

THE Presbyterian Quarterly.

NO. 52==APRIL, 1900.

I. THEOLOGY OF THE FUTURE.

Our age, on its religious side, has been characterized as an age of doubt. We are constrained to admit that there is a propriety in this characterization. Doubt with regard to religious matters is more widespread at present than it was in days gone by. This is not saying that the Christian religion has not a stronger hold upon men to-day than ever before, for it has. The mustard seed sown in the ground and springing up into an herb is growing yet, though already the greatest of all herbs. The leaven hid away in the meal is still permeating the mass, and will continue till the whole is leavened. The doubt of our age does not furnish sufficient ground to justify the believer in entertaining pessimistic views of the future. But there is none the less a widespread spirit of questioning and uncertainty concerning things religious. It is not confined to the student's cloister, but is found among the masses. It appears in a good deal of the popular literature of the day, and tends to create for itself a congenial soil, if that be not already found. But as has been remarked by those observant of the trend of theological thought in our day, while doubt is more general than it was in a former age, it is not of the same intensity. It is not so much a positive denial as it is an enquiry. A century ago unbelief was very sure of itself. It sneered at faith, and assumed a happy, even a lightsome attitude. But such self-complacency has largely disappeared from the theological world, and in its place there is more of earnest investigation.

VI. A POINT OF COMPARISON BETWEEN THE OLD THEOLOGY AND THE NEW.

Theology is not a stationary science. Like Astronomy or Botany or any other science, it may, and should, make continual progress. No astronomy has ever exhausted all the secrets of the starry heavens. No botany has ever discovered and classified all the facts of the vegetable kingdom. So no system of theology has ever given an exhaustive exposition of all the truths and facts of Divine Revelation. There are some things, it is true, which have been forever settled. There are some articles of our faith which are no longer open for revision. The great headlands of religious truth are fixed and immovable, and clearly discerned. But between these there remains much territory to be explored and possessed. Not yet has the Spirit made known to the Church, or to any section of it, all the things "which are freely given to us of God." There is always room for setting old truths in new lights; for detecting new relations between known truths, and for discovering new meanings in Scripture which old, and long-accepted human statements are unable to hold. "Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." (Matt. 13:52) Hence it should excite no prejudice or mistrust on our part if the theology of the present essays an advance and improvement over the theology of the past. This is what should be expected and desired. A lack of it would be a sure indication of stagnation and decay. The proper attitude for the Christian student to maintain toward every such attempt at progress is one of candid and open-minded inquiry. He should beware, on the one hand, of being led away by every attractive setter-forth of some new doctrine; and on the other hand he should seek deliverance from that dull conservatism to whose taste old teaching, like old wine, is always better than that which is new.

He should "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good," whether it be old or new.

Within the present generation theological teaching has, in many quarters, taken on a new phase. The "New Theology" is a recognized fact. Some welcome it as a fresh champion on the field of religious thought, and expect it to render valiant service to the cause of truth. To others it seems, like Hamlet's ghost, to come in most questionable shape, and they have serious misgiving as to its origin and mission. Perhaps it will appear at last that neither the expectations of the one class, nor the apprehensions of the other are wholly warranted; but that, like most other movements of the sort, it contains a mixture of truth and error.

It is not the purpose of the present essay to attempt a critical examination of the New Theology, or even a definition of it. Indeed, it is doubtful if in its present stage it admits of definition. Definition presupposes completeness; whereas, according to its advocates, the New Theology is as yet in the formative state. One who confesses that his sympathies are profoundly with it, says: "For want of a better name, the New Theology designates a tendency of theological thought at the present time, a spirit that characterizes an increasing number of thinkers and writers on theological subjects, and a sentiment that widely prevails in the Christian Church to-day." Accepting this statement I propose in the present paper to compare the old and the new teaching as they bear on a single article of Christian faith, viz: the union between Christ and his people. The reality of this union, and its importance, all will admit. It is the supreme fact in Christian experience; the fact set forth in both sacraments of the New Testament, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. What is the nature of it? What is the relation into which the believing soul is brought with the crucified and risen Christ? The answer given to this question largely determines the character of one's theology as well as his Christian experience. It involves an interpretation of the cross which is the heart of a true theology and of a true religious life.

In the New Testament this union is set forth under a variety of aspects, and through a variety of figures. These representations will be found, I think, to fall into three classes, according as they present more or less distinctly three different aspects of the union; first, as representative or federal, second, as ethical and practical, and third, as spiritual and vital.

