

in six volumes, and Eichhorn's Principles of Church Law for the Catholic and Evangelical Religious Parties in Germany, (*Grundsätzen des Kirchenrechts*, etc.). Other works on the subject are by C. M. Pfaff, J. L. Mosheim, G. L. Böhmer, A. J. Schnaubert, G. Wiese, J. Schuderoff, T. Schwartz, F. Walter, H. Stephani, K. A. Eschenmayer, W. T. Krug, J. G. Pahl, J. W. Bickell, H. C. M. Rettig.

ARTICLE VII.

THOUGHTS ON THE STATE OF THEOLOGICAL SCIENCE AND EDUCATION IN OUR COUNTRY.

Prepared by a Society of Clergymen.

A CAREFUL and repeated perusal of the *Theological Encyclopaedia and Methodology*, published in the preceding numbers of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, has drawn our attention with fresh interest to the state of theological science and education in this country; and we may be pardoned, perhaps, if we now endeavor to present a summary view of the prevailing excellences and defects of our theological systems and training. It is often asked by German divines, "Why have not the Americans some theological science? Have they no taste for any study save that of the laws of steam and of political government?" We need not be surprised that such a question is asked, especially by the Germans; so widely different is the state of theological science with us, from its state with them. Still, they insinuate quite too grave a charge against us in such a query. We have a theological science. The distinguished professor of Logic at Edinburgh has remarked, that in several respects our writers in divinity have surpassed those of England and Scotland. It is certain, too, that our theological works have exerted no little influence on the British mind; and that such men as Andrew Fuller and Robert Hall, have confessed themselves to be largely indebted to American divines. When one reflects that our national existence is but of yesterday, and that our political relations have absorbed a great share of our attention, he cannot but wonder that we have made so rapid progress in the study of divine truth. Under all

our disadvantages, we have won for ourselves an honorable distinction, in this great department of human knowledge. We have a theological science marked by some excellent characteristics, and marred, also, we will not deny, by some obvious defects. It will not be deemed ostentatious, we trust, if we endeavor to delineate some of these excellences, nor will it be thought invidious, if we dilate somewhat upon the imperfections of our theological course.

It appears to us that our theology is eminently practical in its character. It is a proverb with many of our theologians, that the theological system, which is best fitted to be preached, is on that account most entitled to be believed. Hence our bodies of divinity are living, animated; the soul of them is still eloquent. Many of them are in the form of sermons, just as they were preached for practical usefulness. Our theological writers deal little in mere theories. They care little for what is coldly abstract, or for what is simply fanciful and imaginative. Their predominant aim is rather at direct and immediate good. They fasten upon something that is tangible. They dwell on the earth, not in the air; among men, not with beings of mere ideal existence. We have indeed but a very limited class of *theologians* in the technical sense of that word; i. e. of men who devote themselves entirely to theological study, and take no part in the practical duties of the ministry. The fact that our theological writers are generally preachers also, conduces very much to the practical cast of their works. Some of the ablest of these works have been widely circulated as experimental, not less than theoretical treatises. This, it must be allowed, is a high commendation of our theology. It is an excellence, which is essential to the perfection of the science in every country. True, some evil may result from an undue attention to the immediate practical utility of all our theological speculations. The remark of Gesner is important: *Discendum quicquid occasio fert, licet non statim scias quorsum prosit. Non multum discent, qui diligenter nimis computant. Ne speres magis, futurum, ut aliena opera fias doctus, quam aliena virtute bonus.* Undoubtedly there is with us, in some cases, quite too exclusive a regard for what is of present and visible usefulness. We may see it in the class of studies which many of us pursue, and in the style of writing which many of us adopt. But we would not waive the great advantage of our system, merely because it is liable to such evils, nor even because, to some extent, it is actually marred by them. The fault which we

commit, in this particular, only shows how far that excellence has been carried from which the fault originates.

It is another excellence of our theology that it is characterized by soundness of judgment, and by native good sense. This is the distinguishing prerogative of Americans. We are a people who have but little inborn genius for what is absurd or paradoxical. We give ourselves but little time to elaborate and publish splendid air-castles on any subject, and least of all on subjects of sacred science. Our system is not one of school dialectics, nor one of adventurous surmisings, and above all, not one of poetico-philosophical reveries, "aliquid immensum, infinitumque" never understood by master or disciple. It is manly and plain dealing. It does not stop to refine a distinction nor polish a syllogism, when it can utter some convincing doctrine, or apply some sturdy truth. It is like our good Saxon tongue, which fitly ministers to it; direct, nervous, solid, racy, sober, earnest. It seeks to enlighten, convince, persuade honest and strong minds, and it abjures everything in form and style which might frustrate this aim. Discarding all unintelligible technicalities, and especially all conceits, whether of thought or language, which the people never comprehend, it becomes all things to all men. It states the great truths of Christianity, it reasons of righteousness, and judgment, so that the readers do not so much admire, as tremble. It makes a way for the truth to their hearts, not through their imagination, or their taste, but through their reason, their better judgment, their well discerning and practical common sense; the faculties of the soul most worthy to be trusted, in matters of such high concernment. We received at our country's origin, a favorable impulse to the employment of our native good sense in theological investigation; for our forefathers made an open renunciation of all prescriptive systems, and took the Bible alone for their text-book. We have been encouraged also in the same course by our circumstances, by our being so greatly destitute of books and other helps in investigation. What we have achieved, has necessarily been the result of patient original thinking.

Another excellence of our theology is, that it is thoroughly evangelical. The true position of all theological science is, at the feet of Christ. If we adopt any principle, or extend our researches into any province, which draws us from this humble seat, we wrest the science from its legitimate sphere. In all its departments and among all classes of men, it should be to the truths of Christianity, what the science of grammar is to a lan-

guage. It should inquire after the teachings of the gospel; it should classify, arrange, define, prove, defend, illustrate, not as an inventor but as a discoverer, not as principal but as a subordinate. It has no commission to give some hue of its own, to divine truth. Its office is not to modify the gospel, or to present its different elements in any other relations than those sanctioned by divine authority. Now it is the glory of our theology, that it aspires no higher than this. It may be metaphysical, rather than exegetical, but in all its forms it is, it seeks to be the mere servant of the gospel. Its spirit is entirely distinct from that of frigid rationalism, and from that of any philosophical system which overlooks the claims of the inspired word. It has but little affinity to that excessive regard for the externals of religion, which degrades the theology of Rome and Oxford, and reduces the liberal spirit of Christianity to a mere Judaizing formalism. Our systems of divinity are characterized by the evangelical element, by that religious spirit which prevents undue attention to minor and unessential peculiarities.

