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I. THEOLOGY OF THE FUTURE.

Our age, on its religious side, has been characterized as an age of doubt. We are constrained to admit that there is a propriety in this characterization. Doubt with regard to religious matters is more widespread at present than it was in days gone by. This is not saying that the Christian religion has not a stronger hold upon men to-day than ever before, for it has. The mustard seed sown in the ground and springing up into an herb is growing yet, though already the greatest of all herbs. The leaven hid away in the meal is still permeating the mass, and will continue till the whole is leavened. The doubt of our age does not furnish sufficient ground to justify the believer in entertaining pessimistic views of the future. But there is none the less a widespread spirit of questioning and uncertainty concerning things religious. It is not confined to the student's cloister, but is found among the masses. It appears in a good deal of the popular literature of the day, and tends to create for itself a congenial soil, if that be not already found. But as has been remarked by those observant of the trend of theological thought in our day, while doubt is more general than it was in a former age, it is not of the same intensity. It is not so much a positive denial as it is an enquiry. A century ago unbelief was very sure of itself. It sneered at faith, and assumed a happy, even a lightsome attitude. But such self-complacency has largely disappeared from the theological world, and in its place there is more of earnest investigation.

not disturbed the faith of the unlearned, while commanding the respect of scholars." The estimation of his character and learning by other scholars in the same department may be inferred from his selection as Chairman of the American Old Testament Committee. The estimation of his talents and attainments, by scholars abroad is indicated in the publication of some of his works in German and Spanish, and was fully and warmly expressed in the multitude of greetings sent him on his fiftieth anniversary from the great Universities of Europe. Many of these scholars did not agree with him in his critical views, but they could not withhold admiration for the simplicity and sincerity of his character, the greatness of his attainments, the courtesy and ability of his discussions, and the unity and power of his life—as scholar, teacher, author and man of God.

W. W. M.

THE DIGNITY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The dignity of an institution like the Presbyterian Church is as valuable as its peace. Loss of respect either from enemies or unruly children means loss of power. The hesitating and apologetic way in which our sister church to the North of us has dealt with the McGiffert case has bred contempt. Following hard on the announcement that Dr. McGiffert would withdraw from the church—Dr. Birch having appealed to the Assembly—Dr. Hillis, a member of Chicago Presbytery, not having taken the trouble, first, to ask for a letter of dismissal to a Congregational Association, thus caricatured and abused the church whose creed he had sworn to adopt and whose peace and purity he had vowed to study. The occasion was a sermon from Plymouth pulpit, Brooklyn:

"To-day one of our greatest denominations still includes that tremendous statement in its Confession of Faith, saying that certain men and angels are foreordained to everlasting death, being 'particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished,' and every young man who enters the Presbyterian Church has to solemnly swear to believe and

teach this fruitful view. And every attempt to revise and expel that statement from the creed has been successfully combatted by a majority that wishes to retain the doctrine. It would seem that if men believed it, reason would be shaken to its foundation. It would seem as if a man would prefer to be burned at the stake rather than hold, or assert, or charge such infinite cruelty upon the all merciful and all loving God. The day the scholastics wrote that chapter in the Confession of Faith they got the devil confused with God. What! Read the story of Christ's life, love, suffering and death, and then charge God with 'particularly and unchangeably designing' the majority of his children to eternal torment? I would rather shake my fist in the face of the Eternal, and fling every vile epithet towards his stainless throne, where eternal Mercy sits with the world's atoning Saviour, than lift my hand with that creed towards God's throne and affirm that I taught or believed it. For the man who does believe that hideous doctrine the hour of judgment has now come. His sun is already darkened; his moon is turned to blood; his stars have refused to give their light. But, for the common people driven toward utter denial and atheism by such false theology, there has risen the light of science to reconcile contradictions, to enforce righteousness, to convict of sin and to recover men unto belief and love for God revealed in our Saviour, Jesus Christ."

The Presbyterian Church had better drop its present apologetic habit towards heretics within its pale. It should deal with them with a sure hand. Presbyterian law is one of the most powerful and unerring engines that was ever set in motion. The Church ought to so rebuke all such offenders as McGiffert and Hillis as to win back the respect, which it has undoubtedly lost, and which any organization without the courage of its convictions must inevitably lose.

The next issue of the QUARTERLY will contain reviews of the great Ecumenical Council of Foreign Missions, the Northern and Southern General Assemblies and the other important annual ecclesiastical meetings.