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THE VALUE OF AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS.

IN attempting to penetrate the spirit of American Institutions, to explain the phenomena, which they present, and to show the relative position of American civilization in the history of the world, it is improper to suppose that these things have taken place in some accidental manner,—that the outcasts of the old world, carried by some fortunate wind to the American shores, and favored by some undefined influence of our hills and vallies, our fountains and streams, commenced the superstructure of American culture, of American government, and American enterprize. So too it is equally as absurd to trace our American life to the noble spirits, that figured so extensively in our early history, as if it were owing to their originality, or powers of invention, that we have been made to occupy our present position in the history of the world. Our historic characters, or great men, and we have such as have made an impression on the world, were the embodiment of a spirit, that was not peculiar to them, but which was shared with them by others in distant lands; and how could they have been its originators? The time-spirit would disdain so recent an origin; it comes to us from afar, from the wreck of ancient, and venerated institutions; from the ruins of empires, from the tomb of former glory, and bears in its

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SCHAFF'S CHURCH HISTORY.

Geschichte der christlichen Kirche von ihrer Gründung bis auf die Gegenwart. Dargestellt von PHILIP SCHAFF, Professor der Theologie in Predigerseminar zu Mercersburg in Pennsylvanien. Matth. xiii: 31-33. Erster Band: Die allgemeine Einleitung und die erste Periode, von Pfingst-feste bis zum Tode des heil. Johannes. (a. 30-100.) Mercersburg, Pa.: Selbstverlag des Verfassers. Zu haben bei: *Ernst Schäfer* in Philadelphia und Leipzig; *Rudolph Garrigue* in New-York. 1851.

THE appearance of this work deserves to be considered certainly something of an event. It is the first volume of what proposes to be a full History of the Christian Church from its origin down to the present time, replete with German learning and written in the best and purest German style, worthy in this respect to compare with the first productions of like character in Germany itself and sure to be received with respect among leading scholars in that land of literature and science; and yet it is in full an American work, brought out in a retired American village, where it was necessary even to create the press that was required for its publication, and designed primarily for the use of a public on this side of the Atlantic. For those who are at all acquainted with the difficulties that were to be surmounted in the case, the execution of such a work, and the highly respectable style in which it appears, cannot fail to be taken as highly complimentary to the resolution, patience and persevering diligence of the author, no less than to his learning and scholarship. The outward show of the book is in all respects neat and handsome, and well suited to the dignity of its subject and theme. Its real substantial worth however lies of course in its contents; and we have no doubt that the estimate put upon it in this view by all competent judges, will be favorable in the highest degree.

The work bears upon it the marks of true learning and vigorous independent thought from the first page to the last. In the nature of the case a Church History may not pretend to absolute originality; it must go over the same field of matter and fact that has been already passed over by many previous works of the same sort; and to make no account of what has been thus done by others, would be to forfeit from the start all claim to rational respect. The author before us affects no such false and weak singularity; but owns in full what may be called the *historical* character of the science of Church History itself, aiming

to understand its objective movement from the beginning down to the present time, and so to throw himself with free clear consciousness into the stream which thus unites in itself the wealth and strength of this art as it has been cultivated by other hands, the results of experience and study handed forward from other times. Very special account is made in this way of the labors of *Neander*, in whom the previous course of the science may be said to have reached a new grand epoch, and to have found a depth and comprehensiveness of meaning of which the world had no knowledge before. Dr. Schaff takes pains to acknowledge his obligations to the learning of this great man, and still more to his genius and spirit. It was desired from the first to bring out the work in some connection with his name, and as it were under the auspices of his paternal friendship; and he was solicited accordingly at the outset for permission to address it to him in the way of dedication. This permission was granted in the most friendly terms; but in the mean time, alas, the venerable *Neander*, to the grief of the whole Christian world, has been snatched away by death; and the work before us is now dedicated only to his MEMORY: "*Dem Andenken des seligen Dr. August Neander, Vaters der neueren Kirchengeschichte.*" In this title, father or patriarch of Modern Church History, he may be regarded as by universal consent now fairly and firmly established. No writer after him can deserve regard, who shows himself ignorant of his labors or insensible to their high and enduring value. To admit this however in his favor and to own as he also was ready to do the value of other and older services in the sphere of the same science, is not to preclude by any means the idea that there is room and need still for farther progress in its cultivation. The proper merit of such a genius as *Neander*, is not that he has exhausted and brought to an end the art of which he appears the father, taking away thus all opportunity for others to do more than repeat his work, but this rather, that he throws open to the human spirit a new stadium of activity, and imparts to it at the same time the stimulus of a fresh enthusiasm, by which it is encouraged and impelled to proceed still farther with new and independent movement in the direction of such salutary impulse. This is the relation in which the work before us stands to the historical authority of its own science, in the view now noticed. It is the birth and product truly of that *Modern Church History*, of which *Neander* is acknowledged to be the presiding genius and great ruling star. But with all this, it is no loose compilation merely or servile copy, either in whole or in part, of what has been written by others. It is truly an

