

ADDRESSES

AT THE INAUGURATION OF

REV. A. A. HODGE,

AS PROFESSOR OF

DIDACTIC, POLEMIC & HISTORICAL THEOLOGY.

IN THE

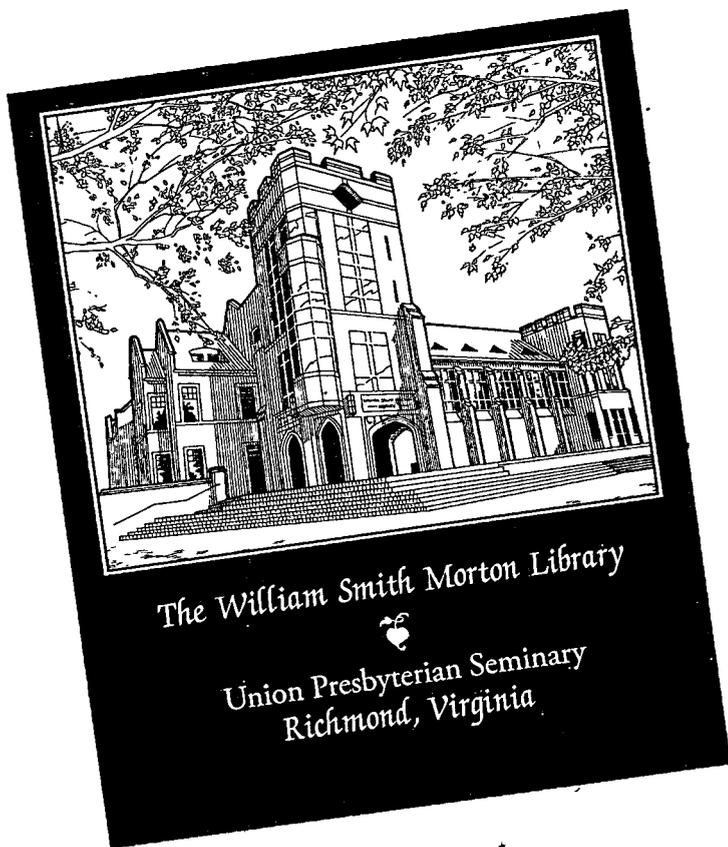
Western Theological Seminary.

—♦—
PUBLISHED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.
—♦—

PITTSBURGH:

PRINTED BY JAMES McMILLIN, BOOK AND JOB PRINTER, 147 WOOD STREET.

1864



ADDRESSES

AT THE INAUGURATION OF

REV. ARCHIBALD A. HODGE, D. D.

AS

Professor of Didactic, Polemic and Historical Theology

IN THE

Western Theological Seminary;

COMPRISING

THE CHARGE TO THE PROFESSOR,

BY REV. JAMES M. PLATT;

AND

THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS,

BY REV. ARCHIBALD A. HODGE, D. D.

PITTSBURGH:

PRINTED BY JAMES McMILLIN, JOB PRINTER, 147 WOOD STREET.

1864.

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

THE Inauguration of the REV. ARCHIBALD A. HODGE, D. D., into the Chair of "Didactic, Polemic and Historical Theology," in the Western Theological Seminary, took place in the First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, on Wednesday evening, November 2d, 1864. Rev. C. C. BEATTY, D. D., Vice President of the Board of Directors, presided on the occasion, and put the constitutional questions to the Professor elect. The services were opened with prayer by the Rev. SAMUEL WILSON, D. D. After the induction of Prof. HODGE, the following Charge was delivered, in behalf of the Directors, by the Rev. JAMES M. PLATT.

CHARGE.

My Dear Brother:

You are now fully entered upon that work to which we trust the Master himself has called you, through the instrumentality of his church. The General Assembly, reposing great confidence in your character and attainments, have entrusted to you, in part, the education of the young men who are here preparing for the Gospel Ministry. They have committed to your oversight a department of instruction which has, in time past, been regarded as of the very highest rank, and which still holds its place as having no superior. The work of independent Biblical interpretation, is undeniably the first duty of the living preacher, who receives and holds fast the Scriptures as the lively oracles of the grace of God. But it appertains to your department to show the grounds on which one may entertain a reasonable faith in those Scriptures as the words of God. It belongs to you to conduct the minds of your pupils through the very foundation principles of all intellectual and rational belief, so that having brought them to see that reason itself requires them to accept of Revelation as their guide to a true acquaintance and fellowship with God, they may then go on to perfect themselves in the knowledge of Divine mysteries, with the convictions of an enlightened *understanding*, all clear and fixed, and in perfect harmony with those of a heaven-descended *Faith*.

The work of a professor of Intellectual Science, according to Sir Wm. Hamilton, is, "not to teach men philosophy, but to teach them to philosophize." The work, however, of a professor of Theology, lies even beyond this. For it fairly includes the whole province of philosophy, without resting upon mere induction for the attainment of the highest Truth, and it shows the well-trained mind how to advance by a clearer light than that of Reason, into those realms of higher knowledge, where the Lord God himself giveth the light by the testimony of his own Spirit to his own inspired Word. In undertaking this work, therefore, you are not without a safe and a sufficient guide. You have the Revealed Word itself, which is at one and the same time the field for your intellectual toil, and the instrument by which you are to accomplish every task. And so far as your choice may lie between the teachings of Science and those of Revelation, you can have no more appropriate motto than that which the great poet of our own times has furnished you :

"Hold thou the Truth, define it well,
For fear Divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark, and be
Procureess to the Lord of Hell."

I do not propose, in this address, to speak of your work as a Theologian, but as a teacher of Theology, under whose influence the character of our rising ministry is to receive much of its thorough fitness for the great work of Christ in the world. In entrusting our young men to your care, for such an important part of their intellectual and spiritual culture, we are committing to you, on behalf of

the whole church, a very precious charge. And it is because the act itself is one of such a solemn nature, involving such vast and sacred interests with respect to the future prosperity and purity of the Church of Christ, that we make use of such an occasion as this, to convey to you some faint conception of what, in our estimation, this work demands.

The task assigned to you is, in its main outlines, the same as was committed to Calvin and Turretin, and Chalmers, and our own beloved Archibald Alexander, and which has for many years been devolved by that eminent fitness which is the noblest right of succession, upon your own honored father. We expect you to avail yourself largely of their devout studies, and to set forth the same system of Christian doctrine which they have taught and defended with such masterly ability. We would have you, however, to call no man your master, in such a sense as to hinder you from those independent investigations of the Scriptures, and of all correlated truth, which are essential to the highest development of your own peculiar gifts. We trust that in unfolding to your students the great mystery of redemption, you will never lose sight of, or seek to remove, those ancient landmarks of the Westminster Confession, to which to-night you have so solemnly signified your cordial adherence. But, at the same time, we would have you to keep constantly in view the practical work of the ministry; at this present time the great currents of popular thought to which it must, in some measure, adapt itself, in order to gain a hearing; and the forms of error by which it is most liable to be opposed or hindered. Let me ask you, then, to consider, in a few particulars, some of those

practical tendencies of the times themselves, in view of which the work of theological instruction is to be pursued.

1. There is one feature of our times, that meets us everywhere, under every variety of form, and that no one fails to recognize. It is seen in the flag that is unfurled over every recruiting station. It is felt in the intense anxiety that stretches out its eager gaze toward every battlefield. It is heard in the tramp of armed men, in the shouts of victory, the groans of the wounded, and the wails of them that are suddenly bereaved. In observing the *moral effects* of such a war, however, we discern its dreadful influence in the shocking increase of irreverence and profanity, and covetousness and licentiousness, and a fearful recklessness of human life; and when we add to this the low passions that it nourishes among the unthinking multitude in the discussion of political questions, the unchristian intolerance which it fosters among members of the same christian households and churches, the gross conceit that follows every victory; and the unmanly trepidation that comes with every reverse; all these developments of character serve to reveal us unto ourselves, and to show how vast is the work that yet remains for the Church of Christ to undertake, through its ministry, in moulding and directing, and elevating the moral sentiments of such a people, to the attainment of the noblest Christian manhood.

