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## ARTICLE I.

### GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS TO BE UNIVERSALLY CONFESSED.\*

The pure and unsullied righteousness of God lies at the foundation of all right conceptions of his nature, his word, and his works. God is himself absolute moral perfection. Whatever he speaks is absolute truth; whatever he does is absolute righteousness. It must be so. The God who is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom and power, must be so no less in his holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. You can more reasonably deny the existence of God altogether, than deny that. An infinite devil is a moral impossibility; our reason revolts at it, no less than our conscience. The heathen, with all their devil-worship, have never imagined, much less believed in, such a monster. The advocates of Dualism never held to such an absurdity; for even in their view, the eternal principle of evil is eternally limited and checked by the eternal principle of good. Consciously or unconsciously, the mind refuses to ascribe infinite attributes to a being even tainted with moral imperfection. Jupiter with all his magnificence

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\*Some peculiarities of this paper render it proper to state that it embodies the substance of a sermon preached before the late Synod of South Carolina, which has been reduced to writing and prepared for publication in this form, at the particular request of one of the Editors of this REVIEW.

effect. If the world has produced men whose lives have been productive of grander or mightier results, we know not who they are. And yet the author of the Minority Report regards such men as mere dispensable appendages, if not excrescences on the missionary work.

J. LEIGHTON WILSON.

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ARTICLE VI.

THE SECOND GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE PRESBYTERIAN ALLIANCE.

*Report of the Proceedings of the Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance, convened at Philadelphia, September, 1880. Printed by direction of the Council. Edited by JOHN B. DALES, D. D., and R. M. PATTERSON, D. D. Presbyterian Journal Company, Philadelphia; and J. C. McCurdy & Co., Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis. 1,154 pp. 8vo.*

We have had special reasons for sympathising in the general impatience for the appearance of this volume. But now that we have actually seen it, have felt its weight, have looked into its 1,154 pages of closely printed matter, impatience gives place to wonder that it has appeared so soon, or that it should have ever come at all. And when, by some effort of the imagination, we try to realise that the larger portion of this volume was really delivered before one audience within the space of less than nine working days, we believe more than ever in Presbyterian pluck and endurance. To our own humble share in the proceedings, which, for the most part, consisted in the effort to hear, "mark, and inwardly digest" this Noachian deluge of learning, we feel like applying the urchin's translation of the well known lines of Horace—

Exegi monumentum ære perennius.

Regali situ Pyramidum altius, etc.

"I have eaten a mountain tougher than brass, and taller than

the kingly structure of the Pyramids"! We no longer feel the slightest touch of shame at the sense of utter satiety which more than once impelled us to forsake the Academy of Music, resounding with the ceaseless stream of orthodoxy, for the melancholy roar of the sea-lions, the antics of the monkeys, and the chatter of parrots in the Zoological Garden. Surely the mere sight of this bulky volume will convince Dr. Knox and the Belfast Committee, if nothing else does, that the next programme must be cut down at least to one-half if not to one-third of these proportions. It may be very well, once for all, to demonstrate in this manner that we are the lineal descendants of the iron men of old, who wrote ponderous folios and preached four hours. But if the Council goes on at this rate, there will be a gross literalness in the Apostle's hyperbole, "The world will not be able to contain the books." Only by stern repression of this exuberant genius for "Papers" can time be found for conference upon schemes of practicable coöperation, upon the inauguration and success of which, we must believe, more than all else, depends the value and perpetuity of the Alliance.

The work as it lies before us reflects credit upon the editors and publishers. Errors of course can be detected here and there. The phonographer fails occasionally to catch the exact purport of the extemporaneous remark, or the correct name of the speaker may not in every case be given. But the wonder is that so few mistakes occur in a volume so extensive, the contents of which are of such diversified character. The appendices are full, and the index enables one to turn in a moment to any topic in the programme. The value of the book is enhanced not a little by the elegant designs, due to the taste and skill of Dr. McCook, Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements, representing by appropriate emblems the various historical Churches of the Alliance, so that a glance of the eye takes in an epitome of their history, its great events and chief actors.

The reader will cheerfully excuse us from attempting to analyse in detail so large a volume, and one embracing such a variety of topics. Instead of attempting this, we will content ourselves by a rapid survey of some of the principal matters dis-

cussed in the Council, in order that we may see the present status of opinion in the Reformed Churches as reflected in these discussions. To do this we shall not attempt to adhere to the order laid down in the programme, but rather seek to group the discussions together under such headings as: 1. Dogmatics; 2. Apologetics; 3. Ecclesiology; 4. Religion and Society; 5. Christian Activity and Coöperation.

### I. DOGMATICS.

The topic of Dogmatics was fittingly introduced by Dr. Rainy's paper on "Modern Theological Thought" (p. 77). We heard the paper criticised at the time, as being deficient in a plan and devoid of a clearly defined point. However, much information, the fruit of an intelligent survey of a very wide field, is given, and the paper is better suited for private reading than for the rapid process of public presentation.

"During a period of great mental activity," he says, "maxims and methods have formed themselves on the general field of intellectual effort. They are found, or are supposed, to be valid in that field, and they claim universal application. They embody strong impressions adverse to the admission of authority, incredulous of the supernatural, inclining to trust exclusively to what may be called material and tangible proof. They embody also strong impressions as to the condition of human existence, the measure of human responsibility, the past history and future destiny of man. These maxims and methods press on the convictions and habits heretofore cherished in believing minds. They claim a right to alter or to subvert. How is this pressure to be dealt with? What is to be made on theological ground of these maxims, of these methods? By various schools this question is diversely answered. Sometimes a hostile, or a precautionary, attitude is assumed toward the tendencies whose presence is felt. Sometimes, on the contrary, they are welcomed, and their influence in a new shaping of theology is studied with predilection. Hence arise problems for all the theologies and for our own."

Dr. Rainy proceeds by noting the *apologetic tone* imparted to all theological literature. Every belief being called into question,

it is natural that belief be stated with eye to that expected doubt. The immediate source of this critical movement he finds in the great crisis of the last century, our own times witnessing the unfolding of that movement. The whole contents of human thought have been all the while involved, but the effects have been more marked in the theological sphere. Criticism has attacked the credentials of Christianity, and in order to reach as many as possible, apologetic discussion has, *argumenti causâ*, been disposed to make provisional concessions. "Grant that the measure of divine guidance vouchsafed to the writers is debatable, yet," etc. Criticism has invaded the contents of revelation, and the same concessive tone is heard. The *tendency* is inbred, for the nature of apologetic is to persuade. In dealing with various classes, it must argue, of course, *ex concessis*. Speculative theology reflects the tendency also, "for the object of such systems is not, directly at least, the practical service of the Church, nor is it edification. The want they meet is purely intellectual. The aim is to exhibit theology in its relations to philosophy; or to exhibit it as one department of the whole of reasoned knowledge, continuous and coherent with the rest. It proceeds on the idea that theology, like other systems, must be pervaded by the questions: How do I know that I know? in what sense do I know? Theology is to be placed in harmonious relation to man's faculties; and not to these alone, but to the whole world of thought and impression which man has acquired, and to the maxims he has learned to hold valid. In short, theology is to be contemplated in the light of man's best conceptions of the intellectual world he lives in, and his best conceptions of the conditions of his intellectual and moral life" (p. 81). Hence it is not to be wondered at that speculative theology is somewhat at a discount in orthodox schools. The tendency is to overdo its work—to minimise difficulties and differences in order to effect adjustments with the thought of the age. Dr. Rainy illustrates these positions by instancing the tendency to retire into the background, as it were, the "juridical element" of the Reformed Theology, to which he is disposed to give, if not the central place, yet the name of the "organising or dogma-building ele-

ment." He does not, of course, assume that the Reformed Theology may not be supplemented or corrected, but he emphasises the thought that such a change as this, if effected, would be a great step.

