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I.

DR. SHEDD'S SYSTEM OF THEOLOGY.

IN the three brief pages of reference to American theology, with which Dorner concludes his *History of Protestant Theology*, that eminent author informs us that, so far as he is able to survey it, theology on this continent "has as yet no connected literary history." We are gravely told that "the numberless parties" existing here, mainly engaged in external labors and conflicts, "have not as yet been able to do much for the advancement of theological science." Yet the hope is expressed that by "the introduction of English and Scotch, and especially of German theology, now abundantly taking place, and transporting into the country many elements of culture," theology may hereafter attain among us not merely a recognizable existence, but also "a new and even an independent form and combination"—a form and combination which somewhere in the future, provided these favorable conditions continue, "may in many respects resemble the theological development of the Church in the first centuries." But at present, in the estimate of Dorner, "America is as yet merely on the threshold of its theological existence."

But what shall be said of a history of Protestant theology written within twenty years which makes no mention whatever of that remarkable anthropological controversy, involving many of the most fundamental principles in evangelical Protestantism, which agitated not only New England but the whole country during the latter half of the eighteenth and the first decades of the present century—a controversy which gave to the Protestant world the treatises of Edwards on Original Sin and the Freedom of the Will, and a large

body of cognate doctrinal literature, and which may justly be said to have decisively affected the cast and tone of subsequent Calvinism, not merely on this continent but also in insular Europe? What shall be our estimate of such a history, which passes by with two or three scant sentences the great Christological controversy with which this century began, especially in New England—a controversy in which were exhibited both scholarly learning and theologic quality of a high order, and which both in itself and for its influence deserves to be ranked as one of the most important among the battles of orthodoxy with the Socinian heresy since the age of Servetus? Why does not the learned historian, in discoursing on the theology of the eighteenth century, once name him, the chief figure in those earlier anthropologic debates, whom Robert Hall, with a pardonable exaggeration, styled the greatest among the sons of men? And why does he make no mention of West or Smalley, of Bellamy or Emmons and their compeers, or of the large series of Bodies of Divinity originating in New England alone, and stretching from Willard and Hopkins and Dwight down to Woods and Pond, to Tyler and Taylor? And on what ground, looking in this quarter only, could we endorse his sweeping declaration that America is as yet only on the threshold of its theological existence?

So far as the Presbyterian Church is concerned, there were extant at the time when this *History* was written (1870), the Lectures on Divinity by John Witherspoon (1802), the systematic Lectures on the Shorter Catechism by Ashbel Green (1841), the Theological Lectures of that calm and clear thinker, James Richards (1846), the Views of Theology by Lyman Beecher (1853), the two large volumes of Breckinridge on the Knowledge of God (1859), the Outlines of A. A. Hodge (1860), and his Commentary on the Confession of Faith (1869)—to say nothing of many special treatises and discussions in various forms. But since that date, and without very special help from German sources, this list has been greatly enlarged in both amount and quality. The Theological Lectures of Beard, the revered Nestor of the Cumberland Church, and those of the gifted Thornwell of the Southern Church (1871); the Systematic Theology of Charles Hodge, and the two doctrinal treatises by Hickok, condensed from his theological instructions (1872), the compendium of Christian Theology for the People by Willis Lord (1875), the Systematic and Polemic Theology of Dabney (1878), the System of Christian Theology collected from the manuscripts of the lamented professor, Henry Boynton Smith (1884), the enlarged Outlines of Archibald Alexander Hodge (1878), and his admirable Lectures on Theological Themes, his last earthly service to the Church, published in

1887—do not these constitute a somewhat remarkable series of doctrinal productions, issuing from a single denominational source within so brief a period, in an age which has been pronounced hopelessly untheological, and in a country where, prior to the last twenty years, no men or parties had been able, according to Dorner, to do anything worth mentioning for theological science? May it not be questioned whether any section of British Presbyterianism, or even of continental Presbyterianism, can furnish a list of doctrinal treatises at once so extensive and so valuable, produced during the same space of time?

To this list there is now to be added the *Dogmatic Theology* of Dr. Shedd, the matured product of a lifetime devoted assiduously to the study of the great themes of religion. Aside from this crowning work, the author has justly earned high eminence among us as an able historian in the department of sacred doctrine, as a faithful expositor of the Scriptures, as a skilful teacher of practical theology and the art of sermonizing, and also as a thorough and effective preacher of the Word. But in these volumes he has given to the Presbyterian Church a still larger contribution, and at the same time has rendered to American theology in general a service of the highest type and value. Terminating in this consummate product a prolonged period of rare philosophic and theologic productiveness, he may now fitly take his place, as he rests from his labor, in that long line of able and devout theologians already named, whom American Presbyterianism does well to hold in lasting remembrance.

In attempting to present an intelligent estimate of such a treatise as this, and especially of the particular system and type of theology so effectively expressed in it, the writer is deeply conscious of the special liabilities involved in the task which, by request, he has undertaken. A critic of such a system may fail through various causes: want of knowledge may hinder, different training may disable, superficial apprehension may mislead, lack of appreciation may beguile, prejudice may pervert, even friendship old and warm may disqualify. But facing such exposures as best he may, and moved mainly by the deepest interest in the great themes here discussed, the writer gratefully accepts the opportunity to pay an honest tribute to what, after careful examination, he regards as one of the most valuable theological treatises produced on American soil. Its style, though less elaborate and sparkling than that of the author in some of his other productions, is always clear and full, with an occasional phrase or aphorism or flash of imagery that instantly arrests and charms the mind of the reader. Its method, though varying from that of many other theological treatises, is one which amply justifies itself as it is

gradually revealed in the discussion ; and the movement from first to last is eminently vigorous, direct, commanding. Viewed in such respects, the *Dogmatic Theology* will legitimately take high position in the front rank of American treatises in this department, if, indeed, it may not be counted among the ablest theological products of the age.

Every reader of the *Dogmatic Theology* will be impressed at the outset by the abundant traces of extensive study of theological authorities, and by the patient and thorough effort to investigate every topic discussed, in the light reflected upon it from antecedent thought. Hardly any contemporary treatise can be named which brings us into direct contact with such a wide variety of authoritative testimonies, ancient, mediæval, modern—pagan and skeptical as well as Christian. But it is noticeable also that, while the author ranges widely in all quarters for confirmatory illustration and evidence, he follows closely the preference indicated in his Preface by the remark that “some minds in the former ages of Christianity were called by Providence to do a work that will never be outgrown by the Christian Church—men who thought more deeply and came nearer to the centre of the truth on some subjects than any modern minds.” Led by this preference, he appeals more constantly than any American writer outside of Anglicanism to the Fathers of the first four centuries—to Tertullian and Justin Martyr, Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria and their compeers, and especially to Athanasius and Augustine—for support in his exposition of those primary sections of doctrine, such as the Trinity and the person of Christ and the depravity of mankind, with which the early Church was especially concerned. In his argument for the divine existence, his exposition of the nature of the atonement, and some other discussions, he draws large confirmation from the scholastics and eminently from that great evangelical teacher of the twelfth century, Anselm of Canterbury. Thomas Aquinas, still the chief authority in the Roman Catholic communion, is repeatedly summoned into court to bear his testimony to the nature of the divine attributes, of moral law and moral freedom, and of the plan of redemption. To Luther and Calvin and other leaders of the Reformation, and to the continental divines of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and eminently to Turretin, the author turns again and again, as to familiar friends and counselors, in his exposition of those great truths of grace around which the prolonged battle of Protestantism was waged. But it is with the older English divines of the seventeenth century (Hooker, Ussher, Charnock, Cudworth, Pearson, Leighton, and eminently Owen and



Howe), and with their compeers in the eighteenth century (Butler, Warburton, Burnet, and others), that he finds himself in strongest, most constant sympathy as exponents of that theology which he has set himself to explain and defend. He chooses, as he admits, to "follow the older Calvinism rather than the later" at several important points where the later Calvinism, under the influence of the conception of the Covenants and of other causes, has diverged from the current teaching of these venerated English authorities. He goes so far as to aver that confinement to more modern opinions is tending to thinness and weakness in our theology, and claims, with an earnestness fully justified by the fact, that "if his treatise has any merits, they are due very much to daily and nightly communion with that noble army of theologians which is composed of the élite of the Fathers, of the schoolmen, of the reformers, and of the seventeenth-century divines of England and the continent."

