

**ELEMENTS OF
DOGMATIC
HISTORY**

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Elements of Dogmatic History by William Muenscher

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WILLIAM MUENSCHER

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BY WILLIAM MUENSCHER, S. T. D. ✓
AND ORDINARY PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY AT MARIENBURG.

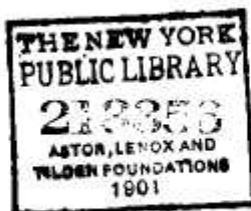
**TRANSLATED FROM THE SECOND EDITION OF THE ORIGINAL
GERMAN.**

BY JAMES MURDOCK, D. D.

NEW-HAVEN,
PUBLISHED BY A. H. MALBY.

1830.

NEW YORK
1830



DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT, SS.

L. S. BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the second day of July, in the fifty-fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. H. MALTBY, of the said District, hath deposited in this office, the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:—

"Elements of Dogmatic History. By William Muenscher, S. T. D. and ordinary Professor of Theology at Marburg. Translated from the second edition of the Original German, by James Murdock, D. D."

In conformity to the Act of Congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned." And also to the Act, entitled, "An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled, 'An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

CHA'S A. INGERSOLL,

Clerk of the District of Connecticut.

A true copy of Record, examined and sealed by me,

CHA'S A. INGERSOLL,

Clerk of the District of Connecticut.

BALDWIN AND TREADWAY, PRINT.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THIS elementary work was primarily intended for use in the author's lectures; and was calculated especially to aid his hearers. Yet it may perhaps be serviceable to others, by presenting to them a rapid glance over the whole field of dogmatic history. The principles on which it is drawn up, are the same as those followed by the author, in his Elements of Church History; and as he has there explained those principles, in the preface, he will not repeat them here. Yet some few observations will be added.

It was his great object, to give a plain, simple and dense statement. Therefore only three periods of time are assumed; and the facts are recapitulated in so unconstrained a manner, that uniformity in the mode of treating the several periods was intentionally disregarded. The facts also, are rather indicated, than fully displayed. The author flatters himself however, that the discerning will perceive a fixed plan, running through the work; and will understand, that a different mode of treating the successive periods, arose from the effort, to give the exact mode of thinking and reasoning, in each. If his aim to be very concise, should here and there produce obscurity, or indefiniteness, the oral instructions of the teacher must remove the former, and give precision to the latter.

In the first period, the passages from the fathers, which might serve as vouchers, are with few exceptions omitted; and the reader is referred to the author's Manual for

DUPLICATE. 27 MAR. 1901.

DREW THEOL. SEM.

them.* In the second period also, the passages in the scholastic writers, are but seldom pointed out; because they could be of little service to beginners; and because, those who are acquainted with these writers, can easily find the passages; their systems having generally the same arrangement. Yet wherever the experienced would be at a loss, to determine on what authority an assertion rests, the passage is expressly named. In the third period, a greater number of citations was necessary: and the author confesses, that he has often doubted, whether too many, or too few, were introduced. It has always been his rule, however, in making the selection of authorities, to regard the historical value, and not the doctrinal importance of the passages.

The author wishes that intelligent judges, if they deem this work worth their examining, would acquaint him with its defects, and thus facilitate its improvement.

To this second edition, the literary notices are subjoined, which the venerated author had written in the margin of his copy; and likewise, such as the editor deemed necessary, in order to bring down the literature to the time of the publication.

* On the most important sections, the translator has introduced the principal references of the Manual into this compendium. They are distinguished, by being connected with the text by means of the common numerals.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE work here offered to American theologians, is supposed, to be unlike any thing, that has ever appeared before the English public. It is an *outline* of a *general history* of the *christian faith*, with copious *references* to authorities and authors who have treated on the subjects.

1. It is an *outline* merely; not a full history. For it mentions only the general facts; and states them, in the most concise manner. It was designed to be the text merely, on which a lecturer might expatiate.

2. It is a *general* history; that is, one that covers the whole subject of dogmatic theology, or systematic divinity; and not the history of one, or of a few, particular doctrines only.

3. It is purely a *history*. For the author did not design, to discriminate between true and false doctrines; to elucidate, confirm, and recommend the former, and to confute and set a mark upon the latter. He aims to be the mere historian of facts; or to narrate, truly and candidly, what doctrines were discussed, and how they were stated, defended and attacked, and by whom; without laboring to prepossess the reader, either for, or against, any doctrine. In other words, he professes to assume the attitude of a *witness* in a court, whose duty it is, to state the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, without regarding the interests of either of the litigating parties; and not the part of an *advocate*, whose office it is, to defend the cause

volume of printed sermons, which are said to be characterized by their religious fervor, and by the constant and happy use made of the holy scriptures. He was also the principal conductor of a journal, devoted to the interests of schools and religion: but his greatest and most noted work, was his Manual of Dogmatic History, in IV. volumes 8vo. extending over the first six centuries. Beside these, he composed an Elementary Church History, and the work here presented to the public. Of his large work, C. F. L. Simon, in his Continuation of Noesselt's Guide to the Literature of Theology, says, (Sec. 299,) "the author has happily combined the chronological order, with that of the relations of things; and the whole work is distinguished, alike, for the persevering, learned, and critical industry, manifested in collecting the materials; and for the solidity and independence of judgment, with which they are methodically arranged, and agreeably expressed." And he adds: "the same commendation is due to the author's Elements of Dogmatic history." Brettschneider, in his *Entwicklung der Dogmatik*, p. 99, ed. 2d, says of the Manual: "It is to be regarded as (*hauptwerk*) the best work on the subject." The Elements, notwithstanding it had to contend with several rival works, has, since its first appearance in 1811, gone through three editions in Germany, without alteration,—two of them since the author's death; and it is still in high reputation, in that country.

The theological sentiments of Dr. Muenscher, the translator regrets, that he is not able definitely to state; since a knowledge of them, might serve to show, where, and how, the author's prepossessions were most likely to mislead him. In several passages of this work, as well

as of the Manual, the translator thought he discovered indications of much laxer views in theology, than his own. Yet he supposes, Dr. Münscher was classed, by his countrymen, with Michaelis, Doederlein, Planck, and others; who stood on middle ground, between the ancient, pure Lutheranism, and the modern neology of Germany. After all, the private opinions, or the commendations and censures of the writer, which occasionally escape from him unconsciously, ought not to influence the reader. It is his *facts*, and his arguments only, that deserve regard. And these, he is supposed to state, with as much fidelity, and impartiality, as reasonably can be expected, from an able and honest man, who felt his reputation to be staked on the correctness of his narration.

NEW-HAVEN, June 1, 1830.