

chism on the part of families. Much has been done for the instruction of the young in these recent years; but it is exceedingly doubtful if, where the responsibility of parents has been put upon Sabbath-school teachers, and the school has supplanted the home, as is too often the case, the rising generation has any better understanding of the Bible and the doctrines of Christianity as revealed therein than had those who in the home committed to memory the *ipsissima verba* of Scripture and repeated on every Sabbath evening of the year the answers to the questions in the Shorter Catechism. It is too late in the day for any man to belittle the Catechism instruction of by-gone days. It will be time enough to decry that confessedly imperfect use of the Catechism when our homœopathic doses of diluted doctrine shall have produced a sturdier race of Christians. It is not, however, of the method of using the Shorter Catechism, but of the manifest neglect of it, that we complain. For this reason, first of all, we are prepared, almost without examination, to recommend "The Theology of the Shorter Catechism" by Drs. A. A. and J. A. Hodge.

On examination we find, as any one who knows the distinguished authors would expect, a clear and concise exposition of the system of theology taught in the Westminster Catechism. The book originated in the demand for a concise text-book for theological instruction suited for the use of laymen as well as ministers. That Dr. A. A. Hodge should be urged to prepare such a work surprises no one. Dr. Hodge, more than any other theologian of our day, had the power of popularizing technical theology. That he should, on undertaking the work, select the Shorter Catechism as a basis is but natural. He accepted the Catechism as the most complete compendium of Bible doctrine, the most accurate and comprehensive statement of Christian truth, ever given to the world.

Part I, comprising seventy-eight pages of the book, deals with and expounds the first division of Systematic Theology, "what man is to believe concerning God," covering Questions 1-38. Part II was unwritten at the time of Dr. A. A. Hodge's death. The task of completing the work fell into the hands of his cousin, Dr. J. Aspinwall Hodge, of Hartford, Conn. One plan is followed throughout both parts. Questions are expounded in order, singly or in groups. The condensed statements of truth are enlarged, their meaning logically set forth and Scripture evidence adduced in support of the doctrines taught. It is scarcely necessary to illustrate. The authors have succeeded in their aims—"to enable parents to make home instruction intelligent and correct, to encourage the formation of adult classes in the Sabbath schools for the study of the doctrines of the Church, to furnish our elders with a clear and brief exposition of the system of doctrine which they are required sincerely to receive and adopt, and to give candidates for the ministry, at the very beginning of their course, a general view, with clear outlines, of God's nature and his gracious plan, and of man's condition and duty, which they are to devote their lives to study and to preach." This was indeed a great work, and they have accomplished it.

The work comprises 168 pages of exposition, seventeen pages of questions, and a complete index. Being published by A. C. Armstrong & Son the mechanical part of the work is good. It is in every way admirably adapted to the purpose for which it was prepared.