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The Importance of Systematic Theology.

In recent years there has been a growing disposition to depreciate systematic theology. It does not have the determining force in preaching and in study it once had. It is not given the prominence and direction in advanced courses of theological investigation that our fathers assigned to it. Rationalistic criticism has done much to remand it to a comparatively subordinate place in scholarly thinking and research.

Over against it many are extolling the newer discipline known in the curriculum as Biblical Theology, or the study of the Bible, book by book, without reference to the systematizing of its facts, principles and dogmas. Under it we are told that dogmatism will disappear and love of the Word of God be revived and quickened. No doubt it has its advantages, but it is no substitute for systematic theology. The two should go hand in hand—the one must not supplant the other. He who ignores systematic theology is in danger of lacking a clear, definite, discriminating, properly-balanced, thoroughly-digested and harmonizing knowledge of the Scriptures. He does not see the necessity of due comparison, of judicious modification and of the right proportion of truth. He is tempted to exalt parts of Holy Writ at the expense of its general trend. He is likely to take up with favorite portions, minimizing what modifies them, and magnifying everything bearing upon his special interpretations, or to set forth what seems striking and prominent in one book, and fail to see how it is affected by subsequent books. There is a unity in the Bible. It is a whole. Truth has been revealed and communicated at different times, under different conditions, and through different instruments. Out of the various writings must be collected the system or body of doctrine taught in the entire volume.

Upon this kind of work the best minds Christendom has ever produced have been engaged. The theological investigations of centuries have been preserved. Bodies of divinity have been elaborated, sifted and tested. To the labors of the past each succeeding generation is indebted. It is no part of wisdom to despise and neglect the productions of such men as Augustine, Calvin, the Edwards' and the Hodges'. No one is fit to be an intelligent and safe exegete or expounder of the Word of God who is not well grounded in Divinity, or who has not grasped and mastered its truths and principles. He will be one-sided and erratic.

The trouble to-day with so many teachers and writers who are putting forth their crudities, is that they have not studied the Bible in its entirety, nor been rooted and grounded in its faith and teaching in their early student-life. There are men who have the ear of the public who would give less uncertain utterances if they had had a thorough theological training at the outset of their career. Those who have had the advantage of a ripe theological discipline, and have

rightly improved it, are generally proof against modern neologists and speculators. It is sad to see so many ministers proclaiming in a tentative way, and, in some cases, even with a good deal of positiveness, views which they would never hold, or promulgate, if they were masters of theology.

There is no chair in our seminaries to-day of so much importance to the Church as that of systematic theology. It makes the intelligent, orderly, reliable and instructive preacher and expounder of truth. The other chairs of instruction have their value, and all combined are necessary in their place and relation, but it is folly, as well as a peril to the ministry and to the Church, to ignore and undervalue careful and thorough theological indoctrination. We would love to note a revived interest in this department of study, and prizes offered for excellence in it. Men of wealth are providing for special scholarships in other lines of the seminary curriculum; why not in this? Let there not be less inducements to marked attainments in other disciplines, but more to the highest proficiency in that which means so much for a rightly and fully indoctrinated and stable pulpit and pew.

Revival Signs.

Revivals of religion are to be sought and encouraged. Usually they begin with the pastor in a deepening sense of responsibility and in more earnest and pointed preaching. He touches responsive Christians, when a greater solicitude for friends and neighbors is manifest. Frequently the blessed work starts in a single family, when some member, passing through a trying affliction, is led to Christ, which causes others to inquire into the circumstances, and to become anxious about themselves. At other seasons, a Sabbath-school is stirred by the Holy Spirit through praying teachers, or by the sudden death of a member, and scores find the way of life. Often a community is awakened to serious thoughtfulness by a startling providence, which the apt and discerning minister turns to saving account. At other times Christians lament the low state of piety in the church and begin to remedy matters, when the Lord hears their cries, and Pentecostal showers follow. Nor is it an uncommon thing for revivals to succeed a sessional conference, a presbyterial convocation, or a synodical gathering. Sometimes they come, we know not how. God is a sovereign, and works in his own time and in his own way.