1. Every believer is one with Christ by virtue of a union that is representative or federal. This truth runs like a thread of gold through all Scripture. It is set forth in the Old Testament through types and shadows, and in the New through the plainest didactic statements. It is the view so fully expounded by Paul in the first part of his Epistle to the Romans, and in his Epistle to the Galatians. Christ stands related to his people as Adam stood related to his posterity. He is the second Adam. He stands as the federal head, and representative of his people. He acts, and is acted with, in their behalf. He takes their place under the law, and answers all legal demands against them. In the eye of the law he is one with them; they are "in him." His relation to them is such as makes this right and even necessary; just as the husband's relation to his wife is such as makes them one before the law, and carries with it the necessity of his answering certain legal demands against her. By the obedience of Christ his people "are made righteous." They are "accepted in the beloved." In every part of his redeeming work they were judicially identified with him. They were crucified with him. In him they passed through the darkness of the "Lama Sabachthani;" in him they came out into the serene light of the "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." They were buried with him; with him they rose from the dead, and ascended, and are seated in the heavenly places. From the standpoint of this truth the gospel is expressed in terms that are strongly forensic. God is viewed as a righteous Judge. Sin is a transgression of law. Sinful men are shut up under condemnation. The work of Christ is a redemption from the curse of the law. It results in the justification of the

sinner ; he becomes a fellow citizen of the saints, and is adopted into the household of God.

2. No less clearly do the Scriptures teach that the union between Christ and his people is an ethical union; one in which the moral powers of the believer's soul are engaged. A union which involves the soul's choice of him as the true and the good; its surrender to him as Lord; its acceptance of his will and example as a rule of life; its participation of his spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice; its determination to live no longer unto self, but unto him. This view of our oneness with him is made prominent in the teaching of Jesus himself. Into such a union he summoned Philip, and Matthew and the other disciples when he said unto them: "Follow me." The same summons is extended to us all when he lays it down as the universal law of discipleship, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

To this view of the union Paul turns in the sixth chapter of his Epistles to the Romans in order to guard the great doctrine of "Justification by faith" which he had expounded from an anticipated abuse. He asks, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" "Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace?" "God forbid" is the emphatic answer, and then he proceeds to show that our identification with Christ means and ensures deliverance not only from the guilt of sin but also from the love and practice of it, not only from its condemning power but also from its reigning power. As we are one with him in his death, so we are one with him in his resurrection-life. We are joined to his living person. By our souls' choice we have become one with him in Spirit and purpose and aim. We are therefore to "reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ;" as a true wife influenced by love and spiritual affinity makes all of her husband's interests and aims her own, and cleaves to him with a choice so exclusive that she becomes as dead to all others.

From the standpoint of this truth the gospel is expressed

in terms that are domestic, as in the parable of the Lost Son. God is the Father. Sin is a great wrong against his goodness and love. The sinner is a wanderer from the Father's face. His salvation consists in his coming to himself; in his penitent return to his Father's house, and submission to his Father's rule.

3. In the third place the union between Christ and his people is represented as a vital union—one involving a common life. He is the Vine, they are the branches. They are the members of his body. He is the Source of their life. Because he lives they live. It is no longer that they live, but he who lives in them. Their spiritual life is derived from him and sustained by him. As he is one with the Father and lives by the Father, so they are one with him and live by him.

When viewed under this aspect the truths of the Gospel find appropriate expression in terms that are biological rather than forensic or domestic. God is the Fountain of spiritual life. Jesus is not only the Way and the Truth, but the Life. Sin is spiritual disease or spiritual death. The sinner is "dead in trespasses and sins." His salvation consists in his being quickened by the Holy Spirit, and made partaker of the life of the risen and glorified Christ. He is a son of God because he is one with the only-begotten of the Father, and a sharer of his life; a son not by adoption simply but by spiritual birth. By virtue of this union he grows in grace, becomes increasingly fruitful in good works, and is more and more conformed to the image of Christ who is the Type of his new life.

Now the mind of God on this important subject is truly reflected only when all these views are grasped and held in proper scriptural proportion. This proportion has not always been observed. Theologians have divided into different schools according as they have emphasized one or another of these aspects of truth. In the older theologies great stress was laid on the first or legal view. This was true of the Latin Fathers, probably because this view lent itself more readily to Latin modes of thought which were

eminently juristic. They were closely followed in this respect by the theologians of the Reformation, and the theology of the Reformed churches has ever since distinctly borne the same stamp. A significant hint of this is seen in the fact that Dr. Charles Hodge in his "Systematic Theology" devotes a chapter of nearly a hundred pages to the doctrine of Justification, while he gives no separate treatment of the doctrine of Sonship. Evangelical preaching has emphasized the same phase of truth, and this has been esteemed its crowning excellence. But may it not be that this aspect of the believer's union with Christ has been dwelt upon too exclusively, and that the effect, in some measure, has been to encourage the abuse which the apostle deprecated of turning the grace of God into license? An intelligent Scotch preacher expresses the opinion that the marked tendency to liberalism among Scotch theologians and preachers in recent years has been due to a strong recoil from a type of orthodoxy which did not lead to holiness of life. And what evangelical pastor has not found among his members some who held sound doctrinal views as to the ground of our justification before God, and were ready stoutly to defend them, but who were not careful to maintain good works? Certain it is that any truth, even the most precious, when emphasized out of the proportion of faith, and at the expense of other related truths, may have the practical effect of error.