When we observe, however, the effect of such a disturbing element upon the *political* world, we discover at once how thought is quickened as new issues are evolved. And as one event after another is rapidly unrolled in the book of Providence, and the great contest narrows itself down to

a single point, with respect to the freedom of an oppressed, degraded race, it becomes evident that the political strifes of such a period must partake of a profound moral, and even religious significance; and the more furiously the battle rages, where such elements are involved in the struggle, the more we are assured that it shall all work out for us a brighter destiny as a Christian nation. The ministry, therefore, that does not, in some manner, put itself in active sympathy with such a mighty Providential movement, is almost sure to be jostled aside, whether justly or unjustly, as something that is only in the way of the advancement of righteousness.

2. The bearing which all this has upon the *religious life and culture* of the people, presents us with a second feature of our times, that demands the profoundest consideration. Already we see the first foreshadowings of it in the Christian labors that are undertaken in behalf of the national army. The dangerous tendency of such times must be that of drifting away from the true foundations of all Christian faith and obedience, and of adopting a system of humanitarian religion, and a Christless philanthropy. But the true antidote for such a tendency as this, is found in the greater activity of the church, in caring for both the temporal and spiritual wants of men, through one and the same instrumentality. And thus the principle is becoming established, that the more life there is in doing good, the more life there is in preaching the Gospel, and the more success there is in converting souls, and in glorifying Christ, as the sufferer's true friend. The currents of Christian life, therefore, in the midst of which we are, are showing us that, instead of betaking itself to more rigorous doctrinal tech-

nicalities, the church must submit the glorious doctrines of the Reformation to a new practical test, by showing how faith in these very truths can render her the foremost agent in overcoming all manner of evil, and in doing all manner of good. We must not refuse to learn something on the score of active benevolence, even from those who follow not with us. The cross of the Son of God must be made to represent not merely the removal of the deadening, damper effects of sin upon the unregenerate soul, but beyond this, and always *along with* this, it must be held forth as the only power on earth for the subduing of every evil lust, or for the removal of any curse that mars the character, or degrades the life of any living man. The love of Christ, therefore, must be regarded not simply as something to be praised at the communion table, but to be received into true manly and womanly hearts; and to be acted out, day by day, in the same spirit of holy self-renunciation as that which the blessed Saviour himself exemplified. Men must be brought thus to learn how they, instrumentally, are to become saviours of their fellow-men, whether from the lowest sin, or the most refined infidelity, all through the power of that faith by which feeble, puny man is enabled to work the works of God. It is just at this point, and in this way, that the church must undertake the great work of reforming all social evils, and dispense with all such worldly half-way measures as constitute the forlorn hope of mere humanitarian enterprises.

3. A third aspect of the present age, demanding the notice of a theological teacher, is that presented in the character of the prevalent *controversies*. It gives a new aspect both to Didactic and Polemic Theology, not only to

find error appropriating to itself the Christian name, but to discover also to what an extent it is propagated from within the church itself, and in the very *forms* even of an inspired phraseology.

It is worth observing also, how every successive point developed in the progress of science; gives occasion for some new attack against the bulwarks of the Christian system. Not only is the authoritative character of the inspired word assailed, and its historical veracity impugned, but the ultimate principles of Christian philosophy are subjected to the chemical test of purest intuition, so that men are battling over the inquiry "Can God be known?" or disputing whether truth is constant, or variable; whether it is always the same, or differing, as viewed by different minds; and in different circumstances. It is amazing, too, to see with what rapidity the subtlest forms of philosophical error are percolated through the periodical literature of the day, so as to find ready converts everywhere. The sturdy mechanic will rest upon his work-bench, and dispute with the educated minister, with such intelligence and adroitness, as to make him wish he had brought his library, and perhaps his professor, along with him.

We observe, further, that the historical classification of the doctrines that have come up in turn to receive some definite formula of statement, proves to be still incomplete. A new topic seems to have been developed out of the discussions of the past few years, which at present takes precedence of all the rest. Shall I venture to call it Bibliology? The question it presents is simply this, What are we to believe as to a God-given Book? On what rational grounds are we authorized to receive that

which claims to be a supernatural revelation? If it be simply a book written by *inspired men*, then, according to what criterion, are we to discriminate between the human and the divine elements of which it is composed? Moreover, if this book is infallibly free from error in all its parts, on what *principle* are its alleged discrepancies with the facts or inductions of science, to be accounted for? To say that its statements referring to matters of natural science are phenomenal, based upon appearances merely, will answer only one particular class of objections, and leaves those of a different character entirely untouched, or at least unanswered. What theory or principle, or dogma, therefore, are we finally to adopt, that will solve, or at least avoid, all these difficulties, so as to retain the simple doctrine of inspiration with perfect accuracy and fullness? These are but specimens of the inquiries which have already been set on-foot within the pale of the Christian church; and although a devout mind will overleap them all at once, they are now so associated with the progress of human thought as to demand a thorough, candid investigation, one that shall reach some clear and well-defined result, though it should amount to nothing more than a confession of our natural incompetency to grasp the very point of profoundest speculation which it involves. If true philosophy can be shown to sustain us even in this conclusion, the controversy will not have been wholly in vain.

The *spirit* in which religious controversy is to be waged, is a topic to which the present attitude of Christianity demands some attention. To advocate any doctrine, merely because it forms part of an ecclesiastical creed, produces no other effect than to lower it in the estimation of educated

men, and to make it a mere object of popular derision. The non-sectarianism of the age has a powerful tendency to *nothingism*. Nevertheless, there is a growing popular demand for living truth—truth that comes home to the felt necessity of the hour—and it is a demand which Christianity is fully able to satisfy. As the first of all requisites, however, the Christian apologist of such an age must have a devout and earnest faith. He must “*believe, and, therefore, speak.*” Like the prophet of old, the word of the Lord must be as a burning fire shut up within his bones, so that he can no longer forbear to speak it forth. Men seem ready, now-a-days, to believe in almost any doctrine, so long as it comes to them clothed in the garb of strong individuality, and a sincere, headlong conviction of its truth. The advocate of Christianity, therefore, must learn to cease from mere wrangling disputations, and must arm himself with the tongue of fire, so that in controversy itself he shall be accomplishing the true aggressive work of the gospel.

An able jurist of Ohio, who was once a pupil of the late Dr. Spencer, remarked to me that the secret of Dr. Spencer's power as a disputant, consisted in his *never allowing his opponent to assume the offensive*. The truth of Christianity, with him, must always be the assailant, and then every error must take care of itself. It is just, such strong, manly disputation as this that the church needs at a time when error is assuming for itself such an intellectual superiority, and affecting to be gifted with a higher spiritual insight than the disciples of ancient, threadbare dogmas. We have had enough of controversy of a partisan character, the small guerilla fights, and border skirmishes, that are but poor displays of skill or bravery, and which result

in nothing but the embittering of an enemy's hatred. Let us have, henceforth, a more honorable warfare in the theological arena, one that shall ensure some commendable trophy for Christ from every fresh encounter, and that shall be always bearing down directly towards the enemy's strongest citadel, with a power that shall prove irresistible and decisive, so as to hasten the Redeemer's final, universal triumph.

And now, my dear brother, if I have succeeded in so much as intimating, in a general manner, the attitude to be assumed by a teacher of Theology, with reference to such a time as this, suffer me to call your attention to a few of the more *specific duties* pertaining to your high position, as Professor in this Seminary. As the organ of this Board of Directors, it falls upon me to point out some of those germs of ministerial character and excellence, which seem, to our devoutest anticipations, to be awaiting your own apt and generous culture for their future development.

