

ARTICLE VIII.

DR. BRIGGS'S "WHITHER?"

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THE publication of this book is very significant, not only as revealing the difficulties of creed revision in the Presbyterian Church and of creed subscription in general, but as bringing to a direct issue many of the rather vague questions of theological discussion characteristic of the present decade. Professor Briggs announces himself as a Broad Churchman, in favor both of more liberal terms of subscription to creeds in general, and of a free revision of the Westminster symbols. Into the merely denominational elements of the discussion it does not concern us to enter, but some of the views maintained are of so general and fundamental a character that they should not be suffered to pass unchallenged.

At the outset, Professor Briggs invents the word "orthodoxism," to express the spurious as distinguished from the true orthodoxy. With his distinctions upon that point there is no fault to find. Orthodoxism as he defines it is reprehensible and should be discountenanced. We agree with Dr. Briggs that true orthodoxy "is ever anxious to learn, . . . is meek, lowly, and reverent, . . . is full of charity and love" (p. 7). We cordially agree also that "Any man or church that refuses to accept the discoveries of science or the truths of philosophy or the facts of history, or the new light that breaks forth from the word of God to the devout student, on the pretence that it conflicts with his orthodoxy or the orthodoxy of the standards of his church, prefers the traditions of man

to the truth of God, has become unfaithful to the calling and aims of the Christian disciple, has left the companionship of Jesus and his apostles and has joined the Pharisees, the enemies of the truth" (p. 9). While we hope there are not many who have consciously joined the Pharisees in cherishing this attitude of mind towards discoveries, it is but just to remark that the world has had so much experience with science falsely so called and with visionary advocates of progress, that those may be pardoned whose reverence for the Bible, and for the faith which has sustained the church through its past trials, makes them slow in yielding to every gust of new doctrine and every new scheme for harmonizing the facts of the universe. The alleged discoveries of science, the assumed truths of philosophy, the supposed fresh facts of history, and even the new light thought to spring from the word of God, should all be tried, and we should hold fast only to so much of these as endures a rightful and scientific ordeal. Some of these assumed truths and new facts as presented by Dr. Briggs we will now subject to a brief examination.

The first general topic attracting the attention of the reader, and one upon which Dr. Briggs's studies would seem to make his opinion of greatest weight, is that of the Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. Dr. Briggs is not content with opposing the view of Dr. A. A. Hodge, that the Scriptures "are both in meaning and verbal expression the word of God to man," and of Dr. Warfield, that "the line can never rationally be drawn between the thoughts and words of Scripture," but objects also to the position of President Patton, that "inerrancy of Scripture is essential to the inspiration of the Scriptures," and that "a proved error in Scripture contradicts . . . the Scripture's claims, and therefore its inspiration in making those claims" (pp. 64-68). This, he terms an "awful doctrine to teach in our days when biblical criticism has the field," and declares that "no more dangerous doctrine has ever come from the

pen of men," and that the tract in circulation among the Presbyterians sustaining this view is "poisoning" thousands of the ministers and people and "misleading them into dangerous error" (pp. 65-73).

Now while we are not called upon to defend these writers in all their individual positions with reference to the nature and extent of inspiration, we cannot refrain from expressing the opinion that the language used above does injustice both to these eminent scholars and to the position maintained by them. For they and the scholars agreeing with them are emboldened to take this position both by the claims of the sacred writers themselves and by the futility of all the efforts during these eighteen hundred years to convict the Scriptures of any error. So universally have these efforts at criticism failed, that the presumption is exceedingly strong that the original writers did not make any mistake. The things which are ordinarily alleged as mistakes are probably mistakes of interpretation on the part of the objectors themselves.

For example, Professor Briggs says that "no candid mind without invincible dogmatic prepossessions can doubt there is an error of citation in Matt. xxvii. 9, that goes back to the original autograph. A passage is cited from Jeremiah that belongs to Zechariah. Dr. Warfield tries hard to overcome this error by three 'plausible' theories. They may seem plausible to Dr. Warfield, the advocate, but I doubt whether any one will be convinced by any of the three, who is not over-anxious to be convinced" (p. 72). We have not at this moment a distinct recollection of what Dr. Warfield's plausible theories are, but we presume they are those which have ordinarily been presented by the great body of believers in the inspiration of the Bible. As to the charge, that none of them is convincing except to one who is "over-anxious to be convinced," we would reply, that some of them are good enough to have been convincing to many persons of great wisdom and of seeming candor; in other words, to a class

of persons possessing in a marked degree the good spirit of *orthodoxy* as Dr. Briggs defines it.

