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A SPIRITUAL CYCLONE: THE MILLERITE DELUSION.

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"EVERY age," says Cardinal Manning, "has hitherto had its heresy. But the nineteenth century has all heresies; it is the century of unbelief." He might have added that religious fanaticism is disappearing; that intensity of spiritual conviction is not a marked feature of the time; and that although the fanatic is an enthusiast—the inflammatory symptoms of his uncontrolled enthusiasm indicating chronic derangement—yet he believes *something*; his creed is not one of mere negations. The fact that the nineteenth century gave birth to a fanaticism like Millerism shows that, in the United States at least, religious fervor had not in the middle of the century become so chilled by indifferentism and unbelief that it might not be fanned into a dangerous flame; and that the stuff of which the martyrs was made is not yet eliminated from this agnostic age.

October 24th, 1844, the fanaticism of Millerism was at its height—was the feature of the times.

For twelve years it had been gaining strength—the last of a long series of similar outbreaks in the history of millenarianism, all based upon the literal interpretation of the prophecy, "Behold, I come quickly."

Millerism had an individuality of its own. It was rooted in mathematical deductions, founded on a literal interpretation of the unfulfilled prophecies of the second coming. It demonstrated as plainly as the simplest rule in mathematics possibly could, that, allowing that the generally accepted rule of biblical interpretation was to be followed, then the final judgment was to take place in the year of our Lord 1843 or 1844. The fixing upon the very day did not come until after the passing by of 1843; then it was clearly revealed to Father Miller and his followers that the mistake had been made by their reckoning Roman time and not

Jewish time. 1843 Roman time was 1844 Jewish time. The grand focalization of all prophecy was upon the tenth day of the seventh month, and at the hour of even. That was the time of the great feast of Atonement. It was reasonable to believe that the great and final atonement would be upon that day.

It is in a study of the leader of this movement—which was no inconsiderable one—that we reach the fairest comprehension of the fanaticism which may be classed among the foremost of those of the nineteenth century.

William Miller was born at Pittsfield, Mass., February 15th, 1782,* and was a well-to-do farmer of Low Hampton, Washington County, N. Y. When in 1831 he came before the public with his gospel, he was a fair type of a prosperous, intelligent, and highly respected Green Mountain farmer. His two hundred acres of well-cultivated land were unmortgaged, and if there was one man before all others in the community whose common sense, honesty, and reliability were undoubted, that man was William Miller. He had been a captain at the battle of Plattsburg, and his record was a brave one. He had served as constable, sheriff, and justice of the peace in his native town, and was the local poet as well, writing exceptionally good "odes" for special occasions. He was more of a reader than many farmers, and his familiarity with books made him quite an oracle among his neighbors, who, nevertheless, were somewhat disturbed at his reading not only Hume, Voltaire, and Tom Paine, but at his able defence of their doctrines. But in good time he threw them aside and wheeled into the ranks of the Baptist Church, and then, in contrition for quaffing at poisonous springs, he began a most devout and con-

* There is a life of Miller by White, Battle Creek, Mich., 1875.

that position as the statement of what is historic, what is evident unto all men, and not at all as a dogmatic article of faith. It is placed there as a declaration of ecclesiastical polity, as this Church hath intended the same." "An historical fact," "a matter of ecclesiastical polity, as this Church has intended the same, and not at all a dogmatic article of faith;" we are glad to meet and confer with our Episcopal brethren on such a basis as this.

JOSEPH T. SMITH.

BALTIMORE.

THE CHURCH: HER MINISTRY AND SACRAMENTS.
Lectures delivered on the L. P. Stone Foundation at Princeton Theological Seminary, 1890.
By HENRY J. VAN DYKE, D.D. New York: A. D. F. Randolph & Co., 1890. 8vo. pp. ix., 265. \$1.50.

The recent translation of the author, as in a moment, from the labors of earth to the rewards of heaven, adds a peculiar element of interest to this volume. He was a man of marked character: genuine and earnest in his convictions, vigorous and cultivated in intellect, manly in his advocacy of whatever he believed to be the truth of God, resolute in opposing what he regarded as evil, a devoted and successful servant of the Church, a lover of good causes, a faithful friend, a man among men everywhere. It was my privilege to place in his hands the insignia of his induction to the highest place of honor in our Presbyterian Zion. It was my greater privilege to enjoy in later years the advantages of an extensive correspondence with him, and of most intimate and brotherly intercourse, especially in connection with certain important ecclesiastical interests. His labors in behalf of a thorough revision of the Westminster Confession, always sincere and earnest, and in a high degree judicious and effectual, are known to all who are familiar with recent movements in the denomination to whose highest development and welfare he was so zealously devoted. His death, just at the acme of his powers and his influence, and while standing on the threshold of what seemed to be a new sphere of peculiar honor and usefulness, was a denominational bereavement, and an occasion of sadness in wider relations. In view of that sudden death one reads with a tearful interest these words (p. 73) from the volume here noticed:

"I am a Presbyterian, not only by birth, but by conviction, and yield to none in loyalty to the denomination in whose service my life has been spent, and in whose bosom I hope to die. But I do not expect to be a Presbyterian, nor anything of the kind, in heaven. And as my sun grows larger and more mellow toward its setting, I would gladly exchange everything that is not essentially Christian for a few of the days of heaven on earth, in the unity and peace of the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood."