He proceeds to intimate the bias imparted to the view taken of this central principle by the prominence recently given to the "Fatherhood of God," and more recently still by the idea of the "educative process" through which the race is being led.

And then, after briefly glancing at the persistent influence now exerted by discussions as to the "theory of religion"—its root in human nature, the primary ideas of the mind—he goes on to say: "Thus considered, modern theology bears the aspect of one who revolves and ponders the necessity of a revision and the propriety of a reaction. A question is in presence about the earlier theologies, the theology of the churches and the confessions. These earlier theologies—take them as a whole—may be described as projected simply from the point of view of Bible teaching and of faith. In intention, at least, that was their character, whatever perversities of method clung to them. The question now everywhere in the air is, Did not all those theologies overdo the confidence of their interpretations and the sweep of their conclusions? Did they not, as some think, trust their sources too simply, *i. e.*, trust too much to the Bible? Or did they not, as others say, interpret those sources too unguardedly, taking that as absolute which was true only under qualification, and that as universal which was true only *secundum quid*? And if such errors do attach, is it in great and substantial matters, or only in small and circumstantial, that the errors are?" (P. 87.)

In her efforts to solve these questions, modern theology applies herself to every available source of information; the sacred writings are analysed afresh to determine, if possible, the exact mental state of the writer; historical theology traces the influences under which this or that doctrine was brought into prominence; philosophy restates man's latest exposition of the intellectual world, in order that Christianity may be adjusted to it. "We who meet here are not of the number of those who imagine that sweeping changes will prove inevitable or imperative." But.

the Church must be ready to act her part. In order to know just how the mind of Christ strikes upon and into the ferment of human thought, one must study both the revealing word, and also our time in its mental workings. It may be well to signalise more clearly the relative certainty for the various elements of our theology. But Dr. Rainy cannot see how the Church can undertake to discriminate, as she is asked by some believing theologians to do, between two theologies—a biblical one, and one that is speculative—requiring absolute assent to the one, but allowing a certain latitude of questioning as to the other.

We have been more careful to exhibit the contents of this paper because the comparative isolation of our country and Church had hardly given us an opportunity to measure the ferment which is heaving and working so actively in other centres of Christian life. Let us be instructed betimes. Many of us shall not have passed from the stage of action until the cyclone shall be careering overhead and around us. Deeper thinking, broader culture, is demanded of those who would guide the thinking of the coming era. May it be true of us that "*Forewarned is forearmed.*"

But the key-note to all that was done under this head may be said to have been struck by Dr. Humphrey in his masterly paper, "The Inspiration, Authenticity, and Interpretation of the Scriptures." (P. 104.) Recent movements of thought, especially in Scotland, have given marked prominence to this cardinal doctrine. Hence every eye was fixed and every ear open when the Doctor began. The trumpet gave no uncertain sound. Taking the same line of thought which we first met with in Dr. Tayler Lewis's admirable little volume, "The Divine-Human in the Scriptures," he proceeded with incisive, rapid strokes to develop the analogy between the incarnate word and the written word—all Human, all Divine! The *modes* of the Spirit's operation unrevealed and undiscoverable, but the results *demonstrable*. The warm assent of the Council found expression in a burst of applause. And then Dr. Watts, of Belfast, followed in an oral discourse of great cogency and power (p. 113), the chief point being the testimony of Christ as to the authenticity and the plenary inspiration of Scripture, contrasted with the position of

the Higher Criticism, so-called. And along with this crushing reply to the critics, he insisted upon the office of the Holy Ghost in the economy of grace, as to the person of the Mediator and all his official acts, and then *a fortiori*, as regards the functions of the apostolate. And when opportunity was allowed for brief discussion on the topic (p. 137), earnest words of assent were spoken by Principal Cairns of Edinburgh, Dr. Skinner of Cincinnati, and Dr. Burns of Halifax, while Dr. J. Murray Mitchell, Narayan Sheshadri, and Mr. McKenzie of China, added interesting testimony, growing out of their experience of the contact of the Bible with the sacred books of Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Parseeism, and Confucianism. And Principal Caven of Toronto filled out the remaining time in warm endorsement of the confessional doctrine of an infallible rule of faith. The whole body, as it were, had spoken with one heart and one voice on this great question.

The next great dogma to which we shall call attention was brought up on the fifth day of the sessions (p. 357)—“The Vicarious Sacrifice of Christ.” The first paper was read by Dr. Cairns of Edinburgh, and it is not too much to say that nothing more completely enchained the attention of the Assembly or thrilled its heart more than the lucid setting forth of the “old, old story.” The reader’s soul was manifestly wrapt in the intense enjoyment of his theme. Singularly devoid of the graces of elocution, his “blood-earnestness” overbore all criticism and commanded full sympathy. 1. The idea of atonement, he contended, had generally in some shape or other commended itself to the religious instincts of man. 2. It rests upon the data of the Old Testament revelation. 3. It is in harmony with all other revealed truth. 4. It is tested and illustrated in Christian experience. It is the centre of life and enterprise to day. It is the burden of those hymns of devotion which vibrate upon the hearts of God’s people. The hearty earnestness of the venerable Scotchman, more still, his mighty theme, stirred feelings too deep for utterance, and many a cheek was wet with tears.

Dr. Hodge’s paper, “The Vicarious Sacrifice of Christ as understood by the Churches represented in this Alliance,” was



worthy of his reputation. He is careful to define the exact import of the phrase "Vicarious Sacrifice." It is not coextensive with redemption, soteriology, or the provinces covered by justification and adoption, but expresses the exact connexion between the sufferings of Christ and the remission of sins. This being settled, he proceeds to emphasise the historical fact that this conception of Vicarious Sacrifice is confessed in all the symbols of the Reformed Churches. And not only as a doctrine, one among many, but as *the doctrine*, carrying with it our whole gospel, our whole religious and ecclesiastical life. It is the catholic creed of all the Churches of the Reformation as well. It comprehends all those partial views of the truth which have been so eagerly held by aberrant minds within the evangelical fold—the theory of a moral impression to be made on men's minds; an exemplification of the great principle of self-sacrifice; sympathetic self-identification in order to a full confession of our sins; the governmental theory of Hugo Grotius. All these are but dismembered parts of the complete whole, and are defective rather because of what they deny than what they affirm.

It happened in the hurry of business that discussion was not called on these papers. But the sympathies of the body were unmistakably shown. The great Council was as one man with regard to the vicarious sacrifice of Christ.

And while all were thus standing, mellowed and tender, before the Cross, it was judiciously arranged that Dr. Witherspoon, of Petersburg, Va., should read his paper on "The Duration of Future Punishment." He began by briefly giving the *status questionis* as it might be gathered on *prima facie* evidence—on the one hand, God's witnessing Church in all successive ages, standing in solid phalanx with scarcely a discernible gap; on the other, an incongruous mass moved by feeling which vents itself in passionate denunciation. The appeal to antiquity is neutralised by the manifest unsoundness of their witnesses upon other vital points as well as this. While among themselves they are divided into opposing schemes of Universalism, Annihilationism, Restorationism, and the latest phase, for which Dr. W. proposes the designation, "Æonism." It is, in fact, a species of Nescience or

Agnosticism introduced into the exposition of Scripture. Of this, as all know, Canon Farrar is the foremost champion at present.

In setting forth the confessional doctrine as to Future Punishment, Dr. W. wisely forbore to attempt in thirty minutes the compass of so wide a topic, which could only have resulted in cursory mention of trite points connected with the discussion. Instead of this, he chose a single term, and that specially commended not only because of the prominence given to it by recent discussions, but also because it is perhaps the most important word in its applications to this awful theme.

