

THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

VOL. IV.

OCTOBER 1900.

No. 4.

Doctrinal Theology.

SOTERIOLOGY.

DEFINITION.

Soteriology is the doctrine of Holy Scripture concerning the application and appropriation of the merits of Christ to the individual sinner, whereby the sinner is led to the actual possession and enjoyment of the blessings which Christ has actually procured for all mankind. Christ is *σωτήρ τοῦ κόσμου*, the *Savior of the world*.¹⁾ *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*.²⁾ Christ is the *propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*.³⁾ The Mediator between God and man reconciled the world with God not partially or potentially, but wholly and actually. *By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*.⁴⁾ When he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, the work of redemption had been fully performed; *he had by himself purged our sins*.⁵⁾

Yet, among those whom the Lord has bought, there are those who *bring upon themselves swift destruction*.⁶⁾ Though God *HATH reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ*,⁷⁾ and *we WERE reconciled to God by the death of his Son*,⁸⁾

1) John 4, 42. 1 John 4, 14.

3) 1 John 2, 2.

6) 2 Pet. 2, 1.

4) Hebr. 10, 14.

7) 1 Cor. 5, 18.

2) 2 Cor. 5, 19.

5) Hebr. 1, 3.

8) Rom. 5, 10.

of marriage, if set aside in one form or stage of married life, is held of little consequence in any form or stage. Divorces would be of comparatively rare occurrence if the nature and significance, the dignity and obligation of betrothal or marriage engagements were properly understood and duly respected. The wanton disregard of marriage in its initiatory stage results in a low estimate of the entire institution. When the sacredness of the marriage bond is no longer a matter of conscience, to be respected also in the absence of the regulations in the penal code, the natural tendency is toward an increase of matrimonial cases in the courts which must interfere where the functions of conscience have failed of their proper effect or have been altogether suppressed. And a breach of betrothal is a sin which brings down upon the sinner and his accomplices and abettors the displeasure of a righteous God, and should expose the offender to the well regulated and energetic discipline of the church.

A. G.

THE CELESTIAL EMPIRE.

A VAST FIELD FOR MISSIONARY ENDEAVORS.

Many who are not thoroughly acquainted with the doctrines of Christ, especially with those of natural depravity, of vicarious atonement, and of the Christian church, take pride in proclaiming the United States of America a nation of Christians; they are anxiously awaiting an era in which our national government will officially enforce some universal religion, of principles and morals which they will call the religion of Christ.

Not more than twenty-six million of the American people profess adherence to some Christian denomination. Of these we may justly fear that a great number are not Christians. But even granted they were, we have in our

country upward of forty-five million professed heathen. We can not be called a nation of Christians.

The masses of the world have always been, and will always be, inimical to Christ and His salvation. We are especially to-day living in those times, of which our Savior says: *Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.* Matt. 24, 4—8.

During the last months our political publications directed our eyes away from other battle-fields to those of China. If anywhere in the world, we have here in the "Celestial" Empire a heathen nation. Estimating the population of our globe at fifteen hundred million, and subtracting very liberally six hundred million for Christianity, nine hundred million are pagans living in ignorance and idolatry; of these over four hundred million, or nearly one half, are inhabitants of the Chinese Empire. In deep humility, and without Calvinistic speculations of preterition or decree of damnation, we bow our knees before the divine majesty and wisdom whose justice calls into eternity innumerable souls before they have ever heard the sweet Gospel of Jesus.

Perhaps a brief ethnological description of China will be taken favorably here. China has a total area of 4,000,000 square miles, an area larger than that of all Europe. It comprises China proper and the provinces of Manchooria, Mongolia, Tibet, and Eastern Turkestan. China proper has on an area of 1,400,000 square miles a population of about 386,000,000; the four provinces one of 16,680,000. The government is an absolute monarchy, and since 1644 is in

the hands of the Manchu dynasty. The present emperor Ch'un, who previous to 1889 had been under the regency of the Empress Dowager, was dethroned by her, and is now imprisoned. An imperial edict of 1898 declared, that he resigned his power to the Empress Dowager. Pu Ch'un, a minor, has since been pronounced emperor; thus the actual power of the monarchy is now in the hands of the Empress Dowager. Pu Ch'un is the tenth emperor of the Manchu dynasty. The Manchu element, numbering only 10,000,000, is of Tartar origin. The predominant element in China are Mongolians, who are now carrying on a movement of expelling the Manchu dynasty, and of restoring the great Ch'ing dynasty to the throne.