A consequent excellence of our theology is, its remarkable degree of correctness. It is surprising, that with so little apparatus our theologians have wrought out such good results. The main principles and modes of reasoning, which are adopted in the majority of our theological schools, are the same which are sanctioned, either in substance or in form, or in both, by the most approved theologians of the old world. It is not because we have borrowed our theology from them; it is because the sterling judgment and honest piety of our divines have led them to the truth, through mazes that have bewildered the rationalist, the mystic and the formalist. We by no means assert that all American theology is remarkable for its freedom from error, nor that all of it is characterized by an evangelical spirit, by sound thought, or by practical usefulness. We predicate these excellences only of the dominant theological system in America; the system, for example, of the Edwardses, as explained and modified by Bellamy, Hopkins and their numerous successors. We are compelled to believe that this system, faulty though it may be in some particulars, contains more of truth with less of error, than any other system which has been formed independently of this. The excellence of its practical operation is most conspicuous, where the system has been most thoroughly preached. A striking commentary on its usefulness is seen in the benevolent institutions of our land, and in the enterprising catholic spirit of our churches.

It cannot be pretended, however, that our theology is free from serious defects. No scholar can be even moderately acquainted with the systems of other countries, and especially of the Germans, without seeing these defects, and feeling their influence. It is not the prerogative of wise men to imagine that they have attained perfection in anything, least of all in the things pertaining to religion.

In the first place, we have no treatise, which can serve the purpose of an encyclopaedia, or general introduction to the science of theology; no comprehensive outline of the science, its various departments, its literature, the best method of studying it, the difficulties to be overcome, the facilities to be secured. Our young men commence the study at great disadvantage, for want of some such general view of the whole science. "The student in the outset should obtain a *conspectus*, a comprehensive and distinctive view of the field of knowledge which he is to traverse, that he may know whither to direct his course, how to occupy in the best manner those fragments of time which are not devoted to the regular studies of his class, and what amount of intellectual labor and industry it may be necessary for him to bestow on that department of study, to which he has dedicated his life."¹ But our students have no adequate aids of this nature, no book which even professes to supply the whole of this deficiency. Even the literature of theology in the English language has been but imperfectly exhibited. We have, it is true, in Bickersteth's *Christian Student*, in about eighty pages, a list of books proper for a minister's library; a still smaller list has been given by Dr. Williams in his *Christian Preacher*; and one smaller still by Dr. Porter in his *Young Preacher's Manual*. But we need a much more comprehensive view of the various works which belong to the different departments of theology. They should be properly classified and characterized; the merits of one treatise should be compared with those of another, and the prominent deficiencies of our literature should be judiciously pointed out to the student. We are pleased to see that Dr. Howe has appended to his recent *Discourse on Theological Education* a valuable introduction to the course of theological study; and a few professors in our seminaries are beginning to direct the attention of their pupils to the general outlines of the sacred science, before introducing them into the mysteries of any individual department. But all this is very far from supplying our great defect in this

¹ Dr. G. Howe, on *Theological Education*, p. 265.

particular. The little that we have in the way of introductory view, is still too fragmentary, unsystematized, and incomplete. Not having the advantage of such a general introduction as the German professor gives to his hearers, and not sensible how much they suffer for want of one, our students rush into a part of the great science, without seeing its relations to the whole. Let any one refer to the Encyclopaedia of Hagenbach, or of Niemeyer, or of Schleiermacher, simply for the purpose of contrasting the same with any and every treatise which we have of the kind, and he will be satisfied that our theological candidates would be advanced far beyond their present state, were they at first to open their eyes upon the whole field of study which they were to traverse. A clear and comprehensive map of their science would enlarge their ideas of its extent and value. It would show them, at a glance, the just proportions and relations of its several departments, and would stimulate them to examine all the subjects which come within their sphere of professional study. It would do much toward preventing them from lightly esteeming any one branch of theological investigation, and from giving to any other a disproportionate regard. It would save them from no small amount of misdirected effort. It would give unity and directness to their pursuits. But before we can secure these advantages, we must learn that lesson which is so alien to our spirit as a people, *festina lente*. We must be less impatient of useful delay, less unwilling to remain in the porch, so as to survey the temple in its symmetry and completeness, before rushing in and seizing its treasures. We must wait to know what our science is, and how it can be best studied; then may we gird ourselves for labor in some specific department of the great system. At present, many of our books and of our teachers lay too little of an interdict upon our zeal for untimely progress. If we use Knapp's Lectures as our text-book in systematic theology, we must first read fifty pages of special introduction, then carefully peruse seventy pages more upon "the Holy Scriptures as the source of our knowledge in christian theology," and afterwards we come to "the doctrine of a God." But if we follow our own excellent Dwight, the very first word we hear is upon "the existence of God;" and we have the same "short method" at every other point in our course. This fault arises chiefly, if not wholly, from the fact, that we have learned to care too little for scientific arrangement, and have chosen to plunge unguarded and unwarned *in medias res*. Capable as our teachers in theology

are, of giving us a full introductory view of their science, we trust that they will soon supply this existing deficiency.

In the second place, the science of theology with us, is not as complete as it should be. An individual theologian is often thoroughly versed in but a small part of the whole science. A single department in the study absorbs his chief attention. Our current language on this subject shows how imperfect is our view of the entire scope and range of the sacred science. The theologian, the *finished* theologian, in our nomenclature, is not one who is profoundly learned in all the different branches of divinity, in hermeneutics, exegesis, dogmatic theology, the history of doctrines, and of the church, the science of homiletics and of pastoral care; but the man who is familiar with dogmatic theology alone is called the accomplished divine. Our language has no distinctive name for theology in its complete form, in its whole range. An interpreter of the Bible, a historian of the church is not ordinarily styled by us a theologian. It may be one reason why we have no good English Encyclopaedia of theology, that we have no system of theological science so comprehensive, so complete, so well arranged, as to afford material for a symmetrical and orderly Introduction. In our prevailing view theology is but an aggregate of some few prominent doctrines, and to these we apply our direct and principal attention; by these is the mind almost wholly engrossed, while numerous important questions in reference to other doctrines lie unanswered, numerous and rich treasures of the science are scarcely noticed.

