

THE
MERCERSBURG REVIEW.

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ART. I.—THE STATE AS AN ELEMENT IN CIVILIZATION.*

BY JOHN H. OLIVER, ESQ., ALLENTOWN, PA.

FELLOW ALUMNI:—Upon return, after years of absence, to this home of our literary youth, we see more clearly, that the central object of the College system was the growth and development of the intellectual powers. The time-honored college curriculum, sanctioned by the wisdom and experience of ages, what other object had it, than to bring into harmonious action all the varied powers of the mind? The study of languages, mathematics, logic, natural science, æsthetics, and philosophy, involved the constant exercise of language, memory, imagination, æsthetic taste, and of our reasoning powers, analytic and deductive, and these in all their sub-divisions embraced the whole of our intellectual life. Trained by these studies, the alumnus should leave the halls of his Alma Mater, the trained intellectual athlete, prepared to enter upon any vocation, to master the truths of any science or profession, distinguished only among his fellows for that superiority of intellectual powers, due to their careful discipline.

This discipline involved the contact of mind with mind; in the society halls with generous fellow-students; in the recitation room with learned professors; and with the great, good, and wise of all ages, both the living and the dead, in the rich

* An address delivered before the Alumni Association of Franklin and Marshal College, Lancaster, Pa., July 7th, 1868.

ART. III.—ANSWER TO PROFESSOR DORNER.

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The following theological discussion appeared originally as a series of communications in the *Reformed Church Messenger*. This form of publication was adopted, for the purpose of bringing the subject immediately and widely to popular attention. A desire, however, has been expressed from different quarters to have it brought into more consolidated and permanent form in the *Mercersburg Review*; to whose pages accordingly it is now transferred, with very little alteration or change. It has been thought best to give all at once as a single long article in the present number of the *Review*.

INTRODUCTION.

An interesting and able article on the Liturgical Controversy of the German Reformed Church in the United States, appears in a late number of the *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie*, from the pen of the celebrated Dr. Dorner of Berlin.

We have reason to feel ourselves complimented, as a Church, by such notice directed towards us from so high a quarter. It is the first time that the course of theology in this country has drawn upon itself to any such extent, the observation and criticism of a leading German Review. The theological scholarship of Germany has been very much in the habit of slighting the movement of religious thought both in England and in the United States, as hardly deserving to be considered scientific at all in any true sense of the term. Dr. Dorner himself, in his *History of Protestant Theology*, finds but little to say on the subject; two or three pages at the close of the work being all he considers necessary to devote, in particular, to this country. "In North America," he tells us, "there is hardly as yet, so

far as we are able to see, any connected literary history." He expresses the hope, however, that a better era for scientific theology is before us; and ends his book finally with these significant words:

"America is still in the commencement only of its theological life; but the future of Protestantism depends, in a large measure, on the future development of this vigorous people, now emancipated also from the curse of slavery; making it thus of incalculable importance, that the intercourse which has been opened there with German Protestantism and its results, should be maintained and enlarged. At present divisions abound, and the opposition of parties is too much a matter of wilfulness and mere outward interest to lead to any earnest scientific conflict. But in proportion as the sense for science increases, and along with this the power of thought, which tends always to union by being directed toward the general and the absolutely true, the more must many of the denominations now existing in the country pass away of themselves; whilst others will enter upon a course of mutual understanding that may be expected to secure for their spiritual and religious life a common history which, with that of Great Britain, will rival in full finally the fruitfulness of German science."

It is complimentary, I repeat, then, in such view of the case, that the consideration of Germany is now directed toward the theological discussions of our American Reformed Church, in the way we find it to be in this extended and respectful criticism coming from so great a man.

It is a matter for congratulation, moreover, that these discussions themselves are in this way gaining broader and more earnest attention. The subjects with which they are employed deserve it. There have been those among us, we know, who have not been disposed to regard them in such light. But in truth, there are no more practically important questions before the Christian world, at this time, than just these theological debates with which our Church is now so earnestly engaged. They have to do with the most central and profound interests of Christianity. It may possibly help to open the eyes of some to their

significance, that they are made, in the case before us, the object of so learned a review in the Berlin *Jahrbücher*. Dorner's article shows, that they are not mere word fights, or controversies about things of little or no account.

Let us trust also, that it may help to lift the general discussion above the level of mere party prejudice and strife, and to give it such a character of decency and fair conduct, as all may see to be suitable to its great importance. Very much of the opposition which has been made in this country thus far to what is called, for distinction's sake, the Mercersburg theology, has been in a form the very reverse of all this. It has taken no pains to understand what it has set itself to condemn. Its only force has been in garbled misrepresentation, special pleadings, *ad captandum* appeals to popular prejudice and abusive scurrilities of the lowest and poorest sort. I have myself been pelted of late with any amount of this polemical mud. It admits, of course, of no notice or reply. Men must learn to be decent before they can be reasoned with as rational or moral. In such circumstances, however, it is especially refreshing to fall in with such an altogether different style of controversy, as we have offered to us in this transatlantic article of Professor Dorner. It is serious, dignified, calm, gentlemanly and Christian. Why is it, that the qualities of controversial truth and fairness are so much harder to be maintained in this country, than seems to be the case in Europe? We know how it is with our common political press, as contrasted with that of England. Is it any better, in the end, with our religious press?

Let Dorner's article serve as an example, and as a rebuke, for this wretched style of controversy. It is worthy of being widely known and read for this purpose only, if for no other. I am not sorry to hear, therefore, that it is in the way of being published for general circulation among us, both in German and English. It may do good; and I have no apprehension, at all events, of its doing any harm.*

* The article has since made its appearance in an English translation. It is hard to say, however, whether this should be considered now a subject for congratulation or otherwise; so little justice does the translation do to the original. Dr. Dorner's

But, in the nature of the case, the article calls for respectful notice and reply. I have no right to pass it by as unworthy of attention, as I might treat the railing of a Thersites or the gasconade of a theological sciolist. Dr. Dorner himself modestly offers his criticism as a contribution simply to the general theological discussion in which we are involved; not for the purpose of crushing it and putting an end to it, by any means; but with the view only of promoting and assisting it in its own proper course. *He*, at least does not seek to lord it over our American freedom and faith, whatever others may be trying to do in his name. To him, therefore, no less than to the solemn interest of the subject itself, I owe the duty of considering and answering what he has seen proper to offer for our consideration, as well as for the consideration of the world at large, in this public challenge and review.

This I propose to do through the columns of the *Messenger*. On some account it might seem better to do it in the form of an article for the *Mercersburg Review*. But the *Messenger* has a much wider circulation; and, besides, I wish to bring the points here at issue directly before the people. They are not theological niceties simply, in which ministers only may be expected to take an interest. They are of general practical concern. I believe, that our people generally can understand them; and the more they can be brought to look at them, and to see what they really mean, the less fear I have of their being turned away from the old and right faith of the CREED in regard to them, by any wrong teaching brought to bear upon the case, whether from this side of the Atlantic or from the other side.

All I care to say farther in this introductory article is to call attention briefly to two or three general preliminary considerations, the force of which must be felt at once by all candid and liberal minds.

style is none of the best in German; but this version of it into English makes it fairly barbarous. The *Uebersetzung* is at once an oversetting and an upsetting; in view of which, Dorner (with his knowledge of English) may well join tears with *Herzog*, and cry: Save me too from my American friends! As it is, few will have patience to read the pamphlet, and fewer still will have power to understand it.

I. Dr. Dorner, it must be remembered, does not belong to the German Reformed Church. ' Originally of the Lutheran Confession, he stands now in the bosom of the United, so-called, Evangelical Church of Prussia. In this United Church he is still confessionally Lutheran, so far as historical Protestant descent is concerned. But his theory of Protestantism is based on the assumption, that the old orthodoxy of the two Confessions (Lutheran and Reformed) has come to a sort of general collapse through the triumph of Rationalism on both sides, making it necessary to reconstruct the whole system in a new form. This I mention, not to disparage at all his character as a theologian, but to show the absurdity of making him an ultimate umpire in our German *Reformed* theological controversies and discussions. It is, indeed, somewhat laughable to find those among us, who at other times affect to be so jealous of outside opinions and views (as held, for example, by Catholics, Anglicans, or Lutherans), now all at once ready to throw themselves into the arms of Dr. Dorner, as though "a Daniel had come to judgement," just because at some points he happens to declare himself in a measure favorable to their laboring cause. They might just as well, of course, call in the judgement of respectable outsiders at home.

And in fact, as we know, they are quite ready also to do this very thing, whenever they have a chance to lug in such foreign help; seeming to feel, apparently, that however harsh the voice of strangers may sound when it is against them, it is all sweet enough where it pipes in their favor. Thus it is, that the authority of outside denominations is invoked, in all manner of ways, to overwhelm with a sort of brute force the free progress of Christian thought and life among ourselves. We must not be allowed to take our own course as an American German Reformed Church, because forsooth it does not suit the ecclesiastical fancy of Presbyterians, Methodists, or Episcopalians. Our home theology must bend in servile obeisance to the oracular censure simply of some good outsider, like Dr. Hodge or Bishop McIlvaine; or worse still, must trail its colors in the dust, before the bushwhacking shots and thrusts of some foreign religious

sheet like the *New York Observer*, the *Lutheran Observer*, the *Christian Intelligencer*, the *Presbyterian*, or the *Independent*.

But all this is asking too much. To say nothing of the bushwhacking newspapers, we cannot allow even such learned and excellent men as those just named, to do our thinking, and fix up our orthodoxy, in this extra-curial style. We deny their lawful jurisdiction in the premises. We respect them, and are glad to take counsel with them on matters pertaining to our common faith; but we cannot consent to be ruled conclusively in our denominational views by Dr. McIlvaine or Dr. Hodge, the one an Episcopalian, and the other a Presbyterian, in this country; and it is hard to see, therefore, why we should yield any more passively in the matter to the quoted judgment of the Lutheran Unionist, Dr. Dorner, in Germany.

II. The mere fact, let it be noted in the next place, that Dr. Dorner is a great *German* theologian, forms no reason whatever for succumbing to his judgment in any such slavish way. With our opponents themselves, heretofore, it has been rather the fashion to depreciate the speculations of the later German theology, and to charge it upon us as a fault that we were following it, as an *ignis fatuus*, into the swamps of transcendentalism and perilous neology. They had all zeal professedly for Ursinus, Olevianus, Pareus, and other such respectable monuments of the buried past; but they were not disposed to listen at all to the profound historical and exegetical views of such men as Tholuck, or Julius Müller, or Liebner, or Martensen, the representatives of the waking, living present. Now, however, a sudden change has come over the spirit of their dream. Dorner has spoken in their favor; has done so at least to a certain extent; and now; Huzza for Germany! Great is the Modern Theology of Germany!

But this sudden rapture is not simply inconsistent; it is ludicrously absurd. It goes on the assumption, that German theology is united and settled in its present form; that it represents fairly the Protestant faith of the sixteenth century; and that Dr. Dorner is a fair and full exponent of this united historical faith, for the Reformed Church as well as for the Luther-

an, and for the Reformed Church, not only in Germany, but all over the Christian world. But the assumption is preposterous in all its parts.

The modern theology of Germany, even in its best character, is anything but united or harmonious in any such results as it has yet reached. It is, as Dorner himself shows in his History of Protestantism, in a vast transition state, which is still terribly confused and chaotic. He asks us to have faith in it as a new creation, emerging from the wreck and chaos of Rationalism. We may try to do so; we may hail what seems to be the weeping rainbow of hope, spanning its still stormful horizon with the promise of better things to come. But it is going altogether too far, when we are required to accept the *unfinished* processes of German thought, at such a time, for fixed and finally settled conclusions. Of course, then again, we cannot agree to take any such unfinished thinking as being in and of itself equivalent at once to the orthodox thinking of the 16th, and 17th centuries. Dorner, and all other German theologians, plant themselves now on the idea of a historical movement in Protestant theology, which puts the notion of any mere outward and mechanical repristination of this sort wholly out of the question. Then as for the right of Dorner himself to be considered in any way the central representative organ of this embryonic new creation, thus struggling to come to the full birth of a regenerated German Protestantism, it is enough to say, that he is too modest and too wise a man to claim it, and that if he did do so, the claim would be resisted on all sides. He is only one strong German voice, among many other German voices, heroically exercised in the defence of what is held to be Christian truth. But these voices are still wonderfully divided among themselves. Dorner, on important points, differs from other German divines, no less orthodox and evangelical, to say the least, than himself. And what is especially to the point, the orthodoxy of all of them together would be considered more or less scandalous, on certain topics, if an attempt were made to introduce it, among the so-called evangelical denominations of this country.

III. Another general remark, to be steadily kept in mind. The *stand-point* of Dr. Dorner's observation and criticism detracts largely from its value. He is too far away from what he undertakes to censure, to perform the office with full intelligence. He is so geographically. He looks at us through a telescope, across the broad Atlantic; and unfortunately one chief lens of his instrument is very far from being pellucid and clear. So he sees us only with dim vision, as "men like trees walking." His article is at fault seriously, where it touches on points of fact in the history of our late Liturgical movement; and it betrays altogether a very confused apprehension of our American church life generally, as well as of the ecclesiastical relations in particular of our American German Reformed Church. But Dr. Dorner's distance from us is not simply geographical; it is at the same time political also and moral; and this makes it above all hard for him, as a German theologian, to understand the freedom of our institutions, or to do justice to the true idea of the Christian Church, as it falls in naturally and easily with the presence of such freedom. The government of the Church in Germany is Erastian, or as they sometimes call it, *Cæsareo-papistic*; the king, pope or head; the Church, in truth, simply a branch or department of the State, having the administration of its affairs in the hands of a civil bureau. It is easy to see and feel, how little at home Dr. Dorner is, under these circumstances, in our system of Classes and Synods, in our ideas of church authority, and so in the course of our ecclesiastical affairs generally. It is all to him more or less *terra incognita*. He is among us somewhat like those brethren, of whom St. Paul speaks in the Epistle to the Galatians, "who came in privily," he says, "to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus;" to whom, however, he immediately adds, "we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour." Dr. Dorner, of course, is not to be classed with these Jewish intermeddlers. On the contrary, we welcome his fraternal interest, foreign German and Lutheran though he be, in our Reformed Church affairs. But we must not be expected to give place to his false ecclesiastical

standpoint, when we know our own to be altogether more true to the original idea of Christianity and to the Apostles' Creed.

On this subject I may be allowed to quote, in conclusion, what I wrote nearly a year ago in an article for the *Mercersburg Review* :

“Theory and speculation have been with us subordinate always to the idea of positive Christianity, as an object of faith exhibited to us in the Bible and the history of the actual Church. The Christological principle has been for us immeasurably more than the requirements of any school of philosophy; its practical consequences have weighed more with us than the logical necessities of any metaphysical system. We have been able to see and own thankfully the service which has been rendered to the cause of Christianity, through the intonation of this great principle, by Schleiermacher, and other master minds, who have here followed him with far more orthodoxy than he ever had himself, without feeling ourselves bound in the least to accept in full all that any such master mind may have been led to deduce from the principle as belonging to the right construction of Christian doctrine. Our theology, in this view, has not been built upon Schleiermacher, or Ullmann, or Dorner, however much of obligation it cheerfully owes to each of them, as well as to others, whose more or less variant systems of thought go together to make up the conception of what is called the evangelical theology of Germany in its most modern form. Whatever of force and worth these Christological studies carry with them for our thinking, all is felt to rest ultimately only in their bearing on the actual life of Christ, and the relation they hold to the development of the mystery of godliness in the actual history of the Church. Here we reach what we feel to be surer and more solid ground than any such studies of themselves furnish; and just because these studies seem too often to stop short of what is involved for faith in the full historical apprehension of the Christian mystery, as a continuous presence in the world, they are found to be at certain points more or less unsatisfactory, in the end, to our religious feeling. Here it is that, with all our respect for German divinity, we consciously come to a break with it in our thoughts, and feel the necessity of supple-

menting it with the more practical way of looking at Christianity which we find embodied in the ancient Creeds. *In this respect*, we freely admit, our theology is more Anglican than German. We stand upon the old Creeds. We believe in the Holy Catholic Church."

There it is once more, in black and white, without the fear of Professor J. H. Good or Mr. A. S. Vaughan before our eyes. *Anglican*, we say, or English, more than German, **IN THIS RESPECT**, though not in other respects. If these gentlemen now choose to go off again in mock heroics on the matter, let them do so to their heart's content. Only let them not be guilty again of *falsifying*, as before, by any garbled quotation, the plain sense of such very plain words.

II. CONFUSION AS TO FACTS.

Dr. Dorner tells us, that he has been earnestly solicited by members of the Reformed Church in this country, to declare himself in regard to our controversies;* in view more particularly of the fact, that some reference was made at Dayton, to his great Christological work, as well as to the later German theology generally, in support of the Christological tendency now prevailing among us. What the point is precisely, on which he feels himself to have been misrepresented in the case, he does not say; and one can hardly help feeling, that his sensitiveness has made much more of it than was necessary. I do not remember, in what way his name was quoted at Dayton; but I know it could not have been in favor of any specific view of Christ's person; because I have never pretended to know fully the last result of Dr. Dorner's historico-theological speculations on this subject. All that could have been meant by the appeal

* On this point the Professor refers in a note to the famous judgment which was surreptitiously obtained from him, through a couple of American students, for the use of Dr. Bomberger's pamphlet *Reformed, not Ritualistic*, last year. In the way of apology he says, "the conversation became public without *their* or my knowledge and will." No doubt this is true, so far as Dorner himself is concerned; but it is no justification of his want of prudence, in allowing himself to be taken advantage of in so gross a manner. He must be considered as in some measure responsible, in the circumstances, for the otherwise irresponsible use which has been made of his great name.

in question was, that the later evangelical theology of Germany in general, as represented by such men as Dorner, Ullmann, and others, has come to be ruled characteristically by the Christological idea, the central significance of the person of Christ, as we have it insisted upon with so much genial force by the illustrious Schleiermacher. This general fact has nothing to do with the particular theological system of Dr. Dorner, or with that of any other German scholar, in its details. He has no right to assume or require, that our Christological thinking must agree at all points with *his* Christological thinking, to be at all entitled to a place in this general order of thought. It has now become evident enough, that Dorner disowns certain views, which our American Reformed theology has come largely to embrace, as necessary deductions from the mystery of the Incarnation. In this, however, we simply hold him to be wrong; which is no reason at all, of course, for giving up our claim of being in reigning affinity with him, nevertheless, as well as with the better theology of Germany at large, in what may be called its predominant Christological character at the present time. In this respect, the statement made in 1866, at Dayton, remains still in full force. It is just as true now, as it was then.

Indeed Dr. Dorner himself admits as much, when he says at the close of his review: "In conclusion, I hail with joy the manifold affinity of this transatlantic theology with thoughts, which lie at the ground of our later German science, and find it represented with fire and force. But it stands in danger also, if I am not mistaken, of wasting its energies in abnormal productions and repristinations. May what we have here written contribute something toward such a revision of doctrinal principles, as may serve to promote both the peace of the Church and the progress of science." This is well. It acknowledges enough. Full agreement with any particular scheme of German theology has not been pretended, and is not desired. Criticism from such quarter, as we have it in the case before us, is honored and welcomed; but it is not for that reason to be accepted blindly. It is only necessary, that it should be carefully weighed in the balance and taken at its actual worth.

Dr. Dorner opens his review with a historical sketch of some ten pages, intended to set forth in brief the progress of the Liturgical movement in our American Reformed Church. In this he tries to be calm and fair; but any one acquainted with the actual course of things among us, can easily see, that he has a very dim and shadowy apprehension of our affairs, as well as of the ecclesiastical relations of this country generally; and that he is guilty, therefore, of gross injustice in what he allows himself to say on this part of his subject. It is rather a humiliating commentary, indeed, in the case of so great a historian, on the reliableness of historical judgments and pictures generally, as concerned with life belonging to other countries and times. If Dorner's characteristics of Christian antiquity, or his sketches of the past three centuries of European Protestantism, are to be estimated at all by his success in reporting the brief chapter he here gives us on the Liturgical movement of our German Reformed Church, it must detract seriously, we think, from our confidence both in his *Christological History* and in his recent *History of Protestant Theology*. How much of all history, alas, is but a caricature in this way, more or less, of what it gravely sets forth as true! To the general difficulty of looking across the Atlantic with the eyes of a foreigner, there is added in the case of our Berlin Professor, I am sorry to say, a very palpable prejudice in favor of the faction, which has obtained his ear, and solicited his interference, in this controversy; a prejudice which has made it impossible for him to do any proper justice to statements from the other side. He sees things through the spectacles forced upon him from this officious quarter; and so, of course, sees them all awry.

Take as an example the way in which he refers to the action of the Synod at Easton, in 1861. He will have it, that this was designed to operate as a bar to the tendency that resulted finally in the Revised Liturgy as it now stands. But for those, who were at the Synod, and who know the source and the animus of that action, any such hypothesis is simply absurd. My own course at this Synod, while he pronounces it "such as became a manly Christian character," he, at the same time, grossly mis-

represents, so as to make it in fact just the reverse. We know, on whose authority these perversions of history are made. They are not designed and willful with Dr. Dorner. But it is still a reproach to him, that he could allow himself to be imposed upon by such transparent falsification. It is not necessary, however, to go here into any more particular notation of his blunders. The points to which they refer are already sufficiently settled, by home knowledge, for all who have taken any active interest in the subject among ourselves; while Dr. Dorner and his readers in Germany, are too far away, both in body and spirit, to make it worth while at all to aim at disabusing them of their wrong impressions. It adds nothing to Dr. Bomberger's special pleading, that it happens in this case to be echoed back upon us by Dr. Dorner. Let it pass for what it is worth.

One striking general instance of this *ex parte* construction of history, we have in the way our transatlantic reviewer tries to cover up Dr. Bomberger's huge inconsistency, in first approving and afterwards denouncing the work he had himself assisted in bringing to pass through the labors of the Liturgical Committee. He has to admit that Dr. Bomberger was well satisfied with the *Provisional Liturgy* in 1857, and that he even went so far as to praise it publicly in very strong terms. But he seeks to break the force of this admission again, by telling us, that there were in that Liturgy two different schemes of worship in fact, joined together in a merely outward way; meaning by this to convey the impression, that Dr. Bomberger approved simply what belonged to one of these schemes, without caring to express at the time his dissatisfaction with the other.

Referring then to me, he will have it that I was bent all along on bringing the mind of the Church to a different system in conformity with my own ideas of Christian worship. The object thus of my report on the Liturgical Question, submitted to the Synod at Chambersburg in 1862, instead of being an honest effort to come to a fair and full understanding of what the Synod really wished in regard to a Liturgy, was no better than a bold attempt to bring that body to a sort of forced compliance with

my views. He even quotes me as acknowledging, that the Synod at Easton had desired only a modification of the Provisional Liturgy in a direction opposed to Ritualism; and argues, therefore, that what I wanted was a fundamental change in the book; overlooking altogether the very plain fact, that the tract in question makes the Provisional Liturgy itself, as it then stood, to be an example throughout of that very altar service, which it sought to distinguish with so much pains from a mere pulpit service, in order to know whether or not the Synod wished to abide by its reigning character now, or to fall over to the other scheme.