Howsoever and whensoever they commence, Christians ought to be quick to note the signs of their appearance and to do whatever may be necessary for deepening and furthering them. It is a happy and covetable gift which enables one to discern the Spirit's movements. Some persons, in the early stages of his manifestation, are hardly aware of his operations, while others seem to apprehend his presence without diffi-

identified himself with the anti-slavery cause. Nor was it a theory, but an innate genuine sympathy for the poor, defenceless slave. Not a few of the leaders in this agitation were men of liberal thought, and although religious, had lost the evangelical doctrines of Christianity. They believed the Bible, but had departed from the Church's interpretation of it, which was to sustain the institution of slavery. Mr. Conway followed his new leaders and separated from his Church and his home, and found his way to New England and Harvard, where he prepared for the ministry of the Unitarian Church. He lectured and wrote on the question pertaining to the emancipation of the slave. He settled as a Unitarian minister in Washington at the beginning of the war. He knew President Lincoln and held frequent conferences with him about the conduct of the war and the liberating of the slaves. He was in personal touch with many of the chief actors in that period of conflict. Because of his religious and political attitude he was entirely ostracised from his family and kindred. But in the changes his father's slaves had gathered into the city of Washington in goodly number. When he found them he took care of them and at the risk of his life and great sacrifice he led them into the free soil of Ohio, and found them homes and employment. Before the close of the war he went to England to lecture on the problems of our country and the questions of government. For thirty or more years he remained in London. He introduces us to the noted men of England who have already passed away. His portraits of prominent men in this country and Europe make up the larger part of his work. He gives us a near, personal view of men which no history could give.

The sad phase of this picture is to see a man of high talent and religious antecedents fall away from the evangelical faith which he once preached into the cold and comfortless assumptions of rationalism and unbelief.

President Warfield's Address at the Inauguration of Chancellor McCormick.

Dr. Ethelbert Warfield, President of Lafayette College, attended the inauguration of Chancellor McCormick, of the Western University of Pennsylvania, in Pittsburg, on Feb. 22, and made an address. He spoke in part as follows:

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you upon the opportunity which this day opens to you. To the man of earnest purpose the one thing which he desires most is a field worthy of his best endeavors. You are placed in the midst of one of the most active centers of human industry. It teems with material wealth. Far above all the accumulated power of the mills and factories and banks you have the motive energies of them all in a vast army of earnest men. You are upheld in the position you occupy not only by the needs of this material civilization, of this vital manhood, but also by the traditions which belong to the word university.

In no part of the world has it been better understood than in America that the fundamental and indispensable faculty of every true university is that of arts. The all but innumerable institutions which have but this single

faculty, and are content to be known as colleges, testify to this. The great significance of this is to be found in the fact that what we call a college education stands for those things which are indispensable to the highest manhood, character, culture and consecration.

Of these the first springs from the discipline which a man may gain from the reiterated lessons of a life-long struggle in the world, but gains best from the earnest pursuit of knowledge under a wise master. However acquired it is the indispensable basis of manhood.

The second is the fruitage of intellectual grafts upon a stock of sound character. Without culture the university sinks to a mere workshop. With culture it becomes the gracious benefactress of the State. Its quality is often as indefinable and elusive as that of the breeze of June or the flavor of the finest fruit. We cannot tell what it is that makes the heart laugh within us when the summer breezes break the long thralldom of a slow-footed spring, nor analyze the sweetness of the sun-ripened peach.

"All service counts the same with God," sang Pippa as she passed through Browning's poem. But the poet shows how far this is from true. Work, no matter how prosaic or commonplace, consciously performed makes for character. But culture comes from companying with nobler natures and sublimer thoughts.

If character marks the man and culture the scholar, consecration is needed to complete the Christian gentleman. I pray God your institution may ever be a school of Christian culture. In order to be this, there must somewhere be a fountain of inspiration, a spirit of consecration. To be a man of culture without a purpose to use that culture to make the world better is to invite the curse of the barren fig tree.

I say to you, Mr. Chancellor, that these are the great fundamentals of the university's contribution to the manhood of its home. Men sometimes forget their value. They assume that all men have character—till they test them. They fancy that all the world needs is to be housed and fed at a fair profit. They declare that the passion for money will make men work without consecration.

But those who look deepest know that our civilization rests on faith between man and man, and needs character; yes, a great deal more than is now being used in finance and commerce and the organization of industry. They know how much it needs culture, the finer eye and the truer eye and the larger mind—that our buildings and our bridges may be beautiful as well as strong, our strong men kind as well as powerful, our homes happy as well as luxurious. They know how much it needs consecration, that the impulses of life may direct men to a larger ideal of social service, of patriotism, and of obligation to God.

Surely there is no place in the world which should cherish those ideals more than this. What a trust this great body of wealth realized and potential is! How much depends on the character of future generations! What an immense investment is made here in the application of science to industry! How much depends on the progress of human knowledge in the domain of pure science, of economics and of social philosophy! What a tremendous stake has this community in the permanence of government! How much depends on

the propagation of the Gospel, with its great calls to charity, forbearance and self-sacrifice!

