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ART. I.—THE VARIABLE AND THE CONSTANT  
IN CHRISTIAN APOLOGY.

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IN the modern, weakened sense of the word, the Church of Christ has no *apologies* to make. We apologize to no man for our faith, as though there was anything in it to excuse or extenuate. But like the “elect strangers scattered throughout Asia Minor,” to whom St. Peter addressed his 1st Epistle, we hold ourselves “ready for apology to every one that asketh of us an account of the hope that is in us.” The simple self-respect of an honest, rational believer, allows no less than this; our loyalty to our Lord may well add something to the readiness and earnestness of our vindication. For it is He that is called in question, rather than we, by the unbelieving world.

When Christ with his own lips charged his disciples, in clear view of the troubled days and scenes to which he pointed them, not to be anxious, not to prepare before hand their apology even for synagogues, magistrates, and kings, he justified the strange charge by the quieting assurance that a cause higher than their own should have an advocacy higher than their own. “The Holy Ghost shall teach you.” “I will give you a mouth and wisdom.” This was the first provision made for Christian apologies and apologists. And to the last day of the Church’s conflict with unbelief and error, it must fare ill with the defense and the defender of the faith that is not under the same teaching and endowment,—while

foundation, that the chair should bear the name of the revered father whose presence and whose spirit have been from the first so great a power here. The precise objects contemplated in this department are objects with which his name has been in our Churches, our Christian homes, and our literary institutions, very closely identified. Far beyond the bounds of his particular ecclesiastical connection, Christian Evidences and Moral Philosophy have made the name of Archibald Alexander a household word.

Humanly and historically we might desire no better auspices than the memories and sympathies thus engaged for us, and the encouragement afforded by the prompt and generous liberality of the friends who have added this endowment to the other resources of the Seminary. But our trust is in the Lord our God, and in this blessed faith of his Gospel, which has not stood all the tests of the past to be found in the utmost future trial, a spider's web to trusting simplicity, a bane to any part or any interest of humanity, the crowning offense of earth against heaven.

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ART. II.—THE THEOLOGY FOR OUR AGE AND COUNTRY.

By PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D., Professor in Union Theological Seminary.

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

Christian Theology is the science of the Christian religion, or the knowledge of God, of man, and of their mutual relation under its threefold aspect of original union, subsequent separation on account of sin, and reunion or reconciliation by Jesus Christ the God-Man and Saviour of mankind. It is the noblest of sciences. It surpasses other sciences in proportion as the Bible, its text-book, excels other books, and as religion, its object, towers above the secular concerns of man. It is occupied with the deepest problems which can challenge the attention of an immortal mind. The boundless wealth of God's revelation, of God's word, of God's plan of salvation, the spiritual experience of

God's people in all ages, creation, sin and redemption, life, death and eternity, things past, things present and things to come, all that can purify, ennoble, adorn and perfect human character in this world, the mysteries of the world to come, with endless bliss and endless woe, the origin, progress and triumph of Christ's kingdom till the final consummation, when God shall be all in all:—these are the sublime themes of theology, ever fresh and ever new, and carrying in themselves their own best reward.

#### DEPARTMENTS OF THEOLOGY.

Theology, like the kingdom of Christ itself, has grown up from small beginnings to such magnitude that its thorough study, exclusive of the necessary preparation by a general literary and classical training, demands now several of the best years in a man's life. And the more we explore its sacred domain, the more we find out how little we know, and how imperfectly we comprehend. Superficial knowledge alone begets conceit, thorough knowledge makes humble. But one drop from the ocean of divine wisdom is better than rivers of worldly pleasure.

The whole field of divinity is best divided into four departments: Exegetical Theology, Historical Theology, Systematic Theology, and Practical Theology.

#### EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY.

Exegetical Theology, or Biblical Literature, has for its object the study and exposition of the Book of books, the Book of God for all ages and for all mankind. This branch of theology embraces, besides Exegesis proper, Sacred Philology, Biblical Archæology, Biblical Criticism, Introduction to the Old and New Testaments or a Literary History of the Bible, and Biblical Theology, in the modern technical sense, that is, a systematic, organic view of the Bible religion in its doctrinal and ethical aspects. Here is a vast field inviting new laborers from year to year. For the Bible, far from losing its charm, is growing richer and more interesting with every attempt to explore its mines of wisdom and comfort. One commentary seems only to create a demand for another and better one; and thus the Church will continue preaching and expounding the same

Word of life to ever-enlarging congregations to the end of time.

### HISTORICAL THEOLOGY.

Historical Theology, or Church History, traces the origin and progress of Christ's kingdom, which is not of this world but above the world, and in the world, delivering it from the power of sin and death, and transforming it from within slowly and surely by the force of truth and holiness.

Church History is a continuous illustration of the twin parables of the mustard seed which developes to a mighty tree, and the leaven which is to pervade the whole lump of humanity. It is the most important and most interesting part of general history. For the world at large is governed in the interest of Christianity. Secular history is but a John the Baptist pointing to Him who was before him, and decreasing, that Christ may increase. The noble language and literature of Greece, the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, the conquest of Alexander, the arms and laws of Rome, were tributary to the first coming of Christ, as much as the theocracy of the Jews. And so will all the movements, commotions and revolutions of modern history prepare the way for the final triumph of Christ's kingdom over the whole earth. History is the epos of God, Church History the epos of Christ. All human factors and even the Satanic agencies are ruled and overruled by the Divine factor to the glory of God.

Historical Theology is, next to the Bible, the richest book of life and devotion and inexhaustible in lessons of wisdom. It embraces the whole outward and inward life and experience of the Church from the beginning to the present time, the history of missions and persecutions, of doctrines and heresies, of government and discipline, of worship and ceremonies, of Christian charity and philanthropy, in short, all that is of abiding interest and that has contributed to produce the present state of Christian civilization. So vast and various is the field of ecclesiastical history, that one single branch alone—as the life of Christ or the Apostolic Age, or the reformation of the sixteenth century—is sufficient to occupy years of earnest research.

## SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY.

Systematic or Speculative Theology reflects, in organic unity and completeness, the present consciousness, life and condition of Christendom, as the result of its past history. It comprehends Apologetics, Dogmatics, Polemics, Symbolics, Ethics and Statistics.

Apologetics defends Christianity, as the perfect religion of God for all mankind, against the attacks of infidelity whether Jewish or heathen or nominally Christian, whether they proceed from philosophy, or criticism, or natural science.

Dogmatics is a scientific unfolding of the doctrinal system of Christianity from the Bible and Christian consciousness, and in harmony with true reason as enlightened by revelation.

Polemics or Controversial Theology has to deal with the inner doctrinal differences of Christendom, and has of late assumed a more dignified, less sectarian and more catholic character, under a new name which includes Irenics as well as Polemics. This is Symbolics, the science of creeds, or comparative dogmatics, which discusses the doctrinal peculiarities of the different denominations as laid down in their authoritative symbols or confessions; calmly weighing their arguments, refuting the errors, and pointing out the way to harmony in the future.

Christian Ethics is a scientific exhibition of Christian life as emanating from, and aiming to imitate, the sinless perfection of the life of Christ.

Statistics is a description of the present social status of Christendom, in its various branches, Greek, Latin and Protestant, with an account of their numerical strength, their polity, government and administration, forms of worship, living institutions and Christian activity.

## PRACTICAL THEOLOGY.

Practical Theology, with its various branches of Homiletics, Catechetics, Poimenics (commonly called Pastoral Theology), Liturgics and Theory of Church Government, looks to the future from the experience of the past. It connects the theory of religion with its practice, the science of theology with the

life of the congregation, the Professor's chair with the Pastor's pulpit, the Seminary with the Church.

In this department, the mature results of Exegetical, Historical, and Systematic Divinity, are made available for the edification of the children of God, through the duties and cares of the gospel ministry. And this process will go on till the whole world is filled with the glory of Christ.