1. First of all, we look to this institution for the perpetuation of a *godly* ministry. In times when it is so easy for young men to be carried along with the mighty currents of popular thought, to the neglect of any high, expanded views of the Divine character and government, we look for a generation of preachers who shall acquaint themselves thoroughly with God, and who shall look upon contemporary events as but "parts of his ways," while they make his statutes their delight, and regard the furtherance of His counsel as the noblest service in which mortal man can be engaged. We would remind you then that true godliness does not consist in the performance of the mere external duties of morality and religion, and no perfunctory services

can by any means supply the want of it. It belongs to the *spirit* of a man; and it consists in living unto God, in all things, having no private or partisan end to serve, being always and altogether on the side of God. For this reason, then, we desire to train up a race of ministers who shall be everywhere recognized as *men of God*; men who are acquainted with God, men who think the very thoughts of God, men who inquire concerning the will of God, and who set themselves diligently and faithfully to *do* his will, considering, first of all, what service He is demanding of them. We would have our young men taught to live near to God; with "a holy habit of hastening with every thing to Him," and with a consciousness of His presence being with them, of his love overshadowing them, and of His power working in them, and through them, upon the world. We charge you, therefore, neglect not in all your intercourse with them, to endeavor after this consummation so devoutly wished.

2. Again, we would remind you that we desire to see the young men coming from this Seminary possessed of *all manly traits and sympathies*.

The objection has often been raised against Theological seminaries, that they withdraw young men too much from the living world, and train them to the habits of the cloister, teaching them to attach more importance to the exact form of a syllogism, than to any practical method of dealing with the souls of men. Still another objection—one of a wholesale character—is urged against an *evangelical ministry*, that it is adapted only to afford soothing, sympathizing counsel to pious women, but that it is not of a robust, masculine character; fitting it to gain influence among men.

In an ordination discourse of Theodore Parker, there is such a sneering sentence as this: "I know some men think the minister must be a little, mean man, with a little mind and a little conscience, and a little heart, and a little small soul, with a little effeminate culture, got by drivelling over the words of some of humanity's noblest men; who never shows himself on the highway of letters, morals, science, business, politics, where Thought, well girt for toil, marches forth, to more than kingly victory;" and so on, in language more and more insulting to the Christian congregations of the whole land, to say nothing of the libel it utters against the ministry. Such denunciations as these, however, are to be met and overthrown, not by any counter statement, but by ministers *showing themselves men*. We have no desire, indeed, that they should be recognized as eminent in the world of science, or letters, or politics. On the contrary, we would have them entirely and constantly absorbed in their one vocation, as the ministers of the Lord Jesus. But, at the same time, the more fully they discharge their just responsibilities to society, as *men*, the more honor and influence will they gain for their sacred calling. We are seeking here to train up a generation of ministers suited to a race of rugged, enterprising men, whose minds are well endowed with plain, honest sense, and whose hearts are easily touched by a word of genuine manly cheer and sympathy. And we would have you consider that you are training men not to be theologians merely, but for an earnest grappling with every evil passion, and disposition, and prejudice, that may be found among such a population; and to carry on this hand-to-hand contest, in such a spirit of Christian manliness, as

to insure the respect of both friend and foe. We would have them cultivate all their powers in accordance with the freest, noblest instincts of genuine manhood, not scorning any thing that belongs to man's true nature, nor disdaining to show kindness to any fellow creature who also is made in the image of God.

3. Again, we would have our young men trained to habits of *sound, robust thought*. We look for the ministry of the Presbyterian church to stand in the front rank of educated thinkers. The true position for them to occupy, is that of leaders among their people. In a very important sense they are to be a guide to the public conscience on all questions of popular interest. They are the authorized expounders of the constitution which the One Lawgiver has framed for the government of human society everywhere. In this respect, as well as in that of offering terms of reconciliation to a guilty world, they are ambassadors for Christ. Each of them, as Vinet has felicitously said, "is a plaintive king." It is in such an attitude of aggrieved royalty, that he undertakes to speak for his Lord Christ to his fellow-men; beseeching them, as though God did beseech them by him, and yet demanding, as for the King of kings, the subjection of their hearts to his law. It is essential, therefore, to the true dignity of such an office, that the Christian ambassador should speak only the words of truth and soberness. In the midst of popular rage and tumult he must endeavor to influence the conduct of men, and yet to influence them only by such principles and considerations as will bear the scrutiny of the Master's eye.

The conflicts of our own day are showing that we must have in our pulpits, at least, if no where else, men of

healthy, well furnished minds, faithful, God-fearing men—men who will not ask the permission of any political cabal to utter whatever sentiment may be according to God's word, and who will know, at the same time, how to use the influence and authority which God has entrusted to them, in that spirit of sound wisdom and discretion that bespeaks a well-trained intellect, no less than a heart loyal to all right principle. These are reasons which the times themselves suggest in behalf of the thorough education of the Christian ministry. To these we might add, that the very nature of the assaults now made against Christianity, and the divers educating tendencies which act upon the cultivated minds of every community, all are necessitating the constant exercise of the most commanding gifts. We charge you, therefore, to attend to this great duty. Take our young men, and train them here to read, to criticise, to discuss, with reference to every subject that claims their attention, and send them back to their Presbyteries with some wholesome, well digested views, which they can rightly call *their own*. Put them to their highest mettle in everything that calls for intellectual discipline. Educate them; draw them out; be to them (a *doux*) a leader in command, and make it your aim to develope and discipline their powers, so as to make them valorous cadets, qualified themselves to take command in the defence of the Gospel of Christ, and withal possessed of that spirit of diligence in study, that will be a sign of far greater promise than the most brilliant natural endowments.

4. A fourth anticipation that we cherish toward the young men of this Seminary, is that they should be *mighty in the Scriptures*. The crowning motive which leads us to

devote to their higher education so much of the best energies of the church, is that through their future labors the Word of God may have free course, and run, and be glorified. The great work to which they have consecrated themselves, is to testify the Gospel of the grace of God. The most powerful utterances they will ever make in behalf of Christ, will be the apt quotation of the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth. That testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of all prophecy, must be the burden of their entire labors. Whatever evils they encounter, they are to overcome them by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony in behalf of Him. They will have abundant occasion to learn that to reason with men, as it is commonly considered, is a mere scuffle of wits; but to "reason with them *out of the Scriptures*," with mind and heart intent upon the truth, this is the argument that brings conviction home, and persuades men to embrace and obey the Gospel. We would commend to you, Robert Haldane's method of meeting the perversions and cavils of the Socinian students at Geneva, by quietly pointing with his finger to some sturdy text that gave the true answer to their objection or inquiry, without admitting of any rejoinder. And after this same manner, every minister of the Gospel—and why not every Christian parent, and every Sabbath-School teacher?—should be so well acquainted with the inspired word, as to be *thoroughly furnished* unto all good works.

5. I have but one more topic to which I propose to call your attention. It is that, in discharging the duties of this high office, you suffer nothing to turn you away from the simplicity that is in Christ. The system of doctrine that

you teach must have Christ for its great radiating centre. Every part of it must be replete with Him. In His light your pupils are to see light. He must be the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of all your labors. The dying declaration of that beloved man of God, whose name you bear, is a beautiful instance of the Christian simplicity which characterized his life, and which we now commend unto you. "All my theology," said he, "is summed up in this one faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." The great *need* of redemption, which is found in the total depravity of Adam's race, and the great *fact* of a redemption, already provided through the precious blood of Christ, are the two great stumbling-stones of modern infidelity. And these must be maintained by us in true simplicity, and Godly sincerity, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

And here I am reminded that this position, to which you have been called, is not without its temptations. The very topic reminds me of the good Dr. Arnold, who was possessed of such true Christian simplicity, along with his large liberal views, and that noble, manly soul. And yet, with such a character, and surrounded by hundreds of pupils, who both admired and loved him, his grand idea of a church state, for which they cared but little, induced him to adopt such principles of Biblical interpretation, as to admit of being carried out into the broadest of Broad Church infidelity.

