

# THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

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## I. THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON.

“WHATSOEVER is spoken of God, or things pertaining to God, otherwise than the truth is, though it seem an honor, it is an injury. And as incredible praises given unto men do often abate and impair the credit of their deserved commendation, so we must likewise take great heed, lest, in attributing unto Scripture more than it can have, the incredibility of that do cause even those things which it hath most abundantly to be less reverently esteemed.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus wrote wise old Richard Hooker some three hundred years ago. And multiplied experience since his day has fully endorsed his observations. Nothing has ever been gained by the friends of the Bible by the assumption of false or unnecessary positions, and at the present critical stage of the battle for and against the supremacy of God’s word, much, very much, is to be lost by such manœuvering. History abundantly shows how bad tactics, the deep and continuous error of Christian apologetics, has once and again compelled retreat before the sharp onslaughts of the foe, with confusion, and doubt, and dismay as the results. Inexcusably, often, has the Bible been put in a false place by “attributing to it more than it can have.” Subsequent defenders have always felt the serious disadvantage of the well-meant but ruinous policy. Finding themselves at the very outset in an untenable position, their first move was necessarily a retreat, to their own discomfiture and the jubilation of their opponents. We are even now learning something of the risk involved in relying upon argu-

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<sup>1</sup> *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book II., Section 8.

Unseen—the Seen of the Unseen. We could scarcely read another page. But the author had set out on a search. Presumably, he did not know what he was going to find. At this stage he calls what he is in search after the “Unseen.” He finds in the end that the “Unseen” proves to be God manifest in Jesus Christ. By this method of pure experimentation the Unseen becomes the Seen; the Unknown becomes Known.

Lecture II. : “The Universal Revelation in Nature.” Here is the first “unveiling of the Unseen”; this disclosure is to the common eye of the race; it finds its embodiment in the world’s religions, more or less accurate; it underlies the entire religious life of man. This revelation discloses the fact that the “doom of death is written upon all that lives.” So far as the race is concerned, this revelation is sadly pessimistic.

Lecture III. : “The Historical Revelation in Christ.” The material universe uncovers the Unseen as Creator and Ruler; it shows man to be the subject of death. But there is another source of information about the Unseen—history, literature. This religious literature is at least as good as that which teaches botany, geology, chemistry, etc. This historical literature presents the Unseen as Christ.

Lecture IV. : “The Gospel of Pardon.” This revelation goes beyond that of nature. It unveils the Unseen, not only as Creator and Ruler, but also, and joyfully, as a Pardoner. Here Dr. Beet, in harmony with Wesleyanism, denies that God can “justify” a sinner in the strict and forensic sense of that word. “Justification through faith is pardon put into legal form.” That is, “justify” does not mean justify; it means pardon. To escape the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, Wesleyanism is driven to the shameful expedient of denying the plain and only meaning of terms.

Lecture V. : “The Superhuman Claims of Christ.” Here the endeavor is “to reproduce the conception of himself left by Christ in the thought and memory of his immediate followers.” The same documents which present him to the world as a revelation of the Unseen also present him as superhuman as a teacher; as possessing an authority and moral grandeur which compels the world to listen to his instructions.

Lecture VI. : “The Supernatural Outward Attestations.” This outward proof is the resurrection of Christ. The documents are carefully and skilfully examined as to the fact, and as to the significance of this fundamental fact.

Lecture VII. : “The Inward Attestation.” This is a really happy development of the experimental argument for the truth of our religion.

Lecture VIII. : “Results Attained.”

For an hour’s delight, we recommend this little book. Its soteriology is Wesleyan.

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#### RITTER’S MORAL AND CIVIL LAW.

MORAL AND CIVIL LAW PARTS OF THE SAME THING. *By Eli F. Ritter.* New York: Hunt & Eaton; Cincinnati: Cranston & Curtis. 1896. Pp. 212. Price, 90 cents.

This is a well-written little book on some practical aspects of the science of jurisprudence. The author writes from the standpoint of the true patriot and sincere Christian. His aim is to show that there is really only one morality, and

that moral and civil law are really aspects of the same thing. In support of his reasonings he quotes a great many authorities in both morals and jurisprudence, and has given a clear, simple, and useful book.

The theme is treated under a variety of heads in ten chapters. The first explains and illustrates the law of public necessity. Here the author shows by a variety of instances that public welfare may override what appears to be individual rights. In the second chapter it shows that morality is a fundamental principle in civil government. This is established by quotations from various State constitutions. The third chapter undertakes that hard task of defining morality. Our author does not agree with those that would separate the spheres of morality and legislation, and he is also careful to distinguish between morality and religion. Religion, he says, is a matter of belief, and morality is a matter of conduct. The former refers to the inner life, and the law does not interfere with it; the latter relates to the outer life, and the law takes notice of this. This can scarcely be said to go to the root of the distinction between morality and religion. Our author in this chapter, however, and in the fourth, which treats of immorality, holds that morality is fixed and immutable, and not a variable quantity constituted by mere human opinion and custom.

In the fifth chapter, on legislation and morality, the position is well supported that every act of legislation must be in harmony with morality, and that morality is a fundamental principle in legislation. Chapter six shows the relation between common law and morality, and the seventh indicates the influence of morality in the civil court from the significance of the oath administered therein.

The eighth chapter makes it plain that legal principles are fixed as moral, yet the law grows through legislation. This is a very good chapter, as showing how fixed principles are wrought out and applied in concrete cases. In the ninth chapter the position is taken very naturally that evil must be suppressed and good promoted by legislation. The tone of this chapter is excellent, and deserves praise. That there are no privileges for evil is the theme of the last chapter. Here a variety of perplexing questions, with which legislation has to deal, such as the liquor traffic, are earnestly discussed in the light of the main principles of the book. Altogether it is a book which is well worth reading.

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#### VANCE'S COLLEGE OF APOSTLES.

THE COLLEGE OF APOSTLES. *By Rev. James I. Vance, D. D.* Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, Chicago, Toronto. 1896.

Dr. Vance has prepared an ever-growing circle of readers to expect something far above average excellence when a new book is announced from his pen. This neat volume will not disappoint such expectation. It possesses, in even larger measure than his former books, certain merits which are characteristic of all the author's work.

It is only fair to let a writer define his aim. It has often happened that a reviewer has found fault with an author for not doing what he never designed to do. One has a right to bound the scope of his purpose, and he is amenable to criticism only within the limits of that scope. In his preface, Dr. Vance has stated explicitly and specifically just what he has undertaken to do: "*The College of*