An opinion so earnestly expressed by one so competent to testify after close familiarity with these high authorities, should be challenged with caution. And yet it cannot fail to be clear to so accomplished a historian that Christian theology did not culminate and terminate with the Fathers, with the Schoolmen, with Luther and Calvin and their continental associates and disciples, or even with those English divines whose profound thought and study have contributed so much, as all admit, not only to the theologic formulation of Protestantism, but to the enlightenment and guidance of Christian thinkers and schools of Christian thought in all subsequent times. Dr. Shedd indeed recognizes with just reference the helpful contributions made by Jonathan Edwards to that older Calvinistic theology at points where it greatly needed essential modification. But he hardly gives to Smalley and Hopkins and the younger Edwards and Emmons and Dwight, among the disciples of the great theologian of Stockbridge, any such prominence as he seems to attach to many continental theologians of the older type whom others would regard as of relatively slight importance. Aside from Charles Hodge, he grants but scant recognition to those Presbyterian thinkers of various schools who in the aggregate seem to others to have rendered no slight service to the existing faith of Christendom by their mollifying interpretations of the older Calvinism. Nor does he find among living theologians abroad much higher authority than he discovers on our own continent; the living teachers of Scotland, of England, and even of Germany, with the exception of Müller and Dorner, are but infrequently called into court as expert witnesses to the doctrines expounded in his treatise. This may indeed be because those older authorities on whom he relies so habitually have

exhausted the subjects discussed, or because more modern thinking has tended in fact, as he suspects, to induce thinness and weakness in theologic exposition. An alternative possibility suggests itself in the fair query whether the Calvinism of this century, and especially the Calvinism of this continent, may not have passed so far beyond the dicta and formulæ of those earlier ages, that it cannot be made to furnish support or confirmation to that more antique phase of Calvinistic belief to which the author so earnestly adheres.

Another marked characteristic of the *Dogmatic Theology* may be seen in the continuous support of the views advanced by the authority of the Scriptures and of the Christian creeds, especially those which were born of the Reformation. This is a natural outgrowth from the views of revelation and inspiration, and of the authentic and canonical quality of the sacred books, presented in the general section on Bibliology. The distinction between unwritten revelation and a revelation written, so often neglected in like discussions, is here strongly urged, and the proper conception of that revelation which we have in the Bible is carefully and well defined. Unwritten revelation is simply that knowledge of divine things which, though originally derived from God, has become corrupted and perverted through human sin; the written revelation is that knowledge, direct and infallible, which holy men of old, being moved thereto by the Holy Ghost, have communicated to mankind. The definition of inspiration as an influence of the Holy Spirit upon a human person, whereby he is infallibly moved and guided in all his statements while under this influence, is sound and safe. In conjunction with such determining divine influence, the author recognizes justly the human element which makes its appearance more or less distinctly in all inspired products. "An inspired man in perceiving and conveying truth employs his own human mind, his own native language, the common figures of speech, and exhibits his own individual peculiarities; but without misconception and error upon the *subject* of which he treats, because his human mind is actuated and guided by the divine Mind." Yet this human element, though always present, never so affects the statements made that they become fallible, as other human writings are; inspiration secures inerrancy; the voice of the Scriptures is after all, and supremely, the voice of God.\*

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\* The biblical and philosophic supports of this position are in the main admirably stated; they are at least conclusive against those looser theories, considerably current among us, which in a general way ascribe to the Bible "a unique character and a paramount authority" among books, but which are always shifting from one explanation to another, and always unable to say wherein the uniqueness or the authority lies, and

Since the proofs of inspiration, which must rest mainly on the testimony of the Revelation itself, cannot be brought into service before the fundamental facts of authenticity and credibility and canonicity have been established by natural evidence, it is a pertinent question whether the order of the discussion here might not with advantage have been reversed, and inspiration presented at the close of the Bibliology as a fact demonstrated on fair historic grounds. The chapters on authenticity and canonicity are more brief than might be desired; that on credibility, presenting the vital arguments from the excellence of the doctrines taught in the Bible, from the known character of Christ, from the facts of miracle, and from the recorded effects of Christianity, deserves particular study; it is not often that this demonstration is so well presented in so brief a space. It is noticeable also that Dr. Shedd lays special stress on the objective and historic witnesses to such credibility, in contrast with the more subjective test suggested, indeed, by the Westminster Confession (I., v.), but somewhat inconsiderately and sweepingly urged in our day under the general and illusive phrase, the religious consciousness.

Holding this high view of the Bible as a veritable revelation from God to man, the author appeals constantly to it for the final support and confirmation of his teachings. Nor are the texts quoted by him those traditional ones which appeared first in the theologies and the formularies of the Reformation, and which have been handed down from theologian to theologian reverentially without variation, as if the past two centuries had made no contribution whatever to intelligent exegesis. Dr. Shedd has faithfully examined such quotations for himself, and has given us the results of his own independent investigation, under all the light which more modern study of the Divine Word is supplying. Indeed, this scholarly examination and use of the Bible as the one great and sufficient witness to any doctrine, will be regarded, even by those who differ widely from him in respect to the meaning of particular passages (as the ἡμαρτον in Rom. v. 12), as one among the best services which he has rendered in these volumes to the theologizing of our times. For is not such scholarly and faithful scripturalizing of current dogma the one thing

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which are much more skilful in assaulting other positions than in describing their own. A critic who tells us that there is a true doctrine of inspiration, and that this doctrine is deducible from Scripture, and yet rejects all formal infallibility of record, questions the unity of the Bible, opposes every claim to inerrancy, advocates vague speculations about construction and reconstruction, and falls back on an indefinable notion about "the essential content of divine revelation," whatever that may be, is certainly neither a dangerous opponent nor a helpful counsellor.

specially needful to transmute such dogma into power, and to release our preaching from technical trammels and give it commanding efficiency with men?

His appeal to the creeds is of like character. Familiar with the various symbols, both ancient and more recent, he has made admirable use of them in sustaining his own positions at many points. The thorough examination even of a single confession like that of Augsburg or of Westminster, is worth as much to any intelligent student as the reading of twenty Bodies of Divinity; and he who has become familiar with comparative symbolism by placing the great creeds of the Church side by side according to their historic place and quality, and deriving from them what they combine to teach him, has by such a process become himself a theologian far above the control of any single Church teacher, however authoritative. Dr. Shedd makes special use, again and again, of the major creeds of Protestantism, and especially of the Presbyterian Symbols, to which he makes no less than sixty distinct references. How far he really has these symbols with him is a question which each student of his system must examine for himself. An interesting instance of such opportunity may be found in the matter of the transmission of sinfulness from Adam to his posterity. Do the symbols teach, as the author, with considerable evidence on his side, claims, that we were truly in Adam seminally and by nature, so that we sinned when he sinned, and fell into guilt and condemnation when he fell? Or do they teach, as Dr. Hodge for the most part affirms (*Theol.*, II., p. 197), that we were in him representatively or legally rather than seminally, and became participants in his guilt and condemnation on the ground of this legal relationship which God had in sovereignty established between him and us? Or do they teach, as Dr. H. B. Smith argues (*Theol.*, p. 283), that our guilt lies not in the specific act of Adam directly imputed to us, and made either naturally or federally our act, but rather comes in through our possession of that corrupted nature which is the consequent of that primal offence, and which in every man stands back of his particular sins, and is seen to be their culpable source and cause? More than any of his predecessors among American theologians does Dr. Shedd bring us face to face with such confessional questions and summon us as Christian scholars to the high task of their solution.

A third admirable characteristic of the *Dogmatic Theology* appears in the continuous and careful effort to secure a solid basis in reason and the nature of things, as well as in external authorities, for the several doctrines advanced. The author sympathizes fully



with those terse and pregnant sentences of Hooker : " Theology, what is it but the science of things divine? And what science can be attained unto without the help of natural discourse and reason?" It is doubtful whether we have ever had in this country since Edwards a theological writer in whom this philosophic bent is so strongly developed. One happy illustration of this may be seen in the manner in which Dr. Shedd (I., 35 *seq.*) states and defends the unusual position that a higher degree of certainty, even of absolute scientific certainty, may be secured in theology than is attainable in what are called the exact or the natural sciences. After showing that from the nature of the case physical science affords none but relative knowledge, that the judgments of the senses are necessarily relative and variable, that the inferences from sensible phenomena must also be variable and uncertain, he goes on to show by contrast that the ideas of God and of the soul, of free will and immortality, of right and wrong, are in themselves absolute ; and therefore that all science founded on these ideas must partake of the same absoluteness. He consequently holds that theology is a positive science in a sense and degree that cannot be affirmed of any natural science ; and especially where the contributing element of intelligent faith is introduced to corroborate the certainty secured through abstract speculation. In opposition to the narrow conception of Mansel and others, that theology is at best a relative and largely negative science, he thus claims for it the greatest measure of positiveness and of certainty that can be secured in any field of knowledge by the limited powers of man. It is a striking illustration of the philosophic genius of Calvin, that three centuries ago he advocated exactly this position : asserting that the human mind, especially when thus aided by reasonable faith, can attain a certain and steady knowledge concerning spiritual things—a knowledge which is more broad, more sure, than can be gained in any other sphere, through the exercise of natural capacity merely.