Again, I am reminded of one whose brilliant dialectical genius found but few compeers in the General Assembly of

our own church, of which Assembly, for ten successive years, he was an honored member. And he, also, occupying a high position as an educator of a rising ministry, and flattered by the high eulogiums of public men, became the bold advocate of a theory of church functions, whose legitimate effect would be that of a total divorce between religion and the State. It was a theory conceived in the interests of a monstrous national iniquity, and under the shadow of it the attempt was made to exalt that iniquity into the rank of a great social blessing. Its mischievous influence also has been felt in efforts to thrust out the Bible from common schools, and to do away with laws for the preservation of the Christian Sabbath; while it has interposed its authority in our ecclesiastical bodies, to restrain them from uttering any testimony in behalf of that righteousness which exalteth a nation. In politics, moreover, it left him free to adopt, and, notwithstanding his ministerial character, to maintain such views of social organization and government, as were at war with the common rights of men, and inconsistent with the very existence of free institutions. And now that he has ended his earthly labors, who is there wise enough to compute the measure of that one man's responsibility for the gigantic treason that struck its first blow under the very influence of his teachings, and with the promise on the part of himself and his co-presbyters, of "their prayers and benedictions?" Such beacon-lights as these, my brother, may well serve to warn a Professor of Theology against suffering himself, for any purpose, to be turned away from the simplicity that is in Christ. The lesson of the present hour seems loudly and imperatively to

demand of you a just combination of genuine godliness, with high Christian manliness, and the broadest, profoundest intellectual culture, together with a thorough, exact knowledge of the word of God, and the utmost simplicity in seeking the things that be of Christ, exalting Him as the adorable Son of God, and as the Surety, the Exemplar, the Friend of the depraved, beleaguered man.

I hazard nothing in assuring you, on behalf of this Board, that in coming to undertake this office to which the church has called you, the warmest welcome of the friends of this Seminary is extended to you. From what they have already learned of your past ministerial usefulness, they have confidence that these high responsibilities will be met, on your part, in a manner that will show a thorough appreciation, not only of the field and the times, but also of the exalted standard of spiritual excellence which it behoves you to have continually in view.

And now, after having occupied you so long, I feel constrained to say that I have no better charge to give than that which is contained in the dying message of a venerable minister of the church of England, which caught my eye a day or two since, in one of the papers. He was a patriarch in his ninetieth year, who had preached the gospel for sixty-six years of his life, and with trembling hands he wrote these words, "Tell the clergy to preach Christ, to live Christ, to serve Christ, and they will enjoy and praise him in eternity." You have listened, patiently, my brother, to one younger, and far less mature than yourself. Now, take the aged man's exhortation: Preach Christ, live Christ, serve Christ; and in doing this, faithfully and singly, you will do all that we have now endeavored to set before you.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

*Fathers and Brethren of the Board of Directors, and
Friends and Patrons of the Western Theological Seminary:*

I am here, at your call, to assume the duties of Professor of Systematic Theology. Every person possessed of any accurate knowledge of the preliminary steps leading to the action of the late General Assembly in the premises, knows that I did not seek this honor, nor desire this great responsibility. As far as human agency is concerned, the whole matter rests upon your judgment, as it was initiated by your action. Under all the circumstances of the case, I felt shut up to the recognition of your call, endorsed by the General Assembly, as the voice of God, and abruptly turning from my own doubts, I have bowed in submission to His will, and cast myself upon the fullness of that grace, with the assistance of which the weakest instrument is more than sufficient for the accomplishment of every appointed end. I continue to pray for the cooperation of this grace; and I now claim from you, on the ground of the responsibility which you voluntarily assumed; in bringing me here, that you cease not, at any time, to unite your intercessions with my supplications.

And now, having met for the purpose of formally inducting me into this responsible office, I suppose that you expect to hear from me a general exposition of my views of

the nature of the department committed especially to my charge, considered in itself and in its relations to the other departments of the same grand science presided over by my honored colleagues, together with a statement of my understanding of the best methods of administering the course of instruction in my own branch. This I propose to do, as fully and as clearly as my ability, and the nature of the service in which we are at present engaged, will admit.

All religion has its ground in the relations which man, as an intelligent and voluntary moral agent sustains to God, his Creator and Governor, and it develops itself necessarily in two directions; *subjectively*, in those inward sentiments and experiences, and *objectively*, in those outward doctrines, confessions, institutions, ordinances and actions which correspond to the truth of that relation. In its most general sense, therefore, religion comprehends, together with an inward, moral and spiritual experience, and as their foundation and essential condition, the whole complement of doctrines which God has revealed, the Church which he has instituted, together with its government, worship and discipline, as established by Him, and its history, confessions and usages, as developed under His providential leading.

Theology, on the other hand, is the science of religion. It is to religion what physical science is to the phenomena of the material world; or what psychology and metaphysics are to the phenomena of mind; or what the sciences of politics and law are to the fundamental facts and relations of human association. Its office is to survey the whole field; to gather material from every available source; to analyze, interpret and classify the

elements; to bring each subordinate department into adjustment with every other; and to rise from particulars to the comprehension of the most general principles. Its great uses are at once constructive, conservative, and defensive. As constructive, it gathers one harmonious whole, all the elements which God has, for our sakes, so munificently scattered in the domains of revelation, creation and providence, causing each element to shine brighter in the common radiance mutually given and received, and each excellence to appear more beautiful in the common symmetry of all the parts; thus at once increasing the religious knowledge, and promoting the spiritual welfare of men, and more conspicuously displaying the unparalleled glory of God.

As conservative, it accurately defines the truth, and thus in every element discriminates it from all error, whether of negation, excess, or defect; and by purifying it from all adulteration, it shields weak brethren from the temptation of mistaking, and false brethren from the opportunity of perverting the faith.

As defensive, it demonstrates the fundamental harmony of the doctrines of revelation, with all the *a priori* and necessary intuitions of reason, and adjusts them with all the final and established results of the experimental sciences. It critically investigates and establishes the ultimate grounds of faith and nature of evidence. It demolishes the false ground of infidels, and the defective grounds of errorists; and in every changing aspect of the controversy, it presents the most effective possible exposition of the evidences of the truth. It answers all objections, reconciles all anomalies, and solves or justifies all mysteries.

This exalted science can, of course, draw its material

only from an immediate, and accredited, divine revelation, and it does lay under contribution every revelation God has made to mankind, of his being, character and will, natural and supernatural, in the light of reason and conscience, in creation and providence, and in the Scriptures of the Old and New Dispensations.

Natural Theology is that science which embraces, as its province, all that God has revealed concerning Himself, and His relations to us, and concerning man and his relation to Him, through purely natural channels. If man had continued in his normal state and relations, this natural revelation would doubtless have enabled him to attain to all the appointed ends of his being. Since, however, in consequence of the apostasy, the Holy Spirit, the principle of all religious life and knowledge, has been withdrawn; since man's reason and conscience have become clouded by the inordinate affections of the flesh, and his natural relations to God, as moral governor, complicated by guilt; and since natural religion throws no light whatever upon the infinitely important questions, as to the possibility or the method of redemption, of regeneration, or of the resurrection of the body, it necessarily follows that for man, as now conditioned, Natural Theology is altogether insufficient. This essential insufficiency is overwhelmingly demonstrated by the experience of every soul that has earnestly struggled with the consciousness of guilt and pollution, and by the entire history of the unevangelized races of men.

And yet Christian Theology has never regarded Natural Theology as an antagonist to be subdued, or as a rival to be supplanted. We have here one of a thousand illustrations of the great principle, that while error is always

defective, one-sided and schismatical, God's truth is always royally comprehensive and catholic. The Scriptures ever assume, as true and incontrovertible, the fundamental principles of natural religion, as the basis of their argument; and they appeal to, and excite to action the moral faculties and natural, religious sentiments of the soul. God's revelation to us through natural channels, and His revelation through supernatural channels, are from the same source, and their results, when adequately interpreted, are perfectly harmonious. His revelation through nature is the necessary preface to His revelation from above nature; and His revelation from above nature is at once the necessary key, and supplement to His revelation through nature. Christian Theology, therefore, adopts Natural Theology as her own rightful inheritance. She builds upon her foundation, assumes her legitimate results, corrects her errors, supplements her defects, reflects down upon her a light from heaven, and crowns her with a divine glory.

Revealed Theology is that science which comprehends, as its province, all that has been revealed to us concerning God and man, and their relations through supernatural channels.

We maintain, as the great formal principle of Protestantism, that the only organs of any supernatural revelation, which as an historical fact, God has been pleased to communicate to man, have been the inspired prophets and apostles, and that the only authoritative source and standard of truth of this order, is the holy Scriptures they were inspired to write.

