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## CURRENT PERIODICAL LITERATURE.

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THE MOVEMENT OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN SCOTLAND, 1843-1896.

By R. M. WENLEY, PH.D.; *The New World*, September, 1897, pp. 467-85.

PROFESSOR WENLEY, of the University of Michigan, claims distinctiveness for Scottish religious thought. The movement of interest in the nineteenth century dates from 1843, the year of the "disruption," which is briefly characterized. The men of that time, whose works are now more talked of than read—Chalmers, Candlish, Patrick Fairbairn—stood for high Calvinistic orthodoxy. Even philosophy had to be orthodox; hence the exclusion of Ferrier from the chair of logic and metaphysics in Edinburgh, under the influence of Dr. John Cairns, of the United Presbyterian church. From 1843 to the middle of the sixties was a period of hidden preparation for the processes that the future was to bring to birth. Dr. Norman McLeod's famous speech on the Sabbath question in 1865 was the first overt indication of an altered religious temper. It revealed on the part of the genial editor of *Good Words* a breadth of sympathy and outlook which created a breach between him and the Evangelicals. From his time onward the established church in which he was a leading man became the recognized home of theological liberty, and the broad church party flourished within her borders. The dissenting churches—the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church—remained comparatively conservative. In 1878 the famous Professor Robertson Smith case came above the horizon, and engrossed public attention. He was the champion of modern biblical criticism, and the agitation his views created eclipsed all other ecclesiastical movements for the time. Still the leaders of broad churchism kept well to the front, and philosophico-theological thought found able exponents in Tulloch, Cunningham, Story, and Milligan. A theological left wing also made its appearance in the national church, represented by the authors of *Scotch Sermons* (1880), and Dr. John Service, of whose volume of sermons, *Salvation Here and Hereafter*, a disproportionately long account is given. The *Scotch Sermons* also receive somewhat too prominent

mention. The main fact as to recent years is the shifting of the center of theological interest from the state church to the dissenting communions, as evinced by the circumstance that the writers who are the best known (full list given) are dissenters. The position of these writers as a whole is thus characterized: "An explicable revelation, but a revelation nevertheless, is the present master thought." It is indicated that the present trend of opinion and sympathy within the state church is toward high churchism and evangelic doctrine of the patristic type.

Professor Wenley is very competent for the task he undertakes. He is a Scotchman, and he has belonged both to the free church and to the established church. His sketch of the movement of religious thought in Scotland during the last fifty years is on the whole correct. Three remarks more or less critical I offer. First, too much importance is attached to Dr. Service and the authors of *Scotch Sermons*. Dr. Service was a clever man, pastor of a west-end church in Glasgow, who drew a number of the enlightened spirits to hear him. But he was chiefly a critic of current religion, not a man with a gospel. *Scotch Sermons* count for very little in Scotch religious thought. Second, in describing the present condition of the state church as to theology Dr. Wenley has overlooked the fact that an orthodox policy is influencing the situation. Men well known to be theological liberals support theological conservatism as the most prudent course for a state church in present circumstances. Lastly, in his list of theological writers belonging to dissenting communions he has classed together men of different theological tempers, without indicating the difference. This, however, may be justifiable in a brief survey, especially in view of the undoubted fact that amidst all diversities the men named, without exception, "witness for the supernatural nature of Christianity."

A. B. BRUCE.

GLASGOW, SCOTLAND.

LES FÊTES RELIGIEUSES AU MOYEN AGE. Par A. MAILHET; *Revue chrétienne*, June, 1897, pp. 425-39.

RELIGIOUS festivals played a great rôle in the life of the people during the Middle Age. The number of such festivals was constantly increased because they were holidays and, therefore, acceptable to the laboring classes. The church herself unbent at such times, and the clergy gave themselves up to jollity which often took on the most grotesque forms. These celebrations were often direct continuations of heathen festivals, such as the Roman saturnalia. During such festivals the clergy were free from all restraints and acted with the greatest abandon. They chose one of their number as leader of their buffooneries, and, under his direction, made grotesque processions and indulged in all the nonsense imaginable. Many events connected with sacred history were given a mimic representation. At Christmas