As a specimen of skilful and forceful reasoning in the highest plane of speculative theology, it would be hard to find anything finer than the presentation (I., 222 *seq.*) of the ontological argument for the divine existence. The author does little more than state, though he states effectively, the other varieties of argument on this vital point, current under the terms, cosmological, teleological, moral, and historical. The two latter, though just now assuming special prominence among the recognized proofs in the case, he passes by with the briefest mention, perhaps for the reason that they, as well as the two older forms of external proof, have been so fully and repeatedly discussed by antecedent writers. It is on the ontological

argument, derived from the nature and qualities of the idea of God and from the peculiar place which that idea takes and holds in the human mind, that his interest evidently centres. On this point he is unsurpassed, if, indeed, he has been equaled by any previous advocate of this position. Those who are familiar with the admirable account of the development and the various phases of this argument, given in his *History of Christian Doctrine*, will hardly refuse to acquiesce in the statement that no writer on the subject, from Augustine and Anselm down to Descartes and Samuel Clarke, has ever cast the argument into a more interesting, a more subtle, a more commanding form. The author indeed admits that all ontological reasoning is commonly regarded, as by Kant and Coleridge, as involving a sophistical inference from an admitted necessity in thought to an objective necessity in fact. But he seeks to bridge this chasm by showing that the idea of God is one so unique among human ideas, one so intuitively received, and so solitary and sublime in its imperial demand upon our belief, and one so indispensable to all further thinking on religious themes, that we cannot rationally refuse to admit the inference that a Being corresponding to such an idea actually exists. The case has never been, nor is it easy to see how it ever can be, more skilfully stated. And an opponent might freely admit, as indeed few thoughtful minds would be prepared to deny, that the existence and place and influence of such an idea in the human mind do furnish a direct and powerful presumption in favor of the great fact which it is adduced to sustain. Yet is it not hard for most minds to see that there is in the argument anything more than a presumption? Will men trust themselves to so tremulous a cord in traversing the wide chasm between the necessity in thought and that necessity in fact, which the soul instinctively demands, and which it is the aim of the great objective arguments to supply?

Other illustrations of the same high type of reasoning might be named; one of the most noticeable appears in what is fitly styled the Rational Argument on the subject of hell, with which the *Theology* closes. In the last resort, the question whether there is a separate world or universe for incorrigibly sinful souls, like most other questions in eschatology, must be answered decisively from the inspired Word alone. If we are compelled to turn to Scripture for our final evidence that there is for man a life beyond the present, *a fortiori* must we go to the same unerring source for information in regard to the special elements and characteristics of that life, and particularly for all solid assurance respecting the relations of our character in this world to that eternal state. Yet Bishop Butler has rendered noble

service to the Christian doctrine on the subject by showing how thoroughly the revealed facts of future reward and future retribution on the basis of character are grounded in the nature of law, of moral government, of eternal righteousness. Jackson, in his suggestive treatise on the *Doctrine of Retribution*, has in a similar way defended the scriptural view by proving that retribution is in fact a doctrine of natural theology, which the Bible indeed affirms, but affirms on grounds that are found more primarily in the deepest reason and nature of things.

Dr. Shedd takes up the problem in a similar way, first carefully defining the nature of guilt as distinct from misfortune, and of punishment as distinct from either chastisement or calamity, and then showing on rational grounds that God as a moral Ruler must punish guilt so long as guilt lasts, even forevermore. He maintains that the dogma of endless punishment is reasonable, because the human conscience justifies it, because the endlessness and the infinite evil of sin demand it, and because the sinful soul itself, as the history of human morals indicates, is forced to accept it as just. These reasonings are certainly above rational challenge, and the clearness and calmness, as well as religious boldness, with which they are presented, so much at variance with the sentimentalism of the times, will commend them to thoughtful minds everywhere. It is doubtful whether the author has rendered a more important service to Christian theology at any other point than in this philosophic demonstration of the necessary existence of that world of the lost, which we term, hell.

There is, indeed, some room for the query whether this strong speculative bent has not in some instances been allowed excessive play. For example, there is little doubt in orthodox minds that the conception of a Trinity internal and eternal is needful as a support to the more obvious doctrine of an external Trinity, against Sabellianism and other kindred errors. There is just as little question as to the profound reality conveyed by the two biblical terms, begetting and proceeding, when applied to the advent and mission of the Son and of the Spirit respectively. But can we go back of these historic disclosures into the interior constitution of the Godhead (I., 290 *seq.*) and discern there two primal processes going on within the divine nature eternally correlative to those described in act as begetting and procession, and themselves definable by such speculative terms as generation and spiration? For the latter process, as distinct from the chronologic proceeding, what testimony of Scripture can be adduced? And for the former, are we not obliged to rest on an uncertain interpretation of two or three passages, which

after all may teach nothing more than is implied in the chronologic phrase, begetting? Of a double process going on within the unfathomable recesses of the Deity—a process not personal, but one of essence—by which the Son is eternally generated by the Father, and from which the Spirit issues through the eternal spiration of the Father and the Son, we assuredly can know nothing by mere speculation, however interesting or profound such speculation may be. It is possible that this conception is sustained by some rather sweeping phrases in the Nicene Creed, but any one who holds that there are three internal and eternal persons or modes of existence in the Godhead, may be pardoned if he pauses with the revealed fact, and attempts no such explication. Is there not a point, as the history of theology has too often shown, where speculations of this class react disastrously upon the very facts which they are intended to illustrate or sustain?

Besides the three characteristics already named, it is a pleasure to refer in brief to other features of the *Dogmatic Theology* which add greatly to its interest and value. One of these appears in the careful, faithful, exhaustive analysis and exposition of the several topics discussed, as in the admirable chapters on the Nature of God, on the Divine Attributes, and on the Trinity in the first volume, and those on the Personality and the Impeccability of Christ in the second. It is not needful that one should accept the teaching of the author on any of these subjects in order to appreciate the great excellence of his treatment. The careful student of these chapters will hardly fail to discern in them that close and critical use and definition of terms, that patient gathering of material, that skilful grouping of evidence and argument, that deductive and inferential expansion of doctrine, that logical sweep and conclusiveness in statement, which belong to our most elevated conceptions of theology as a science, and which are exhibited, for the most part, only by minds of the highest order.

Whatever topic the author essays to discuss, he grasps with vigor and treats with a thoroughness and a fidelity which deserve cordial recognition. Nor does he ever, on any ground, ignore or turn aside from any of those deeper, more fundamental problems with which the Christian theologian must concern himself; the more difficult or obscure the doctrine, the more certain is he to address himself with special zest and power to its solution. For every such task he girds himself as an athlete for the race—as a gladiator for the contest. So strenuously is his gaze fixed upon these fundamental issues that he is prone, in some directions at least, to neglect too much relatively,



and to discuss too slightly those aspects of divine truth, more simple and more practical, in which the thought of the Church is especially interested and unified. But on those great fields where evangelical theologians of various schools have met so often in speculative battle, it is his delight to be and to maintain against all comers his cherished beliefs. Here we realize that we are in the presence of one who has convictions and knows just what they are, who can give solid reasons for the faith which is in him, and who takes a knightly delight in defending that faith against all assailants. Irenic in disposition, and made still more irenic by his familiarity historically with Christian men of all types of belief and schools of thought, he still pushes his own argument like a battering ram relentlessly against every opposite opinion—always seeking, if he does not always gain, victorious entrance into the very citadel of antagonistic belief. Here and there a trace of sarcasm, occasionally a dogmatic positiveness almost imperious, betray themselves; but nowhere do we discover any of those airy assumptions of supremacy, those sweeping claims of corroboration by the common verdict of Protestantism, those derisive references to opponents as insincere or heretical, which have so much blemished some other systems of theology. The gentle spirit of the Preface runs almost without a ripple through the whole.

Perhaps the most striking instance of this blending of positiveness and gentleness may be seen in the manner in which Dr. Shedd presents and defends his theory of original sin. Realizing as he must that there are very few among living Calvinists, and especially among American Calvinists, who would accept his explanation of the catechetical statement that we sinned in Adam and fell with him in the first transgression, he still not only defends his view by the most cogent arguments at his command, but also proceeds to show how inadequate and invalid all other interpretations are, as if he would at least bring all opposing belief into hopeless confusion. Holding to traducianism on other grounds as against the more common opinion that each soul is directly created by God, he defends it especially because it furnishes the best basis for his theory of realistic imputation. That theory, with all its painful implications, he resolutely sets over against the dogma of a federal rather than a naturalistic headship, as the only possible foundation for the proposition that the guilt of the first transgression rests immediately on every soul that is born into the world. He boldly asserts (II., 29) that man exists first as a race or species, and in this mode of existence commits a single and common sin, for which sin each individualized member of the race becomes personally responsible, the total guilt of this first sin being charged upon each sinner. To the

theory of federal imputation, as held by Turretin and by Hodge, he strongly objects that such an imputation is merely an arbitrary act of sovereignty, not a righteous, judicial act, carrying in it an intrinsic morality and justice. "To make the eternal damnation of a soul depend, he says (II., 36), on vicarious sin contradicts the profound convictions of the human conscience." Nor does he regard the theory of mediate imputation with any larger degree of allowance, because in his judgment (II., 193) it creates greater difficulties than it relieves. Against all Arminian or Pelagian explanations he is still more resolutely arrayed; with these he admits no compromise whatever. Apparently aware that his own view has been supplanted largely in Calvinistic circles, he still affirms and defends it with an uncompromising purpose, as if the very doctrine of salvation rested upon it. And yet this is done in utmost calmness and with a considerateness of language and a fairness of discussion which disarm criticism, and almost incline one to believe what on sober reflection it becomes increasingly difficult to see how any one can believe. Had all theologians cherished his fine spirit, and so carefully respected the opinions and the good name of those from whom they differed, the world would never have learned to scoff at what Melancthon once plaintively styled the *rabies theologorum*.

