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I.

PROF. GEORGE D. HERRON AS A LEADER.

THE Rev. George D. Herron, D.D., has been brought into a new prominence recently, by the issue of the symposium in *The Northwestern Congregationalist* which resulted in the change of that paper into *The Kingdom*, and its erection into the organ of a new movement. He had been already well known and generally favorably regarded as a writer of great force, of intense earnestness, and of profound devotion to the great principle of sacrifice for others, which is the distinctive Christian doctrine, and which he knows how to enforce with startling vividness. In the department of sociology the Christian world is looking anxiously for a leader, for a man who shall come forward and speak the word at the present crisis which shall set the Church upon the way which the times call upon it to tread. Many regard Dr. Herron as this man, though he himself designates himself only as a "voice." Still, if he is a voice which shall exhibit the calmness, wisdom, balance and soundness which are required in a leader, he need but utter his cry and he will be the leader needed. Thousands of others can be found to put into execution the wisdom which he shall express.

The present writer has recently read, throughout, all the published works of Dr. Herron for the sake of determining for himself what the promise of finding here the desired leader may be.¹ The

¹ *The Larger Christ*, 1891 (quoted as *L. C.*); *The Call of the Cross*, Four College Sermons, 1892 (*C. C.*); *A Plea for the Gospel*, 1892 (*P. G.*); *The New Redemption*, 1893 (*N. R.*); *The Christian Society*, 1894 (*C. S.*). In the last volume is included Dr. Herron's first tract, *The Message of Jesus to Men of Wealth*, 1890 (*M. W.*).

VII.

OBITUARY NOTE.

THE REV. PROF. EDWIN CONE BISSELL, D.D., LL.D.

EDWIN CONE BISSELL was born in Schoharie, Schoharie county, N. Y., on the second day of March, 1832. His parents, however—George Cone Bissell and Elizabeth (White) Bissell—were natives of Connecticut and had lived at Coventry, in that State, until within a few years of his birth. Thither they returned when he was about five or six years old, so that he was in all respects the scion of a New England family. He had the good fortune, as Edward Everett Hale has put it, of being born in the middle of a long line of children, being the sixth in a family of twelve. To the advantages given him by this specially favored place in the household, his parents added the inheritance of a strong religious nature. His early training prepared him for entrance into the Church, and this step he took in boyhood. But no sooner had he taken the step than it became clear to him that it must be followed by another, *i. e.*, an effort to enter the ministry and perhaps go out as a foreign missionary. With the end in view of accomplishing this he set to work preparing himself for college. He spent four terms at Monson Academy, Monson, Mass., and with this, together with some previous preparation obtained privately, he was enabled to present himself for admission at Amherst College in the fall of 1851. Here he spent the next four years and graduated regularly in 1855. The year following he taught at Williston Seminary, Easthampton, Mass.; and then without further delay entered on his theological studies at Union Theological Seminary, New York. His course here was interrupted only by a brief stay of a part of a term in the Theological Institute of Connecticut, at East Windsor Hills (afterwards removed to Hartford and called the Hartford Theological Seminary). He completed the regular course at Union in 1859, and was at once called to the pastorate of the church (Congregational) at Westhampton, Mass. About the same time he was married to Miss Emily Pomeroy, of Somers, Conn. While he was ministering to this church, the War of the Rebellion broke out and a call for volunteers was issued. This call did not meet with enthusiastic response at Westhampton. He was desirous that it should be heeded, and on being assured that some in the congregation and parish would enlist if he were to lead in the

movement, he immediately proceeded to organize a company which, as Company K, joined the Fifty-second Massachusetts. Thus literally stepping down from his pulpit, and employing a substitute there, he endeavored to perform what seemed to him the more pressing duty. The call, in answer to which he went to the front, was for nine months' service, but as events turned out the company was detained in the service for a whole year. At the end of this period Mr. Bissell returned to his charge at Westhampton and continued his pastoral labors there until 1865. He then resigned this charge in order to travel in California. On coming to San Francisco he found city mission work and engaged in it, developing it into the Greene Street Congregational Church of that city. This church naturally called him to be its pastor and retained him as such till 1869. At this time wishing to travel abroad he resigned his pastorate. His resignation was not, however, accepted, but leave of absence was granted him for a year. During his residence at San Francisco he became associate editor of *The Pacific*, and gradually assumed complete control of the paper. Just as he was about to utilize his leave of absence in a trip to Europe the Franco-Prussian war broke out, making it undesirable to carry out this plan. Accordingly he turned his face westward and sailed to the Sandwich Islands. The English church at Honolulu being without a pastor at this time, first engaged him as stated supply, and then called him by unanimous vote to the pastorate. But he did not see his way clear to accept this call. He also again presented his resignation to the church at San Francisco, and returning to New England accepted a call to the church at Winchester, Mass. His pastorate here lasted until 1873. Here he found time, among other things, to publish in 1873 his first book, *The Historic Origin of the Bible*. During the same year the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions issued a special call for some one to take up an important work in the Tyrol, Austria. Mr. Bissell, who had always wished to become a foreign missionary, resigned his charge and offered himself to the Board, and receiving the appointment went to the field, spending the next five years of his life there. But the restrictions under which the work in Austria had to be carried on chafed him. He felt that he must labor under different conditions to obtain the best results. He gave up his commission as a missionary, and returned to this country to engage in writing the *Commentary on the Apocrypha* for the English edition of the Lange series of Commentaries on the Bible. This volume was put before the public in 1880. Meanwhile his taste for scholarly pursuits had been so far developed by the work he did on this volume, that he undertook to fit himself specially for critical and exegetical labors in the Old Testament. To this purpose, crossing the ocean once more, he spent a year at Leipzig, studying Hebrew and Old Testament exegesis. In 1881 the Trustees of Hartford Theological Seminary offered him the Nettleton Professorship of the Hebrew Language and Literature in that institution. This he at once accepted and held until

