

Apologetik.—Wissenschaftliche Rechtfertigung des Christenthums, von J. H. A. Ebrard, D. D., Ph.D., 1878.

Systematic treatises on Apologetics in our English tongue are, as yet, rare. In the German we have comprehensive works from various standpoints by Sach, Baumstark, Delitzsch, Ebrard and others, but scarcely any of them are translated into English. Perhaps no English author can be named, who, in a systematic way, has covered the whole ground of this department. The Bridgewater, Boyle and Bampton series only take up detached topics in the wide field; Lardner, Paley, Rawlinson and Westcott deal with certain historical questions of deepest interest, while Flint, Diman, Bowne and Harris discuss merely the various phases of the theistic controversy. One of the best works on the subject by an English author is that of Professor H. B. Smith, late of Union Seminary, New York. It is concise, comprehensive, and exceedingly suggestive. Professor Fisher, of Yale, in his last work, *The Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief*, gives us an exceedingly readable book, while along much the same lines Christlieb's *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief* presents the discussion of Theism and Christology in a most attractive and instructive form.

Ebrard's work, first published in 1878, consists of two volumes of over 500 pages each; and in its scope, method and result, it is most admirable. In all its parts it gives evidence of patient and extensive research, and it also shows great care in arranging and digesting the vast details with which it requires to deal. It should be added that the tone of the work is at the same time reverent and devout, showing a marked contrast in this respect with many German works published between 1835 and 1860. With Ebrard, learning breathes the spirit of piety, and worships at the shrine of the supernatural.

Turning to these excellent volumes we find their general plan elaborate and somewhat technical. The *schema* is thoroughly German. In the Introduction the proper place of Apologetics in the theological encyclopædia is indicated, and the peculiar function of the science is well defined. The following definition will present the author's views on both of these points: "Apologetics is the science of the defence of the truth of Christianity." By defence (*Bertheidigung*) he means not merely the refutation of opposing theories, but also the distinct vindication of Christianity, as a self-consistent and inherently adequate system.

In passing to the discussion of the subject he takes substantially the same position as Christlieb in regard to the purpose Christianity is intended to serve. It is the redemption of man by the eternal, living, personal God, out of an abnormal state and relation to God, into a normal condition and relation to Him; and this is effected, in harmony with the divine will and man's destiny, through the historical Christ. Christianity is thus seen to be *eternal truth* and *historical fact*, and these unite in Christ. This gives the two-fold division of the whole subject. Attack may be made against the absolute truth, and against the historical character of Christianity, so that the science of Apologetics must provide defence for both of these possible assaults.

In the first division of the work the *truth* of the Christian system is vindicated, on the one hand by the facts of nature, and on the other by the data of consciousness. This part of the subject is first developed