

**INTRODUCTION TO  
THE STUDY  
OF THEOLOGY**

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Introduction to the Study of Theology by James Drummond

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STUDY OF THEOLOGY

BY

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*Tò πνεῦμα πάντα ἑρπύσῃ, καὶ τὰ βιβία τοῦ Θεοῦ*



London  
MACMILLAN AND CO.  
1884

## PREFACE.

THE Introduction to the Study of Theology, which is here offered to the public, has been delivered, during the last few sessions, in the form of a course of lectures, to Students of Manchester New College. It is hoped that it will be more serviceable to them in its present shape, and that some few beyond the circle for whom it is more immediately intended will find it of use. Its object is to deal, not with the *matter* but with the scientific *form* of Theology, and to bring before the student the nature, method, and mutual relations of the various branches of theological study, so that he may see more clearly the bearing of his labours, and view the several departments of his work, not as incoherent fragments, but as constituent members, each with an appropriate place, in a collective organism which embraces them all.

In determining the character and position of the numerous topics which come under review I have not thought it necessary to allude at any length to the opinions of others, being anxious rather to give the student a clear survey of the country to be traversed than to encumber him with details which might only confuse his vision. I have therefore contented myself

with referring to a few well-known books when it seemed desirable to defend my own position or to illustrate the possible variety of treatment. The Bibliography, which forms so useful a feature of Hagenbach's "Encyklopädie," has been omitted, both to bring the volume within a more moderate compass, and because it seems best for each teacher to recommend such books as, under any given circumstances, he may deem most suitable for the beginner.

It has been my endeavour, in accordance with the principles on which Manchester New College is founded, to treat the subject with impartiality; and while some, no doubt, will discover and reprobate the coloured medium from which human thought is never exempt, others may see only coldness and indifference in the attempt to be just. The number, however, is increasing of those who think that Theology should have the same freedom as physical science, and not be always viewed through a sectarian haze. In pleading for perfect liberty in theological research we ask for no more than is admitted to be the indispensable condition of truth in every other subject of human inquiry. Liberty does not mean exemption from the restraining laws of thought and evidence, but submission to those laws, without regard to inherited prejudice or party demands. In pressing upon the young student the claims of freedom, we do not mean that he may "believe what he likes," that he may follow mere subjective fancies, or treat with disdain the past ac-



quisitions of Theology, or reject without solid reason what his teacher presents as ascertained fact, but on the contrary, that he is bound to seek for the fullest knowledge and to follow the laws of evidence which belong to his subject. It is only through this higher service that mental freedom is secured. If a similar plea is not made when we begin to teach astronomy or geology, that is only because it is no longer necessary. We cannot say that in Theology the time has yet come when important differences are discussed without heat, and when party allegiance never disturbs the vision of truth. Till that time has come we must point out to the learner that large, serene, and candid soul, without which he can never hear what the Spirit saith, unconfused by earthly din.

The origin of this work in the friendly intercourse of the Lecture-room will account for the occasional retention of the direct form of address, which may appear less suited to a treatise intended for perusal. I have, however, omitted a lecture which I still prefer to deliver orally, relating to the personal habits of the theological student, and to the practices of our own College. A similar lecture, from his own point of view, might be usefully given by any teacher who thought the present volume a suitable handbook for his class.

The student will readily perceive that it is impossible for one mind to master the vast range of subjects which here come under review, and he

may be alarmed by the almost boundless claims of theological learning. It is not, however, expected that any single mind should be versed in every subdivision of Theology. Out of the immense mass of material the scholar must select one or more departments to which he will especially devote his attention; but whatever department he may prefer he will study it with more interest and with wider sympathy if he clearly perceive its position and bearing in the complete circle of theological knowledge.

Owing to the limitation of human faculty here indicated I can hardly hope to have altogether avoided mistakes in travelling over so wide a field, with many parts of which I have no special acquaintance; but I trust that they will be found neither numerous nor serious. I must express my obligations to my colleagues, and particularly to Dr. Martineau, for some corrections and suggestions; but, while I have reason to hope that the work will on the whole meet with their approval, they are in no way responsible for its plan or execution, or for the opinions which it enunciates. Such as it is, it is now sent forth with the earnest wish that it may render some modest service to the cause of genuine scholarship and spiritual faith, and help some few wayfarers towards the fresh uplands of Christian love and communion.

HAMPSTEAD, 20<sup>th</sup> October 1883.

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