

# THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

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## I.

### SOME OBJECTIONS TO THE FEDERAL THEORY OF IMMEDIATE IMPUTATION.

WE will notice the most radical objection first. A distinguished theologian, who teaches immediate imputation, and who would be classed as a Calvinist, objects to the federal theory on the ground that "it is extra-scriptural, there being no mention of such a covenant with Adam in the account of man's trial." What he thinks of the covenant of grace may be gathered from the fact that he makes election logically subsequent, in God's decree, to the purpose to redeem. "The true order of the decrees," he holds, "is therefore as follows: 1, The decree to create; 2, the decree to permit the fall; 3, the decree to provide a salvation in Christ sufficient for the needs of all; 4, the decree to secure the actual acceptance of this salvation on the part of some—or, in other words, the decree of election." Such an order of the decrees is obviously inconsistent with a federal relation on the part of the Redeemer to any particular class of fallen men. It implies that his work had equal reference to all. Election is simply an expedient to save the scheme from ignominious failure. We understand this author to make a square issue. The natural relation is the only one we sustain to Adam: our union with Christ begins when we exercise saving faith. The theory of the covenant being extra-scriptural, he does not employ the terms which belong to it. To use Bishop Butler's distinction, he objects to the evidence rather than to the contents of revelation. We agree with him entirely that the question is one of fact. If the doctrine of the covenants is not a matter of divine revelation, then any

The last two sermons are on the relation of the natural and supernatural. Space forbids any attempt to exhibit their contents. It may be said of these, as of them all, they are clear, massive, splendid discussions of some of the greatest themes which stand in waiting at the portals of human thought.

Would that a multitude of preachers would take this volume, and learn from it that strength which these weak times so perishingly need!

Clarksville, Tenn.

R. A. WEBB.

#### ROBBINS' "CHRISTIAN APOLOGETIC."

**A CHRISTIAN APOLOGETIC.** By Wilford L. Robbins, D. D., Dean of the Cathedral of All Saints, Albany, U. S. A. 12mo, pp. 194. Longmans, Green & Co., 39 Paternoster Row, London; New York and Bombay. 1902.

This neat little volume is one of a series of "Handbooks for the Clergy," edited by Arthur N. Robinson, Vicar of Allhallows, Barking by the Tower (London, England). This series is evidently prepared mainly for the clergy of the episcopal branch of the church, but it will be of service to the ministers of other branches of the church also.

The series, of which this volume is one, consists of ten numbers. Six of these are already published, and four are in course of preparation. Their titles will show their general nature and scope: "The Personal Life of the Clergy," "Patristic Study," "The Ministry of Conversion," "Foreign Missions," "The Study of the Gospels," "A Christian Apologetic," "Pastoral Visitation," "The Study of Church History," "Authority and the Principle of Obedience," "Science and Religion," "Lay Work." The authors are all men in the Episcopal Church in England, and their expositions are suited chiefly to the conditions of that branch of the church in the old land. It will be seen also that the subjects discussed are mainly practical in their nature.

The little volume before us is rightly termed, "A Christian Apologetic," for it makes no claim to be a systematic treatise on apologetics, as this term is now understood. It is simply one line of the vindication of the reasonableness of the contents of the Christian faith. It is by no means a defence and vindication of Christianity at all points. Yet it has its distinct value.

The titles of its chapters will show its aim and limits: "Introductory," "Definition of Aim," "Apologetics in the Light of Modern Thought," "Jesus Christ, and the Moral Ideal," "The Divine Claim of Christ," "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ," "The Trustworthiness of the Christian Records," "The Witness of Prophecy," "The Demonstration of the Spirit."

In the introduction allusion is made to the dislike many people have of this study, and some reasons are stated for this temper among many good people. Yet our author claims a place and value for this branch of religious discussion.

In defining his aim the author simply assumes the results of the whole theistic discussion, which is the subject matter of fundamental apologetics; and he announces that he proposes to deal with Jesus Christ, and to make good his historical reality, and the divinity of his person and mission among

men. He makes the question, "Was Jesus Christ Divine?" the thesis he proposes to prove.

In dealing with apologetics in relation to modern thought, our author rejoices that present-day modes of thought and methods of inquiry are helpful to the Christian apologete. He lays special stress on the inductive method of modern science as very useful in the religious sphere in our own time, and he proposes to follow it himself. Here we can go heartily with our author, only we might attach more value to philosophy than he does.

In the chapter on Jesus Christ and the Moral Ideal, the moral grandeur of the Man of Nazareth is made the basis of a valid argument for his divinity, or at least his uniqueness. The moral influence of Jesus Christ in the world is well brought out by our author, and its apologetic value is justly estimated. Care is needed at this point by the apologete. Sinlessness of itself may not prove that Jesus Christ is a divine person, for the unfallen angels are sinless, yet not divine. Still, the fact of a sinless human life, lived amid universal sinfulness, gives the life of Christ a uniqueness which suggests that in some sense his personality transcends the sphere of mere humanity. The argument has value in this sense.

The chapter on Christ's most remarkable claim is perhaps the best in the book. It makes good the position that the only explanation of that claim, and the way in which it was sustained, is the fact of his divinity. The exposition of Christ's resurrection, while brief, is satisfactory. An empty tomb and an absent body is best accounted for by the fact of the resurrection. The trustworthiness of the records of the gospels and the witness of prophecy are also treated in the same simple and satisfactory way, though many points of value had to be untouched by reason of narrow limits of the discussion.

The last chapter, on the demonstration, suggests the argument from the effects of the Christian religion, alike in the individual and in the race.

The impression of the book as a whole is good. Because of its brevity, it leaves much to be desired; yet it will be read by many who will not take time to go through larger treatises. It strikes us, however, that, being intended for ministers, it might have been a little more thorough. For intelligent laymen it is also suited to be of great value.

*Louisville, Ky.*

FRANCIS R. BEATTIE.

#### SMITH'S "THE INTEGRITY OF SCRIPTURE."

THE INTEGRITY OF SCRIPTURE. Plain Reasons for Rejecting the Critical Hypothesis. *By the Rev. John Smith, M.A., D.D., Broughton Place Church, Edinburgh.* 12mo, pp. viii., 283. \$1.25, net. New York, Chicago, Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company. 1902.

Dr. Smith is the busy pastor of an Edinburgh church. The chapters of this book were given to his congregations in monthly lectures. They are the work of a scholar as well as of a preacher. They express the results of careful and discriminating study in popular terms. As such they appeal especially to the educated layman, the representative of a large class of people who are inquiring what there is in the claims of the new criticism.