In its widest comprehension, therefore, Theology is that science which embraces the literature of this inspired book,

its accurate interpretation; the systematic construction and exhibition of its doctrinal contents, and the deduction therefrom of practical principles and rules. It, therefore, includes the entire curriculum of studies taught in a theological Seminary to theological students.

An analysis of this vast subject will give us the following elements;

1st. Apologetics, including the positive evidences of Christianity, and maintenance of its polemic position, offensive and defensive, in relation to all antitheistic and antichristian error.

2d. The determination of the sources of revealed theology, including the doctrine of plenary inspiration, and the determination of the authenticity and genuineness of each of the inspired books, constituting the canon.

3d. Biblical criticism, settling by the comparison of authentic manuscripts, and ancient versions, the *ipsissima verba* of the sacred text.

4th. Hermeneutics, or the science which develops the laws of biblical interpretation; dealing with all questions of language, local idiom, and personal style; with the history, customs, political, ecclesiastical and physical conditions of the writers; and original readers of the sacred books; with the different styles of composition; narrative, epic, lyrical, prophetic, epistolary, parabolic, and didactic; with the nature of symbol and type, ritual, historical and prophetic; and with the mutual relations of the two testaments, and of all the separate compositions they contain.

5th. Exegetical Theology, which applies the principles of interpretation thus developed, to the actual unfolding of

the sense of each successive book and passage, in its connections, exhibiting the truths of revelation, in the very terms, aspects, and relations in which the Holy Spirit has indited them, and tracing their development through the writings of both dispensations, from Moses to the Apostle John.

6th. Systematic Theology, or the construction out of the vast mass of results furnished by the sister science of Exegesis, of the symmetrical system of truth therein implicitly contained, including the exact definition of each doctrine separately, and the exhibition of all in their proper positions, proportions and relations to each other, in the general system; the faithful discrimination and refutation of all error, and the comparison of the results thus reached with the special dogmas and doctrinal systems set forth in the symbols and classical theological literature of all branches of the church in all ages.

7th. Ecclesiology, or that department of the general science which treats of the Church as an actual, divine institution, comprehending its idea, its organization, government, laws, offices, members and ordinances; and the whole body of practical principles, and rules derived from the preceding exegetical and systematic development of the contents of Scripture.

8th. And finally, the history of this Church, as a visible organization, preserved and developed by a special Providence and dispensation of the Spirit; of its inward and outward life; of its doctrinal controversies, and organic revolutions; of its territorial expansions; its political and ethnological complications; its relation to philosophy, literature, art, and practical civilization; and of the condi-

ditions; and processes of its various apostasies, and reformations.

You will observe that this comprehensive view of Theology as a whole, is realized in the plan of our Seminary; in the distribution of the provinces presided over severally by the Professors of Biblical and Exegetical Theology, of Didactic, Historical and Polemic Theology, of Ecclesiastic and Pastoral Theology, of Homiletic Theology, of Biblical and Ecclesiastical History, and of Practical Theology.

I have thus endeavored to give you a description of the scope of Theological science, in the widest sense. Like most other terms, however, which stand for the results of human classification, Theology is used in various degrees of generality. A narrower sense of the word is that of Theology proper, as distinguished from the theory and practice of interpretation on which it is founded, on the one hand, and also from the practical department of applied Theology, to which it gives birth, on the other, including the construction, the exposition and defense of the entire system of truth taught in Scripture. In a yet narrower sense, the term Theology is used to designate that single but sublime department, which, in the strictest sense, is the science of the being, and attributes, and acts of God, as distinguished from the sister departments of Anthropology, Soteriology, Eschatology, and Ecclesiology.

It is evident that Systematic Theology, the department which you have been pleased to commit to my charge, as it draws all its materials from a book, and from a book so ancient, and of such various composition and unique construction as the Christian Scriptures, must rely entirely upon the results furnished by a scientific exegesis. It is

only as we have first determined the *ipsissima verba* which the Spirit has given, and the exact sense which the words, in each passage were intended to convey, that we can intelligently proceed to define what the dogmatic data of Scripture are. The truth, in the very terms, and aspects, and relations, in which the Spirit has given it expression, and the method of its gradual evolution from the type to the antitype, from the symbolic adumbration to the clear, logical exposition of the later Scriptures, is the rich domain of Biblical Exegesis, and the precious material which it hands over for the construction of the finished and harmonious system.

It is evident, therefore, that these two complementary methods; Exegetical and Systematic, can exist only in their mutual relation, as the equally necessary movements of one organic process, always reciprocally reacting on each other. Thus the commentator must interpret every passage according to the analogy of the faith; limiting and adjusting the sense of every particular passage, by all the other utterances of Scripture on the same subject; and hence his exegetical interpretations must be continually moulded by the general bearing of his doctrinal views. On the other hand, the substance and form of every dogma must be determined by the final interpretation which a true Exegesis gives to the passages from which its elements are drawn. When Systematic Theology is neglected, Exegesis having lost its principles of adjustment, necessarily becomes vague, and its results fragmentary and inconsistent; while, on the other hand, when Exegesis is neglected, or even when Systematic Theology ceases, in any degree, to maintain a constant living communion with an ever fresh and

original interpretation of the inspired word; it necessarily shrivels into a dry and profitless body of logical forms, if it is not carried away entirely into an abyss of rationalistic speculations, or of mystical imaginations.

But when this relation is duly observed, Systematic Theology becomes in the highest sense useful as the crowning result of the entire process of Scriptural study; and, indeed, an absolute necessity, both from the constitution of the human mind, and from the nature of the subject-matter of Revelation itself:

Speculation, the attempt to trace effects to causes, to analyze all the constituents of our knowledge into their ultimate elements, to reconcile apparent anomalies, and by rising to the highest generalizations to reduce the whole mass to unity, is an original and universal tendency of human intelligence. Since it is intelligence, it must speculate; and since it is finite, and morally depraved, it must, under diverse determining influences, reach in many instances partial and conflicting results. Hence, theological theories and systems are inevitable; and as these are more or less scriptural or rationalistic, spiritual or secular, errors and heresies are generated, and controversies introduced. In our present probation, the elements of trial to which God's people are subjected, are intellectual fully as much as they are sensual, or secular. It is only at the price of eternal vigilance that the heritage of truth can be preserved pure from internal corruption, or entire from external aggression. It is only by detailed discriminations and accurate definitions, that the truth can be determined and all error eliminated; and it is only by the skillful use of all the resources of an exalted and comprehensive Christian

science, that all the foundations of truth can be protected, and her supreme dominion vindicated.

On the other hand, Systematic Theology is made necessary by the very nature of the subject matter of revelation itself. The entire scheme of Redemption is a thoroughly organized whole, all the parts of which are accurately adjusted to the nature and conditions of man, and to the nature and providence of God. The revelation, consequently, which exhibits this scheme, must embrace a more or less developed, yet potentially complete system of doctrine, every part of which, when accurately conceived, is in perfect harmony with all the rest. Such, indeed, is the mutual connection and interdependence of doctrine with doctrine, that one cannot be fully comprehended except when viewed in its natural correlations with the rest; and error in the mode of apprehending any one, must logically lead to the perversion of all in turn. All heresies have commenced with the denial, or defective definition, of some one doctrine, which has invariably led, by an inevitable logical development, to a corresponding re-adjustment of the entire system.

The views entertained by any school of theological speculators, in the department of Anthropology, must determine their views of Soteriology immediately, and then less directly, but as certainly, of Theology proper, and of Ecclesiology. The views entertained upon the subject of the nature of the Atonement, must determine at once the view held, as to its extent, and as to the office of faith in justification; and these again will determine all the great questions relating to the Divine decrees, and the nature, efficacy and necessity of Divine grace; and these, in turn, will settle

all questions relating to the nature and extent of innate corruption.

