

ARTICLE III.

THE PROPHETS OF THE RESTORATION,

[A review by the Rev. S.J.P. Anderson]

A *Commentary on Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi*,
by Rev. T. V. MOORE, D. D., *Pastor of the first Pres-
byterian church, Richmond, Va.*

It may be safely affirmed that a new era has dawned on English Hermeneutic Theology, and the fact should, be recorded with gratitude. For excellent as are the older commentaries in our language, (and they are so valuable that they cannot be dispensed with, even now, by any one who wishes to be imbued with the spirit of the sacred record,) it is an undeniable fact, one that presses itself on the attention of the student at every step of his progress, that they do not meet and satisfy the wants of the time.

We shall, perhaps, suggest what we conceive to be the new element that gives character to the commentaries, that are from time to time coming forth to meet the exigencies of the age, when we say that they are distinguished by a manly criticism that does not fear to look a difficulty full in the face. It is not satisfied with being copious and pious on the plain declarations of the living oracles, but the obscure utterings are pondered, and their, hidden meaning sought after, and often found and brought forth to add to the priceless stores of the treasury of things, new and old, in which the church of God rejoices. And it is eminently practical as well as critical. It makes a minute, patient and learned examination of the sacred text the foundation of the development of doctrine and practical inference and remark. It seeks to ascertain the mind of the spirit in each enunciation of the great revealer, and thus put into the hand of the Christian warrior the sword of the Spirit, with its heavenly temper and keen edge uninjured.

The writing commentaries of this class is a work of herculean labour, and no one who has a due sense of the requirements of the case will think of attempting the exposition of the entire Scriptures. That honor is not.

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for any one man. The result, whenever attained, will be a composite one, and will consist of monographs from many hands. The incomparable work of Eadie on the Ephesians, and Hodges Exhaustive Commentary on the Romans, will be universally accepted as worthy contributions to this noble effort. And in this galaxy of interpreters of the word, that shall at once adorn and instruct the church in her later and better day, this work on the Prophets of the Restoration is entitled to, and we are confident will secure no mean place. We have no hesitation in saying that, as yet, there is no German work that we have seen that is entitled to a place in this assembly of worthies. No one can deny the great value and indispensable necessity of such works to every scholar, without exposing his own ignorance or presumption, and perhaps both. But the master works of such men as Tholuck and Hengstenberg and Olshausen, have defects both in criticism and in doctrinal exposition that are felt at every step. Nearly akin as we are, and much as we have in common, there is a radical difference between the Teutonic mind and ours. An argument that is demonstration to a German scholar is often very far from bringing conviction to us, and difficulties that seem insurmountable to him, make but very little obstruction in the progress of our reasoning. To use his own hackneyed expression, our "stand-point" is different.

And yet, as we have already said, the aid of our metaphysical and learned brethren is indispensable. The work is to be done by the Anglo-Saxon mind, enriched by German culture. It is a happy combination of the good sense and directness of the one with the patient and learned acuteness of the other that is needed. Nor are we willing to give this noble work exclusively to the hands of our Theological Professors and teachers of Biblical criticism. These men, with all their piety and learning, generally look at the world through the loophole of a study window, and have far too little acquaintance with the wants and modes of action of that great mass of mind that is to be redeemed and sanctified by the truth. And hence they are not so skillful as they might be in arresting and satisfying those who are engaged so eagerly in the actual struggle of life. Give a Pastor a

good degree of the Professor's learning, and his familiar acquaintance with the busy and fluctuating thoughts of men, as he meets them in the working-day-world will be of signal advantage in enabling him to guide the sword of the Spirit to the very point most vulnerable. In short, we suppose that the perfection of a commentary must combine the facts of learned research and practical dexterity. No one, we think, can read Eadie's works on Ephesians and Colossians without perceiving on every page that he is a Preacher as well as a Professor.

This same most desirable quality attaches, in a highly gratifying degree, to the work before us. While it is complimentary to the author's diligence and self-denial that such a work has been conceived and brought forth amid the exacting and exhausting labours of a large pastoral charge, it is also the better for that very reason. We see that he looks at truth and handles it not as a dead fossil but as a living, operative reality that must move as well as enlighten the hearts and consciences of men. Yet, were we in a critical mood, we might suggest that perhaps there is a little too much of the Preacher to be seen here. The style is too intense and epithetical and antithetical. There is a trifle too much of flourish and rhetoric for a Commentary. But we can readily pardon so slight a blemish when it is but the excess of so good a thing.