It is necessary to remember that in a case of this kind there is as likely to be prejudice upon one side as upon the other. The student should be reminded that it is a somewhat difficult matter to impeach the truthfulness of a witness who has already a well-established character for honesty, or to fix the responsibility for a gross error upon a writer who is noted for his accuracy. The presumption of honesty and of painstaking may be so strong in favor of a given writer that almost any theory which is not impossible would in a court of law be accepted as exonerating him from the charge. Here the charge of Professor Briggs is, that Matthew, in the original document, attributed to Jeremiah a passage that was written by Zechariah; but in this case, as in many others, an allowance should be made for a margin of error both in the interpretation of the passage and in its transmission.

As to the probability that there is still a remnant of error from transmission even in our best manuscripts and critical texts, we can do no better than to quote the discriminating remarks of Dr. Briggs in his "Biblical Study": "From the point of view of biblical criticism, we are not prepared to admit errors in the Scriptures in the original autographs, until they shall be proven. Very many of those alleged have already received sufficient or plausible explanation; others are in dispute between truth-seeking scholars and satisfactory explanations may hereafter be given. New difficulties are constantly arising and being overcome. It is difficult on the one side to demonstrate an error, as it is on the other side to demonstrate that the Scriptures must be absolutely errorless. It is a question of fact to which all theories and doctrines must yield. It cannot be determined by *a priori* definitions and statements on either side. Indeed the original autographs have been lost for ages and can never be recovered. How can we determine whether they were absolutely errorless

or not? To assume that it must be so, as a deduction from a theory of verbal inspiration, is to beg the whole question" (p. 242).

Continuing in this judicious vein, we would ask Dr. Briggs to say how, except from some *a priori* theory, he knows there were errors in the original autographs. How can he be so bold as to say that in Matt. xxvii. 9 the original autograph certainly contained an error? The truth is that the determination of the existence or absence of an error in such a case is by inference drawn from the known character of the agents employed. From what we know of the character of Matthew as an author and historian, and from what we know of the agents and means through which the writing has been transmitted, the question is, Which is most likely to have made the error, Matthew or some scribe? For our own part we have no hesitation in saying that the error is most likely to have originated in the transcriptions. The character of Matthew is such that in this case, and so far as we know in every other case in which fallibility has been attributed to him as an author, he may properly be permitted to have the benefit of the doubt. This is ordinarily considered as sufficient proof of an author's accuracy, that is, his character is sustained on account of his general reputation, unless an error is definitely proved.

In the preceding case there is nothing very vital at stake except the general reputation of the inspired writer. We should not be greatly concerned for this reputation, were it not for the fact that at other points vital doctrines may depend upon it. For example, with reference to the alleged discrepancy between the writer of the fourth Gospel and the other evangelists respecting the time of eating the Passover, a flat contradiction can be avoided by use of one of two or three hypotheses, the most plausible of which is the assumption that the phrase "eat the passover" has considerable elasticity—more elasticity, perhaps, than extant Greek literature may distinctly reveal. But

as it is an elasticity entirely in analogy with phrases of that sort in all languages, the explanation is by no means a strained one. The alternative is to suppose that the details of a scene such as that accompanying the last Supper did not impress itself upon the mind of the beloved apostle so as to be retained forever afterward vividly in memory. If he could not remember with ordinary accuracy, whether such important scenes as that in which he leaned upon the Saviour's bosom and at Peter's instigation asked, Who is to betray thee? and in which he followed the Saviour out into the agonies of Gethsemane, and thence after the arrest into the judgment-hall itself, to witness the scenes of the mock trial, preceded or followed the Passover, the whole credibility of the fourth Gospel must be greatly impaired. Any ordinary witness, even without inspiration, could not fail to keep in his mind the order of such tragic events. Without being open to the charge, therefore, of being "over-anxious" to defend the character of the witnesses, we are justified in allowing the presumptions of the case largely to determine our interpretation. The rationalistic critics are at least as likely to be fallible in their theories and interpretations as John was in his remembrance of the facts.

