

Union Seminary Magazine.

Vol. X.

February-March, 1899.

No. 3.

I.—Literary.

REPENTANCE AND ORIGINAL SIN.

The question is sometimes asked whether we must repent of original sin. It is sometimes asked triumphantly by controversialists who fancy that they disprove by it the reality of "original sin." The Christian heart, they argue, turns in instinctive repentance away from all sin: it is absurd, however, to talk of repenting of "original sin": the only sin that is recognizable as such, therefore, under the test of repentance, is our actual transgression. It is also, however, sometimes asked anxiously by earnest Christians, eager to perform their whole duty before the Lord. All sin, they reason, must be repented of that it may be forgiven: must I not then repent of the sin of our first father, which has been imputed to me, just as really and just as poignantly as I repent of my own actual transgressions, if I am to hope for forgiveness and reception into life? If not, am I not practically assuming the frivolous attitude of the young French woman, who, when asked by her Confessor; "What must we do to repent unto life," replied archly: "We must first of all sin, my Father?"

In approaching a question like this we must obviously begin by making sure that we are not using our terms confusedly. What do we mean by "Repentance?" And what do we mean by "Original Sin?" Clearly, if we use these terms in shifting senses we shall never arrive at a stable solution of the problem propounded. If Repentance means for

no room for the devil's chaff." Again, it is a most important preparation for Christian usefulness, preparing the young for Sabbath School and church work, and for dealing intelligently with all religious questions.

May the day soon come when education shall be Christian, and the Bible have an honored place in the college curriculum.

MOSES DRURY HOGE.

The death of Rev. Moses Drury Hoge, D. D., LL. D., on January 6, 1899, in his 81st year, removes from his earthly labors one of the greatest preachers that ever graced the American pulpit. For those who have enjoyed the privilege of listening to his splendid sermons, looking into his noble face, and feeling the kindly pressure of his hand, a description of the man, his traits and his genius, would be unnecessary. They can never forget them. But for those who are to come after us, some such description may be attempted, imperfectly as the task may be performed. In undertaking it, the writer is painfully conscious of his inability to properly perform the task, and he has only attempted it at the solicitation of the editor of this Magazine, who doubtless selected him because of the fact that for nearly twenty-five years he has been a member of Dr. Hoge's session.

On his father's side Dr. Hoge was of Scotch descent, on his mother's of Huguenot. The characteristics of these were blended in admirable proportion in him, and plainly appeared in his traits. He was fully six feet high, with no superfluous flesh, graceful in his movements, especially when speaking, of a dark complexion, wearing no beard except a closely trimmed moustache. He had a finely shaped head, a high forehead well developed, bright hazel eyes, a nose inclined to be Roman, rather high cheek bones, a mouth and chin well suited to his face, and indicating strength of character. The genius which was en-

throned behind lighted up his countenance and gave it a charm which, to be appreciated, must have been seen. His head was well poised and his bearing dignified, yet with nothing of sternness, but full of gentleness. He never forgot that he was a minister of the gospel, and bore himself as such, but like his Master, he kept in touch with humanity. No one could be more charming in society, nor more sympathetic by the bedside of the sick or in the home of the afflicted. This was the expression of the great kindness of heart for which he was noted, which was shown also in his many charities, and his unselfishness. He would often use the time given for vacation in preaching in a more northern pulpit, and money thus earned he devoted to some charitable purpose connected with his church, and much of his regular salary also was thus spent. Once I remember, after a prosperous year, it was determined to raise his salary. Against this he protested, and said that if it was done he would only use the additional amount in charity. This unselfishness was also shown in refusing numerous calls to larger city churches, which offered much greater salaries than any he received from the church which he planted and served till the day of his death. His purse was open to every deserving object, and his reputation in this regard brought upon him calls enough to bankrupt a man of wealth.

Dr. Hoge was one of the most earnest and humblest of christians. His every energy, and all his splendid talents were devoted to the service of his Master with a consuming zeal. To be the instrument of God in bringing men into the kingdom he deemed his life work, and his highest privilege. But with all the success with which his work was crowned, and with all the applause which his preaching excited, he was humble in his walk before God. His knowledge of the human heart was remarkable for one who had become a christian in early life. The writer once said to him that he could not understand how one leading his life could be so well acquainted with the wickedness of the human heart, as his sermons indicated. He answered, with great humility, "I have a very wicked heart."