Take, in proof of this, a single passage from the tract (p. 39), at the close of its contrast between the two kinds of worship: "If it be asked now, on which of these two liturgical schemes the *Provisional Liturgy* of the German Reformed Church has been constructed, the answer must be, of course, that it was intended to be prevailingly a liturgy for the altar and not simply a pulpit liturgy. It aims at being churchly, sacramental, and in proper measure also priestly. It is formed to move round the sun of righteousness in the heavenly orbit of the Church year. It seeks to make the people outwardly active along with the minister, in the outward solemnities of public worship. In all this, it falls in with what may be considered the reigning genius of such worship in the first ages of the Church; and in doing so, has incorporated into itself largely, of course, those primitive forms, which have been considered classical and sacred for all liturgical use from the beginning. This much is patent at once on the face of the new Liturgy; and it has never pretended to appear in any other character."

This is plain; but now, in the face of this, Dr. Dorner argues, that my object in the tract was to discourage the idea of a simple modification of the Provisional Liturgy as ordered at Easton, and to engage the mind of the Synod in favor of another scheme altogether; which then the Synod, after all, still refused formally to sanction; while the Committee, however, went on afterwards to carry it out nevertheless in its own way, as we have it at last before the world in the form of the

Revised Liturgy. This, it is quietly assumed, amounted to such a radical variation from the Provisional Liturgy, as to account satisfactorily for Dr. Bomberger's wonderful metempsychosis in regard to the whole movement. But all that Dr. Dorner thus assumes would seem to rest entirely on Dr. Bomberger's own "History and Criticism of the Ritualistic Movement in the German Reformed Church." There is no evidence at all, that he has ever himself seen the Provisional Liturgy. He talks in the dark, therefore, when he speaks of it as essentially different in any way from the Revised Liturgy. The very features and forms that Dr. Bomberger now abominates, as full of all mischief, are actually in the Provisional Liturgy no less than in the Revised; he helped to bring them out as a member of the Liturgical Committee; and, worse still, these very features and forms were in part selected as the *special* object of his praise, in the public panegyric he saw fit to pronounce at the time on the whole work. So much for Dr. Dorner's historical accuracy in the matter.

With all this obliquity of vision in particulars, however, it is to the credit of Dr. Dorner, that he has not been able to take in the false conclusion toward which all looks through the distorted optics of Dr. Bomberger. The notion of a systematic plot and plan on the part of the Liturgical Committee to defeat the wishes of the Church, he finds too monstrous to accept; however much his borrowed version of particulars may seem otherwise to run toward this end. Speaking of my *Vindication* he says: "The historical part of this tract contains a somewhat excited defence against the charge, that the Liturgical Committee, and especially Nevin himself, had by refined management contrived, partly by delay and then again by going forward, to carry out their ritualistic views gradually in opposition to the expressed will of the Synod. This charge, from all we know of the very honorable character of Dr. Nevin, is unquestionably rash and unjust. There is no reason to doubt, that Dr. Nevin had no liturgical system of his own in the beginning; and as he came to have one more and more with the progress of the work (the result, indeed, of principles which were with

him of much older date, and closely connected probably with his hostility to the sect system and to religious subjectivism generally), he made no secret of it, we must believe, as far as it was clear to himself, before the Synod. The Synod then, also, in spite of his openly expressed convictions (without, however, thereby meaning to approve them), constantly added him anew to the Committee, as one whose talent and learning it could not afford to do without; while, however, the opposite tendency also was brought into representation. As regards the seventeen years' history of the Liturgy, therefore, we cannot join here in the moral condemnation of the conduct of the Liturgical Committee, and of Dr. Nevin. But the full significance of the controversy comes out first fairly in the *dogmatic* question: Is the new Liturgy at variance with the Evangelical and in particular the Reformed basis of doctrine? Should that be so, the work must, in such view, be condemned."

This, as all may easily see, is sufficiently slipshod and lame. But I allow it to pass; and along with it dismiss now the whole narrative portion of Dr. Dorner's article. He appears to bad advantage in it as a historian. This is owing to distance, and the use of a wretchedly poor telescope. It will be more interesting, as well as more to the point, to hear what he has to say in the farther progress of his article as a theologian. There, at least, we can hope to find him in the use of his own eyes; and may respectfully reverence his opinions, even while we earnestly dispute their force.

III. GOD MANIFESTED IN CHRIST.

In passing forward to his criticism of the second part of my *Vindication*, that which is devoted to the theology of the Liturgy, Dr. Dorner does me the justice to quote largely and fairly from the tract itself. A very different treatment, indeed, from that of which I have to complain on the part of certain less learned controversialists in this country; who too commonly make it their business, *not* to let me speak for myself, but to charge upon me garbled or perverted misconstructions (either their own or borrowed from some other irresponsible outside

source), which they find it then an easy task to demolish with sarcasm or show of argument, as to their fancy may seem best. Dorner knows nothing of such disingenuous, dastardly behavior. His polemics are honorable and fair. He takes up the characteristics I give of what is called the Mercersburg Theology; and without copying what I say in full, offers to his German readers such an ample and truthful synopsis of my statements, that I have no reason whatever to complain of the representation, as being either defective or suited to mislead. He comprehends what he undertakes in this way to report; and he shows himself, at the same time, able to report intelligibly and faithfully for others. In these circumstances, his criticisms also, whether right or wrong, are no less intelligible and relevant. They are not rigmarole declamation merely, put forward for popular effect. They carry with them point and purpose; and form real and substantial questions, on which it is possible to join issue in a real and substantial way. Altogether this is, as I have said before, refreshing and satisfactory. The argument before us is, in this way, lifted above the sphere of personal interest and passion. It is in the service only, and for the sake, of Christian truth.

The first point Dorner makes with my characterization of our theology, is where he brings in what I say of the Christocentric stand-point, as being the *only* one from which we can have a just apprehension of Christianity. Let me quote here in full from the *Vindication* on this subject:

“No other stand-point can be substituted for it (the Christocentric) without boundless error and confusion. It is possible to bring in here a different centre of observation; nay, it is the natural vice of our fallen reason, that it tends continually to throw itself upon a different centre; for the full practical sense of what Christ is, in this respect, belongs only to the world of faith, which as such is, at the same time, the world of what transcends all natural reason. We may have a simply anthropological divinity—a mere humanitarian theology; all centring in the idea of man (anthropocentric); the earth again ruling the heavens, and the merely moral or ethical at best playing itself off as the divine. Or we may have, on the other hand, a sim-

ply theological divinity—a construction of theology starting from the idea of God, considered absolutely and outside of Christ (theocentric); in which the relations of God to the world, then, will become pantheistic, fantastic, visionary, and unreal; and all religion will be made to resolve itself at last into metaphysical speculations or theosophic dreams. How far these false projections of Christian doctrine, in one view antagonistic, and yet in another everlastingly intermarried, have made themselves mischievously felt in the Christian world, through all Protean forms and shapes, from their first bad birth as Ebionism and Gnosticism, down to the Socinianism, Anabaptism, and metaphysical Calvinism of the sixteenth century, and down still farther to corresponding forms of religious thought in our own time—this is not the proper place to inquire. Our object is simply to fix attention on the possibility of such wrong constructions of Christianity, for the purpose of insisting with more effect on the necessity of a construction that shall start from the right point of observation; and to make fully apparent, moreover, how much is comprehended in what we say, when we affirm that this right point of observation is the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that no theology, therefore, can be either safe or sound, or truly Christian, which does not show itself to be in this view a truly Christocentric theology.”

On this Dorner remarks, in a note: “*These are assertions without proof. From God, in any case, must Christology, as well as Anthropology, proceed. Nevin talks as though there could be no conception of God save as in hostility to Christology; or as if Christianity did not bring us the true self-evidencing idea of God, in the light of which then again Christ himself is to be viewed; as without the general idea of God also, we cannot come to Christ.*”

I have been greatly surprised, I confess, as I doubt not many readers of the *Messenger* will be also, on reading these words. Who would have expected to find Dr. Dorner, the great German Christologist, gravely questioning the truth of the proposition, that there can be no starting point of Christianity, no beginning or actual origination either of Christian knowl-

edge or of Christian life, except in the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! Yet this is what he does in the note just quoted, pronouncing what I say of Christ's central and fundamental relation to all Christian truth to be assertion without proof, and maintaining that Christianity has its ground and beginning in the idea of God, which is older and wider than the fact of the Incarnation.

Now we all know, of course, that God in His absolute character, is the ground ontologically of the whole creation. Of Him, through Him, and to Him, as the Apostle says, are all things. In Him, all live, move, and have their being. Every Christian child knows this. He is the foundation in this view of the new creation, as well as of the old creation. If there were no God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed through His Son, there could be no Christ, no Son, to make him known. These are simple truisms which admit of no dispute.

Again, there is a sense also, in which the absolute being of God, as related immediately and directly to our created being, must be considered the necessary ground of our *knowing* Him, and coming into union with Him, in the way of religion. The whole possibility of religion for us starts in the God-consciousness, or direct sense of Deity, which is as much a part of our original nature, as the sense we have of the world around us or of our own existence. It is not put into us by any outward evidence or argument. It authenticates and necessitates itself as a fundamental fact in our life; and in doing this it certifies, to the same extent, the truth of the object on which it is exercised. Or rather, we must say, the truth of the object on which it is exercised, which is the Divine Being, or the existence of the Absolute, certifies itself, makes itself sure in and through the consciousness into which it thus enters. In this sense, the idea of God comes before Christianity, as it comes before religion in every other form. But who will say, that this general idea of God can be for us, therefore, the actual root of Christianity; so that any among us starting with that alone, could ever by means of it come to a full construction of what God is for true Christian faith? It lies at the ground of pan-

theism, dualism, polytheism, deism, and all false religions, no less than at the ground of Christianity. For the distinctive knowledge of Christianity, then, we need some other specific principle or root, which however it may be comprehended in the general principle of all religion, must be regarded at the same time, nevertheless, as the ground and beginning, exclusively and entirely, of religion under this its highest and only absolutely complete form.

Where now is that principle to be found? Where does the whole world of Christianity, the new creation of the Gospel (life, power, doctrine, and all), take its rise and start? Where do we come to the source of its perennial revelation, the ground of its indestructible life? Where, save in the presence of the Word Incarnate, the glorious Person of Him, who is the "Root and the Offspring of David, the bright and morning Star—the Faithful and True Witness, the BEGINNING of the Creation of God!"

Yes; even the natural creation springs from Him as its archetypal source in God. By Him, and through Him, God made the worlds. "He is before all things, and by Him (literally *ἐν αὐτῷ*, *in Him*) all things consist"—*συνέστηκε*, stand together as in their common root. Or as we have it just before, "He is the first-born of the whole creation; for by Him (again strictly *in Him*, *ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα*) were all things created" (Col. i. 15–17). Thus to understand the world of nature itself, the only stand-point of right study and observation is that which is set before us in what we may call the *Logology* of St. John, the doctrine of the Divine Logos or Word as we have it proclaimed in the beginning of his Gospel. Here we must take our position by faith, and not in the idea of God simply as the absolute ground and beginning of all things, to have any just apprehension at all of the relation in which the world stands to Him; so as to avoid the error of pantheism on the one hand, and the no less serious error of a mere abstract dualistic deism on the other. For want of this, the old Grecian cosmogonies ran into interminable bewilderment and nonsense; and without it, both the philosophical thinking and the unphilosophical popular thinking of our own time, show themselves full as pow-

erless to grasp the true mystery of creation, in the form in which we have it declared by St. Paul: "Through faith we *understand* (*νοοῦμεν*, inwardly see), that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Heb. xi. 3.)

But if the natural world be thus rooted and grounded in the Eternal Logos, how much more earnestly and strongly must we not insist upon the parallel truth of the Gospel, that the whole being of Christianity, the new world of grace in which only the world of nature itself becomes complete, is rooted and grounded in like manner in the Incarnation of the same Divine Logos, whereby He became man for us men and for our salvation? This fact, the Incarnation, is comprehended, of course, in the eternal generation of the Son, as that again holds only in the absolute Being of God; in other words, the principle of Christianity is comprehended in the principle of the creation, and the principle of the creation again finds its deepest and last ground in the idea of God as the First Cause of all things. But none the less for this reason is the principle of Christianity, in its own form, the generating and producing source of all that belongs specifically to this new creation; so as to make it impossible, that the same should ever be at all understood or apprehended in any other way than through its guidance and illumination. Nay, as the ultimate sense of all going before, it is easy to see, that this last fact, the coming of Christ in the flesh, must indeed be regarded as the only sole orb of light, that can flood with any true intelligence either the older ways of God or the being and character of God in any other view.

This is what I have meant, in maintaining, that the only right point of observation for the knowledge of Christianity is the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and "that no theology, therefore, can be either safe or sound, or truly Christian, which does not show itself to be in this view a truly Christocentric theology." It did not enter into my mind, that any one could question the truth of the statement made in these general terms; and so I added: "The proposition needs no proof. It is a first principle, a self-evident axiom, in Christianity. To doubt it,

is to call Christ Himself into doubt." After which, however, I still went on to offer, in summary quotation from the New Testament, what I then considered, and fully as much now consider, unanswerable authority for all I had said; as any one can see who chooses to look at the 58th and 59th pages of my tract. But now here, in the face of all, we have no less a man than Dr. Dorner proclaiming by his mere *ipse dixit* in a note: *These are assertions without proof!* Alas, what does this whole contradiction, preferred in such dogmatic style, mean?

"Assertions without proof," indeed! As if the whole New Testament were not one broad evidence of their truth. As if the Person of Immanuel were not itself at once their overwhelming argument and demonstration.

The conception of God outside of the Incarnation is not necessarily hostile to this mystery, I have said nothing of that sort. But such general conception can never of itself be for us what God is through the Incarnation. Neither have I said or implied, that "Christianity does not bring us the true self-evidencing idea of God in the light of which Christ then is to be viewed," in order that we may come to Him fully. On the contrary, that is just what I most earnestly affirm. The question regards not the being of God, absolutely considered, but the *revelation* of God, by and through which we are brought to know Him as He is. Certainly the idea of God meets us, with its own self-evidencing light, in Christianity, as it meets us nowhere else. But how is it, and where is it, that we thus come into its glorious light? Most assuredly only in and through Christ Himself. His own presence it is alone, that serves to bring into view the idea of God, the truth of His existence, the glory of His perfections, the fullness of His grace, as it is not possible for the heart of man to conceive of all this in any other way. In this Divine light then, indeed, the full glory of His own Person also is revealed. He shines as the Brightness of God. But still He does so only as He is the medium and organ of God's self-manifestation; and so it remains true to the end, that whatever God is for faith or knowledge in Christianity, He is all solely and entirely through His Son, "conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary."

Now this is just what I have meant, in saying, that Christianity centres in Christ; and that the *Christocentric* position, therefore, where we are brought to take our stand by faith in the mystery of the Word made Flesh, is the only right and sure point of observation for taking in the true sense of the Gospel, or for understanding the true economy of the world in any view whatever.

What else is it than this, when Christ is said to be the "image of the invisible God" (Col. i. 15)—the "brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person" (Heb. i. 3); when God is said to give us "the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6); when the full understanding and acknowledgment of the "mystery of God" is affirmed to be by Christ, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 2, 3)? But why multiply such quotations? "No man hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven" (John iii. 13). "No man knoweth who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal Him" (Luke x. 22). "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by ME." "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen *Me* hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" (John xiv. 6, 9).

This surely is *Christocentric* theology. Will Dr. Dorner wave it aside as "assertion without proof?"

IV. DORNER'S THEOLOGICAL POSITION.

Having completed his fair and satisfactory sketch of what I say, in my *Vindication*, on the first general characteristic of the Mercersburg theology, Dr. Dorner enters upon a formal criticism of it as follows:

Extract from Review.

"After this extended representation of the Christological ground thought, let me be allowed to add some remarks. One can rejoice from the heart, certainly, in the glowing and vigor-

ous confession of great truths which is contained in what is here spoken. But taking into consideration the appeal made to my writings by Dr. Nevin at the General Synod of Dayton, an exposition is required on several points, comprehended in his view; points, where our ways no longer go together, since Dr. Nevin is led by them to propositions in regard to the *Church*, which seem to me not rightly deduced, and even no longer evangelical, and which he must himself have felt to be objectionable if he had held the principle of the Reformation in its full significance and force.

“We begin with what he says on *right position* in regard to the object, for seeing as it were under right point of view the things of Christianity as they are in truth. This right point of view now, from which only the centre is to be clearly distinguished from its radii and periphery, is according to common Reformation doctrine the right personal disposition and capacity of man—in one word *faith*, the necessary presupposition of all sound Christian knowledge. Such faith has in the Evangelical Church its most intensive and purest idea and form; and this, as faith in redemption (above all, justification) through Christ. This faith includes in it the Divine assurance of salvation given in the God-man; in the consciousness of redemption and its truth, is implanted principally at the same time, and with *one* stroke, consciousness of the Redeemer and of His dignity and truth. It is Pelagian, to affirm any true and sure knowledge of Christ, before the experience of this redeeming power. A pretended knowledge *before* such personal experience is only the reflection in us of a foreign faith or knowledge; in truth, however laudable in its place, bare authority-faith. In difference from this, through the proper cognition of faith, in the way of religious experience, the believer is raised above all mere human authority, as for example that of the Church; nay, even above the merely outward authority of the Holy Scriptures themselves: as having now experienced in himself, through the Holy Ghost, that the Word of God in the Scriptures, or in the mouth of the Church, is the truth. Faith thus, in the evangelical sense, is the position or point of view, from

which the true essence of Christianity is to be known. 'Nay, faith is itself the eye also, or organ, for such knowledge. But what is thus made sure to faith as its own contents, is already *in nuce* the whole of Christianity, both in its objective and in its subjective wealth.

“Quite otherwise, so far as we can see, Dr. Nevin. Of the Reformation faith he has, in this decisive passage, nothing to say. Christ is for him the self-evident centre of Christianity; and nothing is said of the necessity of conversion, here where the subject is in hand, for gaining the proper condition and basis of true knowledge, as if every man in Christendom must understand of himself, that Christ is this centre. Instead of giving us in the first place a doctrine of the way in which a man becomes a Christian (a phenomenology of faith and a theory of Christian knowledge), and showing how in the certainty which faith has of the truth, both the organ and principle are given for our ever widening range of Christian knowledge; instead of this, we say, he puts the Christology immediately into front view as a primordial and central truth. The telescope of Christian inquiry, with him, has not the Christology for its *object*, in order to find in it the centre of the whole; it is made to be the presupposition, one knows not how reached, for the Christian thinking itself. In this lies, to my mind, a methodical fault, which has great consequences for all that follows. The Christology, and this at once also in the sharply defined dogmatic form, in which it has come to be understood only as the result of long historical labor, is here withdrawn from scientific investigation and construction altogether; whereas it ought rather to form the unchangeable presupposition of all dogmatic theology. Whilst in fact God and man precede the Incarnation, and furnish in their separate natures the elements from which first a Christology is to be brought to pass, this is here made to be itself the primordial centre, out of which all flows objectively as well as for knowledge; as if Christ might be called the condition also of God, or as though the Church were Christ. If it be said, however, that only the germ of a Christology, and not such a doctrine in full form, is

required in order to a theological system, we put the question: How do we come then even to this germ? Nevin's answer may be: Through the Church, which carries Christ in it. But in a theological system, we have to do with truth and its assurance. Do we reach these, then, through the authority of the Church and its attestation? In that case, we have in principle abandoned the evangelical ground, and the Church is placed after all above Christ and His Spirit, as accrediting Christ. Should he answer, however, with the Evangelical Church: By the self-authenticating power of the objective truth itself through the Holy Ghost—he must not forget that this is not experienced by every one, since otherwise all would have it who hear the Word. Thus, while all are held bound fast in like sin and unbelief, those only come to the assurance in question in whose persons a change has preceded by conversion and faith. In and by their redemption do they first become aware and sure of Christ as the Redeemer, and this is thus an indispensable condition of their true knowledge. Yea, this factor of the personal assurance of objective truth through faith is of such weight, that it carries with it the right of critical inquiry concerning the sacred canon and its consistency with itself, as also especially the right of sitting in judgment on doctrinal productions and on the Church.

“Nevin, on the contrary, takes the ancient, in part anti-Reformation position, in such sort, that the dogmatic productions of the ancient Church, in their simply objective character, form for him unawares the basis and condition of his system; that he says nothing of the fundamental significance of faith for an evangelical system of faith; and that it seems not even to have entered his mind, that in an evangelical system of faith strictly taken nothing has found its place fully, which has not yet gone through the experience of faith and in this way received its authentication for personal assurance.

“Modern theology, viewed from this point, falls into three main orders or divisions. The *first* looks upon the old oecumenical symbols of the Church as the absolutely immovable foundation of the Church, little caring to inquire how we have come to the assurance of their contents, and little concerned

when the authority of the Church is exhibited as the ultimate warrant of belief; in this way, denying the evangelical ground of faith. The *second* seeks to take position in the Reformation, for which the personal assurance of salvation in Christ and of the truth was of supreme account; but through fear of prejudicing in any way the full freedom of the subjective side recognizes no immutable objective as given in the Scriptures, disowning as foreign or unessential all that has not come within the scope of its own antecedent religious experience. So in particular it proceeds with what are called objective doctrines, and with a portion at least of the oecumenical confessions. Both these divisions are unhistorical. The last breaks at once with the entire pre-Reformation Church and life, which it regards as having been only a grand aberration. The more, however, it loses the firm substance of stable Christian objectivity, so that even the canon ceases to be canonical for it through its contents, the more does it lose also both Christian assurance and Christian faith. For to both belongs an inward *substance*, to which they refer themselves. The same process repeats itself theologically here, which we have in the one-sided movement of the subjective philosophy ending in Fichte. But the first division is also in its way unhistorical and revolutionary; because it *breaks with the Reformation*, and its demand for the free personal appropriation of truth, and makes but small account of the need of salvation and truth. It springs over the Reformation, that work of God, in which the Church mounted to a higher stage in the appropriation of Christian truth, in order to fall back at once and immediately to the ancient Church. We will not say that this is necessarily Romanizing; but even if errors, specifically Roman, may be (by in consequence) happily avoided, such a theology acquires so much the more an Oriental type; it must place the Divine institution of the Church higher than the faith, with which in the Reformation view the Church first properly begins, and that will show itself unavoidably in sacramental hierarchical views.

“The method of Nevin would be allowable, if the theological subject and object were identical, so that the believer might say, I am Christ, and the Church is simply the *Christus expli-*

citus; or if the principle of doctrinal knowledge and the principle of actual existence were the same. When the subjective side is thus crowded out of its proper place by the Christian object, the consequence is that religion or faith and theology are confounded, and the last (as happens unpleasantly with Nevin himself against his adversaries) is handled as if it were religion itself. If Nevin would take faith in the evangelical sense as the preliminary condition of theology, and would represent scientifically the factors of which it is composed, he would find the true union of its subjective and objective constituents in the conjunction of faith with Holy Scripture, but see at the same time that in the systematic exhibition of the contents of faith more than *one* method is admissible. For how should it not answer for example, to make God the beginning of a dogmatic system, without prejudice to the idea of Christ; although on the other side that also has its right, that we are brought to the Father through the Son? Such a system now, however, might well be called theocentric; and with it might well be joined the view also, that in Christ God is not simply (as before Christ) the centre of nature, as also of general and Old Testament history, in His character of *Logos*, but becomes the centre also of a kingdom of grace and glory.

