

# THE UNION SEMINARY MAGAZINE

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## I.—LITERARY.

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### THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE SCRIPTURES.

The fundamental question of the christian religion is the origin of the Scriptures. It is fundamental because the answer we must give to almost all other religious questions depends on the answer we must give to it. What we are to think about God and his attributes; about the law and its penalties; about sin and its consequences; about Christ and his salvation; about life and its duties; about death and its issues; about the future that lies beyond death, and the destiny that awaits the righteous and the wicked; what we are to think about these and number of other subjects, is determined by the conclusion at which we arrive as to the source whence the Bible has come. If it originated with men in the exercise of their own unaided powers, its contents are merely human speculations, having no more authority than human reason can confer. But if it came from God, and, in all its parts, is a record of divine truth, its teachings on all subjects come to us with authority that precludes all debate, and that demands immediate obedience.

A very important question, then, is, how may the ordinary reader of the Book, who has no acquaintance with its original languages, and who has no time for protracted study of books on the evidences, come to a satisfactory conclusion as to its divine origin, so that he may be able to rest upon its teachings all the weight of his eternal interests without any misgivings that his hopes will at last go up as dust.

as unhelpful, in nine cases out of ten to him. Besides it is an expensive habit, and not one of the cleanest. But we are not ready to say that it is so hurtful to the cause of Christ as attending the modern dance. The casuist should think deeply. He should certainly avoid counting one of two things as morally worse than the other because it happens to be worse from an esthetic standpoint. We may agree that the tobacco habit is more offensive to the esthetic faculty than the waltz. The question as to which will work the greater moral evil is not settled by this agreement.

THOS. C. JOHNSON.

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**THE ETHICS OF MARRIAGE.** *By H. S. Pomeroy, M. D.,* Boston. With a Prefatory Note by Thomas Addis Emmet, M. D., New York; and an Introduction by Rev. J. T. Duryea, D. D., Boston. Also with an Appendix showing the laws of most of the States and Territories Regarding Certain Forms of Crime. Pp. 197, 12 mo. Funk & Wagnolls: New York; London.

This work has been before the public since 1888. We have no doubt that it has already done a vast deal of good. It should do much more, however. The questions handled in this book are of fundamental importance whether looked at from the point of view of the family, the state or the church. They are discussed with as much reserve and delicacy as was consistent with the high purpose of the author, viz.; To convey much needed truth on themes of the greatest moment. The discussions are marked throughout by the sort of conviction which springs of thorough-going research, and by great fairness in dealing with well meant but misdirected protests against the evils, at the root of which the author gives well directed blows.

We believe that his main positions are at once scientific and Biblical—that they are true. And so valuable do we esteem the work that we would not offer adverse criticisms if we could.

We especially, advise all our young brethren in the ministry, whether married or not, to buy the work and read it.

Orlando, March 7, '96.

THOS. C. JOHNSON.

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**A HISTORY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES.**  
*By Robt. Ellis Thompson, D. D.* New York: The Christian Librature Co.

This is the sixth volume in the American Church Series. It is properly a history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. The treatment of the other Presbyterian Churches, attempted, is very sketchy and defective. As a historical product it is, perhaps, of about the average value of the volumes of this series. It can not be called a good history of even the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. In several particulars the author has failed of the historical truth. Some of them are important.

In the treatment of the division into Old and New School in 1838; and of the union of these bodies, North, in 1870, the author has fallen into the role of the irenical historian. He belittles the differences between the two parties previous to 1838. He makes the theological differences slight. See p. 124. This is in the face of facts so well-known that there can be little regard for an author's word who is either ignorant of, or ignores them. That the New School Party and the New School Church did tolerate within it men who held views diverging widely from the Westminster Standards, and that it did interpret these views as consistent with the standards, or at least as allowable deviations, no man but an ignoramus, or one incapable of logical discernment, can with truthful intention deny. To illustrate, widely differing views of sin—some of them altogether un-calvinistic—were taught in the New School Church. Now the tyro knows that a man's view of sin is determinative of his view of almost every cardinal doctrine of redemption. According to one's view of sin is his view of the necessities of man's case, his view of the work absolutely needed by him. The historian should know that the works of many New School men remain to this day; that they may be read; that their views are clearly expressed in these works; and that if he will have his work respected he must respect the testimony of these works.\* The author seems at times to forget how important it is to be irenical. He at such times gets a glint of truth. On p. 159, in speaking of the Southern Presbyterian Church, he says:

"The next year a union was formed with the United Synod (N. S.). This was on the basis of a doctrinal statement which covered the grounds of difference of 1837; and the New School men of the South, by accepting it, showed that either they had shifted their ground in the meanwhile, or else that they never were in agreement with those who drafted the Auburn Declarations. This, however, is denied by some of them to this day."

Apparently, in this passage, he thinks there is considerable difference between Auburn Declaration and the Old School Theology; whereas most Old School men, who know any thing of the matter, are convinced that the Auburn Declaration, as it never was formally adopted by the New School Church, never expressed any thing like all the Theology of the New School Church. If there were differences between Old School Theology and the Auburn Declaration, and this the author asserts, how much greater the differences between Old School Theology and Taylorism, Barnesism, Beecherism, and all the other current *isms* tolerated in the New School body.