#### THEOLOGY AND THE MINISTRY.

From the nature and extent of theology we may form an estimate of the importance of the ministry for which it prepares. I pity the young man who thinks and talks of sacrifices he is making, and honor he is conferring on the Church, by devoting himself to the clerical profession. God has no need of our poor, feeble services. God rather bestows the highest honor upon us by accepting us as candidates for the stewardship of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. What can be more honorable, more glorious, than the calling for which the eternal Son of God himself came in the flesh, and to which the purest and noblest of men, the teachers and benefactors of mankind, have devoted their lives? There is, indeed, as the great Augustin says, "nothing more wretched, mournful and damnable in the eyes of God than the ministry, if it be sought from impure motives, and administered in an impure spirit;" but there is also, he adds, "nothing more blessed in the eyes of God, if the battle be fought in the manner enjoined by our Captain."

The demands upon the ministry are now higher than ever. Ministers ought to be the purest, the noblest, the most useful and charitable of men. They ought to be in the front rank of the civilization of the age, take the lead in all true progress, and maintain the supremacy of religion in the highest walks of learning and literature.

#### THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY.

The character of Theology suggests the proper spirit and best method of its study.

As a science, Theology must be studied like every other science, with the application of all our cognitive faculties. Its vast treasures of knowledge from the Bible and the history

of Christianity, in all its forms and phases, can only be appropriated by memory, and arranged by judgment; its deep and intricate problems demand close and earnest thinking. It opens a field for the service of every mental power, and touches at all points on other branches of human learning and literature, as ancient and modern philology, geography, history, philosophy, geology, astronomy, music, poetry and the fine arts in their relation to worship.

But as a *sacred* and *spiritual* science, based on a divine revelation and concerned with the eternal interests of man, theology should be studied spiritually as well as intellectually, devoutly as well as thoughtfully, on the knees as well as behind the desk. On its portals we read the inscriptions: *Procul abeste profani. Sancta sancte tractanda. Oratio, meditatio, tentatio faciunt theologum.* Only those who are pure in heart have the promise to see God. The impure will always walk in darkness, or worship idols.

To make God simply an object of philosophical speculation, and logical analysis, is irreverent and profane, and leads to serious error. God is first and last an object of adoration and love. He is sought and found by meditation and prayer rather than by ratiocination. Hence the old adage: *Bene orasse est bene studuisse.* It has been said that while human things must be known before they can be admired and loved, divine things must be loved in order to be known.

#### FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE.

With equal propriety we must require faith as a condition of knowledge. The greatest theological genius of the nineteenth century has adopted the motto of Anselm and Augustin: *Fides præcedit intellectum.* How can we know God unless we believe Him to exist? And how can we enter into the depths of His character without boundless confidence and trust in his perfections? We must, then, first spiritually apprehend and appropriate the divine objects before we can intellectually comprehend and understand them. Faith is the pioneer in all great undertakings. Faith in ideas guided Plato in his lofty speculations; faith in the existence of a new world led Columbus to the discovery o

it; faith produced the Reformation and sustained its leaders in their trials; without faith the art of printing and other modern inventions would be unknown.

But as *pistis* precedes *gnosis*, so on the other hand *pistis* necessarily leads to *gnosis*. The same great divines who gave precedence to faith over knowledge, laid down the correspondent principle: *Credo ut intelligam*, I believe in order that I may understand. Faith is the most fruitful mother of knowledge. The philosophical principle of Cartesius, *De omnibus dubitandum est*, may apply to the functions of rigid historical criticism or legal investigation, but it is false of constructive science. Theology certainly is not born of the barren womb of skepticism or indifferentism to truth, but out of the virgin soil of faith in God, and love to God and man. In the plerophoria or full assurance of faith, the theologian may boldly climb the giddy heights and descend to the hidden depths of speculation and research, without a misgiving as to the result. Bible truth is fire-proof against the attacks of an infidel science and philosophy falsely so-called. Our understanding of the Bible may be wrong and need rectification, from time to time, by the progress of knowledge or new discoveries; but the Bible is no more responsible for the mistakes of translators and commentators than the book of nature for the false and contradictory hypotheses of scientists.