"In coming before you to-day," he said, (p. 372,) "I have no purpose to attempt a compass of this controversy. Time would not permit. I take my stand upon a single point in the line of defense—one that seems to me to be the key to the whole position. I shall ask your attention to a review, in the light of recent scholarship, of the signification of a single word—a commonplace word, I know, but one upon which the whole controversy is made to hinge. I refer to the word *αἰών*. Of the original signification of this word no better expression can be given than that found in the celebrated passage of Aristotle, who makes it to be a compound of *αἰεί*, *forever*, and *ὄν*, *existing*, so that it carries in its very structure the idea of eternity. Classical scholars all agree that it comes from that root whose simplest formation, and therefore the one most colorless, is the adverb *αἰεί*, *forever*. They all agree that this same root, passing into other languages of the Indo-European stock, appears in the German *ewig*, and the English *aye* and *ever*; that it lies at the basis of the Latin *æternus*, *æternitas*, and the English *eternal*, and *eternity*. But that which we claim of importance is the testimony of Aristotle as to the usage of the word to signify the complete period of existence. Taking this idea of the complete period, the *all of existence*, as our clue, it is easy to trace the whole classic usage of the word; for evidently the first measure of completed existence which suggested itself to the mind was a human life. It was the man's *all of existence* to the eye of sense. Hence, in the earliest Greek literature a man's life is his *αἰών*. And so,

viewed by these same standards of sense, the nation has its *aión*—its all of existence from its rise to its fall. The material world, in so far as it is viewed as temporal, has its *aión*—its all of duration. But as the mind advances in thought beyond the temporal and finite, there comes into view, first dimly shadowed forth, then more clearly revealed to cognition, a past in which there must have been existence of some kind that never began, a future in which there must be existence of some kind that shall never end. And thus *aión* comes to signify the complete period of all existence, past and future—eternity in its strictest sense—that unmeasured and measureless duration in which all conceivable time is but a brief parenthesis, a ripple upon the surface of an ocean without bottom and without shore.”

Having thus seized upon the clue which is to guide him through the tangled labyrinths of affirmation and denial, Dr. W. proceeds to apply and justify the position gained, by a reference to the contrasted usages of Plato and Aristotle, of the poets philosophers, and rhetoricians. And then passing into the Septuagint translation, he signalises the continuity of this idea of a totality of existence. *Aión* renders the Hebrew עוֹלָם when it expresses the being of God, his kingdom, glory, mercy, etc. And even when it expresses duration which is clearly finite, the limitation in every instance can be seen to arise from the nature of the case—it expresses the completed period of existence for that thing. The same principles obtain in the New Testament. Twenty instances are admitted in which *aión* expresses duration less than infinite, “but in every case in which it is so used the subject is one that admits of only a limited duration, and the word *aión* retains its original force, as expressing the totality of duration of that to which it refers.” In perfect accord with this radical signification we find the contrast made between the present *aión*, (*time*, as we say,) the completed existence of the present order of things, and the future *aión*, which never ends, being the whole existence of God and immortal souls. These conclusions are applied with crushing force against the position of Canon Farrar, that *aión* is a word indeterminate in its application to future punishment. The force of the prepo-

sitions *ἐκ*, *ἀπὸ*, and *εἰς* is carefully noted, and the blunder exposed that *πρό*, in temporal clauses with a genitive, should be rendered *before* the time, instead so long a time *before*, the later Greek usage being exactly parallel with the Latin *pro* with the ablative of time. *Pro paucis diebus*, *πρὸ πέντε ἡμερῶν*, being respectively, "a few days before," "five days before."

The expressions *εἰς αἰῶνας*, *εἰς αἰῶνα αἰώνων*, *εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων*, etc., are then taken up and analysed, the procedure of the mind being given as to their formation. *Αἰών* in itself expresses limitless duration. But when the mind seeks to enter into that sphere, it strives to realise more vividly to itself the vastness of duration.

"The mind stretching itself to embrace the utmost conceivable period of duration, makes that the unit in a system of additions and multiplications, that by these as stepping-stones, it may pass on and on in its nearest possible approximation in consciousness to the infinite period embraced in its logical concept. But so far from the idea in these expressions being less than strictly eternal, the very purpose of their formation is to give the most expression possible to this idea, and for Canon Farrar and others to plead these passages as a proof that *αἰών* does not mean *endless*, is about as rational as it would be to plead that because we use in English such phrases as *forever and ever*, and *eternity of eternities*, therefore the English words *forever* and *eternity* imply a period that may have an end."

Dr. W. then alludes briefly to the abortive effort to produce from the Scriptures stronger assurances for the endless happiness of the redeemed than for the endless misery of the lost. Of these terms he says: "There is not one of them the classical usage of which is more uniformly in the sense of eternal and everlasting—not one of them which could any better withstand the destructive criticism that has been brought to bear upon *αἰών* and *αἰώνιος*." And then with a passing allusion to patristic usage, he adopts the conclusion of Tyler, that "if the idea of duration without end is not expressed in the words *αἰών* and *αἰώνιος*, it cannot be expressed by any words in the Greek language." The statement of Moses Stuart in 1830 stands good to-day, he

thinks, when viewed in the full light of later scholarship: "If the Scriptures have not asserted the endless punishment of the wicked, neither have they asserted the endless happiness of the righteous, nor the endless glory and existence of the Godhead."

The charge that the ministry of the day has discarded the frequent use of "hell," "damnation," "the gnawing worm," etc., may only mean that they have ceased to employ the terrible pictures of Dante and Milton, which is to be commended; but if it signify the surrender of the testimony to the hopelessness of those who die unbelievers, then it is to be deplored and denounced. 1. "The formulation of Christian doctrine must base itself first, last, always, upon the simple testimony of God's word." 2. To falter is to admit that with regard to one of the greatest doctrines, the future state of the impenitent, the Bible speaks in variable and doubtful terms, which differs immensely from saying that it is silent. 3. To shrink from this testimony is to imperil the souls of men who cling persistently to the faintest hope of pardon after death as the ground of neglecting salvation now.

We have dwelt at some length upon this paper, not only because it was one of the most scholarly and able of all, and because it came from our own corner of the vineyard—(may it be the harbinger of the higher Biblical scholarship that is to be among us!)—but also because the confessional doctrine has been recently challenged. It was commonly reported that at least one delegate on the floor (he was from Canada) has been recently dealt with on account of alleged departure from the faith more or less pronounced. But when in view of all the facts the writer of these lines felt called upon to invite special attention to the attitude of the Alliance toward this solemn doctrine (p. 785), the allusion was met with such demonstrations of assent as showed the Council to be practically unanimous on this point also.

A valuable report on "Creeds and Confessions" was presented to the Council by Dr. Schaff, Chairman of the Committee, which appears as the fourth topic in the Appendix, (p. 935,) and fills no less than one hundred and fifty-eight pages in small

type. No explanation was given as to the precise purpose in view, except a most emphatic denial on the part of the Council of any assumption of authority on its part to "revise" creeds and confessions, which are in every case the property of the Church which holds it. No dread need be felt, we think, of unauthorised interference by way of enactment or advice. And yet, of course, if ever in the good providence of God the Churches shall see their way clear to constitute an **Œcumenical Assembly** with the powers of a church court, this movement must come about by ascertaining first what basis do our various Confessions, as they now stand, afford for such a consummation. Into this carefully prepared document we cannot at this time enter at all. It richly deserves a separate article in this **REVIEW**. And although the whole topic has been again committed, Dr. Cairns, of Edinburgh, being made the Chairman, enough matter has been already furnished to warrant such a critical article by some competent hand, showing the common basis of the Confessions, so that we may arrive at a satisfactory opinion as to the feasibility of a great federation to be expressed in a **General Assembly** for all the Presbyterians of the world. Of course it is to be expected that the closer intercourse among the Churches, and the discussions growing out of the Council, will bring the men of to-day nearer together than the framers of the Confessions may have been, acting as they did in comparative isolation. And this has given rise to grave apprehension in the minds of honored brethren in our own bounds lest we be carried away by the drift from the old moorings. Of course this danger inheres in all such associations. But unless we greatly mistake, the conservative tone of the Council will go very far toward giving preponderance to the opposite consideration that it is our duty and privilege to testify for the truth as we hold it, gladly availing ourselves of this association in order to help forward such of our brethren as may have creeds less complete than our own. We may incur some risk, but no more than we are necessitated to do in reading their books or in holding intercourse with the unbelieving of the world.