The question has been raised whether the *Dogmatic Theology* contains what may be described technically as a theological system. Dr. Shedd himself in his Introduction has shown very clearly what theology is as a science of God, of man, and of the relations between God and man; and also what a true system of theology is as an exhibition, under some cardinal law or principle of arrangement, and in logical order and connection, of the essential truths embodied in that science. The rule of Schleiermacher that a true system of theology should exclude all heretical matter and include all ecclesiastical matter, is here practically broadened so as to comprehend within the system all that is fundamental in Christianity, and all this set in such proper order and relations as to present to the view one composite, concrete, symmetrical whole. In constructing such a system the author would group all available material under four heads: the trinity, the apostasy, the incarnation, the redemption; and then so bind these fundamental verities together as to make of them one body of divinity, animated by a single dominating principle. Following this general conception, he has not aimed to produce a mere compendium or epitome of theology in outline, with orderly recognition of each and every element and with an exhaustive synopsis or summary of all that might properly be gathered into

such a compilation. His evident purpose has rather been to lay hold of the great central matters in such a system, and to spend his strength on these, even at the risk of omitting less important material.

This peculiarity may provoke criticism on the double ground that too much is omitted altogether, and that what is presented is not always set before us in fair and full proportions, like the parts and members of a Grecian temple. In some respects it is to be regretted that topics of great moment in a complete theological system are only named or suggested; such, for example, as the law of God, moral government, the kingship of Christ, the Church and kingdom of God on earth, the millennial era. Other topics, to which considerable space is assigned in similar treatises, such as providence, miracles, prayer, faith and repentance, perseverance, the judgment particular and final, heaven as a state, are but very slightly discussed. The prolegomena to Christian theology are brought in for the most part incidentally, rather than formally, in connection chiefly with the unfolding of some positive doctrine, such as creation or the human will. It is also true that while some portions of theology are thus omitted or casually noticed, others receive what seems like a disproportionate and excessive treatment. The ten long and strong chapters on the trinity, the divine attributes, the decrees, creation, the creation of man, original sin, the atonement, the intermediate state, and hell, occupy considerably more space than the twenty-nine chapters on other branches of the general subject, and in fact engross mainly, if not entirely, the attention and interest of the reader.

Two practical considerations undoubtedly determined just such a theologic construction as is here presented. One of these appears at a glance in the relation of these themes on the one side or the other to present thought. The popular mind is not much concerned, for example, with the doctrine of immortality, of the resurrection, of the final judgment, or of heaven; but is intensely engrossed with the problem of the intermediate state, of probation after death, of the nature and duration of punishment in eternity. It would hardly be possible therefore for a considerate thinker like Dr. Shedd, familiar with these living issues and realizing their serious relations to the whole scheme of grace, to refrain from giving them what might seem to a casual observer a disproportionate prominence, even at the cost of passing almost in silence other topics possessing intrinsically even greater importance.\* The other consideration was probably still

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\* The criticism on the *Dogmatic Theology*, in which certain reviewers and editors have indulged themselves at this point, is too smart to be either wise or just. Had it been

more influential ; it is found in what may be described as the strategic significance of the truths discussed with such relative amplitude. The astute author realizes well that his expositions of the divine decrees, of the creation of man, of original sin, and of the atonement are the corner-stones of his system, and he therefore devotes to them more than a fourth of his entire treatise, evidently in the conviction that whosoever is convinced at these four points must in logical consistency receive the body and substance of his whole scheme. He perceives, as his readers also must perceive, that accepted in these particulars his system must be accepted substantially throughout. What he has written obviously exists in his own mind as a compact and convincing unit, determined and foreordained from beginning to end by these primal postulates. It would be hard to find in this aspect a better organized, more tenaciously articulated, more profoundly logical and persuasive scheme of sacred truth.

Finding in these two obvious facts the principles which have determined the form and proportions of the *Dogmatic Theology*, we are brought at length to the main question in the case—the question respecting its comprehending aim and purpose. For the author has not merely taken upon himself the task, worthy though such a task might be, of adding another to the already lengthened list of theological treatises, American and European, which have sought simply to set forth the Christian Doctrine in the Augustinian or Calvinistic form. Had he sought nothing more than this, his volumes would still have secured for themselves an honorable place in the large library of Calvinism. But Dr. Shedd, as he modestly intimates in his Preface, has a more specific and a more difficult end in view—nothing less than the restoration of the older, the more distinctively Genevan type, in contrast with the more recent, and what he regards as the weaker varieties of the Pauline theology, as received and cherished by the Reformed Churches. He frankly admits that “upon a few points the older Calvinism has been followed in preference to the later ;” and confesses that it is around these points (especially the ontological argument for the divine existence, the

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the aim of the author to print a proportionate compendium of theology simply, he would doubtless have presented the biblical doctrine touching the blessed estate of the righteous dead, as fully as he has set forth the eternal estate of those whom we term the lost. Those who have studied his treatise on the *Doctrine of Endless Punishment* understand exactly why he takes such pains to show at length that this doctrine, however unwelcome, has an immutable basis in both the natural and the spiritualized conscience, as well as in the Word of God. That position established, the dogma of a probation after death will not tarry long to trouble the Church, and Dr. Shedd will have the satisfaction of having contributed largely to its discomfiture.



theory of traducianism, the sin of Adam and its immediate imputation to his descendants, and the doctrine of decrees and election, with its logical consequent in a limited atonement) that the chief difference is manifested between his treatise and other contemporary treatises of the same general type.

It is this special aim, apparent throughout the *Dogmatic Theology*, which lifts it at once into commanding prominence, and invests each topic of which it specially treats with a peculiar interest. That the treatise has the highest theologic authority in its favor is obvious; in fact, it is a nearer approach to the theology of John Calvin himself than any American theologian has made in this generation. That a large vein of scripturalness runs through it, like gold through quartz, will be admitted even by those who most strongly question some of its teachings. Besides this sparkling biblical quality, it is built and knit together logically like a lighthouse on some rocky promontory—welded and bound by many a clamp and chain, as if the author had anticipated the dashing of many an adverse wave against its substantial front. It is also characterized and beautified, as we have seen, by intrinsic qualities of style, of method, of illustration and reasoning, which compel the thoughtful respect even of those to whom Calvinism in any positive form is an offensive thing. But after all the chief question respecting this grand book is the question constantly pressing itself upon the reader, whether it will effectively arrest existing beliefs and tendencies, create and hold a school of adherents, restore the prestige of the old Augustinian theology, rehabilitate and *Calvinize* our Calvinism?

That changes of considerable magnitude have come over historic Calvinism since the death of its great expositor, will not be denied. These changes have been manifested, not so much in the rejection or abandonment of any of its original elements, but rather in such new modes of stating particular truths, such different forms of construction and adjustment, as have been found needful, both for its own practical usefulness as a system, and for its more amicable relationship to whatever is seen to be cardinal in other evangelical systems. This process unquestionably began with the introduction of the Cocceian and more obviously biblical conception of the covenants, as antithetic to the antecedent and more speculative conception of the one absolute decree—a change whose sequences are seen at numerous points in the theology of Turretin and the other Calvinistic divines of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in still more marked variety and significance in the theology of most of their successors in our own time. So far as such reconstruction is traceable to any single mind on this continent, it has registered itself

pre-eminently in those signal *Improvements* which Jonathan Edwards is represented by his son as having introduced into the system,\* and which have more or less consciously come to pervade the thinking and give tone to the teaching of American Calvinists of almost every school. But a broader and more potent influence appears in those new and fresh conceptions of God in his fatherhood and grace, of the Gospel in its cosmic adaptations, of personal responsibility and activity in the sphere of religion, and of other kindred elements in the Christian scheme, which have penetrated so diffusively the religious mind of our age, and which are more and more compelling recognition even in our most abstruse theologies. It is apparent also that what may be described as the exigencies of preaching—the need of stating our Calvinism from the pulpit in such forms as shall on one side protect it from the hostile criticisms of those who hold to other systems, and on the other shall make it most effectual in persuading and winning sinners—have had much to do, especially in this country, with such structural modifications. We probably also owe much in this direction to the gradual dying out of the rancor of schools and sects, to the inflowing airs of an era of balmy peace, and the quiet unifying of evangelical Protestantism around the great verities of the common Gospel—a gracious process which seems almost to forbid anything like a belligerent emphasizing of the things wherein we may still differ.

