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I.

THE MOSES OF THE CRITICS.

MOSES had gone up into the thick darkness, fire, and smoke, which covered the summit of Sinai. The people had waited in vain for his return. Days and weeks had passed, a month and more had elapsed, still there were no tidings from him, and no sign of his reappearance. "And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him" (Ex. xxxii. 1). Their excited minds pictured him as hopelessly and forever gone; he would never be seen, nor heard from again. Thus in the imagination of the critics the Moses of the Bible has disappeared from view. And with loud acclaim they are chanting the praises of the mystic symbols E, J, D, P and R, which they have set up to fill the vacancy created by the removal of Israel's great leader. The advance of critical science has in their opinion entirely changed the aspect of affairs; and the history of that whole period must be reconstructed on a new and different basis. Let us briefly consider what the critics propose to substitute for the Moses that has been taken from us. The theme proposed is the Moses of the critics, or Moses as the critics represent him.

The Moses of the Bible is a clearly defined, conspicuous and commanding personage. Saved from threatened death in his infancy by an interposition of Providence, which secured for him a training at the court of Pharaoh without weaning his heart from his own

were those for the two Biblical departments, Old and New Testaments, and the addresses of both were largely devoted to the doctrine of inspiration. The Rev. Matthew B. Lowrie, D.D., who was inducted into the Chair of New Testament Literature and Exegesis, took for his theme, "The Bible as the Word of God;" and the Rev. Charles G. Sterling, Ph.D., who was inducted into the Chair of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis, spoke on "The Study of the Old Testament." The two addresses are an honor to the young institution, and give the Church the assurance that the truth of God will be taught in it by men thoroughly prepared to expound the Word and resist all attacks upon it. Dr. Lowrie's address is largely devoted to outlining a sound apologetical position; Dr. Sterling's develops the reasons for and methods of studying the Old Testament. Under the former of these heads Dr. Sterling lays the chief stress upon Christ's testimony to the Jewish Scriptures as establishing their unique character as the Word of God. "To get rid of Christ's testimony to the Old Testament Scriptures" he strikingly remarks, "is to tear to shreds the Gospel history. . . . It is to deny the existence of the real Jesus of history The Old Testament Scriptures as the authoritative and perfect Word of God must stand or fall in intelligent human faith with Jesus of Nazareth." "Let the timid or doubting Christian," he urges, "who is alarmed or unsettled by the current criticism and slander of this Divine Book, dare to stand with the God-man Jesus against all men of weaker spiritual strength and lesser wisdom." This is indeed the essence of the whole controversy on inspiration as at present pressed: is it safe to accept and trust Jesus' views of Scripture, its divinity, its authority, its truth? The line that divides into two camps men who reply yes and no to this question, ought certainly to be the line which separates Christians from the world.—*Public Services at the Installation of the Rev. J. Preston Searle, D.D.*, as Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology in the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in America, at New Brunswick, N. J. 8vo, pp. 49. (New York: Board of Publication of the Reformed Church, 1893.) As Dr. Cornelius Brett, the President of the General Synod, in his sermon (p. 10), reminded him, Prof. Searle has the distinction of having been inducted into the oldest professorship in the oldest theological seminary in the New World, to succeed such men as Livingston, Milledoler, Van Vranken, Berg, Van Zandt and Mabon, a true apostolic succession, which Dr. Brett knows how to trace back to Christ. Dr. P. D. Van Cleef's excellent practical charge opened out the duties of the office. The new professor, in the beginning of his address, modestly disclaimed any special present fitting for the great task before him; but promised diligence in its prosecution, hearty loyalty to the Reformed Standards (p. 38), and above all to keep his eye fixed on Christ, the great Revealer. Because it is to Christ alone that he looks, he feels that he cannot occupy a rationalistic standpoint in his attitude towards divine truth, or seek guidance from the spirit of the age or even from the spirit of the Church of any age. The whole address is admirable. We are not sure that we fully apprehend the remark that a true theology, because it must be Christ-spoken, "may not be philosophically complete" (p. 46). Paul, though he would not preach in enticing words of man's wisdom, nevertheless spoke wisdom—the wisdom of God. It surely is not a question of principle, but of fact, which experience is to decide, whether the theology which is Christ-spoken "may not be philosophically complete"—which we take to mean, may not constitute a logically complete system of truth. Christianity must not permit itself to be dominated by philosophy, nor can she permit philosophy to supply the moulds into which her precious treasures are to be poured. But she may be, and will be, found to provide a Christ-spoken theology which is philosophically complete.—*The Evolution of Love*. By Emory Miller,

