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I.

HAS SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION DISTURBED THE BASIS OF RATIONAL FAITH?

THE path of the wise man is a midway between extremes. Solomon thus described it and urged men not to turn from it to the right or to the left. Aristotle so described it; his moral rule was to choose the golden mean and follow it till a habit of virtue was formed. Copernicus, the founder of modern astronomy, when dying said: "I ask not for the mercy which Paul received, nor for the forgiveness shown Peter, but only for the compassion granted the dying thief—that is my desire." He wished these words carved on his tomb, but his enthusiastic disciples held the epitaph should run: *Terræ motor solis calique stator*.

In him science and religion met in harmony, as in Newton, Kepler, Bacon and the great men who ushered in modern thought and life. But it is hard for their disciples, in a wider field of observation, when knowledge has grown from more to more, and when proud philosophy turns every rainbow of mystery into drops of rain and rays of light, to be equally reverent toward God and true toward themselves.

German thinkers often speak of a threefold consciousness, which includes self-consciousness, the consciousness of the world without, and the consciousness of God, in whom the world subsists and in whom we live and move and have our being. Lotze, the most comprehensive philosopher since Hegel, teaches that the only bond uniting the results of science and the needs of man's soul is found

IV.—SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF SALVATION. By GEORGE BARKER STEVENS, Ph.D., D.D., LL.D., Dwight Professor of Systematic Theology in Yale University. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1905. Svo; pp. xi, 546.

Dr. Stevens,* although since 1895 Professor of Systematic Theology in Yale Divinity School, has hitherto been known to the wider public chiefly as a writer upon themes of Biblical Theology, the fruit, doubtless, of his studies while he was Professor of New Testament Criticism and Interpretation in the same University (*The Pauline Theology*, 1892; *The Johannine Theology*, 1894; *The Theology of the New Testament*, 1899; *The Teaching of Jesus*, 1901). There was no doubt a little volume of not very great significance called *Doctrine and Life* published in 1895. And more to the point, there was always a strong dogmatic tone in the professed Biblical studies, and there were always intruded into them not merely a dogmatic method, but large elements of purely dogmatic discussion. And as Prof. Stevens has been very much of a dogmatist from the beginning, so he has from the beginning been very much the dogmatist he exhibits himself in the present volume. From his earliest publication the same tendencies of thought which meet us here in their full flower were already present. Already in the volume on *The Pauline Theology* (1892), for example, the divine righteousness is resolved into the divine love, and the doctrines of "original sin" and "satisfaction" are rejected. Even the same methods of argumentation and the same insufficiency in the statement of opposing views which characterize the present volume are already noticeable in that. We must confess to some surprise, therefore, at the chorus of astonishment which has greeted the appearance of this volume. Doubtless, Prof. Stevens' theological conceptions have somewhat ripened during the interval which separates it from its predecessors, and in the process of his special studies for it, but this is very much the kind of book on "the Atonement" which any reader of his former works should have expected to receive from Prof. Stevens.

We shall not profess to have found the volume pleasant reading. The polemic tone in which it is cast from beginning to end, strident from the commencement, finishes by becoming rasping. It is not obvious that the opinions thus endlessly controverted have been sympathetically appreciated. It is not even obvious that the trouble has been taken thoroughly to understand them. Certainly they are not always stated in their completeness; and they are not seldom refuted in mere caricature. The reader acquires an unpleasant feeling as he proceeds in the volume that the language of scorn, rising even to vituperation, is now and again depended upon to do the work of argument. Dr. Stevens does not like the doctrine of "penal satisfaction." Not liking it, he is entitled to argue against it, and (if he can) to refute it. It may be questioned, however, whether its refutation is advanced by declaring that it makes God a Shylock (p. 410) whose most distinguishing characteristic is "his appetite for revenge" (p. 331 *et seq.*). And it seems more than questionable whether this procedure is justified by the open declaration that the advocates of such a doctrine are past arguing with. Take, for example, this sentence: "It seems to me that one who can adopt the principle which underlies the penal theory of our Lord's sufferings—that God is so just that He cannot forgive the guilty until He has first punished the innocent—

*It goes without saying that this notice was written before the death of Dr. Stevens. It has not seemed necessary, however, to make any alteration in it on account of that sad event. The book remains the same, and requires the same treatment; and it is better that the verdict passed on it should remain unaffected by any personal considerations whatsoever.

thereby renders himself inaccessible to all considerations of equity and morality" (p. 383). In Dr. Stevens' view sin itself, in its most complete development, does not reduce man to so hopeless a condition (p. 316): he remains always accessible to appeal and open to conviction. It is inconceivable that he really considers his Christian opponents in worse case than the worst of sinners. His language is the language of simple vituperation.

