

THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

OCTOBER, 1851.

No. IV.

ART. I.—*Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland*, which met in Edinburgh, May 22, 1851. From the Home and Foreign Record.

THE opening sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Paterson, of Free St. Andrews, Glasgow, the Moderator of the last Assembly, from John viii. 32.

According to the Scottish custom, the moderator of the former Assembly nominated the Rev. Dr. Duff, and he was chosen by acclamation; and on taking the chair, delivered an animated and interesting discourse, in which he took a comprehensive but rapid survey of the fortunes of the Church of Scotland, and her struggles with Papacy and Prelacy; and then came down to the disruption in 1843, by which the greater part of the evangelical clergy of the Established Church voluntarily relinquished their livings and their resources, rather than yield to the Erastian principles adopted by the civil government. He concluded by earnestly recommending to the Assembly the sustentation of all their *schemes* connected with the prosperity of the Church, and especially urged the importance of prosecuting foreign missions with increasing ardour and liberality. The address occupied more than an hour in the delivery.

latter, the dramatic pomp of ceremonial rites and symbols. But let such remember that the most expressive shadow must be less satisfactory than a clear view of the body which produces it, and cannot rationally be preferred to it. Instead of sighing for the return of what is past for ever, or attempting to amalgamate discordant elements intended always to exist apart, let us thank God that in this sense also, we are not "of the night" but of the day; that to us "the darkness is past and the true light now shineth"; that to us the Son and Spirit, the cross, the throne of grace, the gate of heaven, are no longer "shadows," but defined forms and substantial realities. And while we tremble at the new responsibility attending this increase of light, and, at the "deep damnation" which awaits the obstinate rejection or abuse of it, let the happy change which has already been experienced by the church excite and cherish an avowed hope of good things yet to come, of which the present is in some sense but a shadow, a still more glorious change that yet awaits her and the humblest of her faithful children, when "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, nor any more pain, because the former things are passed away, and he that sits upon the throne hath said, BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW!"

ART. V.—*Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche. Von Philipp Schaff. Erster Band: die apostolische Kirche.* Mercersburg, Pa., 1851. 8vo. pp. 576.

IT is now some years since Dr. Philip Schaff appeared among us, or at least among the German churches of this country, recommended to their notice as a young theologian of extraordinary promise, not only by the testimony of distinguished Germans, but by the actual first-fruits of his literary labour. Of his early publications we can name but two, his Treatise on the Sin against the Holy Ghost, and that on the identity of James the son of Alphæus, with James the brother of the Lord. Both these juvenile performances afford evidence of a lively and ingenious mind, independent judg-

ment, varied and exact information, and unusual powers of composition. One of them, if not both, is familiarly referred to, by German writers of great eminence, as a kind of authoritative work upon the subject, although neither of them ought perhaps to be regarded as any thing more than a preliminary trial of the writer's gifts.

As Dr. Schaff became known, through the press and otherwise, first to his own countrymen, and then to the Anglo-American public, their previous impressions of his scholarship and talent were entirely confirmed and even strengthened, but not without some disposition to find fault with a certain confidence, and even dogmatism of tone, which was supposed to characterize his bearing towards both races. This was soon found, however, to be in part a false appearance, and in part a fruit of inexperience as to this new world, of which he had so recently become a denizen. To us, indeed, there is no more striking proof of Dr. Schaff's superiority, than the sagacity and ease with which he has thrown himself into a situation so untried and trying, and begun at once to operate upon it, not by sinking to the level of existing usages and institutions, but by striving to raise them to his own, yet not without conceding much for the sake of gaining more. The ground which he has taken and maintained, with respect to the conflict of the German and the English interest among the people of the former race in the United States, is one which indicates a high degree both of theoretical and of practical wisdom, especially as estimated from the German "stand point."

But besides these proofs of intellectual and practical superiority, Dr. Schaff has given to the public, since he came among us, satisfactory pledges of his soundness in the faith, as to the great principles of Protestantism, by committing himself early and distinctly to the anti-popish views of Justification and the normal authority of Scripture. The confidence produced by these professions may have been impaired, in certain quarters, by his peculiar views on other points, and by his real or apparent implication in the doctrinal developments, which are supposed to have their centre and their source at Mercersburg. But until explicitly forbidden by himself, we shall continue to claim him as a well armed and a well skilled champion of the

genuine old Reformation principles, and hold ourselves in readiness to draw the distinction, which may sometimes be necessary, between the feelings of the friend or partisan, and the independent judgment of the theologian.

