

## Pastor and People.

### A THANKSGIVING.

For the wealth of pathless forests,  
Whereon no axe may fall;  
For the winds that haunt the branches;  
The young bird's timid call;  
For the red leaves dropped like rubies  
Upon the dark green sod;  
For the waving of the forests,  
I thank thee, O my God!

For the lifting up of mountains  
In brightness and in dread;  
For the peaks where snow and sunshine  
Alone have dared to tread;  
For the dark of silent gorges,  
Whence mighty cedars nod;  
For the majesty of mountains,  
I thank thee, O my God!

For the earth and all its beauty;  
The sky, and all its light;  
For the dim and soothing shadows  
That rest the dazzled sight;  
For unfading fields and prairies,  
Where sense in vain has trod;  
For the world's exhaustless beauty,  
I thank thee, O my God!

For an eye of inward seeing  
A soul to know and love;  
For these common aspirations,  
That our high heirship prove,  
For the hearts that bless each other  
Beneath thy smile, thy rod;  
For the amaranth saved from Eden,  
I thank thee, O my God.

For the hidden scroll o'erwritten  
With one dear name adored!  
For the heavenly in the human;  
The Spirit in the Word;  
For the tokens of Thy presence  
Within, above, abroad;  
For thine own great gift of being,  
I thank thee, O my God!

—Lucy Lartom.

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### THEOLOGY AND LIFE.\*

BY W. G. JORDAN, B.A.

The writer of this review was asked the other day, on the street, "What do you think of 'People's Churches'?" Living in a small town that is so full of churches of the ordinary type that there is no room for theological or anti-theological novelties, one has to confess one's ignorance with as little loss of dignity as possible. But when we gain the information that these People's Churches are churches without a creed, congregations gathered round some attractive preacher who wishes to cherish sweet Christian sentiments and pursue the philanthropic life without "metaphysics" and "dogma," then we are driven to express the conviction that it is just as possible for a Christian church to exist without a creed as it is for us to have a human body without bones. Churches of the people, made by the people and for the people, may express the fashion of the hour, but they can scarcely be said to be founded on a rock. If they have any value as a protest against narrow ecclesiasticism they are weak because they depend too much upon small temporary attractions and have not caught the meaning of that great word, "I will build my Church." This is the feeling that we have as soon as the subject is pressed upon our attention, and when we turn to Dr. Scott's scholarly lectures we are reminded that history is constantly repeating itself, that many a new experiment is simply the ghost of some scheme that was dead and buried long ago, that ethical culture clubs, Unitarian societies, and other forms of the creedless church have tried in vain to meet the need of the sin-stricken soul.

Of Thomas Carlyle, Froude tells us, "In earlier years he had spoken contemptuously of the Athanasian controversy, of the Christian world torn to pieces over a diphthong; and he would ring the changes in broad Annandale on the Homoousion and Homolousion. He told me that he perceived Christianity itself to have been at stake.

If the Arians had won, Christianity would have dwindled away to a legend." In Carlyle's day "the school of Ritschl," had not arisen to explain how Jesus Christ can have the "religious value" of God and yet be man, and if it had it is not probable that the great Scotch thinker would have tolerated any such trifling.

We are led to make these remarks by the volume before us, a volume by Dr. H. M. Scott, of Chicago, and dedicated to Dr. Green, of Princeton. This volume consists of a series of lectures, six in number, "written at the request of the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary, having in view especially students of divinity and young ministers." Certainly it can be commended to the class for which it is intended on the distinct understanding that this is not, "a little book on religion," which can be read in an afternoon, but a text-book which along with other scholarly works may be used in studying some of the most important problems of Church life and history. If the aim had been to produce a more readable book, I suppose it would have been possible for Professor Scott to have worked up more of the material into the body of the book, and so have reduced the number of the notes which might then have been placed at the end of each lecture instead of at the bottom of the page, occasionally creeping very near to the top. The multiplicity of notes reminds one sometimes of the gentleman who explained to Kant that the reason why he did not read the great philosopher's works was that he had not a sufficient number of fingers to "keep track" of the different clauses of the sentence. This, of course, is merely a question of form, and so to the earnest student is, relatively speaking, a small question. While dealing with trifles of this sort, we may point out that the index—an important part of a work of this kind—might be made more complete, e.g., interesting statements are made about Dr. Robertson Smith, and Dr. Martineau, but these names do not appear in the index.

