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I.

THE REVISED CONFESSION.

THE Northern Presbyterians have published their Revised Confession of Faith, and it is proper for other Presbyterians, not of that communion, to review the changes which have been made, with a view to ascertaining whether they are alterations in the mere superficialities or in the substantive body of the Calvinistic system. The hilarity with which the revision has been received by such diluted Calvinists as the Cumberland Presbyterians, together with the promptness and enthusiasm with which they offered organic union on the basis of these changes, awakens apprehension, and calls for cautious examination.

An inventory of the changes which have been made will show that the Northern Presbyterians have, (1) explained their former doctrine of Predestination, (2) interpreted their doctrine of the salvation of Dead Infants, (3) restated their doctrine of works done by unregenerate persons, (4) amended their doctrine of Oaths, (5) withdrawn their charge that the Pope of Rome was Antichrist, (6) added a new chapter on the Holy Spirit, (7) and added a new chapter on the Love of God, and Missions.

We are not going to take up these points in detail, but elect, for animadversion, the changes which seem to affect the integrity of the Calvinistic system.

We quote now the new language which is the basis of our fault-finding:

great sources of argument—the Psychological, the Cosmic, the Moral. To the first he devotes four chapters; to the second, four; to the third, three, with a concluding chapter on the Kantian Criticism, and a Summary of Theism. He then takes up the Antitheistic Theories which have been offered as substitutes for Theism. In this concluding section we have thirteen chapters treating of Atheism, Semi-Materialism, Pure Materialism, Psychological Materialism, Materialistic Evolution, Positivism, Agnosticism, Deism and Rationalism, Pantheism, Pessimism and the Problem of Evil.

The foregoing outline, inadequate as it is, will give the reader some idea of the breadth and fulness of the discussion. We have indicated already our estimate of the work. We read it with pleasure and with pride. In our judgment it is a credit, not to the author alone, but to the great church which he represents. In it he has given hostage to the public which the two succeeding volumes will not find it easy to redeem.

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DENNEY'S "THE ATONEMENT AND THE MODERN MIND."

THE ATONEMENT AND THE MODERN MIND. *By James Denney, D. D., Professor of New Testament Language, Literature and Theology, United Free College, Glasgow (Scotland).* New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son. 1903. Small 8vo. 159 pp.

About two years ago Dr. Denney gave us a very valuable book—*The Death of Christ*—in which, by a very careful exegesis of the New Testament teaching upon this subject, he gave a most satisfactory explanation of the fact, and presented a well-defined view of the sacrificial nature of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. This book was received with much favor by those who were in sympathy with evangelical views of the atonement; but certain criticisms seem to have been made upon the book by some who were out of sympathy, for one reason or another, with such views. To meet these various criticisms, Dr. Denney recently published three articles in *The Expositor*, and they were also delivered as a series of lectures at a Summer School of Theology held in Aberdeen during the past summer. They are now published in a neat little book, and may be properly regarded as a supplement to the author's treatise on *The Death of Christ*.

He here treats of the Atonement as he understands the death of Christ to be, in its relation to what he terms "the modern mind," which is in many cases out of sympathy with, if not in actual revolt against, the scriptural doctrine of the atonement. Our author at times is in direct opposition to the modern mind, in some cases he is in sympathy with it, and in a few instances he really seems to capitulate to it. As the subject is a vital one in our own day, we may give this little book some careful attention.

The titles of the three chapters are, Preliminary Definition of the Subject, Sin and the Divine Reaction against it, Christ and Man in the Atonement. But these titles are very brief, and give but little idea of the scope of the discussion. Hence some further explanations are necessary, that the reader may know what this little book contains, and that its strength and its weakness may be made evident.

In the first chapter the terms "atonement" and "modern mind" are explained. In regard to the first term he takes substantially the same view of the atonement as he elucidated in his previous book on the death of Christ. He takes it to be a great reality about which there can be no compromise, since it is the very heart and essence of the Christian religion. The gist of this great truth is that "Christ died for our sins" that thereby "the forgiveness of our sins may be mediated to us through Jesus Christ." God assuredly "forgives sins," but only "through Christ" and "by the blood of his cross." God "freely forgives," but "at this cost to himself and to the Son of his love." Our author takes this to be the teaching of the New Testament.

He meets some objections to this view, especially the claim that God can forgive freely and in a sovereign way without any reference to atonement. He answers by saying that the point at issue is "not the freeness of the pardon," but "the cost of it"; not "the spontaneity of God's love," but "the necessity under which it lay," that "God might be true to himself." Here he turns the tables on those who adduce the parable of the Prodigal Son to support this objection, by pointing out that if there be no atonement in it, there is no Christ either, so far as the terms of the parable are concerned. Hence he concludes that the truth of the atonement which is to be commended to the modern mind is, "That there is forgiveness with God, and that this forgiveness comes to us only through Christ, and signally or specifically through his death."

