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I. REGENERATION, REAL, NOT FIGURATIVE.

THERE are doubtless those who think that in a discussion of regeneration nothing new can be said that is true, and nothing true that is new. However this may be, it is certain that opinions differ widely, and that much confusion prevails. It is not our purpose to review the variant and widely diverse opinions which are held on this subject. That were a profitless task. We propose to study the subject anew from the standpoint of the Scriptures, and to compare the conclusion reached with the view generally accepted as orthodox. What is that view?

A very few years ago a report was made to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., by a committee appointed to revise *The Confession*. In that report the following words were found: "The act of regeneration wherein being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit he is enabled to answer God's call and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it." Had this been approved, new matter would have been added to *The Confession*. This report teaches that the act of regeneration enables the subject to believe on Christ. That this is the commonly accepted view a few citations from Doctors R. L. Dabney and A. A. Hodge may be allowed to show. Dr. Dabney in his *Syllabus and Notes* (Student's Edition, Part II., p. 85) says under the caption "Regeneration properly defined," "we prove that regeneration is not a mere change of human purpose, occurring in view of motive; but a supernatural renovation of the dispositions which determine the moral purpose and of the understanding, in the apprehension of moral and spiritual truth." Says Dr. A. A. Hodge in his *Outlines*: "In the new creation God

IX. CRITICISMS AND REVIEWS.

BEATTIE'S PRESBYTERIAN STANDARDS.

THE PRESBYTERIAN STANDARDS: AN EXPOSITION OF THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH AND CATECHISMS. *By Rev. Francis R. Beattie, B. D., Ph. D., D. D.* Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication. 1896. Pp. 431. \$2.00.

Dr. Beattie belongs to the Southern Presbyterian Church by adoption. He is a native of Canada. In 1888 he left his pastorate at Brantford, Canada, and removed to Columbia, South Carolina, where he occupied the chair of Natural Science in Connection with Revelation and Christian Apologetics, discharging the duties of that professorship for five years with great ability, and to the satisfaction of his brethren. In 1893 he resigned his place in Columbia, and became the occupant of the chair of systematic theology and apologetics in the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, the duties of which he is now performing. He is growing in the favor and love of the church he serves. An able and godly man; ripe and rich in scholarship; strong and courageous, while cautious and tactful, in his defences of the faith; clear and conservative in his expositions of evangelical truth; skilful and successful in his labors as an educator; thoroughly and conscientiously out of sympathy with all radicalism in criticism, in science, in philosophy, in theology, in apologetics—our church is proud of him, and has placed him at the front, given to him its confidence, and believes that he will guard his trust with fidelity and ability of no ordinary degree.

Dr. Beattie is the author of *An Examination of Utilitarianism*, *The Methods of Theism*, and *Radical Criticism*. To this list he has now added the work which is before us. In these books he stands squarely against rationalism, and for conservative and traditional orthodoxy. He is a Calvinist of the school of the Hodges. His theological alignment is with the federalists, and the covenant is, with him, a ruling factor in anthropology and soteriology. He stands in with our own matchless Thornwell.

The book on our desk is what it professes to be—an exposition. It is not a speculation; it is not an attempt to evolve a system of theology from the Westminster Standards as a genetic base; it is an interpretation of those venerable formularies. True exposition devotes itself to the definition of terms, or, rather, more broadly and accurately, to the definition and explication of ideas and generalizations. It is not concerned, at least primarily, with establishing either the falsity or the truth of its subject-matter; still, incidentally, good, clear-cut exposition is often the most conclusive form of argument. Disputants would often come to agreement if they would stop to define their terms. This form of composition underlies the whole field of serious and didactic writing. The attributes of good exposition are plainness, clearness, and simplicity. These qualities are found in this book in an eminent degree. We desire at this point to express two or three specific judgments upon Dr. Beattie's work.

