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Poetry.

HE KNOWETH OUR FRAME.

WRITTEN FOR AN INVALID.

He knoweth our frame; He remembereth
that we are dust.—Ps. ciii: 14.
Lerd, is it wrong—this state of things?
I hardly know:
Each little bird its anthem sings:
I feel so low!
So restless, so disheartened and so weary!
Life seems to me so desolate and dreary!
This body seems to drag me down:
I cannot see
The beautiful, unfading crown
Prepared for me.
Some of Thy children seem so full of light!
But as for me, my day is almost night!
I do believe it was for me
That Jesus died:
And Heaven's door, I think I see,
Is opened wide:
I do believe that He will let me in,
And that His blood has cleansed me from my sin.
Oh why then shall I feel afraid?
—Is it not true
My sins were all on Jesus laid,
And sorrows too?
Hath he not grace enough for all to-morrow?
For surely He hath borne our griefs and sorrows!
My Father! oh how sweet the name!
Art thou not near?
Say, dost Thou not pity me?—or blame?
I long to hear!
FATHER! MY FATHER! This is all my trust
That Thou rememberest I am but dust;
Thou knowest well my frame, for Thou
Hast fashioned me:
The darkness all around me now
Is light to Thee!
Then take me by the hand, and lead me on,
The poor blind child!—until the night be gone!
Until the shadows flee away
Before the sun;
And glorious, everlasting day
Shall have begun!
Meanwhile, in love and pity lead Thou me,
For all my expectation is from Thee!

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, BY CHARLES
HODGE, D. D., PROFESSOR IN THE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, PRINCETON,
NEW JERSEY. VOL. 1. PP.
648.

We do not pretend to have read every page of this bulky volume; but we have examined it sufficiently to be able to form a judgment of its value and utility. To thinking men and to ministers generally, who are of course thinking men, it will prove to be of great worth—stimulating inquiry—guiding research—confirming faith—preserving from mistakes and errors.

The topics discussed are; INTRODUCTION, comprising chapters on Method—Theology—Rationalism—Mysticism—Roman Catholic doctrine concerning the rule of faith—The Protestant rule of faith:

PART I. THEOLOGY PROPER, in thirteen chapters—Origin of the idea of God—Theism—Anti-Theistic theories—knowledge of God—The nature and attributes of God—The Trinity—The Divinity of Christ—The Holy Spirit—The Decrees of God—Creation—Providence—Miracles—Angels. The remaining portions of "Systematic Theology" are treated of in the second and third volumes. The second has been already noticed by us. The third, we believe, is not yet published.

There are some instructive observations on the influence of the spread of scientific knowledge on the interpretation of scripture. Dr. Hodge is not an alarmist; neither does he allow "the oppositions of science" to interfere with scripture theology. Thus he discourses on scientific theories:—

"As the Bible is of God, it is certain that there can be no conflict between the teachings of the scriptures and the facts of science. It is not with facts, but with theories, believers have to contend. Many such theories have, from time to time, been presented, ap-

parently or really inconsistent with the Bible. But those theories have either proved to be false, or to harmonise with the word of God, properly interpreted. The Church has been forced more than once to alter her interpretation of the Bible to accommodate the discoveries of science. But this has been done without doing any violence to the Scriptures or in any degree impairing their authority. Such change, however, cannot be effected without a struggle. It is impossible that our mode of understanding the Bible should not be determined by our views of the subjects of which it treats. So long as men believed that the earth was the centre of our system, the sun its satellite, and the stars its ornamentation, they of necessity understood the Bible in accordance with that hypothesis. But when it was discovered that the earth was only one of the smaller satellites of the sun, and that the stars were worlds, then faith, although at first staggered, soon grew strong enough to take it all in, and rejoice to find that the Bible, and the Bible alone of all ancient books, was in full accord with these stupendous revelations of science. And so if it should be proved that the creation was a process continued through countless ages, and that the Bible alone of all the books of antiquity recognized that fact, then, as Professor Dana says, the idea of its being of human origin would become utterly incomprehensible." p. 573.

While the author pleads for plenary i. e. verbal inspiration (in which we cannot fully agree with him,) he is careful to state that the inspiration of the sacred writers was limited to the subjects which they were directed to bring before their readers.

"They were not imbued with plenary knowledge. As to all matters of science, philosophy, and history, they stood on the same level with their contemporaries. They were infallible only as teachers, and when acting as the spokesmen of God. Their inspiration no more made them astronomers than it made them agriculturists. Isaiah was infallible in his predictions, although he shared with his countrymen the views then prevalent as to the mechanism of the universe. Paul could not err in any thing he taught, although he could not recollect how many persons he had baptized in Corinth. The sacred writers also, doubtless, differed as to insight into the truths which they taught. The Apostle Peter intimates that the prophets searched diligently into the meaning of their own predictions. When David said that God had put all things under the feet of man, he probably little thought that all things meant the whole universe (Heb. ii. 8.) And Moses, when he recorded the promise that childless Abraham was to be the father of many nations, little thought that it meant the whole world. (Rom. iv. 13.) Nor does the scriptural doctrine on this subject imply that the sacred writers were free from errors in conduct. Their infallibility did not arise from their holiness, nor did inspiration render them holy. Balaam was inspired, and Saul was among the prophets. David committed many crimes, although inspired to write psalms. Peter erred in conduct at Antioch; but this does not prove that he erred in teaching. The influence which preserved him from mistakes in teaching was not designed to preserve him from mistakes in conduct." p. 165.

