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I.—LITERARY.

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.

doctrine, it exhibits at several points a decided toning down of the doctrine of the *Augsburg* Confession, especially in regard to what is known as synergism." The plain reader who gets any intelligible idea from this statement will in all probability get a wrong idea. He will be as apt as otherwise, at least, to think that Dr. Beattie speaks of the Augsburg Confessions as synergistic. Here desire for brevity has occasioned the production of an ambiguous statement. It would be easy to point out similar defects in other pages of this chapter.

There is a mistake of somewhat similar character on page 328, where the author speaks of "the mere symbolic" view of the sacraments as the view of Zwingli. This is a fashionable mistake. Zwingli held a much higher view of the sacrament than is commonly supposed.

Still, these are very small defects; and one feels like begging Dr. Beattie's pardon for pointing them out in so good a work.

In the last chapter, "Summary and Conclusions," in which the chief characteristics of the Westminster system are set forth, a chapter of great worth and containing noble paragraphs, there is, now and again, a want of a peculiar kind. For example, when the author speaks of the "race's" relation to Adam and his sin and fall," he says, "While we are clearly of the opinion that what is termed the immediate imputation theory is most consistent with the contents of the standards, and especially with the covenant principle upon which they are constructed, yet we would be far from maintaining that the theory of mediate imputation, of generic unity, or of concurrence is to be regarded as heresy." On reading such a statement the question at once arises: But suppose a man denies the theory of imputation while maintaining that of Generic unity, where is he to be aligned, according to the Westminster Standards? This question has arisen. It will perhaps arise again. It is not sufficiently answered in this chapter.

But, we repeat, the blemishes on this work are slight in comparison with its excellences.

THOMAS C. JOHNSON.

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN PULPIT: A COLLECTION OF SERMONS. *By Ministers of the Southern Presbyterian Church.* 8vo. Pp. 408. Price \$1.50. Richmond, Va.: The Presbyterian Committee of Publication.

Our able Committee of Publication has gathered into this volume thirty-three sermons from as many of our ministers.

In the Preface it is declared that two motives have prompted the issue of the volume: 1. To supply a "distinct demand for a book of practical sermons, suitable for reading in the public worship of God when conducted by ruling elders of the church." 2. "To put in permanent form some examples of the work of our Southern Presbyterian pulpit."

These motives are thoroughly approvable. It is eminently desirable that our own pulpit should give of its cream to feed, at least in this way, a thousand destitute folds. The people who shall have read to them one of the best sermons of our pulpit, by a good reader, will not lack for its Sabbath rations. Moreover, whoever has the slightest interest in the

history which our Church is now making will rejoice in the preservation of these cases of our pulpit work. We, ourselves, wish that such a volume could be issued once in every five years. It would then be an easy thing to write the history of the worship of the age.

We have read every one of these sermons: They are not hard to read. The most of them repay one at every step. The most of them are based on honest exegesis of important passages of Scripture. The most of them are clearly and logically planned, and honestly and ably argued. We have noted only *two* or *three* cases of what appeared to us to be sophistical work. In those cases we have no doubt that the speakers were entirely unconscious of all sophistry. However they were arguing for positions in the main true. In only one sermon have we noted any thing to deplore seriously. We are pained by being obliged, in this notice to call attention to any considerable defect in the book. We would like to commend it without an exception or an adversative word; our sympathy with the enterprise and with the most of the book is so entire. But in one of these sermons are some ideas tending to the confusion of the common reader's mind on the subject of inspiration—a subject on which at this time the common mind of the church is already too confused. The ideas in the sermon referred to are of New England origin, at least proximately. We should be glad to see them remanded to New England, again. We are sorry that they are given currency through publication in a book which is to spread so widely as this one is destined to do.

There is one sermon in this volume which should be reprinted in tract form. It is that on "The Sabbath Day," by Rev. W. F. V. Bartlett, D. D. The Church needs to be taught thoroughly at this time of the Sabbath as a divine institution of Universal and permanent obligations. Dr. Bartlett presents this truth in a singularly felicitous and forceful way.

