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ARTICLE X.

ALVAH HOVEY, D.D., LL.D.

BY PROFESSOR JOHN M. ENGLISH.

DR. HOVEY was born in Greene, Chenango County, New York, March 5, 1820. In the same year his parents removed to Thetford, Vermont, where he attended the public schools until he was fifteen years of age. He was a student in Thetford Academy parts of two years, and then went to the Academy in Brandon, Vermont, where he prepared for college. He entered Dartmouth College in 1839. At the close of his sophomore year he became the principal of the Academy at Derby, Vermont, which position he occupied two years. Upon returning to college, he joined the Senior class, making up the studies of the Junior year, and was graduated in 1844. After graduation from college he was the principal of the Academy in New London, New Hampshire, a little more than a year. He entered the Newton Theological Institution in 1845, and was graduated in 1848. Here he studied under Henry J. Ripley, Barnas Sears, and Horatio B. Hackett. He was acting pastor of the Baptist Church in New Gloucester, Maine, one year (1848-49). In 1849 he returned to the Seminary at Newton as a teacher, where he has remained ever since. He was ordained to the Christian ministry in the Baldwin Place Baptist Church, Boston, January 13, 1850.

Dr. Hovey has taught in nearly every department in the Institution. From 1849 to 1854 he was assistant instructor in Hebrew, and Librarian. He was acting professor of Biblical Literature and Interpretation, 1851-52, also 1858-59. He was professor of Church History two years (1853-55). He began teaching Theology in 1854, but his professorship in that department dates from 1855. Since 1870 his professorship has been that of Theology and Christian Ethics. He was acting professor of Biblical Interpretation, New Testament, 1892-94. He was elected President of the Institution in 1868, and held the office until his resignation in 1898,—a period of thirty years. Since that time he has been Acting President, and continues in his professorship of Theology.

Dr. Hovey was married September 24, 1852, to Miss Augusta Maria, daughter of Mr. Marshall Spring and Mary (Livermore) Rice. Five children have been born to them, four of whom are still living.

He received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Brown University in 1856, and that of Doctor of Laws from Richmond College and Denison University in 1876.

In 1861-62, he was in Europe, studying in the universities of Berlin, Göttingen, and Heidelberg. In 1897 he visited Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Constantinople, Athens, England, and Scotland.

Dr. Hovey has held numerous positions outside of the Seminary. For many years he has been a Fellow of the Corporation of Brown University, being next in seniority to Dr. Edwards A. Park. He served as a member of the Executive Committee of the American Baptist Missionary Union for fifteen years, eleven of which he was Chairman. He has been President of the Northern Baptist Education Society, and is now one of its directors. He is a Trustee of Wellesley College, Worcester Academy, and the New England Conservatory of Music.

Dr. Hovey is a prolific writer, the following constituting his chief works, which are named in chronological order: "A Memoir of Rev. Isaac Backus, A.M." "The State of the Impenitent Dead." "The Miracles of Christ Attested by the Evangelists." "The Scriptural Law of Divorce." "God with Us." "Religion and the State." "The Doctrine of the Higher Christian Life Compared with the Scriptures." "A Manual of Christian Theology and Ethics." "A Commentary on the Gospel of John," and "A Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians," being two of the volumes of "An American Commentary on the Old and New Testaments," of which he is the Editor. Together with Drs. John A. Broadus and Henry G. Weston, he edited the improved edition of the "Revised New Testament of the American Bible Union." "Biblical Eschatology." "Studies in Ethics and Religion." "Christian Teaching and Life." He has been a large contributor to the religious press and periodicals both of his own and of other denominations.

With the exception of a single year in the pastorate, Dr. Hovey's entire public life has been given to the cause of sacred learning in the Newton Theological Institution, his connection with it covering two-thirds of its history. A half-century of teaching, though distributed among different institutions of learning, is a remarkable record. A period of fifty consecutive years of instruction in the same school is wholly exceptional. Forty-five years of Dr. Hovey's half-century at Newton have been devoted to the teaching of theology. During this long period of service he has had associated with him in the Faculty many of the most distinguished educators of the Baptist denomination, among whom have been Horatio B. Hackett, who, for twenty-nine years, was professor of Biblical Literature and Interpretation; George D. B. Pepper, President of Colby University; Ezekiel G. Robinson and E. Benjamin Andrews, each of whom has been President of Brown University; and Samuel L. Caldwell, a former President of Vassar College.

Dr. Hovey's equipment as a teacher of theology is varied and ample. Fundamental among his qualifications is his love of truth,—all truth wherever found, but especially the truth contained in the Sacred Scriptures. And it is his supreme aim and end in teaching to infuse a love of

truth into the minds of his pupils. His chief question concerning any theological opinion is not, whether it is considered orthodox or heterodox, whether it is held by many or by few, but whether it is true. It is this loyalty to truth that has given him his strong and unbroken hold upon the nearly two generations of students who have sat in his classroom.

Vitality akin to his love of truth is his judicial mind. He is a remarkable weigher of evidence. He is able to take into the account the varied elements of a theological problem,—the harmonizing and the opposing, the more and the less important, and to hold them all in fine, firm balance until his mind is made up, and he has clearly reached and strongly grasped his conclusions. And it is always certain that his mind will not, cannot, be made up until all the evidence is in, and he has thoroughly sifted and carefully arranged it.

