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ART. I.—COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS. JULY 25, 1867.

BY J. W. NEVIN, D. D., PRESIDENT OF FRANKLIN AND MARSHALL COLLEGE,
LANCASTER, PA.

I. TO THE GRADUATING CLASS.

Young Gentlemen:—Just fourteen years have elapsed since I stood in this place to speak my parting words to the last Senior Class of the old Marshall College, which was at the same time the first Senior Class of the new consolidated institution, into which the old college had become merged in this place. That solemn public act closed, as I then thought finally, the relation in which I had stood to the college as its President through previous years; and in view of this fact, it seemed proper to make my farewell to the graduating class a sort of general farewell to all who had ever been under my care as students. The Baccalaureate became in this way an oration to the Alumni. A desire has been expressed from different quarters, that the resumption of my old office should be marked on this occasion by a similar comprehension or gathering up of the past in the present; and you will not therefore take it amiss, if my address to you now, as the first graduating class under my new term of service, be so widened and enlarged in its

Works on the Athanasian creed: *G. J. Vossius*, De tribus Symbolis, Amstel. 1642; *Montfaucon*, Diatribe de Symbolo Quicunque, in his edition of the Works of Athanasius; *J. H. Heidegger*, De Symbolo Athanasiano; *J. G. Walch*, Introductio in libros ecclesiæ Luth. Symbolicos; *Köllner*, Symbolik aller christlichen Confessionen; *Dan. Waterland*, Critical History of the Athanasian Creed, Cambridge, 1724; *John Dennis*, The Athanasian Creed, 1815; *W. W. Harvey*, History and Theology of the Three Creeds, London, 1856; *P. Schaff*, The Athanasian Creed, Mercersb. Review, April, 1859.

ART. X.—OUR RELATIONS TO GERMANY.

BY J. W. NEVIN, D.D., FRANKLIN AND MARSHALL COLLEGE, LANCASTER, PA.

It has been occasionally charged against our theology heretofore, that it consisted very much in a blind following of German modes of thought. Because it made large account of German learning, and of the results of German speculation in the different departments of theological science, it was considered proper to make the fact a reason for viewing its peculiarities with suspicion and distrust. This could be done in different ways to suit occasions. Sometimes it had the purpose simply of disparaging our views, as being without any sort of original force. Again, it was to hold them up to contempt, as unintelligible and obscure; German thinking, at best, being a sort of dreamy idealism, and *our* version of it of course an incompetent rendering into English, that was sure to turn it into something worse. What came in such form was of questionable shape. It might be set down at once as transcendental nonsense; in so far forth precisely as it failed to fall in with the stereotyped notions of those whose perspicacity, thanks to their want of all German training, had never become clouded by any similar mysticism. Then again, however, the charge of

Germanizing was pitched upon a new key. Could any good thing, in the way of Christianity and theology, come out of Germany? Was it not the land of neology, rationalism, and pantheism? Had not its philosophy, from Kant to Hegel, been in the service throughout of skepticism and unbelief; and was it not notorious that its old religious orthodoxy had been swept away completely by the influence of its philosophical speculations? To be in any communication with German thinking, in such circumstances, was counted enough in certain quarters to justify the apprehension of a somewhat latitudinarian or unsound faith. The idea seemed to be, that a man was the more to be relied upon as a competent scholar in philosophical, theological, and moral science, the *less* he knew of the great writers on these subjects in modern Germany. Rauch's *Psychology*, for example, might have been better without the knowledge of Hegel; it detracted from the value of his *Lectures on Ethics*, that he had studied Fichte and was thoroughly familiar with the teaching of Daub; and that Mercersburg theology, as it was called, should find any thing at all to admire or approve in the magnificent Schleiermacher, was held sufficient to bring upon it the reproach of all his errors. Here, moreover, was ground for looking askant on its professed regard for the first class of evangelical German theologians generally belonging to the present time. For who among them had not been influenced, more or less, by the thinking of Schleiermacher? It was no help to our cause then, that it could plead in its favor at certain points the authority of such men as Neander, or Ullmann, or Julius Müller, or Dorner, or Rothe, or Ebrard, or Martensen, or Liebner, or Tholuck, or Lange. These might be all good enough for Germany; but they could not pass muster here, of course, among the evangelical sects of America; and any school or tendency among us, therefore, that might pretend to be in good understanding with them theologically, could but deserve for this very reason, to be looked upon with some measure of misgiving and doubt.