In explaining what our author means by the modern mind he very properly points out the fact that it is a temper of our time which arises largely from certain presuppositions "as to the relations subsisting between God and man" which have "no place," or find no need for the atonement of Christ. If the modern mind, he adds, "is rooted in a view of the world which leaves no room for Christ and his work as Christian experience expresses them, then that view must be appreciated by the evangelist." This is a point well taken, for we are convinced that much of the antipathy which is felt in certain quarters in our day to the teaching of Scripture concerning the death of Christ has its source in an unsound philosophy. Hence the vital import of a fundamental apologetics, which shall construe, by a sound theistic philosophy, the relations which subsist between God, man and the cosmos, is self-evident. So, too, those who would begin their apologetic with either Christ or the Bible, without reference to the fundamental problems of the theistic philosophy, as against both deism and pantheism, are not on the most secure apologetic ground. We go with our author heartily here.

He next mentions and briefly expounds three factors in the thought of our time, which have had much to do with the production of the modern mind. The first is "the enormous development of physical science." He here shows that the tendency of this science in physics, chemistry and biology is to lead men to think "that everything is fixed," and that even human life itself is "a closed system," incapable "of helping or being helped." This perforce tends to remove the atonement from the sympathetic regard of the modern mind. The second influence at work in our time is the potency in it of "the great idealist movement in philosophy" which "began with Kant and culminated in Hegel." This our author very correctly says "gives a certain

stamp to the mind." It teaches "the essential unity of God and man," and "forecloses the question of the atonement." Our author very acutely asserts that "this philosophy can make no room for Christ's consciousness of himself." The third factor in the modern mind is produced "by the devotion to historical study," which marks our own time. The historical temper consciously or unconsciously has done not a little "to strike at the life of the Christian religion," and "especially at the idea of the atonement." Hence arises the modern plea for "the historical" rather than "the dogmatical" interpretation of the death of Christ.

Our author notes two subsidiary elements in the modern mind which are to be properly considered. One is the demand that everything shall "be based on experience." When this is applied in the sphere of religion it means that the verdict of Christian experience is to be placed above the authority of Scripture. The other is that the modern mind "desires to have everything in religion ethically construed." What "violates ethical standards must be excluded from religion." This the atonement does, and so must be set aside. This demand appears in two ways according to our author. First, there is "the demand for analogies to it (the atonement) in human life," and secondly, there is the demand that "the atonement shall be exhibited in vital relation to the new life in which sin is to be overcome." Our author concedes the legitimacy of these demands, but argues that they are not inconsistent with the scriptural fact of the atonement.

In the second chapter our author deals with "sin and the divine reaction against it." He undertakes "to so present the atonement that it shall excite the least prejudice, and find the most unimpeded access to the mind of this generation." He begins by defining man's relation to God as *personal*. He uses the term *personal*, not in an individual, but in a universal sense. He also uses the word *personal* as in a certain sense in contrast with *legal*, though he warns us "that personal relations, though distinct from legal, are not independent of law." This simply means that man's relation to God "is not lawless," and that as *personal* "these relations have a moral meaning, and are determined by something of universal import." They are "not merely personal, but ethical."

In this connection, it is to be observed that our author is in sympathy with the modern mind in one respect. With some impatience he repudiates all sympathy with the "forensic," or "legal," or "judicial" doctrine of the atonement. He says that "there is nothing which I should wish to reprobate more whole-heartedly than the conception which is expressed in these words." By the term "forensic" he means "regulated by statute." Sin is a breach of a statute, and "the sinner becomes a criminal," and God stands in the relation of judge to man. Still he does not commit himself to the idea of universal fatherhood, because he says that to take "the relation of father and child does not get us past the difficulty involved in the relation of judge and criminal." He prefers to speak of these relations as universal, or "as determined in a manner which has universal validity." This is true also of the relation of parent and child, unless we hold that there is nothing moral in this relation. It is a relation where "certain things are forever obligatory," and "some things forever impossible."

