

THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

VOL. I.

APRIL, 1897.

No. 2.

Doctrinal Theology.

BIBLIOLOGY.

This chapter of theology was by our earlier dogmatists commonly dealt with in their *Prolegomena*, where they treated of the nature and the principles and source of theology. It was not unreasonable to dwell on the source of doctrine before exhibiting the substance of Christian doctrine as comprised in *Theology proper*, *Anthropology*, *Christology*, *Soteriology*, and *Eschatology*. This was the more pertinent as the principal positions of Bibliology, especially the divine origin and authority of the Bible, were generally conceded, and to impugn the inspiration of the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments would have been looked upon as preposterous by theologians of all churches and schools. The great ancestors of modern Protestant theology, Zwingli, Calvin, Melancthon, never theoretically or dogmatically assailed this stronghold of scriptural theology. Even Calixt, the Noah of the present generation of neologists in what is called the Lutheran Church, did no more than plant the first germs of unscriptural Bibliology for future development and would probably have been amazed and appalled at the growth of thorns and thistles gone into seed in these latter days.

burdensome position. Jerem. 23, 21.—2. *He should not leave on account of the wicked in his congregation*, who embitter his life, Rom. 12, 21, unless his own frail person only were at issue and hence another orthodox minister might achieve what, because of the disagreeable personal relations which may have grown up between him and the greater part of his congregation, it would be absolutely impossible for him to accomplish. 2 Cor. 13, 10.—3. It must be clear to human eyes that the new charge he is being offered is not only in itself of greater importance, but that in it he particularly might turn his gifts to better advantage for the church *than if he remained*. 1 Cor. 12, 7.—4. *He should not readily take the decision into his own hands*, but leave it to his present congregation as well as to the congregation calling him away, and to several experienced theologians. Prov. 12, 15.—5. He should not leave his congregation without the latter's *explicit consent*, unless it were evident to every one that the congregation out of sheer obstinacy and in disregard of the welfare of the church absolutely denied its consent. A. G.

THE CONNECTION OF THE FIVE CHIEF PARTS OF THE CATECHISM.

I. The Law.

The Ten Commandments reveal the holy and righteous God and His holy, unalterable will.

But the Law does not save. It is only the spiritual mirror in which we see how we daily violate the will of God, and, therefore, how sinful we all are, that we are, therefore, children of wrath and have merited death and eternal damnation and that we can in no wise free ourselves from our sin and guilt and its consequences.

II. The Gospel.

The Gospel reveals the Lord our Righteousness and our Salvation, and proclaims the only peace that can satisfy the sinful and condemned soul. It teaches us how Christ redeemed us and how His merit is applied to us and must be appropriated by us. The Apostles' Creed clearly expresses the essentials of this doctrine, viz., that by the mercy of God, through the merit of Christ, we are saved by faith, and that faith is a gift of God bestowed by His Spirit through His word, the Gospel of our salvation. When we repeat the Creed, we confess our faith, i. e., we make a verbal statement of what we believe concerning our salvation.

But true faith manifests itself not in words only, but also in deeds, and the works of believers have for their rule the commandments of God. Love, the daughter of faith, is the fulfilling of the law.

III. Prayer.

Having been made children of God by faith, it is but natural that we should cry, "Abba, Father." Having been quickened into newness of life, the pulse of the new man will beat in prayer. Of ourselves and before the lessons of the Gospel are learned and believed, we did not know to whom, how, and for what to pray. Now we learn to pray. The Lord's Prayer, the form given by Christ Himself, reveals the true spirit and contents of prayer and teaches us how to pray.

IV and V. The Sacraments.

Unless spiritual life be nourished and sustained, it will grow feeble and finally expire. But spiritual life is nourished and sustained by what it was engendered, the means of grace, the gospel in its various forms, the word and the *Sacraments*. The special significance of the sacraments in the economy of grace lies in their manner of appropriating

and sealing to the individual the benefits of Christ, inasmuch as by them God deals with every person to whom the sacrament of Baptism or the Lord's Supper is administered as by a more special communication and application of all the spiritual blessings conferred by the Gospel. And thus, as a Christian learns more and more to know his special weaknesses and shortcomings, the dangers to which he is especially exposed, fighting the battle of life under the onslaughts directed against him especially, and praying for that of which he is in special need, God offers him in the sacraments the special assurance of His grace, that as surely as *he* was baptized by having the gracious water of life applied to *his* own person, and has taken Christ's body and blood with *his* own mouth, so surely has God taken *him* into His covenant of grace, made *him* His child and heir, forgiven *him* all *his* sins, has entered *his* name upon the book of life, will stand by him in *his* peculiar troubles and struggles, will hear *his* prayers, and will at last deliver *him* from all evil and place upon *his* brow the crown of glory.

Contributed by G. M. S.