And this brings us to the excellent paper of Dr. Van Zandt of

the New Brunswick Theological Seminary (Dutch Reformed) on "Creeds and Subscriptions to Creeds." (Pp. 263-268) This he discusses under the two heads: I. "The necessity and uses of Creeds"; and II. "The nature and extent of the obligation incurred by subscription to them." Under the first head, the doctor answers briefly the various objections which have been urged against Creeds: 1. That they antagonise the fundamental principle of Protestantism. 2. That they disparage the Scriptures by implying defect as to substance, or as to mode of statement in God's word. 3. That they obstruct research and progress in theology. 4. That none is qualified to be a Creed-maker. And all these objections having been fairly met, he proceeds to the more difficult matter of subscription.

"It is obvious that on this question extremes are to be avoided. But the discovery and adjustment of the golden mean is not so easy. It is against the whole spirit of our Protestantism, and would be ruinous to any Church, to insist upon unqualified assent to every sentence and clause of an extended confession; but it is no less contrary to good faith and honest dealing to profess acceptance of a creed or confession, and yet hold one's self at liberty to reject and contradict whatever in it does not accord with one's own opinions. Where shall the line be drawn at which liberty becomes license? What is the criterion by which to distinguish an honest subscription from a disingenuous evasion? Who is to decide what may or may not be excepted from the obligations of an *ex animo* conformity?"

"For meeting the difficulties thus suggested, two methods have been proposed.

"First, to simplify the creed until it shall express only the essentials of the Christian life. Second, so to modify the form of subscription, that it shall involve no obligation of conformity to details, or explanations of doctrine.

"The first method is, in effect, a giving up of the whole controversy by reducing the creed to such narrow limits and general terms as to defeat all the purposes for which creeds exist.

"The second method would equally destroy the value of subscription, as a test of doctrine, or a protection against error.

The formula of subscription, '*for substance of doctrine,*' may be a relief to a scrupulous conscience, or it may also be a convenient refuge from the unwelcome pressure of an orthodox creed. The phrase itself is too indefinite and ambiguous to fix a man's theological status, or the position of a Church in which such a form of subscription prevails.

"It is not, then, by reducing creeds to the brevity of a few undefined general articles, nor yet by modifying the terms of subscription so as to destroy all the value, and significance and value of the act, that we are to avoid the extreme of a too rigid enforcement of the obligations of an accepted creed. In point of fact, that extreme is seldom reached; and in these days the danger in that direction is rather a theoretical possibility, than a matter of actual apprehension. Ecclesiastical martyrdom now lies oftener in the path of those who insist upon the obligations of an honest subscription.

"The truth is, that where creeds are not imposed, but accepted, the practical difficulties of subscription recede almost to the vanishing point. A man is not obliged to confess in the words of a creed which does not express the faith that is in him. But to whatever creed he does confess, thereto is he bound until he is lawfully discharged from the obligation.

"Moreover, he is bound to that confession, not with indefinite reservation, but *ex animo*, and in the historical and commonly received meaning of its articles, as held by the Church whose creed it is. If he has scruples or doubts concerning this or that paragraph, or proposition, it is for the authority requiring the confession to decide whether these excepted propositions are necessary to the integrity of the creed as a system of doctrines. An honest man will make these scruples known *in limine*, and he will always find provision made for their due consideration. He will find, too, that their treatment is liberal and generous; more generous sometimes to the individual than to the denomination represented."

To this solution there will be few to take exception. It embodies these fundamental propositions: 1. That it is competent to each Church or body of disciples entering into covenanted fel-



lowship with the Lord and with one another, to make as the articles of their confederation such a statement of the principal truths of Scripture as may express with sufficient fulness their common faith. 2. That it is also competent to this body of disciples, as a free Christian commonwealth, acting under a due sense of responsibility to God, and also duly observing the provisions of their own organic law regulating the modes of procedure, to amend this confession when further light has been gained. 3. It is the duty of the individual in seeking office in the Church, *first*, to ascertain the honest meaning of the confession, and *then*, his own mind sincerely agreeing thereto, to subscribe to the confession in the received historical sense, making known to the authorities who receive his confession any doubts or exceptions that may then occur to him. 4. Should subsequent examination convince him of a defect or error in the confession, it is his plain duty to go before the tribunals of his Church, state his exceptions, and cheerfully abide the decision of the power which, acting for Christ, gave him a commission to exercise authority, as to continuing or withdrawing that commission. Should the man still adhere to the conviction that he is called to preach or rule, he can seek connexion with some other branch of the Church which agrees with him. Or that failing, he can stand forth in his individual capacity to testify for Christ and his truth as he understands it. But for one who has accepted office under a written contract to attack the propositions of that agreement, while he holds to his commission as an office bearer in covenant with the Church, upon plea of "advanced thought," or light subsequently obtained, is, we humbly submit, nothing less than bad faith. This point was clearly brought out in the discussion upon Prof. Flint's paper. The overwhelming agreement of the house was plainly manifested. But Principal Grant, of Kingston, Canada, showed both misapprehension of the point and dissent from it; the manner of expressing himself not being free from the appearance of personal discourtesy to one of the speakers. No one had questioned the right of a presbyter, sitting in a court and acting under the limitations of the constitution, to move amendments to the confession. The allusion was plainly to individual action outside

of the courts, to criticisms and attacks upon a proposition in the confession made before the general public, and in such a way as to produce discontent and schism in the body of the people, who have no voice in amending the confession. To this Dr. Grant: "But we are told that brethren may go outside of the Church. I answer, that we do not endorse secession. No true minister of Christ should secede from the Church so long as he is true to the One to whom he made his ordination vows—the Head of the Church. If he is preaching what he believes to be the truth, why charge him with dishonor? Has the Church no power of discipline? Let the Church exercise its power of discipline, and cast off the brother if he is unfaithful; for the point is, that he does not think himself unfaithful, because he speaks the language of his own age, and not the language of two or three centuries ago. . . . We talk of ordination vows. A brother is under the law, primarily to Christ, and secondarily to the Church. Because he is under the law to Christ, let him speak all that Christ teaches him. He owes a duty to the Church; and let him give to the Church all the truth that he is capable of giving, until the Church says to him, 'We cannot tolerate you.' Let me illustrate by way of analogy. You of the United States have, from time to time, made amendments to your national constitution. Now, if you were to propose, as a fundamental requirement, that no amendment shall be made to the Constitution of the United States unless the citizen proposing it shall have left the United States, gone to and lived in Canada or Great Britain, do you think that any such amendments would ever be ratified by you?" (Pp. 299, 300.) The analogy is utterly inapt as to the point intended by the speaker. A "citizen" of the United States can only propose amendments when he is a member of Congress, and such proposal can only be acted upon by the legally appointed representatives of the people, not by the mass of citizens. Dr. Grant laid himself open to the reply of Dr. De Witt: "But I do wish most solemnly to protest against a most vicious illustration made use of by Principal Grant. The supposition that a judge of the supreme court of our Church may, in the exercise of his teaching gifts and in his official capacity, impugn or strike at the

very constitution which he has received and adopted, is the most vicious supposition that I have ever had the infelicity of hearing from a Reformed Churchman."

And when the opportunity was given (see p. 379.) for discussion on "Creeds and Confessions," the conservative view was shown to be the one which found favor with the house. Dr. Burns, of Halifax, earnestly deprecated the belief that the "advanced" opinions of Principal Grant, and others, represented the Church in Canada. Of eighteen delegates present in the Council, only three were believed to entertain such views. "I felt yesterday," he said, "when listening to the remarks of Dr. DeWitt, that that gentleman had struck the nail on the head. I felt that my beloved brother, Principal Grant (and no one loves him, with his great heart, more than I do), did speak unadvisedly with his lips. I do hope that the remarks of Dr. DeWitt will strike him with such force as to make an impression upon him without breaking his head."