When the author attempts to teach that New Havenism and these other new views would never have obtained wide currency if they had been dealt with in a forbearing spirit by the Old School he plays the role of a prophet. Uninspired prophecy is generally not worthy of refutation. Sufficeth it us to say in reference to this case that a widespread and powerful impression to the contrary prevailed in the Old School body at the time—a body of great sagacity.

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\*The reader who is unacquainted with the controversy and thinks us too hard, may refer to James Wood's *Old and New Theology*: Presbyterian Board of Publication: Philadelphia.

Dr. Thompson asserts that it was on the Ecclesiastical side that the Old School policy was most capable of defence but even here he alleges that there was no need of the split; that the "High-Church" spirit spreading about that time in all the American Churches would have prevented the further tendencies of the Presbyterian Church toward congregationalism. To this philosophy it is enough to say that the "High-Church" spirit wrought in congregationalists as in Presbyterians; and it is quite possible that nothing but the shock from the division would have arrested the congregationalizing movement in the New School party.

In treating of the union between the Old and New School bodies, North, the author, of course, could see no differences worthy to keep the parties apart. He slurs over the fact that an *explanation* of the way in which the standards were to be interpreted *could never be framed which met the approbation of both bodies; that the whole united church adopted in coming together, the latitudinarian, Broad-Church, New School interpretation of the Standards.* Moreover, he makes next to nothing of the influence of the hatred to the South, common to both these bodies, in bringing them together. This is all the more remarkable since he adverts over and over again to *political influence* as one of the important forces in the union of several smaller Presbyterian bodies, South, with the Southern Presbyterian Church.

Now peacemaking is a blessed function, but the historian who ignores that which must be forgotten by parties in order to happy union is untrue to the objective history. His aim, if he were a pastor and not a historian, might be commended. But Dr. Thompson proposes in this work to be a historian. He does not even admonish us that he proposes to be silent as to certain parts of the church's post. Old Dr. Milner in writing his History asserted, at the outset, that he would write for edification; that, accordingly, he should omit those parts of the history of the church which would not minister to edification. Dr. Thompson makes no such announcement. On the other hand he attempts to deal with questions which he might have refused to discuss; and gives a most imperfect, even if irenical, treatment of them.

Dr. Thompson descends to the level of the ordinary partisan *in dealing with the Southern Presbyterian Church.* He says that "Those who stood by the Spring Resolutions had the whole history of the Church, the teaching of the Confession, and the authority of God's Word on their side. P. 154.

This contains along with some truth a great untruth. It is true that the Church had often subordinated herself to the state—shame to the Church. But it is as false to say that God's Word sanctions the prostitution of church to state, as was done by the great Presbyterian Church, North, by the Spring Resolutions.

The author attempts to show that the Southern Church did not plant itself upon the ground taken in Hodge's protest against the Spring Resolutions till after the close of the war; and that it did so then as an afterthought. For proof he quotes from the narratives on the state of religion in 1862 and 1864. Every body knows of those missteps on the part of the Southern Church. It should be as well known that they were *transient*

*inconsistencies* in contradiction to her formal position taken in 1861, and generally maintained in spite of her extraordinary circumstances. It should be as well known also that our church has collected all accounts of such missteps by her Assembly and formally expressed her sorrow for such as were not merely apparent cases of political action. Dr. Thompson seems to be entirely ignorant of this noble conduct on the part of our church.

According to this *historian* political sympathies "sufficed to modify ecclesiastical convictions" so as to bring into the Southern Church, the Synod of Missouri, the Synod of Kentucky, the Associate Reformed Presbytery of Alabama and that of Kentucky. He makes of the Presbyterian Church, South, a very "politicating" body.

In an other aspect this work is very interesting. Dr. Thompson may be fairly styled an apostle of the Oxford movement in his Church. He is neither a Pusey, a Newman, nor a Keble; but he sympathizes with each of these men; as what good man will not. But he sympathizes with their non-Puritan side. He hungers after more of the spectacular, more ritual, more sacramentarianism. By his school, his book—parts of it—might be used as a tract for the times. His book will, perhaps, add to the number who preach in gowns, who talk about and try to have built sermons in stone, and who preach with gothic arches, stained glass, beautiful frescoes and sermonettes. But God forbid that this monument in the Presbyterian Church should prevail as that emanating from England's greatest University and working to the Romanization of the Church of England.

The work has multitudes of statements which are unhistorical and has other defects; but passing these by, it should be said that the author's literary style is good; and the pleasing traces of wide culture beautify many pages.

Orlando, Fla., March 16, 1896.

THOS. C. JOHNSON.

ON NEWFOUND RIVER. *By Thomas Nelson Page.* Author of "In Ole Virginia," "Two Little Confederates," etc. 12mo, pp. 240. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1892.

We are almost angry with Mr. Page, because he did not keep us longer with him on "Newfound River." When we laid down the book it was with the distinct feeling of regret that there was not more of it. To a friend sitting by—a lady of good literary taste—we expressed this feeling of dissatisfaction. We found that her appreciation of the book was high, like our own.

The story is of a picturesque and highly interesting people. It is told in a simple, clear, living way. Mr. Page writes so as to make easy reading. And this is one good test of a good style. While he is an adept in the use of pure English, he is masterful in the use of the negro dialect. He understands the negro character. His negroes are true to life. Take Unc' Polium, for instance, as he appears at Jones' Cross-roads on the day of the law suit between Major Landon and old Dr. Browne. In reply to an inquiry about his master's health, Polium says,—