It will be acknowledged, we think, that these are just and necessary distinctions.

Dr. Hodge writes on infant salvation with great clearness. Calvinists have been so often libelled as murderers of infant souls that it was desirable to place this subject in a satisfactory light. Having quoted Rom. v. 18, 19, the author remarks:—"We have no right to put any limit on these general terms, except what the Bible itself places upon them. The scriptures nowhere exclude any class of infants, baptized or unbaptized, born in Christian or in heathen lands, of believing or unbelieving parents, from the benefits of the redemption of Christ. All the

descendants of Adam, except Christ, are under condemnation: all the descendants of Adam, except those of whom it is expressly revealed that they cannot inherit the kingdom of God, are saved. This appears to be the clear meaning of the Apostle, and therefore he does not hesitate to say that where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded; that the benefits of redemption far exceed the evils of the fall; that the number of the saved far exceeds the number of the lost." p. 26.

We could desire fuller discussion on some topics, even at the expense of another volume or two. As it is, we have frequently results rather than reasons, and the book becomes a storehouse of sound conclusions, without placing before us, *in extenso*, the processes which have led to them. There is an exception, however, in regard to the rule of faith. In treating of Scripture and tradition, Dr. H. is much more exhaustive than on other points. The importance of the theme justifies the enlargement. We commend that portion of the volume (pp. 104-188) to the special attention of our readers.

We are not disposed to accept Dr. Hodge's account of the opinions broached by Thomas Munzer and his followers in Germany, in the sixteenth century (p. 81.) It is an exaggeration. Robert Robinson has given a different and much more favourable description, in his "Ecclesiastical Researches." In those days of calumny and blood the Baptists were a sect "every where spoken against." No one understood them. All united to destroy them. If some broke out into excesses, it was not to be wondered at: "Oppression maketh a wise man mad."

Our Presbyterian friends will prize this work very highly. Readers of all denominations may study it with advantage. C.

DEATH OF THE REV. WILLIAM ELLIS.

The veteran missionary and "apostle of Madagascar," William Ellis, died last Sunday morning at his residence, Hoddesden, aged seventy-six years. As long ago as 1815 he was in training for missionary work at Gosport, under Dr. Bogue. His earlier life had been spent in London, where he was a youth connected with the Silver-street Sunday-school. Early devoted to missionary work, he was appointed to labour in the South Sea Islands. His "Polynesian Researches" throws much light on the early history of missions there. After some years of labour in that distant sphere he returned to England, and afterwards became, for a time, one of the secretaries of the London Missionary Society. He married for his second wife Miss Sarah Stickney, whose works on "The Women of England" and "Education" have won for her fame. Shortly after his marriage he retired to Hoddesden, but not to be inactive. He found a small chapel in this village in a wretched condition, which was supplied by the students of Cheshnut College. Not content that this state of things should continue, he set about raising funds for the erection of a chapel, in which he was greatly aided by his accomplished wife; and this beautiful chapel stands in the midst of the village as a memorial of the united labours of Mr. and Mrs. Ellis. For some years he ministered in this chapel, but ere long he was wanted for more distinguished service. When in 1853, there seemed to be the promise of an opening, for the return of Christian missionaries to Madagascar, Mr. Ellis was selected by the London Missionary Society to visit the country, in company with Mr. Cameron, in order to ascertain the actual condition of things, with a view of resuming missionary labour. The manner in which Mr. Ellis conducted the most delicate negotiations with the Government of Madagascar, so as to secure an entrance for the Christian teachers to the country, and the influence he exerted in high places, are well known to all persons acquainted with modern missionary enterprise. On

three occasions Mr. Ellis visited Madagascar, always on important missions and always with signal success. He went before, and prepared a way for those who have gone in and occupied the field. On each occasion of his return to England he had marvellous things to tell of Madagascar and the prospects that were opening for the Church of God there. Had he been as powerful in speech as he was in other things, the tale he had to tell would have thrilled the audiences which gathered to hear them. As it was he was everywhere welcomed as a kind of Christian hero, and listened to with breathless interest. It was in his books, however, that he set forth the state of things to the greatest advantage. His "Martyr Church of Madagascar," "Madagascar Revisited," and "Three Visits to Madagascar," give a history of that mission-field which leaves nothing to be desired. It was he, too, who completed and revised the translation of the Scriptures into the Malagasy language.

