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## A SPIRITUAL CYCLONE: THE MILLERITE DELUSION.

BY MRS. JANE MARSH PARKER, ROCHESTER, N. Y., AUTHOR OF "A MIDNIGHT CRY," ETC.

"EVERY age," says Cardinal Manning, "has hitherto had its heresy. But the nineteenth century has all heresies; it is the century of unbelief." He might have added that religious fanaticism is disappearing; that intensity of spiritual conviction is not a marked feature of the time; and that although the fanatic is an enthusiast—the inflammatory symptoms of his uncontrolled enthusiasm indicating chronic derangement—yet he believes *something*; his creed is not one of mere negations. The fact that the nineteenth century gave birth to a fanaticism like Millerism shows that, in the United States at least, religious fervor had not in the middle of the century become so chilled by indifferentism and unbelief that it might not be fanned into a dangerous flame; and that the stuff of which the martyrs was made is not yet eliminated from this agnostic age.

October 24th, 1844, the fanaticism of Millerism was at its height—was the feature of the times.

For twelve years it had been gaining strength—the last of a long series of similar outbreaks in the history of millenarianism, all based upon the literal interpretation of the prophecy, "Behold, I come quickly."

Millerism had an individuality of its own. It was rooted in mathematical deductions, founded on a literal interpretation of the unfulfilled prophecies of the second coming. It demonstrated as plainly as the simplest rule in mathematics possibly could, that, allowing that the generally accepted rule of biblical interpretation was to be followed, then the final judgment was to take place in the year of our Lord 1843 or 1844. The fixing upon the very day did not come until after the passing by of 1843; then it was clearly revealed to Father Miller and his followers that the mistake had been made by their reckoning Roman time and not

Jewish time. 1843 Roman time was 1844 Jewish time. The grand focalization of all prophecy was upon the tenth day of the seventh month, and at the hour of even. That was the time of the great feast of Atonement. It was reasonable to believe that the great and final atonement would be upon that day.

It is in a study of the leader of this movement—which was no inconsiderable one—that we reach the fairest comprehension of the fanaticism which may be classed among the foremost of those of the nineteenth century.

William Miller was born at Pittsfield, Mass., February 15th, 1782,\* and was a well-to-do farmer of Low Hampton, Washington County, N. Y. When in 1831 he came before the public with his gospel, he was a fair type of a prosperous, intelligent, and highly respected Green Mountain farmer. His two hundred acres of well-cultivated land were unmortgaged, and if there was one man before all others in the community whose common sense, honesty, and reliability were undoubted, that man was William Miller. He had been a captain at the battle of Plattsburg, and his record was a brave one. He had served as constable, sheriff, and justice of the peace in his native town, and was the local poet as well, writing exceptionally good "odes" for special occasions. He was more of a reader than many farmers, and his familiarity with books made him quite an oracle among his neighbors, who, nevertheless, were somewhat disturbed at his reading not only Hume, Voltaire, and Tom Paine, but at his able defence of their doctrines. But in good time he threw them aside and wheeled into the ranks of the Baptist Church, and then, in contrition for quaffing at poisonous springs, he began a most devout and con-

\* There is a life of Miller by White, Battle Creek, Mich., 1875.

some points almost to the verge of affirming what is called eucharistic grace.

Other illustrations of the fresh, suggestive, practical, as well as speculative teachings of this treatise must be omitted. Would that its author might have been spared to formulate his system of theology more fully, and to make other contributions to our knowledge and our faith! How elevated and inspiring such a service might have been is beautifully apparent in these sentences from the preface to this volume:

"I claim to be a minister, not only of the Presbyterian Church, but of the one visible Church of Christ: and the larger relation dominates and moulds my thoughts and feelings. I long for the time when all the ministers and churches of Christ shall cease their rivalries and their witness-bearing against each other, and shall unite in the larger and more important work of testifying the grace of God in all the world to every creature, and in co-operation for the triumphant establishment of Christ's Kingdom in all the earth."

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THE PSALMS. A New Translation, with Introductory Essay and Notes. By JOHN DE WITT, D.D., LL.D., L.H.D. New York: A. D. F. Randolph & Co., 1891. 8vo, pp. xxxvi., 325, \$2.