In regard to the original language of the Old Testament, for instance, a good understanding of which is so necessary to the accurate interpretation of the New, it would perhaps be thought too much to inquire, how many of our scholars are so far acquainted with the Chaldaic, Syriac, Samaritan, Arabic and Ethiopic dialects, as to be able to derive from them any valuable illustrations of the meaning of Hebrew words and phrases; but we may at least ask, how many have attended so far to the Hebrew itself as to be well imbued with its genius and spirit? How many are so familiar with it, as to be at home in its usual forms, and especially in its strangest idioms; as to have the genuine *vernacular feeling* with regard to it, the critical *sense* by which the meaning of a Hebrew phrase is instinctively detected? It has been said that this instinctive feeling of the true import of a phrase is the *bloom* of a philological education; all other attainments in

language being merely preparatory to it, but not of themselves yielding or even promising any matured fruit. Yet of what little importance is this philological feeling deemed among us, even by those who are considered eminent theologians? How few of our students young or old ever attain to it?

In the original language of the New Testament, also, are there many of our scholars who feel the distinctions between the different dialects, and enter with a ready sympathy into the Hellenisms of the Gospels and Epistles? Are there many who are able to illustrate the sacred text by pertinent references to the Septuagint, or to the Talmudical writers? And has the department of higher criticism received an adequate degree of attention from our theologians? Are they generally familiar with the history of the sacred canon? Have they inquired much when the collection of inspired books was commenced, when finished, what was the original state of these books, in what language and at what times were they at first written, how their inspiration was determined, with what degree of fidelity they have been transmitted to us, how far and by what means the text has been corrupted? Have our theologians conducted an independent examination, and formed a candid opinion with regard to the genuineness of the Books of Moses, or of the Book of Daniel, or of the latter part of Isaiah, or with regard to the contested books of the New Testament, such as the Gospel of Matthew in its present form, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Second Book of Peter? Who is ready, as the result of his own patient study, to answer the inquiries of European scholars respecting the historical character of the first chapters of Genesis, or of the entire book of Job? Is a sufficient degree of attention paid by our divines to the department of Chronology, or Sacred Geography, of Biblical Antiquities, of the history of the names, nations and tribes alluded to in the Bible, of their private life and domestic habits, of their sciences, arts, literature, and government? Are our students generally so instructed as to be able to form independent judgments concerning the philosophy or the terminology of religion; to determine for themselves the meaning of a Hebrew or Greek word, when lexicographers differ or are indefinite; or to determine the meaning of the most important English words which are used, often with great ambiguity, in our theological works; such as wisdom, decree, power, cause, miracle, law, and many others? We apprehend that our course of theological instruction is generally deficient in comprehensiveness, in

detailed and minute research through the varied departments of the science, and we believe that instead of confining our attention to a few prominent topics, and these chiefly in a single branch of theological inquiry, we ought, from the first, to explore a much wider field; we ought to scrutinize it all with a more critical eye; we ought to lay the foundation of a more complete system, and erect our superstructure in more just and symmetrical proportions. It is indeed true, that our theological training is more complete than that of the divines in the Established Church of England. One of the most eminent of their living preachers has recently declared, that he never read a single treatise on Homiletics; that he had heard of a treatise by Claude, but had never seen it. This is but one specimen of the neglect into which whole departments of theology are fallen in the English church. But the example of that church is no rule for the descendants of the Puritans.

In the third place, our theological science is not sufficiently systematic. Such departments of the study as we do cultivate, are examined with too little of rigid order. Our topics are not so scientifically arranged, not so closely interwoven with each other as they should be. We investigate certain fundamental articles earnestly and long; but when we rise from the toil, the results at which we have arrived do not stand out with distinctness before us, combined and compacted together in their natural order. Our science is too much an aggregate, rather than a system of truths. Even in that department which is called *systematic* theology, and in which we should expect the most perfect method, our topics are often illogically arranged, and, what is worse, many of them are treated as distinct and independent subjects, rather than as being intimately related to each other. In all our so called systems of divinity, for example, natural theology is held to be the basis of revealed religion, and is of course first discussed. We hold that the truths and even the inspiration of the Bible can never be proved, unless the doctrines of natural theology, have been previously established. But conceding to this department its fundamental position, claiming for it this prime importance, our theologians still suffer it to lie too much neglected. There are not many of them who are accustomed to take or to give a sufficiently comprehensive view of its real province. Its history, its present state, its value to the theological student, its sources of evidence, its true character and place in the great world of religious truths are too rarely illustrated with discrimination and

skill. Even in our published works on theology, the same defect is manifest. We have been wont to say, that Dr. Dwight's sermons on the Existence and Attributes of God are the best that we have in this department; but we cannot think them by any means satisfactory as scientific discourses. They contain, it is true, much sound and convincing argument, and they are throughout characterized by the eloquence which marks all his productions. But they omit to solve some important difficulties; they cut some knots which ought to be untied; they do not invariably proceed in a strictly logical strain; many of the results which they aim to establish might be more forcibly presented by other processes; and there is a manifest, we had almost said a painful want of that scientific finish and varied learning in them, which the importance of the subject would justify us in expecting from so valuable a teacher.

The natural consequence of this imperfect and illogical exhibition of natural theology, in its relations to the whole of sacred science, is an unfortunate degree of indefiniteness and uncertainty in the minds of our students with regard to many fundamental dogmas. In examining candidates for license we have found but few individuals who could readily prove the *unity* of God, or who were sure that a plurality of deities can be disproved by arguments drawn from nature alone. We have met with but few, on such occasions, who could promptly reply to the philosophical objections by which such arguments may be met; with but few also who could establish and vindicate the benevolence of the Deity on principles of reason; but few who had formed settled opinions and could give the reasons for their opinions, on the foundation of virtue, on the nature of the moral sense, and on other fundamental topics in this branch of theology.

