

**PRINCIPLES OF THE
REFORMATION
PRACTICAL AND
HISTORICAL**

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Principles of the Reformation practical and historical by Henry Wace

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HENRY WACE

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BY

THE VERY REV. HENRY WACE D.D.

DEAN OF CANTERBURY

150 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK

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PREFACE

I have ventured to collect these studies in the history and the practical principles of the Reformation, in the hope that they may do something to promote a better appreciation among us of the depth and grandeur of that great movement. They are the result of many years' study of the writings of Luther, and of the chief sources in which the course of the movement is to be seen; and I hope that they will be found to indicate some of the deep springs in human thought and experience which brought a new life to the Christian Church and to Europe at that time.

Like all great truths of a spiritual and moral character, those of the Reformation will always

be liable to misunderstandings, and will always encounter deadly opposition in some quarters. The Roman Catholic Church, with its grievous perversions of Christian truth, does but exhibit in an extreme form permanent tendencies of human nature, and we may always have to contend against similar influences. But the only effectual method for resisting them is to maintain before the minds of men and women, in full force, the momentous realities and the profound truths from which the Reformation drew back the Medieval veil. I believe that those realities and truths lie at the very foundation of the spiritual life and the moral force of our people, and that the Church will command confidence in proportion as she teaches the cardinal truths of Christian faith in the light of those principles. In the following pages Luther and the great Reformers will speak in great measure for themselves, and I have confidence that in proportion as they are heard, they will command

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the gratitude and the allegiance of Christian thought and belief.

I have ventured to add three papers, in which some urgent controversies of the present time are considered in the light of the same principles.

H. WACE.

THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF PROTESTANTISM

I

In September 1896 Archbishop Benson of Canterbury paid a visit to Ireland, and at the first public meeting he attended, held in Dublin in aid of the restoration of Kildare Cathedral, he saw opposite the platform a motto, which described the Church of Ireland as "Catholic, Apostolic, Reformed, and Protestant." He took occasion to say that we, in England, have not been careful enough to teach our children and the mass of our people the history of the Church of England. "I hope," he said, "we have awakened lately to this matter, and we are now intending to do it far more thoroughly. To you," he added, "the appeal comes most strongly, and you cannot justify those four words, 'Catholic,' 'Apostolic,' 'Reformed,'

and 'Protestant,' unless you teach everybody you have to do with 'why you are what you are.'" On October the 9th, two days before his death, he attended, in the Ulster Hall, Belfast, the last public meeting in which he took part, and he recurred to the same thought in very emphatic and impressive words. "I reciprocate," he said, "with my whole soul your most earnest desire that intercourse between our Churches should be constant and complete; that, as we look each other more in the face, we will know each other the better, and live equally in that true faith and fear of God which I saw characterised by a motto at Dublin—the faith taught by that Church, which is at once Apostolic, Catholic, Reformed, and Protestant. There was not one," he proceeded, "of those words that could be spared; and if ever it was necessary, if ever we began to doubt whether it was necessary, to lay so much emphasis upon that last word"—the word Protestant—"I think that events which have been occurring in the last few weeks, and the tone which has been adopted towards this primeval Church of Ireland and England, are things which warn us