

THE
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I.

NOTES ON THE REVISED NEW TESTAMENT.

THE long-expected Revision is at last before the public. The first rattling volley from the newspapers has spent itself with the result which might have been predicted; aiding to stimulate the general curiosity, but doing very little to satisfy serious and intelligent inquiry as to the true merits or demerits of the work.

Too much has not been said, too much cannot be said of the general excellence and the wonderful value and power of our Authorized Version. The interest awakened by the Revision is the grandest of all testimonies to these. All that has been so eloquently written concerning its racy, nervous English, its service to literature, and the tenderness, dignity, and inspiring character of its associations, may be reaffirmed with emphasis; and hence the Revisers were no more than judicious in laying down as one of their first and principal canons—to avoid all unnecessary changes in that which years and associations have made so precious. But on this point two things may be said, the one concerning the Revisers, the other concerning the readers.

As to the Revisers, it may be safely affirmed that nothing in their admirable preface justifies extravagant expectations on this head. Their clearly stated rule is, that the alterations to be introduced should be expressed, *as far as possible*, in the language of the Authorized Version or of the Revisions that preceded it. They are, moreover, at pains to set forth their endeavor, when compelled to use other words, to find such as

ferences the various schools of his disciples. We believe this to be entirely a mistake. Calvinism is just a general term to express a system of Christian doctrine, including in the genus all the specific variations. This system existed from the times of Paul and Augustine, and it includes many varieties. It has a history, and hence the term has a sense fixed by that history. In that sense its standard is the consensus of the Confessions of the Reformed Churches, and of the great classical Reformed theologians. In this *consensus* we have the generic essence of the system, while in the variations of the Confessions, and writers, we have the specific differences.

In the second place, the author maintains that the Westminster Confession of Faith was alone designed to be the public doctrinal standard of the subscribing Churches, while the Catechisms, prepared by the same committee, and issued by the authority of the same Assembly, were designed simply to be used for the purpose of conveying catechetical instruction. Hence that the Catechisms, as affirmed by an act of the Free Church Assembly in 1851, have no confessional authority; and that in consequence of this difference of design, the Westminster Assembly, in drawing up the Confession of Faith, confined itself to general statements of the essential principles of the Calvinistic system, while the same Assembly, a year afterward, introduced more precise statements, on points upon which Calvinists differ into the Longer and subsequently into the Shorter Catechism. And that while these peculiarities of the Catechisms express the personal opinions of their authors, they were not intended either directly to bind the churches, or to explain the meaning of the Confession.

It seems to us, on the other hand, that an authoritative formula for catechising the children of the Church cannot be supposed to contain elements of doctrine which the Church as such does not profess to believe, or to go further into details of doctrinal definition than the formula intended as the standard of ministerial communion. What we are authoritatively instructed to teach the children, we are *ipso facto* instructed to believe and profess. Besides the fact that the Catechisms were prepared by the same men, and issued by the deliberate vote of the same Assembly, after a lapse of months of further study and discussion, necessarily cause them to be the most authoritative possible exposition of the sense the corresponding definitions of the Confession were intended to bear.

And whatever may be the state of ecclesiastical law in the several Presbyterian Churches of Scotland on this head, the Catechisms, as well as and as much as the Confession of the Westminster Assembly, are the doctrinal standards of the Presbyterian Churches of America.

The Adopting Act of 1729 declares that the "Confession and Longer and Shorter Catechisms of the Assembly of divines at Westminster" were "adopted as the Confession of our faith." This Adopting Act was referred to and accepted as the common historical basis of both Branches by the terms of Reunion, adopted 1869.

The printing and binding of this little book is perfect; and ought to direct the taste and excite the emulation of some of our American publishers.

A. A. HODGE.

MESSIAH THE PRINCE; OR, THE MEDIATORIAL DOMINION OF JESUS CHRIST. By WILLIAM SYMINGTON, D.D., late Professor of Theology in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. With a Memoir of the Author by his Sons. London: T. Nelson & Sons, Paternoster Row; Edinburgh; and New York. 1881.

Dr. Symington is best known in America by his admirable work on the "Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ," which for many years was a text-book in our theological seminaries, and still retains its place as a classic in our Presbyterian theological literature. It is also remembered as the first volume republished at the suggestion of Dr. Archibald Alexander, by those eminent dispensers of religious truth in its purest and sweetest forms, Robert Carter & Brothers, of New York City.

The work here republished was issued by its author in the latter part of 1838, four years after the treatise on the Atonement. Although less famous, this work on the "Mediatorial Dominion of Jesus Christ" is more original, and is better adapted to meet a practical want in the relations of the Church to the world in the present generation, especially in America. The author founds his argument upon the Word of God, the Christian consciousness, and the experience of the Church. He conducts it with a logic perfectly unanswerable, and expounds it in a lucid and simple style; and he includes in his discussion the entire field of his subject in all of its essential relations—as the Qualifications of Christ for His Mediatorial Dominion: its nature, spirituality, necessity, and universality, and His divine appointment thereto; His mediatorial dominion over the Church and over the nations, and its perpetuity. No subject is of more vital, practical importance, and none is more neglected among us, than the relation which the Lord Jesus, and the revelation of His will recorded in the Christian Scriptures, sustains to human governments, civil and social laws and their administration, and above all to the great department of national education. We heartily commend this work of Dr. Symington to all who desire light upon this subject.

Although he occupied so eminent a position in the entire Presbyterian world during the middle third of this century, yet twenty years have elapsed since his death before even this slender memoir of his life has been brought to completion by his surviving son. It is, as it professes to be, only a meagre sketch, yet it reveals the true greatness of its subject. As preacher and theologian, he was not only the first man in his denomination (the old Covenanter or Reformed Presbyterian body), but one of the first in Scotland. The first twenty years of his ministry were passed in the small town of Stranraer, in Wigtonshire. Here his ministry attracted the attention of all classes, and all varieties of Churchmen and Dissenters. His influence extended throughout the south-west of Scotland, so that a competent judge testifies, "that in short what in these days Dr. Chalmers was to Glasgow, and Dr. Andrew Thompson to the west end of Edinburgh, that in many respects was William Symington in Wigtonshire and Galloway." In 1839 he was transferred to the pastorate of Great Hamilton Street Chapel, Glasgow, which he held with increasing fame and usefulness until his death, January, 1862. He was appointed to the chair of Theology on the death of his brother, Dr. Andrew Symington, in 1854, and was reinforced by his son-in-law, Rev. Wm. H. Goold, D.D., as a colleague, who, upon the union of the Free and Reformed Presbyterian Churches in 1876 and '7, was the first Moderator of the united body.

A. A. HODGE.

IV.—PRACTICAL THEOLOGY.

DIE KATECHETIK FÜR SCHULE UND KIRCHE. Neubearbeitet von L. KRAUSZOLD. Erlangen: 1880. B. Westermann & Co., New York.

This work was first published in 1843, and received at the time high praise from the theological Reviews for its careful and able treatment of the subject. After more than a third of a century, it is now republished, a good deal enlarged and improved. Dr. Krauszold is a veteran in the pastorate, and is entitled by his long and varied experience, as well as by his learning and admirable spirit, to speak with authority on the important questions belonging to the sphere of catechetics. Some of these questions are full of difficulty, especially in our own day, and require great judgment, candor, and practical wisdom in order to answer them aright. They are, indeed, the fundamental questions of Christian nurture. Dr. K. discusses them in a clear and thorough manner, and although he does it, of course, largely from the German point of view, yet many, if not most of his conclusions are full of value for us and in substantial harmony with the old doctrine and practice of the Presbyterian Church.