This is but a single instance of the want of system in our course of theological training. At the very foundation, we fail to impress upon our science the impress of a well-digested scheme; and the looseness which we allow in the beginning does not leave us by the way. If any one will compare the syllabus of theology, as laid down in any treatise in our own language, with the syllabus which is presented in the Encyclopaedia of Niemeyer, he will be struck with the contrast between the logicalness of the German method and the irregularity of our own. It is worthy of suggestion, whether we might not improve our theological course by combining with it a thorough study of logic; whether our students might not derive from this study important facilities

for systematizing their theological acquisitions, for acquiring such a definiteness of view and such a precision of statement, as will remove the confusion which is now induced by the perusal of some valuable treatises on divinity. It is also worth a suggestion, whether the time has not arrived for a new treatise on systematic theology. May not the excellences of Knapp, Storr and Flatt, be combined with those of Hill and Dick and Dwight, and all presented with more exactness of order and statement, and more sympathy with the progress of the science, than either of these writers has exhibited. We cannot soon expect a new *Dogmatik* from Germany, which will be adapted to our wants. That of Twesten will, it is feared, never be completed, and that of Julius Müller will not be sufficiently *American* for our necessities; but there are materials enough scattered here and there for a truly logical and systematic exhibition of the science, and we hope that some of our enterprising theologians will reduce these materials to their proper shape.

In the fourth place, the science of theology with us is not sufficiently philosophical. We do not state theological truth, and explain it, and prove it, with such clear and confident reference to first principles as we might wisely exhibit. The plain dictates of reason, the decisions of our moral consciousness are too lightly esteemed. We have one immortal work which serves to show us how well a true philosophy may minister to theology, Butler's *Analogy*; but we have transfused but a modicum of its spirit into our theological instruction and study. We praise the invaluable treatise, but we do not master it, nor the method of argument and illustration which it embodies.

One cause of our deficiency in this particular may be the fact, that so far as we give any place to philosophy in our course of theological studies, we confine it too much within arbitrary limits, as though it were an independent, rather than a collateral branch of human science. We keep it in a great degree distinct from theology, instead of allowing it to pervade and permeate all our sacred researches. We give some little attention to it as philosophy, and then hand it over to oblivion, as we would chemistry or the mathematics, that we may have an eye single to distinctive theological investigation.

Another cause of our deficient philosophical training may be the fact, that with some among us there is a peculiar jealousy and dread of philosophy in religion; as though the one were an enemy and not the handmaid of the other. Such persons fear

that it will make us vain and proud. It exalts reason, they say, above faith. Our piety, they forewarn us, will be supplanted by mere knowledge. Our theologians will become ambitious, and there will be no more place among us for genuine humility. A short-sighted and timid jealousy this, but it is current among us, and by it many are deterred from those fundamental researches which they would otherwise pursue. We cannot think for a moment that such fears are well grounded, or that there is more reason to apprehend the inroads of an unchristian spirit from the prevalence of philosophy than from the neglect of it. We believe, that if our theology were more thoroughly pervaded with a truly philosophical spirit, it would be more rigidly systematic. The truths of the Bible are intimately blended with those of philosophy, and unless the latter are well understood, the former will be but imperfectly appreciated. The objections which are urged against the christian scheme, too, are often philosophical, and they cannot be thoroughly refuted except by a philosophically trained mind. Besides, every man has, and must have some philosophy of religion, secret or expressed, and unless we labor to secure the prevalence of a true system of science we shall be entangled in one which is false. It may be that philosophy is an evil, or at least that it is liable to become an evil, like fire-arms; but fire-arms being used by the enemy, and being used unskillfully by our own friends, our labor should be to promote their proper and effective use. We are aware that objections have been made to philosophical studies on the ground that they are forbidden in such passages of Scripture as Rom. 1: 21. 2 Cor. 10: 5. Coloss. 2: 8. 1 Tim. 6: 20; but in these passages a false philosophy is condemned; the apostle, than whom no man of his nation was more thoroughly versed in philosophy, or more deeply imbued with its genuine spirit, here cautions against *pretence*; against the foolish and unlearned questionings of men. This condemnation of folly is, in the same breath, the approbation of wisdom; the censure of old wives' fables, is the commendation of sound science in their stead; the forbidding of false philosophy is the sanction of the true. Socrates contended against the same philosophy falsely so called, which Paul condemned; yet he did not abjure a genuine wisdom, because it had such counterfeits. This only led him to labor the more zealously to promulgate a better system; and none of his objections to a fabulous imitation of science are inconsistent with a hearty love of a reasonable philosophy.

There is no room for doubt, that many more philosophical at-

tacks will be made on religion in our country during the half century to come, than have been made in the half century that is past; and if we neglect to prepare ourselves for these attacks, we shall be unfaithful to our obligations. True, in resorting to philosophy as a tributary to inspired truth, and drawing from its armory such weapons as we need for successful attack or effective defence, we shall encounter some deep prejudices. Our course may be stigmatized as rationalistic, and anti-christian. This we know; we know, too, that the Papists were strongly opposed to Erasmus, and to others of his time, for cultivating a certain dangerous language, called the Greek; but we think all such prejudices against any branch of real learning indicative of more folly than wisdom. Certainly our country is the very last which ought to tolerate such an antipathy to philosophical investigation. We ought rather to be preëminently a philosophical people; and our scholars should be more deeply imbued than any others with the spirit of rational science; for we are a people distinguished for activity of mind, and inquisitiveness of intellect; we are more inclined to speculate for ourselves and think on our own responsibility, than to rely on the traditions of the fathers, and to receive all things without questioning as we find them. We ought to take advantage of such a trait in our natural character. Our prospect of becoming serviceable in the literary world, our chief hope of distinguished usefulness to the cause of learning lies in this direction rather than in any other. We shall never accomplish so much in the examination of ancient records, as in the independent search for the principles of things. If we are true, therefore, either to our genius, or to our position in the world of letters, we shall begin, one and all, to drink deeper at the head-springs of philosophical truth, and we shall be especially zealous to bring this branch of human science into a more living and indissoluble connexion with the divine. We shall make our philosophy more religious, and our religion more philosophical. Our statements of theological truths, our arrangement of them, the air and costume which we give them, our modes of advocating and defending them, will all be in more exact accordance with the laws of the human mind, so as to be only the more effectually commended to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

In the fifth place, our theology is not sufficiently historical. True, we are not an historical nation; for our national existence is so recent as to sever us from past antiquity, give us little interest in it, and impart to the ages immediately preceding our own, an

undue prominence over all others. We have few ancient manuscripts, and old monuments, which can inspire the lovers of historical investigation. Still, after the exertions of Irving and Prescott in political history, we need not despair of the success of our countrymen in ecclesiastical narrative.