Accompanying this judicial temper of mind, perhaps a part of it, is his utter fairness in dealing with the opinions of others on theological topics. It has been often said of him that he is fairer to an opponent than he is to himself; that, if possible, he weakens his own position by the extreme candor of his clear, strong expounding of views with which he cannot agree. In the long run, however, this, of course, gives his instruction great weight in the esteem of his students in their search after truth. No pupil of Dr. Hovey can ever truthfully say that he was led astray by his teacher through any falsifying or minimizing of the position of another, by any specious magnifying of a supposed error, or by any fascinating glamour cast over his own convictions. By his calm, judicial process he strips an idea bare, as it were, and exposes it to view in its sheer nakedness, and bids his pupils look at it, and decide for themselves concerning it. He is always a judge, never an advocate.

Dr. Hovey is a genuine student, a minute, wide, accurate scholar. He loves learning for its own sake. Like the typical German professor, he is an unwearied, painstaking plodder. He has a scholar's command of Hebrew, of classic and New Testament Greek, of Latin, German, and French, and he continually uses these languages as tools in his theological studies. He is to-day a good church historian, and a skillful New Testament exegete. He possesses a wide and profound knowledge of the theological literature, and is as fresh and eager in the study of theology as ever before in his long career as a teacher. His linguistic outfit, together with his studious habit, qualifies him to be, as he is, an investigator. He goes straight to the sources of theological thought and scholarship, taking nothing at second-hand. He is not satisfied either in his own mind, or in his teaching, until he has carefully studied an author in the language in which he thought and wrote. And he has clear, deep insight into the central contents of a theological work.

Joined to his ability as an independent student in the realm of theology is his mastery of a clear, simple, exact style with which to expound

theological truth. In his expression he is at the furthest possible remove from the involved, and hence often vague, style of the characteristic German theological writers. As can be readily seen, this command of an adequate expression, coupled as it is with the judicial quality of his mind, with his candor, and with his scholarship, constitute a superior equipment in the field of theology.

Dr. Hovey's theology is not speculative, metaphysical, dogmatic in the technical sense in which those terms are usually applied to theological method. He is slow even to call his scheme of doctrine systematic, preferring the word Christian. The ratiocinative process, so far as it has legitimate function touching spiritual things, is employed by him in establishing the reasonableness of the truths of theology. His theological system grows out of the threefold revelation of God in nature, in man, and in Scripture. It is based, however, chiefly and ultimately upon the careful exegesis of the Bible. If the two words can be legitimately joined, he is, par excellence, an exegetical theologian. The ruling, the final question with him is, What is the body of doctrine contained in the Word of God? Whatever is opposed to Scripture teaching, as he is able to discover it, is rejected as authoritative content in his theology. Since Dr. Hovey's theology is emphatically biblical, Christian, its core is what are known as the doctrines of grace,—the holiness and the love of God: Jesus Christ, Redeemer, Saviour, and Lord: the Holy Spirit, the renewer and sanctifier of human nature; man natively sinful and lost, yet salvable through the gracious agency of Christian truth and the Holy Spirit on the divine side of the transaction, and an answering faith, and love, and obedience on the human side. While holding firmly to what is commonly regarded as the evangelical substance of Christianity, he has an open mind, and is swift to welcome light from any source, and he is constantly at work upon the phraseology of his theological system in the endeavor to remove terms unduly technical, and to introduce those that most simply and adequately express theological truth to our own time. As witness of this he has, within the past two or three years, thoroughly revised and rewritten his *Manual of Theology*, thus making it practically a new work.

Back of the theologian is the man. It is Dr. Hovey's character which, after all, has been the great source of his wide and deep influence in the Institution that he has so long and so faithfully served, in the denomination to which he belongs, and among Christians of every name, and of every shade of theological opinion. He is a humble and devout believer in Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour and Lord. He has, during all these years, lived a pure and beautiful life before his fellow-men. He has thus unconsciously called forth the profound confidence, respect, and affection of all who have known him. Through his catholic mind, his large practical wisdom, his conciliatory spirit, and his clear, apt expression of his judgments, he has rendered valuable service on the boards of

trustees of institutions of learning, on committees in missionary organizations of his denomination, and on their anniversary occasions. When tangled questions of administration and of delicate and far-reaching missionary policy have been pressing for solution, concerning which questions there have been marked differences of opinion, and possibly strong feeling, he has made things plain, and has presented a course of procedure that has commended itself to the judgment of all concerned. The Baptist denomination has in it no more influential man than Dr. Hovey, and no one more highly esteemed or more truly loved.

The fiftieth anniversary of his connection with the Newton Theological Institution, as a teacher, was fittingly observed June 6th and 7th. Distinguished representatives of colleges, universities, theological seminaries, and of the pastorate united in paying him honor as a man, and in gratefully recognizing the varied phases of his services both within and without the Seminary. Few men are privileged to serve their generation in a career so long and so notable, and none could receive a wider, more sincere, and more hearty tribute of esteem and affection than that paid to Dr. Hovey at the close of a half-century of teaching.