Faith and knowledge, revelation and reason, emanate from the same source, and must return to the same source; they agree in principle and aim, as God agrees with himself, who gave them both, and claims them for his service. It is only a superficial taste of philosophy and science, according to Bacon, that may lead away from God, fully exhausted they lead back to Him. The more thoroughly we know any object, the more nearly we approach the truth, and the nearer we get to the truth, the closer we get to God, who is the source and centre of all truth.

#### THEOLOGICAL CHARACTER.

The aim of the theological student should be to cultivate the heart as well as the head, to grow in grace as he grows



in knowledge, and to make his attainments profitable to his fellow-men. The blending of intellectual and moral strength, of profound learning and devoted piety, constitute a *theological character*.

Such a theologian is a power and a blessing to this generation. Such were the best among the fathers, the chief schoolmen and mystics, the reformers, and the leading divines of the Protestant churches, who, though dead, still speak words of life, and stimulate to noble thoughts and deeds. It is well for the student to keep constantly before his eyes those truly great and good men who shine as burning lights on the pages of the Greek, Latin, and Evangelical Churches.

It is still better to aspire, after the apostolic examples, from whom an Athanasius and Augustin, a Chrysostom and Jerome, an Anselm and Bernard, a Luther and Calvin, have derived their inspiration. Look at St. Paul, who was at once the deepest thinker, the noblest character and the most successful missionary. Remember St. John, the evangelist and seer, who was first and emphatically called the "theologian," who studied at the bosom of the *Theos-Logos*, and saw deeper and with purer heart than mortal ever did before or since, as the mediæval hymnist so inimitably expresses it :

" Volat avis sine meta,  
Quo nec vates nec propheta  
Evolavit altiu.  
Tam implenda quam impleta  
Numquam vidit tot secreta  
Purus homo purius."

But best and most of all, let us ever look to Christ, the great Captain of our salvation, the Revealer of God, the Wisest of the wise, the Purest of the pure, the Holiest of the holy. Conformity to His blessed image, imitation of His perfect example in His mission of love and good will towards mankind, should be the highest aim and ambition of the theological student. A *Christ-like* theology and ministry is the first and last necessity to the Church and to the world.

#### EPOCHS OF THEOLOGY.

Every age and nation must produce its own theology, for its peculiar wants and use. We have no right to live off the

inheritance of the past ; we must make it our own, and enrich it by the fruits of our exertions.

The ancient Greek Church is the mother of ecumenical orthodoxy ; she elaborated the fundamental dogmas of the Trinity and the Person of Christ, as laid down in the Apostles', Nicene, and the Athanasian creeds.

The Latin Church devoted her strength to the problems of anthropology, and her noblest offspring is the Augustinian theology, with its profound views and experiences of sin and grace.

The Schoolmen of the middle ages formalized, analyzed and systematized the doctrines of the Fathers, and showed the harmony of revelation and reason ; while the Mystics of the same period insisted on a theology of the heart and inward spiritual experience.

With the Reformation was born evangelical theology, from the fresh fountain of the Scriptures, and in heroic conflict with the errors of Romanism. Since that time soteriology and the subjective side of Christianity in its bearing upon the character and comfort of the individual believer have received more attention than ever before. Kliefoth thinks that ecclesiology and eschatology will come next and last ; but the burning questions just now are, Christology in its historical aspects, and Bibliology in its relation to modern criticism and science.

In our age, Germany is the most fertile field for the cultivation of scientific theology, and is making invaluable additions to the stores of Biblical literature, and Church history. In conflict with modern Rationalism there has grown up a new type of evangelical theology, more critical, liberal and comprehensive than the older forms of orthodoxy, which preceded the era of skepticism. There is no doubt that even Rationalism, bad and destructive as it was in its immediate effects, did good service in investigating the natural and human aspects of the Bible ; but instead of overthrowing, as was the intention, the belief in its supernatural and divine character, it has only supplemented this belief and furnished a broader foundation for it. For the written word of God, like Christ, the personal Word, is theanthropic in origin, nature and aim,

and can only be fully understood and appreciated under this two-fold character. 'The mystery of revelation is God manifest in flesh, and the mystery of Christian life is a heavenly treasure in an earthly vessel.