From the very fact that we are trying a political and a politico-ecclesiastical experiment, results a necessity of our consulting the oracles of days gone by. All theologians ought to be conversant with the past; for their science is taught in records which breathe the spirit of antiquity, which are to be illustrated from the studies of olden time, and which in fact cannot be understood without such a familiarity with ancient customs, as shall enable us to stand in the position of the inspired authors, seeing with their eyes, and hearing with their ears, speaking yet again their household words. But the historical discipline which all theologians so greatly need, is peculiarly important for us, because our circumstances tend so strongly to turn us away from it. In the perplexity and whirl of our forming period, while we are laying the foundations of a better state and a purer church than have ever yet blessed a country, we are in danger of being wholly absorbed in the present; we can commune with the past only by stemming the current of national predilections. If we yield to the infelicities of our position in this respect, we shall derive little profit from the experience and wisdom which have been laid up in store for us. It ought, therefore, to be our especial care, that we do not exclude ourselves from this copious source of knowledge.

There is one department of history which is peculiarly important for our theologians, but to which they have as yet paid less attention than they are probably destined to give in future. We refer to the history of religious doctrines. There are but few of our theological seminaries, in which this branch of theology receives its due share of consideration. The small manual of Münscher, translated by Dr. Murdock, is one of the most valuable works that has appeared in our language on this subject; while his larger treatise, and the treatises of Augusti, Bertholdt, Euperti, Baumgarten-Crusius, Lentz, Englehardt, Rösler, Lange, Wundermann, Münter, Hagenbach, and several others, are almost entirely neglected by many of our scholars. The subject which receives such prominent notice in the German universities and from German authors, is hardly recognized by some of our theologians, as an integral part of their science. We are

even destitute of a full treatise on the progress of theological opinion in our own country; of the manner in which some of our peculiar views have been originated and received. But the history of christian doctrines cannot be neglected with safety. It delivers us from a morbid fear of new theories, by showing us that there is but little under the sun which is really new and yet essentially dangerous. It delivers us, too, from dismal apprehensions in view of every new phasis of truth, by teaching us that every age has developed new forms of doctrine; and that during this process of introducing novel statements, if not rather by means of it, theology has made steady advances. It teaches us, also, to be diffident of our own opinions, for it shows us that the very same opinions have been controverted, exploded it may be, by the wise and good of other ages. It inclines us, moreover, to be catholic in our feelings toward those who differ from us; since we find that pious men have ever been on some points at variance with each other, that Owen and Baxter disputed acrimoniously, and Watts and Doddridge could not see eye to eye. Dogmatic history teaches us, also, that the advocates of heresy have inculcated much truth involved in their heresy, and that the advocates of truth have defended much error involved in their truth; that we must not judge all to be false, which is said in opposition to right doctrine, nor all to be true, which is said in opposition to error. We are predisposed in this country to know too much; we pry into many a secret thing, and have already answered many questions which no one is capable of comprehending. From a view of the speculations of our predecessors, we may learn, not indeed to cease from speculating, but to exercise the same charity for others which we wish to receive for ourselves. The history of doctrines, moreover, shows us the influence which climate, habits of life, forms of government, systems of philosophy and standards of education, have exerted upon the science of theology, and thus suggests the dangers to which ourselves are exposed. In various other ways, it gives us a clue to the right understanding of a doctrine as it has been held by the church, points out the sources of the error which may have been blended with it, and leads to a clearer exposition and an abler defence of its inherent truth. Especially may we acquire a comprehensiveness and a definiteness in our views of theological doctrine, by studying the symbolical books of different churches, by comparing, for instance, the Catechism of Luther with the Heidelberg Catechism, or by examining the works on

symbolical theology by Planck, Marheinecke, Winer, Möhler, Guericke, and others. With these views of dogmatic history, we feel constrained to express our earnest desire to see it more highly appreciated and better understood in our own country. We should rejoice to see the German science, and research in this branch of theology, at once transferred to our literature, and we especially hope that the history of Arminianism, Edwardeanism, Hopkinsianism and other systems, as they have flourished among ourselves, will not long remain unrecorded.

In the sixth place, the theology of our land is not pervaded as it should be by an aesthetical spirit. With us it is absolutely necessary that theology as a science, should be attractive, and especially that when presented in the form of sermons it should be fitted to interest the intelligent and refined among our laity. The fact that we are dependent upon the community for patronage, that we have no well endowed theological scholarships, that our literary men form so small a class, and that our institutions are mainly of a popular character, makes it indispensable that we set forth our theology in as comely and alluring garb as is consistent with its character for solidity. But the pages of some of our worthiest divines are less winning, less closely wedded to beauty and grace, than we desire to see them. Truth is presented sometimes in too stern an aspect, sometimes in an attire too homely and coarse. The style of president Edwards is not so safe a model as his sentiment; and yet we by no means approve of the attempt made by Mr. D. A. Clarke and others, to give an improved version of his writings. Let us hear our great masters speak as they may choose, rather than endeavor to make them other men than they were. The style of Dr. Hopkins, too, is about as awkward as it could well be; and that of Dr. Dwight is not always chaste and pure, though it comes much nearer than that of his predecessors to the standard which we are striving to commend. Our occasional sermons too, although written and printed for the people, are less classically elaborate and adorned than they might be without detriment to their pungency. The sword of truth would cut equally well should we polish it more, and give it a finer edge. We fear that our discourses, whether printed or preached, especially those which are intended to body forth some fundamental doctrine, are not so skilfully adapted as they might be to influence the higher classes of mind. We are too apt to present the truth to their view in jagged and unsightly masses, fresh from the quarry, rather than in forms of grace and beauty,

wrought out with a master's hand. Our sanctuaries are thereby rendered less alluring than we could wish, to the men who sway public opinion, and the word of God acts less powerfully than it might act upon those who are well qualified to turn many from the error of their ways. We believe that, in the present state of society, the cause of religion will sensibly decline, unless there be a decided improvement in the style of our pulpit address. American Christians are left to depend upon the efficiency of the preached word; there is comparatively little of other instrumentality on which we can rely. Neither the patronage of the State, nor rites and ceremonies, be they ever so venerable on account of their antiquity, will ever hold the American mind to the truth. Something more, something better, something higher we must have; and we are gratified to see, that this conviction is becoming more and more deeply impressed upon the mind of the churches. Let, then, our theology in all its departments, be more thoroughly pervaded by a true aesthetical spirit, and it will not only present a fairer form to the eyes of men, but it will obtain a deeper lodgment in their hearts.

