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I. Literary.

THE CHARACTERISTIC AND DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA.

BY REV. DAVID JAMES BURRELL, D. D.

THE *Reformed Church in America* has no noteworthy "characteristic features" to distinguish it from the larger branches of the "Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System." It is, to all intents and purposes, identical in doctrine and polity with the Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches.

Nevertheless it holds a separate existence, because of a belief, more or less prevalent among its adherents, that it has a real *raison d'etre*. There are those who aver that its power for good—which is not inconsiderable—would be greatly increased by an alliance with one of the larger Presbyterian bodies. Overtures looking to such a union have been made more than once, but for various reasons have come to naught.

I. The Reformed Church has an honorable history. It is the oldest evangelical organization in America. The first Dutch immigrants came over in the *Half-Moon*, Hendrik Hudson, skipper, in 1609. This was the year of Holland's armistice with Spain after a century of bloody conflict for religious liberty. The *Half-Moon* returned to Holland the following year, reporting an exploration of the Hudson River in vain search for the fabulous open passage to the Orient. An allusion to "fertile lands and fur-bearing animals" tempted the thrifty spirit of the Dutch

We know of few books better worth buying. It ennobles the reader. It ought to be brought out in a new edition.

THOMAS C. JOHNSON.

15 Jan., 1900, *Union Seminary, Richmond, Va.*

MOSES DRURY HOGE: LIFE AND LETTERS. *By his nephew, Peyton Harrison Hoge.* Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication.

This noble volume has already received sincere, earnest, and high commendation at the hands of many of our religious newspapers and periodicals. It reached us just too late for notice in our last issue. We avail ourselves of this our earliest opportunity to join in the general chorus in its praise, being assured, after a somewhat careful reading from the title page to the end, that it is worthy of all the praise it has received.

A glance at the physical features of this book makes one devoutly grateful that we have in our Southern Zion printers of such skill and excellence as Messrs. Whittet & Shepperson, and that the whole book-making art has been carried to such perfection in our midst. It is a very handsomely made volume. But of this printing, binding, and so forth, we had no thought in our introductory remarks. We had there in mind the work of Dr. Peyton H. Hoge.

Dr. Hoge has very unusual fitness for this sort of work. He has fine insight into most things upon which he turns his mind, first-class analytical powers, and just as good synthetical ability. He is gifted with an incisive and vigorous, yet delicate and mellow power of expression. He is one of the most cultured of American ministers of his equals in age; and his culture irradiates the simplest and most straightforward narrative.

He had a very fine subject—a subject worthy of all the powers he could bring to bear in his work. Indeed, it would hardly have been possible for any man to have written an absolutely tame, insipid and unattractive life of Moses Drury Hoge. He was, as a boy, as a youth, as a mature man, and as a man of advanced years, full of life and energy, of heart and head, of vitality and will-power that overcame obstacles insurmountable by men of less heroic mold; and that enabled him to accomplish his huge achievements with, not weariness and fatigue, but zest and delight. Few men have found so much of delight and joy in life, a kind of high *gradium certaminis*. Dr. Moses Drury Hoge was as lovable a subject as he was a living one, too. Those who saw him at a distance only might doubt this, but we know of no one who saw him intimately who has ever doubted it. Indeed, to be brought into close acquaintance with him was to come to have very unusual regard for him.

His biographer has done wisely to let him do so much talking in this book for himself. No one could have done it better. Dr. Hoge was a delightful correspondent. What courtesy in these letters! What tenderness in many of them! What beauty of thought and style in all!

What freshness, vivacity, joy in life and effort! What sagacious reflections in some of them on men and things! What wit in some! What charm of style in every one of them! Not that they are unparalleled. They are not; but they are noble and very charming and Christian. The oration at the unveiling of the statue of Jackson, once you are through the introduction, is noble, very noble.

We are not sorry that the author has made any single disclosure he has made. Indeed, we would like to have been helped to a still more thorough knowledge of the man. We don't agree with him that we ought to have in our church a prayer-book. But we are quite willing to let him say all he can in behalf of a church's having such a book, to be used at the minister's option. Of course, the biographer ought to note the fact that his subject did not regard the matter as of sufficient importance to make a fight for it, if such be the case. And we think the biographer might serve the cause of truth well by pausing in such a connection to animadvert on the evil consequences which have generally followed from a dependence on such forms. But we do not believe in lopping off men in their biographies. And we believe that Dr. Moses D. Hoge was large and lovable enough to bear setting forth as he was.

His biographer has nobly executed a noble task. He deserves not only the hearty congratulations, but the grateful thanks of all who have an interest in the work.

Union Theological Seminary.

THOMAS C. JOHNSON.

OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE HISTORY COMMITTEE OF THE GRAND CAMP OF THE CONFEDERATE VETERANS, DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA. *By Dr. Hunter McGuire, Chairman.* October 12, 1899. Richmond: J. L. Hill Printing Company. 1899.

This is a very vigorous, able, timely, and effective document. It contains a drastic review of Fiske's *Historical Works*, especially his *History of the United States*; and one also of Messrs. Cooper, Estill & Lemond's, *Our Country*.

The character of the review of Fiske may be best shown by the following extract:

Finally, and this deserves a separate paragraph—with respect to the motives of action, we would be glad if Mr. Fiske or any other Northern author would relieve us of the mental confusion resulting from the contemplation of the facts that Robert E. Lee set free all of his slaves long before the Sectional War began, and that U. S. Grant retained his as slaves until they were made free as one of the results of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.*

Soldiers and gentlemen, we accepted in full faith and honesty the arbitrament of the sword. We are to-day all that may be honorably

* "Few, perhaps, know that General Grant was a slave-holder, but the fact is that he had several in the State of Missouri, and these were freed, like those in the South, by the emancipation proclamation. 'Those slaves,' said Mrs. Grant, 'came to him from my father's family, for I lived in the West when I married the General, who was then a lieutenant in the army.'"