Rev. Mr. Neilson, of New Hebrides, raised the inquiry as to the possibility of simplifying the creeds, and hoped that the discussions in the Council might shed light upon this question. "I belong," he said, "to a very old Church—to what was called 'The Reformed Presbyterian,' or 'Cameronian' branch of the Church in Scotland. In taking upon myself ordination vows, I subscribed a very long creed: I subscribed the Confession of Faith; I subscribed the Catechisms—the Larger and Shorter; I subscribed the Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Synod. I bound myself to maintain the faith contended for by the martyrs in all the persecutions in Scotland. Now, for the last fourteen years, I have been in a mission where we have been admitting converted heathen, cannibals—men who have been eaters of the flesh of ministers of the Christian Church—and we have admitted these upon a creed that can be written upon a small scrap of paper." Mr. Neilson does not clearly discriminate between the subscription required of the private member at his admission into church fellowship, and of an officer at his ordination. He leaves us in doubt as to whether he did in fact give in his adhesion twice to his long creed. But Dr. McVicar, of

Montreal, replied well: "I presume that the creed of a cannibal, in the New Hebrides, or elsewhere, when brought into the Christian Church, may be a very short one; but that the creed of the public preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and of the whole word of God, cannot be quite as short as that of the cannibal.

"Hints have been thrown out, I think, on the floor of the Council (and they are quite abundant beyond it), that there is a want of freedom in discussing the doctrines of our Church, on account of something in our polity. I grant at once that there is a limit set to the province of the public preacher. I hold that no man is entitled to go before the people, and deliver a message, until he is quite sure himself that it is the truth of God. There is a limit for him. But there is no limit set for any one of the fathers and brothers of this Council in bringing forward for discussion, by overtures in Presbyteries, Synods, and Assemblies, any doctrine which is formulated in our creed. In the Presbytery of Montreal, I would be willing to sit for eight or ten days to hear a man plead for an overture touching the doctrine of the Trinity, or any other great doctrine. I suspect, however, that we should send him home convinced that he had undertaken a very foolish piece of business, in assuming to disturb that doctrine. Yet, he is at liberty to bring it up, and discuss it to his heart's content.

"It has been hinted, too, that there is something wrong about the creeds. These hints may be wisely made in Presbytery or Synod; but, for one, I should much prefer to see such propositions distinctly formulated so as to set forth exactly what it is these brethren wish and demand. If the creed is too long, pray tell me what it is you are going to cut off. If the creed is too diffuse in its texture, pray give me a proposition which you design to substitute for that diffusiveness in a creed which you have had so long. Then I shall have something tangible to consider. But, until that is done, these mysterious hints (which often conceal far more than they express) do not present anything definite. It is hinted, too, that an adherence to creeds is calculated to hinder progress. Historically the evidence is just the reverse. The

Churches which have had long, concatenated creeds, are themselves, to-day, strong and vigorous. Churches, on the other hand, which have been constantly extemporising their creeds have been non-progressive. So that the evidences of history are in favor of length in creeds; and I can conceive of nothing that would be a greater advantage to the truth than for this great Council to gather up all the accepted truths held by Christendom, and set the stamp of its approval upon them. That alone would shut the mouths of sceptics, and would break the back-bone of the argument by which Romanism is accustomed to hold its votaries in thralldom. What we need to do, is not to go back in formulating creeds, but to discover the truth as we reason it out more fully, and as we are ready to subscribe to it. Progress is not in the direction of disintegration, but rather in the direction of reformation."

Dr. Calderwood of Edinburgh followed in one of those discriminating addresses for which he stands unexcelled among all the debaters to whom it has been our pleasure to listen.

"I listened with very great attention and interest to the discussion which we had yesterday, not at all marvelling that there are many among us who are anxious for some degree of liberty beyond what we at present enjoy, and not wondering that there were some inclined to seek a greater simplicity of creed. But as I listened, I thought it became obvious that the discussion needed to be somewhat carefully regulated with regard to all the interests involved. What was sought for by those who did so earnestly and passionately plead for increased liberty, or for a reduction of the creed, was simply that which would allow liberty to the individual, along with fidelity to the Church. But the question is, what liberty to the individual is to be allowed, and under what circumstances is it to be allowed? The fidelity of the Church is quite above the liberty of the individual in the Church, and the fidelity of the Church is its fidelity to its Master, and to the great work which the Church has to do in instructing mankind. Accordingly, we must put the responsibility of the Church for its teachings altogether above any liberty which may belong to the individual in respect to his own teachings.

“Next, it must be obvious to every one that his teaching is to be in harmony with the creed of his Church, and whosoever, acting under authority to teach God’s truth from the pulpit to the Church, asks the liberty to teach that which that Church does not hold to be God’s truth, asks what the Church cannot grant.

“But when we are brought down to this point, it is urged that we are placing ourselves in a wrong position, unless we admit that the creed may be revised. That, however, is another question, and one that stands in a totally different position. It is the liberty, the right, and the duty of each Church to revise its creed, as that Church shall see fit, by means of its own representative courts. It is for the good of theologic truth; it is for the interest of the whole Church, that the man who entertains a wish to modify, alter, or improve, shall be required first to think so long, so carefully, and so patiently, about what he means to propose, that he shall meet his brethren in the regular court to make that proposal, and shall go through all the necessary restrictions that are involved.

“In the same way you may say that it belongs to us to remember that we may shorten our creed. Certainly may the Christian Church, if it see fit, by its representative office-bearers, shorten its own creed. But it is not the right of the individual minister, whatever his position, either in the pulpit or in the chair, to begin that work of reduction. It belongs to the Church as a Church, through its representative body, to shorten its creed. The Church, rejoicing in its liberty, will act slowly, cautiously, prudently, and well, as it proceeds in this great work. Let it not then be said that we are in any way lowering the power of the Church to deal with its creed; but rather that we are asking that Presbyterian order and honor be constantly and carefully guarded in all that we do in dealing with a question such as this.

“Let us ask ourselves (while we allow all such discussion, and while we value it,) what is the exact position of this Council, and what is the relation of the Churches represented in it as a Council? We may yet do something very important in our history, by presenting the different aspects of the several Churches

in relation to the creed; but if we have to do that work at all, we have to do it well. This Council will follow behind the Churches which have the individual right (and they cannot be deprived of it,) of dealing with their creed; and it will very slowly and patiently, step by step only, and with the utmost caution, do that which, as a Council, it may think may be done, in the interest of truth and in the service of the whole Presbyterian Church. Just as we are open to admit free discussion, and yet are cautious and slow in formulating, do we serve our Churches."

Dr. Skinner, of Cincinnati, after distinguishing clearly between what is required for admission to the sacraments, and for ordination, signalled the only two omissions in the Westminster standards—a testimony against the preaching of women, and a declaration of the duty of alms-giving. These he is in favor of incorporating into the Confession.

Dr. Wallace, of Wooster, Ohio, followed in a similar strain, claiming that freedom of investigation was amply provided for. But investigation should be had before vows are taken. The candidate for ordination is competent for it, having gone through the course of philosophy and theology. Let him examine before he subscribes, and let it be understood that he has something settled when he avows his acceptance of the creed of his Church.

Dr. Murkland, of Baltimore, gave a telling illustration of the moral power of a clearly defined creed. A high dignitary of the Roman Church had said not long since to a friend of Dr. M.'s, "There is one Church that we fear above all others, and that is the Presbyterian Church, because we always know where to find it, and it meets us at every point with an intelligent answer for its faith and the Bible for its basis." And, so too, said the doctor, if the rampant infidelity of this age were to name the Church which it hates most, it would say the Presbyterian Church. The Church which Rome dreads and infidelity hates above all others, enjoys her preëminence because of her allegiance to the historic Confessions.