This treatise was first delivered last year at Princeton Seminary on the Stone foundation, as a special series of seven lectures, and was published shortly after, with a valuable appendix, for more general circulation. It discusses at the outset the broad doctrine of the *Holy Catholic Church*, and of the *Kingdom of Christ* on earth, with particular reference to the practical problem of the *Unity of the Visible Church* among men. It then considers the question of church-membership, and especially the *Membership of Infants* in the household of faith, and also the question of *Ordination to the Ministry*, and the qualifications for that sacred

office. It closes with two interesting lectures on the *Lord's Supper* and the proper *Administration of the Sacraments*. The appendix is explanatory of topics not so fully set forth in the lectures themselves.

The general position of the author, as might be anticipated, is strongly Presbyterian and in a marked degree churchly, and yet in a high degree generous and catholic. He rejects the papal and episcopal claims as unwarranted, yet emphasizes "the grace of orders," and with great earnestness exalts the ministerial office to its proper place of dignity and influence within the Church. He rejects also the antique dogma of church government *jure divino*, even in the Presbyterian form, and recognizes the propriety of variety in forms and usages, according to the developing needs of the church as an organization, in any given country or age. The present necessity for existing denominations is admitted, and loyalty on the part of each to his own denomination is urged on the ground that only thus can the highest usefulness of the whole be secured; but at the same time the evils of denominationalism, and especially of a narrow and antagonizing sectarianism, are strongly presented, and the worth of a spiritual catholicity as strongly advocated. Believing in creeds and advocating them as helpful, if not indispensable in the present condition of Christendom, the author nowhere lifts even his favorite creed of Westminster above the Scriptures as the supreme rule of faith, or claims for it an unwarranted measure of supremacy over other Protestant beliefs. As he frankly says in his preface, he is *high-churchly* in his doctrine of the divine origin and authority of the Church and its ministry and sacraments, and at the same time *broad-churchly* in his views of the constitution of the Church, and his readiness to subordinate differences in doctrine, government, and form to the fundamental matter of unity among all who love Christ.

His teaching on some particular points, more or less in issue in our time, is worthy of thoughtful consideration. For example, he affirms with great earnestness the extraordinary possibilities of salvation, even outside of the territory of the Church; maintaining that "no human soul will be lost whom it is possible for God to save consistently with His own attributes, with the freedom of the human will, and with the best interests of the intelligent universe." He declares that the Church has no right to shut the gates of mercy by excluding any from salvation, and that "*Christ has cosmic relations* which, because they do not come within the sphere of our agency and responsibility, are but occasionally hinted at in Scripture." In wide contrast with this fact, he maintains that modern millenarianism is a pessimistic perversion of that comprehensive Gospel, fundamentally out of harmony with the teachings of the Holy Word. He affirms boldly the salvation of all infants dying in infancy, not as an abstract theory, but as a good and necessary inference from the biblical doctrine concerning the character and especially the grace of God. As to the place and relation of the children of believers within the visible Church, he takes high, if not extremely high ground, though he strongly repudiates the dogma of sacramental grace in connection with baptism. He emphasizes the divine element in contrast with the human elements in ordination to the ministry, going so far as to affirm the presence of a special type of grace conferred at such ordination upon every true minister. His view of the eucharist, as to its nature and its relations to the spiritual life, is characterized by the same tendency of thought, rising at

some points almost to the verge of affirming what is called eucharistic grace.

Other illustrations of the fresh, suggestive, practical, as well as speculative teachings of this treatise must be omitted. Would that its author might have been spared to formulate his system of theology more fully, and to make other contributions to our knowledge and our faith! How elevated and inspiring such a service might have been is beautifully apparent in these sentences from the preface to this volume:

"I claim to be a minister, not only of the Presbyterian Church, but of the one visible Church of Christ: and the larger relation dominates and moulds my thoughts and feelings. I long for the time when all the ministers and churches of Christ shall cease their rivalries and their witness-bearing against each other, and shall unite in the larger and more important work of testifying the grace of God in all the world to every creature, and in co-operation for the triumphant establishment of Christ's Kingdom in all the earth."