D.D., LL.D. 12mo, pp. 346. (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1892.) The speculative ability of this small volume is of a high order. The author attempts to present Christianity as a reasoned system, almost as the necessary implication of our knowledge of self. He thus transmutes it into a philosophy; and his desire is, of course, to make it appear as the one true philosophy. Like Descartes, with his *Cogito ergo sum*, he begins at the bottom—finding the fundamental fact in the fact of a perceiving agent, man's "perception of himself as perceiving." From this he proceeds upwards to God, by the pathway of "implications of Being;" and then develops the nature of God as *actus purus* and that *actus* love. The sorites, sententially stated, is: "reality is action, action is life, perfect action is love." Taking hence a new start, he next develops the "implications of love," in a doctrine of creation, sin, atonement, future state. The step upwards from Being to God, depends on the position that existence implies self-existence and dependence, independence—somewhere; so that in the perception of ourselves as existing and dependent, a self-existent, independent not-ourselves is implicated. Less solid is the passage from the conception of God as *actus purus* to the conception of Him as Love. The fundamental thought is that "perfect action, conscious and volitional, is the highest generalization, the ultimate unit, the unconditioned nature of infinite being." This is identified with self-love as "that kind of action which in a perfect being actualizes a perfect or ideal self." Then we are told that the only difference between self-love and love in general is a subjective one, and we may as well drop the word "self." Having thus obtained love for God, nothing remains but to develop the implications as to creation, sin, atonement, the future, of such a conception of God. Of course creation is conceived optimistically: "the purpose of creation is the realization of a perfect universe;" "love's creative action must project the highest ideal of conditioned being—a perfect universe." But as God creates free agents, the realization of perfection depends as truly on their wills as on His; all that He can do is to establish the most favorable conditions for their securing perfection. Sin, which is fundamentally selfishness, having introduced evil, love can only so modify the conditions as to render reharmonizing and perfection still attainable. The atoning fact is found in "the subjective strain" which is experienced by a love which endures incalculable abuse; in the "consciousness of solicitude" which God has "as the Eternal Son, the relative consciousness in Deity," "in his objective efforts to order a perfect universe, conditioned as his effort is by the freedom of the persons who compose the universe." Thus "'love's devotion to the perfect,' agonizing because conditioned by evil, is an atonement for sin, a ransom for sinners, the atoning fact." The eschatology of such a scheme would naturally be Universalism. But evolutionistic conceptions, careful rather of the type than of the single life, enter in to condition the result; and Dr. Miller compromises upon Annihilationism. He refuses the name, indeed, and prefers to call it "the self-sinking of personality," conceiving it as the gradual extinction of the self-consciousness of a sinner in a period proportioned to the definite determination in each of the selfish purposes (pp. 263 and 343). We do not see why the influence of the evolutionary conception need be stopped at the fate of the wicked; rather would we suppose that from this point of view, too, Dr. Salmon's remark will hold, that "in no system which disposes of the wicked by annihilation will it be long possible to maintain faith in the immortality of the good" (*The Eternity of Future Punishment*, p. 7). It is on the whole a very pleasing scheme with which Dr. Miller presents us, wrought out in an unusually sustained dialectic. It doubtless comes as near to the facts as one could hope to come in an *a priori* construction, based on the deification of love.

Many passages occur in the volume which are brilliantly thought and finely expressed. For ourselves, however, we prefer "the concrete, popular way" of expressing religious facts, which the Bible uses. We do not think Christianity gains anything by being transmuted into a philosophy and having its divine facts pared down, or explained away, in order that they may fit better into a philosophical scheme of human devising. We go with Harnack so far as this: that "the universal and supernatural character of the Christian religion imposes upon its adherents the duty of finding a statement of it which will not be impaired by our wavering knowledge of nature and history." Not that we can do without philosophy, but that she must recognize herself as second not the first—the servant who obeys, not the mistress who commands.

—*The Gospel of a Risen Saviour.* By the Rev. R. McCheyne Edgar, A.M., author of *The Philosophy of the Cross*, etc. 8vo, pp. xv, 376. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark; New York: Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892.) There is an immense amount of well-digested material packed into this comprehensive volume. Dr. (for he now deservedly bears the title of "Doctor") Edgar's reading must be prodigious; while he marshals his material with a skill equal to his learning. The plan of the volume is first to lay firmly the fact of a "Risen Saviour," both as a historical reality and as a perpetual power in the experience of His people; and then to develop the "Gospel" revealed in Him. Both parts of the book are admirably executed—the former most thoroughly and satisfactorily, but the latter with sufficient fullness to serve the purpose in view. The evidence, from all sources, for the resurrection of Christ is developed in the first part, of two hundred and fifty pages, with a fullness and a cogency which leave little to be desired. In the sections on the Biblical evidence we have a very clear summary of the primary evidence, with incidental defense of it against objectors. In those on "Christ Risen in the History of the Church" and "The Risen Christ among the Doctors" we have an interesting survey of Christological discussion in the Church. In the part on the Gospel involved in the Risen Saviour, we have a lucid account of fundamental Christian doctrine from a fresh point of view. The impression left by the whole quite justifies Dr. Edgar's view that the key of the Christian position, at large, may be found in the single and supreme historical fact of the resurrection of the Master from the dead. There is little that need be said in the way of criticism. Perhaps some of the remarks on eschatological problems (such as those with reference to the meaning of a "spiritual" body and of Christ's descent unto Hades) scarcely reach the high level of the rest of the book. But the volume is as remarkable for its judiciousness as for its richness of material. Let us quote only a few "words for the times" anent mysticism. "As for the Mystics of the Middle Ages, they were too busy analyzing the incarnation of God within themselves, through the reception of the Holy Ghost, to give themselves earnestly to the more important problem of the incarnation of God in Christ Jesus. Thrown in upon themselves, their introspection produced no result in the advancement of the knowledge of Christ. . . . There was thus a practical obscuration of the Risen Saviour. . . . It is also to be noticed that a mystical school arose in the wake of the Reformation, which demonstrated that the attention of men was again shifting from the Person of the Saviour to the operation of the Holy Ghost. We see it in such a book as Johann Arndt's *Six Books of True Christianity* when he passes from Scripture and Christ, to conscience and the inner light, as coequal guides of men. . . . Of course I do not mean to affirm that the work of the Spirit within men should not receive careful examination; but when it absorbs attention to the neglect of Christ; when men are thrown in for the revelation which is really embodied in a Risen Saviour, . . . it is