We have been blamed heretofore, we say, in these different ways, for being too much ruled by the authority of the Ger-

mans in matters of theology and religion; and many are no doubt still ready, as much as ever, to renew the blame on what they may feel to be suitable occasion. It is somewhat surprising, however, to find this charge against us turned of late into precisely the opposite form. On the strength of an opinion got at second hand from Dr. Dorner, in regard to our new Liturgy, occasion is taken to make it out that our views are *not* endorsed by the standard-bearers of modern evangelical theology in Germany, and that this now must be taken as a powerful presumption against them without any farther consideration. If it was our heresy before to be too much German, it is our no less serious heterodoxy now to be too little German. The case of difference with us on the part of Dorner, is indeed ludicrously small. It reduces itself to a single point, set over against three other main points, in which he agrees with us in full, against those who wish to overwhelm us with his condemnation. Dorner is in favor of a true people's Liturgy; Dorner approves of our seeking to incorporate the spirit of the primitive Liturgies with the theological life of the sixteenth century; Dorner declares the sacramental doctrine of our Liturgies to be the true doctrine of the Reformed Church as it was taught by Calvin in the age of the Reformation. All great points, on which the Puritanic anti-liturgical party among us, and on the outside of us, has been at issue with us, more or less angrily, all along. But then, the same Dr. Dorner takes exception, it is said, to our view of Ordination and the Christian Ministry, pronounces it Anglican (not German), and sees involved in it the conception of a third sacrament not in proper harmony with Protestantism; and this at once is seized upon as sufficient to turn his otherwise favorable judgment into a wholesale testimony against us, with which, it is complacently assumed, we ought to feel ourselves altogether confounded and put to shame. With the Christological theology of Dorner, Ullmann, and other such German divines, the Puritanic anti-liturgical party among us, and on the outside of us, have in the nature of the case no sympathy whatever. It is that order of thinking precisely which they are ever ready to exclaim against as unevangelical,

whenever it comes in their way. But in the case before us, all that is forgotten. To serve an occasion now, these German authorities (though they are themselves mostly *not* Reformed at all, but either Lutheran or Unionistic), are made to be an infallible standard for the German Reformed Church here in America, which we, as belonging to that Church, are bound to respect, on pain of being held heretical for any deviation from it whatever. The authorities in question, it is well known, are not in full harmony among themselves, and agree with no sect or confession in this country; but no matter for that; if they can be made to tell against our so-called Mercersburg theology in any way, it is at any rate so much clear gain. Does not this theology claim to be German, as professing to represent the German Reformed Church? But here we have the Germans themselves objecting to at least something in it, as not according to their mind. Is not that enough to condemn it?

It is hard enough certainly, that we should have charged upon us as a fault in this case, what it has been considered our fault at other times to be wanting in; the power, namely, of not following blindly in the wake of German theological speculation. But let it pass. We are used to such unfair polemics. All we have in mind now, is the improvement of the occasion here offered, for setting forth in general terms briefly what our relations to Germany have been actually all along, and still continue to be, in the whole sphere of religion and theology.

We honor German learning and thought, and stand largely indebted to them for such views as we have come to have of man and the world, of Christianity and the Bible. We are not of that class who pique themselves on being good philosophers, because they have never read a line of Kant and have not the remotest conception of what was dreamed of by Fichte and Schelling; or who consider themselves good and safe theologians, because their dogmatic slumbers have never been for a moment disturbed by Schleiermacher or the dangerous school of Tübingen. We confess our obligations both to the philosophers and the theologians of Germany. They have done much to deepen our religious convictions, and to widen the range of

our religious thought. We are perfectly sure that the central stream of all spiritual science in the modern life of the world, is in that country; and that it is worse than idle, therefore, to dream of any live, progressive thinking, philosophical or theological, in England, America, or any other country, which shall not be impregnated largely with the results of German study and speculation.