But whatever the causes, it is quite clear that the Calvinism of the nineteenth century, though holding firmly to the old symbols, and adhering with fervor to every really essential element in the original system, is not in this country, or even in England or in Scotland itself, the Calvinism of the sixteenth century. It is rather that older system, suffused by new tempers, mollified toward other systems and tendencies in evangelical thought, adjusted to the larger needs of present life and duty, quickened by glorious revivals, and animated by a missionary purpose to influence and save the world. It is the old Calvinism, less closely organized around certain philosophical

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\* *Works of Jonathan Edwards, Jr., D.D.*, Vol. II., 481 *seq.* Of the ten "Improvements made in Theology" by the senior Edwards, the most prominent in the list given by his son relate to the end of God in creation, liberty and necessity, the nature of true virtue, origin of moral evil, the atonement and imputation. He who reads carefully this brief treatise cannot fail to discern in large degree the secret of the change through which Calvinism, not merely American but European also, has been passing since the middle of the eighteenth century. Had Edwards not risen to recast, and by profounder and better methods to explain and defend the Calvinistic system, its career for the last hundred years would have been far less illustrious—its fruitage far less beautiful and precious. For that service God predestinated, called, empowered him, as truly as he ordained and endowed Luther and Calvin for their great mission.

propositions, with larger biblical rather than speculative quality, allowing wider varieties of statement and explanation, less relentless toward opposition, exhibiting broader and stronger modes of defence at points where it was found most vulnerable, and possessing all in all many fresh elements of persuasiveness and of power. Dr. Shedd, indeed, intimates, not wholly without warrant, that what he describes as "the practical application and spread of religion" has been at some points injurious to "scientific theology," and may have tended to "thinness and weakness" in the direction of speculative opinion. But even this, if admitted to the largest practicable limit, would not disprove either the reality or the importance of the changes which time has so effectively wrought; it may still be true that Calvin himself, were he here to bear testimony, would confess—what is at least very widely believed among us—that the Calvinism of our time, taken in all its length and breadth, is in fact a larger, stronger, really better system for all practical uses than that so well elaborated in his famous *Institutes*. Two or three illustrations may suffice :

Dr. Shedd justly says in his Preface that it would be difficult to mention any mind of modern times "whose contemplation of the great mystery of sin has been more comprehensive and searching than that of Augustine." No careful student of the *Civitas Dei* would be willing to undertake that task; probably the time will never come when the Christian world will abandon the homage which for nearly fifteen centuries it has paid to the sage and saint of Hippo, the greatest of the Latin Fathers. But it hardly follows that the Christian world must therefore accept his speculative traducianism, his sensuous theory of seminal guilt, his naturalistic explanation of original sin, his conception of constitutional rather than moral depravity—his doctrine of man, at those points where that doctrine, carried out to its legitimate results, would uproot the sense of freedom, subvert the cardinal truth of human responsibility, and sweep us all away to the very verge of fatalism. And so far as Calvin followed in the same line of speculative explanation, and used illustrations and advanced philosophic theories which tend toward the same dangerous extremes, we are bound to like discrimination and like reserve in our acceptance of his teachings. Our loyalty to the very truths to which these great masters in Israel clung so ardently, compels us to run clear and faithful lines of distinction always between the fundamental facts as revealed in Scripture and experience, and those theoretic explanations and illustrations of these facts, and also those large and sometimes questionable inferences from them, in which both the first and the second Augustine not infrequently indulged.

To illustrate: traducianism, as taught by both Augustine and Calvin, is not a clear doctrine of Scripture, but simply a speculative theory as to the origin of the soul in man—a theory for which the *Dogmatic Theology* claims biblical as well as philosophic warrant, but which has never, under any explanation or support, been able to lift itself up to the altitude of a Christian doctrine, such as the Church becomes obligated to receive. Many later Calvinistic theologians (in America, Witherspoon, Green, Richards, Thornwell, Hodge, Hickok) have therefore felt at liberty to substitute for it the anti-thetic theory of creationism—a theory which seems to have equal biblical testimony in its favor, and is far less fraught than its opposite with perplexing and in some aspects dangerous implications. But in exchanging the one theory for the other, these divines have by no means abandoned any essential element of the common Augustinianism. They do not regard themselves as compromising the system at any point in making this exchange of theoretic explanation. And it is noticeable that the special argument which Dr. Shedd adduces in favor of traducianism, drawn from its obvious affinity with his further theory of natural headship, is one which many of them would urge as a conclusive objection against it. Faithful Calvinists though they are, they prefer another and quite different explanation of the great mystery respecting the origin and the transmission of sin.

On this latter point the *Dogmatic Theology* affirms with great elaborateness and force the theory of Augustine himself (*Civ. Dei*, Bk. XIII., 14), which regards the particular sin of our first parents, with its particular guilt, as transmitted from them to human nature, incorporated into that nature, transmitted through it in undiminished volume to every one who by descent from them, physical and spiritual, inherits that nature, and finally becomes in each and every person both an originating sin and an initial ground of guilt and of condemnation before God. The first sin was not an individual, but a common sin; and it is imputed judicially (II., 186) to each and every human being on the only ground on which it could justly be imputed—namely, that each and every one actually committed it. The author strongly condemns the theory of a federal as separate from this natural imputation, on the express ground that it charges guilt where, unless the original offence had been committed, there could be no guilt—condemns those who, if they did not themselves share directly in the Adamic offence, could not equitably be regarded as under condemnation on account of it. On the contrary, he maintains that we were actually in Adam, and actually sinned with him as well as fell with him, when he ate the forbidden fruit. His iden-



tical transgression is (II., 88) our transgression ; his identical guilt is therefore ours, and ours indivisibly in all its dark totality.

The evolution of Augustinian opinion at this point is intensely interesting. It is an historic fact that it was the discovery of serious, spreading, ineradicable difficulties attending this ancient explanation of the matter—difficulties that need not here be named—which led by degrees to the proposing of the hypothesis of a federal or forensic, as a substitute for this seminal or natural headship. It is also a fact of history that the discovery of other difficulties, hardly less serious or sweeping, which gradually cast their perplexing shadows over this new theory, led on to the further hypothesis urged by Placaeus and his compeers, out of which, partly by expansion and partly by correction and emendation, grew the theory of mediate, as distinguished from immediate imputation in either the natural or the forensic form. And this theory in turn, by the development of its own cluster of parasitic difficulties, became the occasion of still another hypothesis, not unknown in Calvinistic circles, which practically limited the notion of sin and of guilt wholly to the sphere of personal action, going to the verge of denying the Adamic connection altogether, except in the form of constitutional liability to certain retributive consequences of the original offence. Nor is it strange that there should be real Calvinists who, confronted by a dark array of difficulties at this point also, and finding themselves unable to make choice between these four hypotheses, should refuse all speculative explanation, and simply affirm, with the Auburn Declaration (Art. III.), that by a divine constitution Adam was *se* the head and representative of the race that, as a consequence of his transgression, all mankind became morally corrupt, and liable to death, temporal and eternal.

We are not here concerned with the general question as to the respective values of these explanations, all standing somewhere within the circle of historic Calvinism, but with the simpler question whether the Calvinism of our time can be brought to reject these three later theories, and go back with one mind to the original Augustinian hypothesis, or to any modern exposition of it, howsoever ably defined or defended. Is it likely that we shall all with one heart strike the tents which we have pitched in these more pleasant and fruitful plains, and take up our backward line of march toward those lofty, but rugged and unproductive summits? Have the difficulties which seem at times to have greatly embarrassed Calvin himself, and which led so many thoughtful minds after his day to seek some better solution of this mystery of transmitted sin and guilt, grown any less prominent or troublesome with time? Have not

these difficulties, springing from the sensuous elements in the Augustinian conception itself, from its materializing terms and tendencies, from its inherent taint of fatalism, rather increased with the ages, and become more and more insurmountable as they have been more closely examined in the light of modern thought? And is it not much more probable that the Calvinistic teachers of this century and of succeeding centuries, instead of returning to this venerable yet embarrassing theory, will either cling to these later hypotheses, or perchance invent some other, or possibly rest at last upon the simple fact, as revealed alike in Scripture and in experience, confessing themselves unable to penetrate its unfathomable mysteries?

Without adverting to any of the other anthropological problems, discussed so thoroughly in this treatise, such as its analysis of sin itself, and of the human will as free and yet fatally incapacitated by sin—the incapacity more marked, apparently, than the freedom—we may turn to a second general point of divergence between the earlier and the later Calvinism—that which appears in the doctrine of the divine decree or decrees. That God from all eternity foreknew what would occur in time, and that he had from the beginning a plan, intelligent and wise and good, in which all created objects were comprehended, and according to which all things are in some sense produced, preserved, governed by the divine efficiency, is a proposition which no Calvinist would gainsay. But when we come to the contemplation of this plan in its relations to the acts of man, and especially to sinful action, a wide variety of statement and of explanation is found to exist. The long and tough debates in the Westminster Assembly, whether the divine decree should be described as singular or as plural, is a significant illustration of this variety in its earlier stages. And when that astute body determined to use the term, decree, in the singular number in the Confession, and the plural form, decrees, in the two Catechisms; and when they further decided to define that plural form in the Shorter Catechism by the speculative phrase, eternal purpose, and in the Larger by the descriptive phrase, wise, free, and holy acts, they evidently accepted what we may properly call a compromise between opposing conceptions, even then current, of the general doctrine. In the older Calvinism we seem to see simply the one single, sovereign, eternal, and irrevocable purpose, so resistless in its majesty, so absolute in its sway and working, as apparently to bind nature and man together in a common fatality from which there is no escape. But the introduction of the doctrine of the Covenants, setting forth the divine process in a chronologic order of development, prepared the way

necessarily for such modified descriptions of the divine decree rather as a series of wise and free and holy acts, occurring under the conditions of time. And later Calvinism has in various forms accepted this modified conception, and thus has opened the way, in part if not altogether, for an escape from that taint of fatalism which, in spite of all explanations, seemed to abide in the older view, as enunciated by Calvin and by his immediate disciples.