Professor Briggs has fallen, we think, into a similar mistake in his treatment of the argument concerning the canon of Scripture. He holds that it is "the authority of God himself, speaking through the Holy Spirit, by and with the word to the heart, that determines that the writings are infallible as the inspired word of God, and it is their inspiration that determines their canonicity" (p. 75).

In justice to Dr. Briggs we are bound to say that this construction of his views is derived largely from various passages in his "Biblical Studies,"¹ to which he so often refers in the more general and popular volume under consideration. We admit, however, the danger of misinterpreting his views, as many of his statements appear to be con-

¹ See especially, pp. 26, 111, 136, 160, 228, 408, and 411.

tradictory to one another, and in places he seems to give a weight to external evidence concerning the canon which is apparently denied in others. We leave it to Dr. Briggs himself to show that his views are in reality harmonious, and that he does not throw undue discredit upon the external evidences. At any rate, we are shut off from showing this without pressing to an extreme degree such personal presumptions in Dr. Briggs's favor as he is unwilling to have us urge in behalf of the inspired writers for the sake of harmonizing their apparent discrepancies.

But as it is, we understand him to leave out, to an unwarrantable extent, the external evidence. The ordinary argument is a combined and cumulative one involving both internal and external evidence. The evidence upon which we are permitted to rely for our confidence in the canonicity of a book in the Bible is not solely that of our personal perception of its inspiration. We are not at liberty to expect from the Lord such a quickening of our spiritual faculties that they will be enabled always to detect the flavor of inspiration in a literary document as we do that of musk in a drawer. To expect this would be to tempt providence and to despise the gifts and opportunities of reason which the Creator has given us. The very fact that Christianity is an historical religion involves the responsibility of dealing with it historically, and of acting upon such a degree of certainty as historical evidence can afford. Fortunately, in this case the historical evidence is abundant, and the confirmatory evidence furnished by the character of the documents is ample. Indeed this is a part of the historical evidence. We do not deny the aid of the Spirit, but we magnify the work of the Spirit in connection with the production of the original documents, and somewhat limit the character of its work at subsequent stages of the historical development. This is done on ample grounds of both reason and revelation. No other class of religious teachers sustains the same relation to the truths of the gospel as did the company that were

with Christ on earth and felt the first impact of his influence. The importance of maintaining this principle lies in the fact that, without proper respect for the writings authorized by the apostles, the church is deprived of the proper regulative forces in its development. The opposite view unduly depreciates the value of the apostolic calling, and dangerously magnifies the authority of the individual Christian consciousness of succeeding ages.

Professor Briggs very positively asserts that Dr. Warfield cannot prove that "the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Gospels of Mark and Luke had 'apostolic origin' and 'apostolic gift'" (p. 87). Perhaps, however, Dr. Briggs would give a narrower interpretation to "apostolic origin" than Dr. Warfield would, and so it may be a war over words which does not touch the real question. But, from many things which Dr. Briggs says, it seems probable that his idea of what constitutes proof differs from that of Dr. Warfield. Doubtless, Dr. Warfield holds that the degree of certainty required in the case is not absolute, but that all that is necessary is, in legal phrase, that the fact should be proved "to a *reasonable* degree of certainty." Now it is not difficult to show that the rationalistic critics in their discussion both of the genuineness and canonicity of various parts of the Bible set up unreasonable standards of proof. It is probably true that neither Dr. Warfield nor any one else can give a specific answer to all the objections which can be urged against many of the books of the Bible. But this is too much to ask. Our ignorance of the circumstances forbids specific explanations of many things that may have been clear enough at the time. All that can reasonably be asked at the present time is that the objections be shown to be such that more knowledge of the circumstances might furnish sufficient explanation.

Professor Briggs goes on to say: "Are we, then, to build the authority of the divine word on human authority? We do not give unquestioned allegiance to the ear-

ly church in other matters of faith and practice, why should we grant them the last word as to the foundations of our faith? . . . No historical student can possibly accept any book as divinely inspired simply because the church of the first three centuries reached that conclusion" (p. 81). Plainly we should not give *unquestioned* allegiance to the early church in this matter, but their views have been questioned, and we think that the testimony of the early church as to what books contained the original deposit of the Christian revelation has been shown to be of the very highest order, and worthy to command the allegiance of succeeding ages. Protestants have all along properly and wisely made a distinction between the later traditions of the church and their traditional interpretations of the Scripture, and the testimony of the church during the first two or three centuries to the plain and obvious facts out of which Christianity has developed. The churches to whom the biblical books were first addressed are their proper sponsors. Coming to us from them they are like documents brought into court from the accredited archives. We may examine them to see that no fraud has been practised, and to eliminate the errors incident to transmission, but we are not compelled to go back to the foundations to prove their genuineness as we should have to do if they were now discovered for the first time. Possession is nine points of the law, and in such a case ought to be. The very character of the considerations often urged by rationalistic critics as a ground for rejecting or doubting the authenticity of almost every book of the New Testament reveals the unsoundness of their principles of procedure.

