

THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

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I. THE LATEST PHASE OF HISTORICAL RATIONALISM.

IN the last number of the QUARTERLY (pp. 36 *et seq.*), we undertook to give some general account of the new historical rationalism which is being now introduced to the American churches by certain enthusiastic pupils of Adolph Harnack; and then, for its better elucidation, began a somewhat fuller exposition of one or two of the more fundamental positions assumed by Dr. A. C. McGiffert in his *Inaugural Address*, in his advocacy of it. We pointed out in that section of our article Dr. McGriffert's conception of Christianity as a development, and gave some account of the "transformations" which he conceives Christianity to have undergone since its origination by Christ. The most important of these "transformations" he represents, certainly with the best of right from his point of view, to be that from the primitive to the Catholic Church, to the better understanding of which his *Address* is devoted. For our better estimation of the significance of his teaching here, we should next consider more closely:

V. DR. MCGIFFERT'S THEORY OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

One of the most striking passages in Dr. McGiffert's *Inaugural Address* is that in which he draws a picture of "primitive Christianity" as it is conceived by him, preliminary to expounding what he calls the momentous "transformation of the primitive into the Catholic Church, of the church of the apostles into that of the old Catholic fathers." That important changes did take place

does a theology. Indeed, a theology without a presupposed and involved philosophy is an impossibility. We regard Dr. Shedd's distinguishing merit as a theologian and his certain title to a permanent and commanding influence as found in his masterful and consistent union of philosophy and theology.

4. The conservatism and soundness of his views. Dr. Shedd possessed in large degree the historic spirit, and had little respect for those self-sufficient theologians who imagine themselves able, irrespective of the achievements of the theologians and church of the past, to complete by their unaided efforts the systemization of the doctrines contained in the Scriptures. This author, with the conservatism which a profound acquaintance with the history of the development of Christian doctrine naturally produced, built his own system upon the doctrinal attainments of the past, the Nicene Trinitarianism, the Christology of Chalcedon, the Augustinian Anthropology and the Anselmic and Reformation Soteriology. He was too wise a man to ignore the providential labors of such representative theologians as Athanasius, Augustine, Anselm, Calvin, Turretine, Owen, Howe, and Edwards, those great master-spirits whom God has raised up to give the most accurate and scientific expression to the system of revealed truth. One of the great merits of this great teacher of theology was that his *Dogmatic Theology* was based upon the results of his *History of Christian Doctrine*, and the conviction was wrought in the minds of his students that the Augustinian or Calvinistic system was the combined product of the ablest and saintliest spirits in the history of the church, and this, united in his instructions with the vindication of its intrinsic reasonableness and with the careful biblical exposition which showed it to be the system contained in the Scripture, gave the force of absolute demonstration to its certain and necessary truth.

We do not believe we could do a better service for our church than to induce many of our ministers to enter upon the careful study of this massive product of one of the most imperial intellects and saintly spirits which God has given to his church in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

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THORNTON WHALING.

MILEY'S SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY. *By John Miley, D. D., LL. D., Professor of Systematic Theology in Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey.* Two volumes, 8vo, pp. 1105. New York: Hunt & Eaton; Cincinnati: Cranston & Curtis. 1893 and 1894. \$3.00 per volume.

Learning, philosophy, logic, and skill have each waited upon the author in the production of these volumes. In their mechanical preparation the publishers have delighted the eye of the most exacting reader.

The first volume was reviewed by Dr. B. B. Warfield, in this *QUARTERLY*, July, 1893. In that notice Princeton's distinguished professor said many laudatory things. They ought to have been said. They were neatly said. The merits of the second volume compel their reiteration and extension to the whole work. Dr. Warfield also passed some adverse criticisms upon the volume which he noticed. They had to be passed. They were courteously passed. There is no need of our repeating them.