But enough has been produced, we think, to show the conservatism which largely predominated in the Council. There

were three brethren from Canada, a few from Scotland, just how many we could not tell, who were understood as leaning toward what is usually termed "Broad Church Views." Of these Principal Grant displayed most vigor, and was the recognised leader. From certain letters to the New York *Independent* we learn that Prof. Bruce of Scotland, as we had reasons to surmise, fully sympathises with these "advanced" views. We have given much of our space to these points, not only because of their transcendent importance, but also because we were positively told by brethren from our Church who were visitors at the Council, that there are ministers in our Assembly's bounds who do not fully receive certain doctrines of the Confession as they are held by the Church. No names were given, and we are ignorant at this writing of any such brethren. We heartily wish that we could believe our informants to be mistaken. But we wish to lift up a testimony against the danger of wounding one's conscience, on the one hand, by continuing to profess propositions (as silence certainly does), which one no longer believes *ex animo*. On the other hand, we would, to the extent of our ability, protest against the violation of one's vows, which surely results from giving forth, as a recognised teacher of the Church, views which contradict the creed one has subscribed as the condition of his ordination. The discussions herein set forth have shown us a more excellent way. Let the exception be frankly avowed to the Presbytery. And, if after consulting together in brotherly fashion, the exception be judged of such a nature as to impair the integrity of the creed, let him resign his commission into the hands that gave it. If his conscience impels him to preach, there is ample room outside the Presbyterian Church. We shall be sorry to part with such honest men. But they may be assured of the respect and esteem of every presbyter. The truth, as they understand it to be, will not suffer disadvantage from such candor and honor in those who profess it. And the seceder will lay the Church under obligations to one who has saved her from a prosecution which is sure to evoke bitterness and endanger souls. We have known such an instance, and the separatist is fully assured to this day of the respect and confidence of his former associates.



## II. APOLOGETICS.

The papers read under this head were well worthy of the distinguished men who wrote them, and of the Presbyterian name.

Dr. Calderwood's (p. 198) on "The Relations of Science and Theology," insisted upon rigidly defining the respective spheres of the two departments of thought. 1. "Science" (physical science we prefer to write it) "is concerned exclusively with observed facts, and it can advance only as observation leads or warrants a given form of inference. Science does not, indeed, profess to advance only under warrant of a perfect induction; but treating this as unattainable, asks that such precautions be taken to secure rigid accuracy of observation, that there can be no misgiving as the facts. Facts must be carefully ascertained, and so, also, must their uniform relations, in order that we may with certainty speak of accurate classification or competent inference as to the laws of nature. External observation is the instrument, facts coming within the compass of such observation are the material; and inference from these affords the result which may be described as scientific induction, or a contribution to the vast body of scientific truth. The legitimacy of all this will be universally allowed; but the most important thing to be remarked at present is, that theology does not enter upon this sphere, and is in no respect involved in what is attempted or achieved within it. The sphere lies quite apart from that of theology, which cannot under any pretext be brought into a position of antagonism. Theology has nothing to offer by way of contribution, and nothing to refuse out of the host of conclusions which may on adequate scientific tests be accepted by the human intelligence. There would be no need for insisting upon this very obvious truth, were it not that certain scientific men are accustomed to protest against the interference of theology. The interference is a myth. Science has nothing to encounter save the tests which its own methods impose, and these are the ordinary conditions of intelligence. Natural theology refuses to be restricted to external observation, but it does not suggest doubt of such observation, or profess to offer opposition to its exercise; rather it asks from all the sciences the ma-

terials with which it may itself work. Christian theology finds upon an authoritative revelation, but the revelation does not offer any help on scientific questions, does not profess to be a substitute for science. It does not forestall inquiry as to the facts of nature or the laws by which these are governed. It professes to be a revelation, by the searching of which the simplest man may learn the highest wisdom; but it does not profess to reveal the elements of geology, biology, or physics. On the contrary, it is quite in accordance with all its professions, that men should have been left waiting till the nineteenth century of the Christian era before they were able to reach a truly scientific investigation of the secrets of nature. This being so, there is ample ground for urging that theology cannot interfere with science, and protestations against theologic interference may well take end, as inconsistent with intelligent recognition of the boundaries of the sphere assigned to theology.

“On equally valid grounds it needs to be admitted that science cannot interfere with theology, because it cannot enter into its sphere, and thus can neither bear testimony nor offer criticism. Science cannot transcend its own boundaries. Unchallengeable within these, it is powerless beyond. It cannot, on any warrant capable of bearing scientific test, maintain that there are facts save those recognised by external observation, or that there is no form of truth save that which expresses the phenomena presented to the senses. Science has no testimony to bear save as to the facts of observation, and can neither affirm nor deny beyond the boundaries which it has marked out for itself and proclaimed, and which all intelligent men see must be the boundaries of science according to its nature. As it is no disparagement of theology to say that it cannot do the work of science, so neither is it any disparagement of science to say that it cannot contribute toward a rational test of theology otherwise than by presenting its testimony as to the facts of nature. I am not in this way seeking to deny that intelligence may challenge the reality of the supernatural, but merely suggesting that when this is done it is not part of the work of science; or, otherwise expressed, it is not scientifically done. There can be no scientific denial of the su-

pernatural, for science is only of the observational—that is, of the natural. What bearing this has upon the attitude and intellectual work of scepticism concerning the supernatural may be matter for after consideration. The primary and fundamental fact is that science and theology occupy distinct spheres, so that the one cannot occupy the province of the other.

“The bearing which this fact should have upon the attitude of theology toward science is that which chiefly concerns us here. It clearly implies a sound intellectual sympathy with science and delight in its progress. It is the province of one department of inquiry or thought to cherish intelligent respect for other departments; and if this be a general maxim, it must be to have special force in its application to theology; for whereas there may be that in educational science which contributes toward doubt in the supernatural, belief in the supernatural must accept with thankfulness the widening of the area of knowledge, in whatever direction advance be made. It is manifestly a part of the Church’s work to encourage and sustain the profoundest interest in the advance of science. Belief that the worlds were made by the power of God must quicken intellectual enthusiasm in the systematising of our knowledge of the universe. Whatever scientific men may have to say of theology and theologians, they should have no difficulty in recognising the sincere and delighted acknowledgment which the Church of Christ makes of the gain to the human race from widened knowledge of man.”

2. Prof. Calderwood next proceeds to note the “*closeness of the relations of theology to science.*” “Theology cannot dwell apart from science, though it is quite possible that science may dwell apart from theology. . . . Theology must stand in close and friendly relations with science, as a condition of its own existence. Even a profession of concern, because of the progress of science, is an admission of weakness. There can be no disguising of this from ordinary reflection, and there should be none in the councils of the Church. Such apprehension betrays mistrust of scientific methods, which is a challenging of human intelligence; but, in its worst light from a Christian point of view, it is mistrust of the testimony of creation from those who proclaim

unwavering trust in the Creator, and in the truth—the grand certainty—that all his works praise him. It is, therefore, one essential part of the task intrusted to the Christian Church to banish from its borders mistrust of science.”

3. “The point most for consideration is that *theology has been specially assailed from the regions of scientific inference*. Theology has not been assailed by science, the impossibility of which assault has been indicated; but by scientific men, distinguished in various departments of science, it has been met by a distinct refusal to recognise the Supernatural. It may seem only a verbal difference to say that it has been assailed by recognised scientific leaders, not by science, but the difference between science itself, and the applications which scientific men make of scientific conclusions, is immense. Science does not rest on authority, and teaches us to rest lightly on the dicta of individuals. It accepts only what evidence establishes, and constrains all to recognise. But when scientific men proceed to reason as to the logical consequences of scientific results, as warranting inference concerning the government of the world, science ceases to be responsible, whether these inferences favor theology, or assume an aspect of antagonism. Such inferences as to the government of the world become fit subjects for the general intelligence; and, according to the analogies of experience, theologians may be fairly regarded as having trained aptitude for dealing with them, while scientific observers have no special training for this task, and are in fact so much disciplined in intellectual exercise of a different kind, that they may in a large measure lack the training which fits for this work. Accordingly, it is only expressing a very general impression among intelligent men, if I say that examples of cosmic speculation from recognised scientific authorities have in several cases failed to awaken a favorable judgment of fitness for the voluntarily selected task.”