The matter of revelation, besides constituting a perfect system itself, moreover stands implicated in endless relations with the entire frame of nature and course of providence. Revelation throws light upon the most profound problems of metaphysics, as God, the infinite and finite, and their relation, spirit, free will, the moral law, the origin and destination of sin. It inosculates with every department of physical science, throwing a light backward over the long history which Geology unfolds, and outward into the infinite spaces in which Astronomy presides. It yet more intimately allies itself to questions falling under the departments of Psychology, History, Ethnology, Political Economy and Social Law. Every man's theory of virtue must, if logically developed, determine his view of the nature of the Atonement, and his theory of the will in its psychological relation to the other faculties of the soul, must determine his views of providence, sin and grace. No truth is isolated. In the mind of God all truth is one. As our knowledge increases, and our faculties expand, we also advance along that line, which, ascending spirally, at every step brings us nearer the central point of view.

A comprehensive science of Systematic Theology is necessary, therefore, to satisfy the inextinguishable desire of the human soul for order and unity in the entire body of its knowledge—to set the truth apart in visible discrimination from error—to bring out the true significance and beauty of every feature of the truth, in its proper symmetrical proportions and relations; and, by vindicating for herself her true place as Queen of all the Sciences, to place

her great Author, the Mediatorial King, in his true place, as the Alpha and Omega of both the Natural and the Supernatural.

This would be the position of a perfect science of Systematic Theology, if once realized. But although the system, as it exists in the divine ideal, is perfect, and although its elements are furnished to us by an infallible inspiration, yet the effort of the human mind to realize it by speculation, is necessarily, both in its progress and results, subject to all the limitations which attend every human process. Instead of springing at once into perfect being; it must grow gradually through a long process of successive tentative movements, successes and failures, divergent schools, and controversies, drawing together the contributions of innumerable colaborers of all nations and ages. Thus Theological science, as every other, has its history, marking its past development, stage by stage, to its present maturity; and also its controversial or polemical side, marking its past and present relation to every divergent tendency of human speculation.

A science, as every organized product of growth, can be best understood, not by contemplating nor by dissecting its mature form, but by tracing the development of the organization, and of all its component elements, through the entire history of their growth. Systematic Theology is the result. Historical Theology presents the development of each doctrine separately, and then the reciprocal actions and reactions of all on each other, and upon the system as a whole. We first have the most general form in which each doctrine was conceived in the mind of the church, then the divergent speculation, then the heretical depart-

ure, then the thorough sifting, by means of controversy, then the more discriminating analysis, and accurate definition, explicating the general conception into its various contents, relations and consequences. These, therefore, mutually supplement each other, and can never be safely separated. Historical Theology, without Systematic, would be a process without a result. While Systematic Theology, without Historical, would give you that which is evidently not a creation, but a product of elaboration not yet completed, without the process through the course of which it is still being evolved.

In the present stage of our history, in like manner, Systematic Theology can never be separated from Polemics. As long as it remains incomplete, it can advance in the future only, as in the past, by means of controversies; and so long as truth continues unacknowledged in an unbelieving and heretical world, ceaseless and skillful controversy is the sole condition upon which it can maintain its ground. Every exhaustive analysis, and accurate definition of the truth, involves an accurate discrimination of all coterminous error; and a complete exhibition of all the evidences establishing the truth, involves necessarily the refutation of error. These cannot be separated, and in our present state, a knowledge of polemics, at least in their theoretical aspects and general outline, is as necessary for the student, as a means of attaining a knowledge of the true system, as it is for the practical controversialist.

In regard to the treatment of Systematic Theology itself, its construction and its exposition, it is evident that the first and highest problem is that of Method, the principles, and thence the rules of procedure to be observed in collect-

ing, interpreting and systematizing all of the scattered data of Scripture: What point of view is to be assumed from the first, from which the perspective for the entire system is to be taken? What doctrines are to be assumed as fundamental and central, by which the position of all the rest is to be logically adjusted? What is the exact nature of that "analogy of the faith," which is to rule the interpretation of all separate passages? Upon what principles are passages of Scripture to be classified, and what degree of force is to be put upon refractory texts, in order to reduce their prima facie meaning into harmony with the established sense of other passages bearing upon the same subject? How far have we a right, on these transcendent themes, to reason from doctrine to doctrine, and in the spirit of system to press the truths revealed to us on one subject, into a form determined by their logical relations to other truths? What is the true office of reason, whether intuitional or logical in Theology, and what the proper character, and quantity of the Metaphysical and Psychological elements to be admitted; and what the proper weight to be given to the various dogmatic findings of the creeds and confessions of the Churches? I think it is to be regretted that the canons of doctrinal induction have not been as fully discussed and defined, as those used in the sister science of Exegesis.

I shall adventure only a few general remarks upon this important and difficult subject.

I. And the first is that an exaggerated spirit of systematizing, a disposition to force the whole matter of revelation into logical harmony with a few dogmatic conclusions, assumed from a partial induction of Scriptural data, has not

only been the characteristic error of all heresies; but it has prevailed too generally even among the most orthodox. Deduction has been commenced prematurely, before the necessary preparatory work of observation; analysis, classification and induction, has been completed. This indeed has proved a pestilent, and often a prevalent vice in all sciences.

Moreover, a tendency may be traced, operating more or less consciously, to adopt some one or more normal principles, theoretical or practical, abstract or concrete, scriptural or rationalistic, and to govern the construction of the entire system by them. Thus it is evident that the principle which has determined the entire Papal system, ecclesiastical and dogmatic, is that of a perpetual inspired Apostolate, the sole organ of divine revelation and authority, and the sole channel of grace. In the doctrinal system of John Wesley, formed under the overmastering influence of a fervid and wide-spread revival, the guiding, though doubtless unconscious principle of construction, was the practical relation of different doctrines, viewed as motives acting upon the human will, and estimated as suited to excite to action, to convict of sin and personal responsibility, to warn from carelessness, and to encourage in the diligent use of all the means of grace. Arminianism, in its more theoretical aspect, challenging the recognition of its opponents, as "a well defined, symmetrical system," "the best approximation to a satisfactory solution of the facts of the divine government," affirms, according to one of its most recent advocates, as its fundamental axiom and crucial principle by which its entire complement of doctrines is to be ordered, "that in

order to responsibility for a given act or state; power in the agent for a contrary act or state is requisite."

In the case of the various forms successively assumed by what is generally known as the New England Theology, it is evident that its determining principle, instead of being practical and revivalistic, as in the instance of Wesley's system, was apologetic, the governing aim being to bring old Calvinism into adjustment with the prevailing philosophy, and to meet the exigencies arising in the controversies maintained with the Socinians, and other rationalists. In the new Mercersburg Theology, the radix from which the entire system by an "organic process of legitimate development" is declared to spring, is that humanity is not a mere aggregate of individuals, but a generic life; that this genus was created in Adam, and propagated into individual men and women, the common possessors of the "one underlying substance," by the process of natural generation; and that the divinity of Christ became incarnate by union with this generic human nature, and his resulting divine-human life, comprehending at once divinity, soul and body, is unfolded in the Church, being communicated to each individual member, by a spiritual regeneration through the sacraments.

In opposition to this vicious tendency, illustrated in various degrees in the foregoing, and in innumerable other instances, we maintain that the work of the Systematic Theologian is not that of a constructor who builds systems according to his fancy out of the elements furnished by Scripture, as a man builds houses out of stones dug from the ground; but that he is legitimately as strictly as the Exegete himself, nothing more than an Interpreter. The entire system, in all its relations and proportions, is as truly

in the Scripture itself, as are the detached elements which together constitute it. As the phenomena of the physical world, to us so often apparently detached and confused, are, nevertheless always grouped in the precise order and relation which belongs to them in God's great system of nature, so the dogmatic contents of Scripture are always there set forth in some one or more of those essential relations which belong to them, in God's own great system of Providence and Redemption.

The Copernican system, as far as it goes, was from the creation the real order of the procedure of the stars, while to human eyes the phenomena appeared grouped in far different relations. There had been in the history of astronomy, constructors of systems out of assumed facts, or principles, more than sufficient; all that was needed was the simple interpreter, who, putting himself at the true centre of movement, should with open face read God's system in the sky.