The outcome of Professor Briggs's position appears in striking light on page 160. "The conscience of a child of God cannot be bound by anything that God himself does not speak in his holy word to the believer himself. This makes the Scriptures, or rather God in the Scriptures, the only arbiter." And again we find him denying

that saving faith has anything to do with preliminary questions of biblical criticism. "They are in the field of scientific theology. Saving faith goes directly to God, when the sacred writings are presented to it; it finds God in them and does not raise or consider questions of criticism" (p. 150). Are we, then, brought to the conclusion that faith may recognize as infallible what criticism has proved to be false? Shall we encourage believers to trust in the spurious passage concerning the heavenly witnesses because they may find in it something on which their souls can feed? Can they draw divine comfort from it when they see that there are no grounds for believing in its genuineness? Or again, is saving faith so blind to the results of criticism that it must ask no questions about the passage that describes the descent of an angel to trouble the Pool of Siloam? Can saving faith go on to build itself upon the foundations of Second Peter if science is compelled to believe that book to be a forgery? If criticism is admitted to prove that the Pastoral Epistles were not written by Paul, can faith still go on to build upon the foundations there laid, as though they were the work of the Master Builder? It is utterly impossible to do this.

We will consider only one other point, namely, that relating to the moral government of God, especially as it concerns the doctrine of probation after death. Dr. Briggs declares that "the New England doctrine of the moral government of God is only a democratic twist in the doctrine of divine sovereignty" and that its doctrine of probation is not only a departure from the older Calvinism, but is "a provincial and temporary freak in theol-

had no probation here" (p. 218).

Here we pause to remark that throughout this part of the discussion our author is confounding two questions that should be kept apart; namely, the means of salvation open to actual sinners of the human race, and those open to possible or probable sinners who may be taken into the conditions of another world before the attainment of actual sin. The Bible is written specially for the former. About the latter little is said, and so there is little direct revelation by which to limit our speculation concerning their fate. It is lawful, therefore, concerning the fate of those who die in infancy, to draw inferences from the known merciful character of God. We may therefore leave the question of the salvation of infants out of our discussion for the present.

But we cannot consent to the position that the adult heathen stand substantially on the same plane with infants and have no real probation in this life, for even, according to Professor Briggs, "They have had sufficient of the light of nature to condemn them as sinners." The whole paragraph following is worthy of quotation to show just the position taken. "If this life is a probation upon which our everlasting future depends, then in order to have a fair trial and an equitable judgment, it is necessary that all should have a true and a complete probation. The lesser stages of probation must lead up to the higher stages, until every opportunity has been rejected and the only unpardonable sin has been committed. The doctrine that this life is a probation, leads inevitably to the position that the middle state is a still larger field for probation, for the vast majority of our race who have had no probation here; in which we must conceive of a preaching of the gospel, regeneration, faith, justification, and the entire order of salvation begun and carried on. Those who take the contra-confessional position that this life is a probation, have no ground of resistance to the doctrine of the continuance of that pro-

bation in the middle state, until all have had the opportunity either of accepting Christ as their Saviour or of committing the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit. They cannot hold probation here without following the Andover theory and holding probation there. Christian ethics will inevitably compel every probationist to become an out and out probationist for this world and for the next" (p. 220).

We should note at this point that much confusion has been brought into the discussion of this question by an equivocal sense sometimes given to the word "probation," especially by the Andover men. "Probation" may be made to refer to the testing of an innocent person to see if he will withstand temptation and refuse to sin. In this sense the race was practically tried in Adam. In view of the result in Eden we may regard the race as in a lost condition, for it is certain beforehand that on coming to years of accountability amid the conditions of this world, every human being will succumb to temptation, i. e., will sin. But "probation" is ordinarily used with reference to man's trial under the system of grace. God offers grace to every man, and tries him to see if he will yield to the persuasions of mercy. He does not cut the barren fig-tree down at once, but digs about it and enriches it to see if it will not under such treatment bear fruit. It is this gracious probation which is generally meant by the word. The question is, How shall we determine the limitations of man's day of grace?

