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I. THE NEW CHRISTOLOGY.

THE completion of Dr. Gerhart's *Institutes*¹ prepares the way for a full consideration of the theory which the distinguished author sets forth and maintains. The volumes give us a new work on systematic theology. They emanate from the Reformed (German) Church. They are able and entertaining. The spirit of their author is calm and reverent; his mind is broad and grasping; his method is positive and constructive rather than polemical and controversial; his style is plain and vigorous. The work possesses great value, but that value is chiefly negative, because these volumes are a concrete demonstration of the utter inability of modern progressives to fulfil their promises of a new theology and to make good their criticisms upon the old. Others of this school have written incisively upon topics in theology, and have had the polemical advantage of having that particular topic separated to itself, so that it could not be reinforced from the general system of truth to which it belonged; but Dr. Gerhart, bolder, braver, fairer, and truer than all his school, undertakes the construction of a system. His mind sees, and his heart feels, that, if the new principle be

¹ *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. By Emanuel V. Gerhart, D. D., LL. D., Professor of Systematic and Practical Theology in the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church at Lancaster, Pa. Complete in two octavo volumes, 1744 pages; per volume, \$3.00. New York, London, and Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls Company. 1894.

Dr. Briggs was too manifestly serious in penning those lines to create any suspicion of fun, but he would have been perfectly excusable if his eye had twinkled the least bit as he wrote, "There are doubtless many *still living* who are unwilling to accept any theological opinions which have not been stamped with the approval of the *antiquarians*"; the italicized words are very amusing to us. The alignment of the Higher Critics in the next sentence will prove pleasing to the altitudinous.

Whether the author has attained to that "heavenly vision" to which he aspired may possibly be a question in the minds of some of his readers; there will be less doubt perhaps of his measurable success in the effort "to turn away from the Christ of the theologians and of the creeds and of the church."

The chief thing of note in the book is that Dr. Briggs has reversed his judgment as to the composition of the Apocalypse. In 1888 he published in the *Presbyterian Review* a brief, but very able article, attacking the theory of the composite character of the Apocalypse; he now accepts heartily this theory, and a large portion of his work is the ingenious re-assortment and re-arrangement of the document as it has passed through the four different editions of it before reaching its final form. He does not in this volume vindicate his change of view, he simply announces it and proceeds to the re-arrangement of the Apocalypse in accord therewith.

In conclusion we feel constrained to say that the method pursued in this study does not commend itself to our experience of it; "the effort to see the Messiah as he appeared to each writer in each separate writing" seems to have some manifest advantages, but the general effect is not the best. It is something like trying to form an idea of the appearance of a man of forty-five years of age by examining the pictures of him taken in infancy, in childhood, in youth, and then upon reaching his majority, and combining the series by an effort of the imagination into one portrait; the series would be an interesting study of the man's gradual growth and development, but we would have a far more satisfactory impression of the developed man by seeing *one* picture of him *after he had developed*. Just so, speaking for one's self only, the impression made by this study of the Messiah is a confused fragmentary one; we put forth this judgment with diffidence; let each reader decide for himself, but comparing the presentation of Christ made by this specimen of Biblical theology with that offered by systematic theology, notwithstanding the danger of being ruled out of "the open-minded and truth-loving" class, we are compelled to record our verdict in the language of our Master: "No man also having drunk the old straightway desireth the new; for he saith, THE OLD IS BETTER."

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BALFOUR'S FOUNDATIONS OF BELIEF.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF BELIEF; being Notes introductory to the Study of Theology. *By the Right Honorable Arthur James Balfour, author of A Philosophic Defence of Doubt, etc.* New York and London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1895. 12mo, pp. 366.

This is an able book by a busy British statesman, who for five or six years was Secretary of State for Ireland under the recent Liberal ministry in Great Britain. But its interest does not rest merely upon this fact, for it is a book marked by considerable freshness and power. One wonders how the author, amid all the

duties of his office, and while wrestling with Irish Home Rule, was able to get time and quiet to produce a volume having many features of philosophical importance.