Space fails us for the remaining paragraphs of this profoundly able and compact paper. And it is next to an impossibility to compress it, since every superfluous word has been carefully eliminated. The readers of this REVIEW will not fail to detect the substantial agreement between the principles elaborated by Dr.

Calderwood, and those propounded more briefly by Prof. Woodrow in two able articles on the same general topic in the Nos. for July, 1873, and April, 1874. For the present, scientific men and theologians seem to be alike averse to a careful observance of the boundary lines between the two provinces of thought. Nevertheless, such reading and reflection as we have been able to devote to this great question brings us more and more to the belief that therein lies the solution of the question of the relations of theology to physical science. After briefly applying his principles to the defence of religion, Prof. Calderwood goes on under his fourth head to say:

“In view of the immense advance in scientific knowledge, and the admitted conflict as to the legitimate inferences from this knowledge, the interests of the Christian Church require among its adherents, and specially among its ministers, some devoted to the study of distinct departments of science. It is a legitimate claim on the part of scientific men, that the defenders of theology give evidence of possessing ample scientific knowledge. To meet this claim there must be division of labor and *specialising*. The interests of the Christian Church so obviously call for this, as to present a legitimate object of Christian ambition to those who recognise the power of such knowledge.”

Thus, from the further side of the Atlantic and from the highest seats of learning in Edinburgh, do we have a tribute paid to the far-seeing liberality of the founder of the “Perkins Chair” in the Columbia Seminary. This feature of the instruction there given constitutes, in our opinion, a separate and decisive reason for the reopening of that institution, and for special satisfaction among the friends of religion at the prospect, growing hourly brighter, that this will certainly be done, in the good providence of God.

We can scarcely resist the impulse to copy the concluding paragraphs in this notable paper in which Dr. Calderwood earnestly cautions ministers against the evil habit of making “general charges against science, and general attacks upon scientists,” and then urges them, while carefully defending the faith once for all delivered to the saints, not by hasty denunciations, but pro-

found and discriminating analysis, to cultivate the spirit of intelligent and hearty recognition, on our part, of the immense service rendered to the race and to Christian education by the expanded horizon of our knowledge of the Universe, "in which moral and spiritual life is the grandest thing discovered."

Dr. McCosh, of Princeton, followed in a paper discussing the question, "How to deal with young men trained in science in this age of unsettled opinion." (P. 204.)

After some discriminating remarks showing the limitations which must be put upon the scientific use of the much disputed term "evolution," limitations which strip it of certain metaphysical and theosophic speculations which have grown up around it, Dr. McCosh goes on to lay down wise maxims for pastors, teachers, and parents who may be called to deal with interests so delicate and so unspeakably precious. He closed by giving the results of these rules as brought out in his own experience. "In the Irish College I knew of only one young man who went away an avowed unbeliever; and he had been induced by a friend not to attend my upper class lest he should fall under my influence. I have watched the career of the thousand young men who studied under me then, most of them wielding influence in their own country, some of them in high position in India, and a few of them in this country, and I have not heard of one of them openly joining the ranks of the infidel. In this country four out of the twelve hundred students who, trained under able Christian instructors, have graduated in Princeton since I became connected with it, have left its walls believing in nothing." The subsequent history of these four is most wonderful. Two of them are now ministers of the word, one an advanced student in a theological class, and the fourth has been heard of as conducting Sunday-school exercises and opening them with prayer!

The discussion on these papers (pp. 225-234) developed nothing requiring comment beyond mention of the evidence given in the course of it, that many, perhaps the most, are hardly prepared just yet to accept Dr. Calderwood's Eirenikon. The opposition is easy to locate. Men insist just yet upon a traditional interpretation of Scripture which makes it responsible for certain

scientific theories, which thereby become matters of faith with them. Secondly, such as may develop great love for some branch of science, if they be at the same time devout, are apt to infuse their science into their theology, or their theology into their science, or both, to the great injury of all interests. We have been convinced for years that Dr. Calderwood's position is the one to which we must come. And the history of past controversies between theologians and scientific men amply justifies it.

There are some wise suggestions in the paper of Dr. de Presensé, the distinguished apologist of the Church in France, to which we must refer the reader without attempting the analysis which it richly merits. His references to recent volumes will be of great service to such as are resolved to enter into this great domain. The paper is found in its English garb at p. 902 of the Appendix. Speaking of the hostile demonstrations against the faith made by men eminent in physical science, M. de Presensé remarks (p. 906): "We cannot ignore them. The first duty of apologetics is to know them well—to possess such knowledge that the blows may not be in vain and hazardous. *I cannot approve too highly of the establishment of scientific courses in our Theological Universities*, at least where they are not already introduced. I am convinced that the more information is spread, the more easy will be the victory over contemporaneous materialism.

"The more I consider its gigantic efforts to ruin the belief in the spiritual world, the more I am persuaded of the force of our position towards each other as Christian spiritualists, and that we should not ignore the opening of the combat which is inevitable." We have taken the liberty to italicise the recommendation coming from this distinguished defender of the faith, who has earned our admiration in the thickest of the fight. It coincides fully with the advice of Dr. Calderwood in pointing out the special danger to our young men arising from the potent name of *Science*, and also in indicating that special culture is required in the ministry along that border of theology which separates it from physical science. The whole of that border-line is in dispute, and to locate it requires knowledge of the country on both

sides. It is to us at this time just about what "the Eastern Question" is to British statesmanship. And while it is true that, owing to our comparative isolation at the South, and also, in part, to the conservative character of our people, less progress has been made here by "scientific doubt" so-called, yet is it also true, as every pastor knows who is brought into contact with young men and especially such as may be entering the cultivated professions, that the epidemic has already set in. The "sporadic cases" daily become more numerous and the type of the disease more clearly defined. The cry shall soon be going up from agonised mothers, fathers, and ministers, all over our land, for our Moses and Aaron who may stand between the living and the dead, that the plague may be stayed. The taint is spreading through all our popular literature—books, magazines, newspapers. We have nothing to fear save ignorance in the ministry and unrighteousness in our membership.

The reading of Professor Flint's paper on "Agnosticism" was perhaps as vividly impressed on our mind as any incident in the proceedings. We had not seen the distinguished author before, and there was nothing in his *personnel* to suggest greatness: under medium size; of a sallow complexion; light tinted eyes; forehead broad, but low; manner rather quick and decisive, but not graceful. But when once he was fairly launched into his subject all else was forgotten, or else obscured. The only gesture was a nervous hitching of the right hand as it passed to and fro between the stand which held his manuscript and its favorite position on the right hip. The voice was not sonorous, the Scottish accent was unmistakable, but there was something in the words as they passed out into the great hall which was like the peculiar *wheep* of a minic-ball. The effect of such concentrated energy, such "blood-earnestness," to recur again to Lord Kames' description of Chalmers, is ever irresistible. Let a man have something to say that is worth hearing, and let him say it with heart and soul, he is always sure of attention and sympathy. Such was the fact with regard to Dr. Cairns—the opposite of Dr. Flint in physical proportions, but like him in being destitute of comeliness or the graces of an orator. No two men



were heard more eagerly in the Council. And their attractiveness consisted in weight of their thoughts and the energy of soul which launched the thought like a rifle-shot.