And we cannot but hope that the new style of criticism will develop a new style of preaching. We cannot find it in our hearts to depreciate those grand old divines and preachers who adorned and instructed the former times (for there were giants in those days) and we bless God for them. But may we not suggest that they were too systematic and general, and that even they would have been improved by the modern culture. That a minuter criticism would have given greater definiteness and exactness of application, and that a closer study of the forms of belief or unbelief developed by the time, would have fitted them for a more efficient application of the gospel remedy to the diseases of humanity. We trust that the ministry, is getting more into sympathy with the actual world of hoping, fearing, doubting, struggling men and women, and that this closer acquaintance with present wants

will enable the ministers of God more fully and triumphantly to vindicate the claim of the gospel to be rest for the weary and satisfaction for the doubting. At all events, we know that an exclusive attachment to the old forms of preaching truth would greatly disable the modern preacher in his attack on the powers of darkness. It is the same precious, unalterable truth, but its form of presentation and illustration may, and must, be diversified to meet the infinite varieties of ever changing error. Our science and our art must keep full abreast of all other arts and sciences. It will not do to go to work with the match-lock and cross-bow, when the enemy is using Minnie rifles and Paixhan guns.

Dr. Moore has been very happy, we think, in selecting his portion of the Word of God—the closing period of the Old Testament dispensation, that stretches from the return from Babylon to the five centuries of silence that intervened between the promise of the Messenger that was to prepare the way of Jehovah, and the startling announcement of one crying in the wilderness, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.” It was, as our author most appropriately and suggestively calls it, the period of restoration. It witnessed the rebuilding of the ruined temple amid the rejoicing hopes of the young and the tearful memories of the old. It was a twilight time—but it was morning twilight illumined by three bright day-stars which did not lose their gentle and cheering radiance, but were swallowed up by the full light of the perfect day of the Sun of Righteousness. This whole period has a peculiar and tender interest. It is all tremulous with hope and desire. It stood on the tiptoe of anxious and yet hopeful expectation. It is an old Scotch custom to announce the presence of royalty on the battle-field by a peculiar flourish of trumpets. We hear this in Malachi. “The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold he shall come saith the Lord of hosts.” The shout of a king was in their camp.

And is there not a special fitness in the study of this portion just now, when we seem to be about to witness the dawn of a brighter day for the church? For much

as interpreters differ in particulars, they agree in the great hope that we are on the verge of great things—that a new era in the administration of Christ's kingdom is at the door.

But we must not vaticinate. We would rather express our acknowledgments to our author that he has not felt called to enlighten us on unfulfilled prophecy. We rejoice that he has not been bitten by the prophetic mania of the armageddonites, who not only locate the arena for the great battle, but call the combatants by name, and kindly suggest the military policy that will lead to victory. An act of forethought that all the expectant warriors should make a note of for future use.

But it is not simply in the selection of the theme that there is great felicity, but in the "whole arrangement and execution of the work. The common version has its proper and yet rarely conceded place in critical commentaries, at the head of the page, without obtrusively taking up too large a portion of it: the new translation is accurate, preserving the Hebrew idiom with remarkable closeness, and not only prefaces each book, but is presented in full in the notes, so that the new and old version, with the commentary, can be seen at a glance. The arrangement of the page is incomparably better than in any other work we have ever seen. And then the notes preserve a happy medium between learned dulness and wearisome fulness of reference on the one hand, and pious but common-place remark on the other. Each portion is finished off by inferences, natural, pointed, apothegmatic and pregnant. Many of them will stick in the memory of the reader. And hence others than clergymen will find the book an interesting and profitable one. There is no small advantage to our author in the fact that, so far as English readers are concerned, he traverses an almost untrodden field. Those who have made this remarkable trio of Prophets a special study, have left their labors for the most part buried in a dead language. We may give information to some, even of our clerical readers, when we record the names of labourers in precisely the same field that Dr. Moore has chosen. Such works as *Nesi Breves Observationes in Comm., Rab. Davidis Kimchi in Aggem Zechariam et*