"High-Churchism Gone Mad."

Under this title The Protestant Churchman, an Episcopal paper published in Washington, D. C., gives the following. The paper itself, we understand, is issued as a protest against the growing ritualism and destructive criticism in that Church:

"It has been claimed often enough and with positiveness enough that the present name of the Church is what stands in the way of its growth; that if we would renounce our Protestantism and take the title 'Catholic' we should grow rapidly.

"As far as gains from the Roman and Greek communions are concerned, there is not the slightest evidence that we should make any. They deny the validity of our ministry, each, as we have shown before, claiming to be the only true Church. They are not going to join us for a mere change of name while we remain to them a little 'sect.' In regard to other Protestants than ourselves, we venture to say our name has nothing whatever to do with their continued separation from us. There is, however, a reason that has a great deal to do with it. It is the boundless arrogance of the claims often thrown in their faces, and thrown at times in the most offensive and insulting manner. Here, for instance, is a letter published in one of our largely circulated Church papers.

"The writer is one Wilberforce Wells, of Lebanon Springs, New York. He is evidently a rector at a summer resort. A Presbyterian gentleman—obviously a Christian as well as a gentleman—courteously asks the rector if he can be allowed to come to the Lord's table during the summer. The rector answers with a decided no. The gentleman asks why.

"'Because,' was the answer, 'you are living and intend to live in sin. You do not truly and earnestly repent of *all* your sins. You do not mean to follow *all* the commandments of God and walk in *all* his holy ways.'

He said: 'What do you mean?'

"'I mean,' said he, 'that being a Presbyterian or anything else but a Catholic is a sin in itself,' etc.

"We will not characterize the bigotry and Phariseism of the reply. The Presbyterian was evidently a godly and conscientious man, who wished to obey his Master. He supposed the sacrament was the *Lord's* Supper and not the supper of Mr. Wilberforce Wells or his Church. That was where he made his mistake. But we should like to see the meeting of these two men before the judgment seat of Christ. We can imagine one saying, 'Lord, I was a Presbyterian, to be sure; but I loved you and I wanted to 'remember' you. I was in this man's parish, and he forbade me to come to your table. He said I was a Presbyterian, which was a sin itself, and he would none of me. But, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee.'

"What Wilberforce Wells would say to the Lord we do not know, nor would it be half as important as to know what the Lord would say to Wilberforce Wells.

"Another correspondent of the same class, Rev. G.

W. Dumbell, of Goshen, New York, writes in regard to another clergyman who is under pressure for his opposition to ritualism, and who has said, not as a threat, but as a simple fact, that if he should be driven out of the Church for his non-ritualistic and non-sacerdotal views five hundred of his people would follow him into some other Christian communion. Mr. Dumbell is amazed at this statement, and does not see how the clergyman can contemplate 'without horror the possibility of his lapsing into heresy and schism and taking five hundred persons with him to *perdition*. I use these last words, says Mr. Dumbell, 'advisedly.'

"That is, in the charitable judgment of Mr. Dumbell, if a man is driven out of the Episcopal Church, as two thousand of the most godly ministers of the Church of England were driven out under the infamous Stuarts, he and all who go with him go to hell!

"It is this sort of teaching—as stupid as it is wicked—not the name of the Church, that turns from us intelligent Christians of other names, whether the teaching is expressed in the coarse way of these writers or in smoother terms with the same theory behind them."

It is a healthful sign to find in the Episcopal Church such protests against "High-Churchism gone mad."

Y. Z.

Paragraphs.

By Rev. George Haws Feltus.

Any one can find fault; only few know to appreciate.

* * *

One feels most the duty of others who feels least his own.

* * *

Salvation by faith is salvation without works but not salvation from works.

* * *

The conceited man holds too much for his own head to hold, so it runs over in words of advice to others.

* * *

Manful acceptance of hardships, instead of timid effort to escape, has the effect of making the hardships easier to bear.

* * *

There is no serious objection to men being a law unto themselves; the difficulty is that such people seldom enforce the law.

* * *

The fear of failure is not a reason for a Christian to remain outside of the church. Is there hope of not failing if you do not make a public profession of discipleship? If so, then you are wise in not making a profession. But will the church help in sustaining a Christian life? Then come into the church for the help you will receive.

* * *

There is not a radical difference of creed between the various denominations; all believe in one God and in an only Way of salvation. The distinction is maintained by the tenacity of the clericals to their non-essentials. Yet scarcely one minister, bishop or priest in a hundred but decides to which sect he will adhere before he has studied the peculiar tenets of that sect.