Dr. Miley is an Arminian. His conscience, his intellect, his heart, are all

Arminian. He has read widely; he has thought earnestly; he has made the Scriptures his final authority; he is generally fair and intelligent in stating the positions of those from whom he differs. As a polemic, he moves straight against the enemy's centre. He asks no quarter. He offers none to others. He believes Calvinism to be both unphilosophical and unbiblical. He accepts Arminianism upon logical and ethical grounds as well as upon supposed scriptural grounds. His Arminian reader is bound to rejoice at the ability of the exposition and at the logical defence of his system. The Calvinist is bound to love his own system all the more as he sees this antithetic exhibition of it. At every point the antithesis is direct and unambiguous. This is a long stride towards ultimate truth. The Calvinist has for a long time complained that the Arminian would not define his doctrine in technical terms. Dr. Miley almost silences this complaint. He assures us, for example, that original sin is not guilt, and insists that this is the historic position of his church. Several of his positions are radical and revolutionary departures from current Wesleyanism.

From the nature of the case, we cannot notice all the points of interest, nor even all the vital matters, in these volumes. Inasmuch as we write for Calvinistic readers, we shall confine this notice to Dr. Miley's views of anthropology, atonement, and free-agency.

I. As to the origin of man, his antiquity, and the unity of his species, our author's views are traditional and orthodox, but his defence is weakened by a conciliatory tone. As to the constitution of man, he is a "bichotomist." As to the image of God in which Adam was created, there are three features of likeness—spirituality, personality, holiness. (Vol. I., p. 407.) As to the Adamic holiness, the fact is admitted, but its ethical quality is denied: "The holiness of Adam, as newly created and before any personal action of his own, was simply a subjective state and tendency in harmony with his moral relations and duties. But such a state, however real and excellent, and however pleasing to the divine mind, could not have any truly ethical quality, or in any proper sense be accounted either meritorious or rewardable." (P. 410.) As to probation, it was real, and the test was made at this precise point, namely, Will Adam, by a personal act of his very own, put an ethical quality into his natural holiness? Under extraneous temptation he failed to convert his natural, unethical holiness into a moral quality, and so fell into sin. (Pp. 423-440.)

Depravity is the subjective state of the soul of Adam's posterity after the fall. It is the result of the deprivation of native holiness, and consists precisely in "a disordered state of the sensuous and moral nature." (P. 445.) But is this sensuous and moral disorder technically known as depravity, sin? "This," says Dr. Miley, "is not disputed." (P. 511.) But according to our author, depravity is sin when sin is used in its metonymical sense of abnormality and disorder. It is not true of depravity, when sin is used in the sense of demerit and ill-desert. Upon this negative the author is vigorous and vehement. He charges inconsistency upon many Arminian writers who have carelessly or ignorantly permitted themselves to employ language which can be construed as implicating moral ill-desert in the notion of Adamic depravity. The descendants of Adam "could not be born with any sin amenable to an eternal doom." (P. 521.) The formula for the true Arminian doctrine is, "Native depravity without native demerit." (P. 521.) "Such is the doctrine of the Methodist Episcopal Church." (P. 524.) But while an in-

herited "nature cannot be the subject of guilt—cannot be sinful in the sense of penal desert" (p. 527), it is none the less a state of moral ruin. (P. 529.) In his second volume, Dr. Miley says (p. 243), "Man is utterly evil : all the tendencies and impulses of his nature are toward evil ; he is powerless for any good, without any disposition to the good, and under a moral necessity of sinning." When viewed simply in its Adamic relation, without thinking forward to the atonement, such is the state of the race—ruined, utterly evil, having all tendencies to evil, having no tendencies to the good, powerless, under a moral necessity of sinning. How, Dr. Miley, did the race come into such a state of moral impotency ? By a blunder, you must say, and do say, when you deny the demerit of depravity. Through some misfortune the race has come under the moral necessity of sinning. It would be an outrage in God, according to Armenian theology, to inflict such a moral state as a judicial judgment upon the race for participating federally in the guilt of Adam, but it is right and proper in God to create the race in this moral state when it was in no sense guilty or ill-deserving. The view is as damaging to providence and to God's moral character as it is to Calvinism. We do not believe the author represents the Methodist Episcopal Church in thus denying the demerit and guilt of native depravity. We believe his position is necessitated by the logic of Arminianism, but we cannot believe that the great church of Wesley is so far gone towards semi-Pelagianism. We hope that church will continue to maintain the inconsistency of holding to the guilt of original sin.