The views and principles to which we here refer, have been expressed partly in the author's English treatises, and partly in the German Magazine, (*der Kirchenfreund*), which he has edited for several years with great ability, although we fear with very inadequate encouragement. The last article in this work from his own pen, which we happen to have read, contains a highly interesting comparison of German and American modes of education, from which we should dissent as to a few minor points, but which more than confirms our previous impressions of the author's comprehensive views and soundness of judgment, by the rare discrimination and impartiality with which he strikes the balance between the virtues and the vices of the several systems. We wish some blind and indiscriminate admirers of Teutonic usages and modes of thought, could read German well enough at first hand to profit by this weighty testimony, from a person so well qualified by talent and experience to see the good and evil which exist on both sides. It might help to disabuse them of the strange hallucination under which they labour, that modes of culture and of training which have grown up under the peculiar circumstances of one country, can be bodily introduced into another, without sharing the inevitable fate of the tree which changes soil or climate after the period of safe transplantation.

These various appearances of Dr. Schaff before our public, besides their immediate effect, have tended to keep up the expectation of the work upon Church History, on which he has long been known to be engaged, and of which some chapters have appeared as essays in the numbers of the *Kirchenfreund*. These specimens have rather served to whet than blunt the edge of public curiosity, by giving promise of great originality and independence, combined with strict adherence to sound principles, at least in matters of essential moment. The curiosity thus felt by some, if not by many, has been gratified in part by the appearance of the volume now before us, containing above a hundred closely printed pages of introductory

matter and above four hundred on the Apostolic period of Church History.

The very act of bringing out a German volume of this size and character, in the face of so many discouragements and difficulties, is heroic, and apart from all consideration of its theological and literary merit, fairly entitles the indomitable author to applause and to encouragement still more substantial. This kind of adventurous enterprise is far more German than American, and bears a strong resemblance to the fact, which we have heard on good authority, that some of the most expensive philological and scientific publications which appear from time to time at Leipzig, are brought out with the certainty of loss to the publisher, with a bare hope of redeeming it by other sales, and sometimes from a disinterested wish to promote the cause of learning, by publications which would otherwise be necessarily suppressed. Whether this statement be correct or not, there can be no doubt that our author deserves well of the public for the good example which he has here given of superiority to selfish or commercial motives, and of zeal for truth and knowledge on their own account. We sincerely hope that all our German-reading scholars, and especially our ministers and students of that class, will combine to save the author of this book from loss, if not to recompense his self-denying labours. We are far from wishing this to be regarded as an act of patronizing charity. The sums expended for the purpose just proposed will secure their full equivalent of valuable matter. If Dr. Schaff might claim the public favour, even on the ground of his self-sacrificing faith and zeal, without regard to the intrinsic merit of his work, much more may he assert the same pretensions, when the book comes to speak for itself and to be estimated at its real value. To this end we can only imperfectly contribute, by a simple statement of our own impressions from a rapid but not inattentive perusal. A work of such a character is not to be accurately judged of in a hurry, and we claim for what we are about to say the benefit of subsequent and more deliberate reconsideration.

The book is eminently scholarlike and learned, full of matter, not of crude materials crammed together for the nonce by labour-saving tricks, but of various and well digested knowledge,

the result of systematic training and of long continued study. The more critical and technical portion of this matter overflows into the notes, but with so perspicuous a condensation as make both reference and perusal easy. The false impression made on some by the exterior of the work, that so large a space devoted to the Apostolic period implies extreme diffuseness and verbosity, or at least a gratuitous amplification, may be at once removed by the simple statement, that this volume comprehends in fact, though not in form, a critical introduction and historical commentary on the Acts of the Apostles and the cognate parts of the Epistles and Apocalypse. Besides the general views presented in the text, there is scarcely an interesting question, even of philology, that is not handled in the notes, with brief but ample references to the best books on the subject; so that on the whole, we know of no help in the study of these parts of the New Testament containing so much in so small a compass, precisely suited to the wants of students.

Besides the evidence of solid learning which the book contains, it bears the impress of an original and vigorous mind, not only in the clear and lively mode of presentation, but also in the large and elevated views presented, the superiority to mere empirical minuteness, and the constant evidence afforded, that the author's eye commands, and is accustomed to command, the whole field at a glance, as well as to survey more closely its minuter subdivisions.* This power of attending both to great and small in due proportion, throws over the details a pleasing air of philosophical reflection, rendered still more attractive by a tinge of poetry, too faint to vitiate the manly prose of history, but strong enough to satisfy that craving for imaginative beauty which appears to be demanded by the taste of the day, even in historical composition. We do not pretend to be judges of German style, but we have always regarded Dr. Schaff as a writer equally remarkable for clearness, strength and elegance.

* As a sample of the author's originality and independence, we cannot help referring to the short but admirable chapter on the language and style of the New Testament (§ 137, pp. 526—531), in which the old way of apologizing for the bad Greek and mean composition of the Apostles is exchanged for the assertion of a new and noble dialect, as admirable in its way as that of the Greek classics, and yet altogether different. This view of the matter as presented here, is to us as novel as it is convincing and acceptable.

