

THE
ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

THE BAIRD LECTURE 1891

THE ASCENSION
AND
HEAVENLY PRIESTHOOD
OF
OUR LORD

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TO

MY SISTER

JEANIE H. PATTERSON

PREFACE

THE following Lectures are intended to be a sequel to those on the Resurrection of our Lord published by the same writer a few years ago. He need not hesitate to say that he has felt his present subject to be as difficult as it is important; and he can only therefore hope that, though he has endeavoured to express himself as clearly as possible, there will be found in his language no trace of dogmatism. Such a spirit would be peculiarly unsuitable to the treatment of the Theme with which he deals,—the Ascension of the Redeemer and His heavenly Priesthood. In those parts of the volume, more especially, which have occasioned the author most anxiety, when he has to speak of the Offering of our Lord, of the Gift of the Spirit, and of the essentially superearthly or heavenly nature of the whole Christian dispensation, his aim has rather been to stimulate inquiry, and to encourage students of theology to prosecute the subject. Good which he has himself been unable to effect may thus be done by others. Few will deny that fresh

investigation into the fundamental truths of the Christian system, to be in all probability followed by a restatement of many of them, is needed in our day.

At the time when the volume on the Resurrection of our Lord appeared, the writer had no thought of again turning to a subject so much akin to it as that with which the following Lectures are occupied. He has accordingly found it difficult to avoid a repetition of some things that had been previously said. Should it be thought that he has been only partially successful in this, he can assure his readers that the failure has not resulted from want of effort to effect his end. It will be seen, too, as in the discussion regarding the Offering of our Lord in heaven, that, even when a view taken in his former work recurs, it is stated in a different relation and for a different purpose. In these circumstances he ventures to hope that there may be little ground for complaint upon this point. Of what he had written in occasional papers in Theological Journals he has felt entitled to make freer use. Such papers are for the most part unconnected with each other, and are often forgotten as soon as read. He regrets that the fear of unduly increasing the size of the volume has made it necessary to suppress, at least in the meantime, many Notes which he should have wished to add to the Lectures.

In conclusion, the author acknowledges the kindness

of the Rev. James Cooper, East Church, Aberdeen, in supplying him with several valuable hints for the Lectures. He desires also to take this opportunity of recording his gratitude to his old and venerated friend, now gone to his rest, the Rev. Dr. Alexander Anderson of the Gymnasium, Old Aberdeen, a conversation with whom first led him into one of the most important lines of inquiry connected with the Offering of Christ, and whose warm-hearted encouragement, while he pursued the subject, he will never be able to forget.

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