Dr. Shedd himself, in his fine statement of the distinction between events occurring under the law of physical necessity and events transpiring in the sphere of humanity (I., 403 *seq.*), falls in with what, at least since the days of Edwards, has been regarded as an indispensable modification of the doctrine of decrees as embodied in the primitive Calvinism. While he still defines the decree as single, eternal, universal, immutable, unconditional or absolute, much as Calvin did, he yet with great skill sets forth the vital difference between the operation of this decree in the universe of matter and its operation in the higher universe of mind. He indeed claims (I., 409, *note*) that his great master had himself recognized this difference, and had thus freed himself from any just charge of fatalism; but the claim, it must be confessed, rests on rather scant foundations. One may justly doubt whether Dr. Shedd would accept as his own, or whether, indeed, any considerable number of living Calvinists do accept, all the propositions, singular and collective, on the subjects of predestination and reprobation, that are found in the Third Book (Ch. XX.–XXIV.) of the *Institutes*. The careful thinking of the past three centuries has discovered that, without any sacrifice of the divine attributes or prerogatives, better, safer, sweeter modes of inculcating the essential truth in the matter can be found—modes which do not impair the proper liberty or limit the moral responsibility of the sinner, while they maintain none the less that God has in a true and precious sense foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, not merely in the universe of nature, but as truly in the universe of mind. In other words, this supreme purpose is so administered in the latter realm that, in the language of our Confession (Ch. III., 1), no violence is offered to the will of the creature, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

Each of the two directions in which the doctrine of decrees is applied in Christian theology will illustrate the change just stated. Calvin quotes Augustine (*Inst.*, Bk. III., Ch. 23) as saying that while the human vessels that are formed to honor are not vessels of personal righteousness, but of divine mercy, the formation of others to dishonor is to be attributed not to personal iniquity, but to the

divine decree. And Calvin himself defines predestination as the eternal decree of God by which he has determined in himself what he would have to become of every individual of mankind; and affirms that to those whom he devotes to condemnation, the gate of life is closed by a just and irreprehensible, though incomprehensible judgment. He indeed says elsewhere that God devotes to the condemnation of death only those whose dispositions he sees will be inclined to wickedness and impiety—a declaration which would make their condemnation turn immediately not upon an antecedent purpose in the divine mind, but upon their own sin. But this is more than once counterbalanced by opposite statements, not unlike that just quoted from Augustine, which make the sin itself, rather than the condemnation consequent upon the sin, the prime object of divine foreordination. The *Dogmatic Theology* assumes substantially the same position in the statement (I., 448) that preterition precedes perseverance in unbelief—such perseverance being the consequence of preterition, but not its cause. Does it not inevitably follow from this position that it is the decree and purpose of God from all eternity that certain men and angels should be and should continue to be sinners?

It is the revolt from this *decretum horribile*, as the Genevan divine himself confesses it, that has led modern Calvinism to describe this decree as permissive rather than absolute, and to emphasize the passing by, more than the ordaining, in the strong statement of the Westminster Symbol—the term preterition taking the place of the more positive and repugnant term, reprobation. It no longer holds to the condemnation of a certain portion of mankind as fixed from all eternity by an inevitable purpose, which is not only back of the acts of men, but in fact determines their acts as well as their fate—which first creates men to be vessels of wrath and makes them sinners, and then punishes them as guilty for their sin. The appeal to sovereignty, and to the absolute right of God to do with men whatever he pleases, here gives way to the higher appeal to the divine equity, and to the divine fatherliness and grace. The sense of freedom and of consequent accountability, which animates so largely both the preaching and the theologizing of living Calvinists, also tends strongly to the same result. Hence, modern Calvinism generally prefers (Hodge, *Theol.*, II., 317) to make condemnation turn on sin as the antecedent fact, and to make sin turn not on the sovereign will of God alone, but rather—to use the helpful term of Calvin—on the wrong disposition of man.\*

\* The stringent declaration in the Confession (Ch. III., iii.) that “by the decree of God . . . some men and angels are . . . foreordained to everlasting death,” and



What is true in respect to reprobation is also true, though in less positive degree, in respect to the doctrine of predestination or election unto life. No Calvinist believes that salvation is bestowed on any ground of morality, belief, repentance, faith, evangelical obedience, or because of any foresight of these on the part of God constraining him to save those who may exhibit such spiritual qualities or graces. We hold as tenaciously as Augustine himself to the position that the sole and only ground of salvation is to be found in what Christ himself was, did, and suffered as our Mediator; and that these religious developments in the Christian are simply the sequences and signs of his antecedent justification and regeneration through the grace of God. We believe in an election which is not only unconditional in this high sense, but is also particular and individual—God himself choosing, not classes merely, but persons one by one, to whom regenerating and justifying grace should be given. On these two cardinal points, unconditionalism and particularism, the earlier and the later Calvinism are substantially one.

Yet the later obviously differs from the earlier, first in emphasizing the general as well as the individualistic relations of the scheme of grace, and secondly, in associating the fruits of faith on our part much more closely with the electing act on the part of God. In other words, the doctrine of election is now contemplated much less

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also the kindred declaration in Sec. iv. respecting these foreordained persons, that "their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished," are always painfully embarrassing, until they are read in the light shed upon them by Sec. vii. "The rest of mankind God was pleased . . . to ordain to dishonor and wrath *for their sin*, to the praise of his glorious justice." And it is noticeable that wherever reprobation or preterition is elsewhere taught in our symbols, the result is always associated with the sin of man, as its proper ground and occasion. See Conf., Ch. V., Sec. iv. and vi., Ch. VI., Sec. vi., Ch. XXXIII., Sec. ii., which speaks of "the damnation of the reprobate *who are wicked and disobedient*." The Larger Catechism (Ans. 13) speaks of the foreordination of the wicked "to dishonor and wrath, *to be for their sin inflicted*;" and further (Ans. 89), of their condemnation as based "upon clear evidence and *full conviction of their own consciences*." The fact is, that reprobation is always represented in our symbols as occurring in view of sin and on account of sin, and this "the sin of the creature," God being "neither the author nor approver." It would have saved our Calvinism from a thousand cavils, and many an adherent from painful misgivings, if Sec. iii. and Sec. vii. in Ch. III. had simply been blended in one, so as to read, By the decree of God some men and angels are *for their sin* foreordained to everlasting death. And had the teaching of the Catechism been added, that such condemnation occurs only upon clear evidence of their sin, and *full conviction of their own consciences*, the statement would have been one which no devout believer in Scripture would be likely to call into question. If those who desire some emendation of the chapter on God's Eternal Decree would address themselves to the task of utilizing, by better combination and adjustment, the various phrases on this subject already existing here and there in our symbols, they might find their task greatly simplified and lightened.

in the aspect of exclusiveness, and much more as a blessed provision and privilege in which the race has an interest. In the language of the Declaratory Act of the United Presbyterian body in Scotland, the doctrine is always "to be held in connection and harmony with the truth that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, and that he has provided a salvation sufficient for all, adapted to all, and offered to all in the Gospel." So the doctrine is now much more strongly emphasized than of old at the point of its relations to character, the election being viewed on one side as always an election to holiness, and on the other as an election to usefulness and service—two features which ought never to be forgotten in our expositions of the truth. The broad fact is, as high Calvinistic authority teaches, that the gracious purpose of God never takes effect independently of faith and a holy life; while faith and holiness do not as causes induce or constrain his election, yet apart from these that election would never occur. Any other view must vitiate salvation itself; for what salvation can there be which is not in this sense and degree a salvation in character?

It is not to be supposed that so acute and so spiritual a theologian as Dr. Shedd could be indifferent to such primal aspects of the truth as these. Yet in his strong desire to emphasize the absolute sovereignty of God in the matter of election, the wholly unconditional nature of his act, the specific application of his gracious choice to a certain number of mankind, and the predeterminate exclusion from salvation of all but the persons thus elect, the author of the *Dogmatic Theology* certainly goes much farther in the opposite direction than the majority of living Calvinists would be willing to follow him. All can see that he is as faithful to what he regards as fundamental in the case, and as thorough and rigorous in the application of cherished principles, as ever Calvin himself was, though he is conscious of diverging widely from the current tendencies of the time. Nor can any one refrain from admiring both the courage of his convictions and his fearlessness in their expression, however strenuously we may be constrained to dissent from his delineation of the Calvinistic scheme. The truth is, that while we all believe as heartily as he in the revealed fact of election, and still hold as firmly as ever the Calvinistic rather than the Arminian interpretation of this fact, we are not disposed to push the resulting doctrine out to its most rigorous extremes, or to urge it upon men in any exclusive form or temper. The lamented Archibald Alexander Hodge, in his *Popular Lectures*, well represents the nature and spirit of current Calvinism in his frank statement (p. 158) that many of us who are the staunchest Calvinists feel that the need of the hour is not to

emphasize a foreordination which no clear, comprehensive thinker doubts, but to unite with our Arminian brethren in putting all emphasis and concentrating all attention on the vital fact of human freedom.