The book is laid out, on lines usual in such treatises, in three parts. These parts would commonly be described as occupied successively with laying the Biblical foundation, tracing the historical development, erecting the dogmatic construction. These descriptions appear, however, to apply to Dr. Stevens' three parts only in a somewhat modified sense.

The discussion of the First Part (pp. 1-135), for example, seems devoted less to laying firmly a Biblical basis for a doctrine of Atonement than to removing all Biblical basis for such a doctrine. In Dr. Stevens' view there are almost as many Biblical doctrines of Atonement as there are Biblical writers: which is as much as to say that there is no Biblical doctrine at all. He does not deny that the "theory of penal satisfaction" is taught in the Bible. He intimates rather that it is taught by Paul; although when he expounds Paul's teaching for us, it takes in his hands much more of the appearance of the governmental theory (p. 60). He seems not very averse to allowing even that it may be implied in certain sayings attributed to our Lord in even the Synoptic narrative. But on that very account he doubts the authenticity of these sayings. And he does not feel bound to believe all that Paul taught. He is a modern man, and can no more "think in terms of late Jewish theology" (as Paul did) "than he can think in terms of pre-Socratic philosophy" (p. 74). "He claims the right, then, to distinguish between the specifically Christian and the characteristically Jewish or Rabbinic in Paul" (p. 751). Making this distinction, he ascribes Paul's doctrine of a substitutive atonement, of a "propitiation of God" (p. 61, note), to his Jewish inheritance; and rejects it from the possibilities of thought. "The men of to-day can no more appropriate the outward forms of Paul's Jewish thought respecting expiation, than they can adopt the cosmology or demonology which he derived from the same source" (p. 74). "What is Pauline? What is Scriptural? Is every conception of which Paul made use a necessary part of his religion and of ours—physical death due to sin, our sin due to Adam's, Christ's speedy return to earth? As I have frequently intimated, it seems to me that no fruitful investigation of the beginnings of Christian theology can be made without recognizing the distinction between the contingent thought-forms of the first Christian thinkers and the essential religious life and fundamental Christian certainties concerning God and the experience of salvation which they were seeking to expound and to philosophize" (p. 131). The upshot of his discussion of "the Biblical basis of the doctrine," therefore, is to free himself from the trammels of much of the Biblical teaching. Only the teaching of Jesus, it seems, is to be implicitly trusted: and that, not the entire teaching attributed to Jesus, but only the Synoptic tradition of His teaching: and not even that in its completeness, but only so much of it as Dr. Stevens' criticism spares.

In the historical section of his treatise (pp. 131-261) Dr. Stevens does not attempt "to write the history of the doctrine of salvation in the Church"; but quite properly confines himself to outlining "the principal types of theory which have obtained in Christian thought regarding the specific problem of atonement." These types of theory he conceives to be fundamentally three, which may be roughly designated by the names of the doctrine of "Satisfaction" and the "Governmental" and "Moral Influence" theories. The first two of these he discusses in their founders, Anselm and Grotius, and in their modern representatives of various kinds, under the names of "modern penal satisfaction theories"

