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I. AUTHORITY IN REVELATION AND MORALS.

FIVE FALLACIES AND ONE FIASCO CONVERGENT.

CURRENT literature, popular addresses and constantly recurring conversations in social intercourse, discover six convergent influences actively at work in society. Four are newer; two older. The aim of each is to shift the basis of authority in moral and religious life. The six forces differ widely in nature and in the character of those who direct the propagation and transmission of them through society. But, without collusion and moving along different, and sometimes antagonistic, lines, they tend to the same result, the annihilation of finality and authority in ethics and revelation. The convergence implies the superintendence of the same evil personality, shrewdly intruding himself into these different spheres of life and giving a common direction to their movements.

1. Blatant last century infidelity holds that miracles cannot be proven by testimony, and that, therefore, the claims of Christianity cannot be established because resting on them. It denies the relevancy or pertinency of what are called the evidences of Christianity, and in regard to Scripture would say: granted that a revelation has been made, it cannot be authenticated. It scoffs at religion as a superstition, and sneers at authoritative morals as the silly scruples of childhood and inexperience—greenness. Its ethics are utilitarian only. The best that it can say is, moral principles must be obeyed, because it is for the good of society. The evil of such a system was shown long ago in the famous passage about balances when held in the hands of self.—*David Hume, his confrères and followers.*

The translation shows that the author has an ear for rythm, a rich vocabulary and a nice appreciation of the force of words. At times it is very felicitous. There are times, however, when he fails to recognize the distinction between a translation and a paraphrase, and occasionally there occur expressions which sound just slightly stilted—as when we read Psalm lxxii. 1.—

Give thy justice, O God, to the king,
To *the royal by birth* thy righteousness give.

We have indicated by italics the expression to which we take exception. The Hebrew is לָבֵן מֶלֶךְ. The Revisers render with more literalness and more effectively—

Give the king thy judgments, O God,
And thy righteousness to the king's son.

There is, as Dr. DeWitt points out, a slight ambiguity here. But might not this have been avoided and the elegant simplicity of the original retained? The weakest point in the translation is the handling of the tenses of the Hebrew verb. This however is a point of great difficulty and one where some differences of judgment and taste are no doubt inevitable. One of the strong points is the recognition of nice shades of distinction between different Hebrew words of kindred meaning. The notes are valuable. We emphasize this by adding that they are too brief. We might cite many examples to sustain our judgment as to their worth, but lack of space forbids. It is only fair to add that, here also, we must occasionally dissent from the positions taken. For instance, the author seems to have nodded when he speaks of וְאִישׁ נָהַר (Psa. iii. 6.) as a cohortative and as virtually throwing back its cohortative force upon the preceding form.

Pastors who pore over the Psalms before going into the pulpit in order to awaken devotional sentiments, and to enrich their devotional vocabulary, and all who use the Psalter as a book of worship in private or public will derive pleasure and benefit from a reading and study of Dr. DeWitt's book.

Columbia Seminary, S. C.

W. M. McPHEETERS.

MUSICK'S GENESIS OF NATURE.

THE GENESIS OF NATURE: Considered in the Light of Mr. Spencer's Philosophy, as based upon the Persistence of Energy: *By Thomas H. Musick.* Pp. 377. New York: John B. Alden. 1890.

Under a rather striking title, we have in this treatise an elaborate critique of the fundamental principles of H. Spencer's philosophy, centering in the doctrine of the Persistence of Energy. The author shows wide acquaintance with the writings of leading physicists, and a good deal of acuteness in discussing them. It cannot be said that in every case his reasonings carry conviction, still his analysis of several generally received views in physical science counsels to caution in regard to their unquestioned acceptance.

Through twenty-three chapters, the author pursues his discussion, and a list of the writers whose views are noticed shows how diligent a student he has been. In chapter II., the evolutionary doctrines held by Spencer, Darwin, Lamark, Cope,

Bastian and Hinton are sketched. In chapters IV. and V. the theories of the persistence of force and energy, set forth by Grove, Helmholtz, Merriman, Carpenter, Grant Allen, Poinier, Thurston, Taylor, Stewart and Tait, Crocker, Stallo, Balfour Stewart, and H. Spencer are noticed. The last, of course, receives chief attention. Later on in the discussion, the names of Mayer, Newton, Faraday, Croll, Proctor, Guillemin, Tyndall, Silliman, Deschanel, Pascal, Cooke, and Carnot appear.

In chapters IX. and X. there are some exceedingly acute remarks made upon Gravitation, and upon the Laws of Force and Motion; and in chapter XVI. the topic of Potential Energy is discussed with no little ability. We make no attempt to reproduce the reasonings upon these subjects.

The aim of the author, all through, is to show that the great principle of the Conservation of Energy, as held by H. Spencer, is by no means so well founded as physicists generally take it to be; and it must be admitted that our author's criticisms are, in some instances, forcible, if not irrefutable. These criticisms, if heeded, will certainly lead to greater care in accepting any scientific opinions merely on the *authority* of any great name. In this connection it is instructive to note the readiness with which many who deny *authority* in matters of religion submit to *authority* in the realm of science. Credulity, so called, is certainly not peculiar to those who adhere to the verities of the Christian system.

Towards the close of his discussion our author lays siege to Spencer's system, and, with a good deal of success, shows how insufficient it is to provide a philosophy of "the genesis of nature." Spencer's attempt to correlate all forms of force and make them transmutable is shown to be utterly futile. Chapter XIX has a capital treatment of Spencer's elaborate effort to correlate physical, vital and mental forces, and even sociological forces. The result of the criticism, as well as that in the chapter on science and religion, is highly satisfactory to those who hold by a well defined theistic theory of the universe, and are not enamoured with speculations that rest on a basis of mechanical materialism, and which lead to necessitarian and atheistic results.

In conclusion, it need only be added, that the questions discussed in this treatise are of vital interest at the present day. There is a tendency on the side of science to make too much of the doctrine of the persistence of force or conservation of energy, which has by no means been made out in regard to the various forms of physical force. On the other, hand there is a tendency on the side of philosophy to ignore the spiritual elements which must have a place in every true system. A treatise such as this, which at least calls a halt, is welcome, and cannot fail to be useful. It deserves to have many readers.

Columbia, S. C.

FRANCIS R. BEATTIE.

CORSON'S INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE. *By Professor Hiram Corson, LL. D., Professor of English Literature, Cornell University, New York.* Boston: D. C. Heath & Co.

The book before us makes no pretense to exhaustiveness. It aims merely to suggest a few hints as to the best method of securing the best results from a loving, intimate study of the great dramatist. Any criticism, therefore, that condemns