These lectures deal with the development of doctrine during the first three centuries with reference to modern criticism, especially the criticism of the Ritschl school. It is a book to be read along with Harnack and Hatch when we are investigating the growth of the early Church in its relations to Roman civic life and Greek philosophical thought. The lecturer speaks from the standpoint of intelligent orthodoxy with the advantage that he has had abundant means and opportunities of studying the latest phases of German theology, and historical criticism. He owns his indebtedness to "Harnack and men of his school," but at the same time opposes vigorously the "defective theory of Christianity and its doctrines" which is championed by these brilliant scholars.

Harnack tells us that, "in reality there no longer exists any distinction between German and English theological science. The exchange is now so brisk that scientific theologians of all evangelical lands form already one Concilium." (Preface to *Outlines of the History of Dogma*). This seems to us to be a sanguine statement, but it is becoming truer as the years roll on, and we are glad to welcome this specimen of "brisk exchange" from Professor Scott dealing with Harnack's own subject of which he can say, "So far as I know, these lectures are the first attempt in English to outline the growth of the Nicene theology, with any real reference to the work of the school of Ritschl." We have heard not a little about Ritschl lately and it seems that we are destined to hear more. In the *British Weekly* of Sept 3rd, there is the following quotation from the German correspondent of *Le Chretien Evangelique*: "Pastor Nouman is now sailing on with a favouring breeze, which is not surprising considering his immense ability. Ability, however, is not the only cause of his success. In his newspaper he prefers to dwell on the effects rather than on the causes of Christianity, on

the love of Christ rather than on His atoning death. If I am not mistaken, all this belongs to the inner traditions of Ritschlism," and in the same number of this journal we read, "Whereas of Mr. Balfour we have heard it well said that he would make a very good Ritschlian." As Mr. Jourdan discovered that he had been talking "prose" all his life without knowing, so some of us may wake up and find that we have been "Ritschlian" quite unawares. If so, Dr. Scott will show us that Christianity must be something more than vague sentiment and that the highest Christian life cannot flourish where the intellect and heart are at variance. It is one thing to struggle against the formalism which reduces Christian doctrine to a dry scholastic system, it is another thing to run to the opposite "falsehood of extremes" which maintains that we can have no clear knowledge of God, and the Divine Christ, and must be content with an enthusiastic faith which is felt from the intellectual standpoint to be half illusion.

It does not require a very extensive knowledge of "Ritschlianism" to see that it has affinities with the subtle forms of agnostic philosophy, which have played such a great part in the nineteenth century, and with the popular sentimental aversion to definite doctrine, which in many of us is simply a sign of intellectual indolence. This cry of "no metaphysics" and "no dogma" may not matter much when it comes from emotional people who are ignorant and uninfluential, but when it is made the watchword of scholars who attempt to reconstruct the history of the Christian Church in the light of their presuppositions it is fraught with danger. Dr. Hatch's book is, considering its subject, written in a pleasing popular style and often throws light upon important questions, but it gives us sometimes the uneasy feeling that instead of the development of Christian theology being explained, it is being explained away, and we are prompted with Dr. Scott to declare that in the name of "Hellenism" the critics "have taken away our Lord." We welcome, then, most cordially, Professor Scott's attempt to disentangle for us some fundamental truths from the bewildering mass of conflicting opinions. Criticism has done its best and its worst upon the original documents of our faith, with the result that the life of our Lord and the teaching of the Apostles stand upon a firmer basis than ever before. The critics are now attempting to reconstruct the history of the first centuries, and it will be some time before the last word is spoken on that great subject. Ritschl, Harnack and others of that school will in their own way render service to the cause of truth, and teach the Church some needful lessons; but in the meantime it is important that both in Germany and England, and America the same subject should be treated by men of great scholarship whose faith in the Divine Christ and His atoning sacrifice is absolutely unshaken.

