it is to say it had not become a *terminus technicus* in Scripture; and it is as plain a fact that it has been employed in the history of theology in quite a series of senses,—that is to say, it has never acquired a universally recognized technical meaning.

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BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD.

Christian Certainties of Belief. The Christ. The Bible. Salvation. Immortality. By JULIAN K. SMYTH. *The New Church Press*, New York. 1916. Pp. 123.

We have here four popular lectures on the subjects indicated in the title. They set forth the Swedenborgian view on these subjects. The lectures are written in a clear and attractive style.

Princeton.

C. W. HODGE.