“Over against the two grand divisions of modern theology now described, then, there stands of right a *third*, which alone can be said to have the promise of a future. That is *the* theology, which *genuinely historical* breaks neither with the Ancient Church nor with the Reformation, but stands in essential harmony with both, and seeks to understand accordingly the continuity of the life of the Church. It is in the nature of things, that as children of the Reformation we proceed from the Reformation stand-point; that we lay all stress thus in particular on the free conscious personal apprehension of salvation and Christian truth; an end, which, in the way of all teleology, must work back into the beginning, also, and hold at a distance there whatever may be at war with this end, the authority of the Church for example, regarded as the ultimate seal of truth. So far as this goes, the Church has passed with the Reforma-

tion (as compared with the Christological and Trinitarian period) into the Anthropological and Soteriological stadium. But she has not hereby, by any means, become anthropocentric in the sense of Dr. Nevin. The faith which brings salvation with its free personal appropriation and assurance, cannot come into exercise, except as the *object* it is to embrace is offered to it for this purpose through the Holy Scriptures and the preaching of them by the Church; and the substance of the plain Gospel thus preached through Scripture or Church, as it is comprised for example in the Apostles' Creed, has power in it to make itself evident to the penitent, believing mind. But with this there is given at once also a real identity, not only with the old Christian faith of the Creed, but as far as theological consciousness is unfolded with the Trinitarian and Christological decisions likewise of the Ancient Church; which form thus a rich and valuable inheritance, although, as regards the precise details of church doctrine, it is to be entered upon only *sous le bénéfice de l'inventaire*. That involves, it is true, the right of evangelical faith to sit in judgment on ecclesiastical doctrinal decisions, and so a recognition of the fallibility of the Church in herself, which will not allow her to be considered the highest authority in matters of religion; but then is only that faith which is demonstrably in harmony with Scripture, that can legitimately exercise any such criticism over the Church."

A General Observation.

Thus far Dr. Dorner. I have thought it well to give in full his criticism on this part of my tract; both to do him justice, and to bring fairly and clearly into view the interesting and important subject on which he has here taken pains to declare his mind. What such a man has to say on the principle of Protestantism is entitled always to respectful hearing and consideration. As this extract, however, reaches so far, it must be allowed now to form by itself the body of the present article; while I reserve to myself the right of answering it in my next communication. In the meantime, it is commended to the careful study of the readers of the *Messenger* generally.

They may see from it the magnitude and solemnity of the discussion with which it is concerned; its theoretical difficulties; its far-reaching practical applications. Let them be well assured, that it is eminently worthy of their closest and most earnest attention.

One general observation, however, I may be allowed to make here, in view of the whole argument which I have now taken the trouble of translating from Dorner's review.

The argument rests on premises and views, very different from those that govern the thinking of the party in this country, which is industriously trying to make capital out of it now at my expense. For the party in question, indeed, this is of the smallest imaginable account. It is only in keeping with the tactics it has seen fit to pursue generally, in contending *manfully* for the faith once delivered to the saints. All weapons, no matter from what foreign ecclesiastical armory or camp, have been made welcome, which could by any possibility carry with them what seemed a temporary edge against my views, by either direct or cross, cut or thrust, in any and every direction. Any authority, Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopalian, or even Roman Catholic itself, has been considered good and sound *as against Mercersburg*. Why, then, should not all account be made of Dorner's unfavorable criticism also for the same purpose? No one could expect anything else. Who of this guerilla band, this bushwhacking Morgan's corps, cares a fig for Dorner's theological status in any other view? Still this is no reason why attention should not be called to the fact now stated. It may be of some interest to the friends of truth, even though it be of none to the friends of error.

The whole theological position of Dr. Dorner, even as brought out by the extract now quoted, is different from that of his admirers in this country, who are now bent on making him a *coryphaeus* for the American German Reformed Church; and the difference is such, as, under other circumstances (exhibited, for example, in our new Liturgy or in the *Mercersburg Review*), could not fail to draw upon itself their heavy censure and animadversion. Let it suffice to instance in the following particulars:

1. Dorner holds, in the first place, that Protestantism is *historical*, in the sense of being the legitimate succession of the previous life of the Church back to the time of the Apostles. The only theology which has the promise of the future, he tells us, is that which neither ignores the Reformation of the 16th century, nor yet makes it the birth of a new Christianity, but seeks to maintain the proper continuity of the Christian faith and life by joining the Reformation with Primitive Christianity, so that they may appear one with full justice to both. Now this is just what we, as a Church, have been reaching after, in our Liturgy and in all our theology. Dorner may not like exactly *our* way of joining the two periods. Still he is of one mind with us plainly, as regards general theory and object. But in this he differs *toto cælo* from his American would-be cousins; as well as from the universal Babylon of sects they here represent—of which, it is only too plain, our good Dr. Dorner knows next thing to nothing. It is the glory of this whole school to be perfectly unhistorical. The beginning and end of their Protestantism is simply *Delenda est Carthago*, hurled forever against Catholicism and all Christianity older than the 16th century.

2. Then, in the next place, Dorner proceeds throughout, as I have had occasion to remark before, on the assumption that Protestantism, in its historical character, has been itself also a *moving* fact from the beginning (in the general movement of the world's life); that it has in this way parted with very much in form which belonged to it originally; that it requires now broad reconstruction, to conserve and maintain its first substance; and that this can never be done at all by any repristination simply of old terminology or old modes of theological thought. He will not hear of a mechanical, but only of a dynamical resurrection, for the orthodoxy of the Reformation age either Lutheran or Reformed. How little this agrees with the prating of our American resurrectionists on this subject, whose whole learning consists in digging up the mere bones and dust of that buried time, and trying to pass them off as its veritable life, all who choose to look at the matter can easily see.

3. The whole idea of a regenerated Protestantism, in the third place, as held by Professor Dorner, is predicated on the common German view, that much of the orthodox thinking of the 16th and 17th centuries was both *philosophically and theologically wrong*. That its doctrine of God, for example, and His relations to the world, was not rightly digested; that the true conception of revelation in its historical character, was not reached by it; that it had no proper sense, therefore, of the relation of Judaism and the Old Testament to Christianity and the New Testament; that its theory of inspiration, in particular, was mechanical and wholly unsound. That its supernaturalism altogether, in a word, was dualistic and magical, and in this way at bottom irrational and fairly open to the assaults of Rationalism; which had a right, therefore, to triumph over it, as it did triumph over it in fact, in the deluge of subjectivity (intellectual, sentimental, and moral), with which all was hopelessly submerged in the 18th century. This is the German *Evangelical* theory. This is the theory in which Dr. Dorner openly stands, as any one can see in his late History of Protestantism. Now I pass no judgment upon it here. That is not my business at present. I only say, that it is brimful of heresy, as measured from the stand-point of those among ourselves who are now ready to magnify Dorner as their great Apollo against Mercersburg. *Their* stand-point is that of our American *Evangelicalism* generally; and it involves precisely, that whole scheme of one-sided, abstract supernaturalism, which Dorner thinks went down like a foundering ship in the floods and billows of German unbelief at the close of the last century; making room, only through its own vast and terrible wreck, for the resuscitation of the old faith now in new and better form!

4. Once more: Dr. Dorner tells us plainly, that the material principle of Protestantism, justifying faith, the right of the Christian believing personality, is so *independent* in its own order, that it may bring to its critical bar, not only the authority of the Church, and all Christian tradition, but the sense of Scripture, also, and the canonical authority of the Bible. It may exercise here still the same freedom that Luther exercised,

for example, when he pronounced the Epistle of St. James an epistle of straw, and charged St. Paul with false logic in the Epistle to the Galatians. Now here, as before, I simply state Dorner's view, without passing upon it at present any judgment. But how does all this, it may well be asked again, fall in with the ordinary Evangelical thinking of this country? Such a view of saving faith, as exalted above the Church, cannot fail, of course, to be pleasing to it: but what of the exaltation of faith above the Scriptures? Can that also be pleasing to it? Not certainly in Dorner's sense. Our American Puritanism, in all its forms, affect, to build its religion wholly and exclusively on the Bible. That is for it the pillar and ground of the truth, the beginning and the *ne plus ultra* of all sure and orthodox belief. In other words, it puts the formal principle of the Reformation into the place of its material principle; the very error again in which Dorner sees the rise and growth of the great Protestant apostacy of the last century; and the full surmounting of which he holds to be now the first condition of that great Protestant restoration, which is, in his view, the problem and task of the present century.

V. CHRISTOLOGICAL VIEW OF FAITH.

I come now to consider Dr. Dorner's strictures on my view of the central relation of Christ to Christianity, as they have been quoted at large in my last article.

He charges me, in general terms, with confounding subjective and objective in my way of looking at Christianity; and thinks that I fail, on this account, to distinguish properly between religion or faith and theology—making the last to be religion itself; as if the principle of doctrinal knowledge here, he says, and the principle of actual being or existence, were one and the same.

Now I can only say, that the two are for my own mind perfectly distinct; and that I have never supposed myself at all to be confounding them in the way thus laid to my charge.

I must confess, however, on the other hand, that I look upon them as most intimately related; in such sort that there can be no proper theology, no knowledge of what Christianity is scien-

tifically, which is not based upon the sense of what it is in the way of some actual religious experience. "Theology," says Martensen, "is not only a science *of* or concerning faith, but also a knowledge *in* faith and *out of* faith." In this view, when we go back far enough, the knowledge-principle and the being-principle here *do* meet together in a wonderfully significant way. Saving faith is the beginning of all evangelical knowledge. Subject and object are inseparably conjoined, where such faith becomes for the soul the germinant power of a true Christian life. They are not to be confounded with one another, certainly, as if they were identical; but just as little may they be sundered and held apart, as if one could exist and be of force without the other.

It is not to be imagined, of course, that Dr. Dorner would dispute this; and yet he seems to me, strangely enough, to lose sight of it in his criticism now under consideration.

If I understand him rightly, he has it in his mind, that when I affirm the Person of Christ to be the only right stand-point for seeing Christianity in proper view, and understanding it properly, I must mean to assert the necessity of some Christological theory, some scientific or dogmatic apprehension in the first place of what is comprehended in the constitution of His Person, as a sort of intellectual preparation for such Christocentric knowledge of the Gospel. But I need not say, that this is as far as anything well could be from my real meaning in all I have ever been trying to say on the subject.

In opposition to any such theoretic or intellectual position, now, which I am supposed to insist upon, Dr. Dorner gravely tells us: "The right point of view, from which only the centre is to be clearly distinguished from the radii and periphery, is according to common Reformation doctrine, the right personal disposition and capacity of man—in one word, *faith*, the necessary presupposition of all sound Christian knowledge. Such faith has in the Evangelical Church its most intensive and purest idea and form; and this, as faith in redemption (above all, justification) through Christ." Again: "It is Pelagian to affirm any true and sure knowledge of Christ, *before* the experi-

ence of His redeeming power ;" as if in some way *my* Christocentric theory involved that. And so it follows: "Quite otherwise, so far as we can see, Dr. Nevin. Of the Reformation faith he has, in this decisive passage, nothing to say. Christ is for him the self-evident centre of Christianity; and nothing is said of the necessity of conversion, here where the subject is in hand, for gaining the proper condition and basis of true knowledge, as if every man in Christendom must understand of himself that Christ is this centre."

Now this is truly amazing. Where have I ever said a word to imply, that the knowledge of Christ can be brought into us otherwise than through *faith*? Have I not been insisting all along on the necessity of having such faith toward Christ to start with, for any true and right apprehension of the Gospel? What else than this can I have meant, by gathering up the sense of the Creed continually into that fundamental confession of St. Peter: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God? Where have we, if not here, the true conception of faith (God-wrought in the soul), in distinction from all mere ratiocination or outward tradition (of flesh and blood origin); commended to us as it is by the solemn congratulation of the Saviour Himself?

Not to speak now of other utterances, made by me over and over again on this subject, which Dr. Dorner may never have had the opportunity of seeing, what are we to think of his overlooking, in the very passage itself which he is here criticising as of such *decisive* significance, the following plain language:

"As an object of *faith* and knowledge, and in the only form in which it can be regarded as having reality in the world, Christianity has been brought to pass through the mystery of the incarnation, and stands perpetually in the presence and power of this fact. All its verities, all its doctrines, all its promises, all its life-giving forces, root themselves continually in the undying life of Him who thus became man for us men and for our salvation. And such being the actual *objective* constitution of Christianity, it would seem to be at once plain that our *apprehension* of it, to be either right or safe, must

move in the same order. It must plant itself boldly and broadly on the proposition, that Jesus Christ is the principle of Christianity, and that the full sense of the Gospel is to be reached only in and through the revelation which is comprehended in His glorious Person. In doing this, it will become necessarily such a theology, such a way of looking at the Christian salvation, as we are now trying to describe. Learned or unlearned, it will be a theology that revolves around Christ as a centre, and is irradiated at all points by the light that flows upon it from His presence." *Vind.*, p. 55.

Again: "How then, having such objective constitution, and standing thus actually and entirely in the historical being of Christ, beyond which it must necessarily resolve itself into nothing, as having no *basis of faith* whereon to rest; being in such sort bound to Christ, we repeat, as the Alpha and Omega, sum and substance, of its whole existence, how possibly shall Christianity be studied and understood aright, either practically or doctrinally, either as a system of life or as a system of theology, if it be not in the Christocentric way of which we are now speaking? To comprehend the world which grace has made, we must take *our position by faith* in the great primordial centre from which all has been evolved, and *there* fixing our spiritual telescope, endeavor, as best we may, to scan the wonders thus offered to our contemplation." *Vind.*, p. 59.

How *could* Dr. Dorner say in the face of this, that the centrality here claimed for Christ, as the self-evident origination of Christianity, shuts out the fundamental significance of *faith* in its Reformation sense; when the very purpose of the whole representation is to show, that what the Gospel is objectively in the Christocentric view, it must be also as mirrored in our apprehension of it—which it cannot be, except as we *take our position by faith* in the actual centre itself (Christ Jesus) from which all flows!

It really seems at times, as if Dr. Dorner, in his zeal for the autonomic character of justifying faith, the independence of the material principle of Protestantism (as against both Church and Bible), were disposed to resolve all Christianity into the action

simply of our human subjectivity in this form. Our faith, he says, is the only right viewing point from which to understand Christianity as if we could have this somehow, without *being* in Christianity: as if it were possible for faith to be in us, and yet not be at once the comprehension and power of its object in us at the same time.

This, of course, is *not* what Dorner means. Faith with him is more than a strong self-persuasion merely of inward justification, in any Anabaptist or common Methodistical sense; however much his language sounds occasionally that way. He tells us explicitly, that it has power and reality only through what it lays hold of as its object. It is thus subjective and objective both together. But there is after all, I cannot help feeling, a certain amount of confusion, in the way in which the objective factor is brought in by him to complement the subjective.

Sometimes he speaks of the complementing factor, as if it were simply the Holy Scriptures in the most general sense. Then again, however, it is made to be Divine Revelation, the substantial matter back of the Written Word, which faith has to do with directly in a sense that gives the principle authority co-ordinate with that of the Bible itself. But such revelation, it is seen, must come to its completion in Christ and it is in Him only therefore at last, that faith finds its full object. This now would seem of itself to bring us to the Christocentric view, which Dorner so strangely seeks to avoid. But here again we meet with new confusion.

As the power of our justification, faith has to do primarily, we are told, with the atoning righteousness of Christ; it is the meeting in us of the subjective consciousness of guilt and condemnation, with the objective presence of the satisfaction Christ has made for our sins by His death upon the cross. At times, now we have this spoken of as if it were something to be thought of, and laid hold of, in its own separate nature. But then it is felt again, that as such an abstraction the atonement can have in the end no objective reality; and so it is admitted to be of force for faith, only as it is apprehended in the living

person of the Redeemer. We have redemption through Christ's blood only *in* Christ Himself.

This seems certainly to refer the whole Christian salvation to the Mediatorial being of the Saviour, in the full sense of our Liturgy and the Creed; and I had supposed, therefore, that I was simply giving Dorner's own view of Luther's doctrine of justifying faith, when speaking of it in my article on his History of Protestantism, in the April number of the *Mercersburg Review*, I used these words:

“The only real foundation of Christianity, objectively considered, is Christ Himself. Great stress then is laid here on the thought, that justifying faith, in the Reformation sense of the term, amounted to a self-authenticating apprehension of Christ's righteousness through an actual laying hold of His person and life. In other words, that in which Christianity started within the soul, was held to be not just the idea of the atonement after all; but this idea lodged in the Incarnate Word, as the power of salvation back of all Christ's doings and merits in any other view. This is all very well, and as we believe profoundly true. The article of a standing or falling Church becomes thus Christological, in the fullest sense of the term. It centres upon the person of Christ, and has no meaning or truth in any other view. Dorner sees well, that in no other view can there be any room to speak either of theological consistency or of historical continuity for Protestantism; without this it must resolve itself into endless confusion and chaos. We may well say, therefore, that in thus maintaining the Christological sense of Luther's doctrine of justification by faith, Dorner has, in truth planted himself on what must be considered the very Gibraltar of the Protestant cause, if that cause is to be defended at all on strictly Protestant ground.”

I supposed, I say, that this Christological view of the Reformation doctrine was Dorner's view; and I see not yet, how any one can help getting such impression from what he says on the subject in his History of Protestant Theology; while, nevertheless, I have all along thought, and over and over again said, that the view committed him to *more* than he seemed willing to

allow, and that he was inconsistent with himself, in particular, in not carrying it out to his proper churchly consequences as we have them set forth in the Creed.

Now, however, it might almost seem, from this article in the Berlin *Jahrbücher*, that he is disposed to take back altogether what he has written on the subject in his History of Protestant Theology, and to make the atonement in some way a deeper principle than the life of the Incarnate Son of God, in and by which only we have received the atonement. Dorner surely, cannot, deliberately conceive of the incarnation or flesh-taking of Christ as a mere instrumental contrivance to make the atonement possible. Yet the way he now talks looks more or less, it must be confessed, in this direction. Altogether he lays himself open to the charge of serious inconsistency and self-contradiction. This I have felt before; but I feel it now more strongly than ever.

It is now more than before evident also, through what interest and preconception it is that the mind of our Berlin Professor is swayed out of right course, in what he has to say on this subject. It is want of full sympathy with the Creed, and want of power to accept the idea of the Church as it is there made to be an article of faith. Here it is, as he tells us, that our ways, his and mine, no longer go together; "Since Dr. Nevin," he says, "is led by them to propositions in regard to the *Church* which seem to me no longer evangelical, and which he himself must have felt to be objectionable if he had held the principle of the Reformation in its full significance and force."

That, however, is just the question between us. Must the material principle of the Reformation be so taken, that it shall be Christological only to the extent of embracing the atonement in Christ; or may it not be taken as Christological in full, by being brought to embrace at once the whole Christ and all His benefits? In the latter case it will run the same course with the Apostles' Creed, and bring us finally to its doctrine of the Holy Catholic Church.

Let me quote here, in conclusion, a remarkable passage from Dorner himself (Hist. of Prot. Theol., p. 224), which bears with

full force on the great subject here in hand, and as it seems to me yields in fact all that I have been contending for in regard to it. It is on Luther's view of the material principle of Protestantism, and reads as follows:

“Luther laid the greatest stress at all times on the assurance of salvation and of the Divine truth of Christianity. The ground certainty, on which all other certainty depends, is with him the justification of the sinner for Christ's sake apprehended by faith; of which it is only the objective statement, to say that the ground certainty with him is Christ as the Redeemer, through surrendry to whom faith has full satisfaction, and knows that it stands in the truth. The last ground of certainty, then, that through which all other truths are made certain, is for him plainly neither the authority of the Church, nor yet the authority of the canonical Scriptures handed down by the Church. Instead of this it is the *substance matter of God's Word*, which, whatever different forms it may take, is able to authenticate itself as God's Word by itself and its Divine power upon the heart. As Luther had not himself come to faith and the assurance of salvation directly by reading the Holy Scriptures, or through their authority, so neither could he allow to the sacred canon the first right to be believed; but it is the inward life of the Gospel proclamation which arrests him, when he has been first awakened to a lively sense of his need for it, and whose Divine, self-accrediting power then he experiences after having yielded himself to it in trust. Of course the Holy Scriptures contributed to the production of his faith, even if he might not have been aware of it himself as a *means of grace*. Without the presupposition, that the historical testimony of the Church concerning Christ was warranted in general as true, (and this warrant we have, at last, only through the archives of the New Testament,) he could not have performed the act of faith in the historical Christ. Without the historical witness of Christ, faith would have lacked its historically cognizable object. But, although historical faith presupposes this witness in general as credible, it is still not yet itself true saving faith, neither is this historical assurance true certainty. The Gospel as histori-

cal truth only would be something past and dead, as being a mere doctrinal system of eternal truths without life and without reference to the living person. Such is the nature of the Gospel, that it is first truly known and embraced only when Christ the historical, is apprehended at the same time as the present, and so as the always enduring also in the future; although past, yet still to-day actively alive and pointing toward the depths of an eternity whose life-forces are all in Himself. Where the substance of the historical Gospel has come to be thus apprehended in its inward nature, as at once historically real and yet everlasting, there the abode of eternal peace and of Divine life has been found; and just as little now as the sun needs the testimony of any other light to prove that it shines and throws out heat, so little can faith, made participant of the inward presence and power of truth, require their demonstration in any other form."

This is beautiful; and speaks for itself. I ask no finer exposition of what I mean by a *Christocentric* Gospel.

VI. THE CHURCH A CHRISTIAN MYSTERY.

In the progress of his criticism, Dr. Dorner comes, in the next place, to the consideration of my second characteristic of our theology, namely, its comprehension in the scheme or outline of the Apostles' Creed.

It is well, he says, that the honor of the Creed is maintained, against the wrong it has been made to suffer at the hands of Puritanism; but he objects to its being made absolutely regulative for all later confessional faith.

Here comes out now, more fully than before, the nature of the divergency he speaks of, as having place between him and myself, in our different ways of carrying out the Christological idea of the Gospel. I run it, he says, into views of the Church, which he cannot approve. But I do this, in truth, by simply following the movement of the Christological idea itself, as we have it represented in the Creed; and now, in contesting the point between us, Dorner shows himself in conflict also with the fair and proper sense of this venerable œcumenical symbol.

This at once, as all may readily see, is a powerful presumption against his general criticism.

In opposition to what I say of the necessary order of the articles of the Creed, as answering to the objective order of the Christian salvation itself, he betrays his own *divergent* theology by the following most significant and highly characteristic observation :

“From this it would follow, that not only for us, but in and of itself, the Church, nay even the communion of saints, is at hand before the forgiveness of sins or justification; is thus at hand before the existence of believers or justified persons; which at once implies, that the Church before all is to be regarded as a sacramental, Divine institution. But such wrong estimation is contradicted plainly by the whole Apostolic symbol; since this does not begin with the Church, but with the three times repeated Credo.”