We know not whether it is praise or dispraise to describe his German as unusually English; a quality arising, we suppose, not merely from familiarity with English books and English conversation, but from something of the same original peculiarity which renders Hengstenberg, although a very different writer, so attractive and available to English readers. With all his zeal for German ways and notions, Dr. Schaff never verges upon nonsense. He always knows what he means and how to make it known to others. The interminable sentences and endless involutions and contortions, which deform the style of many celebrated German theologians are entirely foreign from his composition. In point of style, and indeed of literary execution generally, there is no Church history in German known to us, excepting that of Hase, that deserves to be compared with that before us. We need scarcely add that there is no department of theology in which this rhetorical advantage is of so much use as Church history, where the mass of inert matter becomes not only dead but deadening, unless quickened by the *vis vivida* of the author's genius.

As to the views of Christian doctrine here presented, it is not easy, within narrow limits, to do justice to our author and ourselves. We may say in general, however, that his doctrinal statements are for the most part such as we could adopt with very little modification. At the same time, there is a marked peculiarity, or at least a sensible divergence from what a German would consider our traditional formality of statement; a difference arising from the author's long familiarity with certain forms of unbelief, and the attempt, perhaps unconscious, so to qualify and shape these as to make them vehicles of Scripture truth. This gives to his theology, even where it is substantially the soundest, an appearance of approximation to erroneous forms of statement and belief, which to many will perhaps be more alarming and objectionable than it is to us. His adoption of Schleiermacher's maxim, that Christianity is not a doctrine (*lehre*) but a life (*leben*), tends in its logical development to favour the rationalistic representation of the most material doctrinal diversities as mere exterior variations in the action of the same essential principle, so that one apostle could believe and teach that men are justified by works, and another that

justification is by faith alone. This is far from being Dr. Schaff's conclusion; but it is one that others might without absurdity deduce from his own premises. This whole conception of entirely distinct types of doctrine in the apostolic writings, although pretty and ingenious, seems to us unworthy of the grave theologians who first invented or have since maintained it, because unsupported by any adequate proofs derived from the Scriptures themselves. A serious objection to the compromising way in which some doctrines of the Bible are here stated, is the door which it leaves open for evasion or equivocal interpretation, if it should ever or for any reason be desirable to vindicate its orthodoxy on the one hand, or its freedom from a bigoted rigour on the other. We have no suspicion that our author wrote with any such end in view; but we do believe that such a use might be made of his expressions, and that some who are enamoured of the looser German systems of belief, might possibly be tempted to embrace them in the hope of thus giving them an orthodox interpretation. At the same time, we desire to bear witness to the value of the work before us, as an antidote to the incomparably lower and more dangerous opinions, as to inspiration, and some other most important doctrines, which are gaining currency and sanction, even among us, by the authority of such names as Neander and some others of the same devout but latitudinarian school. The religious tone and spirit of the work are such as to leave no doubt on the reader's mind respecting the sincere belief and piety of the author. Its practical tendency is uniformly good. Its influence, we trust, will be felt in Germany itself, for which cause we are glad to see it in its German dress, as well as on account of its rhetorical attractions, which could hardly be preserved in a translation. At the same time, we regret that in its present shape it must remain a sealed book to so many of our ministers and students of theology, whose only access to it is through such imperfect sketches as we have here given. We had hoped to furnish a more thorough critical analysis of this important work, soon after its original appearance. But the person upon whom the duty of preparing it appeared most naturally to devolve, was providentially called elsewhere, and circumstances now forbid the execution of our plan in its original extent. We have not

been able to persuade ourselves, however, to abstain any longer, upon this account, from an explicit though imperfect statement of our general impression of the faults and merits of this welcome addition to the stores both of German and American theology. Into what we regard as minor faults of plan and execution we have neither time nor inclination now to enter. We might say something in the way of exception to the rubrical arrangement which the author has retained from his predecessors, and which, by carrying us back over the whole ground of Moral and Religious Life, Worship and Church Government, Doctrine and Theology, after the History is at an end, gives a character of heaviness and irksome iteration to the close of what is otherwise one of the most interesting books that we have ever read. But we yield to every author, and especially to one so highly qualified, the right of determining such questions for himself, believing, as we do, that such a man can write best on the method which he likes best, and that the disadvantages arising from a forced compliance with a rule imposed *ab extra* would more than outweigh the advantages, however real and important. We have still less inclination to record our dissent from the author's judgment upon certain matters of detail. Should the work be continued, as we trust it will, we may have other opportunities of going into these minutiae. In the meantime, it is enough for us to know and say, that this experimental volume, were its faults and errors far more grave and numerous than we think they are, would still place its author in the highest rank of living or contemporary Church historians.

ART. VI.—*Histoire de l'Eglise Vaudoise, depuis son origine, et des Vaudois du Piémont jusqu'à nos jours, avec un appendice contenant les principaux écrits originaux de cette église.*
Par Antoine Monastier. Toulouse, 1847.

WE have often thought that the well known words in the emblematic device of the Church of Scotland, "NEC TAMEN CONSUMEBATUR," might be fitly chosen as the motto of the collective Presbyterian Church, by which we mean the Reformed,