independent and original work, the fruit of active personal study, a genuine creation of art, having its own form and spirit from beginning to end. Whatever it may owe to others, all has been evidently reproduced in the way of living thought, and appears under a character of fresh and glowing interest springing in this way directly from the life of the subject itself. The author has his own theory and scheme, his own method, his own order and proportion, and his own style. In all this too, so far as he has yet gone, we consider him eminently successful. His work is at once thoroughly learned and strikingly plain and popular. This last advantage it owes, both to its clear distribution of topics and its nervously compact and direct style, intermediate we may say between the aphoristic sententiousness of *Hase* and the heavy lumbering periods of *Guericks*. It is of a decidedly better form in this respect, particularly for American use, than the great work even of Neander; for it lay in the whole character of this great and good man, in his supreme regard to the *inward*, the spiritual soul and substance of things, to overlook and neglect even to downright slovenliness itself the claims of the outward and formal in almost every respect. He paid no earnest attention whatever either to method or style, but like the old African father Tertullian seems to have shrunk rather from every such rhetorical care, as a sort of outside nicety in which a christian should take no concern. The consequence is, that the charm of his works lies wholly in the power by which he has been able to throw into them the very life of his own soul, and is exerted continually in spite of his style—which is for the most part loose and clumsy in the extreme. The work before us labors under no such objection. On the contrary it is a model of historical order and clearness.

We have here the first volume only of a work, which is expected, when complete, to embrace the entire history of the Christian Church from its foundation down to the present time. To write such a history is a great undertaking, not to be completed under years of persevering study and labor, and subject to many difficulties and uncertainties, of which our author seems to have full sense, and in view of which he is properly cautious as regards binding himself with absolute promises for the future. We trust that his life may be spared for the work, and that he may have ample encouragement and fair opportunity to fulfil in due time the whole measure of his present plan. His taste and talent seem happily joined to qualify him for such a service, and to urge him towards it as his proper mission; while there can be no question of its high importance, as deserving to the fullest

extent all the diligence and zeal that may be required for its accomplishment. At the same time however, there is no reason for considering the full and final completion of so large a plan necessary in any way to the completeness and value of the several portions of history of which the whole is to be composed, provided only these portions are made to embrace in a full and sufficient manner periods that are actually in their own nature thus separate and distinct. In this view, the volume here in consideration forms in truth, not the fragment simply of a full Church History, but a work which may be regarded as finished and complete for the period to which it is devoted, (as much as this can be said to be the case with *any* history,) even if the author should be prevented hereafter from executing in full his present plan. It is occupied simply with the Apostolical Period, the founding of the Church and its first fortunes as they come before us in the writings of the New Testament. No period can be more important or full of interest; for as it forms historically the introduction to the whole subsequent development of the Christian life, it is plain that the knowledge we have of it, and the view we take of it, must condition materially always our judgment of the history of the Church in all following ages. For this reason also the treatment of this period, above that of any other, should be made to carry a separate form, and to appear as in the case before us in the character of an independent and distinct work, introductory to the General History of later times, but without subjection to any of the ecclesiastical schemes that come in necessarily to influence the view taken of this later history in all its parts.

To form some conception of the importance and interesting character of this first volume of Dr. Schaff's History, it is sufficient simply to glance at its general plan and division, and to consider the several subjects and topics that are made to pass in lively succession before the eye of the reader. It commences with a masterly and well digested Introduction, reaching through seventy eight pages, and embracing the following scheme of chapters and sections: I. *History*—1. Its conception; 2. Its factors; 3. The central position of religion in history. II. *The Church*—1. Idea of the Church; 2. Its development; 3. The Church and the World. III. *Church History*—1. Definition; 2. Compass; 3. Relation to other branches of theology; 4. History of the growth and persecution of the Church; 5. History of doctrine; 6. History of practical religion, government and discipline; 7. History of worship; 8. Sources; 9. Compensation for the study of sources; 10. Method of historiogra-