Now the amount of this evidently is, that the idea of the Church in the Creed is to be taken as of one meaning simply with the notion of a collective association of individual believers, whose existence it then follows and depends upon in a purely external way. But this most unquestionably is *not* what the idea of the Church was for the Christian world in the first ages, and *not* what it is made to be as an article of faith in the ancient Creeds.

The Church, regarded in such merely outward view, could not be the object of faith at all in the sense of the Creed. It might be the object of empirical observation, or the object of abstract reflection; something to be seen or to be thought of notionally, as we may be conversant with any other social organization; but there would be no *mystery* in it, no such presence of the supernatural, as would require for its apprehension a faculty or power transcending all natural intelligence and reason. It is not making it such a mystery, to resolve it simply into the conception of an *invisible* society as distinguished from what it is under another view as a visible society. In any case, as Dr. Dorner well knows, no such distinction entered into the thinking of the first Christian ages, and it is utterly

foreign therefore from the historical sense of the Creed. But, besides this, the distinction itself cannot be said to relieve at all the question now before us; for that regards the possibility of making a mere outward generalization the object of faith, in the same sense with the other articles of the Creed; and for this it is of no account, whether the generalization be of visible forms of existence or of such as are held to be invisible. It is an abstraction only, or a notion of our own minds, that we have to do with in either case. There may be a mystery (to be apprehended only by faith) in the regeneration of single believers, considered as belonging either to a visible or to an invisible society, but this will not make a mystery of their association in one view or the other. Assuming the existence of such separate miracles of grace, the mere classification of them under a common general conception and name (whether as visible or invisible) is no mystery whatever, and requires for its apprehension no exercise whatever of true evangelical faith. The Church in such view is at best only the putting together, and summing up of a certain number of mysterious facts (individual Christian experiences) that have become separately actual beforehand in another way altogether.

This, I am sorry to say, seems to be Dr. Dorner's view. I can make nothing else out of the criticism just quoted. As there can be no Church without believers, he argues that the existence of the Church cannot be in any sense prior to the existence of believers; and so takes it for granted, that, in the order of grace, believers come first and the Church afterwards. All real priority in the case is found in the subjective experiences of individuals; they come first of all to justifying faith and the sense of pardoned sin, in the way of independent separate conversion; and the whole being of the Church then follows, as the gathering up simply of such religious life into a collective social form. There is nothing new to us, of course, in this way of looking at the subject. It is the voice of our American Puritanism, so familiar to us on all sides. It is the *material principle* (God forbid I should say of Protestantism, but I *will* say boldly) of evangelical and rationalistic Sectarian-

ism, all the world over, In this sense only is the sect spirit ever found (for occasional dramatic effect) mouthing the Apostles' Creed, and saying with pious mental reservation, *I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.*

Can such a man as Professor Dorner seriously imagine, that the Church under this notional character may be considered a mystery, in one line with the other mysteries of the Creed; that it is an object for supernatural faith in any such miserably dependent view; and that being of this character, then, it is out of its place, where it now stands in the Creed; being there only by accident as it were, without premeditation or design, and without any coercive reason in the objective movement of the Christian salvation itself?

Most certainly the sense which is thus forced into the Creed, is not that which the construction of the Creed itself involves. The idea of the Church, as it meets us among other fundamentals of the Christian faith in this primitive œcumenical symbol, is not that of a whole depending on its parts (in which case it would be a mere thought), but that of a whole comprehending its parts in itself, and possessing them with its presence. In other words, it is the idea of an organic whole, and not the notion of a simply mechanical whole. A mechanical whole is made up of single things or particulars, put together in a merely outward way. An organic whole on the contrary, is the union of particular existences and a general existence, through the power of a common life. In the first case the general follows the particulars and depends upon them entirely; but this is not so at all in the second case. In an organic whole the general is before the particulars, underlies them, and actually brings them to pass. True, the general in this form cannot come to any actual subsistence in the world, except through the particulars it thus brings to pass; but it is not for this reason an unsubstantial abstraction; it has a most real positive and substantive being of its own; and in the order of actual existence this comes first, and forms the only possibility, or potential reason, for all the particular existences by which it is brought into view.

Let no one say this is absurd; for we have it exemplified to our observation continually in the world of nature. Single animals and single plants are what they are everywhere, only in virtue of the generic life which belongs to them in common with other animals or plants of the same kind; and this generic life, in every case, comes in fact before the single existences, which it thus enters into and actualizes with its otherwise invisible presence and power. The race or kind cannot appear indeed, cannot become actual, except through the single creations into which it resolves itself; in the order of time, the general and the particular go together, the presence of the one is at once the presence also of the other; but for all that, in the order of being the general is the first and the particular second. In a profound sense, the life of the genus is older, deeper, and broader, than that of all the single living objects comprised in it. We all see and feel this, just as soon as we come to reflect seriously on the world around us; and our knowledge of the world is conditioned universally by our quiet admission of the philosophical fact. Our knowledge of the general life that enters into single living forms is never for us a generalization simply of these forms; never something that is felt to follow them only in the way of corollary or deduction. On the contrary, the general life is always apprehended as fundamental and first in the order of existence, so that we can be said to know and be sure of the single forms, only as we perceive them in the power of its ideal and yet all the while most real presence. We believe in the generic life first, and through that next in the particular and individual life; by means of which only, at the same time, the generic life ever comes actually into view.

With this mystery, now, everywhere before us in the world of mere nature, why should we have any difficulty in admitting a corresponding law of existence in our general human life, first in its natural condition, and then also in the condition to which it has been advanced by grace? Such undoubtedly is the view that underlies and determines the sense of the Creed, in the point which we have now under consideration, It is not neces-

sary to suppose any metaphysical reflection in the case. We have in it the intuitional logic simply of sound Christian faith. At the ground of this doctrine of the Church lies the idea of an organic redemption, answerable to the organic ruin of the race, and making room for the salvation of individual believers, just as this ruin draws after it the corruption and perdition of individual sinners. It is only through this idea of a generic redemption, indeed, that the generic character of the fall (original sin and universal bondage under the power of the Devil) can be said to come into view at all in the Creed. Here the fact of such organic general ruin, however, is solemnly recognized, in the acknowledgment of a like organic general restitution of our fallen human nature, through which alone it has become possible for men to be saved from their sins. To believe now in such an organic power of redemption, the actual presence in the world of a constitution of grace no less real than the constitution of man's fallen life on the outside of it; to believe in this as the result of Christ's victory over sin and death, the fruit of His resurrection, and the form of his presence and working in the world through the Spirit to the end of time; to believe in all this, I say, is to believe what is substantially the article of the Holy Catholic Church in the Creed. The article does not regard primarily and immediately the empirical organization of the Church at any given time. It looks to the general or universal life of Christianity (the Pentecostal *gift* of the glorified Saviour), as that, which must necessarily precede in the order of actual being all particular Christian life. This generic Gift (Eph. iv. 8-16), reaching historically through all times, is the idea of the Church, however variously actualized from age to age; and it is easy to see, why in such view it should be one of the "articles of our undoubted Christian faith" as we have them set forth in the Creed; and why also it should stand exactly where it does, in the movement of this grand old Christological confession. To be an article of faith at all, it must be where it is in the confession, and nowhere else.

Here, in its true and proper place, it meets us as a mystery,

of one order with what is represented as going before it; a mystery growing out of the general mystery of godliness (the manifestation of God in the flesh), whose living movement it is the object of the Creed to proclaim and set forth; a mystery, then, which has its necessity in this movement itself; which is postulated and demanded by it, from the first, as a part of its own self-evolving law of life and salvation; and which requires, therefore, for its apprehension the same faith, that is needed to believe in Christ's resurrection and glorification at the right hand of God, or to believe that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh at all.*

The article of the Church is not in the Creed in any way at random. Some might think it better to have the Bible in its place. But the Bible could not possibly stand here with the same inward reason or necessity for faith. There is no direct immediate connection between the sending of the Holy Ghost and the giving of the Holy Scriptures, in such sort that faith can be said to be shut up by the first to the second, as that without which the first must be felt to be unreal. It is not without reason, therefore, that the Holy Scriptures are not mentioned in the Creed. The fundamentals of Christianity, flowing forth immediately from the revelation of the Holy Trinity in and through the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, lie back of the inspired record and canon; so that in the true order of faith, the authority of the Scriptures can be only of subsequent apprehension and force; as the New Testament in fact, we know, did not originate Christianity in the beginning, but grew forth from it gradually as its Divine product and birth. For this reason, I repeat, the Bible could not stand in the Creed where the Church now stands. It is not postulated there by the movement of the Christian mystery; and so it could not be, at this stage of the movement, an article of faith at all in the sense in which faith is shut up to the other articles of the symbol in their consecutive order and place. The

* "Die Kirche," says the late Dr. Ullmann, "ist dem Christenthum nicht etwas Zufälliges, so dass sie also wohl auch hätte nicht gestiftet werden können; sondern sie ist etwas Nothwendiges. Sie ist die Erscheinungs- und Daseinsform des Christenthums selbst." Let the thoughtful consider well what this true word means.

Church, on the contrary, is there, not by accident, but through the immanent law of the Creed itself; and those who think at all that it might by any possibility be left out, and a different article (the authority of the Holy Scriptures for example) be substituted in its place, only show that they do not understand the Creed, and that it is not for them the true norm of Christian faith which it was held to be in the beginning.

Of course, then, I am not moved here at all by Dorner's objection now under consideration. Right or wrong, the Christian world had in the beginning, I must believe, that view of the relation of general Christianity to particular personal Christianity, which he tells us would imply, that the Church might exist before the existence of believers; and this view, beyond all question, rules the movement of the Apostles' Creed, demanding the exercise of faith in the Holy Catholic Church, and in the communion or common life of saints, before it asks us to believe in the forgiveness of sins. There can be no actualization of the Church in time, we know, without individual believers and saints; but for all this, there may be, and there is a priority belonging to the Church in the order of existence, in virtue of which it must be for us an object of faith before we can believe firmly in the powers and operations of the Gospel under any narrower and more particular view; just as we must believe in humanity at large (although there can be no actual humanity without particular men), *before* any particular man can be to us more than an evanescent spectre or shadow.

That the Church holds its proper place in the Apostolic symbol, and that it is there of purpose and not by accident, is rendered still farther evident by the mention which is made of its necessary distinguishing attributes. On any close consideration, it is found at once, that these, no less than the being of the Church itself, are part of its ideal character; and that they have their necessity for faith, therefore from the general nature of Christianity as this goes before in the person and work of Christ, and not at all from any empirical observation of its following fruits. Faith does not wait to find the attributes of the Church exemplified in the society of believers under any actual

historical form. The attributes are in the idea with *a priori* necessity and force; so that to believe in the Church at all, is to believe in it at the same time as *One*, as *Holy*, as *Catholic*, or *Universal*, and also with the Creed of Nice as *Apostolical*. These distinctions are not factitious or arbitrary in any way. The obligation to believe them lies in the Christian mystery itself; just as this mystery binds us to believe the descent to hades or the second advent, not on other evidence primarily, but through the force of the Christological movement itself, in which they are comprehended. In this view, the attributes themselves are mysteries for faith, and not matters for speculation or opinion. We do not come to the knowledge of them through any outward reflection or observation, through any study of actual church life or ecclesiastical history; but are shut up to them from the start as original conditions or postulates, without which the Church can be for us no object of faith whatever. Let any one consider this, and he must see at once what a dislocation of the Creed it would be, if the article of the Church were made to come after the mention of individual salvation, instead of going before it and making room for it, as it does in the way it now stands.

But all this is to make the Church, Professor Dorner tells us, "a sacramental, Divine institution." It is to do that most assuredly, since otherwise it could have no right to challenge the faith of the world as it has been doing through all ages in the Apostolic and Nicene Creeds. As a mere human visible society, or as a mere human invisible conception, how could it have its place rightly among the other fundamentals of Christianity here brought into view, which *all* represent to us the presence of the supernatural in the Gospel brought near to us sacramentally through natural forms. Certainly the Church is a Divine institution. It is the Ascension gift of the Risen Son of God. Its functions, offices, and powers, are of Divine origin and force. In this view its presence in the world also is sacramental. For is it not the Body of Christ, in and through which He works supernaturally by His Spirit to the end of time? Dr. Dorner altogether argues quite too loosely, it seems to me, in

the use of these ambiguous terms *sacrament* and *sacramental*. But as we are to meet them hereafter again on the subject of the Christian Ministry, I shall say nothing farther in regard to them at the present time.

Why the Creed should be taken by Dr. Dorner to contradict this view of the Church, because it does not put it before its threefold confession of the Holy Trinity, I am not able, I confess, to see or understand. The Church is in no sense the origin and beginning of Christianity; it flows from the redemption of Christ, and is a necessary part simply of the historical movement or process by which this is brought to take effect on the world.

Dr. Dorner charges me farther with overlooking the fact, that the Creed rests upon the Trinity and "God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;" while, according to my view, he says, it ought to proceed forth at once from Christ. But to this sufficient answer has already been made, in what I have said in my *Third Article* of the necessary central position of Christ in the scheme of Christianity, over against the notion of its being intelligible in any way from the idea of God outside the idea of Christ. The question, we have seen, regards the Manifestation of God in His relations to the world; and this, as it completes itself in Christianity, comes to its full effulgent focus in His Incarnate Son, who is the image of the invisible God, the reflected brightness or shining of the Father's glory and the exact copy or character of His person (*χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ*). Looked at in this way, the revelation we have of God in Christ is not simply something added to what we may know of Him in other ways; it brings His whole being and character before us under an entirely new view. Thus it is, that the mystery of the Trinity comes out only through the mystery of the Incarnation; and a belief in God as the Maker of heaven and earth, is conditioned absolutely by our belief in Him as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Although the Creed then starts with God the Father Almighty, it is plainly in such a way that this article, as well as the whole fact of the Trinity, is apprehended and acknowledged only in and by the

light which is thrown back upon the Godhead from the Person of Christ. In other words, the organization of the Creed is strictly and exclusively Christocentric; and no one can repeat it understandingly, who does not take his position with true faith first of all in the great fact of the Incarnation, so as from this point of vision only, to take in the form and sense of all that goes before as well as of all that follows after.

VII. CONSTRUCTION OF THE CREED.

After what has now come into view in regard to Dr. Dorner's divergency from the Christological construction of the Apostles' Creed, and in consideration especially of its bearing upon the Church, and through this upon his theory of the material principle of Protestantism (where we reach the full profound significance of our present controversy), it seems proper to consider here somewhat more closely the general nature of this old œcumenical confession, on the authority and force of which so much depends for the whole discussion with which we are now engaged. This I cannot do more satisfactorily perhaps, in brief compass, than by using for the purpose an argument on the subject which I published in the *Messenger* not long since as one of my series of articles on the *Church Movement*.

The Creed is constructed on the assumption that Christianity is historical, and that in this form it begins wholly and entirely in Christ. He is not the teacher and revealer simply of its several articles; but the articles are all so many historical realities or facts, that flow forth with necessary derivation from His presence in the world, just like a stream from its fountain. Without Him they would have no truth or meaning whatever. He is in Himself first of all, the universal system of grace and truth which they serve to bring into view.

They mistake the character of the symbol altogether, then, who see in it a summary simply of supposed primary doctrines, each accepted as true on its own separate evidence, and all then joined together in a merely external way. So one, for example, might settle in his own mind on certain religious truths, such as the being of God, the immortality of the soul, the in-

spiration of the Scriptures, the fall of man, the miraculous birth of Christ, the atonement, justification by faith, the resurrection, the eternal damnation of the wicked; might hold these to be so many severally independent truths, all equally necessary to be believed as fundamental elements of the Christian system; and so putting them all together might call this his Creed, meaning to express by the term simply his notional conception of so many things as needed to be owned and confessed by a Christian man. But it is not in this way at all that the articles of the Creed challenge our belief; and those for whom the formulary is nothing more than such an outward platform of things to be separately believed, show plainly that they have not yet begun to understand properly "what be the first principles of the oracles of God," as they are here made to be the object of the Christian faith.

The articles of the Creed are true only in Christ, and not at all out of Christ. Any one of them taken separately from Him, and held for a truth independently of His person, would by that fact alone cease to be true in the sense of the Creed, even if it might have some truth of its own in another and different sense. The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the future judgment, for example, made to be the object of belief in any other form than that which they have as dependent upon the mystery of the incarnation, would not be any part of what the Creed is in fact; could not be taken as entering at all into its constitution; but must be regarded as belonging to some other scheme of faith altogether. As the branches of a living tree are what they are only through their relation to the trunk and root from which they grow, and without this could not be true branches at all; so here the several articles of the Creed are but so many forms of existence, historical facts, that root themselves throughout in "Christ, the Son of the Living God" and to tear them away from this root is to destroy at once their whole life and force. They are severally different objects of faith; and yet they are collectively, at the same time, all one object of faith. They cause to pass before us, in panoramic vision, the universal ground scheme of the new creation;

while they show all revolving at the same time, in full-orbed glory, around the Son of Man who is also the Son of God. He is the centre, the alpha and omega, of the Christian Salvation. Not only the whole matter of the Creed, but the whole form of it also, is determined in this way by its derivation from Christ. Its articles are, objectively considered, the movement of the new creation itself in *Christ Jesus*, out to its glorious consummation at the last day; and through this self-unfolding movement they are not only what they are, but also where they are, in the Apostolical *regula fidei*.

Apprehended in the way now stated, the articles of the Creed become to our view at once *mysteries*, and as such true objects for faith in the proper sense of the term. So much lies in the very idea of the *Creed*. It has to do properly with mysteries, supposed to transcend the order of nature, and to be apprehensible as true, therefore, only through the exercise of faith. This at once serves to show, that no article of the Creed can be truly believed on the ground simply of its being ascertained to be true in some other way before it is believed. If one, for example, should have come to be convinced of the existence of God, or of a future life, by the light of reason, no such conviction would be enough to make these articles for Him what they are in the Creed. But more than this: the articles of the Creed are what they are here for faith, even as revealed truths, not through any separate revelation; but only by reason of their flowing forth from the original Mystery of Godliness, the Word made Flesh in the Person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. They exist for faith, and are what they are, only in the bosom of the new world of grace which has been brought to pass by His incarnation, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glorification; so that on the outside of this new creation, they cannot be known or received as real and true in their own form by any intelligence whatever. Every article of the Creed is in this way, by virtue of its comprehension in the power of Christ's life, a mystery for faith, just as truly as the incarnation itself is such a mystery; and to be believed truly, it must be believed with an inward apprehension of the relation in which it thus stands to this fundamental mystery. In no other way, can any

article be believed at all ; for every article is what it is here for faith, wholly and exclusively through its relation to the great fact that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.

The Creed thus is for faith throughout ; not for doctrinal apprehension immediately, or theological knowledge, but for faith. Faith is the special organ, and the only organ, for taking in the sense of its mysterious truths, or say rather, of its mysterious facts. And now, as such a power of taking in the sense of the Gospel in its own form, it must move in its exercise conformably to the actual constitution of the Gospel as we have it exhibited in the Creed. In other words, it must follow the order of the Creed ; beginning where this begins, and ending where it ends ; so that Christianity, or the Gospel, shall be for it subjectively just what it is in the Creed objectively. As the organ for taking in Christianity, then, faith cannot start with the authority of the Scriptures, with the doctrine of justification, or any other like article ; neither can it go to work laying hold of one truth here and another there, in a loose promiscuous way ; it must start where Christianity itself starts, and follow the actual movement of Christianity throughout ; so that the Gospel shall be found repeating itself, as it were, in the form of its believing apprehension. Only as thus answering to the actual nature of its object, can faith be at all true faith, in distinction from mere notion or fancy ; and only thus can it have the force of an argument for the truth of its object, as being in the language of the New Testament, "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen."

All Christian faith, thus, according to the Apostles' Creed, starts in the power of acknowledging that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (1 John iv. 1-3). This is not one among other articles simply, which are required for a good evangelical confession ; it is the root of all other articles, and the assurance of it for faith draws after it the Divine certification of all that follows. The evidence on which faith accepts as true the following parts of the Creed, is found first of all in the self-authenticating mystery of the Saviour's glorious person, the fountain from which all its declaration of truth and grace proceeds. In

this way all the articles of the Creed have their proof ultimately in Christ, and carry with them for faith what may be called an *a priori* demonstration drawn from His actual presence in the world. Faith does not wait to have them made intelligible or certain from any other quarter, or under any other form; but is carried over to them at once, and finds itself as it were shut up to them, from the force of what is felt to be comprehended in the mystery of the incarnation itself. Not that the articles could be drawn out from this fundamental fact, without the help of history, by mere speculation; but in such sense, that the history coming after the fact is at once felt to be authenticated by it as its own necessary onward movement and course. In this way, the certainty of the whole Creed gathers itself up still into the primitive confession: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God!" There all true Christian faith begins. Its object is, first of all, the Incarnate Word, through the light of whose glorious appearing, then, all the following facts of the Gospel are made evident to it, and thus come to be apprehended by it as so many parts of the general mystery of godliness in their proper order.

Thus it is, that all through the Creed faith goes before intelligence, and postulates the truth of every article as a mystery in Christ, before it is comprehended or proved from any other quarter. Indeed there is no room for comprehension or proof, in the case, from any other quarter. As the whole Creed is true in fact only in and through Christ, so it is only in and through the apprehension of Christ that the truth of it can be apprehended really at any point. We believe in the resurrection of Christ, not because we can understand it, nor because we can prove it by any natural evidence; for how should the natural be able to evidence and prove that which is above itself, the supernatural? but because our faith in Christ Himself, as the Son of God, carries us irresistibly forward to the idea of such victory over death and him that had the power of death. In the same way we believe his descent into hades; not because we know where that unseen world is, or what exactly He accomplished while there; but because we feel that without this His

resurrection could not have carried with it the profound cosmical significance, which alone can make it credible in connection with His heaven-descended person.

In the same way, let us add again, we believe in His second advent ("He shall come to judge the quick and the dead"); not because we know when, or how, it is to take place; but as a mystery involved in his first advent, and necessary to complete the sense and purpose of all that goes before in His Mediatorial Life. It is part of the Christian faith, which cannot become dim for us without shedding dimness and shadow at the same time over the whole Creed.

And just so, as I have shown before, we believe the article of the Church and its necessary attributes. Not because we have been able in the first place to identify its existence under an outward empirical form; nor yet because of any power we have to construct a satisfactory scheme of it in a purely theoretical way; but because our faith in Christ and Christianity shuts us up to the idea of the Church, as the only form of religious life adequate for the manifestation of religion in such absolute view. This does not imply, that we are to content ourselves with a mere ideal conception of the Church; or that our faith does not require us to concern ourselves about its actual presence in the outward historical world. We know very well, that no invisible abstraction here can satisfy the sense of the Creed. The Church must be visible as well as invisible, to be the object of true Christian faith. All I mean is, that our faith in the Church must start forth from its ideal conception, to be of any account for its empirical apprehension. Only so can the Church Question be for us ever of any earnest practical interest. Our sects commonly feel easy on the subject, only because they do not *believe* in the Church; it is no object of preliminary faith for them at all, as it is made to be in the Creed. Faith here, as elsewhere, must go before knowledge. *They* reverse the order of faith entirely (as Philip also did in another respect, John xiv. 8, from his simply theocentric stand-point), who say: "Lord, *show* us the Church and it sufficeth us!"