II. Soteriology is summed up under two formulas: "Atonement in Christ" and "Salvation in Christ." (Vol. II. p. 65.) The atonement is considered first as a fact, and second as a doctrine. The fact is proved from Scripture texts and terms. (Pp. 70-79.) The necessity of the atonement is grounded primarily in the needs of God's moral government (p. 90), and secondarily in the necessity of penalty where there is sin. (P. 93.) The main reason for an atonement rises out of governmental expediency, but resort to such an expediency would be legitimate only in cases of sin. This leads the author, of course, to adopt the theory of atonement known as the governmental. He does so avowedly and by name.

The Calvinistic reader will be interested in the heads of argument by which he seeks to clear the field of the theory of satisfaction: (1.) It is an impossibility. (P. 142.) (2), It is self-destructive. (P. 148.) (3), It implicates the punishment of Christ. (P. 148.) (4), It implicates the guiltlessness of the redeemed. (P. 149.) (5), It implies a limited atonement. (P. 153.) (6), It rests upon the notion that God's justice is commutative. (P. 153.)

Dr. Miley not only adopts the governmental theory for himself, but to it he commits all Arminians and Wesleyans, Watson, Whedon, Minor Raymond and Bledsoe. But what is the theory ?

Public justice can administer penalty to sin only upon the ground of demerit (p. 171), and this for two reasons: to satisfy retributive claims, and to conserve the ends of government. (Pp. 172, 173.) Penalty may be remitted not only absolutely and unconditionally, but also when the ends of government would be advanced by such a remission. (Pp. 175, 176.) Now, it is not expedient to remit the penalty absolutely, but it is expedient to remit the penalty in consequence of the sufferings of Christ. The deepest necessity for an atonement is in its effects upon government. (Pp. 176-178.) The author illustrates his view by the measure adopted by Bronson Alcott in the government of his school. Under that plan the

master, instead of chastising the offending pupil, required the disobedient boy to flog his teacher. "This, therefore, is a true case of atonement through vicarious suffering, and in close analogy to the divine atonement." (P. 182.)

The opportunity is too good for asking Dr. Miley two or three hard questions:

(1), If penalty can be administered only to sin (p. 171), how can God administer penalty to Christ, except he be a sinner in some sense? And in what sense could he be a sinner but in one of two, putatively or personally? If there is any truth in the analogy, God flogged Christ for the sake of sinful men. Why? Just for the influence of the example upon the world, replies our author, and not because Christ was federally guilty. Then, in his case, penalty was administered where there was no sin.

(2), Again, everybody instinctively feels that the boy deserved the flogging which the master graciously took in his stead. The master got the thrashing the boy ought to have had. If the analogy holds, we must conclude that God inflicted upon Christ the precise punishment which the sinner deserved. But such is a Calvinistic conclusion.

(3), Again, if depravity is not so demeritorious as to make man amenable to an eternal doom, if depravity is not sin in the sense of guilt, what was the bearing of atonement upon original sin? If it carried away any fact of original sin, what fact was carried away? We have been accustomed to think that it was precisely the guilt of original sin which was removed, according to Arminianism, from the race by the atonement of Christ. According to Dr. Miley, we cannot see what the practical effect of atonement upon depravity was. Yet the author says atonement presupposes sin.

(4), Again, if the deepest necessity of atonement is in its effects upon government, then the deepest meaning of the atonement is its influence upon moral government. Was the atonement made for government, or for man? Was the atonement but a stroke of Gamalielian state policy? The Arminian generally traces its origin to the love of God for the world; Dr. Miley's logic grounds it in God's love of government.