Malachima, Paris, 1557, and Willii Prophetæ Hageus, Zacharias, Malachias Comment, illustrati, Bremæ, 1638, and Varenii Trifolium Propheticum, Rostoch, 1662, though covering precisely the same ground with the present work will most assuredly never jostle it in the competition for public favour. We think, therefore, that this Commentary supplies a deficiency in our apparatus for study. Perhaps no part of the sacred Scriptures is less read than the Prophets of the Restoration, and yet they are full of hope and encouragement as well as reproof and warning for a church called to build the wall in troublous times—to hold the implements of labour in one hand and the weapons of war in the other, and finding it ever needful to keep alive a loving, trusting heart—in order to give energy and efficiency to both—in short of a church which, though now beset by enemies, looks with steadfast faith to the coming of a better day. The publisher has done his part of the work well with the exception of a few typographical errors and the very remarkable omission of an interclause of the new translation of ch. 1, vs. 7, of Haggai, and found on page 60. We are disposed, however, to enter our protest in behalf of the brethren who are low in purse, against the size and consequent cost of the work. It might have been published in a neat and handsome duodecimo, and thus have come within the means of a much larger circle of those who would greatly appreciate its perusal. The price of two dollars for a Commentary on three of the minor Prophets would suggest a painful question in the rule of three to many a poor clergyman.

But by far the most striking point in this work is found in the introduction. We have first, a discussion of the nature of the Prophetic gift, which is defined as “something bestowed by God on any one, by virtue of which he was qualified and authorized to speak authoritatively for him.” The Prophet is one who speaks instead of another, and that without reference to the question, whether the announcement refers to present, past or future. Then follows a new and very striking classification of the different modes of God’s manifestations to man. First, the *theophanee*, in which God revealed himself by visible appearances, and extending through

the Patriarchal dispensation, and closing with the mission of Moses. The Mosaic dispensation is termed *theopneustic*, because in it God revealed himself mediately through inspired men. The third dispensation is the Christian, and which is called *theologic*, because in it God reveals himself permanently by inspired writings.. This classification deserves, attention, and for a full comprehension of its character and bearings we refer the reader to the extended discussion of it, to be found in this excellent Introduction.

In discussing the literature of these three prophetic books, our author pays a deserved tribute to the wonderful genius, learning and services of John Calvin in revealing the mind of the Spirit as here recorded. Indeed it seems, that while many of the older commentaries are becoming mere library lumber or repositories of curious, exploded theories of interpretation, that the great thinker and theologian of the Reformation is getting a firmer hold on the reverence and affection of the most advanced, minds amongst us. There are some statues so gigantic in proportions that they are not seen to advantage except at a distance. So it has been with him. For a time after the great impulse which he gave to the generation in which he lived it was fashionable to neglect him. But now he is again rising above the horizon, a luminary of the first magnitude, whose calm and serene radiance will, as we trust, shine on the way of life till the end of time.*

We close this work with a feeling of profound satisfaction and recommend it to all students of the Bible. And a re-perusal of these three Prophets, with the lights that are now offered, is suggestive at once of hope and fear. For as we are cheered by promise of the speedy and glorious coming of the Son of God, we are reminded that when he comes he will inaugurate a day of searching scrutiny. He will be as refiner's fire and as fullers' soap, He brings, therefore, both blessings and cursings. And while we trace the first streaks of the morning

* We notice, with special pleasure, that Dr. Schaff, in his new work on Religion in America, acknowledges that Calvinism is the dominant influence in the American Church.

light we catch a glimpse of consuming fire that shall burn the enemies of God.

ARTICLE IV.

MICHAEL SERVETUS.

- I. *Calvin and Servetus: the Reformer's Share in the Trial of Michael Servetus historically ascertained. From, the French : with Notes and Additions. By the Rev. W. R. TWEEDIE. JOHN JOHNSTONE, 15 Princess Street, Edinburgh, and 26, Pater Noster Row, London, 1846.*
- II. *A Short Account of the Ancient History, Present Government and Laws of the Republic of Geneva. By GEORGE REATE, Esq., London. Printed for R. & J. DODSLEY, in Pall Mall, 1761.*

Had Servetus been burned by the Romanists at Vienna, we should probably never have heard his name; or at most, his case would have excited no higher interest than the thousands of martyrs who have fallen victims to Inquisitorial power. His wild speculations in theology, together with his more useful discoveries in physiological science, would have been swept into oblivion by the flames of Papal justice.

We initiate our present effort with this (as some may think,) bold announcement, that our readers may bear in mind the proposition which we hope to demonstrate; and that they may fairly and fully weigh all the facts as they shall be given in detail. Rome had consigned myriads of God's most faithful ones to the rack, the fire, and the dungeons of the Inquisition, for the damning heresy of calling in question her dogmas and authority, until these things came to be considered matters of course ; and until, from the vast numbers of her victims, a single name, unless one of marked eminence, was lost, from public view.