1. It is a singularly plain piece of expository work. The author's thoughts lie clearly defined in his own mind, and every trace of foggyiness is dissipated from about the crystal idea. He has observed, with painstaking fidelity, the laws of division, and thereby secured almost perfect methodicalness and orderliness of elaboration. He has resorted to the mechanical art of notating the points, heads, and sub-heads, and to the literary device of repetition, until it is impossible for the reader to ever "lose himself," or fail to recognize all the time the precise stage of the development to which the reading has brought him. The author has eschewed with relentlessness all abstrusities of language and all involved forms of sentence. Technicalities appear where they are necessary, but the context always defines the technicality. In handling abstruse topics—and there are abstruse topics in Calvinism—Dr. Beattie has successfully labored to be clear and simple. We do not see how it is possible for the grammar-school boy to miss the meaning of these sentences, through which daylight shines all the time.

2. This is a singularly cautious piece of exposition. We are struck by the fewness of the understatements, of the overstatements, and of the partial statements. Our author's object has been to set forth the contents of these Westminster Standards. Calmness of mind, fairness of treatment, prudence of statement, were necessary at every point. It was not his purpose to say what he would like for these standards to contain; it was not his object to tone them down at some points, and to tone them up at other points, and to gently warp them at still other points; he has been careful to stay within safe bounds, and to represent the standards as teaching what only great prudence and conservatism would readily concede. At no point has he brought undue pressure to bear upon these authoritative statements of doctrine, but has always let them yield their easy and natural meaning to his pen. Indeed, there is nothing reckless, dashing, daring, startling about this author; his ruling ambition seems to be to say only what is safely true. We are delighted with the self-denial here exhibited—the denial of all temptation to make some striking, original, and racy use of these great formulae. It shows that our author loves truth better than brilliant dash, sensational departure, or flashy speculation. There is not a purple adjective in the book.

3. It is a singularly faithful piece of exposition. True interpretation is not merely mechanical, but creative, only regulating the new creation by the constructive lines of the original. This sort of work requires a severe analytical judgment in order to answer the primary question, "What does this document mean?" It also demands a vivid imagination in order that the interpreter may put himself by the side of the original author, to see as he saw, and to think as he thought. But the supreme temptation of the interpreter is to read into the original his own ideas, or to throw upon it some colors of his own mind. The ideal of the interpreter is to be a perfectly transparent, unrefracting medium for the transmission of the thoughts of the original. We believe that Dr. Beattie has approximated the realization of this ideal. There is almost no personal colorization of the ideas.

4. It is strikingly comprehensive. The author's aim was to give a connected exposition of the entire Westminster Standards. The Shorter Catechism is made the basis of the treatise, but the contents of the Larger Catechism and The Confession of Faith are carefully incorporated at every point. In this feature his book is differentiated from the commentaries of Hodge, Mitchell, Paterson, Fisher, Steel, and others. Two introductory chapters are given, the one on "The Great

Christian Creeds," and the other on "The Nature and Uses of Religious Creeds." The last chapter is a "Summary and Conclusion," in which the author gives his personal estimate of the Westminster Standards. There are thirty-four chapters in all. Each is headed with a reference to the source where the ideas sought to be exhibited may be found. A good index is added for speedy reference.

Dr. Beattie has no sympathy with the modern insane crusade against creeds and confessional theology. He does not look upon such formularies as hampering the spirit of free inquiry, nor as biasing research concerning religious problems. On the contrary, creeds are, in his opinion, good vantage-ground from which to prosecute investigations. He holds that they are necessary as a bond of unity in doctrine, worship, and polity for those who belong to the same communion; that they supply the best basis from which to deal with heresy; that they are the best declaration of faith and conduct to those who are outside of the particular communion; that they are the very best compend for religious instruction. Of late years, in some quarters of the theological world, it has been a fascinating idea to prosecute investigation into religious truth without reference to traditionalism and confessionalism, the attraction being in the liberty and originality which were supposed to belong to such a method. We are of opinion that that tide is beginning to turn back to the theology of creeds and confessions. The untrammelled experiment has brought the reverent and biblical thinkers back to the conclusions which they found set up for them in the ecclesiastical formularies of faith. The feeling is, that the method is really backward and not forward; that such a student simply works over old ground; whereas, if he had begun at the point where the creeds have left off, he could have carried theology a step forward, instead of merely expending his time and life in bringing it to the point it reached at Westminster two hundred and fifty years ago. The feeling is beginning to steal over such students that they have simply cheated themselves, and thrown away their opportunity to make some advanced contribution to theological science. All hail to the decline of this foolish and egotistical experiment to wipe out the thought of the past!

