

# THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW.

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I.

## CHRISTIAN FAITH AND THE TRUTHFULNESS OF BIBLE HISTORY.\*

IT will be generally agreed that the above subject has the merit of timeliness. For some time past the assertion has been made, and it is being made in our own day with greater confidence and insistence than ever, that our Christian faith and historical facts have very little or nothing to do with each other. Most frequently this assertion is made with reference to some one particular event of Sacred History, which has for the time being become the subject of debate from the point of view of its historicity. Those who incline to doubt the historical truthfulness of some such narrative as, *e.g.*, that of the supernatural birth or the resurrection of the Saviour, or at least incline to consider it an open question, are, when their skepticism awakens remonstrance from the conservative side, ever ready with the answer that Christianity is something too great and too deep, too inward, ideal and vital to be dependent in its essence on this or that single occurrence in the world of history. They protest that their own faith lives far superior to the level where such questions are discussed and decided, as to whether Christ was supernaturally conceived by the Virgin Mary or rose bodily from the grave on the third day. And they are not slow to make their own subjective faith in this matter the standard of

\* Address delivered at the Religious Conference held in Princeton, October 10-12, 1905.

dominant force in the highest social circles, and with what skillful diplomacy Francke furthered his cause.

Among the supplementary documents there is a most interesting one containing the plan for the establishment of the *Seminarium Ministerii Ecclesiastici* and the *Seminarium Eligantioris Litteraturæ* at Halle.

Princeton.

FREDERICK W. LOETSCHER.

THE ENGLAND AND HOLLAND OF THE PILGRIMS. By the late HENRY MARTYN DEXTER, D.D., LL.D., and his SON, MORTON DEXTER. Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1905. Svo; pp. xii, 673. Price, \$3.50.

Most of the contents of this work, we are told in the Preface, were collected by the late Dr. Henry M. Dexter. "To this task he devoted much of his time for many years. Of Pilgrim descent and born almost within sight of Plymouth Rock, he desired to give to the world a more complete record than any which had been written of the religious and ecclesiastical movements in England that made the Pilgrims what they were, and of their emigration to Holland and their life there before they came to America. But he died in 1890, leaving his chosen task unaccomplished."

With the zeal of a dutiful love, however, as well as with consummate ability, a second generation of the Dexter family has carried to a fitting completion the noble undertaking begun so many decades ago by the greatest authority of the time in all matters pertaining to the history of Congregationalism. The chief credit for the book as it lies before us is due to the late author's son, Morton Dexter. He rewrote the first five chapters left him by his father in the crude form of a provisional draft, and edited the sixth and concluding chapter, contributed by Prof. Franklin B. Dexter, of Yale University.

The work is one that confers an unwonted honor upon American historiography. A vast literature has been minutely explored; archæological evidence of all sorts has been laboriously gathered in English and Dutch cities; a wealth of information pertaining to the economic, political, educational, social and religious life in the England and Holland of the Pilgrims is admirably distributed through the exceedingly valuable notes and made to give color and character to the comprehensive picture of the text: the most painstaking research is happily combined with critical acumen, judicial composure and fairness, and a very satisfactory degree of artistic skill in the presentation of the facts and the development of the theme. Here and there, it must be confessed, the pages are burdened with too affluent a material, and even without the extenuating circumstances usually found in his embarrassingly rich contributions, the style sometimes becomes rather heavy: animation and attractiveness are sacrificed to accuracy and thoroughness. In some portions of the volume, moreover, the writer's interest is so exclusively archæological and in others so one-sidedly biographical that the reader is tempted to question the propriety of phrasing the title in such big terms. We cheerfully confess that new light has been thrown into many a dark nook and corner of English Reformation history; but the emphasis might with greater advantage, we think, have been placed somewhat less strongly upon the merely archæological items of the story, interestingly as these are presented, and far more heavily upon those spiritual forces which after all, in the case of the Puritan development as in all other periods of history, are of primary and fundamental importance. But, taken as a whole, the book is the best treatment we have of the rise and early stages of Puritanism. The press-work is in keeping with the unusual excellencies of the author's achievement in this volume.

Princeton.

FREDERICK W. LOETSCHER.