#### AMERICAN THEOLOGY.

The time has now fully come for America to produce her own distinctive theology, not indeed in selfish and conceited isolation, but in organic union with the Catholic theology of evangelical Christendom throughout the world. Firmly rooted and grounded in the Scriptures, and in the wisdom and experience of eighteen Christian centuries, American theology should mark a new era in the progressive development of the Church—a development, not of the divine truth itself, which is perfect and unchangeable, but of the human apprehension and application of the truth as it is in Christ and his Gospel. For all legitimate and normal progress in theology and religion is simply a *growth in Christ*, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," in whom the whole fulness of the Godhead, and the whole fulness of manhood, without sin, dwell in perfect harmony forever.

American theology, in its first phase, belongs to the Reformed type and is connected with Calvinism through the medium of English Puritanism. It was born in a powerful revival of religion toward the middle of the last century. It may be dated from the profound and devout speculations of the pure and venerable Jonathan Edwards and his successors, who manfully grappled with problems of Christian metaphysics. Since then, the immense growth of our country, and the recent importation of the vast treasures of European learning, have vastly expanded our horizon, opened new avenues of thought and research, and stimulated the native zeal to original contributions in Biblical literature. We may say that all the intellectual and moral forces necessary for a new chapter in the history of sacred letters, are already at work or fast maturing among us.

Our age is not, strictly speaking, a theological age. Theology is no more the all-absorbing and all-controlling science, as it was from the fourth down to the seventeenth century.

Mathematics, and the natural sciences, the mechanical and useful arts, trade and politics, have grown to vast dimensions, and invite genius and talent into new channels. The morbid passion for sudden wealth and power, for extravagance and vain show, is a fertile breeder of dishonesty and corruption, and a serious check upon those ideal tendencies and pursuits which, after all, constitute the true nobility and abiding glory of man.

But, on the other hand, our age and country are remarkable for energy, enterprise, liberality and zeal in the cause of general education, and afford unusual facilities for the exchange and spread of ideas and literary productions.

We have, indeed, no such venerable and well-appointed institutions as the great universities of Europe with their scores of distinguished scholars, complete libraries, antiquarian and artistic collections—the growth of many centuries. Most of our teachers, moreover, are too much distracted by extraneous cares and practical duties incident upon the youth of our institutions, while the university professors of Europe can devote that single and undivided attention to their scholastic calling which is necessary to the highest efficiency in any department.

Yet we enjoy, on the other hand, certain advantages even over good old Europe for the cultivation of sacred learning in harmony with the highest religious and moral interests of the race.

#### THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE.

In the first place, our peaceful separation of Church and State, by throwing Christianity upon the voluntary principle of self-support and self-government, tends to develop a degree of individual interest and liberality for the promotion of religious and theological objects, far greater than exists in those countries where the people are accustomed to look to government for support. Considering the youth of our country, it is astonishing how much has been done already without aid from government and princes. Theological seminaries have been multiplied all over the land, and many a plain layman has immortalized himself by more than princely donations, which will perpetuate his influence for good to

the end of time. A noble rivalry exists among different denominations to excel each other in zeal for the training of an able and efficient ministry, which shall make this magnificent country—the richest inheritance ever given to man—Immanuel's land for all time to come.

Our voluntary system, moreover, discourages the study for the ministry from any other than the proper motives of love to Christ and to immortal souls, and keeps from its ranks the large number of those who, in state-churches, pursue theology, like an ordinary profession, for a mere living, and thus degrade and paralyze the sacred ministry. Professors and ministers, who disbelieve the very truths which they are appointed to teach and to preach, and who labor to destroy the Church which they ought to build up, could fortunately not maintain themselves in our country. Such men find here more congenial occupation in the folds of secular science, politics, and commerce.