Of course there are differences between these sermons as to value, but it would be invidious to indicate.

The contents will serve to intimate further, the varied attractiveness of the volume. The contents are:

The Transforming Power of the Gospel—Dr. B. M. Palmer.

The Changing World and the Unchanging God—Dr. Moses D. Hoge.

"One Jesus"—Dr. J. Henry Smith.

The Gospel Call—Dr. George D. Armstrong.

"What is the Chaff to the Wheat?"—Dr. J. W. Lupton.

Christ's Pastoral Presence with his Dying People—Dr. John L. Girardeau.

The Pitilessness of Sin—Dr. J. R. Stratton.

The Happy Service—Dr. R. L. Dabney.

Seeking the Lord—Dr. J. W. Rosebro.

Our Redeemer's Prayer for Christian Unity—Dr. Neander M. Woods.

The Divineness of the Family Bond—Dr. W. U. Murkland.

Why Believers Should Not Fear—Dr. A. W. Pitzer.

The Ruler's Question—Dr. J. H. Bryson.

Children of the Covenant—Dr. S. W. Davies.

Man Inspired of God—Dr. G. R. Brackett.

"How Long Halt Ye Between Two Opinions?"—Dr. J. R. Burgett.
 Consecration—Dr. G. B. Strickler.
 Personal Work for the Master—Dr. W. N. Scott.
 Joseph of Arimathea—Dr. John A. Preston.
 The Striving Spirit—Dr. Robert P. Kerr.
 Applied Christianity—Dr. R. K. Smoot.
 The Three Causes of Salvation—Dr. W. W. Moore.
 The Necessity of Christ's Resurrection—Dr. J. F. Cannon.
 Natural Law and Divine Providence—Dr. Peyton H. Hoge.
 Take Hold of God—Dr. James I. Vance.
 "To Me to Live is Christ"—Dr. J. R. Howerton.
 The Valley of Achor—Dr. G. L. Petrie.
 Religion Not a Vain Thing—Dr. Samuel A. King.
 Jesus' Supreme Authority—Dr. C. R. Hemphill.
 Trust in the Lord—Dr. Joseph R. Wilson.
 Not One Forgotten—Dr. T. D. Witherspoon.
 The Sabbath Day—Dr. W. F. Bartlett.
 The Gospel as First Revealed—Dr. W. T. Hall.

As we cast the eye over this list of brilliant preachers and God-fearing men, we note with grief that will not be assuaged even by the thought of his own increased well-being that the earthly work of John A. Preston has been finished. There is not the name of a more manly, loveable, Christ-like man in all the list. When sick once in Hampden-Sidney College we received from Mr. Preston a brief visit which we shall never forget. For he left us stronger in purpose of noble endeavor than he found us. We met him frequently after that time. His effect on us was always the same. He seems to have made it his business to lift men up, more than most preachers, to lift them and have them lifted. He was always preaching, whether on a flour-barrel in a grocer's shop, or aboard a train, or waiting in a railroad station, or in his pulpit. We have seen Dr. Preston in many different places; but his Father's business usually engaged him. His intense sympathy for man, every man and all men, would have made him a tribune of the plebs in Rome, a great commoner in England, as it made him a great pastor in our church. Many of his characteristics come out in the sermon of his in the volume under discussion.

Union Seminary Students will remark that over one-half of the sermons are by alumni of their *alma mater*. The present faculty is nobly represented by Drs. Strickler and W. W. Moore. The people on the Hill will recognize under the title of Dr. Moore's sermon in the volume the very able sermon which he preached in the College Church on occasion of the installation of Dr. Murray. Dr. Dabney's sermon is not only rich in the Gospel, and characteristic of himself; it has an incidental interest of no mean sort. It was preached before the 18th Virginia regiment, 1861.

The church at large will be pleased that Drs. Palmer and Hoge occupy the two first places in the volume,—“the princes of our pulpit.”

October 26, '96.

THOS. C. JOHNSON.