We hope to be pardoned for dwelling so long and minutely on the various defects in our theological character, and we now proceed to inquire, what means can be adopted to raise the standard of theological science and attainment among us. We do not indeed expect to attain perfection, but we may make great advances beyond our present state, and still remain far from the perfect standard.

Among the means of aiding our progress in theological science may be mentioned, first, a strong fraternal sympathy between the patrons of its various departments. The different branches of theology, as of all other sciences, are most intimately connected. The proper cultivation of one, improves the whole; the neglect of either injures the others. It is here as in the human body, 'the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.' There is a peculiar need of this reciprocity of aid, where the science is in a depressed and languishing state. The mutual connections and dependencies of its various members must, in such a case, be carefully kept in view, and every possible advantage must be taken of the law of sympathy which belongs to the whole. In our own country, particularly, very much in regard to the state of the entire science must depend upon this cordial and active union among its several branches. For the cultivation of one facili-

tates the cultivation of another, and we need all the facilities which can be obtained for strengthening the things that are ready to die. Moreover, by interesting the community in favor of any one department, we contribute to the creation of a popular feeling, a public sentiment, in favor of all the related departments; and without a favorable public sentiment we cannot expect in this country to advance any science to its highest standard. Let all the representatives of each branch of theological study, then labor as earnestly as they can to give completeness to their favorite branch; but as each values his own, let neither be wanting in a cordial sympathy for every other. Let all join hand and heart in encouraging every new laborer that enters the great field. Let countenance, incitement, patronage, commendation, be freely given by each separate department to the whole circle of theological studies. It is not well, however common, for the didactic theologian to disparage the province of his brother who prefers the department of exegesis; representing the employment of a mere interpreter to be contracted and unscientific. It were better for the philologist not to decry the office of a systematic theologian, as too favorable to the assumptions of human reason and too apt to lead the mind away from the Bible. And why should the biblical student tell us that philosophy is vain, or the religious philosopher speak lightly of attention to texts of Scripture and to the authority of the fathers? Why should the rhetorician speak with unmitigated disgust of the awkwardness and clumsiness of those, who are so earnestly engaged in their deep researches for truth as to pay little regard to the dress in which they clothe it? Or why should those who are examining the foundations of the science, speak contemptuously of him whose office it is to beautify the superstructure? The consequence of all such jealousies, secret or expressed, must be wholly evil. Each single department comes, in this way, to have its partizan-admirers, and the admirers of each are apt to become indifferent to all the others, if not openly opposed to them. Each department, therefore, has too small a number of friends to give it an adequate support, and thus all of them languish; whereas, if the friends of theology felt themselves to be of one brotherhood, and would patronize the whole class of sacred studies, each would find his own favorite branch the gainer by this liberal policy. We know that in any community, the prosperity of the rich is the very life of the poor; and he that sows discord among the two ranks, is an enemy to both. God has not made the true

interests of one class adverse to those of the other. They stand or fall together. We know that once the principle of political economy was, "every nation is impoverished by the prosperity of every other nation;" but now the principle is, "every nation is enriched by the prosperity of all other nations." And precisely the same principle operates in the science of theology. Let any department receive a healthy and zealous patronage, and all the rest will feel the stimulus. Let the rhetoric of the pulpit be improved, and the studies of our scholars in systematic theology, and in biblical interpretation will be improved also. The same spirit which incites our preachers to "speak well," will also stimulate them to think out something which is worthy of being well spoken. If we overlook this fact, and attempt to elevate any one branch of study upon the ruins of another, we shall find at last that the foundation will not sustain the superstructure.

Again, our theology may be greatly improved by encouraging among our scholars more freedom and candor of criticism. We have long been dissatisfied with the manner in which the critical department of our literature is conducted. Our theological criticism, especially, ought to be governed by well-established and sure principles, and to breathe a spirit of the utmost candor. It ought to love the truth more than the canons or the symbols. Its reverence for the dead ought not to exceed the limits of sound reason; nor should its tenderness to the living hazard the interests of science. It ought to rise above party sympathies, above popular prejudice. But it is only a small part of our theological criticism which is regulated by these principles. We have many parties in theology, and each school is inclined to extol the writings of its own partizans, and to depreciate the productions of its opponents. There is more severity of criticism with us than with the hard-nerved disputants of Germany; but it is severity against those from whom we are separated by party lines. There is more adulation of authors in this country than in that land of authors; but it is the adulation of those who are hemmed in with us by the same sectarian limits. Like our political editors and orators, we are too much disposed to speak only well of him that is with us, only ill of him that is against us; the flattery is too fulsome, the censure too unsparing. It is rare that we find a truly dispassionate and unbiased criticism, dispensing praise and blame where it is deserved, without fear and without favor, without bitterness and without partiality. It is by no means easy to determine the exact value of a work from any review of it which

is given in some of our religious journals; so much allowance are we compelled to make for party predilections, so much severity are we called upon to mitigate, so much adulation to qualify. Now we ought to have candor enough, independence enough, enough of the liberal spirit of true learning, to rise above so narrow and baneful a policy, and to redeem the character of our national criticism from the extravagance both of flattery and of sarcasm, which has so generally been objected against us. If criticism is to hold any valuable place in subserviency to theological science, it must be more liberal, more discriminating, more moderate in its sectarian partialities, more faithful to the spirit of sound scholarship and fraternal sympathy. On this account our theological reviews ought to be made independent, in a pecuniary respect, of private patronage; they ought to be sustained by large permanent endowments, and thus raised above the necessity of submitting to the popular will at the expense of the higher interests of literature.

Still further, we might contribute much to the improvement of our theology, by a more intimate acquaintance with the writings of foreign authors. If every new language is, as was said by Charles the Fifth, a new eye to the mind, let us extend our vision as far as possible, by increasing our knowledge of different languages, especially of such as are rich in theological literature. The German candidates for the ministry are accustomed to conduct frequent exercises in the interpretation of the Bible, and in the discussion of doctrines, in the Latin tongue; and with many of them this noble tongue is as familiar as their vernacular. One of the most eminent of their theologians has declared, that he could not remember the time, when he could not speak Latin as well as German; he did not recollect the period of his learning the rudiments of that ancient language, in which he has not only written and spoken but also thought and dreamed. Until our academy, college, and university course shall be more complete than it now is, we cannot expect so great a familiarity with the Latin among ourselves; still there ought to be such a familiarity with it, as would enable our students to read with facility such writings as those of Augustine, Melancthon, Calvin, Turretin, and other continental divines of more recent date. Many of our fathers in the ministry were not wanting in such acquaintance with this great repository of theological learning, nor should we be content with anything inferior to their acknowledged proficiency.