Perhaps the most useful notice of this book will be one that shall merely attempt to differentiate it from other translations of the Psalms into English. There is no best method for such translation; that which is best from one point of view is not so from another. There are advantages in a simple rendering of the sense, with no attempt to transfer the outward poetical form; one who translates thus can give his entire attention to the correct and adequate presenting of the meaning. The method most unlike this is that of the so-called metrical versions, found in our hymn-books and elsewhere. Many of these are fine from a literary point of view, and a few are good translations. As a rule, however, they are either poetically clumsy, or else are not translations, but original poems suggested by the psalm in hand. And yet some of them catch and convey the poetic fire of the psalm in such a way as largely compensate for the lack of exactness in the rendering. But between these two extremes many middle courses are open to the translator.

Of the course most commonly followed a good example is found in the Revised Version of the Old Testament, where the external form of the poetry is marked by dividing the lines and occasionally by paragraphing, so as to indicate the strophes. This method has the advantage that the translator is not cramped by it. Commonly he is just as free to conform his work exactly to the sense of the words and the syntax as he would be if he paid no attention to the lines. It has the further advantage of strongly emphasizing parallelism of statement as the prevailing outward mark of Hebrew poetry. But it has the disadvantage of enabling the translator to indicate mechanically that what he is translating is poetry, and thus often of relieving him from the responsibility of making his translation really poetical; and the further disadvantage that it may give the mistaken impression that parallelism of statement is the only external mark of Hebrew poetry, to the exclusion of rhythm and all like marks.

Present Hebrew scholarship emphasizes the doc-

trine that Hebrew poetry is marked by rhythm as well as by parallelism of statement. What are the laws of the rhythm, or even whether it has laws that are capable of being briefly and simply stated, are questions in dispute; but the fact that the rhythm exists is not disputed. In illustration of this many attempts have been made to transfer the rhythm of particular psalms to English translations. One takes the Hebrew as it stands, and translates, line by line, so that the succession of long and short syllables and of accented and unaccented syllables shall be the same in the English lines as in the Hebrew. Others attempt to formulate the laws of Hebrew rhythm, and then translate into English lines subject to the same rhythmic laws. Work of this kind, patiently and well done, is of very great value for certain purposes, but is generally too cramped for true and spirited translation.

Yet another method is possible—a method which depends largely on the gifts of the individual translator, but which, in competent hands, combines some of the advantages and avoids some of the disadvantages of those thus far mentioned. Translate the Hebrew line by line, aiming to make the translation correct and spirited, but making the English lines distinctly rhythmic, and rhythmic in such fashion as to present to the ear some analogy to the rhythm of the Hebrew. Where convenient, let the English line carry the same rhythmic alternation of syllables with the Hebrew line, but not to the extent of cramping the freedom and spirit of the translation. Where there is sufficient reason, but not elsewhere, take such liberties as the changing of lines or paraphrasing. One who is deficient in scholarship or judgment or poetic appreciation or delicacy, working in this method will simply make a mess of it; but one who is sufficiently endowed with these gifts may have large success in transferring to English both the correct meaning and the poetic fire of a psalm. His work cannot take the place of a mechanically literal translation, but supplementing such a translation, it may lift the reader into an appreciation of the Psalms such as would otherwise be impossible.

This last method is the one employed in Dr. De Witt's book, and Dr. De Witt has the scholarship, the good judgment, the poetic appreciation and delicacy, and the spiritual discernment requisite for making it a success. For a systematic study of the Psalms, this work would hardly supersede the use of a merely literal translation, or of a systematic commentary; and yet it would not be surprising if many students, using this along with other helps, should find it worth more to them than any of the others.

The writer of this notice might specify many things in this book that seem to him to be faults, though most of these would perhaps resolve themselves into differences of opinion between Dr. De Witt and himself, but mainly the work commands his hearty admiration. There are very few brief essays on the Psalms that are anywhere near so well worth a careful reading as the Introductory Essay of this volume. As the work, in earlier form, has been twice before published, once in 1884 and once in 1889, and practically has been rewritten, it has a literary finish that it might not otherwise have attained. In Hebrew scholarship it is up to date, though its position in questions concerning authorship and in all questions that touch the doctrine of inspiration is conservative. Dr. De Witt is one of those conservative scholars who are not afraid to recognize the merits of men who differ with them or to learn even from their

opponents. The notes are always to the point and are usually valuable, though they do not constitute a complete commentary on the book. The printer has done his work admirably. The volume contains nearly 400 pages, the printed matter on a page measuring 6½ by 4 inches.

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#### QUARTERLY AND MAGAZINE REVIEWS.

##### CONTENTS PAGES AND DIGESTS OF THEIR PRINCIPAL ARTICLES.

PRESENT TENDENCIES IN GERMAN PHILOSOPHY.  
By ARTHUR FAIRBANKS, Dartmouth College,  
Hanover, N. H.