The inhabitants of China may be divided into three classes. The Mongolian type is nomadic, and follows pastoral pursuits; the Tartars proper are very much given to the chase; the Manchus, also a type of Tartars, are fond of fishing, hunting, and agriculture, whereas their countrymen in Manchooria excel in various profitable industries and in literary education. Within the heart of China there has always been much war and shedding of blood. One great curse to the country are the secret societies, especially that of the "Boxers," whose watchword is, "China for the Chinese." Throughout the empire we find unsurmountable prejudice, unlimited hatred, and ridiculous aversion against all foreigners, foreign enterprises, foreign religion. These characteristics, combined with contemptuous deceit, make it difficult to build the Christian church in the Celestial Empire. On the other hand it may be said, that the hatred against Christian missionaries was heightened by the representatives of the Roman hierarchy, who cannot keep from putting their fingers into politics.

Thus the inhabitants of China live without religion, in gross idolatry and lewd materialism. They indulge in excessive use of *kumyss* and opium, and the vices of polygamy, polyandry, and infanticide are almost universal.

The three modes of pagan worship found in the Celestial Empire are Brahmanism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Considering the facts that have just been stated, it seems almost incredible, that modern Christian theologians have dared to make so bold and blasphemous an assertion as to claim that the depraved contemplative philosophy expressed in these pseudo-religions contained spiritual exaltation and moral sublimity scarcely found among Christians.

BRAHMANISM. This type of worship has experienced many changes with the lapse of centuries. Originally, it was the worship of the polytheistic Hindoo triad, Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Shiva the Destroyer. Brahma, who is almost forgotten to-day, was generally represented in statues of white marble resembling a man in sitting posture who had four faces and four arms. In honor of him the zebus, or Brahman bulls, were worshiped. It is claimed, that Brahmans of Aryan origin invaded India and there subdued the Turanians. Being more intellectual than these, they followed metaphysical speculation and formed an aristocratic caste. Admiring the Eastern sky, they applied to it the adjectival epithet, *Deva* (bright), this quality became personified, Brightness, finally, Bright God, reminding us of *Deus* and *Ζεὺς*. In later years, the Brahmans worshiped, Agni=fire, Surya=sun, Ushas=dawn, Marut=storm, Prithivi=earth, Ap=waters, Nadi=the rivers, Varuna=the sky, Mitra=the sun, and Indra=the day. In the Rig-Veda, which Max Mueller, the translator, dates between 1500—1200 B. C., we find 1017 poems written to the praise of these gods.

Several centuries later, the Yajur-veda, the Sama-veda, and the Atharva-veda were written. They contain fragments of the old customs of worship, and as an appendix, Sanhita, poems, Brahmana and Sutra, prose compositions. All this literature was written previous to 600 B. C.

During the following centuries the worship of elements vanished, and hero and ancestor worship took its place.

This we see from the two great epic poems, Ramayana and Mehabharat. *Rama*, the deified king of Ayodhya, together with his friend and follower *Hunooman*, the monkey god, are extensively worshiped also at the present time. So is *Krishna*, the hero of Mehabharat. The worship given to them is supposed to reach the throne of *Vishnu*. Other worship is that of *Shiva*, under the form of Lingam, and of *Sukti*, the power and energy of the divine nature in action.

BUDDHISM. *Gautama* or *Gotama*, the *Buddha*, was of Aryan descent. He was of the family Sakhya and son of the king of Kapulavastu. The inhabitants of China call him *Fo*. The life of Buddha is placed between 622—400 B. C. (Vid. also Theol. Quart., Vol. I, Nos. 2. 4.) There is very little known of this eccentric ascetic. As was noted before, the Turanian inhabitants of India were despised by the Brahman caste of Aryans, who had usurped their country. Buddha's human sympathy prompted him, who was an Aryan, to proclaim equality of races. His teachings were eagerly embraced by the oppressed Turanians. After his death he was given divine honor, and even to-day he is worshiped in representations of white marble. Since his time about one hundred learned men have attained Buddhahood, and are worshiped as gods; seven of them stand preeminent, but superior to all is Gautama, the Buddha. The teachings of Buddhism are not easily defined; they are a mixture of ascetic mysticism and materialistic philosophy; at various times and in different places they have suffered many alterations. It can not be claimed that Buddha and his followers admit even a supreme intelligence, or an eternal blissful repose. They believe the universe to be *máyá*, an illusion or phantom, in which supposition the Brahmans now have joined them. The future they call Nirvana, or more accurately, Nibbanam, which, according to all probability, means annihilation. The sayings of Gautama are believed to have been recorded in the Tripitaka or Three Treasuries, of Discipline, Doctrine, and Metaphysics.