Prof. Flint briefly characterised that phase of anti-Christian thought which is known as "Agnosticism." Hume and Kant are given as its twin-source, so far as modern thinkers are concerned. It is the dogmatism of August Comte and the Positive School carried back to its justification in a metaphysical theory of knowledge. Hamilton and Mansel, Christian theists though they were, paved the way for its most conspicuous living champion, Herbert Spencer, as John Stuart Mill was before his death. "Wherever, therefore, assent is withheld because of the alleged incompetency of the mind to ascertain the truth, there is Agnosticism. The rejection of any one kind of truth on that ground is as much Agnosticism as the rejection of any other kind. What is essential in Agnosticism is the reason on which it supports itself, the attitude towards truth and knowledge which it assumes; what is non-essential are the objects or propositions to which it is applied."

"Some have represented the scepticism, which may be appropriately called Agnosticism, as negation or disbelief; others contend that it should be confined to doubt. For reasons which I have not time here to state, I hold that it may be either doubt or disbelief. It is not, however, either merely doubt or disbelief, but the doubt or disbelief which rests upon the supposition that what are really powers of the human mind are really untrustworthy; that what are actually normal perceptions, natural, or even necessary laws and legitimate processes, are not to be depended on. Ordinary doubt and ordinary disbelief have their reasons in the objects or propositions examined by the mind, not in distrust of the mind itself; they imply nothing more than the conviction of the absence of evidence for, or the existence of evidence against, the particular position in dispute. But Agnosticism challenges evidence, and refuses to be convinced by it, on the deeper and subtler ground that the mind is not endowed with faculties by which it can derive truth and certainty from what is alleged to be evidence."

“In the present day, Agnosticism is seldom applied, as it was by the ancient Greek sceptics, to all forms and kinds of what is called knowledge; it is also rarely now maintained, as it has, however, not unfrequently been maintained, to be valid with respect to what is termed reason and science, but not to faith and religion; and on the contrary, it is only in reference to the spiritual and the supernatural that it is very prevalent, and, as regards them, it is alarmingly prevalent. Contemporary Agnosticism, unlike the more consistent Agnosticism of former ages, endeavors to show that ordinary experience and the positive sciences may be received with deference and confidence, but that religion and revelation must be rejected, as presenting only credentials which the human mind is capable of testing.”

Having thus skilfully laid bare the tap-root, so to speak, from which this upas-tree, the baleful night-shade of modern scepticism in its most advanced form, originates, the apologist goes on to specify the various forces that enter into the movement. The personal influence of such great thinkers as Hume and Kant, the Neo-Kantism of Germany, ignoring, as it does, the best elements in the master's system, being the most developed form of Agnosticism. The next element is the critical temper of this age. “We are living at a time when a very large number of persons claim the right to their own judgment, who have, unfortunately, but very little judgment to exercise; when a very large number of persons forget that the right of private judgment, although very important, is only a half truth, and that the duty of judging rightly is its complement and equally important.” For this state of things, as he properly suggests, there is no rapid cure. Time and Providence must work out the problem, and in the meanwhile we may possess our souls in patience. When such immense interests are thus brought into question by minds capricious and ill-advised, there is, humanly speaking, no reasonable means of avoiding the sad consequences. Many, alas! will go down in the greedy waters for whom the gospel life-boat will not, cannot, avail, since they will have nothing to do with it. We are to stand like true men to our oars, however, ready to save all within hail.

The question, How are our Churches to comport themselves toward this danger which threatens them all? Dr. Flint answers with ability and courage. Mere discipline, however just, however necessary, will not answer. Its criticism must be opposed with criticism of a legitimate kind. "Its irreverence must be confronted with piety; its narrow and exclusive views of development, with adequate and comprehensive ones; its ingenious but erroneous conjectures, with *sound* and true inductions; its hypotheses, plausible merely because drawn from facts arbitrarily selected and illusively combined, with conclusions drawn from all classes of relevant facts."

Among the causes of Agnosticism, the Professor alleged a torpid resting of Churches in creeds and confessions, however true and orthodox. There must be movement, life, growth, in order to keep pace with the rapid movements of the age. Past acquisitions must be viewed as the stepping-stones to higher attainments in the knowledge of God, as he is revealed in his word and works. And finally, with true pathos, he ended his thrilling argument thus: "If time had allowed, I should finally have dwelt on the thought that whatever tends to make us unspiritual, worldly, selfish, is favorable to Agnosticism; that all that tends to raise us above unspirituality, worldliness, selfishness, is unfavorable to it; and that the strongest of all anti-Agnostic forces, in fact, the one great safeguard of humanity against the general or final triumph of Agnosticism, is none other than the redemptive power of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. Each one of you—fathers, brothers, sisters—by simply so living as to show that religion is supremely worth believing, may do far more to combat the spirit whence Agnosticism arises, than I or any one could do by a merely formal written attack upon it. The grand argument against anti-religious Agnosticism is the practical one of a consistent and vigorous Christian life; the argument which, through God's grace, we can all use."

It was some days ere the echoes of these vivid thoughts had subsided sufficiently for us to feel more than a passing interest in other matters. And the picture of the earnest Scotchman, his quick, nervous manner, the flashes of his mind, playing like the

sheet-lightning over the rim of the horizon, is with us, abides with us to this hour. Only once before in our life, it seemed to us then, had we met a mind possessed of that dynamic influence, the thrills as it were of some hidden galvanic battery.

"Oh for the touch of a vanished hand,  
The sound of a voice that is still!"

Prof. Flint's attainments we have only been able as yet to see displayed in the field of Apologetics. Here his erudition is positively astounding, and his logical acumen wields the immense array of facts and authorities as Hercules handled his mighty mace. We have been told by one who ought to know, that his power is not so great in other directions. If this be so, our Thornwell excelled. For his grasp upon the controversies, past and present, was but an incident in his wider learning, within the scope of which he frankly acknowledged there was less of acquaintance with the Physical Sciences than he desired. That department of knowledge is a growing necessity for apologist and system-builder.

Two points in Dr. Flint's paper were criticised in the discussion which is recorded at page 295. And in both instances by delegates from our Church. After submitting the paper to closer examination, we are sure that one of these exceptions was an honest misconception, and we doubt whether the other is necessary to a reader, though it seemed needful for the hearers of the paper. And upon better acquaintance with Prof. Flint's mind as revealed in his masterly treatise, "Theism," and "Anti-theistic Theories," we are sure that he cordially adopts the limitation to advance in theology which we then ventured to suggest, viz., that the great discoveries in Christian Theology are behind us.

It is understood that Dr. Flint will publish in due time a third volume upon Apologetics, in which he will deal at length with Agnosticism. We make bold to recommend it in advance to our brethren, as also the volumes above named.

And with this topic we must close for the present. If the editors permit, we will conclude our review of the great Council

by some discussion of the papers on the Church—its organisation, and its attitude toward society—the schemes for active co-operation among the Churches of the Alliance, and the place of our own Church in it.

WM. E. BOGGS.

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ARTICLE VII.

THE DRIFT OF AMERICAN POLITICS.

In all governments where the forms are at all popular, there are two great parties, with lines of demarcation more or less distinctly drawn. And while there may be offshoots from either or both, these are usually insignificant, and devoid of any essential element of power. It has happened some times, that one of these small factions has grown into importance, and by the folly and obstinacy of the real contestants, has suddenly possessed the power for which the other two contended. This was very distinctly illustrated, nearly a quarter of a century ago, by the sudden triumph of the Abolition party, through the dissensions in the camp of the dominant party of this country. While the old Whig party confronted the old Democratic party, presenting clearly defined issues, and adhering to the foundation principles of its platforms, the latter party was kept in a compact organisation, by the constant danger of defeat. And the votes which were then cast for the smaller factions, might as well have been omitted from the count as not, so far as any national result was concerned. But the prominent result of this unexpected Abolition success, was the death of the Whig organisation, and the consequent absorption of its elements. At the North, the fragments fell into the Republican ranks: and at the South, the Democracy absorbed the remnants of its ancient opposition.

In order to a clear apprehension of the present topic, it is necessary to recall some of the more prominent issues that differ-