The student finds it one of his most difficult tasks to correctly understand the trend of thought in his own line, yet unless he does understand and keep in touch with it, his work is likely to be of very little account. Hence the value of such sketches as are found in the inaugural address of Dr. Falckenberg, which gives a careful *resumé* of the present tendencies of German philosophy.

This is undoubtedly an age of detail, of minute investigation, rather than of larger thought. The colossal systems of metaphysics of the early part of the present century have vanished, and rather than attempt to rear others, men are turning their attention to history and to the physiological basis of psychology. The change has this advantage that it permits quiet, detailed preparation for the future, but is unfortunate so far as it averts attention from the fundamental problems of the human race. Thus there is an immense amount of scattering individual work which makes a proper criticism of results almost impossible.

The last century shows four stages of philosophy. The first, that of Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*; the second, Hegel's work on the orthodox dogma in the universities. In the third there was a general breaking up, only the vestiges of older systems remaining, and science seemed to determine the channel of thought so far as there was one, and materialism held full sway. Dissatisfaction with the idea that thought was a mere physiological product of the brain had spread even before 1865, under the influence of Darwin and the evolutionists, Helmholtz and the physiologists, and Lotze, with his medical studies.

Scientific men have been wont to declaim one moment against philosophy and then to philosophize most wildly, but during this period there were many who worked out from narrower lines to a broader outlook, and the result has been that for the past twenty-five years the watchword has been, "Back to Kant." The general characteristic of the Neo-Kantianism is the rejection of metaphysics. As we know only phenomena, materialism and spiritualism are alike unfounded. The great problem of the philosopher is the theory of knowledge; his work to explain the origin and nature of experience, to find the laws of science, solve the question of causation. This idea is the most striking characteristic of German thought to-day, controlling historians, scientists, and theologians.

The one metaphysical question is, Is metaphysics possible? Some deny it entirely, while a few are trying to construct a metaphysics on the old line

and with the old methods. Intermediate between these are a class, seeking to found a new metaphysics with a new method, starting with the relation of mental and physical facts, asking how much of our external world is due to the constitutions of our minds? The method is new in that it is not regardless of facts, the aim modest in that it does not seek to comprehend all reality in one grand system, but studies the results of science and their mutual relation.

The influence of Hegel is still evident in the study of the history of philosophy and in the philosophy of religion, but there is no one of the former leaders of metaphysical thought that has so large a following to-day as Herbart, especially in ethics and psychology, even physiological psychology owing much to his influence.

In ethics the long and rather barren period in Germany is passing, and English utilitarianism is striving with the followers of Herbart, who refer rules of action back to the fundamental ideas of freedom, perfection, etc. Logic, too, is finding new life, being connected with living processes of thought, and acting upon psychology, which again reacts upon it.

German philosophy to-day is exceedingly modest, except for occasional pride of this very modesty. The work is indeed scientific rather than philosophical, gathering the facts for a new era of active production.

Two evils are to be combated: 1. A divorce between what the investigator believes as an individual and what he defends before his companions in thought, the separation between personal conviction and the effort for scientific exactness. 2. A divorce between reason and feeling, a tendency to deny the latter any influence on the results reached by thought. Those who forget that thought and feeling are complementary, and work from a one-sided theory of knowledge, do not and cannot give philosophy its power in the world.

THE DRIFT OF DOGMATIC THOUGHT IN GERMANY DURING THE LAST DECADE. By DR. ADOLF ZAHN, of Stuttgart, Germany. *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, July, 1891.

In this article Dr. Zahn undertakes to set forth the true nature of what is supposed to be German unbelief, and calls attention to the fact that it is a great mistake to conclude that, as a result of this unbelief, there is in Germany a specially degenerated condition of morals. Everywhere there is a sense of duty, a fidelity in office, a respect for law and order, and a spirit of diligence and painstaking work. The general prosperous condition of the country, as instanced in its cities, is, in truth, the outcome of the Reformation and of the Bible in evangelical common schools. Still it is a fact that the German often turns his back upon the Church, the Bible, and all recognition of Christian things as soon as he has made his public profession. The great mass of the educated class appear indifferent, cold, and disinclined to religious things, while atheism seems to have possessed the working people, resulting in a desire to overturn the entire existing order of things. Thus it results that the best pastor is a little man among his people; and the best professor, shut up to his students, is not in touch with the people, and has no connection with the religious element around him. A revision of the evangelical confessions would in Germany interest the clergy only, not the laity. In connection with this he calls attention to the meagreness of