1892, when, the Chair of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis in the McCormick Theological Seminary being offered him, he removed to Chicago and gave the last two years of his life to the training of young men for the Presbyterian ministry in the Northwest. Here, while full of health and comfort in the abundant results of his labors, and in the midst of plans for future work, he was called away from all these, breathing his last on the tenth of April, 1894. While at Hartford, he had published *The Pentateuch, its Origin and Structure*, in 1885, *Biblical Antiquities*, in 1888, *A Practical Hebrew Grammar* in 1891, and *Genesis Printed in Colors* in 1892, besides numerous articles for the theological magazines, and book reviews for THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW. Amherst College recognized his ability and bestowed on him the degree of D.D., in 1874, and Lake Forest University, the degree of LL.D., in 1893.

From the above brief sketch of his life it appears that Dr. Bissell's was a many-sided experience and character. As pastor his success was that of a faithful, hard-working minister; and if, by reason of local surroundings, he did not gather in phenomenal numbers into church membership, he still had the assurance that his labors were blessed with permanent results in the lives and characters of his parishioners. In every one of the four churches he served, there are those who gratefully honor him as their guide to Christ, and their helpful spiritual adviser.

But besides the four churches which he served as pastor, he also served others as parishioner, and in these his influence has been scarcely less perceptible. Having had the experience of a pastor's burdens and trials, he was always ready to assist those who had charge of the congregations with which he was wont to worship. He did not attempt to do this by volunteering advice—although his judgment on practical matters was greatly sought after by his friends—but by putting himself literally under the direction of his pastors. Both in the Fourth Congregational Church of Hartford, and in the Church of the Covenant, at Chicago, he held himself ready to do, and did, work assigned him by the officers of the church. Perhaps, as Prof. Graham Taylor suggests, in this particular the lessons learned during his connection with the army impressed him so profoundly that he carried that military loyalty and promptness into every sphere later.

Because of this military instinct, he found it easy to pass into the compact organization of the Presbyterian Church, though born in and always connected with the Congregational denomination before he came to Chicago. The idea of subordinating his own individuality and working in a system, with due regard to the aims and methods of the corporate body, was one of his ruling principles. To this idea it may be safely said he owed his characteristic loyalty as a member of the Church, or of an institution of learning. Yet while heeding the authority vested in the officers of the organized bodies to which he might belong, he did so only on the understanding that such

authority was the expression of the will of the Supreme Head of all. Where he was convinced that this was not the case, that same soldier-like loyalty to his Great Master made him oppose human authority with unflagging determination.

From another point of view this same feature of Dr. Bissell's character appeared, even to those who knew him but slightly, as transparent frankness. . One felt that, whatever else Dr. Bissell might do, he would not trifle with his conscience. This gave him strength and efficiency as a teacher. His pupils knew that he expected them to do their best work because they saw that he was doing the same himself. Hence he was able to secure thoroughness in his class-room. But as a teacher he specially aimed at a twofold end. First and foremost he designed to enable the student to do work for himself. In order to accomplish this he tried to impress him with the value and importance of the work to be done, and the necessity of doing it thoroughly, and to show him how it might be done to the best advantage. In the second place he aimed to give his pupils some results obtained by himself through the use of his methods. These results always struck his pupils as the very opposite of commonplace both in their conception and the crispness of the language in which they were couched. Many a passage of the old Testament stands full of meaning in the minds of hundreds of his former pupils, which would have been utterly unknown but for his terse way of treating it. Many a word bristles with the suggestions in it to which he deftly turned the attention of the student. At Hartford Seminary, where the work of each day begins with devotional exercises, including the exposition of some passage of Scripture by one of the Professors, his chosen field of exposition was the book of Psalms. And no graduate of that institution between the years 1881 and 1892 will easily forget those expository talks on the Psalms. And the students of McCormick Seminary expressed their sense of the value of his services by putting on the floral tribute which they sent to his funeral, the words, "His delight was in the law of the Lord."

As a scholar he is too well known to need special characterization. He was led in spite of himself into the discussions that became more and more animated regarding the origin and nature of the Old Testament. His position was that of the strictly conservative critic, who believed in the substantial truth of the views that had been held in the Church—not because he ascribed to the traditions of the past any occult force, but because on the whole, after careful examination, these views appeared to him to be more reasonable than the more recent ones propounded, as he thought, largely on the basis of conjecture. In controversy he was quick to see a flaw in the argument of his opponents, but never inclined to take unfair advantages.

As a companion and colleague he was exceptionally genial and helpful. He had a rich fund of native wit, which he was accustomed to use in relieving the tension that might result from constant occupation

with difficult questions. This enabled him both in the Faculty meeting and in the lecture room to bridge over hard places either in debate or recitation, and left a grateful impression on those associated with him.

His love for his professorial work grew on him, so that he declined many calls to deliver addresses and lectures not directly within his specialty. But even, with those he accepted, he found his time fully occupied. He was at the time of his death engaged in preparing the "Stone Lectures," to be delivered at Princeton during the session of 1894-95. The loss that scholarship has suffered by his death in the midst of this and other labors seems irreparable; but the impress he has left on several hundred ministers, his published works, and the memory of his services in his former pastoral charges, will remain a monument to his diligence and faithfulness.

McCORMICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

A. C. ZENOS.