Dr. Hoge was indebted, doubtless, to his Scotch blood for his remarkable tenacity of purpose. He walked

straight, without turning to the right or left, in the path of duty, and never faltered until the end was attained. But while he thus labored to accomplish the ends which seemed to him right, he had the most remarkable gift of what the world calls tact, but what was really wisdom, in controlling men and enlisting them as co-workers. He would have made a great ambassador, representing his country in a foreign court, but he had a higher ambition, that of being an ambassador for Christ to perishing men, praying them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. This message he delivered, not only from the pulpit, but in his ordinary intercourse with men, by being a living epistle, by urging the subject of religion on all proper occasions, by pressing it on the unconverted, and by speaking the truth in love. His reward came largely in this world, not alone in the growth of his church, for often he was approached by people not members of his own church, some of whom were strangers, who had heard him, and who thanked him for some appeal which had led them to Christ.

This firmness of purpose and wisdom in execution was finely illustrated, not only in planting his own church, but in sending forth and sustaining two colonies from it. The first colony was located in the west end of the city, at the time sparsely populated, but with every prospect of growth. The neat church had not been finished before the panic of 1873 overspread the country. Dr. Hoge, besides filling his pulpit twice on Sabbath, preached at night in the new building, until he was able to commit the enterprise to the hands of his talented nephew, Rev. Peyton H. Hoge, who had just left the Seminary. The church continued to grow, and is now well established and self-sustaining, under the ministry of Rev. J. Calvin Stewart, and is known as the Church of the Covenant. The second colony had a remarkable history. After the Church of the Covenant was established Dr. Hoge determined to preach in that part of Richmond adjacent to the docks, which had the reputation of being the most degraded part of the city. The City Council granted him the use of the large hall over the Old Market, which was in the heart of this district. Some of the best well-to-do citizens furnished him with the means to provide seats and heat. Selecting a few of his members

to conduct the music and to act as ushers, and giving notice that he did not wish any one to attend the service who went to church elsewhere, Dr. Hoge commenced to preach on Sabbath nights in the hall. It was crowded from the first by the poor and degraded classes who lived in that vicinity. Dr. Hoge's sermons were of a character just suited to these audiences. He presented the great truths of the gospel in the simplest language, adapted to the comprehension of his hearers, yet in his own charming style, attracting their earnest attention. The fame of these services soon brought to them many cultivated people, and the remark was often made that Dr. Hoge was greater at Old Market than in his own pulpit. Soon the appearance of his audiences began to improve. Garments and faces began to look cleaner; the order, at first sometimes noisy, became perfectly quiet; and to his great delight men and women began to express faith in Christ, and a desire to lead new lives. Then followed Sabbath Schools and house-to-house prayer-meetings, conducted by some devoted members of his church, and his son, Dr. M. D. Hoge, Jr., opened a free dispensary in the neighborhood. The work under these auspices grew until a church was organized, and a minister was found to devote his whole time to its service. And now a well-ordered, growing congregation enjoy the ministry of Rev. J. E. Cook, and worship in a handsome church building named Hoge Memorial. The power of the gospel upon these degraded people in reforming their lives soon became apparent in the diminution of crime, and the Police Justice gratefully acknowledged that Dr. Hoge had done more in making that portion of the city respectable than had been accomplished by the police force. His purse as well as his personal labors made these enterprises successful.

Another conspicuous trait of the great preacher was his courage, not only in declaring the divine message as it is found in the Bible, but in situations of personal danger. In performing what he determined was his duty he shrank from no danger. More than one instance of his personal courage is remembered by his friends, but this trait was displayed most conspicuously and with greatest advantage to his country during the civil war. Finding it impossible

to supply Bibles to the Southern army from Southern sources, he twice braved the dangers of blockade running, in a trip to England where, in the face of the prejudice against the South on account of slavery, he, by his eloquent plea before the British and Foreign Bible Society, obtained a grant of \$20,000 worth, at prime cost, of Bibles, Testaments and Bible leaflets.

The writer will never forget a scene which occurred some twelve months ago, when Dr. Hoge, just getting out from a spell of sickness, and expecting a great treat, attended a lecture on the Huguenots, in which the speaker attempted to depreciate the Reformation, and to distort the figures of some of the great Reformers, particularly Luther and Calvin. At the conclusion of the lecture Dr. Hoge slowly arose from his seat, and, with tottering steps, approached and mounted the platform. Turning towards the speaker he proceeded, in the most dignified and courteous manner, to administer to him a just rebuke for his perversion of history, and treatment of a protestant audience which he had been invited to address. Though feeble in body, the grand old man never appeared to greater advantage.

Dr. Hoge firmly believed in the articles of faith and polity of the Presbyterian church, and he never compromised his faith in his intercourse with other denominations; and yet he was so broad in his sympathies with all true Christians that he was beloved and honored as a brother by all. Indeed, some of his most intimate friends were among ministers of other denominations. A tribute to his broad christianity was rendered by members of other churches who regularly attended in large numbers his afternoon services. This tribute from other churches was emphasized at the memorial services on the forty-fifth and fiftieth anniversaries of his pastorate, at which the several denominations, including the Jewish Synagogue, were represented; and in the memorial services since his death, inaugurated and conducted by ministers of all the churches in Richmond. The hold that Dr. Hoge had upon the city in which he spent his ministry, was manifested in a remarkable degree on the occasion of his funeral, when the population in immense numbers turned out to do him

honor, not only at the church but along the streets traversed by the funeral cortege, and at the grave.