III. Free Agency. The question is precisely and definitely as to the "power of self-action." (P. 278.) But what is the power of this power? How does it operate to the production of a choice? Not in consequence of the domination of some motive (pp. 276-279), nor in consequence of a determining disposition. (P. 282.) The mental facts in any act of choice, comprehensively and analytically stated, are four: (1), Some end to be chosen; (2), Some rational motive to this end; (3), A rational judgment as to the desirability of this end, and (4), An elective decision of that end. (P. 286.) Such is the complex cause of a mental choice, and the fourth is the vital element generally omitted in the enumeration. (P. 284.) Given the end, the motive, the rational judgment, must the "elective decision" follow? *No*, answers our author, for there may be "a rational suspension of the choice" while the judgment is being made up. (P. 291.) But we are bound to ask our author if the rational suspension is not itself a choice based upon motive? What, then, is gained in the argument? There is no progress. Dr. Miley sees this, and to meet the point lays down the further proposition that the mind has the power to set aside all motives, and make its elective decision independent of them. (P. 296.) Motives disappear when the objective relations are destroyed, and by the dismissal or replacement of the present object the

mind controls the whole motive state. (Pp. 297, 298.) But, we ask, if the mind dismiss the object in order to change the motivity, was not that decision to dismiss itself a choice based upon some motive? Then where is the progress in the argument? Or, again, if the mind may dismiss all motives, what becomes of Dr. Miley's analysis of the mental facts which he characterizes as the elements of choice? Or, again, if the mind dismiss all motives, and the act of dismission was not based upon some motive, then was not at least that act an arbitrary volition? But the author denies that volition is arbitrary. (P. 306.)

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STEVENS' JOHANNINE THEOLOGY.

THE JOHANNINE THEOLOGY: A Study of the Doctrinal Contents of the Gospel and Epistles of the Apostle John. *By George B. Stevens, Ph. D., D. D.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1894. Pp. 387, 8vo. \$2.00.

In 1892 Dr. Stevens published his *Pauline Theology*. In a notice of it (January Number of THE QUARTERLY for 1893) we complained that the author, not infrequently, forced the technicalities of the orthodox and traditional theology to stand for new and original ideas. We do not find this fault, to the same degree, with the volume which is before us. There was not an equal occasion. It is easier to pervert John than Paul, because Paul employs, to such a large extent, legal terms whose meanings are more fixed than the more philosophic language of John. It manifestly took more labor to write *The Pauline Theology* than it required to write *The Johannine*, but of the two books we like the latter much better.

The intellectual power, the ripe scholarship, the critical skill, the literary art, the width of reading, are all shown to be the possession of Yale's Professor of Criticism in the very highest degree. The reader feels that the influence of the higher criticism is in the sub-consciousness, if not in the consciousness, of the author. He surrenders to them passage after passage which, like monuments, have marked doctrines which the church has laid in its faith. But it is a satisfaction to know that the author generally finds some text which, by the laws of language and all the canons of criticism, yields the true Johannine doctrine as God's people have been accustomed to understand it. He reduces the number of our proof texts, but it is comforting to know that the essence of the doctrine is generally left. In this volume Dr. Stevens is a better defender of the faith than in his former treatise.

The aim of the volume is to present the theological contents of the Gospel and Epistles of John. The Apocalypse, because of the peculiarity of its form and type of teaching, is not a "source" in these conclusions. Taking these documents and insulating himself from every other writer of Scripture, the author concludes that the teachings of John are the most distinctive in their type, and the most truly and originally theological in their form, of any of the New Testament monographs. Among the more salient features, he finds in John an intense tendency to group his thoughts around certain great central truths; that he is contemplative, mystical, and emotional, yet not vague and shadowy; that his Scripture is neither a barren intellectualism nor yet a dreamy unpractical mysticism, but a penetrating, life-influencing realism; that the author's thought moves among antitheses, presenting those ethical and spiritual conceptions of religion which blend