Faith in the Church then, it can easily be seen, is not op-

posed, as some foolishly imagine, to faith in Christ. The Creed does not set the Church before Christ or above Him. On the contrary, it is from Him and for Him; as the body is complete only through the head, from which it draws all its vital energy and power. We do not believe in the Church first, and then in Christ; but because we believe in Christ, therefore we believe also in the Church; just as believing in Christ first, we believe also in the forgiveness of sins and in the resurrection of the body.

So much now for the general nature and constitution of the Apostles' Creed, the *rule of faith* which governed the universal Christian thinking of the early Church. It proceeds throughout on the assumption, that the Gospel starts in Christ, and sees in it everywhere but the unfolding of the grace and truth which were brought into the world originally in His person, through the mystery of His holy incarnation. In this view, it agrees in full with the primitive, New Testament idea of the Gospel, as it was preached by our Lord Himself in the days of His flesh; as we have it proclaimed in the Acts of the Apostles; as it pervades the universal Christology of St. John; and as it underlies the profound soteriology of St. Paul. It is the expansion only of St. Peter's prototypal confession (on which the Church is built); and answers to the sense of what he saw on Mount Tabor, as we hear him quoting it in his old age (2 Pet. i. 16-17): "We have not followed cunningly devised fables (dreams, notions, speculations), when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came to Him such a voice from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the Holy Mount." It is the Mystery of Godliness spoken of, 1 Tim. iii. 16: "God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." All gathers itself up into the confession, that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh; that Jesus is the Son of God; that God hath given to us eternal life, and that this life is

in His Son (1 John iv. 3-15; v. 11). He is the principle or fountain of the whole Christian revelation; and so our faith in it also to be real or saving at any other point, must begin first of all with His person. By Him only can we believe in God the Father; and only by Him can we believe in any doctrine or fact belonging to Christianity and the Gospel. Our power to believe in the Holy Ghost, in the Church, in the Bible, in the atonement, in justification by faith, and in all else necessary to be believed by a true Christian, is comprehended primarily in this, that we can say: I BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD.

VIII. POWERS OF THE WORLD TO COME.

I proceed next to the consideration of Dorner's criticism on the third distinction of our theology, which I have denominated in my *Vindication*, its "historical and objective character." This is closely connected with its relation to the Creed; for the whole conception of this symbol, as we have seen, turns upon the idea of a new order of objective existence, starting in Christ and perpetuating itself by the Church, through the power of His Spirit, in the most real historical way, to the end of time. In disowning the old doctrine of the Church, therefore, as we have it in the Creed, our German critic disowns necessarily at the same time, the idea of any supernatural constitution or order of grace permanently at hand in the world, in a form answerable to this doctrine. Here again, however, as before, he does not go into any close argument on the subject; but contents himself, mainly, with a somewhat dictatorial disposition of it, in the way of two or three more desultorily sweeping than soundly conclusive notes.

For example. I say in my tract, speaking of the necessary relation between the objective and the subjective in Christianity: "The order of all true supernatural teaching is, the objective first, and the subjective or experimental afterwards, as something brought to pass only by its means. Most of all, we may say, is this true of Christianity, the absolute end of all God's acts of revelation. Its whole significance is comprehended, first

of all, in the Divine deed, whereby God manifested Himself in the flesh through the mystery of the Incarnation. This objective act is itself the Gospel, in the profoundest sense of the term. In the very nature of the case, it must underlie and condition all that the Gospel can ever become for men in the way of inward experience. True, it cannot save men without their being brought to experience its power; on which account it is, that we need to be placed in communication with it through faith; but the power that saves, is not, for this reason, in our experience or faith; it is wholly in the object with which our faith is concerned." On this Dorner notes as follows:

"Right; but the question remains: Where and how does this object exist? Has God so entered into the world, that He has no longer any transcendence, but only immanence? That would amount directly to something pantheistic, and thus heathenish, a binding of God to space and time. Or has Christ so incorporated Himself with the Church, that He has no longer any transcendence with regard to it, not even through the Holy Ghost, but the measure of the life and power of the Church simply is to be taken as the measure of His life and power. Then is He sunk (the Reformers said, buried,) in the Church; His pretended glory is abdication. It is to be asked then: Does Nevin regard the Church as the continuation of Christ, or does he leave Christ a place still aside from the Church? The difference between them must be destroyed, in proportion as only the communication of Christ's life is before all made to flow from Him, while the atonement and justification, in their independent significance, are overlooked."

Such argumentation, I must be allowed to say, is unworthy of so great a man as Professor Dorner. It means nothing, and proves nothing. It is easy to ask questions of this sort, that are purely hypothetical in their form; but it is just as easy to answer them, if need be, with counter-questions of the same problematical character. Certainly, I do not confound God with the world, nor Christ with the Church. On the contrary, I have taken all pains everywhere to guard against any such misconstruction of my views, But now, to turn the tables: Does

Dr. Dorner then so hold the Divine transcendence, as to place God mechanically on the outside of the world in the sense of Mohammedan Deism? Or does he make Christ so extrinsic to the Church, that it cannot be said to be His *Body* in any organic sense whatever? It is easy, I say, to ask such questions. But they prove nothing, and they illuminate nothing. It is not strange, perhaps, that in this country attempts should have been made heretofore, by a certain order of theologasters, to render the idea of Christ's continuous presence and working in the Church odious, by caricaturing it as a sort of physical prolongation of His proper personal life; but one may well be surprised to meet with anything, bordering even on such crudity, in the criticism of Dorner. He at least knows, that to make God in Christ the ground of all Christian life, is not necessarily to reduce Christianity in whole to a pantheistic identification with the being of Him from whom it thus flows. Christ in such view is not lost in His people; just as little as His people are lost by any spiritual annihilation in Him.

Again I say in my tract, speaking of the historical character of Christianity: "Not only the subjective religious experiences and opinions of men here are to be regarded as entering into the flow of history, like their political or scientific judgments, but the objective reality from which Christianity springs, the new order of existence which was constituted for the world by the great fact of the Incarnation, must be allowed also to be historical. Only in such view can we possibly retain our hold on the objectively supernatural, as it entered into the original constitution of the Gospel. It is not enough for this purpose, to have memories only of what was once such a real presence in the world. It lies in the very conception of the Gospel, in this objective view, that its supernatural economy should be of perennial force, that its resources and powers should be *once for all*; not in the sense of something concluded and left behind, as many seem to imagine, but in the sense of what, having once entered into the life of the world, has become so incorporated with it as to be part of its historical being to the end of time."

On this we have another indefinite note: "*Certainly Chris-*

tianity must exist always as a historical power; that Nevin's adversaries also must demand. The only question is: Has it such enduring existence in this, that word and sacraments can never fail and that believers can never die out upon the earth, in whom union with the Spirit of Christ is perpetuated, but who cannot still be outwardly and visibly distinguished in the present *seculum*; or is this union bound securely to an order (priests), and does it propagate itself surely everywhere through sacramental acts of the priests? The last, inasmuch as faith is not to be had by a charm, can be affirmed only where no weight is laid upon faith, that is, where recourse is had with Catholic bias to the magical *opus operatum*."

This, it seems to me, is little better than begging the whole question, by throwing it into the form of an alternative, which I can see no necessity for admitting whatever. Still less am I able to see, how it invalidates in the least what I say, in the passage just quoted, on the necessity of a historical substantive existence of Christianity in its general character, as something different altogether from the successive multitudinous experiences simply of individual believers. These stand in the "powers of the world to come;" but they are not for this reason, in and of themselves, the very substance and whole presence of those powers.

And now just here let me ask what rational conception can we have of these *powers of the world to come* (Heb. vi. 6), if they are not to be regarded as the continuous presence, in some way, of the supernatural forces of Christianity in the bosom of the world's ordinary natural life? Christians are said to have tasted the word of God, and the powers of the world to come (*δυνάμεις τε μέλλοντος αἰῶνος*); as having come thus into communication with an order of existence higher than that of the world around them; the "age to come" in distinction from the "present age"—or, as St. Paul calls it, Gal. i. 4, "this present evil world (*ἐκ τοῦ ἐνεστώτος αἰῶνος πονηροῦ*)," to deliver us from which Christ gave Himself for our sins, according to the will of God and our Father. The "world to come" in such view, we see at once, is not any order of existence simply which

may be supposed to await us beyond the grave; and still less can it be regarded as a system of religious thought and feeling merely, having to do with things supernatural and eternal. It can be nothing less, plainly, than the actual presence here on earth, in the most real way, of that higher stadium of existence for man, in which, according to all the Old Testament promises of God, the miseries of his first fallen state were to come to an end finally in the glories of a new spiritual creation, to be ushered in through the advent of the Messiah. All this involves the idea of an economy, different from the old economy of the first merely natural *seculum*, having in its bosom objective forces answerable to its own constitution (the *powers* of the world to come), and subsisting in such form historically through the ages. All this in and through Christ; who in such view is broadly distinguished from Moses, and all the angelic ministries of the Old Testament, as being the principle of "so great salvation (*τηλικαύτης σωτηρίας*)." "For unto the angels," it is solemnly said Heb. ii. 5, "has He not put in subjection the *world to come* (*τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν*) whereof we speak."

Have we not the analogy of this everywhere in our natural world-life? The deepest forces of history, all the world over, lie not in the doings of single men separately considered, but in the general moral existence in which they and all their doings are comprehended; and this general moral existence, let it be well considered, is something far more always than an abstraction or mere figure of speech. It is just as much positive substance, to say the least, as the flesh and blood, or as the soul and mind, of the several personages that figure on the field of history in an outward concrete way. The invisible here again, as in the case of all organized being, is older, deeper, wider, more lasting, and more potent altogether, than the visible. What is it for example, that the history of a nation has to do with mainly, in order to be in full worthy of its name? Not with the details of individual life certainly so much as with the onward movement of the national life in its universal view, the inward ethical substance (embodied in customs, laws, institutions, past memories of every sort, and continually occurring new deeds),

which underlies and actuates unceasingly its whole empirical presence in the world. The proper being of the nation, regarded in this way, is not open to the observation of sense; you cannot lay your hand upon it as a palpable entity in the midst of other palpable things. But for all this, it is none the less actual, and none the less continually at work, and making itself powerfully felt everywhere, in the drama of the nation's existence. In this way it is a world of unseen powers, which in their own order and sphere are just as objectively real and abiding, as the hills and vallies that surround us in the world of nature. What we call the spirit of a people, or the genius of an age, is nothing more nor less in fact, than just such an objective historical force; which is all the time active in the affairs of men; which enters on all sides into doctrines, usages, and laws; which settles itself in institutions, incorporates itself with learning and science, enshrines itself in creations of art, and reveals its presence sacramentally through all manner of mystic signs and symbols; which has its own ministrics, and sets men apart also to fulfill them, arming them with all needful powers for the purpose. An objective historical force thus of the most real and substantial order, which no one surely can refuse to acknowledge without damage and reproach to his own reason.

And why now should it be held incredible, that the counterpart of all this should have place, under a far higher form, in the *Civitas Dei*, the Christian Church, the glorious Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? If there be room to speak of a substantive historical existence as belonging to the general life and spirit of a people in the order of nature, why should we feel it necessary to ascribe less reality, instead of ascribing immeasurably more, to the common ground of Christianity, as this holds in the ever active agency and power of the Spirit of Christ by which He is present in His Church to the end of time?

Dorner resolves the perpetuity of the Church into this simply, that word and sacraments fail not and believers never die out wholly on the earth. But what now does he mean by word and sacraments? Are they outward forms only; or do they take

hold on inward spiritual realities? And are these realities, then, of no standing objective force, but occasional influences only from God, made to attend the outward forms in a mechanical, more or less magical way? What is the perpetuity of word and sacraments, if there be no constant, perpetual substance behind them which they serve to certify and bring into view? How are word and sacraments themselves to be certified, and shown to be authentic and true in distinction from all spurious counterfeits, if not through the actual presence in them of objective forces (powers of the world to come) which in their own sphere are as perpetual as Christ himself? "The words that I speak unto you," our Saviour says, "they are *spirit* and they are *life*." "We believe and are sure," responded the Apostles, "that Thou hast *words of eternal life*." (John vi. 63, 68.) And so with the sacraments. Baptism, according to St. Peter, carries in it the power of salvation (1 Peter iii. 21); and the Lord's Supper is the communion of the body and blood of Christ (1 Cor. x. 16). They are of such force, not because they originate these things of themselves (which would be magic), but because they find them positively at hand in the world of grace, and signify and seal the presence of them to true believers. What are the sacraments as *signs*, and above all, what are they as *seals*, if what they perpetuate comes only of themselves, and has no abiding objective existence beyond themselves; if they *signify* no actual existence, but a thought only in our minds; if they *seal* not, and so touch not in the way of actual verification, any substance of grace behind their own phenomenal forms. As in the secular world political emblems and guaranties (national flags or national bonds, for example) mean nothing, and are worth nothing, without the actual political resources which exist altogether independently of them in real historical form; so it ought to be plain, that in the world of grace also sacramental signs and pledges can be of no account, except as they serve to set us in communion with the positive actualities of that world, existing before and beyond all such certification. This world of grace (its resources and powers derived from Christ, and perennially subsistent in the

Spirit of Christ) is the true idea of the Holy Catholic Church, which is made to be for us an article of faith in the Creed; where, moreover, it comes *before* the sacraments (as indicated by the position of the "forgiveness of sins," or the Nicene "one baptism for the remission of sins"), and not *after* them as required by the view of Dr. Dorner. How, indeed, can I believe in sacraments, and through them come to be sure of the Church, if I have no faith first in the being of the Church itself, from which the sacraments derive all their significance and force?

We find Dr. Dorner here, then, in the same wrong predicament, virtually, in which we have found him before. He does not carry out his Christological thinking in the order of the Apostles' Creed; and the consequence is, that the Church is for him no such object of faith as it is made to be in that ancient œcumenical symbol, but another and very different conception altogether, answering to what he holds to be the necessary conditions of its existence in the modern Protestant world. To this it comes at last, with his confessed *divergency* from what he calls the old Greek or Oriental Christology. He will hear of no "Church intervention" in the economy of the Gospel, no coming in of any Church-embosomed powers of grace between Christ and the believer, but only of what he denominates the "means of grace;" which then, of course, must be taken as abstract and independent agencies, outside of any such supposed Divine constitution. "*The means of grace,*" he tells us plumply, (in one of his sweeping foot-notes again), "*are not the Church; only believers are so, who gather themselves around the means of grace. We cannot say, therefore, that salvation is of the Church, or that the Church mediates between God and His people. God's people are the Church; they stand in direct communication with Christ, although through the means of grace.*"

There we have it in a nutshell. The Church, an external aggregation of believers simply, joining in the use mechanically of certain instrumental helps to their piety, which are in no sense themselves part of its proper heavenly economy, and in no sense, therefore, part of what St. Paul makes the Gospel to be, when he speaks of it as "the wisdom of God and the power of

God unto salvation." The means of grace certainly are not the Church, in and of themselves; but what can they possibly amount to without the Church, regarded as the comprehension of all the saving powers of Christianity, kept up by the Holy Ghost, through the living fellowship of believers, with true objective historical existence (powers of the word and ministry, sacramental and liturgical powers, in one word, all the powers of the new creation in Christ Jesus), age after age, according to His own promise, to the end of the world! Can any view less large than this be found answerable at all to the light in which the Church is exhibited to us by St. Paul as the Body of Christ, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all? Take in particular the magnificent picture we have of it in Eph. iv. 8-16. "When he ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that He ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And He gave some, Apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers. For the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ. From whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

If that be not the idea of the Church, in the character of an objectively historical, sacramental, and Divine constitution, as we have it in the Creed, it would be hard to say how it could well be set forth in more clear and commanding terms.

IX. FUNDAMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INCARNATION.

It argues, to my mind, a profound defect in Professor Dorner's theology, that he should imagine the cardinal importance of the *Atonement* to be wronged, by its being made to fall back upon the ulterior fact of the *Incarnation* as its origin and ground.

Over and over again, we find him touching, with incidental remark, on this chord, as though there could be no uncertainty whatever in its evangelical sound. "Nevin's theology," he says, "places in the centre the incarnation and life of Christ, not His death and sacrifice"—as if to do that, were a self-evident Christian blunder. "The distinction between Christ and His Church is made to vanish," we are told, "in proportion as all stress is laid on the communication of His life, and the *independent significance* (selbständige Bedeutung) of the atonement and justification is overlooked." With the Greek Church, he says, I "place main emphasis only on the incarnation." My view of the Church, to his mind, obscures the distinct force of the atonement, "because it dwells almost entirely on the mystical communication of Christ's life, but has little to say of justification, merging this rather in sanctification."

I have had occasion to meet this charge, not long since, in my reply to Dr. Ruetenik's very respectable article on the Church Movement, published in the *Reformirte Wächter*; but the regular course of the present discussion requires that the subject should here again also receive some formal consideration. It is altogether too important to be passed over in my answer to Professor Dorner. I must at least recapitulate, in a general way, what I have said before.

The Incarnation before the Atonement.

It seems a mere truism to say, that the sufferings and death of Christ follow in *time* His birth of the Virgin Mary. Without the manger, there could be no cross. The Saviour must come into the world, before He could die in the world. Christmas is older forever, in the order of the Church Year, than Good Friday or Easter.

More than this mere chronological priority, however; it is no less plain that the incarnation carries in it the antecedent necessary *conditions* of the atonement. In the birth of Christ, first of all, lay the whole possibility of His vicarious satisfaction for the sins of men by His death upon the cross; because through it alone was brought to pass that wonderful constitution of His Person, by which only He was qualified to be a true Mediator between God and man in any part of His Mediatorial office and work. So the Heidelberg Catechism has it: "He must be a true and sinless man; because the justice of God requires, that the same human nature which has sinned should make satisfaction for sin—but no man being himself a sinner, could satisfy for others" (Ques. 16). And then again: "He must be at the same time true God; that by the power of His Godhead, He might bear, in His Manhood, the burden of God's wrath, and so obtain for, and restore to us righteousness and life" (Ques. 17). No angel could bear such office; but only the Son of God made to be, at the same time, the Son of Man. And therefore it is, that in the economy of redemption the life of Christ goes before His death, not only in the order of time, but in the order also of inward power and force. The mystery of the Incarnation includes in itself potentially, and in due course of time puts forth from itself actually, the mystery of the Atonement.

In this view, then, I go on to say still farther, the Incarnation is in itself of original and primary significance for the purposes of our salvation; in such sense, that the historical movement of the world's redemption must be regarded as starting in it, and having in it its necessary organic principle and source. In other words, it is not to be viewed as a mere outward device for making the Atonement possible. To this degrading conception of Christ, must come in the end all that way of magnifying His death, by which His life is made to be with regard to it of only secondary and more or less dependent account. The view is common among modern unchurchly and so-called evangelical sects; which indeed arrogate to themselves this title *evangelical*, for the most part, just because they lay all stress on the atonement taken in such miserably abstract sense. The whole

Gospel is thus shorn of its proper historical force; and the result is, on all sides, a certain amount of unrealness and Gnostic spiritualism, which is sure to prove itself unfriendly always to true and vigorous faith.

But, it may be asked, must not the end rule the beginning here, as in the case of all true teleology in God's works? I answer, Yes; but it is only the whole, last end which can do this properly, and not any intermediate partial end; and then, at the same time, the wholeness of the end will ever be found to be but the proper fullness of the beginning, showing this to have been, in truth, the principle throughout of the universal process. Here precisely is the fallacy and falsehood of the view I am now opposing, that it resolves the whole Gospel into the atonement, and makes the death of Christ to be the ultimate and only end of His coming into the world; whereas it is in fact but a part of what was to be accomplished by this great mystery of godliness (1 Tim. iii. 16), and itself also an organic means only toward a far wider teleology embraced in the mystery from the beginning. The view before us narrows the meaning of Christ's Mediatorial Person to His priestly office only; but His Person from the beginning is no less the principle also of His prophetic and kingly offices. His coming in the flesh looks to His death; but not so as to pause in that by any means as its final object; on the contrary, so only as *through* this to reach forward to His subsequent resurrection and glorification, with all their triumphant consequences, out to the full end, "when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." In this broad teleology, indeed, we *do* find the original sense of the Christian principle, *God manifest in the flesh*. But here only. The restriction of it to any narrower purpose and scope is sure to do deep wrong to the Gospel; and it must ever be, therefore, a serious prostitution of the term Evangelical, when it is applied to any such mutilated mode of Christian thought.

The Gospel in Christ Himself.

The Gospel was in the world before Christ died. It was preached to the shepherds near Bethlehem on the night of His

birth; when "the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them," filling them with amazement and dread. "Fear not," it was said unto them, "for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." It was proclaimed at His baptism, when the Holy Ghost came down upon Him in visible form, and a voice was heard from heaven, saying: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." He was Himself, among men, the fullness of the Godhead bodily. All the powers of the Gospel were actually at hand in His Person. Christianity is a new creation; not a great revolution or change simply in the order of the world as it stood before, but the bringing into it of a new supernatural life; and this new life starts unquestionably in Christ. He is thus the principle of the new creation, the alpha and omega of all it is found to comprehend; and so the consciousness or sense of what He is in this respect must ever be the root and ground of all true Christian faith in any farther view.

What less than this, I ask in the first place, is to be made of all those passages, in which the Pre-existent Word is spoken of or referred to as being the source and fountain of the universal creation; in such a way, at the same time, that all is regarded as being one grand system, whose full and last sense is reached only in the economy of redemption? In the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, it is said of the Divine Logos, by whom all things were made, that "in him was Life;" and this life, it is added, "was the light of men." The universal world of mind, in other words, as we have it in man, was derived from Him as its self-existent ground; in such sort, that even after the fall, He continued to actuate its inmost being as "light shining in darkness," though the darkness comprehended it not. Then, in the fullness of time, "the Word was made flesh," we are told, became fully joined with the life of humanity in an actual historical way, for the purposes of its redemption; and dwelt among us, as the complete embodiment of God's presence and glory in the world, full of grace and truth. This manifestation is itself,

plainly, what St. John holds to be the fundamental fact of the Gospel, which "came by Jesus Christ;" in distinction from the law, that was "given by Moses." In like manner, St. Paul (Col. i. 15-19) declares Christ to be the first-born of the natural creation; that is, the fountain-head of "all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible;" and then goes on to speak of Him as the Head also of the Church, "the beginning, the first-born from the dead;" clearly making Him to be, as the Word Incarnate, the root and origin of the entire new creation, no less fully than He is to be considered as being, before He became man, the producing cause of the old creation. With all this agree His own words on the isle of Patmos (Rev. 1; 11, 17, 18): "I am alpha and omega, the first and the last: I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hades and of death."