This state of things ought to secure to us a theology more pure, more Scriptural, more free from error and more in sympathy with the religious life of the people, than in countries where professors and ministers are officers of the State as well as of the Church, and are elected for theoretical qualifications, with little or no reference to the soundness of their views, and the motives of their hearts.

#### COMBINATION OF EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN RESOURCES.

Another great advantage is our ready access to the literary treasures of all nations, with a willingness to learn from all. Continental divines rarely know and notice English or American works; they are better acquainted with the remotest past in the east, than with that living Christianity west of their horizon. English divines, with honorable exceptions, are insular, self-sufficient, and much controlled by the spirit of caste, which separates "Churchmen" from "Dissenters" and "Dissenters" from "Churchmen."

Our cosmopolitan composition as a nation, to which also in this sense may be applied the motto *E pluribus unum*, tends to beget a more catholic and liberal spirit and disposition. Every book of note which appears in Great Britain, whether it proceed from the Church of England, or the

and return well-stored with the latest advances of Continental science.

The blending of strong English common-sense and reverence for holy things, with German learning and perseverance, infused with the freshness and vigor of American life, ought to produce a higher order of theology than either England or Germany alone can give us. Ours is the fault if we do not improve, under such advantages, upon the past and the present. We must retain all that is good in the theology and religion of the Anglo-Saxon race, which, I verily believe, is more deeply imbued with the spirit and power of Christianity than any other people; but on this solid foundation we may build a majestic temple unto the Lord, with precious stones from all the nations of Europe, and every age of Christian civilization.

#### COMMINGLING OF DENOMINATIONS.

Finally, we have among us nearly all the historical types of Christianity in living representation on a basis of equality before the law, and with unrestrained liberty of action. The national churches, which in Europe are separated by geographical and political boundaries, and the difference of language, are here brought into direct contact and social intercommunion. In the same town we find the various churches of the Continental and British Reformation, with all the life, vigor and progressive spirit which characterize the genius of Protestantism, as well as the Roman Catholic with her ancient traditions, compact organization, mysterious worship and extravagant claims. Only the Eastern or Greek Church, the oldest of all, has as yet scarcely a name in this young western country.

This coëxistence and social commingling of the different phases of Christianity, each representing a peculiar set of ideas and a correspondent mission, must facilitate a thorough acquaintance, remove many prejudices, and foster a spirit of large-hearted Christian liberality and charity. It is said that distance lends enchantment to the view, while familiarity breeds contempt. But the best persons and things improve upon acquaintance. In our land, if anywhere on God's earth, is a field for actualizing the idea of Christian union, which

shall gather into one the best elements from all ages and branches of Christ's kingdom.

#### CHRISTIAN UNION.

Union among Christians is becoming more and more an imperative necessity if they are to conquer in the great conflict with infidelity and anti-Christ.

"United we stand, divided we fall," is an old and well-tried maxim. "Divide and conquer," has always been the policy of a successful enemy. "When bad men combine," said one of the wisest of British statesmen, "the good must associate, else they will fall one by one an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle." This is as true of religion as of politics.

But union is not to be sought merely as a means to an end and for the temporary purpose of gaining a victory over a foe. It is to be sought for its own sake, and as a lasting good; it is an essential attribute, and will be its crowning glory and joy of the church.

Christian union cannot be enforced or artificially manufactured. It must grow spontaneously from the soil of Christian freedom. It must proceed from the mighty Spirit of God, which is a spirit of communion. It must rest on the vital union of individual believers with Christ. The closer Christians are united to Christ, their living head, the closer they will be united to each other.