The same commendation may we bestow upon the language

of the Germans, which embodies more theological discussion, and spreads before us the results of more varied and exact theological research than any other living tongue; and without a knowledge of which, it is impossible to discuss with comprehensiveness and thoroughness, many of our most important questions in sacred science. Such a valuable tributary to our exegetical and historical studies, cannot be wisely neglected by scholars who aim to be workmen that need not to be ashamed. A proper acquaintance with this language will be of the highest service in supplying our chief deficiencies; for the German theologians are laboring most upon those very departments of the science, which we have most neglected, and they furnish us facilities for resisting the very evils which now assume the most threatening aspect against us. It is a mere jealousy, it is a narrow and a baneful prejudice, which associates the invaluable contributions of the German mind to theological science, with mere rationalism and pantheism. These contributions are singularly diversified, and the language which contains the heresy incloses also the most effective antidote to the evil.

In giving such enlargement to the range of our theological studies, we cannot fail to give more of completeness and system to our acquisitions. In this way may we hope to render our theology somewhat less the theology of this country, and somewhat more the theology of Christendom; we may hope that our calculations will not be so exclusively for this meridian, but rather for the world, for all men, in all places. As American character is to be, we trust, a consolidated compound of the excellences which have been transported hither from other lands, so should our literature embrace within its ample sphere the excellences which may be culled from all the languages of men. Standing upon the shoulders of the giants of the old world in our political philosophy, and thus obtaining a more extensive range of observation than they enjoy, let us seek for the same high position in our theological science. Let us study the faults of transatlantic theology in order to avoid them, and its virtues in order to incorporate them with our own. We do not wish to eradicate the main peculiarities of our dominant theological system; for we believe that the stock of American theology is sound and healthy and thriving; but we wish to engraft upon it some of the choicest fruits of other climes, to retain all the goodness of the tree, and to increase its productive power.

Again, our theological science would be materially improved,

were we to introduce stricter examinations of our theological candidates. The late Dr. Nordheimer once remarked to one of the authors of this essay, that he spent sixteen hours in uninterrupted study, immediately preceding his examination for the degree of doctor in philosophy; and then without taking either respite or refreshment, submitted to the examining process. The examination of a theological licentiate in Germany is made so important, and is conducted with so much critical acumen as to stimulate the mind of the youthful scholar for a long time previous, and thus to exert a perceptible influence in raising the standard of clerical attainment. With us, however, it is not so. Even in our preparatory schools and colleges, although the examination is held up as *terrorem* as an incitement to careful study, we perceive no very great advancement in scholarship on this account. And in some of the learned professions, the candidate for preferment derives but little substantial profit from any ordeal through which he must pass, in presence of scrutinizing examiners. We must concede to the other professions the praise of exacting much more in this respect, than is required by those who are bidden to lay hands suddenly on no man. Where strictness is most needed, there is it least observed. If a student applies for admission to a theological seminary, he is examined, but almost invariably admitted. If one has finished the preparatory course, and applies for license, we are careful to examine him, too careful also to approve him. In general, no one expects, or fears that he shall be rejected, however little he may be found to know of the science in which he ought to be learned. If he fail before one association or presbytery or bishop, he flees to another. Our examinations, as at present conducted, may indeed be useful, but it is certainly not one of their chief uses, to raise the standard of theological attainment. Indeed, it may be a question, whether they have not some tendency to depress this standard; whether they do not encourage idleness; or a habit of loose and superficial study, which is in fact but a flattering species of idleness. By no means would we make our examinations so strict that men who would be really valuable members of the profession must be excluded. Still we would have them much more searching and comprehensive than they now are. We would have our young men taught to feel that something is at stake, when they come to these trials; that consequences of moment will result from the manner of their passing the ordeal. Our examinations might be so conducted as to render a thorough and critical study indispensable for sustaining

them. They might, without even the appearance of undue severity, be made a constant warning to the dilatory, a constant encouragement to the studious. They might be connected, and that most profitably, with our system of educational charities, and might thus be made a powerful stimulus to intellectual exertion. Let our eleemosynary aid be proffered to such as may need it, on their sustaining certain specified examinations, and it would become the reward of diligence and an honor to merit, instead of being, as it now too often is, a help to men who expect to be assisted through life rather than to make themselves. Our education societies ought to exert a powerful influence upon the character of their beneficiaries, and the reception of the charities of the church ought to be a mark of superior diligence and uncommon acquisitions in the recipient. In other lands the scholarships for the relief of indigent students are awarded to the most meritorious, to those who make the greatest proficiency in their appropriate studies. Should we introduce such a system of test-examinations into our land, the influence of it would by no means be confined to the earlier stages of the professional course. Men who had passed through such an ordeal would go out into the world with a higher character for sound and varied learning, and they would everywhere be more respected, as having made attainments beyond those of ordinary men. In a country of republican freedom, where almost every man who wishes a morsel of bread, can through some avenue or other find his way into the priest's office, it seems preëminently important that such as desire to perpetuate and increase the dignity of this office, should insist on merit, well proved, severely tested merit, as a condition of license to preach the gospel.

Once more, we cannot do justice to the cause of theological education among us, without more division of labor among our theological teachers. We require often of one and the same professor, that he teach hermeneutics and exegesis, sacred geography and chronology, the Hebrew and Greek languages. Another must teach natural and revealed theology, ethics and metaphysics. A third is required to teach ecclesiastical history, church government, pastoral theology, and as much more as can, by any construction, be said to belong to this class of topics. Each of these professors is sometimes required, in addition, to criticise the sermons of candidates, and to conduct other parts of the homiletical course, to preach also, and officiate as pastor of the seminary church. Now it is preposterous to suppose that one man can

treat thoroughly so extensive a class of themes. We have often heard a distinguished professor in one of our oldest colleges, lament, in the strongest terms, the injustice which both himself and his departments are compelled to suffer, because so many and so varied duties are committed to him; and yet he has charge of but three separate branches of natural science, not by any means so much as we impose upon a single teacher in our theological seminaries. He who attempts too many things, does nothing well. The mere department of pulpit-elocution, is sufficient of itself to drink up the energies of any one man; but where is this provided for as a distinct department of theological instruction? Hence it is, that a pulpit orator is seldom found among our clergymen. The principles of oratory are but little understood. They are not properly taught, nor can they be, in the present arrangements of our theological schools. But we ought to be merciful enough to the teachers of our seminaries, and politic enough for the welfare of our churches, to distribute the various departments of theology among a larger number of distinct professors. We cannot hope to carry any branch of sacred study to its attainable perfection, without more of the political economist's division of labor. In the University of Halle are eleven theological teachers; in the University of Berlin are thirteen. Some of these teachers, it is true, deliver parallel courses of lectures, but they divide among themselves, in a measure, the responsibility of the theological department of the university. In this country, the demands upon a preacher are far greater than in any other; and the means of his complete education ought to be more ample. But we find two of our theological seminaries with but one professor, each; eleven of them with but two professors; fourteen of them with but three; five of them with four; only three of them with five; and with us, five are considered a full organization. This deficiency suggests another topic which we deem of great importance.