Now, whatever may be the position of the Westminster Confession upon the point, and however incapable the human reason may be of solving the problem, we do

a fair trial and an equitable judgment, it is necessary that all should have a true and complete probation," it is far from being demonstrated as true that "the lesser stages of probation must lead up to the higher stages, until every opportunity has been rejected and the only unpardonable sin has been committed." It is not true that those who take the position that "this life is a probation, have no ground of resistance to the doctrine of the continuance of that probation in the middle state, until all have the opportunity either of accepting Christ as their Saviour or of committing the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit." These assumptions of Dr. Briggs are neither first truths of the reason nor necessary inferences drawn from premises which are self evident. It is not true that a sinner has a right to demand an extension of his day of grace until he shall have had opportunities to attain the stature of a Judas in sin. That Scripture is not to be controverted which gives the Lord the right to do what he will with his own. And the distribution of the gifts of grace is certainly his own prerogative. These positions are, we believe, not only contrary to Scripture and devoid of well-grounded reason, but are extremely hazardous to souls. To build up in the minds of men a false belief upon such a point as this is no slight responsibility.

Again, in the same connection, Dr. Briggs asks, "If the divine grace may be applied to the millions of infants dying in infancy, why not also to the adult heathen?" (P. 221.) We answer, because the adult heathen have committed sin, and the infants have not. The one class has attained to moral accountability, and the other has not. But this

reasonable. They that have sinned without the law shall be judged without the law. They that have sinned in comparative ignorance shall be beaten with few stripes. "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. viii. 12). It is a misleading view of sin to which Dr. Briggs gives countenance when, as on page 109, he represents some sins of man as small. "It is not so easy," he says, "as it used to be to think that for any act of sin, however small its importance, relatively speaking, the sinner must suffer in hell fire forever, unless redeemed by the grace of God." But it is not necessary to suppose, as this sentence would seem to imply, that the punishments of the future world are all equal in degree. Furthermore how great the guilt of sin may be in one's view depends upon his conception of the native powers of man. If, like Dr. Briggs above, one conceives of the condition of adult heathen before the law to be altogether like that of infants who have had no ability and no opportunity to act, we admit that he will not find it easy to believe in their eternal punishment for the deeds committed in the body, especially if he make no provision in his thought for grades of punishment.

The heathen are not represented in the Bible as so ignorant and devoid of light as the doctrine of Dr. Briggs asserts and implies. But while not having the positive law revealed in the Bible, they are represented as being a law unto themselves. It is declared by the apostle Paul, that "the invisible things of him [God] since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse" (Rom. i. 20). And after the fearful enumeration of the sins of heathendom, it is asserted that they "knowing the ordinance of God, that they which practised such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them" (ver. 32). The light of nature is not de-

preciated by the sacred writers, however much they may emphasize and extol the brightness of revelation's clearer rays. We are not of course to suppose that the light of nature gives the heathen power to do impossible things; such as, for example, to believe distinctly on him of whom they have never heard and of whose existence they have had no definite evidence, and we need not be apprehensive that this will be required of them. According to the teachings of Scripture, man is required to be faithful only according to the talents given him. If he is faithful over a few things, he will be eventually ruler over many. Thus it will appear that the essential thing on man's part in determining his salvation is the willing mind. If he have that, all the rest will in due time follow.

It is in line with these positions of Dr. Briggs that he should reject the idea of a private judgment upon men at death. This follows partly, we surmise, from his self-contradictory and confused views of sanctification,—an attainment which in one place he holds cannot be fully reached until the day of general judgment. But we may be permitted, on Dr. Briggs's view of the process (as given in one connection), to doubt if it is completed even then. For example, on page 147 we read: "Immediate sanctification at death is an error added on to the orthodox doctrine of sanctification that makes it inconsistent and virtually destroys it. . . . The progress of sanctification goes on after death in the middle state, until it is perfected there, and man is prepared by the processes of grace for the final judgment." Yet on the following page we find him saying, "The time is coming, as we believe, when the church and individual Christians may be able to attain that ideal holiness in this life. Entire sanctification is commanded and held up as the ideal of Christianity; and we must recognize that it is a possibility under divine grace; and that possibility will ultimately be attained."