Turning from these glimpses of God and his purposes into the department of Soteriology, we may find one more interesting illustration of the point under consideration in the teachings of the *Dogmatic Theology* respecting the nature and extent of the redemptive work of Christ. The five chapters preceding the Soteriology, which discuss the divinity and humanity, the theanthropic person, and the impersonality and impeccability of the Redeemer, will be regarded as among the most valuable in the entire treatise. The discussion is in a very high degree scholarly, able, profound throughout; and the main conclusions reached are sustained by unquestionable proofs at every point. One rises from the reading of these chapters with a new and vivid sense of the glory and the worth of Him who, in the words of our Catechism, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was and continueth to be God and man in two distinct natures and one Person forever.

After setting forth briefly the three Mediatorial Offices of this glorious Person, the author proceeds to the central topic of the Atonement. The chapter on this subject, which is much the longest chapter in the two volumes, if it were taken out from its connection, and printed as a separate monograph, would be recognized as worthy of a place among our best discussions of the topic. It would be hard to find so much in so brief a space. Respecting the ethical necessity for an atonement and the general nature of the atonement of Christ as a vicarious sacrifice for the sinner and on account of sin, the author is in harmony with the best thought, the purest convictions, of the Church through all the ages. He states with great clearness and force the important distinctions between a personal atonement and one which is vicarious or substitutional, and especially emphasizes, what is too often forgotten, the vital fact that a vicarious atonement must be made by the offended party—by Him against whom (II., 384) the sin is committed, and who alone can in a true sense atone for the commission. He therefore refers the atonement made through Christ to its only proper source in the wonderful mercy of God, and describes its true objective purpose in the reconciliation of the sinner with a propitiated and gracious Deity. The author of the atonement is the same Divine Being who also demands it; God (II., 399) propitiates, appeases, satisfies, and reconciles God. The Deity is thus both active and passive, agent and patient; while the

divine justice requires the satisfaction, the divine compassion makes the satisfaction ; God the Father reconciles God the Judge ; the agency is (II., 408) wholly within the Divine Nature itself.

Respecting the nature of the atonement provided in the Gospel, the author insists on the propriety of the term punishment or penalty, as descriptive of what Christ suffered as our Mediator. While he recognizes the fact that the sufferings of Christ were not identical with those which the sinner would have endured, he maintains that they are equivalent as so much penalty. This is a departure from the antique *quid pro quo* theory as held in substance by Calvin himself, and more distinctly by some of his earlier followers. Calvin maintained (Bk. II., Ch. XVI., 2-5) that our Lord took upon himself and actually suffered the punishment which by the righteous judgment of God impended over all sinners ; that not only was the guilt which made us obnoxious to penalty transferred to him personally, but on his righteous person the penalty belonging to us was inflicted ; and that Christ not only suffered corporeal death in this sense on our behalf, but also descended into hell, and there contended in our stead with the powers of evil and the horror of eternal death. For this view of identical penalty Dr. Shedd substitutes (II., 455) the later doctrine of equivalency—an equal quantity but a different quality of suffering—a kind and an amount of retributive punishment such as is needful to satisfy the sense of justice and the claim of love. He quotes the analysis of Witsius respecting the pains of hell, to show that in enduring what was needful to save men, Christ did not lose the sense of the divine love, or feel the force of divine hatred, or suffer any pangs of conscience or of unworthiness. He tells us in strong language that the Supreme Judge substitutes himself for the criminal, his own mercy satisfying his own justice in the case, and thus opening the way for the remission of the penalty due to the transgressor. He tells us also that the sufferings of Christ were not only equivalent but infinite in their value—of greater worth in meeting the claims of the divine law than the endless punishment of the whole human race would be. This in a high form is the current theory of satisfaction. Whether this satisfaction consists simply in a certain quantity of suffering—whether that suffering can be called penal in any other sense than as a vicarious substitute for penalty, graciously provided—whether the active obedience of Christ is not as truly a part of his propitiatory mediation as his sacred passion was—whether the atonement was not intended to be a revelation of love as well as a manifestation of justice, and therefore a power in character as well as an expedient under law—these and other like questions suggested by the discussion



cannot be considered here. Manifestly, further and more extended investigation of these central themes in our holy faith is one of the theologic needs of our time. For what Dr. Shedd has contributed to such investigation, though he has not fully solved the great problem, we cannot well be too grateful.

In respect to the extent of the atonement, his rigid doctrine of predestination leads him logically to what many will regard as an unwarranted limitation of the redemptive mission of our Lord. At this point he faithfully follows Augustine and Calvin, and those other theologians to whom he reverently refers as having come, at least on some points, nearer to the centre of truth than any modern minds. His view, supported by these authorities, is substantially that the mediatorial work of Christ was for the elect alone; that while in intrinsic value, for purposes of judicial satisfaction, it was sufficient to save the whole world, it was never intended for the whole world; that God at no time designed to apply it effectually for the salvation of all; that redemption, or the application of the atonement, is limited by the divine purpose in election and by the total inability of the sinner to save himself or to be saved outside of the elective design of God; that the bestowment of the Spirit, which is the indispensable condition of the exercise of saving faith, is a sovereign procedure for the benefit of the elect only. In a word, he holds that (II., 476) the Divine Father in giving the Divine Son as a sacrifice for sin, also simultaneously determined that this sacrifice should be appropriated, through such faith as the sovereign Spirit should inspire, by a definite number of the human family, and by these persons only. Outside of this circle there is no possibility of redemption; in fact, there is no redemption either provided or offered to mankind.

From this doctrine, which certainly has some confessional as well as theologic authority in its favor (West. Conf., Ch. III., VII.; Larger Cat., Ans. 13), later Calvinism has to a considerable extent diverged, choosing rather to emphasize those general or universal relations of the mediatorial work which are so naturally suggested by what may be described as the missionary zeal and activities of the age. It cannot be claimed that this divergence is universal, or that it is in every case a conscious and positive experience; it may be that a majority of living Calvinists would still cling in form to what the phrase, limited atonement, expresses. Yet there are multitudes who would not accept that doctrine in the very strong form presented in the *Dogmatic Theology*, and who would prefer to say, in the language of the Scotch Declaration already quoted (Art. I.), that in consistency with the doctrine of redemption as set forth in

the Westminster Standards, the love of God to all mankind, his gift of his Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and the free offer of salvation to men without distinction, on the ground of the perfect sacrifice of Christ, must be regarded as vital, and must receive their due prominence in the scheme of Gospel Truth.

The difficulties which confront the restrictive theory of the mediation of Christ lie in such facts as the following : So far as intrinsic worth or adaptation is concerned, this gracious mediation would need no enlargement or other modification, though the whole world of mankind should penitently and believingly accept it. So far as it is offered as a saving scheme, there are apparently no revealed limits to the extent, the comprehensiveness, the magnificent freeness of the divine proposals. So far as the appended conditions go—repentance, faith, acceptation—all men are alike endowed with natural ability to recognize the justice of such conditions, and are alike moved by natural sensibility of conscience in view of every instant of rejection. So far as human duty is involved, it is obviously imperative upon every soul of man at once, and without the least wavering, to repent of its sin, and instantly turn to Christ for life eternal. So far as sin and guilt are implied, the greatest of sins and the most awful forms of guilt are those which fall upon the race universally wherever the grace of Christ is heralded and is rejected among men ; the blasphemy against him and his Spirit being the sorest offence of which any human soul can ever be convicted before God. So far as the obligation of the ministry and of the Church is concerned, there can be no doubt that God commands his people to go into all the earth, and to make this offer of salvation to every creature—a salvation offered implying always a salvation provided. So far as the gracious activities of the Spirit are utilized in redemption, there appears in Scripture a similar freeness of invitation and of proffered help, such as finds no analogy in nature so suggestive as the freely blowing winds of heaven or the copious showers of spring-time descending on the thirsty earth. And so far as the offices of Christ are concerned, do not the universal prophet, speaking messages of truth and mercy to all mankind, and the universal king, gradually attaining just supremacy over the whole race, suggest the query whether the priesthood of the Messiah must not contain within itself similar elements of universality—is not, in fact, in some deep sense, a priesthood for mankind ?