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THE PSALMS. A New Translation, with Introductory Essay and Notes. By JOHN DE WITT, D.D., LL.D., L.H.D. New York: A. D. F. Randolph & Co., 1891. 8vo, pp. xxxvi., 325, \$2.

Perhaps the most useful notice of this book will be one that shall merely attempt to differentiate it from other translations of the Psalms into English. There is no best method for such translation; that which is best from one point of view is not so from another. There are advantages in a simple rendering of the sense, with no attempt to transfer the outward poetical form; one who translates thus can give his entire attention to the correct and adequate presenting of the meaning. The method most unlike this is that of the so-called metrical versions, found in our hymn-books and elsewhere. Many of these are fine from a literary point of view, and a few are good translations. As a rule, however, they are either poetically clumsy, or else are not translations, but original poems suggested by the psalm in hand. And yet some of them catch and convey the poetic fire of the psalm in such a way as largely compensate for the lack of exactness in the rendering. But between these two extremes many middle courses are open to the translator.

Of the course most commonly followed a good example is found in the Revised Version of the Old Testament, where the external form of the poetry is marked by dividing the lines and occasionally by paragraphing, so as to indicate the strophes. This method has the advantage that the translator is not cramped by it. Commonly he is just as free to conform his work exactly to the sense of the words and the syntax as he would be if he paid no attention to the lines. It has the further advantage of strongly emphasizing parallelism of statement as the prevailing outward mark of Hebrew poetry. But it has the disadvantage of enabling the translator to indicate mechanically that what he is translating is poetry, and thus often of relieving him from the responsibility of making his translation really poetical; and the further disadvantage that it may give the mistaken impression that parallelism of statement is the only external mark of Hebrew poetry, to the exclusion of rhythm and all like marks.

Present Hebrew scholarship emphasizes the doc-

trine that Hebrew poetry is marked by rhythm as well as by parallelism of statement. What are the laws of the rhythm, or even whether it has laws that are capable of being briefly and simply stated, are questions in dispute; but the fact that the rhythm exists is not disputed. In illustration of this many attempts have been made to transfer the rhythm of particular psalms to English translations. One takes the Hebrew as it stands, and translates, line by line, so that the succession of long and short syllables and of accented and unaccented syllables shall be the same in the English lines as in the Hebrew. Others attempt to formulate the laws of Hebrew rhythm, and then translate into English lines subject to the same rhythmic laws. Work of this kind, patiently and well done, is of very great value for certain purposes, but is generally too cramped for true and spirited translation.

Yet another method is possible—a method which depends largely on the gifts of the individual translator, but which, in competent hands, combines some of the advantages and avoids some of the disadvantages of those thus far mentioned. Translate the Hebrew line by line, aiming to make the translation correct and spirited, but making the English lines distinctly rhythmic, and rhythmic in such fashion as to present to the ear some analogy to the rhythm of the Hebrew. Where convenient, let the English line carry the same rhythmic alternation of syllables with the Hebrew line, but not to the extent of cramping the freedom and spirit of the translation. Where there is sufficient reason, but not elsewhere, take such liberties as the changing of lines or paraphrasing. One who is deficient in scholarship or judgment or poetic appreciation or delicacy, working in this method will simply make a mess of it; but one who is sufficiently endowed with these gifts may have large success in transferring to English both the correct meaning and the poetic fire of a psalm. His work cannot take the place of a mechanically literal translation, but supplementing such a translation, it may lift the reader into an appreciation of the Psalms such as would otherwise be impossible.

This last method is the one employed in Dr. De Witt's book, and Dr. De Witt has the scholarship, the good judgment, the poetic appreciation and delicacy, and the spiritual discernment requisite for making it a success. For a systematic study of the Psalms, this work would hardly supersede the use of a merely literal translation, or of a systematic commentary; and yet it would not be surprising if many students, using this along with other helps, should find it worth more to them than any of the others.

The writer of this notice might specify many things in this book that seem to him to be faults, though most of these would perhaps resolve themselves into differences of opinion between Dr. De Witt and himself, but mainly the work commands his hearty admiration. There are very few brief essays on the Psalms that are anywhere near so well worth a careful reading as the Introductory Essay of this volume. As the work, in earlier form, has been twice before published, once in 1884 and once in 1889, and practically has been rewritten, it has a literary finish that it might not otherwise have attained. In Hebrew scholarship it is up to date, though its position in questions concerning authorship and in all questions that touch the doctrine of inspiration is conservative. Dr. De Witt is one of those conservative scholars who are not afraid to recognize the merits of men who differ with them or to learn even from their