With all this high opinion, however, of the German mind and learning, we belong to no German school, and have never pretended to follow strictly any German system or scheme of thought. Neither have we been blind at all, or insensible, to the dangers of a too free and trustful communication with these foreign forms of thinking. There has been no disposition with us, either to commit ourselves passively to any such guidance, or to set up an independent system by its help. We have all along disclaimed every thing of this sort. Theory and speculation have been with us subordinate always to the idea of positive Christianity, as an object of faith exhibited to us in the Bible and the history of the actual Church. The Christological principle has been for us immeasurably more than the requirements of any school of philosophy; its practical consequences have weighed more with us than the logical necessities of any metaphysical system. We have been able to see and own thankfully the service which has been rendered to the cause of Christianity, through the intonation of this great principle, by Schleiermacher, and other master minds, who have here followed him with far more orthodoxy than he ever had himself, without feeling ourselves bound in the least to accept in full all that any such master mind may have been led to deduce from the principle as belonging to the right construction of Christian doctrine. Our theology in this view has not been built upon Schleiermacher or Ullmann, or Dorner, however much of obligation it cheerfully owns to each of them, as well as to others, whose more or less variant systems of thought go together to make up the conception of what is called the evangelical theology of Germany in its most modern form.

Whatever of force and worth the Christological studies of

these great men carry with them for our thinking, all is felt to rest ultimately only in their bearing on the actual life of Christ, and the relation they hold to the development of the mystery of godliness in the actual history of the Church. Here we reach what we feel to be surer and more solid ground than any such studies of themselves furnish; and just because these studies seem too often to stop short of what is involved for faith in the full historical apprehension of the Christian mystery, as a continuous presence in the world, they are found to be at certain points more or less unsatisfactory in the end to our religious feeling. Here it is that, with all our respect for German divinity, we consciously come to a break with it in our thoughts, and feel the necessity of supplementing it with the more practical way of looking at Christianity which we find embodied in the ancient Creeds. In this respect, we freely admit, our theology is more Anglican than German. We stand upon the old Creeds. We believe in the Holy Catholic Church.

In this way the Church Question, in particular, has come to have for us an interest and significance which it has not, and cannot have, even for the best thinkers in Germany. With us, the whole Christological interest is felt to run into it as its necessary issue and end. The Church challenges our faith as an essential part of the Christian salvation; a mystery, to the acknowledgment of which we are shut up by the inward movement of the Creed. But in Germany, they cannot look at the matter in the same way. Their circumstances forbid it. Their churches are dependent on the State, are ruled by civil authority, have no proper ecclesiastical authority or power of their own. How, standing in the bosom of such Erastian systems, can German theologians be considered good authority for any thing that has to do with the proper solution of the Church Question? We profess no agreement with them here, and ask from them no endorsement of our views. We know that we stand upon higher ground. Who among us can think of accepting Rothe's idea of the Church, by which it is made to merge itself at last formally in the Christian State? Who that has had the least insight into the miserable church relations of

the late Dr. Ullmann, Prelate so called of the Church in Baden, would be willing to take him as a sound expositor of what the article of the Church means in the Apostles' Creed? And just so with the judgment of the excellent Dr. Dorner, quoted against our Liturgy on the subject of Ordination. It is only what was to be expected. It carries with it for us no weight whatever. God forbid that we should be bound here by Prussian examples or Prussian opinions in any form.

ART. XI.—FALSE INTERPRETATION.

BY DANIEL GANS, D. D., NORRISTOWN, PA.

"FOR MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN I."—*John* xiv. 28.

We are not surprised that the unbelieving are found to take peculiar interest in those passages of Holy Scripture which they can pervert in favor of their own purposes. They cannot rid themselves entirely of the claims of the Bible. They cannot wholly cast it away as a "cunning device"—as an imposition practiced upon the credulity of men—as a deceit which has deceived the world. This would be going too far. This would be condemned by the good solid sense of all communities. Aye, this would be monstrous even in the eyes of their own consciences. No one man can expect to establish the conviction that all the world is crazy, and that he only is sane. Nevertheless, where they can find a passage which may seem to aim a stab at some vital point in the Christian system, which may, by a false construction, or by tearing it out of its proper connection, or by regarding the sound rather than the sense, be made apparently to undermine any one of the great pillars upon which divine revelation rests, you will find them to take a very active interest in it. You will find them very forward to refer to such passages; and when they do refer to them, you will notice a peculiar light kindling in their eye, and