It is impossible in a brief notice of this kind to do more than indicate in a general fashion the nature of the work undertaken in these lectures by Dr. H. M. Scott. The main question is, of course, the Divinity of our Lord, but many other important matters are discussed as arising out of this central theme. In fact, all significant questions of theology are raised, many of which can only receive a slight discussion, but in so far as they are touched they are placed in relationship to the doctrine of the Divine Christ. We learn that the Nicene theology which vindicated once for all the true Divinity of our Lord was not a corruption but a necessary and legitimate development, setting in clear, intellectual terms the truths taught in the gospel, and carrying to a noble conclusion the best thoughts of the early apologists and theologians. In such a process Greek philosophy and rhetoric necessarily played a great part, but in this particular, Christianity conquered Greek philosophy and used it as a servant, and the early faith was not lost

in the weltering chaos of Greek speculation. The proof of this involves an investigation into the nature of "Gnosticism" an examination of the teaching of Ignatius, Irenaeus, Justin, Origen, Athanasius, and many others, as well as an attempt to estimate the influence of the Old Testament of the school of Alexandria, and of ancient Greek philosophy upon the theology and apologetics of the early Church.

In such a varied course there is room for great variety of opinion on many questions of detail, but we think that on the main question the author of these lectures has supported very strongly his case that "Christianity is the religion of the Divine Christ and of His body the Church" and that this lofty conception coming from the memoirs of our Lord and the Epistles of Paul was a quickening power amidst the confusion and controversy of post-apostolic times, until, under providential guidance, it was cleared from corrupting influences and expressed as the essential faith of the "Holy Catholic Church." These modern critics may tell us that Jesus Christ is not really Divine but is "a man who has for us the religious value of God," and they may make the Church an ethical society instead of the body of Christ; but in doing this, instead of "reforming" the Church, they are bringing in a new Christianity, which is not the Christianity of Paul or of those first disciples who vindicated the faith against the power of Rome and the culture of Greece. There is, as Dr. Scott recognizes, another side to this picture, neither Hellenism nor any other ism is "perfect human reason," and even in those early days corrupt influences were at work which have dimmed the glory of the pure gospel and produced dark, disastrous influences ever since.

For the present we must take leave of this suggestive volume, and close this short review with the conviction that what we all need is a clearer view of our Lord as "the life, the truth, and the way," as a Saviour and a Teacher who can meet all the needs of our complex nature, and inspire in us a faith which will control our practical and intellectual as well as our emotional life, so giving us strength to make all needful readjustments in the sphere of thought, while our heart and conscience maintain unswerving loyalty to Him.

Strathroy.

### THE CONDITIONS OF HAPPINESS.

The *Presbyterian* indicates the conditions of true happiness in the following:

Happiness finds its deepest spring and highest realization, not in selfish gratification, but in a kindly and helping spirit and activity. He is not the happiest who is always thinking of, and advancing, his own comfort and enjoyment, but he who is trying to make others comfortable and happy. For instance, a person is pretty sure to have a dull time at the church social and to go away dissatisfied and complaining who feels and acts as if everybody should entertain him, while he is under no obligations to entertain others. He who sits in his little corner and does nothing to make others feel at home and happy, fails to grasp the very conditions upon which social happiness is generated and maintained.

Professor Charteris, in opening his class last week in Edinburgh University, dealt with the present position of New Testament criticism. He said: The incarnation, the resurrection, the ascension to divine power and glory might be left out of account in the opinion of those scholars, but they were to hold fast by the truth of the divine Fatherhood and by the work of the Holy Spirit. This new controversy came with strange significance just when they hoped to have a time of peace in the enjoyment of the gospels, whose early origin they had seen to be almost universally admitted. Those who denied that there was anything supernatural in the birth and death and life of Christ's human body, but yet clung to the faith of Christendom, seemed to him to have sawn the branch between themselves and the tree; and if they looked up from the ground where they contentedly sat, and said they had not fallen, he was compelled to doubt whether they and their branch were ever off the ground.

\* Origin and development of the Nicene Theology, with some reference to the Ritschlian view of Theology and history of doctrine, by Hugh M. Scott, D.D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Chicago Theological Seminary.