Thus the true system of Theology is as really in the Scriptures, as are the separate doctrines which compose it; and we need in the Theologian a diligent and patient student of the whole field of revelation; an exact observer of all the facts, without exception, in the precise order, and in all the relations, and with all the conditions and limitations in which the Spirit has revealed them; and then we need him to be a simple, faithful interpreter of what he sees. As in the interpretation of the true system of the material heavens, success was secured when the transition was once made from the geocentric to the heliocentric point of view; so in the interpretation of the true system of Revelation, the only *a priori* principle which there is either necessity or propriety in our carrying with us, is

that in the departments of creation and providence, the Theocentric, and in the department of redemption, the Christocentric, are the only natural points of view, around which the order of the system is evolved. In Biblical Theology, moreover, it is only certain aspects and members of God's great system of moral government which are unrevealed to us. The revealed is constantly rising and losing itself in the unrevealed. We should be most careful, then, to see all that is revealed just as it is revealed, and to withhold all premature and exaggerated application of our deductive logic to facts and relations which we cannot fully comprehend. In the august matter of His word, in a higher sense even than in any department of God's works, is it true for the human intellect, that *omnia exeunt in mysterium*.

II. A second remark I would make, is, that as a matter of historical fact, the great system of Theology common to the Reformed churches, was developed gradually in the course of ages, each doctrine, or group of doctrines, being generated separately, by means of protracted controversies, in periods of eminent spiritual and speculative activity. This assertion is true of every element of the system, without exception. At first the truth was apprehended by the people of God; without a thorough analysis of its contents; or an exact discrimination of its relations, in its most general expressions, or as embodied in detached Biblical statements: Then supervened a period of partial and divergent speculation. Then some one-sided tendency has been developed into fundamental and apparent error, and the general Christian conscience has taken the alarm. This has introduced a protracted period of controversy, in the progress of which the efforts to eliminate the error have led to the

attainment of more accurate conceptions, than were ever before realized of the contents and relations of the truth controverted. And then finally the truth as thus thoroughly explicated, has received its accurate and authoritative definition at the hands of the Church, and assumed its recognized character and position as Dogma.

Thus the Christian Fathers of the first three centuries, while holding the substance of the truth with regard to the divinity of Christ, and the wonderful constitution of His person, as both divine and human, and with regard to the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost, yet never attained to a clear conception of all the elements of divine revelation on these subjects, in their perfect union and true relations; and much less were they ever able sharply to define the truth in a comprehensive and consistent formula. Their general faith was represented by the several gradually added clauses of the so-called Apostles' creed. Yet, even among them, we trace the inevitable, speculative energy of the human mind, exercised in isolated movements and one-sided tendencies, and embodying its results in partial conceptions, and inconsistent definitions. As this process advanced, the divergent tendencies of individual thinkers became more apparent, and radical heresies, palpably denying the common faith, arose, making absolutely necessary a thorough review of the whole subject, an analysis of all its elements, a comprehensive integration of them in their fundamental unity, and an accurate and authoritative definition of them by the representatives of the whole Church. This was accomplished only through a long course of general, intense and eminently able controversy, and the results are embodied in the immortal deliverances

on the subject of the Trinity, by the Councils of Nice and Constantinople, in the fourth century; and on the hypothetical union of the two natures in the person of Christ, by the two Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, in the first half of the fifth. These great Creeds accurately, and as far as human science can go, exhaustively define the whole matter of revelation on these subjects, and embody the complete and final faith of the Universal Church to the present day.

The same conditions, in all respects, hold true concerning the history of the great doctrines grouped together under the head of Anthropology, viz: the doctrines of sin, original and actual, of human inability, and of divine grace. We mark the same essential soundness of feeling, yet, vagueness of conception, the same fragmentary and divergent speculation, as represented in the different tendencies of the Greek and Latin Church leaders, the same emergence of radical error repudiated spontaneously by the whole church, and finally the elimination and authoritative establishment in the Western Church, through the controversies of the great Augustine with Pelagius, and subsequently with the Semi-Pelagians of Gaul, of those fundamental doctrines of sin and grace which continue to this day the recognized *principia* of all Evangelical Theology throughout the world. As Athanasius in the fourth century, as the organ and representative of the Greek Theological mind, was commissioned to develop for the universal church the doctrines of Theology proper, and of Christology, and there to stop, so Augustine in the fifth century appears to have been commissioned as the representative and leader of the Latin Churches, to the single work

of settling for all time the doctrines of sin and grace. In the whole department of Soteriology, including the Atonement, forensic justification as distinguished from sanctification; the exact office of faith in opposition to the merit of all works, and the true nature and relations of the sacraments, he hardly advanced beyond the defective views of his predecessors. His confused conceptions on this whole class of subjects ripened during the subsequent ten centuries into a vast system of positive error and ecclesiastical corruption; and it was reserved for Luther and Melancthon, as the organs of the German Church, in the first stage of the glorious Reformation, to take up the unfinished work of Athanasius and Augustine and to define forever the cardinal doctrine of Justification by Faith. Then, for the first time, all the materials for a complete system of Theology were in the hands of the Church, and in the active controversies which followed between the representatives of all the divergent ecclesiastical and speculative tendencies in that age of unparalleled intellectual activity, all the false systems, as well as the true one, assumed gradually that perfect form in which they appear in the classical writings of the great systematic divines of the 17th century. The exaggerated conservatism of Luther, while it arrested the complete work of the Reformation in the Lutheran Church, led through the Sacramentarian controversy to a more perfect doctrine of the Sacraments in the Reformed Churches. The Church of Rome reconciled its inharmonious elements, and completed and authoritatively defined its form of heresy in the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent. In Poland, the disciples of Socinus, taking up the fragmentary traditions of Pelagian-

ism, crystallized them into that perfectly logical and anti-evangelical system, which has ever since been known by the name of their master. In Holland, in the first half of the next century, the middle scheme of the Semi-Pelagians received a complete and scientific development in the writings of the later Remonstrants. In France, almost every possible modification and perversion of Calvinism, as to the order of the Divine Decrees, the imputation of sin and righteousness, justification, the nature and extent of the Atonement, was attempted by Piscator, and the ingenious professors of Saumur Amyraut, Cameron and La Place.

And it is to be remarked, in conclusion, that it was only as a result of these controversies, that the most mature and scientifically symmetrical systems and symbols of the Reformed Church, were produced in the writings of such men as Heidegger, Turretin, Witsius, and their peers; and in the Canons of the Synod of Dort, the Formula Consensus Helveticus, and the Confession and Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly.

It is an old and common trick of errorists to cover themselves with the authority of the general and unscientific statements of eminent theological authors, and of church confessions written before the period when the doctrine in question was clearly discriminated and defined. Thus in all subsequent ages, Arians and Pelagians have appealed to the writings of the Fathers who lived before the times of Athanasius and Augustine. The Fathers of the Council of Trent, and all subsequent Catholics, quote largely authorities furnished by the writings of the most eminent and orthodox church teachers of every age preceding that of Luther and Calvin. And modern perverters of the

doctrine of the Imputation of Adam's sin, insist upon going back to the less fully explicated definitions which originated prior to the controversies occasioned by the heresies of La Place.

The cunningly ambiguous findings of the Council of Trent, are an eminent instance of the necessity of the detailed explication of every doctrine, in its exact nature, limits and relations. In general confessions, their decisions on many points are orthodox, while in detailed explanation they are heterodox. The early Christians were general and indefinite in their conceptions, but orthodox in their sense and spirit. The Church of Rome apparently agrees with them in general confession, but grossly perverts the faith of the Fathers in their detailed explanations.*

III: The last remark I have to make in this connection, is that the philosophy prevalent among any people, or in any age of the church, has always exercised a powerful influence over the contemporaneous theology. This is necessary, from the fact that, in part, philosophy and theology occupy common ground, appealing ultimately to the same native intuitions, testing the grounds of certitude by the same principles, and dealing with the same great subjects—God, man, and nature. The methods and habits of thought which prevail in the general thinking of an age, must be carried into theological as into all other speculation; and as all truth is one, what is held true in philosophy must be equally held to be true in theology. In exact proportion as the principles and the methods of any philosophical system are inconsistent with nature and revelation, will of course be the degree of pervertive influence it will exert upon the

* The late Principal Cunningham's Historical Theology.

course of theological thought. This will be manifested most prominently in the prevailing forms of positive unbelief and of heretical speculation, hindering among the masses of men the dissemination of the truth, and hence in the whole line of theological controversy; but its effects will penetrate the church itself, misleading the unstable, developing the false, and modifying even in the case of the most orthodox the form in which many theological principles are conceived, the aspects and relations in which they are viewed, and the phraseology in which they are expressed. This fact is verified by the whole course of philosophical and dogmatic history from the beginning, and it never was more conspicuously illustrated than in the portentous speculations of our own day.