There is certainly confusion here somewhere. If sanctification ought to be, and may be, attained in this life, is

there anything in the nature of the case to hinder its being completed in all believers when they are called into the scenes of the future world? Surely our limited vision cannot penetrate the veil which hangs between us and the future so as to lay down in such a matter rules for the divine activity there. It is certainly going far beyond the legitimate province of man's unaided reason to say, as Dr. Briggs does, that "If our eternal weal or woe is to be determined by a private judgment at death the ultimate public judgment is reduced to a mere ceremony, confirming in public the judgment that had been privately given to the sinner centuries and possibly millenniums before" (p. 198). On this view of the case one might well doubt the propriety of any general judgment at all.

But we had supposed that there might be deeper reasons for that solemn event than those connected with the determination of the character of men after the manner of a competitive examination. From a variety of considerations we had been led to suppose that the general judgment is needed chiefly for governmental reasons. The solemn and imposing scenes of that day are for the *instruction* of the universe and not for the *information* of the individuals judged or of the Creator.

It is more and more evident that the views here advocated by Dr. Briggs concerning the continuance of the offers of grace after death are logically connected with the views regarding the other two doctrinal points which we have had under notice. The doctrine of continued probation is a corollary of Dr. Briggs's erroneous view concerning the natural inability of the human will. This so minimizes the sin which is committed merely under the light of nature, that the sins of the heathen world can be called small offences, and God can be represented as a tyrant if he does not indefinitely extend the offers of grace until equal advantages have been enjoyed by all. To maintain these positions as a part of the doctrinal system of revelation, it is necessary to tone down the interpreta-

tion of a prominent and important class of Scripture texts, and in general to remove from Christianity many of the characteristics which mark it as a system of grace and an historical religion. The Scriptures seem to teach that the main revelations of the divine will have been limited to a few epochs in human history, and that large responsibility for the spread of these truths and the propagation of the principles of the gospel is from generation to generation laid upon those who enjoy the ordinary means of grace. That is, the propagation of the Christian religion is by a truly historical process in which the natural means are pressed to the utmost in conjunction with an orderly system of supernatural co-operation and aid. Thus the Bible, as an objective fact of revelation, has attained in Protestant countries its supreme importance, and has been at once the inspiration and regulator of all Christian activity. In the formation of true Christian faith, the Bible is supreme, not secondary. It is a serious mistake to confound the ordinary operations of the Spirit with those of a specific character which were bestowed upon the men chosen to be the immediate recipients of the great revelation.

Nor can we close without a single word concerning the important bearing of the doctrine of continued probation upon the activities of the church. If the doctrine is true, of course it should be accepted. But its influence is likely to be so serious, that, if it is a false doctrine, one incurs grave responsibility who either advocates it, or from indifference allows it to pass unchallenged. It is not, indeed, the same as the papal doctrine of purgatory, though some of the ill-guarded statements of Professor Briggs would seem to show that in his own mind there is a close affinity between the two; since he rejects the idea of a fixity in man's destiny after death and before the general judgment on the ground that "it would assign the rewards and penalties centuries before they were earned" (p. 198), thus removing the rewards of the judg-

ment day from the realm of grace to that of works. This, also, his doctrine of sanctification would seem to do. Without, however, pressing this point of similarity, we cannot refrain from emphasizing the fact that Protestants have purchased their freedom from bondage to the papal doctrine of purgatory and of prayers for the dead at a great price, and it would be a sad mistake to surrender this vantage-ground without long and serious consideration. Just as surely as effect follows cause will this burdensome yoke of Catholicism fall upon the necks of Protestant churches if they accept the views advocated by Dr. Briggs concerning the middle state, unless in connection with them there is a general abandoning of their doctrine of prayer. So long as any body of people continue to believe that God hears and answers prayer for legitimate objects, and that the advantage of prayer is more than that arising from the subjective influence on him who offers it, they will continue to pray for the dead, if the dead are supposed to be still on probationary ground. In view of the history of the subject in the papal church it is needless to dwell upon the corruptions which go hand in hand with this unscriptural and most pernicious doctrine. The urgency of the Bible is all for the living. By so much as believers shall be burdened with the care for the souls of the dead, will they be hindered from bestowing effort upon those within their reach.