Union is no dead uniformity, but implies variety and full development of all the various types of Christian doctrine and discipline as far as they are founded on constitutional differences, made and intended by God himself, and as far as they are supplementary rather than contradictory. It does not require an amalgamation of existing organizations into one, but may exist with their perfect independence in their own spheres of labor. It is as far removed from indifference to denominational distinctions, as from sectarian bigotry and exclusiveness. It is quite consistent with loyalty to that particular branch of Christ's kingdom with which we are connected by birth, regeneration or providential call. The Church of God on earth is a spiritual house with many stories, and each story has many apart-

ments ; to be in this house at all, we must occupy a particular room, which we are bound to keep in order and adorn with the flowers of Christian graces. But what should hinder us to live on the best terms of courtesy and friendship with our neighbors and brethren who occupy different apartments in the same temple of God, who love and worship the same Christ, who pray and labor as earnestly as we for the glory of our common Master and the salvation of souls, and with whom we expect to spend an endless eternity in the many mansions of heaven ? Why should we not bless those whom God blesses, why not rejoice in the prosperity of their works, though they bear a different name and pursue a different method ?

Let Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans, Dutch and German Reformed, and all other Christians, of whatever name, be true to their time-honored standards of faith and practice, honestly fulfill their own mission, and do as much good as they can in their own way—there is abundant room for usefulness for them all in this vast and ever-expanding field of labor—only let them disown and abhor the selfish, narrow and uncharitable spirit of sectarian exclusiveness ; let them subordinate their denominational peculiarities to the general interests of Christ's kingdom ; let them cheerfully and thankfully recognize Christ's image in all its reflections, rejoice in the conversion of every soul, no matter by whose instrumentality it is brought about, and lend a helping hand to every effort to spread the glory of Him who died for all and liveth evermore. Let our motto be : *Christianus sum: nihil Christiani a me alium puto.* Let us act on the maxim: *In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas.*

There are, indeed, differences which can never be reconciled ; of two contradictory propositions one must be false and resisted to the end. Between truth and error, between God and Belial, between Christ and anti-Christ there can be no compromise. Here is room for manly warfare, for Christian polemics—even for martyrdom, if necessary.

But there are other differences which involve no contradiction and represent only the various aspects of one and the



same truth. Such were the differences among the Apostles. Paul and James and Peter and John differed widely in their temper, their mental constitution, and their mode of viewing and stating the truths of the Gospel; and yet they were one in Christ, and their variations help to swell the harmony of inspired teaching. So most of the differences which divide the various creeds of orthodox Christendom, point to a higher unity and admit of an ultimate reconciliation in a more comprehensive conception of Christianity in its totality and completeness. We must remember that divine truth is too vast and too comprehensive for one mind or even for one denomination to be apprehended and set forth in all its fulness. We must remember that there is an important distinction between theological and religious differences. The deeper we penetrate into the intricate mysteries of theology, the more liberal and charitable we ought to become towards those who view the same truths in a different light. Such liberality is perfectly compatible with strong, positive convictions and an uncompromising attitude towards real error.

It is the noble mission of a truly evangelical catholic theology to study the lineaments of Christ's sinless physiognomy in all his disciples, to acknowledge the merits of his humblest followers, to collect the fragments of truth from every age and denomination, to unite them into a living and beautiful whole, and thus to prepare the reign of peace, when Christians of every name shall see eye to eye, and beat heart in heart, and gather in common adoration around Him who is the divine solution of all human problems, the harmony of all discords, the Alpha and Omega of theology.

#### PRESBYTERIAN REUNION.

The recent reunion of the Old and New School branches of the Presbyterian Church of the United States is one of the most remarkable and hopeful events in American Church history. It furnishes a practical evidence of the possibility not only of Christian but even of ecclesiastical and organic union, and a refutation of the slander that Protestantism tends only to division and dissolution. This reunion was no compromise between truth and error; it involved no sacrifice of principle or

honor; it was not the work of human policy or design; it cannot be traced to any individual agency; it was evidently brought about by the Holy Spirit of God, who seized the minds and hearts of ministers and laymen, made them forget the bitterness of a thirty years' theological war, and melted them together in true Christian harmony. The meeting in Philadelphia which inaugurated the movement, and the one in Pittsburg which brought it to a happy consummation, breathed a truly pentecostal spirit, and commanded the admiration of Christians of all denominations.