His broad Christianity brought forth most valuable fruit in that Christian unity and brotherly love for which the city of Richmond is noted.

Dr. Hoge was a Christian gentleman of the Virginia school, with all that the words imply. Faultless in manner, kind, sympathetic and courteous in his intercourse with others, he shone in every society, however cultivated or refined, in which he appeared. Not only in America, but in his numerous trips abroad he met with many of the notables of the world, and by his polished manners and brilliant conversation made a deep impression upon them. It was his intention to write out reminiscences of the distinguished men he had met socially, but unfortunately he put it off until ill-health prevented him. The work would have been intensely interesting, and very valuable, as it would have sketched leading characters in America who lived before the civil war, the great commanders who led the Southern armies, and many distinguished men of letters and noblemen, with whom he became acquainted when abroad.

All the elements which conspire to make a great orator met in Dr. Hoge. His logical powers were great, and when he gave them full scope he was powerful as a reasoner. Strong threads of logic ran through all of his sermons, but often the threads were so combined as to make a cord which could not be broken. Such, for instance, was the case in that wonderful sermon on the evidence of the Divine origin of Christianity, drawn from its exact adaptation to the facts of human nature. His logic was overlaid with brilliant rhetoric, which, while it detracted nothing from its strength, imparted to it a never-failing charm. It has been said by one, himself a great orator and logician, that true eloquence consists in eloquent thoughts; to this, however, should be added eloquence of expression. Dr. Hoge had both. He was as sensitive as a photographer's plate to the beauties of nature, and often drew from them for illustration. He had not only strong emotion and passion, but the power of conveying them to his audience. For this he was fitted

by remarkable organs of expression, including voice, intonation and gesture. His voice had a wide range, and from the softest tones of persuasion to the trumpet blast of eloquent passion, it was perfectly modulated. He greatly excelled as a reader. By most appropriate emphasis and intonation, he brought out the meaning of the scriptures and hymns with rare clearness and beauty. His scholarship was accurate and broad, and he enriched his discourses with treasures gathered in every field of knowledge; but whatever passed through the mint of his mind came forth impressed with the stamp of his genius. His memory was phenomenal, and his mind a storehouse of literature. His quotations were from the best thoughts of the best authors, and they beautified while they illumined his subject. He was a master of English, both as a speaker and a writer. His powers of description were splendid. In a few words he outlined his pictures, and then added the shading with the hand of a master. His first sentence invariably fixed the attention of his audience, which he thoroughly commanded, while he presented the great truths of revelation with a power, a pathos, and a freshness of statement peculiarly his own. The most intellectual of his members well said, that his preaching satisfied both the intellect and heart, however enlarged they might be. Dr. Hoge was a great student, not only burning the midnight lamp, but often allowing its light to be shaded by the rising sun. He kept fully abreast of the times, and never failed to recognize the foes of christianity, however disguised, nor to attack and expose them. He spoke without manuscript, and thus was able to give full play to his powers as an orator. The tributes to his power of eloquence have been many. One of the most remarkable exhibitions of this power was in the American Presbyterian Church in Paris. He preached there one Sabbath morning, unheralded and unknown to the congregation. So powerful was the impression he made that his audience sat spellbound for some minutes after he closed the service, while the inquiry was heard on all sides, "Who is that wonderful man?" His readiness, as well as his power, as a speaker were shown, too, on the memorable occasion of the meeting of

the Evangelical Alliance at Copenhagen, in 1884, when suddenly called upon, after entering the church, to take the place of an absent speaker, he made so eloquent an address that it was admitted to be the most splendid delivered during the meeting, and caused him to be invited by the Queen of Denmark to visit her. This great power came from Dr. Hoge's preaching the pure gospel, the power of God for the salvation of men. He never indulged in sensationalism ; it was foreign to his nature, and he would have considered it a desecration of the pulpit. In no part of the sacred service was Dr. Hoge more attractive and impressive than in his prayers, in which he was peculiarly gifted. He seemed to stand in the very presence of the Throne of Grace, and with a full knowledge of the needs of his people he presented his petitions in their behalf, with an earnestness, a pathos, and a beauty of expression rarely approached and never surpassed.

It was the inestimable privilege of the writer to sit under the ministry of this great and good man for twenty-five years, and his highest honor to enjoy his friendship, and is with inexpressible sorrow at his loss that he offers this humble tribute to his memory.

WM. WIRT HENRY.

Richmond, Va.