

THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

No. 34—April, 1898.

I.

DR. MCGIFFERT ON APOSTOLIC CHRIS- TIANITY.*

WE confess to no little disappointment with this new book of Dr. McGiffert's. The author had previously given us an edition of the *Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius* for which we were justly grateful. The scholarship, acumen, and good sense displayed in that valuable work gave hope of a handling of the phenomena of the apostolic age which would mark a true advance in our knowledge. In his more recent *Inaugural Address* Prof. McGiffert showed that he had come under the influence of the newer Harnackian ideas to an extent which awakened some apprehensions. But we were certainly not prepared for so radical and revolutionary a production as this new volume of "The International Theological Library" proves to be. Dr. McGiffert says in his Preface that his aim throughout "has been positive, not negative, constructive, not destructive." We fully believe it; but his work is destructive all the same—destructive of most received notions on the subjects he is treating of—and his construction is of a sort which will cause many not over-conservative people to shake their heads. Had the work come from the study of one of the German theologians Dr. McGiffert loves so much to quote, there would have been little occasion to marvel at its contents. But the views it propounds are surprising as coming from a sober professor

* *A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, by Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Ph.D., D.D., Washburn Professor of Church History in the Union Theological Seminary, New York. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897, \$2.50 net; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

V.—ORIENTAL LITERATURE.

Aegyptische Grammatik, mit Schrifttafel, Litteratur, Lesestücken und Wörterverzeichnis, von Adolf Erman. (Berlin: Reuther und Reichard, 1894.) This volume is the result of practical experience in the class-room, and is intended to make as easy as possible the learning of the Egyptian hieroglyphics and language, even for those who have no teacher. The author strives to make the learner acquainted with those grammatical phenomena which have been established and which must guide us in the explanation of the texts, as well as to give him a correct view of the general construction of the Egyptian language. These intentions of the author have been fully accomplished. Viewed from the standpoint of the present knowledge of the subject, and in view of previous attempts to prepare a text-book for beginners in Egyptian, we think that too much praise cannot be given to Prof. Erman for the manner in which he has fulfilled his task. His Preface is a model of terseness and appropriateness. It first clearly defines his purpose and then informs the student in a manner not to be misunderstood what will help him to gain as rapidly as possible the end in view. He rightly insists on a previous study of Coptic as an indispensable foundation upon which to construct a thorough and reliable knowledge of the more ancient forms of the Egyptian tongue. Throughout his grammar he refers continually to the corresponding articles of Steindorff's Coptic grammar for further elucidation of the subjects discussed. His rules and texts are taken from the Egyptian of the classical period, references to the other forms and constructions being given in notes. The articles to be learned first and before beginning to read are marked with asterisks. We would only prefer the request that in a new edition the author would increase his references to the articles of the grammar when he comes to his reading lessons. It is flattering to the students to suppose that they will divine, as George Smith is said to have done, the meaning of signs and that they will for themselves unravel the knotty skeins of Egyptian syntax; but experience as learner and teacher leads the redactor to believe that it is useless and devoid of merit for one to spend as much time in hunting for the meaning of words and the articles of grammar as would enable him to learn the words and the grammar. But this grammar, like Steindorff's Coptic, is so much better in this respect than others that it seems graceless to criticise it for an omission so common and so comparatively unimportant.—*Syntax der Zahlwörter im Alten Testament*. Von Sven Herner, Lic. Phil. (Lund: Hjalmar Möllers Univ.-Buchhandlung.) This is a most thorough and scholarly discussion of the subject in hand. It will be found essential to any complete understanding of the numerals. It is, also, valuable because of its bearing upon higher criticism, since it demonstrates the occurrence in some books of certain constructions which are lacking in others. We have found the pamphlet useful and suggestive and would recommend it highly to all who are interested in Hebrew Syntax or in Higher Criticism.

Allegheny.

ROBERT DICK WILSON.