and "modern ethical satisfaction theories." He devotes no separate chapter to the founders or early representatives of the Moral Influence theory, but, adverting to Abelard and the Socinians only incidentally in the chapters devoted respectively to Anselm and Grotius, reserves what he has to say of this third type of theory to a final chapter on "modern 'subjective' theories." It cannot be said that the several theories which come up for discussion in this series are dealt with dispassionately. The tone is severely critical throughout; and the object seems to be not so much to estimate the elements of truth discoverable in each as to clear the way for a passionate advocacy of the moral influence theory. The instability of the compromising Grotian theories is recognized (see especially p. 531), and the real opponent of the "'subjective' theories" is perceived to be the doctrine of Satisfaction. To discredit this doctrine becomes, thus, the chief purpose of these chapters. So engrossed is Dr. Stevens with this task that he does not stop to state the doctrine in its completeness before he refutes it; and thus falls into a carping habit which expends its criticisms upon isolated and, we must add, often misconceived elements of the doctrine. He is aware that although Anselm struck out the fundamental statement of the doctrine, it did not come to its rights until it received restatement at the hands of the post-Reformation divines. This has not led him, however, to any careful exposition of the doctrine as taught by the post-Reformation divines. He prefers to close the matter with a scornful allusion to "that period of Protestant scholasticism and hyperorthodoxy," and its "provincial extravagances," which "have no right to the name of orthodoxy, in the comprehensive use of that term" (p. 252). The result is that his polemic is vitiated by its lack of comprehension. The most astonishing oversights are committed; the doctrine attacked is scored for lacking elements which really lie at its very core; and the whole polemic misses its mark and degenerates into an amusing, perhaps, but certainly most ineffectual criticism of detached modes of expression. Though the doctrine of Satisfaction is rooted in the infinite love of God, Dr. Stevens, in criticism of it, elaborately argues out in opposition to it the necessary origin of the saving work of God in His love (p. 246), and ostentatiously compliments an advocate of it here and there as "damagingly admitting" this common proclamation of the whole body of its adherents. Though Christ's "active obedience" enters as an essential element into the doctrine—as even F. A. B. Nitzsch (*Evang. Dog.*, pp. 468, 484), to whom he defers much, would have told him—he blames the doctrine for a total neglect of the whole side of Christ's work which consists in His sinless and holy life in the world. Though it is of the very essence of the doctrine that Christ purchased by His Satisfaction both release from the dominion of sin and a title to holiness, together with the only prevalent instrument of sanctification, the Holy Spirit, he reproaches it with not correlating justification and sanctification in a vital and adequate way. Though the peculiarity of the doctrine of Satisfaction among attempts to explain the nature of the work of Christ lies in its conception of the reconciliation wrought by Him as mutual, he assaults it as making nothing of the attractive power of the manifestation of the love of God in Christ, the force of the demonstration of God's righteousness made on the cross, the moving influence of the perfect example of our Lord's holy life. In a word, Dr. Stevens is in such haste to thrust the doctrine of the Satisfaction of Christ out of the way, that he does not stay to grasp the doctrine itself, but is ever hastily thrusting aside something else which his hands have seized. The consequence is that naturally he is never satisfied that he has thrust it aside. He tells us over and over again that it is all over with the doctrine of Satisfaction; and yet he is ever returning to slay afresh the slain. He cannot get done with it. And finally he seeks his comfort in the assertion that it never needed any slaying anyhow: it long since died of itself. "It has been at no period entirely unchallenged; it has had its

rivals and its critics, until now, at last, there is scarcely a reputable theologian anywhere who ventures to come forward in its defense" (p. 251). He calls F. A. B. Nitzsch and private letters from Kaftan and Ménégoz to witness that it has disappeared from the European Continent, and adds his own assurance that it has equally disappeared from Britain and America—at least in "noteworthy" publications (p. 187). He declares that, "for better or for worse, this theory is moribund" (p. 187), is "obsolescent" (p. 260), and finds practically no place "in the literature of investigation, in the theological monographs and doctrinal systems which are attracting attention and exercising widespread influence to-day" (p. 261). In short, he is continually assuring his readers that the doctrine of Satisfaction is already out of the way, and yet he is perpetually returning to the charge and elaborately refuting it. Is it not unseemly thus to hack a corpse? And is it not strange that as the book comes to its close (p. 531) this poor dead theory—and by this time, one would think, not merely safely dead but sufficiently mangled—is still set forth as living, between which and the Moral Influence theory alone "lies the choice" ("forever irreconcilable theories"); and the reader is recommended—if he is not convinced by this volume that the Moral Influence theory is the truest and most satisfactory—to go on and read Dr. W. N. Clark's *Outline of Christian Theology* and Dr. T. W. Tymms' *The Christian Idea of Atonement*? It sounds very much as if the weary combatant would say, "I have done my best to kill this thing; but it won't stay killed: now I lay down my sword" (shall we say "my hacked sword?") "and leave the task to my fellow-combatants: perhaps they may succeed where I have failed."