It follows, from what has just been said, that in every sudden and vast enlargement of the domain of knowledge in any other department, the equilibrium of the human and divine elements in the church systems is necessarily for the time disturbed, and a new adjustment of the relations of Science and Theology becomes necessary. The intellectual and moral conditions of the age in which we live are in this respect most remarkable. The forces tending to undermine or to modify our theological position are, as to number, variety and intensity, unparalleled in the history of the Church. The domain of positive knowledge, *i. e.*, the knowledge of phenomena and their laws—has been extended, and is being extended, to a degree that overwhelms the imagination. Art and practical civilization have advanced to an equal degree, and with the extension and perfection of civil and religious liberty, have stimulated every human energy to the most intense exercise. So

many principles of the ancients have been found false, so many practical institutions and customs have been discarded, so many new tests of truth have been discovered, so much new positive knowledge has been amassed, which it is found difficult to adjust with old opinions, that there has been generated a prevalent spirit of distrust in fixed conclusions, of disregard for all authority, human or divine; of unlimited confidence in the sufficiency of human intelligence, and of enthusiastic belief in future progress.

In spite of the almost infinite variety of special characteristics, the prevailing schools of sceptical philosophy in this age may, with sufficient accuracy, be classed in two great families, the Transcendental and the Positive. The first makes the intuitions the organ and test of all truth. They start with *a priori* principles, from which all real knowledge is to be deduced. They know God and all causes in themselves, and can therefore logically deduce all that can possibly come from them in the way of effects for evermore. The infinite and the absolute being thus fully comprehended, in science, there can be no real distinction between the natural and the supernatural; while revelation, miracles, the incarnation, redemption, regeneration, all Christian mysteries, are either vain dreams, or symbols of natural processes going on from the beginning. In this view, all religions have a basis of truth, and Christianity is only one of many developments of the common religious consciousness of men, relatively perhaps the most advanced, yet positively imperfect, and destined in the coming age of complete illumination, to cast off its outer husks of history, doctrines and superstitious faiths and hopes, and to rise into the clear, cold firmament of ideal truth.

On the other hand, the Positivist of every school makes the senses the organ and test of all truth. He maintains that all that can be known is the complement of phenomena around us, and the laws of their successions. God, the supernatural, causes, eternal principles, may exist for aught we know, but they never can be known, and in no real sense can they exist for us. The inflexible order of nature is every thing. This prevails far more generally, as a tendency and a sentiment, than as a conscious and avowed creed. In this form it is characteristic of the age. The growing conviction of the inflexible uniformity and universal operation of natural laws, generated by the unparalleled development of the physical sciences, and the application of statistics to the phenomena of social life, is inducing a prevalent conviction that human action, as well as material elements, is governed by fixed laws, that the supernatural is only another name for the natural, as yet unsubdued by science, and that metaphysics and religion are the superstitions of an ignorant age.

Thus these two philosophies, the Transcendental and the Positive, in their origin as wide apart as the poles, end in the same result of universal and inflexible Naturalism. That every thing is God, comes practically to the same thing with the conclusion that God is nothing. That the supernatural can be known and sounded by science, as accurately as the natural, comes practically to the same thing with the conclusion that there is no supernatural to be known. Whatever may be comprehended in the shallow flow of phenomena around us by the unassisted reason of man may be intelligently believed, but that there is aught

beyond the reach of these, is held to be the dream of fools. This blind, narrow naturalistic spirit, is every where present, both within and without the church, and with greater or less intensity is unsettling or modifying the traditional opinions of men. Outside the church it exists in the form of the positive antagonism, or of the supreme indifference of the unevangelized masses of the people, as well as of professed philosophers. Within the church it is manifested in many forms of rationalistic criticism and speculation, tearing the Scriptures to pieces, as in the case of Colenso and his German masters and English and American associates—denying inspiration, miracles, supernatural providence and grace, as in the case of the authors of the Essays and Reviews; or with less virulence, yet tending infallibly to the same end, in a general latitudinarian indifference to God's truth and ordinances in their fullness, which on the occasion of every new adjustment is, in a spirit of accommodation, always betraying the rights of revealed theology to the insatiable claim of an antitheistic and antichristian philosophy.

I am persuaded that here, as well as every where else, the only way to prevent the evil is to anticipate it by occupying its place with the good. It is in vain to rail against reason and philosophy. Men must think, and as they think they will believe. As a false philosophy wars against revealed truth, a true philosophy will be found to blend with it as complementary rays from the same fountain of light. Let the friends of Revelation, therefore, lay the foundations of a true science in a deeper metaphysic, and in a more comprehensive and intelligent study of God's works, and in His good time men will become humbler as

they grow wiser, and more disposed to believe reverently in proportion as they know profoundly.

I have left myself no room for the consideration of that which perhaps most needs a thorough discussion and adjustment; *i. e.*, the method proper to be pursued in the practical work of teaching Systematic Theology in our Seminary. It is evident this ought not to be determined by mere accident, precedent, or custom. It merits careful and prayerful consideration, and should be grounded upon well ascertained principles, properly modified in their application by the special character and circumstances both of the professor and the students. Our great embarrassment in our present Seminary system, is the want of time. The three nominal years amount practically, with all our interruptions, to a decided fraction less than two; and for this time five professors, with the interests of their great subjects, are earnestly pressing. Lecture follows lecture; and subject subject, in hot haste, while deliberate study and wide collateral reading are impossible. In this respect, with all our great advantages, we compare questionably with the three years of solid reading required of the candidates of the last age in the study of their pastor-teachers. It cannot be too much to expect, as every one must desire, that the time will come when the constitution of our church and the practice of our presbyteries will be so altered, that no candidate, on any plea, shall receive a license, either to preach or to marry, until he has his certificate for three good honest years of study.

The thing to be done in teaching Systematic Theology, is to convey the requisite information, to train the mind of the student to think independently, definitely, systemati-

cally, and to exercise him in the accurate and ready expression of his thoughts on these subjects, both in speech and writing, to the end that he may attain the perfect and easy mastery of his knowledge of the science, ever ready for instant use, and various application. The fourfold method of attempting this is, of course, by means of lectures, by the careful study of a text-book, and collateral reading, by catechetical examination, and oral debate, and by writing essays and answers to questions. Each division of this fourfold method has its peculiar and invaluable advantages, and neither one of them should be entirely sacrificed to the others. But I am persuaded that the prevailing habit and expectation that each Professor should recast the whole subject into a course of original lectures, is liable to lead to the teaching by lectures too exclusively, to the practical neglect of the other methods. I am persuaded that the most important end to be secured in administering this department of instruction, is the thorough study of a good text-book, general reading of standard theological literature, thorough sifting, quickening catechetical examination, and constant writing. The real office of the teacher is to bring a well informed and enthusiastic mind into direct living contact with the minds of his students, to the end of directing, exercising and quickening them in the use of their own powers. It is true that we have not at present, in the whole range of English literature, a text-book of Systematic Theology, exactly suited to this age, and to our position; but I am certain that if we had one, the use of the text-book in connection with general reading, would be made the characteristic feature of the best plan of instruction to which the lectures should be auxiliary.

At present I use concurrently, in about equal proportions, all the methods of instruction above enumerated; but if God, in his kindness, shall give the church in our time the rich gift of an adequate modern exposition of Systematic, Historical and Polemic Theology, my purpose is to use it chiefly, and to exercise my classes rather in reading, writing, and oral discussion, than in taking notes of Lectures.