Look now, in the next place, at the historical Gospel, as it meets us first of all in the life and ministry of our blessed Lord Himself. What can be plainer, for all simple-minded readers of the Holy Evangelists, than that the presence of Christ is to be regarded as having been itself the presence of the Christian Salvation among men during the days of His flesh? John the Baptist preached the immediate coming of the kingdom of heaven; but in Christ, this kingdom was actually at hand, and men were called upon to submit at once to its authority and power. And what now was to be the object of their believing trust, the principle or starting point of the Christian life in them, so far as they might be engaged to obey the call. Not certainly the cross and passion of Christ, which were still a mystery that even the faith of Apostles was not prepared to receive; nor yet, we will add, any word or work of Christ outwardly and separately considered. Christian discipleship did not stand in acknowledging (with Nicodemus) the truth of Christ's miracles, nor in admiring His doctrine, as many did who heard His sermon on the mount. Miracle and doctrine became of account in the case, only as they served to fasten attention on the Saviour Himself, and caused it to be felt that He was of a truth in His

own person more than all His teaching or working under any other view. The significance of His teaching and working lay throughout in the life, from which they proceeded, and which they served to reveal. In this sense, most emphatically, Christ was Himself the Gospel, before He died and rose again from the dead. All the powers of the Gospel, together with all its treasures of wisdom and knowledge, were hid in His person from the beginning. And therefore was He, in the days of His flesh, directly and immediately, the one grand central object of Christian faith; which then had its "perfect work" in simply embracing His presence, and cleaving to it, as the sum of all truth and righteousness, without reference to any following doctrine or fact whatever. This was the form in which Christianity began in the world; the form in which it was originally preached by the Master Himself. Who will say that the preaching was not *evangelical*, because it did not start with the atonement, but made the mystery of the incarnation exhibited in the living Christ to be the fundamental principle and beginning of the whole Christian salvation?

The simplest form of the Gospel, as thus preached by Christ, is: FOLLOW ME! Again we have it in the words: "Come unto *Me* all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." All turns upon seeing and feeling that Christ is more for the soul than the whole world besides, as He claims to be in every such command or invitation. This does not depend necessarily at all on knowing *how* He is the Saviour of the world, or on being assured that He is so by an evidence or argument from beyond Himself. On the contrary, it is and must be always, first of all, the result of a power that is felt to proceed directly from the person of the Saviour Himself; a power that draws the soul towards Him, and binds it more and more to Him, with the intuitional conviction that He is its only proper life and its absolutely supreme good. This was the only kind of faith He required of His first disciples; unbounded confidence in Himself; willingness to forsake all, at His word and in His service.

So in that memorable confession, Matth. xvi. 15-18; when to

our Lord's question, *Whom say ye that I am?* Simon Peter answered and said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." We see at once, that it involved no doctrinal apprehension of the plan of salvation; and also that it was the result of no outward testimony or argument. It was an assurance that came wholly from the presence of Christ Himself, and which found in Him again, therefore, its sole object as an act of faith. Shall we imagine that for this reason it was defective, as not centering in the atonement? But how can we do that, in face of the judgment pronounced upon it, by our Lord Himself: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It is impossible to evade the force of this Divine attestation. Peter's confession is the exercise of Christian faith in its most fundamental character and form. It is God-wrought for the soul in which it is found; and it is the very rock on which the Church is built, and on which it rests immovably through all time.

I cannot pretend, however, to follow out at large this course of argument. It would require me to go over the whole Evangelical History; which, for this very reason, is called the *Gospel*, because it sets before us in graphic representation the person and life of Him, in whom originally were comprehended all the powers of the Christian salvation. In a profound sense, His own ministry, in the days of His flesh, had for its object the drawing of men simply to Himself. All His teaching and working looked this way; showing forth the grace and truth which were in Him, and offering His own glorious presence to the world as the fulfilment of its greatest need. Thus it was that He "went about all the cities and villages," we are told, "teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness, and every disease, among the people" (Math. ix. 35).

The Gospel of St. John, in particular, which has been designated the *Heart of Christ*, is constructed throughout on the

principle of bringing into view the interior power and glory of the Redeemer, as being in Himself, in this way, the revelation of a new and higher order of life in the world. What it has to do with continually is the self-manifestation of this life, as it shone forth through all His works, and proclaimed itself in His words, showing Him to be the inmost law of the world's existence, and a force deeper than all other forces in the movement of its history. Here most emphatically, Christ is himself the Incarnate Gospel from the beginning. St. John's Christology everywhere, is full against all who seek to rob the Incarnation of its proper primary significance in the economy of redemption. No one was ever more ready to ascribe glory and dominion "unto Him that loved us and *washed us from our sins in His own blood*" (Rev. i. 5); and yet, as he tells us himself (John xx. 31), his Gospel was written expressly for this purpose: "That ye might believe, that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*"—Peter's fundamental confession, the germ of the Apostles' Creed—"and that believing ye might have life in His name."

The Post-Resurrection Gospel.

The Mediatorship of Christ involved the necessity of His atoning death. Without this the Gospel, previously comprehended in His life could not be complete. Still the death of Christ is not, for this reason, the beginning or end of the Gospel; and is not to be taken for the centre of it, in such sense that all going before or following after must be regarded as standing toward it in subordinate or mere ancillary relation. On the contrary, it comes in as itself subordinate to the victory with which we find it followed in His glorious resurrection; while this is brought into view always at the same time, not as the fruit of His death in any way (this being only its occasion), but as the fruit altogether of His previous theanthropic life, through the power of which He is alive for evermore, and holds in His hands the keys of death and hades.

In the Acts of the Apostles this comes into view continually. The preaching that first brought men by hundreds and thousands into the Church, as we have it represented here, is based

throughout on the fact of Christ's death; but in such a way always as to make this the medium only of proclaiming His personal power and glory as displayed in the fact of His resurrection. The key-note of the Gospel is still everywhere, "Christ declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." We hear but little of the atonement directly; it is taken up into the glorious exaltation of the Redeemer at the right hand of God. The Apostles went forth as "witnesses" simply for Christ; and the burden of their testimony was always, not so much His death, as what had come after His death. The Gospel was still the all-powerful life of Him, who had become man for us men and for our salvation. "With great power," we are told, "gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus;" and God added to the Church daily such as should be saved. "The God of our fathers," they say to the Jewish Sanhedrim, "raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins; and we are witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." Philip preached Jesus unto the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts viii. 35-38), and baptized him on his confession: *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* Saul of Tarsus (Acts ix. 17-20,) was converted through the appearing of the risen Saviour unto him on his way to Damascus; and straightway, it is said, "he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God." That was for him, now, as it had been for the other Apostles before, the fundamental fact of the Gospel, the central object of the Christian faith. In Acts x. 34-43, we have this faith solemnly evangelized by St. Peter for the Gentile world, in these terms: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil; for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree. Him God raised up the third day,

and shewed Him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." In the same strain, precisely, we find the Gospel preached everywhere afterwards by St. Paul. Christ had been slain by the Jews; but this only made room for the manifestation of His glory. "God raised Him from the dead (Acts xiii. 28--33); and He was seen many days of them which came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son this day have I begotten Thee." So throughout. It is continually the same theme, "Jesus and the resurrection"—the personal Christ, once crucified and slain; but now powerfully demonstrated to be the Son of God by the evidences of His risen and glorified life.

The Gospel According to St. Paul.

What has just been said of St. Paul's preaching is the more observable, as he is generally taken to be the great authority (particularly in his Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians), for that view of the Gospel, which makes the Atonement the ground principle of Christianity, and the death of Christ the whole object of His coming into the world.

But the character of his actual preaching, as we have it recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, shows this judgment at once to be erroneous and false. He stands in no such contradiction with Himself. He does, indeed, make supreme account of the Saviour's atoning death; but only as it is comprehended always in the bosom of the Saviour's *Risen Life*—only as it grows forth always from the constitution of His Mediatorial

Person, and is comprised in the general "working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." There is no material difference here between the teaching of St. Paul and the teaching of St. John. Both intone with full emphasis what Christ has accomplished for us by His death; but both are no less full and strong, in setting forth the still more fundamental significance of what He is for us in virtue of His imperishable and all-conquering life.

Who is it but St. Paul, for example, that opens before us the profound cosmical meaning of Christ's person in Rom. vii. 19-23; where the whole creation is represented as having a mysterious interest in the ultimate manifestation of His redemption? Who is it but St. Paul, that describes Him, Col. i. 14-20, as being at once the principle of the old creation and the principle of the new creation, "*in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins?*" Who is it but St. Paul, that makes Him to be, Eph. i. 10, the final recapitulation or "gathering into one of all things, both which are in heaven and which are on earth?"

Who is it but St. Paul, we ask again, that urges with so much force, in 1 Cor. xv. 44-49 and elsewhere, that organic view of Christianity, which underlies the true idea of the Church, and which is always therefore more or less distasteful to the unchurchly spirit? In this view, of course, Christ becomes at once for faith the root of all Christianity, and the fountain of the universal Christian life out to the resurrection of the last day. He is the SECOND ADAM. That of itself gives us the whole thought, and causes us to feel the vital character of the relation that holds between Him and His people. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;" the radical law of existence is the same in both cases. "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Hence the familiar image, by which Christ is made to be the Head of the Church, while it is spoken of as His body, governed by His Spirit, and dependent on Him for its whole life. "He is the Head of the body, the Church; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead;

that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of the cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven" (Col. i. 18--20). How plainly the idea of the atonement here (the *blood of the cross*) is exhibited, not as the beginning of the new creation, but as a necessary all-glorious mode or condition only of its process—the process itself starting in the mystery of our Saviour's holy incarnation. The Church is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. (Eph. i. 23); and from Him, as the Head, "the whole body fitly joined by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying if itself in love" (Eph. iv. 16).

It is only carrying out the sense of this organic conception of Christianity, then, when the same St. Paul, who makes so much of the article of justification by faith, is found insisting again, in so many places, on the mystical union between believers and Christ; in a way that makes Him to be the actual life-principle of their new Christian being, and shows their life to be mysteriously involved in His from its commencement to its close. The regeneration in which all starts, and the resurrection in which all becomes at last complete, are substantially one and the same process; which is viewed, also, at the same time, as proceeding throughout from the glorified life of the Saviour Himself. The process is, of course, in its central character, ethical and free, and, in this form, answerable to the personal nature of its subjects; but is, at the same time, comprehended in the power of a law which is broader and deeper than itself, "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus;" and it is made to embrace in the end, the physical, no less than the spiritual side of our general human existence. It is a new creation, which, as such, cannot start from those who are the subjects of it, but must come from the fundamental regeneration of humanity that is brought to pass, first of all, in the Word made flesh (John iii. 6); while then it must reach out to the renovation of the entire man, ending in the "redemption of our

body" (Rom. viii. 23. All this, we say, is made to confront us in full in the Epistles of St. Paul; so that only the most perverse preconception or obtuse inattention can fail to see and acknowledge it. It conditions his view of Christian Baptism, and pervades his doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. It enters into all his evangelical exhortations and instructions. It is no mere figure of speech with him, to identify the life of Believers with the life of Christ. Dynamically considered, it is all one process; according to His own word: "Because I live, ye shall live also." His death, resurrection and glorification, are potentially (or as the end is in its principle) all this for His people also; who are in Him by faith, and are thus made, even while yet here in the body, to sit with Him in heavenly places (*ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ*. Eph. ii. 1-6).

A mystery, which after all is only in effect what our Lord Himself proclaims, where He says (John v. 24): "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath everlasting life*, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

This may answer to show how far St. Paul was from holding that abstract view of redemption, which is sometimes attributed to him, by those who seek to place him here in a sort of opposition to St. John. The New Testament, in regard to this whole subject, is fully at one with itself. It makes the death of Christ the necessary medium of our salvation; since we cannot be saved at all, as sinners, without being set free first of all from the condemning and binding power of sin; and this deliverance we can have only through the atoning efficacy of the Redeemer's blood apprehended by faith. But the atonement itself, in this view, is not an abstraction; it is immanent, or as we may say, resident throughout, in the person of Christ, and derives all its force thus continually from the power of His indestructible life. And so, then, the apprehension of it must ever be also an apprehension of it as embosomed and comprehended in this personal being of the Saviour. Such is the necessary order of the Christian faith. Christ first; and then His benefits. The Atonement IN the Incarnation; which is

thus seen to be the root and principle of the whole Christian redemption.

X. ŒCUMENICAL OR WHOLE CHRISTIANITY.

It seems a strange thing that our theology should be charged with making too much of Christ; when at other times it is represented as being unevangelical, for making too much of the Church. In the end, however, all really sound Church feeling is at the same time true Christological feeling. It springs from the apprehension of what is comprehended in the living fact of the Incarnation, regarded as the fountain-head of the whole Christian redemption. This must of course influence the view that is taken of Christ's sufferings and death, as well as of all His Mediatorial work in every other view. But why should it be held to stand in any opposition to the significance of this or any other part of that work? Why should any one imagine that to magnify the Incarnation, is not to magnify, at the same time, the Atonement; or that the honor of the Atonement is prejudiced somehow, by the putting of honor on the Incarnation, through which only the Atonement is brought to pass? No such false abstraction, we have now seen, finds any sort of countenance in the New Testament. We have reason to look upon it with distrust, therefore, wherever we meet it in actual ecclesiastical life. All that *Evangelicalism* (be it of the American or be it of the materially different German hue and shape), which affects to measure its zeal for Christ, by making low account of His life in order to make high account of His death, comes before us, to say the least, with questionable character; even if it should not be felt to carry on its front at once, by this very fact, the broad seal of its own condemnation.

Is it not surprising that such a man as Professor Dorner, instead of looking at the matter in this way, should reverse so plain a rule of judgment, and make it a presumption against our theology, that it lays great stress on the life of Christ (as though of itself *that* argued some undervaluation of his death); while the opposite system among us is accredited with him, on its own word simply, as being true to the whole sense of Christ's

coming in the flesh, just because it is heard uttering what he takes to be no uncertain sound in regard to the sense of His dying upon the cross? Surely he ought to know, that if there be a possibility of intoning too strongly here the ever living personality of the Redeemer, there is a possibility no less perilous on the other side, of so insisting on His finished sacrifice as to turn it into a mere Gnostic abstraction.

What right has Dorner to assume at all, as he seems to do everywhere, that my intonation of the life-powers of Christianity (resident perennially in the great fact of the Incarnation) is one-sided; that it argues any want of regard for the cardinal interest of the Atonement; or that there is no call for it in the actual circumstances of our American Christianity?

What right has he to assume that our American evangelical sect-system in general is not in the way here of setting up an abstract spiritualism, like the Gnostics of old and the Anabaptists of a later day, against the claims of the true concrete historical Christ, just because the system itself is forever harping nevertheless, on its own great zeal in preaching Christ; as if that were not possible in any false way?

On what I say, in my *Vindication*, concerning this boast of our unchurchly sects, that they preach Christ above all others, Dr. Dorner, for example, sitting away off in Berlin—as if the boast must needs pass for all it pretends—lets off one of his characteristic notes again in the following style:

“This description of the other side is of crying injustice, especially in what regards the accentuation of objective Christian facts and truths. Their doctrine is indeed not the actual substance, Christ Himself, but only its image or representation; even Nevin himself, however, does not get beyond that. On the other hand, they lay more emphasis than he does on Christ’s crucifixion. He on the contrary emphasizes mainly, with the Greek Church, only the Incarnation.”

The amount of this censure is, that all charge of a Gnosticizing spiritualistic tendency brought against any of our sects, must be taken for “crying injustice,” as long as it is allowed at the same time, that they preach Christ in their way, and lay emphasis on the sin-abolishing power of His death; while on the other

hand, *my* laying emphasis on the Incarnation (with the Primitive Greek Church and the Ecumenical Creeds) must be regarded as *prima facie* evidence of a disposition to make little or no account of the Atonement, if not of absolute disaffection to the whole idea of justification by faith!

It is sufficiently plain, that when Dr. Dorner talks in this way, he is talking at random of things here in our American world, which he does not properly understand; and that he is himself, therefore, guilty of most serious "injustice," in allowing himself to dispose of them with such summary judgment.

Here, of course, our new Liturgy is held also to be at fault. It is very emphatic on the incarnation and the saving power of Christ's life; and that is taken to be of itself, in some way, depreciatory of the proper claims of the atonement. There is not in the Liturgy really, however, any overlooking at all of the cardinal significance of Christ's sufferings and death. On the contrary, the thought comes everywhere into view. The spirit of the Liturgy is baptized in it, bathed in it one may say, from beginning to end. This I have shown abundantly with regard to the service of the Holy Communion in particular, in my article on the subject against the *Reformirte Wächter*; to which let it be sufficient here to refer the attention of my readers. As in that article, so now here again, I deny utterly the charge that the Liturgy obscures or throws into the shade, in any way, the sacrificial side of the Gospel. On the contrary, it magnifies the significance of Christ's death, by showing it forth continually in right relation to His life, both as going before and as following after. It revolves everywhere around Christ, and Him crucified. On what other ground is it, indeed, that its enemies cavil against it as an *Altar* Liturgy, and resent what they stigmatize as its *Sacerdotal* character and tone? The conception of an altar, involves of itself the idea of sacrifice and propitiation. It is the *Pulpit* Liturgy only, in truth, which is by its very nature at once unsacrificial and unsacramental.

Were the Liturgy, it may be asked still farther, so out of cordial sympathy, as Dr. Dorner seems to imagine, with the cardinal significance of Christ's death, how is it to be accounted for that it moves so freely in the bosom of the old biblical and

ecclesiastical forms, which have been employed by the Church through all ages, to set forth this great mystery? It never tires in repeating the ancient *Creeds*. It loves the *Liturgy*. It takes pleasure in the *Gloria Patri*, the *Seraphic Hymn*, and the *Gloria in Excelsis*. It sings triumphantly the *Te Deum Laudamus*, and has special chants for the *Magnificat* and the *Benedictus*. It moves through the cycle of the Christian year, with services that look continually either forward or backward, to *Good Friday* and *Easter*. In all this, no Pulpit worship is at all like it. What are we to make then of this characteristic harmony and concord with these ancient forms? Are they also open to censure here, in the same view with our Liturgy? Shall we say of the *Creeds*, the *Gloria in Excelsis*, the *Litany*, and the *Ambrosian Hymn*, that *they* too lay stress on the Incarnation at the expense of the Atonement, and fail to do justice to the significance of the Saviour's death, by magnifying unduly the boundless meaning of His life?

It would seem to require some considerable courage to do that. But Dr. Dorner does not shrink from so bold a judgment. It is some comfort, I confess, to find myself involved in common censure here with the Ancient *Creeds*, and with the theology in general of the Primitive Christian Church. That is what he means, by charging me with the old Oriental or Greek way of looking at Christianity. His divergency from me, Christologically, is a confessed divergency, at the same time, from the Greek Fathers generally, and as we have already seen, a very palpable divergency also from all the Œcumenical *Creeds*.

But in all this, I must respectfully believe that Dr. Dorner is wrong. If there was a reason in the age of the Reformation for so insisting on the ideas of atonement and justification by faith, as to leave out of sight for the time, comparatively, other interests embraced in the original Christology of the Gospel, it does not follow either that the original Christology was wrong, or that the specific partial use which was made of it in the age of the Reformation may not have been so carried out, as to involve serious perils for the Christian faith, requiring now an earnest resumption of those other interests for its present safety,

as well as for its proper wholeness and perfection in time to come. It is not to be denied, that the side of Christianity which has to do simply with Christ's atoning righteousness, *may* be so urged, in abstraction from other Christian ideas, as to run into pernicious error. It was so in the age of the Reformation itself; making it necessary for Luther and the other reformers to defend their cause against a false spiritualism in different forms, which they held to be even worse than the false realism of the Roman Church. And the Protestant world has seen enough of it since, sometimes in more theoretical rationalistic, and then again in more practical fanatical forms. Any one intelligently observant of the course of things at this time, in our own country particularly, may easily see to what licentiousness of opinion, this spurious evangelicalism has come in different directions; how it has undermined, in large measure, the original Protestant sense of justification by faith altogether; and how necessary it has become now, therefore, to call in the aid of that other side of the Christian faith, which regards especially the life and resurrection of Christ, in order that justice may be done to the whole sense of the Gospel, and Protestantism be held in true historical connection with the life of the Primitive Church; without which Dr. Dorner is himself willing to allow, it can have neither right nor power to exist as a Christian Church at all.

To express my whole view on this subject, I cannot do better, it seems to me, than to quote at large an admirable passage which I find bearing upon it, in Dr. *Martensen's* Preface to the German edition of his *Christian Dogmatics*, published in 1856.

"It has been objected to this system of theology from different sides," he writes, "even by theologians of my native country, that it contains elements which cannot be joined with the practical nature of Protestantism. Sin and redemption, it is said, and the plan of salvation connected with them, are the cardinal points that determine all in the Evangelical Church, and a system in which so many objective and speculative elements are taken up, and which gives such wide room, for example, to the doctrines of the Trinity and the Logos, has not maintained the Protestant stand-point. This objection, we see at once,

if it has any force at all, reaches not simply to my work, but to the speculative tendency at large in our Evangelical theology.

“But to judge of the relation of a system of theology to Protestantism, it is not enough to take the Protestant scheme of doctrine as once for all finished and complete; rather we must place ourselves at the point where the doctrinal productivity of Protestantism took its start, and consider the principle by which this productivity was ruled. The Reformation did not aim to form a new separate Church, but sought to purify the holy, universal church from the errors which, in the course of centuries, had come to obscure its true form. It intended no purely subjective Christianity, but the œcumenical, original Catholic Christianity, in renovated form; for which reason it went back not only to the Apostolical tradition in the Sacred Scriptures, but to the first Christian centuries generally, whose ecclesiastical testimonies show traces of the original purity and freshness of the new life. Was this return now to original Christianity completely carried out in the sixteenth century? Did the Protestant scheme of doctrine attain to full catholicity, so that all parts of the Christian faith were revived and renewed in *like proportion*? It was natural that the consciousness of redemption should come first to its representation; not only because this forms the heart of Christian religious experience, but because also the Reformation had to take stand immediately in opposition to the Roman Church, which had assumed more and more the character of a perverted Judaism, had more and more left the true way of salvation, and become a legalistic church. It was not strange thus, that the Protestant doctrinal system, on its first appearance, should take the Pauline type, especially as we have it in the Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians, and that it was made to centre in justification by faith, and its kindred topics, in the plan of salvation. Can we say, however, that the system attained by this to full catholicity? It is plain as day rather, that although the Reformation denied no single article of Christian revealed truth, but on the contrary, sought to make all its own, essential parts of this revealed truth, nevertheless, were appropriated as a traditional heritage simply,

without coming to any true inward reproduction. The sense of revelation (*Offenbarungsbewusstsein*) did indeed make itself strongly felt, no less than the sense of redemption; there was controversy, for example, not only about the effects of the sacraments, but also about the nature of them, about the objective presence of Christ. But the sense of revelation was not developed by any means in the same measure with the sense of redemption. If we compare the Protestant theology here with the doctrinal consciousness of the first three centuries, we discover a great difference. We find, indeed, that the fathers of the first three centuries, like the teachers of the Reformation period, live and breathe in the element of redemption; but we do not find that they *reflect* with the same care on the experience of the redeemed; their reflection is not turning back always upon their justification by faith; they enter into no fine psychological analysis of the order of salvation, of the struggle of conviction and conversion, of sanctification and mystical union with God. On the contrary, we find another circle of doctrines determining the character of that period; we find in Irenæus, for example, the most important representative of the period, earnest and profound thought on the great truths of the Word made Flesh and the Holy Trinity, on the connection of the mystery of Creation with the Incarnation, on the presence of the Lord in the Sacrament, on the Resurrection of the Body and the Consummation of All Things. Those old teachers feel themselves drawn also especially to the writings of St. John; and this on account of their anti-Gnostic testimony to the coming of Christ in the flesh; while among the Epistles of St. Paul, they are most of all attracted by those to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, through their grand thoughts on the cosmical significance of Christ; Epistles, from which the period of the Reformation was not able at all to derive any similar benefit. Those old teachers, furthermore, take deep interest in the eschatological discourses of our Lord, in the apocalyptic sections of St. Paul's Epistles, and in the Revelation of St. John; which exercised a fructifying influence over their course of thought, altogether beyond any like experience on the part of the Protestant fathers. For who can deny that the doctrine of

the Last Things, is one of the weakest and most poorly handled topics belonging to the Protestant divinity?