phy; 11. Division of Church History; 12. General characteristics of the three grand eras of Church History; 13. The uses and advantages of the science. IV. *The Progress of Church History as a Science*—1. Church Historians before the Reformation; 2. Roman Catholic Historians; 3. Protestant Historians to the time of Semler; 4. Protestant Historians since Semler.—The entire history of the Church, from the beginning down to the present time, is divided into three grand eras, each falling again into as many separate subordinate periods. The first era is that of the **PRIMITIVE or GRÆCO-LATIN UNIVERSAL CHURCH**, extending from the Day of Pentecost to the time of Gregory the Great, (a. 30–590); embracing as its three periods the *Apostolical Church*, to the death of the Apostles, the *Church under Persecution*, to the time of Constantine (a. 311), and the *Church of the Græco-Roman Empire*, amid the storms of invasion and revolution which brought on finally its fall. The second era is that of the **CHURCH OF THE MIDDLE AGES or of ROMANO-GERMANIC CATHOLICISM**, reaching from the time of Gregory down to the Reformation (a. 590–1517); with its three periods of the *Commencement of the Middle Ages*, the planting of the Gospel among the Germanic nations on to the rise of Hildebrand (a. 1049), the *Bloom of the Middle Ages*, the palmy period of the Papacy, Monasticism, Scholasticism and Mysticism, on to the time of Boniface VIII. (a. 1303), and the *Decline of the Middle Ages* opening the way to the Reformation. The third era finally is that of the **MODERN or EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT CHURCH** in conflict with the **ROMAN CATHOLIC**, from the Reformation to the present time; having for its subordinate periods, the *Reformation or Productive Protestantism*, as it appears in the sixteenth century, *Orthodox Scholastic Protestantism*, characteristic of the seventeenth century and the first part of the eighteenth, and *Unchurchly Negative Protestantism*, (Rationalism and Sectarianism,) preparing the way transitionally for a *new era*.—The volume now offered to the public, it will be perceived, is occupied altogether with the first period simply of the first era in this scheme. It confines itself, as before said, to the consideration of the Apostolical Church.

Here we have again an Introduction, looking directly to the history in hand. This brings into view the general relation of Christianity to the previous state of the world, the historical preparation for it which went before in the form of Paganism as well as in that of Judaism—the Grecian culture, its decline, Platonism, the Roman empire, its interior state, Stoicism—the Old Testament Revelation, the political condition of the Jews when

Christ came, their religious state—the influence of Judaism on Paganism, and of this last again on the first—all conspiring to show the need of Christ and to make room for his coming.

Book First, in the next place, treats of the founding of the Church, its spread and persecution, under a division of five chapters. Chap. I. sets before us its proper *Birth-Day*, the miracle of Pentecost, the gift of tongues, the preaching of Peter and its memorable results. Chap. II. has for its title, *The Mission in Palestine* and the Way Opened for the Conversion of the Gentiles—with the topics: The fortunes of the Church at Jerusalem; Stephen, the first martyr; Christianity in Samaria and the ministry of Philip; The conversion of Cornelius; Commencement of the mission among the Gentiles; The congregation at Antioch, and rise of the Christian name. Chap. III. is devoted to the life and labors of the *Apostle Paul* and the planting of the Gospel among the Gentiles, in a series of sections, extending through more than a hundred pages, that serve to bring into view all the leading occasions of his history and the various important relations of his ministry to the progress of the Christian cause. His early character and education, his conversion, his call to the apostleship, his missionary activity, his various journeys, his epistles, his controversies with heretics, his manifold persecutions and trials, all receive proper consideration. Here also various chronological questions and other doubtful points of history are examined with no small amount of learned diligence and labor. Chap. IV. treats of the *Labors* of the other *Apostles* on to the Destruction of Jerusalem: The character of *Peter*; his position in the History of the Church; his later labors; his epistles; his residence at Rome and martyrdom; *James, the Just*; the Epistle of James; Traditions concerning the Apostles; The overthrow of Jerusalem. Chap. V. gives us the *Life and Work of St. John*; his birth and education; his apostolical activity; his banishment under Domitian to Patmos; his return to Ephesus and the close of his life there; his character as compared with Peter and Paul; his writings—Gospel, Epistles, Apocalypse.

Book Second has for its general subject the Practical Religious Life of the first Christians. Chap. I. *The Influence of Christianity on the Moral Relations*. Topics: The new creation; The Apostles; Family life; Marriage and celibacy; Christianity and Slavery; Christian Brotherhood; Social and National Life. Chap. II. *Spiritual Gifts*. Chap. III. *Church Discipline*.

Book Third is an interesting view of the Government and

- Worship of the Apostolical Church. Chap. I. *The Ministerial Office in General*. Topics: Its origin and design; Its derivation from the apostolate—distinction into church and congregation offices; Election and ordination of officers; Support of ministers; Relation of officers to the congregations. Chap. II. *Church Officers*: The apostolate; Prophets; Evangelists.—Chap. III. *Congregational Officers*: Presbyter-bishops; their office; Deacons; Deaconesses; Angels of the Apocalypse.—Chap. IV. *Divine Service*. Topics: Signification of Christian worship and its relation to the Jewish; Sacred places and seasons; Sunday; Year Festivals; Separate parts of Worship; Baptism; Infant baptism; The Lord's Supper; Other Sacred Rites.