Presbyterianism, thus consolidated, far from becoming more sectarian, is all the more catholic and liberal towards sister churches. The success of this reunion justifies the hope of similar movements among kindred branches of the Protestant family. It is time for all unnecessary and useless divisions to pass away. Let the larger bodies which have a historic mission to fulfil, and can work better in separate organization, remain distinct, but let them at least publicly recognize each other and cultivate a spirit of Christian friendship and love.

We do not even despair of an ultimate union of evangelical Protestantism with evangelical Catholicism, although they are now further apart than ever; but this must be preceded by a universal humiliation and repentance, and by a destruction of Popery, which claims to be infallible and therefore irreformable, and holds the catholic truths in bondage, making "the word of God of none effect by the traditions of men."\* Then, but not till then, may be realized the dream of a Johannean Church of love that shall exclude all defects of the Petrine Church of authority and the Pauline Church of freedom, and melt the excellences of both into a higher unity. Out of the fiercest struggle comes the greatest victory, and out of the loudest discord the finest harmony. May God speed the universal pentecost and agape of His one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

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\* The "Old Catholic" movement now in progress in Germany and Switzerland, by breaking loose from the tyranny of Rome, may prepare the way for a better understanding between Catholicism and Protestantism. Popery has overreached itself in the late Vatican Council, and roused the conscience of the more serious and thinking portion of Romanists to a determined opposition, the results of which no one can foresee.

## THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

*Gentlemen of the Board of Directors:*

I have given you an imperfect sketch of the nature and aim of theology, as demanded by the age and country in which we live.

In the spirit of this address I expect, with the help of God, to labor in the professorship to which your confidence has called me. The branches of instruction assigned me are supplementary to other departments, which have grown to such dimensions as to require additional force for thorough cultivation. They embrace *Apologetics*, *Symbolics* and *Polemics*, *Introduction to the Holy Scriptures*, and *Theological Encyclopedia*, in connection with *Methodology* and *Bibliography*. Some of these branches are new in our Seminaries; but will no doubt soon become essential in all, as they have been long since in the older institutions of Europe.

My knowledge of the Union Seminary dates from the day of my arrival in America, twenty-seven years ago, when I became personally acquainted with the late Dr. Robinson—then the only American scholar of European reputation. Coming from the University of Berlin, in obedience to a call from the German Reformed Church, and being furnished with messages of friendship from Ritter and Neander, whom he esteemed as the greatest and best men he had ever seen, I was most cordially welcomed by Dr. Robinson and his cultivated wife to the land of my adoption, and from that time to the day of his death, I enjoyed his friendship.\*

Dr. Robinson—the first critical explorer of the Holy Land—this “fifth Gospel,”—by his teaching and invaluable contributions to Biblical Literature, shaped the scholastic character and mission of the Union Seminary. His colleague, the venerable Dr. Skinner, one of the purest, humblest, and holiest men I ever knew, who has but recently been taken from us in unbroken vigor of body and mind at the rare age of four score years, impressed upon the Seminary the stamp of his own deep-toned piety and spirituality. Their memories will ever be sacredly cherished in the Churches of America.

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\* I have given my estimate of Dr. Robinson in a biographical article in Herzog's *Encyclopaedia*, vol. xx. pp. 577-581.

Of the living, I will only say that I consider it an honor and a privilege to labor as a colleague with such Christian gentlemen and scholars as the Directors and Professors of the Union Seminary.

I like the name of the institution ; it indicates the peaceful spirit and aim of its founders at a time when the *odium theologicum* was raging through the land and rending the Church. It anticipated, as it effectively helped to bring about, the happy reunion of the two branches of Presbyterianism ; and it may prove a prophecy of other and larger union movements in the churches of Christ. The past history of the Seminary, its evangelical and Catholic spirit, its metropolitan position and advantages, point to a great and noble future. You have it in your power to make it at once, and without dispute, the first school of sacred learning on this Western Continent, whither "the course of empire takes its way," and to extend its usefulness through all Christian and heathen lands.

"Art is long; time is short."

Let us redeem our time, which is more precious than gold and silver. May we all be found faithful to our trust, and win the crown, to lay it at the feet of Him who alone, by his grace, can "work in us both to will and to do, of his good pleasure."