This is the fifth jubilee of the Westminster Standards! Many things ought to be said about Dr. Beattie's celebration of it by the issuance of this comprehensive and satisfactory book. Our limits will not permit us to say all that we want to say in praise of this volume. The reader, however, will be interested in a word or two from the last chapter, which will show him the view-point from which the distinguished and able professor has considered the authoritative standards of his church.

He regards these standards as very comprehensive in their scope making a full exhibit of doctrine, of ethics, and of polity. They are a definite creed with a catholic spirit. Their contents, when applied, yield the highest and most beneficent results in individual, in social, in domestic, in national life. Their ruling type of doctrine is historic Calvinism, but their statements are not so rigid as to require but one special type of Calvinism, and to exclude all others as heretical. For example, while these standards are sublapsarian, they do not condemn supralapsarianism as heretical; while they are for immediate imputation, they are not so rigid as to exclude mediate imputation, generic unity, or concurrence, as possible theories as to the relation between Adam and his posterity; while they strongly assert that the atonement is a vicarious, sacrificial satisfaction, they leave some

room for diversity of opinion as to the precise nature of the atonement; while they are distinctly post-millennial in their teaching, they yet leave the pre-millennarian unbranded of heresy; while their ethics are pronounced, they are not severely Puritanic; while their polity is decidedly Presbyterian, they admit some variations of type in this sphere. As to their constructive principles, the standards, in a general way, are theocentric; but in a specific way they were evolved with the covenants as the genetic principle; they are pronouncedly federalistic. They give great prominence to the law and to Christian ethics. They are a finality, not in a primary sense, but only in a secondary way; primarily, the Bible is a final authority, but the standards are final to those who voluntarily live under them. Dr. Beattie's final opinion is, that the Calvinism of the Westminster Standards must become the basis of any closer union of Protestants.

Dr. Beattie's book is a great success. It is bound to be a potent and potential factor in Christian enlightenment, a powerful commendation of our peculiar system of doctrine. We feel sure that it will have a wide influence and a long life. We congratulate him, the Louisville Seminary, and the entire Southern Presbyterian Church upon the issuance of this volume of such soundness and force.

Clarksville, Tenn.

R. A. WEBB.

JOHNSTON'S SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY.

AN OUTLINE OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY. *By E. H. Johnston, D. D., Professor in Crozier Theological Seminary; and AN ECCLESIOLOGY. By Henry G. Weston, D. D., President of Crozier Seminary.* Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society. 1895. 8vo, pp. 383. Price, \$2.50.

This is a compact and readable treatise. It comes from two esteemed instructors in Crozier Seminary. The outline of theology is a moderate type of Calvinism; the ecclesiology is that phase of independency which the Baptist churches in America maintain. The type of Calvinism is not so clear and decided as that set forth in Boyce's *Abstract of Theology*. This may be taken to indicate the fact that the Southern Baptists are more decidedly Calvinistic than their brethren at the North.

In Professor Johnston's outline of theology the usual topics of the system are expounded. The first part is introductory; the second deals with theology proper; the third explains soteriology; and the fourth considers eschatology. This part of the book covers 309 pages. In Professor Weston's ecclesiology the constitution and polity of the New Testament church is expounded. Though this part consists of less than 80 pages it is very condensed and suggestive. The whole covers the main topics of the theological system.

In the introduction of over thirty pages there are some valuable expositions regarding the sources of theology, and concerning inspiration. In the second part, of fully eighty pages, there is a very good summary and exposition of the proofs for the existence of God. This exposition indicates that the author is familiar with the speculations upon this great theme, and that he is competent to give a sound judgment as to the merits of the main proofs for the divine existence. The discussion of the attributes of God is rather brief, and the exposition of the Trinity is very strangely postponed to the department of soteriology. The doctrine of the decrees and their execution in creation and providence is discussed in this