Book Fourth treats of Doctrine and Theology. Chap. I. *The Apostolical Literature and Theology in general*: Origin of the New Testament—The Historical Books—John and the other Evangelists—The Acts of the Apostles—Didactic Writings—The Apocalypse—Organism of the Apostolical Literature—Language and Style of the New Testament. Chap. II. *The Apostolical Types of Doctrine*: Origin and Unity of the Apostles' Doctrine—Difference—Jewish and Gentile Christianity—Jewish Legal type of James—James and Paul—Jewish Prophetic type of Peter—Matthew, Mark and Jude—Gentile type of Paul—Luke and the Epistle to the Hebrews—Ideal type of John. Chap. III. *Heretical Tendencies*: Conception of Heresy—Division and general character of Heresies—Typical Signification of the Apostolical Church.

We quote in conclusion a portion of the author's Preface, exhibiting his own idea of the work he has undertaken and its general purpose or plan:

“To portray with conscientious fidelity to original documents, in clear life-like representation, the History of the Church of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God and Redeemer of the world, to reproduce her inward and outward fortunes, her conflicts and victories, her sorrows and joys, her thoughts, words and deeds, with ardent love for the truth and broad catholic feeling, and to hold up this picture of eighteen centuries to the view of the present time as the most perfect Defence of Christianity, for instruction and warning, for edification and example:—this is a task, well worthy to engage the best powers of a long life, and carrying with it the largest reward, but at the same time so vast and wide, that its execution, if it is to be in any measure satisfactory, can be reached only by the co-operation of the most various agencies. The single workman, especially one of sub-

ordinate capacity, must count it honor and happiness enough, if he be permitted to contribute some stones merely to the gigantic structure, which in its very nature cannot be completed till the Church shall have reached the goal of her history. For science grows with experience, and becomes ultimately complete only by its means."

—"My plan aims, under the guidance of our Lord's twin parables of the Mustard Seed and Leaven, and from the best sources within my reach, to sketch as far as possible a true and graphic picture of the internal and external progress of the Christian Church from its foundation down to our time, for the benefit both theoretically and practically of ministers and theological students, and to aid in this way a proper understanding of the present and a wise hopeful activity for the interests of the future. As regards compass, I propose to steer mid-way, between the synoptical brevity of a mere compend, and the voluminous fullness of a work which seeks to exhaust its subject and is designed simply for the professional scholar. The number of volumes will correspond probably with the periods presented in the General Division. I know too well already however the uncertainty of any such calculation, to lay myself here under any fixed bond in advance, or even to promise absolutely the continuation of the work. The volume now published has turned out much larger than I at first designed. The Apostolical Period however, in view of its fundamental and normative significance, is fairly entitled to a more extensive treatment than the Periods that follow; and it seemed to me necessary moreover to take account directly and indirectly of the late efforts of *Baur* and his school, having for their object, with no small outlay of learning, sagacity and art, a reconstruction of Primitive Christianity, or more properly its destruction—which has had the effect of swelling considerably the number of notes.

"While now my book shows signs on every page of its *German* origin, it is still primarily and immediately designed for *American* readers, and written, so to speak, from an American, or more strictly, Anglo-Germanic position. I have accordingly had regard more or less to the more important productions of English literature, touching on the same field; and propose in later parts of the work, in case it is continued, to treat of English, Scotch and American Church History at much greater length, than is done usually in German works of the same size. Germany has no lack of books on Ecclesiastical History; even since this volume has been under the press, three valuable new compends have appeared there from *Lindner*, *Fricke* and *Jaco-*

bi—with which however my work, from its difference of plan and size, comes into no conflict. Widely different is the case in America, where it has been the fashion heretofore in almost all Theological Seminaries, as in England also, to rest satisfied with a translation of *Mosheim*. Quite recently however translations also of the works of *Neander* and *Gieseler*, still unfortunately incomplete, are coming to be widely studied, and the time is not far distant, when this energetic restlessly active nation of the future shall do its part likewise in the independent culture and promotion of the science of general church history. Of this we have a guaranty already, in the able contributions that have been made to particular sections of this discipline, as well as in the distinguished success with which several highly gifted Americans have been crowned in the department of profane history. Would that I could do something, in my humble measure, to encourage an impartial study of historical theology in my adopted country, and excite to works that may leave my own far behind! Education and outward position seem to impose it on me as a duty, in this time of critical transition and on this ominous muster field of all the good and bad powers of waning Europe and youthfully fresh America, to labor in the service of German theology for American use, and as far as in me lies to mediate thus between the most theoretical and the most practical of existing nations, between the Greeks and the Romans of the modern world."

We trust the work will find proper patronage and favor. If its circulation be in any sort of proportion to its merits, it cannot fail to be both lasting and wide.

J. W. N.