To a certain extent it follows up a previous work of the author's entitled *A Philosophic Defence of Doubt*, although it deals with certain phases of belief in relation to religion. The sub-title of the work indicates that the author intends it to serve as an introduction to the study of theology. How far it will properly serve such a purpose it is very difficult to say, for it is not easy to decide whether the book is written for or against the theology of supernatural religion. Whilst naturalism is severely criticized it can hardly be said that supernaturalism is vindicated. In some respects the agnostic positions are indirectly favored, although it would, perhaps, scarcely be fair to place our author among the agnostics.

The book consists of four parts. The first deals with "Some Consequences of Belief," the second with "Some Reasons for Belief," the third with "Some Causes of Belief," and the fourth makes "Some Suggestions Towards a Provisional Philosophy." The fourth part is the most important.

The order in which the topics are treated at once strikes the reader as peculiar. To deal first with the *consequences* of belief seems a little strange, to say the least. Our author seems to acknowledge this peculiarity, and to confess that his choice of this order was intentional. He hopes thereby to secure the interest and attention of the reader more fully. This, of course, is a worthy ambition on his part, but it may be seriously doubted whether he has not succeeded in puzzling the reader rather than instructing him in the first half of his treatise.

In the first part, in which some consequences of belief are sketched, naturalism in three respects is considered. The scheme known as naturalism in this book has been, the author says, also described as agnosticism, positivism and empiricism. As a system of thought its main position is that we know phenomena, and the laws which connect them, but we know nothing more. This system is treated of first in the sphere of ethics, secondly in the realm of æsthetic, and thirdly in the field of reason. In each case naturalism is inadequate as a true philosophy. Its chief defect is that it supplies no fixed factor in morals, in the matter of beauty, or in philosophy. But while the author points out with great acuteness the inherent defects of what he calls naturalism it can scarcely be said he does much to justify the opposite scheme. Indeed, he seems to be so cautious in committing himself to any conclusions that one almost catches the spirit of "philosophical doubt" while reading it. Perhaps this excessive caution in the realm of philosophy is, in the case of our author, the unconscious consequence of his life as a statesman, especially while dealing with the knotty subject of Home Rule for Ireland. All through a certain vagueness appears in the discussion, arising in part, at least, from the fact that the term *belief* is not defined. We are left to gather, as best we can, our author's meaning from his somewhat unsteady use of the term.

In the second part of the book, where "Some Reasons for Belief" are given, the philosophic basis of naturalism is first shown to be defective, and then the system of idealism is shown to be but little better. Then the author deals with philosophy and rationalism, and with rationalistic orthodoxy. All through this part of the treatise the reader is puzzled more and more to catch the precise

drift of the author's teaching. Sometimes he is dealing hard blows to the naturalistic scheme, and again he is reading a serious lecture to the traditional theologian. Sometimes the belief of the one seems to be spoken of, and, again, the belief of the other seems to be before our author. In short, our author would have greatly aided the reader if he had told us whose belief he was constantly dealing with.

Then in the third part "Some Causes of Belief" are considered. Two main topics are here considered under the headings "Causes of Experience" and "Authority and Reason." Here, again, we wish that our author had favored us with some explanation of the sense in which he uses the terms "experience," and "authority." The origin of experience he finds partly in reason and partly in authority. Indeed, he gives authority a large place in the process. But he uses the term authority in a wide sense, and coins in this connection a peculiar phrase to denote in a happy way his meaning here. That phrase is "psychological climate," and by it in a measure what others term environment is denoted. Now our author finds the origin of experience, and so of our beliefs, largely in the "psychological climate," in which we may be placed, and at times he seems to be almost back on the ground of the naturalism which he had already repudiated.

In the fourth part of the treatise where "Suggestions Towards a Provisional Philosophy" are made, six topics are briefly discussed. First, "The Ground-work"; secondly, "Beliefs and Formulas"; thirdly, "Beliefs, Formulas and Realities"; fourthly, "Ultimate Scientific Ideas"; fifthly, "Science and Theology"; and sixthly, "Suggestions Towards a Provisional Unification." These topics are set forth in rather an abstract way, yet with philosophical ability, and a good deal of wit appears in the whole discussion. Space forbids any full exhibition of the contents of this the most important part of the book, for it is here that the author's positive views, so far as he expresses any such views, are set forth.