“If now we are aware of this difference (and all deeper historical inquiry here has but served to place it in clearer light), we cannot, of course, think for a moment of giving up one iota of what has been gained by the Reformation, or of not going forward in the Pauline Augustinian direction. But just as surely as we know that the problem of the Reformation was of universal church character, and believe our Confession to be the most perfect one, because it is the most œcumenical-expression of Christianity, so surely must this demand for church universality, for true catholicity, reveal itself also in theology. To express the object of theology then, in church-historical form, it is not enough, in my opinion, to say that it is to reproduce only the *redemption-consciousness* of the age of the Reformation, in a form answerable to the present need of the Church, as Schleiermacher, for example, apprehended the subject; but it is to reproduce, at the same time, in new form, the *revelation-consciousness* of the first centuries, whose contents the Reformation period took up mainly in a merely traditional way; or rather to *recapitulate both scientifically in a higher synthesis*, a synthesis which would then gather up into itself also all that was right in the theology of the Middle Ages. A theology, which in our time does not propose to itself this object, but aims at nothing more than to reproduce the Augustinian element of Protestantism, can have no promise of progress, and shows a want of power to comprehend the present need of the Church.”

So Martensen; defending his theology here from the very same charge that is preferred against ours. The only wonder is, that such a man as Dorner should now seem to be countenancing at all the opposite view. For does he not also himself tell us, in plain terms, that the only order of theology, at this time, which has the promise of the future, is that which neither ignores Primitive Christianity nor ignores the Reformation, but is *truly historical* in the sense of doing justice to both; or in such way, that the original wholeness of the Christian faith shall be maintained, by such an apprehension of Protestantism

as may serve to place it in harmonious agreement at the same time with what was the life of the Church in the beginning? And what is this, I ask, but that very idea of the "recapitulation or gathering up of both in a higher synthesis," which Martensen insists upon as the proper object of all right theological science at the present time; and which, I will add, has been the animating soul of the entire church movement which is now at work among ourselves? All our theology aims at this; not a giving up of the Reformation, nor yet such a blind starting with it, as would infer that there had been no historical Christianity before that modern time; but a free inward conjunction of the Reformation life with the older life of the early Church. This, we know, means something more than the raking up simply of the dead bones and dust of either period; something more than a mere mechanical repristination of the buried past in any view; it can be reached only through a revivification of the true actuating spirit of both periods, which, as being in both the effluence and birth of the same One Spirit of Christ, must be capable, it is believed, of appearing in full concord with itself. Such a view implies, of course, that Protestantism has not from the first carried along with it the full and complete sense of all that was comprehended originally in Christianity. As Dorner himself says (see *Merc. Rev.* April, 1868, page 262, 263), there may be much left behind it yet in the old Communions, Greek and Latin, which it needs still to take up into itself as the necessary ultimate complement of its own higher life; and there is no question but that Martensen is right also, when he tells us that what is wanted particularly, is the bringing up of what he calls the old *Offenbarungsbewusstsein* (sense of revelation—the powers of the world to come objectively considered) to some sort of parallelism with the *Erlösungsbewusstsein* (sense of redemption—the processes of the Christian salvation subjectively considered), which has come to be so generally all in all for Protestant thinking. Now this is precisely what is aimed at in our Liturgy. There is not in it anywhere the slightest undervaluation of Christ's sacrifice and death. On the contrary, the altar feeling pervades all its services, and gives them their universal tone

and force. But it seeks to carry along with all this, at the same time, the lively sense of the great Christian facts, *in the bosom of which only the ideas of atonement and justification can be kept from evaporating finally into sheer rationalistic dreams.* Hence its intonation of the Trinity, of the Word Incarnate, of the Life which has become the Light of men, of Christ's Resurrection and Ascension, of the Pentecostal Gift, of the Holy Catholic Church, and of the Second Advent; of all the grand ideas, in a word, that meet us in the Christological and Liturgical productions of the Ancient Greek Church. Hence its unison throughout with the sublime old Hymns and Creeds, that hold us in communion still with the Christian life of the first ages.

XI. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

It is not necessary to go into any large consideration of what Dr. Dorner has to say on special topics comprised in our Liturgy. He makes no points other than those which have been already urged against it, to so little purpose, in this country; and adds nothing at all to the interest or weight of their discussion. In the nature of the case, moreover, the view he takes of them is conditioned altogether by his general view of the Church. Here, as we have seen, he diverges from the Christological scheme of the Apostles' Creed. If he is right in doing so in the way he does, then without farther argument he may be considered right also in the other points now referred to; but if, on the contrary, the Creed is right, and his divergency from it wrong, it becomes no less certain of itself again, and without farther argument, that on these other points also he is wrong.

As regards our *Form of Baptism*, he acknowledges that "its doctrine agrees essentially with the Heidelberg Catechism;" but it should have mentioned more distinctly, he thinks, the necessity of penitential faith, so as to avoid all semblance of magic; and he considers it a defect in the service for children especially, that while great emphasis is laid on original sin no corresponding reference is made to the forgiveness of sin as the turning point of salvation. But this is simply captious. One main part of the office is the use of the Apostles' Creed, which surely is positive enough on this point; and in the address to

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parents the "remission of sin" is declared to be, no less than the "gift of a new and spiritual life by the Holy Ghost," the special purpose of the whole transaction.

The *Form for the Holy Communion* again he pronounces in many respects beautiful; but looks upon it, at the same time, as objectionable on the score of some forms of expression, which in his view approximate, in sound at least, too near the old Oriental theology, to suit the modern evangelical ear. This is a mere personal opinion, easily enough intelligible from what we have seen to be Dr. Dorner's general theological position; on which it is not necessary here to bestow any particular attention. The Liturgy, by its own acknowledgment, aims at being something more than a mere mechanical echo of the cultus of the sixteenth century; it seeks to be historical, by reaching back through this to some felt unison with the liturgical spirit of the early Church; just as Dr. Dorner himself tells us Protestantism at large is required to be historical in the same way, by joining its whole existence with the Christian life of the first ages, and not pretending to start absolutely with the age of the Reformation. What if our office of the Holy Eucharist *does* breathe some portion of the same spirit that animated the worship of the Primitive Greek Church? Does that show it to be wrong? Or does that prove at all, that it may not be at the same time in substantial harmony with the religious life of the Reformation? No such sweeping judgment as this, certainly, can be maintained by any who believe seriously in the historical legitimacy of the Reformation, as being itself, in any true sense the birth and product of what Christianity was in all previous ages.

The qualified doubt expressed by Professor Dorner with regard to our forms of *Confirmation* and *Absolution* deserve no separate notice; because we see at once that he is ruled in the case altogether by that low view of the Christian Ministry which runs through all his writings, as it is in some sense necessary also to his German ecclesiastical position, and which seems to have been the main occasion of his dissatisfaction with the Liturgical movement in our American Reformed Church.

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Here we meet in full force his antagonism to the old idea of the Church, as we have it made an article of faith in the Apostles' Creed; and understand also why it is, that he shows himself so uncompromisingly opposed to the *Church tendency* of late years, whether under Anglican or German form; refusing to see in it any promise of help whatever, for the deplorable necessities of Protestant Christianity at the present time. He has before his fancy the bright vision of a resuscitated Protestant theology, to be followed by a corresponding resurrection of the dead Protestant life of Germany; but all this is to be reached in his view, it would seem, without any practical account of the Holy Catholic Church.

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The burden of his objection to our *Ordination Service* is, that it converts the solemnity into a *sacrament*. This he finds in the fact that the office of the Holy Ministry is represented in it as being of Divine origin and supernatural force, flowing forth directly from Christ as the fruit of His resurrection and glorification; as being designed by Him to carry forward the purposes of His grace upon the earth, in the salvation of men by the Church, to the end of time; as starting in the Apostles, and being transmitted from them, by true succession, down to our time; and as involving, therefore, an actual commission from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself to exercise all the functions and powers appertaining properly to so high an appointment. Over and over again, this representation is charged with involving sacramental, hierarchical and magical conceptions of the Ministry, incompatible with sound Protestantism. How far such a judgment now may suit the present condition of Protestantism in Berlin, or in Germany at large, I will not pretend to say; but I am very sure that a very considerable portion at least of the Protestant world is not yet prepared to accept it, either in Great Britain or in this country.

The way in which Dr. Dorner operates here and elsewhere with the mere words *Sacrament* and *Sacramental*, as if they were of uniform fixed sense, and that sense always what they are taken to mean in the case of the two Christian sacraments strictly so called, is hardly worthy of his high character and

great learning. He knows very well, of course, that the terms have been used from the earliest times in a far wider sense than this; and that it is only by conventional usage that they have come to that more restricted meaning which is now common. The Latin *sacramentum*, ecclesiastically understood, is simply the Greek *μυστήριον*; and it has its sense fundamentally in the idea of the invisible and supernatural made to be present through the outward forms of Christianity. This *mystery* finds its most concentrated expression in the forms of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which for this reason are rightly called *sacraments* in the most absolute sense of the term. But it would be a most barren view of Christianity, to suppose that these central institutions must exhaust the entire mystery of its supernatural presence in the Christian world, so that it must be regarded in every other relation to the world as an object of thought merely and nothing more.

Such is the connection in fact between nature and the supernatural, that where the power of seeing and feeling it has come to be properly awakened through the exercise of religious faith, the whole visible creation will be felt to be, not the outward symbol only, but in a profound sense the very sacramental presence of things unseen and eternal. "The moral and devotional writings of the Fathers," it is beautifully said by Keble, "show that they were deeply imbued with the evangelical sentiment, that Christians as such are living in a new heaven and a new earth; that to them 'old things are passed away,' and 'all things are become new;' that the very inanimate creation itself also is 'delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.' Thus in a manner they seem to have realized, though in an infinitely higher sense, the system of Plato: every thing to them existed in two worlds: in the world of sense, according to its outward nature and relations; in the world intellectual, according to its spiritual associations. And thus did the whole scheme of material things, and especially those objects in it which are consecrated by scriptural allusion, assume in their eyes a sacramental or symbolical character."

No wonder then that these same Fathers carried the sense of the sacramental, in all directions, into their view of Christianity itself, in which the mysterious relation between nature and the supernatural came for them to its highest utterance and force. In Tertullian the term sacrament is used to denote the whole Christian Religion, and also its particular doctrines. The Trinity thus is a sacrament; the Incarnation is a sacrament; and finally all Christian rites and ceremonies are sacraments, so far as they serve to bring into view mystically the realities of the unseen world in which Christianity has at last its true and proper home. Cyprian also finds sacramental meanings everywhere, in the ordinances and appointments both of the Old Testament and of the New; and so the early Christian writers generally. "The Fathers," says Knapp, "called every thing standing in any relation to religion *sacramentum*, and extended the term especially to all religious rites which have a secret sense or anything symbolical, and which are the external and sensible signs of certain spiritual things not cognizable by the senses." In these applications, the word is not used even by them, indeed, in the same full sense in which it is applied to the great central sacraments of the Church; but it is not to be disguised that it is used with a certain measure at least of this sense. Even in this broad use, the term will be found to mean more than such words simply as, *figure*, *emblem* or *symbol*. "God omnipresent," it has been well said, "was so much in all their thoughts, that what to others would have been mere symbols, were to them designed expressions of His truth, providential intimations of His will. In this sense, the whole world, to them, was full of sacraments."

Now in this broad view, there is just as much room as ever for ascribing to Christianity a general sacramental character; and to do so at any special point does not necessarily imply by any means that a new sacrament is there affirmed of one and the same order with the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Church itself is a sacrament, a *μυστήριον*, not to be apprehended, for this very reason, except through an act of faith. How can it be less than this, as being the body of Christ,

the fullness of Him that filleth all in all? And where then the sense of this has come to prevail, something sacramental will be felt to go along with all the offices and ministries of the Church. They become for us more than ordinary human agencies; more than what they are for such as have no faith whatever in the Divine constitution of the Church; they have in them to our apprehension everywhere, a measure of the same supernatural quality that belongs to this constitution at large. We believe in this way, without superstition, in the sanctity even of consecrated places and things. They are sanctified, as the Apostle expresses it, by the word of God and prayer. They cease to be profane or common, and become holy, through the blessing of the Church.

In view of all this now, it amounts to nothing that Dr. Dorner chooses to charge our Liturgy with making *ordination* a sacrament; because he is simply playing in the case with the use of an ambiguous term. He might with just as much reason say, that the Liturgy makes *Marriage*, or the *Burial of the Dead*, or the *Consecration of a Church*, a sacrament. The Liturgy itself says nothing of the sort in its Form of Ordination. All that Dorner can mean then is, that such a view is taken in it of the Holy Ministry as necessarily implies the idea of a sacrament, in the act by which men are set apart to the office. All turns therefore at last, on what this view actually is and the construction which is thus put upon it by Dr. Dorner. Now when we look into the case, we find that all resolves itself simply into this, that the Ministry is represented to be a supernatural office, and that in the view of Dr. Dorner the conveyance of any such supernatural office to men through the solemnity of ordination must be held to be a sacrament in the fullest sense of the term. What he in fact disowns then, under this notion of a sacrament, is the idea of a truly supernatural character in the constitution of the Christian Church, and in the office of the Holy Ministry, in any form. And here we, of course, join issue with him in full. The real question between us is not, whether Ordination be a sacrament like Baptism or the Lord's Supper; the Liturgy says nothing of that sort; but

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whether it be a real investiture from Christ with the powers of a true heavenly office, or nothing more than an ordinary designation on the part of men to an office which is not heavenly at all, but of like force only with common human ministries under other form.

Against this last view now, it must be maintained with all earnestness that the Christian Church is Divine as well as human, and that the Christian Ministry also is of "truly supernatural character and force." The two go necessarily together. A supernatural Church with merely natural functions and powers, is a contradiction in terms. In the nature of the case, every constitution, civil or religious, must impart its own force, whatever that may be, to the organs and agencies through which it works and fulfils its mission; just as in nature everywhere the powers of any organized life reach forth into the activities it puts forth by its organs, so that what the life is these activities are also, in their derivative operation and force. Thus the majesty of the State conveys its specific quality, its own constitutional virtue and power, over into all the subordinate ministries by which it makes itself felt in the world. Every magistracy belonging to it is by its political commission invested, sacramentally we may say, with a portion of the same majestic distinction that forms the constitution of the State itself. And now if the Church be a real polity deriving its existence from the glorification of Christ, and holding in its constitution from Him the powers of the world to come (as we profess to believe in the Creed), how can we say less than that its organs and functions also must partake of this same more than merely human character; and that its ministers therefore, commissioned and appointed by Christ, are by this commission itself armed with rights and powers, more than civil or political only, and answerable strictly to the supernatural character of the polity from which their office depends. As the Church is, so must be also its Ministry.

Dr. Dorner takes no notice of the *Scriptural* argument, on which the Liturgy bases its view of the Christian Ministry; but tries to set the view aside, by simply opposing it with his

own different conception of the Church. But there the Scriptural argument still stands in all its unbroken force. There especially stands untouched that wonderful passage Eph. iv. 8-16; which it is strange how any one can seriously consider, without seeing that it involves virtually, not only the whole idea of the Church, but the whole idea of the Christian Ministry also, in that very sense of our Form of Ordination which Dr. Dorner now opposes, and against which he tries to create prejudice, by pronouncing it sacramental, hierarchical, and contrary to the true genius of Protestantism. Both the Church and the Ministry (and the first in and through the last), it would seem to be plain, are in this passage exhibited to our faith as a special constitution, consequent on Christ's triumphant ascension above all heavens, and flowing forth from the same through the Holy Ghost; and this at once is enough to establish the heavenly origin and supernatural character both of the one and of the other.

Such a Ministry, in the nature of the case, must be Apostolical; just as the Church must be Apostolical also, as well as One and Catholic. In other words, if the constitution of the Church in the beginning involved, in the way now stated, its dependence on a Divinely commissioned Ministry, we are bound to believe in the continuance of this order afterwards, and so in the continuance of such a Ministry also, holding office by the same commission. This at once is the idea of Apostolic succession. It may be a question how it is maintained; but we cannot give it up, without parting at the same time from the whole idea of what the Church was in the beginning. Such a succession is not of course on the outside of the general Church life, but still it is something more than the force only of this life, creating ministerial organs, as occasion may require, for its own use. It is easy to say, that this is hierarchical, and against the universal priesthood of believers. But there is no meaning really in such random talk; especially where it goes directly in the teeth of New Testament precedent and example.

Take a respectable Presbyterian authority on this subject. "The power of governing the Church," says Dr. John Dick,

“belongs exclusively to certain office-bearers, who derive their authority from Jesus Christ, and are accountable to Him alone for the exercise of it. The constitution of the Church differs from that of a civil society. A voluntary society is formed by the free consent of the members. Here, the society is before the rulers; but with respect to the Church, the rulers were before the society; and no reasoning, therefore, from the one case is fairly applicable to the other. There was no Church, when our Lord gave the Apostles their commission; when He committed to Peter, and to them all, the keys of the kingdom of heaven; when He invested them with authority to preach the Gospel, to administer the ordinances, and to exercise discipline over His professed disciples. They were appointed immediately by Him; and they were appointed as the first in a long succession, which was to continue to the end of time, as we learn from His promise to them: ‘Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.’ The office of the Apostles was extraordinary, and ceased at their death; but, besides the gifts of inspiration and of miracles, they were possessed of ordinary powers, for the edification and government of the Church, which did not expire with them, but passed into other hands. The pastors, and teachers, and rulers, who existed in the primitive times and can never be wanting, without the dissolution of the Church as an organized body, were appointed by the Apostles. They were set apart to their office, and through them as the channel in which power was conveyed to them from Christ, the source of all spiritual gifts and privileges. This is the channel of transmission which was established in the beginning.”

This is sound Presbyterian doctrine; such as I had instilled into me by Dr. Miller, of blessed memory, years ago, in the Theological Seminary at Princeton. Take again, however, a still more striking testimony from the great English Independent of the seventeenth century, Dr. John Owen; who will not allow the popular principle of Congregationalism itself to bar out this idea of a Divinely ordained Apostolical Ministry, so essential is it in his mind to the constitution of the Christian Church. After having spoken of Christ's institution of offices in His

Church, and of the call and ordination of ministers, he goes on to say :

“By these ways and means doth the Lord Christ communicate office-power unto them that are called thereunto; whereon they become not the officers or ministers of men, no, not of the church, as unto the actings and exercise of their authority, but only as the good and edification of the church is the end of it; but the officers and ministers of Christ Himself. It is hence evident, that in the communication of church power in office unto any persons called thereunto, the work and duty of the church consists formally in acts of obedience unto the commands of Christ. Hence it doth not give unto such officers a power or authority, which was formally or actually in the body of the community by virtue of any grant or law of Christ, so as they should receive and act the power of the church by virtue of a delegation from them; but only they design, choose, and set apart the individual persons, who are thereon entrusted with office power by Christ Himself, according as was before declared.” Again: “This choice or election doth not communicate a power from them that choose unto them that are chosen, as though such a power as that whereunto they are called should be formally inherent in the choosers, antecedent to such a choice. For this would make those that are chosen to be *their* ministers only, and to act all things in their name, and by virtue of authority derived from them.”

In other words, according to Dr. Owen, the forms of Congregationalism must not be allowed to prejudice the idea of a *jure divino* Ministry, and of a real transmission of office in the case, from its first Apostolical appointment and ordination onward to the end of time, through a channel different from the general life of the Church. Just as sacramental certainly, and just as hierarchical, as the tying of the Holy Ghost to any Episcopal or Presbyterian law of succession.

And now, as I am in the way of quotations, let me urge another (strongly to the point) from high authority, in our own American Reformed Church. On the subject of the Christian Ministry, my old respected Mercersburg friend and colleague

Dr. Schaff, in his History of the Apostolical Church, writes in different observations as follows :

“ Church government has its foundation in the Christian Ministry, which is originally identical with the Apostolate and contains the germs of all other church offices. It was instituted not by men, but by Christ Himself in person. When our Lord was about to leave the earth, He gave His disciples, whom He had gathered around Him since His public appearance as the Messiah, and trained by a three years personal intercourse, a commission to continue His divine work ; to preach the Gospel to every creature ; and to baptize the penitent in the triune name of the Creator, the Redeemer and the Sanctifier of mankind. The Apostles here appear as representatives of the ministerial office in general. The design of the Christian Ministry is none other than that of the mission of Christ Himself—the redemption of the world from sin and error, and the extension and completion of the kingdom of God, as a kingdom of truth, love, holiness, and peace. The ministry is the vehicle of the powers of divine grace ; the appointed channel for conveying the blessings of the gospel to mankind ; the organ through which the Holy Ghost acts upon the world and gradually transforms it into the kingdom of God. The ministerial office was originally one and the same with the apostolical. But as the Church outwardly and inwardly grew, the Apostles found their sphere of labor so enlarged, that they could no longer attend to all the duties of discipline and public worship, and were compelled to resort to a division of labor. In this way arose gradually, as the wants of the Church and the force of circumstances required, the several offices, which *have their common root in the apostolate, and through it partake in various degrees of its divine origin, its powers, its privileges, and its duties.* All the various branches of the spiritual office are the organs, through which Christ Himself in the Holy Ghost continues to exercise on earth His offices of prophet, priest and king.”

Here we have all that is claimed in my present argument. The Ministry is of direct ordination from the great Head of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ ; not in the way of new ap-

pointment from age to age; but in virtue of the commission, by which the Apostles were originally set apart to their work of founding and organizing the Church; a commission, the force of which was to endure through all time; and the very conception of which therefore, as thus one and continuous, involves necessarily the idea of Apostolical succession. The ministerial office in this way is no outgrowth simply of the universal priesthood of believers; it holds immediately and directly from Christ Himself, and not from Him circuitously only through the Church. This is exactly the view which is taken of the office in our new Liturgy.