He further confesses that "he entirely agrees with those to whom forgiveness resting on a judicial transaction does not appeal at all." He seems to hold that "there is a moral order or constitution in which we have our life in relation to God and each other." Only by assuming this can sin and righteousness, atonement and forgiveness, have any meaning. The relation of men to God expresses itself, not by statutory statute in any forensic sense, "but by a moral constitution." This constitution must be maintained, and sin is a reaction against it. The atonement, then, means that "forgiveness is mediated through One in whose life and death the most signal homage paid to law"; the very "glory of the atonement is that it manifests the righteousness of God." This is a refinement which gets us over the difficulty in hand only by landing us upon the ground of the governmental theory of the atonement, for it is the moral constitution rather than the holy nature of God that sin reacts against. He says in so many words that "in the widest sense of the word, sin, as a disturbance of the personal relations between God and man, is a violence done to the constitution under which God and man form one moral community, share, as we may reverently express it, one life, have in view the same moral ends." We regret to have to say that this seems to us only a very refined governmental scheme, and defective even in the light of our author's book on "the death of Christ."

In particular "the abiding reaction" of sin against this constitution gives rise "to the bad conscience or the sense of guilt." Here our author has a searching and scriptural discussion of the relation between sin and death; and, although he says doubtful things about the way in which the third chapter of Genesis is to be understood, yet his exposition is informing. He brings out the point that death is both natural and spiritual reaction, for he says that "sin is the act or state of the whole man, and the reaction against it is the reaction of the whole order, at once natural and spiritual, in which man lives." He thus binds the natural and spiritual orders closely together, and thus he concludes that a point of view is furnished which may enable the modern mind "to appreciate the atonement," which consists in the fact that "forgiveness, as Christianity preaches it, is specifically mediated through Christ's death."

The third chapter has for its theme, "Christ and man in the atonement." Here some deeper aspects of the atonement as above explained come into view. First, "it becomes credible that there is a divine necessity for it," which means that "there is no forgiveness possible without it." This is good, and is in keeping with what Anselm has taught the ages upon this profound theme. The atonement becomes an act "by which God does justice to himself," and in it "grace and righteousness" are included. Then, secondly, "there is a human necessity for the atonement" also. This means "that apart from it the conditions of being forgiven could no more be fulfilled by man than forgiveness could be bestowed by God." He carefully guards against the moral influence theory of the atonement and the view that no atonement is necessary since God can pardon without it on the condition of repentance. He says that "man cannot repent without a motive," and "the motive which makes evangelical repentance possible is the way God makes himself known in the death of Christ." "All true penitents are children of the cross." Here

we cannot but feel that our author is scarcely careful in his statement. He should certainly have taken into account the work of the Spirit in giving the dispositions to be thus affected by the vision of the death of Christ. Those who were eye witnesses of it did not show that they were in many cases affected in this saving way by it.

In this chapter he repudiates the idea of imputation entirely. He will not deny that Christ died as our substitute, and that his death was sacrificial, but he denies all transfer of merit when he says that "merit and demerit cannot be mechanically transferred like sums in an account." He adds that the substitutionary view of Christ's atonement must not be taken "to suggest the idea of a transference of merit, the sin of the world being carried over to Christ's account, and the merit of Christ to the world's account." Here we are inclined to think our author has capitulated, in part at least, to the modern mind. He tries to save himself by drawing the contrast between "a representative" and "a substitute." He says that Christ was "our substitute, but not our representative."

Here we are prompted to make two remarks. First, in denying imputation, or "transference of merit," as he calls it, our author fails to distinguish between guilt and demerit. Guilt as liability to penalty is imputable, even though personal merit or demerit is not. Those who teach the doctrine of imputation do not teach the transference of merit as our author seems to think. The other remark is that if our author had placed the covenant principle under his feet, he would have had no such difficulty as he seems to feel with the word representative. Indeed, we felt this to be a weakness in his book on the death of Christ, and it is now more evident. Then, with the covenant under our feet, we have no difficulty in giving proper scriptural meaning to both imputation and representation.

But we must conclude. We are sorry to have to say that we find here some toning down of the exegetical results which our author brought out so finely in his former book. This book, therefore, may be a little more agreeable to the modern liberal mind, but it is just that much the less satisfactory to the modern evangelical mind, which believes not only that Jesus Christ died for our sins, but that he died for us.

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ORR'S "DAVID HUME AND HIS INFLUENCE ON PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY."

DAVID HUME AND HIS INFLUENCE ON PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY. *By James Orr, D. D., Professor of Apologetics and Systematic Theology, United Free Church College, Glasgow, Scotland.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1903. Pp. ix.-241.

This is one of an interesting series of books known as "The World's Epoch Makers." About a dozen have been already published, and this is one of the very best. Those who know Dr. Orr's ability and fitness for the task assigned him are prepared to find this a good treatment of a difficult subject, and we are sure they will not be disappointed when they read the book now before us.

Hume's philosophy has had a peculiar history. In his own day it had little influence, and his books nearly all "fell flat" when first issued. Then later on it revived for a time when empiricism became influential. Again,