Mr. Ellis had a remarkable aptitude for hard work. His attainments, as the result of his strength of application were very great. His botanical studies, which were put to good service when he was in Madagascar, were almost enough to make a reputation. With a view of making the Christians in this country familiar with scenes in Madagascar, as well as persons, he made photography a pursuit. On returning from his last visit, when engaged on the work of carrying the Scriptures in Malagasy through the press he shut himself off for weeks from general intercourse in a room at the Mission House, and their toiled on. He was, indeed, a mighty worker. He never seemed to tire, nor, indeed, to grow old, returning from his travels in Madagascar looking fresh and young as ever. It was almost impossible to realise that a man who looked as ruddy and walked as nimbly as he did was indeed aged. Lately, however, he had to acknowledge that he did not feel as young as ever. Only for a few days has he been actually laid aside, and we can scarcely believe that Mr. Ellis, whom we talked with so recently and saw on the platform of Exeter Hall at the anniversary meeting of the London Missionary Society in May, is no more amongst us. So men ought to write their autobiography. But they are seldom the men to do it. They have no time for it. If Mr. Ellis had lived to have the leisure for it, it would have been a singularly interesting book.

It is surprising the amount of service he compressed into his life. He did the work of a dozen men such as only a dozen picked men would have done. Yet there was no bustle about him; and so great was his modesty that, returning from his visits to Madagascar, he took his place amongst the lowest, as though he did not know that he had done anything remarkable. He was one of the most self-forgetful and self-denying men that ever lived. Not one man in ten thousand, in advanced life, would have been willing to leave his home and to be separated from his wife for a while that he might go on a visit to Madagascar as there are but few ladies who would be prepared to make the sacrifice involved in letting their husbands go. It is pleasant that after passing through so many trials as he did in his Madagascar adventures; he died peacefully in his bed in the old house at Rose Hill. Very interesting was it to think of so distinguished a couple as Mr. and Mrs. Ellis, passing the evening of their days together in that quiet charming spot. And it is worth recording that when, a year or two ago, the house and beautiful garden which he had long rented was put up for auction, and it was ascertained that Mr. Ellis wished to bid for it, the neighbours all resolved that they would abstain from bidding against him.—London paper.

Make it a rule never to utter any unnecessary complaint or murmurs but in patience to possess your souls.—Mrs. Cameron.

A DANGEROUS PERIOD.

BY REV. J. KENNARD.

A gentleman and his wife presented themselves to our church the other evening to be received into membership. Blessed in each other's love, they had heretofore lived strangers to the supreme joy of Christian samphaty. But now, their faces beaming with solemn gladness, they came together to consecrate themselves at God's altar.

The husband, after relating the history of his conversion, paused a moment, and then with deep seriousness added, "There is one period in my life which, though I cannot call it the most sinful, I now see to have been the most dangerous. It includes the past three or four years, in which I have never been without convictions of my duty to be a Christian, but in which I sought to avert the claims of God upon me by looking for flaws in the character of professors of religion. It grew to be a pleasure to me to discover their inconsistencies, and to flatter myself that if that was all religion did for a man, I was not losing much in neglecting it.

"The effect was to hinder my Christian friends from speaking to me, while my own heart grew harder and blinder. I now see that nothing but the merciful interposition of God saved me from becoming a confirmed scoffer and sceptic.

"He cut down a most intimate friend as in a moment by death, and in that moment woke me from my delusion. I now discover to my sorrow that I was merely using the imperfections of Christians as a means of shielding myself from His merciful convictions and I bless him for delivering me from that snare. I now offer myself to the church, and shall be glad if I can be as good a Christian as some whom I once criticised."

When he had taken his seat, his wife arose and told how years before she had given her heart to God, but had never made a confession of it. "Oh, how I have longed," she said, "that my husband would join me in serving God; but I knew how he felt about professors of religion, and I dreaded to speak with him. When one night he said to me that he was resolved to seek the Saviour, and offered to pray with me, oh, it seemed to me I was so happy I did not care to live any longer. Oh, to think that God had blessed me so and I so undeserving, for I had done nothing to bring him to this resolution; and to think that he first should ask me to pray with him. Oh, I can never, never do enough to praise God for giving me a Christian husband."

Now this man had been comparing himself and his wife with professors of religion, and drawing conclusions which only served to defraud him of the comforts of a Christian experience; and yet he himself owed his restraints and morality to the influence of that Holy Spirit who was striving with him, while his wife, whom he exalted above Christians for her virtues, was all the time secretly a child of God, and only restrained from making a profession by her unwillingness to leave him behind in the world. Are there not many husbands and wives in just this state?—Am. Messenger.

RULES FOR SPOILING A PRAYER MEETING.

1. Never think of it unless some one mentions it; never pray for it.
2. When any one speaks of it, say that you think it stupid, ill conducted and shamefully cold.
3. If the plan of suggesting a subject in advance be pursued, say that it makes the meeting heartless and formal; if not, call it rambling and useless.
4. Never attend on stormy nights,—it might encourage the faithful ones.
5. Never leave any business or amusement for the meeting,—you can't have time for everything.
6. When you do go, if you wish to