Dr. Dorner's notion of the Church and its ministry is altogether different. The Church, with him, comes before the Ministry, is independent of it, has the power of creating it, in fact, at its own pleasure! "The organic communion which proceeds from Christ through the Holy Ghost," he says, "cannot depend on the external rite of a sacramental ordination, so as to derive from this first its reality and historical character. It is rather the object of faith; we must distinguish between the Church as visible and invisible as outward and inward, and the common notes of both are only the Word, Holy Baptism, and the Holy Eucharist, which are sufficient to furnish reliable ground for such organization as is needed here on earth with free variation answerable to different times. The Word of God demands preaching and the administration of sacraments according to divine or doctrinal necessity. But how particularly the duty and right of the Church to exercise this perpetual function should be ordered has not been divinely prescribed, but is left to that wisdom by which the Church is bound to make the best possible provision for the wants of every time. It is therefore arbitrary, when Nevin heaps upon the ministry all church powers, and thereby robs the laity of their proper rights, in a way that puts the common minister higher than the Catholic Church puts her bishops. Such a practical undervaluation of the universal priesthood of believers could not be possible, if Dr. Nevin had not unconsciously forced the stage of the Reformation, with its more inward apprehension of

the Gospel of free justification, back to the stage before the Reformation."

If this now means anything, it means that the Church has its full constitution in the possession simply of the Word and Sacraments, and that the ministration of these is placed entirely in her own hands to be provided for in different periods, by agencies of her own appointment, as to herself may seem best. The Ministry thus is made to be the creature entirely of the popular will in Christian form, supposed to devolve its own powers on those whom it sets apart for its service in such sacred office. Such plainly is the sense of Professor Dorner's theory. What he says of my heaping *all* powers on the office, and so making no account of the universal priesthood of believers, sounds to me, I must confess, little better than Bombergerian clap-trap, and carries with it to my mind no force whatever.

How far this German theory, now, may be settled authority for the Evangelical Protestantism of Germany we need not at present stop to inquire; one thing is certain, as I have intimated before, it is not what has generally been regarded as sound doctrine among the historical Protestant Churches of England, Scotland, and this country; and when Dr. Dorner makes it the test of fidelity to the Reformation stand-point, he cannot be considered to say the least, as representing truly the best faith of the Protestant world.

What then are we to think of those among ourselves, who in their zeal against our Liturgy have shown themselves willing to fall in with Dorner's exceedingly low view of Ordination and the Christian Ministry? The Liturgy has served as a *lapis lydius*, to bring out the secret quality of some very bad divinity among us at other points. How is it here? Let those see to it, whom it may concern.

XII. THE PRINCIPLE OF PROTESTANTISM.

The different points of controversy which have thus far claimed our attention, as may be easily seen, refer themselves throughout, more or less directly, to one great radical subject of inquiry, *the principle of Protestantism, and its right relation to the prin-*

ciple of Christianity. Here the controversy between Dr. Dorner and myself, the divergency, as he calls it, of our Christological ways, comes to what is, after all, its main meaning. The subject is large and difficult. I can only, of course, glance at it briefly in this closing article of our present discussion.

We have seen how, in various ways, Dr. Dorner takes occasion to insinuate, or openly assert, that my Christological views, and the reigning spirit of our Liturgy also, are not in harmony with the essential genius of the Evangelical Church (meaning by this, Protestantism in its German form), but involve, if not a conscious, at least an unconscious falling back upon a standpoint anterior to the Reformation—not just Roman Catholic perhaps—but then all the more certainly Oriental or Greek, as we find it in the first Christian ages. Let us now try to understand exactly what this German Evangelical theory of the Reformation is, in its modern form, which is thus made to be the measure of all true and sound Protestantism, in such sweeping style.

Dorner, as we have seen, sets out in his criticism, by charging me, in a polite way, with overlooking the fact that for Protestantism, all turns on faith and the right relation of the soul to God; as if my idea of a Christocentric theology implied somehow, that the mere theoretical knowledge of Christ is to be considered the source of true Christianity for us (either as theology or as practical religion), apart from all personal experience of what Christ is for us as the power of salvation. No misapprehension could well be more total or complete. The central place assigned to Christ in my theology has always been under the view of an actual apprehension of His person, first of all, through the exercise of faith; and it is only wonderful, how Dr. Dorner could ever have got himself into any other imagination. Certainly all true Christianity has its ground for us in faith, the power of saying with Peter, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.* But no such faith can exist without embracing its object; and in such view the object apprehended is still more the ground of what is thus brought to pass (although object and subject in the case go both together), than is the simple act of

apprehension, by which it is taken up into our subjective life. Dr. Dorner knows that, and admits it freely; although at times he seems to forget it, and talks as if the mere subjective exercise of faith (without regard to its contents) were to be considered in some way of independent authority in the Protestant system. This we know is the view that has come to be taken practically of the Protestant principle, by a very considerable part of our modern sectarian religion. Faith itself, or mere personal feeling and conviction, is made to be with it the source of justification; and the freedom of the Reformation is taken to be the right of determining, from within simply, what is true Christianity, without regard to any objective authority whatever. But such is not Dr. Dorner's view. Faith, with him, is of no account, and can have no real existence in fact, without being filled with the positive substance of Divine truth. Here too he sees (though sometimes a little confusedly), that this truth is not just the documentary form in which it is presented to us in the Bible, but the living fact of revelation itself, as it lies behind the Bible and looks forth upon us through its inspired pages. Faith has to do in the case, not primarily with the inspiration of the book, but with the substantive matter which the book makes known; with this, in its own immediate self-authenticating form. But now, all revelation centres in Christ; and so Dorner is willing to admit, in the end, that the last ground of certitude for faith, is found in the direct apprehension of the Saviour Himself, who is the alpha and omega of all that God has been pleased to make known of Himself in this way. This, as I have remarked before, seems to be equivalent to making the Person of Christ the root and principle in full of the whole Christian salvation. But here it is now, that Dr. Dorner refuses after all, so far as I can understand him, to carry out this great thought to what seems to me to be its necessary theological consequences, as we have them set forth comprehensively in the Apostles' Creed. On to this point, our ways would appear to be in general harmony; since it is a pure mistake, to suppose that I make any less account than he does of the factor of faith in the Protestant principle. How is it then, that just here the material

principle of Protestantism becomes with him, all at once, something different from what it is in my system; to such an extent that I am charged with being unfaithful to it altogether? The subject is of fundamental account for this whole discussion, and deserves certainly our most close attention.

The peculiarity of Dörner's view of justifying faith (the material principle of Protestantism) shows itself in this, that the feeling of a rectified relation to God (the sense of guilt met with the sense of pardon through the righteousness of Christ) is regarded by him as going before the apprehension of Christ in any wider view, and as mediating, so to speak, our full access to His person. His interest is in maintaining the absolute autonomy of the believing subject; which he thinks cannot be done effectually, without making the subjective side of the process of salvation in this way the *primum mobile* of the whole movement. Faith must be free of all outward authority, all coercion from beyond itself. It is independent thus of the Church, of course; but that is not all; it is independent also of the Bible; and in the end, it would really seem, is to be considered independent also of the objective presence of Christ Himself, except as a certain inward experience comes in first to make Him intelligible and apprehensible in His whole character to the awakened soul.

I am blamed for making the objective Christ primordial for the Christian salvation. This position, he will have it, belongs in the Evangelical Church only to faith; which is (*per se*, it would seem) the "Divine assurance of salvation;" and in which, as the consciousness of redemption, "is implanted principally, and as with one stroke, the consciousness of the Redeemer, and of His dignity and truth." That is: While the sense of subjective redemption and the apprehension of Christ's objective presence go in fact together, it is the sense of redemption nevertheless which, properly speaking, makes room for such embracing of the actual Christ, and which is thus the true principle of all that is reached in the process.

Thus, criticizing the Rev. S. Miller on what he says of the power of Christianity to make itself evident to faith, Professor

Dorner remarks: "Faith so described is unfortunately, however, not faith in personal salvation by Christ, but only in objective Christianity; its certainty, thus, does not rest on the experienced certainty of salvation, but on the blindly received authority of the Church, and is promised only as the reward of such blind, willful obedience. The author comes to this, by looking away from the ethical side of the faith process, from the eye of the moral consciousness which recognizes both its own sin and the righteousness of Christ."

This is clear. Faith, as the experience of subjective right-setting in relation to God, must go before all other evidence in Christianity. Except as mediated and illuminated by this, all other evidence, as being "only objective Christianity," must be necessarily *heteronomic*, a foreign outward law, for the proper freedom of the human spirit; and the faith engendered by it no better than blind, willful obedience to external authority (*Autoritätsglaube*, called also sometimes *Köhlerglaube*). The "objective Christianity" which Dr. Dorner has first in his mind, as thus heteronomic for faith, is that of the Church; though he does not shrink, as we have seen, from speaking of the authority of the Bible also in the same way. But what shall we say, when we find his language here virtually bringing the glorious Person of the Redeemer Himself under the terrible operation of the same Procrustean rule? "Only in objective Christianity," he says of all faith, for which its object has not *first* found the seal of its truth in the believer's own mind! But is such objective Christianity found only in the Church or in the Bible? Where have we it in full, if not in our Lord Jesus Christ himself? And shall we say now, that bowing implicitly to the authority of *His* presence, is blind, willful obedience to a heteronomic rule? Can we ever, by our subjective experiences, verify Christ sooner or farther, than He, through the blessed vision of His own Person, offered to the eyes of our faith, verifies *us* by the light of truth, showing us at once what we are, where we are, and whither we must turn for salvation? Subject and object in all such faith of course flow together; but it is a strange way of looking at the matter surely, to sub-

ordinate the objective to the action of the subjective; to make the last primordial for the process, and the first secondary only and relatively dependent.

So far, however, does this inversion prevail with Dr. Dorner, that he insists on conditioning by it the universal sense of the Gospel; in such sort that the Gospel must be considered as having been only imperfectly developed before the Reformation, because the principle of justifying faith, in the form here described, had not before been advanced to its proper autonomic dignity and independence. The great significance of Protestantism, he thinks, lies in the bringing out of this principle. Here is the signature of its being the work of God. This constitutes it a new creation; not in the sense of a full rupture with older Christianity (for Dorner, as we have seen, is historical, and requires a continuity of Christian life between the sixteenth century and the first ages); but in the sense of such a re-ordering of Christianity, as makes its whole previous history from the beginning to have been relatively defective and wrong, as not flowing strictly from the true idea of the Gospel. The standpoint of the Primitive Church, therefore, needs rectification from the retro-active force of the new position which was gained for faith in the age of Luther and Calvin. In other words, the principle of Protestantism here is made to be the only true principle of Christianity in its widest view; and we are given to understand, that we have no right (evangelically) to go back of it, in quest of any other more general root or ground in which it may be supposed to be comprehended.

Our theology, Dorner tells us, must be genuinely historical, by breaking neither with the Ancient Church nor with the Reformation. But this requires, he adds, that as "children of the Reformation" we proceed from its special standpoint, the free personal laying hold of Christian salvation and truth; an end, he goes on to say significantly, *which, in the manner of all teleology, must work back into what goes before it, so as to preclude whatever is not consonant with its own nature.* That is, it would seem, the true teleology of the Gospel is reached in the standpoint of the Reformation; and, therefore, the sense of

all earlier Christianity must suffer itself to be righted retroactively from this, instead of being called in ever as itself a principle of rectification for the later period. The beginning, thus, must be construed into conformity with the end, and not the end into harmony with the beginning. Such is Dorner's idea here of historical Christianity.

Now, it is true that the end, in God's ways, actuates and rules the beginning. But, as I have taken occasion to say before, it is only the absolute end that does this, and not any merely partial intermediate end. It is an utter wrong done to the full sense of Christianity, therefore, when Dr. Dorner presumes to circumscribe it by the special article of justification by faith, as we have this brought out in the sixteenth century. The full Gospel embraces far more than that in its ultimate teleology; and we are bound, accordingly, to include far more than that in its original principle or germ. For the very reason that the end must give us the sense of the beginning, I insist on seeing in the beginning *more* than the special mind simply of the sixteenth century, which cannot, by any means, be taken for the consummation of all Christian truth. Original Christianity is a deeper and wider fact than Protestantism; and in the relation of one to the other, the only true order unquestionably is that by which Protestantism is taken to have its root in Christianity, and not Christianity to have its root in Protestantism. The Protestant principle of justification by faith then is valid, only as it falls back on the general principle of Christianity, which is none other than Christ himself; and this in such a way, that Christ is not brought in as the instrument simply of our justification, but is apprehended as being at once in Himself the whole fullness of our salvation.

Here it is that Dr. Dorner's doctrine of Protestantism appears to me to be sadly at fault. It is not fully Christological in the sense of making Christ the absolute ground and beginning of Christianity. He acknowledges a falling away of Protestantism itself from its own original principle; which calls now for a reconstruction and righting of its whole present status (both as Lutheran and Reformed), by a proper historical recur-

rence again to this principle in its true sense. But he is not willing to see that the Protestant principle itself may need to be righted, or at least secured in its only right sense by a similar historical recurrence to the older and more general principle of Christianity as it comes before us in the first ages of the Church. For want of this his idea of historical Protestantism is lame, and his theory of what he calls the Evangelical Church very much of one sort in the end, I must be allowed sorrowfully to say, with the radicalism of our most unhistorical and unchurchly American sects. We see at once why he is not on good terms with Primitive Christianity; why he is not satisfied with the Christological construction of the Creed; why, in a word, he cannot abide its article of the *Church*, or the idea of an objective authority for faith belonging to the Church in any form.

To this it comes necessarily at last with the primacy of faith, as it is made to be the distinguishing basis of Protestantism by Dorner and other great German theologians. The old dualism between subject and object in religion, it is assumed, has been for theological science, since the time of Schleiermacher, effectually surmounted; by seeing in the supernatural only the necessary complement or filling out of the natural (as man's intelligence and will), which then the natural again, that is, the rational nature of man, has the power of taking into itself through its own free activity and apprehension. In this way the law is supposed to be maintained, that nothing can enter the mind as objectively binding for its intelligence or will, which is not first authenticated for it as true and right by its independent, spontaneous (not approval simply, but) actual production, as it were, from the depths of its own nature. This is that *autonomy* of faith, which is here put forward now as the true principle of the Reformation (over against all merely outward objectivity, whether of Church or Bible, Dorner makes no difference*); which our original Protestantism, it seems, did not it-

*"Did Paul," he asks "require submission, first, to an outward authority, faith in the Old Testament Scriptures, or in the Church, or in his own divine commission; or did he proclaim Christ from an overflowing heart, etc." To save Dorner's orthodoxy here his conscientious translator interposes after the "Old Testament Scrip-

self thoroughly understand, and so drifted away, by devious course into the Neology and general Rationalism finally of the eighteenth century; and which it is the business of the nineteenth century at last, we are told, to re-inaugurate in right form as our only reasonable hope for the welfare and prosperity of Protestantism in time to come.

Now I make no question, but that there is a deep truth in Schleiermacher's idea of a necessary correlation and synthesis of the natural and the supernatural in religion. But I have dreadful misgivings, I confess, with regard to much that I meet with among modern German theologians, in their way of carrying out the idea to its practical applications. There is no one of them whom I admire more than the late Dr. Richard Rothe, author of that wonderful structure of speculative thought which he has entitled *Theological Ethics*, himself a sort of Schleiermacher over again, and at the same time no less remarkable for what seems to be the simplicity of his piety than for the greatness of his learning and the profundity of his genius; and yet who can feel safe altogether in his guidance? With him, the synthesis of the human and the divine in Christianity amounts to a resolution of all at last, into a simple completion of the world process in its ultimate ethical form. The idea of the Church loses itself thus finally in the idea of the State! Dr. Dorner, with all his regard for Rothe, would join here, I suppose, in the condemnation of his system. But one cannot help feeling that his own way of looking at Christianity involves much also which would appear to run precisely in the same direction; as Rothe himself, indeed, charges the new *Evangelical* theology of Germany generally with not speaking out here fully its own necessary sense, and predicts that it must yet come openly to his ground. Is this whole scheme, after all, any other than the arch-heresy of our fallen life, *Humanitarianism*, in its most subtle and refined form, all the more dangerously adapted to deceive the very elect through such gorgeous semblance to

tures" a bracketed parenthesis thus: ["because handed down by the Church, B."]; but that is only his own fancy. Dorner himself means simply what he says; and knows also what he says, as his scholiast B. does not.

an angel of light? I merely ask the question, without pretending to answer it now; for the purpose of bringing into view the very deep solemnity of the subject with which it is concerned.

It is as coming within the sweep of this general humanitarian tendency that Dorner's doctrine of justifying faith in particular, regarded as the subjective material side of the principle of Protestantism, becomes to my mind unsound and unsafe. In his zeal for the full moral freedom of the believer (the autonomy of the human subject), he will have it that all merely objective authority must be held in secondary relation to the exercise of this subjective factor or force. So in the Bible, and so in the Church, and so then, in spite of himself, it would seem necessarily to follow, in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ also. For is not *He*, as already said, the fullness of all objective Christianity, before it becomes otherwise objective, either in the Bible or in the Church? Hence the weakness of Dorner's Christological hypothesis; by which he allows himself to invert the true relation of Christ's work to His person, and so of course the true order of faith in regard to it—subordinating, in fact, the wholeness of the Mediator to one function simply of His Mediatorial Office. Hence his persistence in the strange opinion, that to lay emphasis on the Incarnation and to magnify the life of Christ, is necessarily to wrong the claims of the Atonement, and to make small account of the death of Christ. Hence his confessed divergency from the Christology of the Creed, and the religious thinking generally of the first Christian ages. Hence his opposition at large to the idea of the Church as it stands in the Creed, and was for this old thinking unquestionably the object of universal faith.

Now, against all this I maintain, that the authority of Christ's presence and person (objective Christianity exhibited to us in Christ,) is the ground of all subjective Christianity. Faith, in its last and deepest sense, is simply submission (free, but yet unseeing also, and implicit) to such objective authority. The Gospel to which it bows is primarily an external Gospel. So the Apostles believed in response to the word, *Follow Me*. So the Apostolic commission runs: "He that believeth and is

baptized," that is comes under the yoke of entire self-surrender to Christ through baptism, "shall be saved." And so it must be through all ages. The Christianity which was originally in Christ, must be for the Christian world an objective authority till the end of time. It is so in the Bible; but it is so also in the Church, and without its actualization for faith under this last form, it can never make itself fully actual in the first form. In some way the general life of Christianity (which is the Church) must come between all individual faith and the letter of Scripture, to make the relation either Christian or Protestant in any true sense of these terms. The very idea of faith implies a relation of dependence and need toward an object, which is thus for it an outward authority, (not indeed heteronomic, but still,) absolutely binding for its whole action; just as all natural vision holds in the objective power of outward light, without which there can be no exercise of the visual faculty whatever.

There is much in regard to this part of the subject especially which still challenges consideration, and which I would be glad to bring into the present discussion; but I am admonished by the length to which the discussion has already run that it is time to bring it to a close. It will be seen that my object has been throughout to hold the argument to general and broad issues, rather than to let it lose itself with secondary points and more or less merely incidental details. More than a full third part of Dorner's article is devoted to the Rev. Samuel Miller's *Mercersburg and Modern Theology Compared*; but only in the way of desultory criticism for the most part, (a running fire of short notes mainly,) on particular points selected miscellaneously from the general course of the book. So much attention from so high a quarter is of course complimentary to the book itself, and its worthy author; but it is of very little account for the interests of theological science; and it would be a waste of time to go into any examination of the criticism in its particulars, with the view of determining how much or how little of force it may carry with it in each separate case. Let the controversy, as I have just said, be kept to what we

have seen to be the fundamental matter of difference between Dr. Dorner and the theology of our Liturgy. This is sufficiently broad and deep. It concerns not simply our Reformed faith, our relations to the Heidelberg Catechism, but our Protestantism in general. Dorner takes the principle of Protestantism in a sense which makes it independent of historical Christianity, and narrows the significance of Christ Himself too much to its own subjective measure. The special principle of Protestantism with him, in other words, is not held in due subordination to the general principle of Christianity. In his system there is no room for the Church as one of the mysteries of "our undoubted Catholic faith." He is thus, by his own confession, not in full harmony with the Creed.

All this should be enough for our American Reformed Church. We have already planted ourselves firmly on the basis of the old Christian faith, as we have it embodied in this primitive symbol, and we are not likely now to recede from that good foundation. Our late grand Festival of the Heidelberg Catechism reached its conclusion in the following solemnly appropriate action, taken by the Synod of Lancaster in 1864, (*Minutes*, p. 145):

"I. Our Tercentenary Jubilee has served a wholesome purpose in reviving for our ecclesiastical consciousness a proper sense of what is comprehended in our confessional title, *Reformed*, as related originally to Lutheranism in one direction, and to the Catholic Church of the olden times in another.

"II. It is an argument of sound and right historical feeling in this case that the beginnings of our church-life are referred, not simply to the epoch and crisis of the Reformation, but through that also to the original form of Christianity as it existed in the first ages.

"III. The true genius and spirit of our Church in this respect is shown by the place which is assigned to the APOSTLES' CREED in the Heidelberg Catechism; where it is plainly assumed that the Creed, in its proper historical sense, is to be considered of fundamental authority for the Reformed faith.

"IV. It is a matter for congratulation, that our growing

sympathy with the Apostles' Creed is attended with a growing power of appreciation among us also for that Christological way of looking at the doctrines of Christianity, which has come to characterize all the evangelical theology of Germany in our time, and by which only, it would seem, the objective and subjective (in other words, the churchly and experimental) sides of the Gospel can be brought into true harmony with each other."

That is where we stand. The Heidelberg Catechism, anchored and moored securely in the old Œcumenical Creeds! Our Christology fixes us there and nowhere else. If Germany, in the person of Professor Dorner (even though he should be commended to us by an angel from heaven itself), come preaching to us now what is after all another Gospel, born of the general confessional demoralization which seems to be sweeping all theology there into the maelstrom of *humanitarianism*—Germany, in this case, will preach to us in vain. Our existence as a Church is bound up in our simple fidelity to the APOSTLES' CREED.

ART. IV.—RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

DISCUSSIONS IN THEOLOGY. By Thomas H. Skinner, Professor in the Union Theological Seminary. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, No. 770 Broadway. 1868.

A second edition of miscellanies, containing discussions on the following topics: Miracles the Proof of Christianity, Nature of the Atonement, Christ Pre-existent, Christ Preaching to the Spirits in Prison, Impotence of the Will, Theory of Preparation for Preaching, &c. It contains Presbyterian theology of the New School type.

The argument on Miracles is directed against that kind of naturalism, which denies anything specifically new in Christianity. If these, however, are in error, the author, we think, takes an extreme, and, therefore, untenable position in endeavoring to refute them. It is very much the same position taken by the Roman Catholic Church, which appeals just as strenuously to miracles now wrought for the truth of their Church. The very title, *Miracles the Proof of Christianity*, is sufficient to indicate his error. "Evidences of Christianity!" says