In the third century B. C., Buddhism became established in India by the emperor Asoka, and held its own there for about thousand years. Brahmanism traveled to *China* and prospered together with Confucianism. About thousand years ago Brahmanism revived in India, whereas Buddhist missionaries transplanted Buddhism to the Celestial Empire, where to this very day it flourishes hand in hand with Confucianism, and is blended with Brahmanism.

Tibet is, above all, a stronghold for Buddhism in a corrupt form, called Lamaism and Taoism. Here we find instances of mysticism, and ascetic meditation on Buddha that remind us of Roman monasteries. Especially in the secluded Lamaseries the devotees of Lamaism constitute a hierarchy of considerable influence, their studied display of power being strengthened by imposing ceremonies and mysterious modes of life. The inhabitants at large are leading a semi-pastoral life, and appear to be very cheerful and blessed in their ignorance and heathendom. Recent travelers have penetrated Tibet, and, to the very unpleasant surprise of the Jesuits, have discovered striking similarities between Buddhist and Romanist rites and ceremonies. They found among Lamaists, the monastery, celibacy, the dress and caps of the priests, the incense, the bells, the rosary of beads, numerous lighted candles at the altar, similar intonations in the services, the same ideas of purgatory, the praying in an unknown tongue, the offerings to departed spirits in the temple, and other resemblances.

A peculiar instrument connected with their idolatrous rites is the prayer-mill for recording prayers. The man in devotion twirls this mill, or hanging it above the fireplace, lets it be turned by the heated air as it seeks to escape through a hole in the roof. Prayer-wheels or barrels, are placed also on the banks of streams, turned by horizontal overshot water wheels. Over the houses, attached to long poles, wave white flags with painted prayers.

South of Tibet and north of British India, we find the independent countries of *Nepal and Bhotan*. The Bhotiás are given to polyandry even more than to polygamy. Their pseudo-religion is an adulterated form of Buddhism.

In *Corea*, which only since the China-Japanese war is an independent nation, polygamy is in universal practice. The pseudo-religion also of this country is an adulterated form of Buddhism.

CONFUCIANISM. K'ungfootsze, the master K'ung, was born in China proper, 551 B. C. He compiled five books, his disciples four. The former are looked upon with idolatrous veneration, the latter are also held sacred.

K'ung was an atheist pure and simple and at times an agnostic filthy and confuse. His political influence as a statesman and his social influence as a moralist are exceptional in the Celestial Empire. One of his maxims was: "All society is a great family which is in passive obedience to its sovereign." He imperatively urged obedience of children to their parents and veneration in general to ancestors. Thus worship of ancestors and heroes, among whom K'ung of course stands supreme, is common in China. He himself offered prayer to the dead, though he said nothing about the state of the departed, and claimed that all retribution for good and for evil were received in this life. Laotse, a contemporary, taught, that good should be returned for evil. K'ung said: "What, then, will you return for good? Recompense injury with justice and return good for good." He worshiped *Tien*, Power, Heaven, but avoided the word *Ti*, Government, Lordship, evidently denying a personal God, and entertaining, sometimes at least, pantheistic thoughts.

Of Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, the last element appears in our days to be predominant in China.

We have now briefly recalled to our minds that gross idolatry, lewd materialism, and plain agnosticism are the chief features of what is often incorrectly called religion of the Celestial Empire.

The idols of the Chinese are most horrible statues of monsters and dragons, and the unhappy people speak of God with terror only, knowing nothing of substitution or sacrifice, and being ignorant of the fact, that those who believe in Christ Jesus are the dear children of God.

How thankful should we be, whose ancestors were also a people that walked in darkness, whereas we have now the light of the saving Gospel shining among us. How zealous should we be in bringing these glad tidings to those who have them not. How sad must we be if we consider the terrible words that must be said of the Celestial Empire: *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; SO THAT THEY ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE.* Rom. 1, 18—20. E. B.