On the other hand the tendency among those who are recognized as exponents of the New Theology is to lay emphasis upon either the ethical or the vital union which exists between Christ and his people. Were this done within scriptural limits, and only to the extent of restoring the balance of truth, we should welcome it as a helpful and timely service. But, unfortunately, the emphasis has been excessive, and has gone to the length of underrating or denying altogether our legal oneness with Christ. Some openly repudiate this phase of the truth, and assail it as dishonoring to God, and immoral in its influence upon men. They either explain it out of Scripture by a juggling exe-

genesis, or they see in it a Pauline modification or perversion of the teaching of Jesus; as if Paul had made a false claim when, in defending his apostleship, he said, "we have the mind of Christ;" as if the early disciples had made a mistake when "they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine," supposing, simple souls, that by so doing they were continuing steadfast in the teaching of their Lord; as if nineteenth century doctrinaires were better qualified to interpret the true mind of Christ than were the Apostles whom he chose and ordained, and trained, and endued with the Spirit of truth for this very purpose!

Others are less radical, and are chargeable, not so much with making war against the truth in question, as with ignoring it. It seems to have no place in their conception of the gospel. The late Prof. Drummond was conducting a question-box exercise at one of the Northfield Conferences. One of the questions propounded to him was: "How do you present the gospel to young men so as to win them?" He answered, "I call them to enlist under Jesus Christ as their king." A minister in the audience then asked, "Do you think any one ever enlists under Christ as king who has not first apprehended him as an atoning and pardoning Priest?" After a little reflection, he replied, "I suppose not." Apparently he did not deny the truth for which we are contending, but certainly he, and others of the same school, are justly chargeable with omitting all notice of it where fidelity to scripture would demand its notice.

Such teaching we cannot but regard as insufficient and dangerous. A gospel which does not recognize the provision made through the atoning death of Christ for removing the guilt of his people—the satisfaction which he rendered in their behalf to the holiness of God and the claims of a broken law—so that they are legally accepted in him, justified on the ground of his merit, and forgiven for his sake is not, we are bold to say, the full gospel of the grace of God. Under pretense of vindicating the love of God such a gospel sadly obscures it. "God is love," some men tell us, "and therefore did not need to be propitiated." But the

beloved disciple says, God is love, and therefore has provided a propitiation. That provision is the one supreme, convincing proof of his love. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 Jno. 4:10.) That is the only gospel which fully reveals the love of God, or fully meets the need of man. No other can give perfect rest to souls that are burdened with a true sense of guilt.

It is said that the late Dr. Berry, of England, was saved from an ultra-liberalism in theology by a pastoral experience. In his early ministry he strongly inclined to the New Theology. But on one occasion he was called to the bedside of a young woman who had led a life of sin and was dying of rapid consumption. He began to give her his ethical view of salvation, and to tell her how a wasted life might be retrieved, and a broken-down character restored. But the poor creature only looked at him with wide-eyed bewilderment and despair. He saw that such a gospel would not meet the case, and fell back on that which he had heard at his mother's knee, telling her of a Saviour who died on the cross in the room of guilty sinners, and whose precious blood cleanseth from all sin. This was the water of life for which her soul was thirsting. She eagerly drank it in and was at rest; and this, as the story goes, was the end of Dr. Berry's liberalism. Through this old-fashioned gospel the church has won all her triumphs in the past, and through it alone can she hope to win like triumphs in the future.

One other feature of the believers' union with Christ must be briefly noticed before we close, viz: that it is established by the agency of the Holy Spirit through faith as its instrumental bond. The relationship is not natural but gracious in its origin. We enter it, not by natural birth, but by the new birth. All men are not partakers of it, but believers only. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." A basis is provided for it through the incarnation of Jesus Christ, and his assumption of federal oneness with his people, but it is realized and becomes actual only when the

soul is united to Christ by a living faith. This obvious truth is much obscured, if not wholly repudiated by the teaching of the New Theology. A doctrine of the Divine immanence is taught which ignores the wide breach which sin has caused between God and man. It postulates for all mankind a natural relation of sonship with God—a sonship which needs only to be recognized to be saving. The incarnation of Christ is simply a revelation to men of their native sonship. "The belief of the Church that men as fallen and sinful must become the sons of God by regeneration and adoption," is said by one with rare modesty, to be "no longer preachable or credible among thinking men." Dr. Washington Gladden writes in a recent number of the *Congregationalist*: "And now let me say what was said in the Council, only more deliberately and with a still deeper conviction of its truth, that the one central, inclusive, fundamental fact on which the kingdom of Heaven is builded is the fatherhood of God; the fact that God is the Father of all men, not of some men; that he is their Father not figuratively but really, the statements implying other relations being figurative; that we become his children not when we are converted but when we are born, &c." One is at a loss to see how such a statement, however deliberately and solemnly pronounced, can be reconciled with this statement of Jesus Christ to certain Jews who claimed to be the children of God; "If God were your Father ye would love me. . . . Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." (Jno. 8:42, 44.) Or with this statement of John; "But as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12, 13) Or with these of Paul; "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:26.) "When the fullness of the time was come God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4:4, 5.) That there is a natural fatherhood of God grounded in Creation and Provi-

dence has always been recognized by conservative theology. But this falls infinitely short of that high and blessed relationship into which the soul is admitted who is united to Christ by faith. Such a one receives a sonship which is far more real and precious; which involves a participation of the nature, and life and Spirit of the only begotten Son, and joint heirship with him to all that the Father hath.

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