Throughout the whole Third Part of the volume (pp. 262-536)—which is entitled "Constructive Development of the Doctrine"—the polemic element continues to occupy a large space. But in the fourteen chapters which constitute this part an attempt is made to elaborate and commend the special form of the Moral Influence theory to which the work is consecrated. This task involves a survey of a great number of the topics of theology; and they are expounded—if we may be permitted to use a general term in a general sense—in what must be spoken of generally as the Socinian sense. The doctrines of historical Christianity are, in other words, reduced, here, at least "to their lowest terms." We thankfully recognize that there are many expressions scattered through the discussion which show that this is not Dr. Stevens' inheritance, and that he has not adjusted himself perfectly to the lowered views of the doctrines which he is, nevertheless, in the main, commending. He can even criticise a treatise on the Atonement on the ground of its want of "scripturalness" (p. 243). If he objects to Anselm's phrase which ascribes to God "outraged dignity," he can himself speak of His "affronted love" (p. 275). If he scouts the analysis which distinguishes between justification and sanctification, he yet claims its benefit in distinguishing between the forgiveness of sin and the removal of its moral consequences (pp. 355-356): "Forgiveness is but one factor in salvation"; "the pardon of sin is never conceived in Scripture in separation from the cleansing, life-bestowing action of the divine spirit"; "forgiveness is a name for the beginning or restoration of right personal relations," etc. If the conception of guilt is minimized almost to the vanishing point, it yet is explicitly retained (pp. 319, 337, 355)—although race-guilt is denied and no guilt is allowed to stand in the way of acceptance with God. Nevertheless it must be regretfully allowed that Dr. Stevens' theology is of a piece—as indeed all theologies must be, since, as Dr. Orr has tellingly pointed out afresh (*God's Image in Man*, pp. 7, 8, 12, 13, 23), it is impossible to hold the Socinian doctrine of Atonement and not hold along with it a Socinianizing doctrine of everything else—of God, of sin, of the person of Christ, of the application of salvation.

We are not asserting that Dr. Stevens "does not believe in the deity of Christ."

But we are constrained to admit that no reader of the chapter in this volume on "The Personality of the Saviour" could venture to affirm that it is taught in it. There seems to us in this chapter (we trust we are mistaken) a notable falling off from the position (already somewhat unsatisfactory) in his *Theology of the New Testament*. There, Dr. Stevens represented "the metaphysical Sonship," the "ontological deity" of Jesus, rather as an inference we draw from the ethical facts or the data of our Lord's manifestation than as an element of His own consciousness: but he at least expressed his own earnest conviction of its reality. Here, although we are told that "the divinity of Christ is presupposed in the Christian view of His Saviourhood" (p. 298), we are also bidden to magnify "the moral and religious significance of His person" and be careless what "its metaphysical background" may be. Men may have "tried to exalt Him by ascribing to Him all manner of metaphysical characteristics and powers," but "what the Gospels place in the forefront of their portraiture is just His moral completeness, His perfectly filial consciousness, His stainless, untainted holiness" (p. 290). Just how much or just how little this may mean the reader may be puzzled to determine. Nor will he feel sure that things can stand at this point. For he can scarcely fail to note with blanching countenance the attenuated grounds on which alone Dr. Stevens can rest an assertion of moral completeness, perfect filial consciousness, untainted holiness for Jesus. With the feeble hold he has on the trustworthiness of the Scripture records, as he partly perceives himself, there is no sufficient reason to be derived from them for so great a conclusion: and to say that "the divinity of Christ"—does that mean His "metaphysical deity"?—"is presupposed in the Christian view of His Saviourhood" may not suffice one who does not hold to "the Christian" but to "the Socinian" "view of His Saviourhood." This view of His Saviourhood has not been historically correlated with a clear and firm faith in the "metaphysical deity" of Jesus.