To say in reply to such facts as these that the atoning work of Christ is intrinsically sufficient to satisfy eternal justice for the sins of all mankind (II., 464), but that God has no intention whatever to utilize this sufficiency to this end, will not meet our difficulty, since

what we are seeking is not some ideal or possible, but rather an actual provision for human sin and human need. In this respect the line so strongly drawn (II., 469) between atonement and redemption, though just in itself, seems quite inadequate, since an atonement which, however sufficient intrinsically, does not actually redeem, and was not intended to redeem, is not what the Scripture seems to offer to sinful man as a plan of redemption. Especially does this appear to be the case when it is held that in the divine mind (II., 475) the two things, the atonement and its application, are of necessity inseparable; God contemplating the atonement only and always with reference to the specific use which he has purposed to make of it in redemption. And further, to restrict the natural meaning of all such biblical passages as appear to set forth an unlimited redemption—to say that the term, world, does not mean world (II., 480) in these instances, or that the term, all, relates not to all men, but to all of a particular class only; or that the preacher should make his offer of salvation universal, simply because he does not know for whom among the multitude that salvation was in fact provided, is a process which can hardly be justified on grounds either exegetical or ethical. Nor does it quite satisfy us to be assured that the divine will of complacency, the abounding mercy of God, is the source (II., 484) of the universal offer, if at the same moment we are told that God has no intention to save any one, or to provide the helps and instrumentalities necessary to save any one among those who hear that offer, outside of the fixed and unchangeable group of the elect. After all that can be said, and no one could well say more than the author in favor of the primitive conception of a limited atonement as held by Calvin himself (*Inst.*, Bk. III., Ch. XXIII.), are there not difficulties in the dogma, at least in this strong form of it, which will always make it a tenet hard to believe and harder still to preach?

In the succeeding chapter on Regeneration Dr. Shedd furnishes an admirable exposition of the very remarkable definition of effectual calling found in our Shorter Catechism—a definition which hardly has a parallel for conciseness, for clearness, for cogency of statement, in the whole circle of Protestant symbolism. This exposition might perhaps be challenged on the ground that it emphasizes unduly the passivity of man and the sovereign dominancy of the Holy Ghost in regeneration, were it not so well balanced by the subsequent chapter on Conversion, in which the duty of the sinner to repent and believe, in accordance with the command of God, and with the convicting and regenerating impact of the Spirit, is very forcibly stated. Evangelical faith is justly defined in this connection as the

act of man, an act of the understanding as well as the will, by which particularly the soul rests on Christ, and is united to him spiritually and eternally. So repentance is carefully distinguished from all natural emotions, such as regret and remorse, and is set forth in its proper character and relations to faith as an indispensable condition of salvation. The practical view of the consequences or results of the mediation of Christ thus introduced is well completed in the two chapters—too brief to satisfy the student—on Justification and Sanctification; justification resting on the ground of the one redemptive sacrifice, and carrying with it faith and regeneration—an instant and comprehensive act of God, whereby all guilt is taken away and all corruption of nature graciously condoned; sanctification, a consummating work of God by his Spirit, resting on the same divine ground, including the whole man, and progressing within the soul with an unflinching certainty till it becomes complete in glory. It would be hard to find any better statements of these fundamental truths. If at any point they should seem to any one to lay relatively too much stress on the divine side of this complex process of grace, and relatively too little upon what man ought to feel or to do as his appointed contribution to that process, the offence is one which any thoughtful Calvinist can easily condone. For in this age of special emphasizing of the human elements and factors in salvation, it is well for us all to be reminded, as we constantly are in these strong and pure chapters, that far above our work God is working more mightily within us by methods which we can never fully appreciate, to will and to do according to his good pleasure.

This review, already too extended but also too cursory, must close without any special reference to the eschatology of this treatise; its exposition of the intermediate state, or of the second advent of Christ, and the resurrection and final judgment as accompanying events. That the author has no sympathy with the current forms of millenarianism, or with the shallow theory of a probation to be experienced after death, will be abundantly evident to the reader. The final chapter on Eternal Punishment has already been referred to as one of the most able and conclusive discussions in these volumes. In closing this inadequate survey of a great book, the writer ventures to suggest to those who have had patience to peruse these pages certain obvious causes for congratulation.

One of these lies in the fact that in such a busy age as this, when the Church is so largely absorbed in outward enterprises, and men are so much engrossed with mere affairs—when prejudice against what is called doctrinal preaching is so common, and the discussions



of our pulpits are so much controlled by questions of duty and of outward life—when our young preachers so often deem comprehensive and continuous study of abstract truth an irksome thing, and the number of those who read really profound books is so small as to make authorship an impoverishing as well as severe labor, there still are men who are willing to give their lives to such studies, and to spend themselves in the task of making some needful contribution to the theologic knowledge of the times. The Church and the world may be thankful that, notwithstanding the fascinating stir and show of externalities, there are those who prefer, in the happy phrase of Dr. Shedd, to give themselves to daily and nightly communion with the noble army of theologians that have made other centuries famous, and to daily and nightly contemplation of those fundamental verities by which, as ultimate tests, the spectacular activities of the hour are all to be judged and determined. These are not the men whom he aptly characterizes as getting into the eddies of the age and whirling round and round in them, however conspicuously; they are rather the happy souls, secluded and silent though they seem, whose thoughts and lives are in harmony with what he describes as that majestic sweep of the stream of the ages which holds on its way forever and forevermore.

It is also a matter of gratulation that our Presbyterian Church has had among its membership so many men of this high type. The graves of Jonathan Edwards and Witherspoon and of Charles and Archibald Alexander Hodge are in Princeton; those of Lyman Beecher and the revered Hickok and Henry Boynton Smith are in New England; and those of other eminent thinkers and teachers of the Church are scattered widely here and there, not always marked with enduring marble. But the printed teachings of such men are their abiding monuments, and the preservative and the quickening influence of their labors is one among our choicest heritages. Nor will this cease to be the glory of our Presbyterianism. So strong, copious, stimulating a creed as ours is constantly compelling its adherents to theologize; as ours is eminently the Church of the doctrines, so it must ever be prolific in theologies. And while it is painful to think of the losses which death has brought upon us, especially within the past decade, taking away one after another of these illustrious minds just when they were at the summit of their usefulness, we may be both grateful that we have had them with us for awhile, and assured that the bright succession will not cease. Their examples live, and will continue to bear fruit after their kind.

We may also congratulate ourselves that the half-sarcastic reflection of Dorner on American theology, however justified in the past,

has little foundation now, and is likely to have still less warrant in the future. There is a valuable lesson for us, not merely in his criticism, but in the astute suggestion already quoted respecting what he describes as a process of fermentation, the outcome of which may finally resemble in some respects the development of theology in the Church during the first centuries. The conditions of such a development, as Dr. Schaff has so well shown,\* are already here. They are seen in the peculiar commingling of sects and opinions, in the freedom of religious thought and discussion, in our rapidly increasing familiarity with the best thoughts and best thinkers of all other lands and times, in the absence of all civil complications arresting our religious life, in release from all repressive ecclesiastical censorship, in the special stimulations arising from our continental work and mission, and the supreme need of adapting all theological statements to the exigencies of an unexampled form of national life. Is there not ground for the belief that under these new conditions there may yet grow up on this continent types of theology which for originality and scholarship, for comprehensiveness and vigor and practical worth, shall equal or surpass those which were born out of the thoughts and conflicts of the Reformation?

And finally, we may congratulate one another as Calvinists that the system of theology which bears that name, which first found formal expression in the *Civitas Dei* and afterward in the *Institutes*, which grew into dominating influence during and after the Reformation, which held its own on the continent of Europe even against the onslaughts of an acute and powerful Arminianism, which gained such hold of the Scotch mind and produced such a school of theologians as the English divines of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and which has taken such root and is revealing itself in such numerous and commanding forms in America, shows no signs whatever of dying out, but is rather more extensively received and cherished the world over than ever before, as on the whole the completest system of divine truth which the genius of man has thus far framed. And it is worthy of note, respecting this remarkable system, that the days of its peril were the days in which it was elaborated in its most extreme and exclusive forms—in the strongest temper of antagonism with all antithetic thought; while, on the other hand, the days of its triumph have been and still are those in which it has been stated in mediating terms, with widest sympathy with all other varieties of evangelical belief, and under the stimulus of a supreme desire to utilize its amazing energies in the task of per-

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\* *Christ and Christianity, The Theology of our Age and Country.*

suading and impelling the world to believe. Had the Calvinism of the beginning of the seventeenth century been as moderate and genial as the Calvinism of this age, it is doubtful whether there ever would have been any Arminianism. For the theology of Arminius was a protest chiefly, and the canons of Dort were chiefly a belligerent answer; the five points were rather five forts from whose turrets hostile flags were relentlessly flying. So the Protestant world came to be divided into hostile camps, and Calvinism at length became in Switzerland, in France, in Holland, a beleaguered and depressed and relatively uninfluential thing. But the system has within itself a certain reconstructive and recuperative energy, which for a century has been silently restoring it to its normal place of power, and which is now gradually giving it greater and greater influence over the thoughts and lives of men. It is safe to say that there never were so many Calvinists in the world as now; and no system of evangelical thought or belief seems to have in it the promise of a wider or grander future. But we must learn the serious lessons which the past has taught us, and daily and hourly adjust our Calvinism more and more to the teachings of Scripture, to the nature of the Gospel as a religion for mankind, and to the needs of a sinful, helpless, sorrowing world.

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