He points out that our beliefs may be considered from three aspects. They may be considered from the view-point of their practical necessity, of their philosophical proof, and of their scientific origin. He also makes some ingenious remarks to show why men more easily abandon a scientific belief of any sort than a religious belief, and that the abandonment of the former may not affect conduct while the latter will surely do so. Then our author, on the one hand, severely criticises Herbert Spencer, and on the other he scolds the traditional theologians heartily. All the while he is practically hiding his own views, at least from open inspection, which is scarcely fair.

Our author concludes with the brief statement of four broad principles which he says emerge from his discussions. First, any system of knowledge which we may be able to construct must suffer from obscurities, defects of proof, and from incoherencies. Secondly, No unification of belief of the slightest theoretical value can take place on a purely scientific basis, that is, by an induction from particular experiences. Thirdly, No theory of knowledge can be satisfactory which does not find room within it for the fact that so far as empirical science can tell us anything about matter, most of the proximate causes of belief, and all its ultimate causes are non-rational in their character. Fourthly, No unification of beliefs can be practically adequate which does not include ethical beliefs as well as scientific ones. He adds that to enforce, illustrate, and apply these principles is the main object of his book, and in this way he hopes to establish the interdependence of the great religious, ethical, and scientific truths to which our beliefs relate.

To make a general estimate of the ultimate value of the book is to our mind not easy. It is written in an easy, ready style, and yet it is so cautious and marked by so many qualifications that we confess great difficulty to discover its precise import. At times his subtle exposure of what he calls naturalism inspires one with high hopes as to the goal to which our author will lead us. Then, again, when he seems to intimate, indirectly at least, that, perhaps, no other system is very much more complete, we grow fearful lest we are to be led into the cold shades of agnosticism. In brief, while apparently this book is a critique upon naturalism on the one hand, on the other we shall not be surprised to discover, perhaps, years hence, that it proves to be one of the most acute and dangerous books that has been recently written in the interests of skepticism in its agnostic phases. This is a present fear of ours; we hope that it may be proved groundless. In any case the book is stronger in its destructive than in its constructive parts, and to our thinking affords no adequate introduction to the study of theology.

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MAGGREGOR'S HISTORY OF NEW TESTAMENT APOLOGETICS.

HISTORY OF NEW TESTAMENT APOLOGETICS. *By James Maggregor, D. D., Sometime Professor of Systematic Theology in the New College, Edinburgh; Author of the Apology of the Christian Religion; The Revelation and the Record; Bible Class Books on Galatians and Exodus, etc., etc.* Imported by Charles Scribner's Sons. New York: 1894. 8vo, pp viii. 370. \$3.00.

This able book is really much more than it purports to be. It contains real apologetics of no meagre or mean sort. Possibly, from the very nature of the subject, this could not be avoided, and possibly, also, it was to be expected. For by blood the author is a Scotchman ("my name is Maggregor"), and by appointment he was "sometime Professor of Systematic Theology." His belligerency, therefore, comes "both by nature and by practice." He cannot witness a fray without taking a hand in it. All this, while palpably outside the scope of the book, really adds to its absorbing interest. Among its finest paragraphs are those in which, anent the swine miracle and believing Christ while not believing on him, the "weapons of precision" are wrenched from Prof. Huxley's hands and turned against him with telling, murderous effect. In hand-to-hand encounters of this kind the author is at his best.

The volume under review concludes a series of three, the other two being *Apology of the Christian Religion* and *The Revelation and the Record*. Each is complete in itself and independent of the others, but all treat in an exhaustive way different periods or phases of the same general subject. The author has entered and possessed a field hitherto but partially occupied so far as treatises with this distinctive end in view are concerned. He has done his work in a thorough and scholarly manner; to the immediate task is brought a wealth of knowledge of the Bible, sacred history, and contemporary literature in higher criticism and agnostic speculation that is simply marvellous, while wherever he touches the controverted fundamentals of Scriptural faith, he is conservative and sound to the core. Not only the history of apologetics, but apologetics also, at least in outline, are brought up to date in a manner eminently satisfactory to those who believe with the author in uncompromising defence of Christianity as embodied in the orthodox views.