On another matter we feel less hesitancy in speaking decisively. Dr. Stevens exhibits a remarkable sensitivity to the "charge" that the "moral influence" theory of the Atonement implies a lowered view of sin (pp. 267-68, 390, 392, etc.). One does not wish to be offensive: but is not the truth of the "charge" not only inherent in the case, but also plain matter of fact and universally recognized? Is Dr. Orr bringing a railing accusation against his brethren when he says (*God's Image in Man*, p. 11): "It is a truism that, with defective and inadequate views of sin, there can never be an adequate doctrine of redemption: it is, in fact, precisely because so many superficial views of sin are abroad, that there is at the present time so general a recoil from the Biblical declarations on the need and reality of atonement." Certainly if we needed an *à posteriori* proof of the truth of this dictum, we should not need in order to supply it to go farther than Dr. Stevens' own chapter on "The Sin from which Christ Saves" in this volume. Of course, no one supposes that either Dr. Stevens or any other advocate of these lower views of "the Atonement" does not think sin a bad thing, a very bad thing: or that they cannot discourse eloquently about its badness. But no one who reads this chapter can doubt that Dr. Stevens does not think sin so bad a thing as it has been thought by the advocates of those "provincial extravagances" of the "era of Protestant polemic scholasticism," which included among them the doctrines of original guilt, total depravity, and inability. It is, in fact, part of the very purpose of this chapter to discard these "extravagances," "exaggerations": and in calling them "extravagances," "exaggerations," Dr. Stevens advertises his own view as, relatively to them, a "lowered" view. It surely cannot be offensive, then, to say that it is only because this "lowered" view of sin and its effects on man is Dr. Stevens' view, that his view of the Atonement seems to him adequate. If he held the "exaggerated" view "taught, for example, by Augus-

tine and Edwards, and embodied in the Westminster Confession," he would not be able to content himself with his view of the "Atonement."

It can scarcely be necessary to prolong this notice in order to explain in detail what Dr. Stevens' view of the Atonement is. He did not leave it to this point in his treatise first to avow it: and we have not been able to follow his treatise thus far without repeatedly suggesting it. Let it suffice to say it is simply a form of the very prevalent "Moral Influence theory," and like all forms of this theory finds the atoning fact, the actual thing which brings man into right relations to God, not in Christ or in anything which Christ was or taught or did, but in man's own act of repentance and return to God,—Christ's whole function consisting in inducing man to repent and return to God. It is only by a figure of speech therefore that it can be said that "Christ gives us repentance and so remission" (p. 354). For how does he "give" it? Only by "making us to feel and know our sin, and showing us the sure way to escape from it." There is nothing upon which Dr. Stevens waxes more passionate than upon man's inalienable power to repent, "to heed and respond to the Gospel invitation" (p. 316). On this view one may well ask, What then becomes of those who lived and died before Christ came? Only two views are possible. Either they are hopelessly lost, or else Christ's work is not necessary to salvation. The former alternative Dr. Stevens, of course, does not take; he even (absurdly enough) tries to fix it on the "Satisfaction theory" (p. 379). The latter is, then, inevitable to him: and he boldly embraces it in a theory of what he calls "Eternal Atonement" (Ch. X, pp. 433 *sq.*), in which he teaches that "the word 'atonement' represents a process and not a merely single event,—that it designates the operation in history of certain laws or forces of the divine life which are perpetually operative, an action of God in relation to sin and salvation which has been continuous throughout human history" (p. 433). Thus our Lord's "saving mission is a transactional expression of eternal atonement" (p. 440): "the earthly life and suffering of Christ are the historic form of an eternal reality, a perpetual process" (p. 442). All of which, being interpreted, means that it is not what Christ did on earth which grounds salvation, but "the dateless passion of God on account of sin"; and that "God is, by His very nature, a sin-bearer." Why, then, the mission of Christ? Why His sufferings and death? There is a chapter (Ch. VIII) on this too. Its axiom is that "Christ came to realize in the world the ends of God's holy love" (p. 401). "Christ did not come to procure but to proclaim and bestow forgiveness" (p. 386). In any event that He did not come earlier, leaves it certain that what He did in the world was not necessary for the salvation of man—that nothing He did in the world was essential to salvation. If the world did not need His work for so many ages, it can have stood in no need of it at all. Search and look: it is inherent in the very nature of the Moral Influence theory to depreciate the importance of the mission of Christ. He becomes only one Saviour among many (Bushnell, Sabatier). His work is really unessential to salvation. Undeniably this is not the Biblical view. Undeniably it is not the view of the Christian centuries. Is it a view tolerable to the Christian heart? The plain fact is that the lowered views of the Atonement now becoming so prevalent are unbecomingly conformable to all the presuppositions of the Christian faith, and involve a reconstruction which will ultimately transform it into a merely natural religion.

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GOD'S IMAGE IN MAN, AND ITS DEFAACEMENT, IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN DENIALS.

By JAMES ORR, D.D., Professor of Apologetics and Systematic Theology, United Free Church College, Glasgow. London: Hodder & Stoughton. 1905. Crown 8vo; pp. xv, 325.

Dr. Orr's "Stone Lectures" were listened to in Princeton with great pleasure.