In order to secure a higher standard of theological attainment in our land, we must have fewer theological seminaries. If we would introduce a better division of labor, we must bring more of the laborers together, where they may distribute their duties among themselves. We are aware that it accords well with our character as a people, to have many rather than few institutions of sacred learning. We consult our convenience; we look mainly at present and practical good; we are jealous of concentration, especially in corporate bodies; we are not insensible to consid-

erations of local pride ; we are impatient of all dependence on our neighbors ; we are glad, therefore, not only to have a common school, but if we may, an academy, a college, a professional seminary at our own door. Hence we have all these various institutions in great numbers ; so great that a large proportion of them do and must languish. This is especially the fact with our colleges and theological schools.

Now we are free to confess, that we are no converts to this short-sighted policy ; and we are forced to believe that its influence upon the state of theological science is highly injurious. So far as the interests of sacred learning are concerned, there is no necessity for more than six or seven seminaries for the whole Congregational and Presbyterian denominations in the United States. The different parts of our land are now brought so near each other by the facilities of communication with which we are favored, that a small number of divinity schools, properly located, would be sufficiently accessible to the various sections of our country. This limited number would accommodate all our theological candidates, in regard to distance of travel, as well as twice that number would have done twenty years since ; and to plead for a new seminary in this State, or beg for an old one in that, because it may happen to be geographically nearer some few aspirants for the ministry than one in a neighboring State, is a kind of policy that savors more of republicanism and Americanism, than of sound sense or of sober thought. An individual student may receive some advantages from the location of a seminary in his own immediate neighborhood ; but these advantages are more imaginary than real. The good, when it actually exists, is often counterbalanced by evils. And even were it always a real good, and a great one, still we should not, and could not be reconciled to that excessive multiplication of seminaries which we now lament. Just so far as we render these seminaries local and provincial in their adaptations, we fail to make them attractive to students who are free from provincial tastes, and we fail to inspire our theological candidates with that generous and liberal spirit, which they might derive from more national establishments. Our theological institutions are becoming so numerous, as to render the appropriate division of labor among their teachers absolutely impracticable. The patronage of the community is so much divided, that in some instances it appears to be wasted. The dignity of our seminaries is sometimes lost by the efforts which they feel constrained to make, for the increase

of funds and of students. Their agents are sometimes tempted to adopt the same means, which are usually considered the patent-right of medicine-venders and "travelling merchants." The newspaper puffs of theological institutions, the extravagant eulogiums on "the low price of board," and on the great facilities for self-maintenance, betoken a spirit of rivalry, and of jealousy, and of eagerness to live, which is truly heart-sickening. There is also great danger, that the standard of requisitions for license to preach will be more and more depressed, as our schools are obliged to struggle, and to underbid each other, for pupils. It is, moreover, impossible for all our existing seminaries to give an adequate support even to the few teachers whom they are enabled, on any terms, to procure; and hence are many valuable men, who ought to be wholly absorbed in their profession, obliged to act as travelling agents and as newspaper correspondents, for the purpose of eking out a subsistence which is at last altogether inferior to their necessities or their merits.

And where, meanwhile, is the cause of theological science? Where are the influences which nurture and advance it? It is not overlooked; it is in some degree promoted; but no rational observer will doubt, that were all the funds now devoted to the education of the rising clergy, concentrated upon fewer seminaries, and were all the men now employed in theological instruction, wisely distributed among a smaller number of theological schools, there would be an immense gain to sacred science, and to the efficiency of our ministers. Our feeble, mendicant institutions are in danger of imparting a sickliness to our theological character. Every seminary that is not plainly needed, is plainly a nuisance. It may do some, even much good service; but at the expense of still greater and better services, which it precludes. Its utility is local and ephemeral, but it draws off the resources of other seminaries which can be, and which ought to be of far more extensive and permanent benefit. Its life will ere long be extinct, and it will then stand as a mere brick and mortar monument of a zeal, which was not according to knowledge and which, therefore, soon died away. A small good which prevents a larger good, is often the most unmanageable of evils.

It may be objected, that were the number of our theological seminaries reduced, we should have a reduced number of theological students. But even in this case, the students who should be educated would be of more elevated character, and would

make more useful attainments, than those who are now so imperfectly provided for. It is, however, by no means certain, that the reduction of the number of our theological seminaries would diminish the number of theological candidates; for it is easy to see, that the expenses incident to a course of study might be greatly lessened, if the community would avail themselves of existing endowments rather than multiply new endowments which are not needed. The same professorships, for example, and to some extent the same buildings and libraries would supply the wants of a hundred and fifty students, which are now provided for half that number, and the true economy is to make the apparatus which is already procured, subservient to the wants of as many students as can conveniently make use of it.

It may be further objected, that different parties in our churches desire to be represented in their own seminaries. But this is the very way to perpetuate parties. If any theological scheme needs to be represented in a theological seminary, there is a better mode of securing this representation. Let the advocates of this scheme establish a professorship in some seminary that is already in existence, rather than institute a new one. Instead of two starveling schools, let them have one thoroughly furnished. If the theologians who adopt the principles of Kant, are dissatisfied with the theological instruction at an existing seminary, why should they deem it essential to be at the expense of obtaining new buildings, a new library, and an entire corps of new officers, in order to have their favorite philosophy properly taught? Why not provide for its introduction just where it must in their esteem be most needed, within the walls of those very institutions which are wedded to a different philosophical theology? Why may we not have parallel courses of instruction, in so comprehensive a science as the theological, at the same seminary? It is certainly better in many respects that opposing systems be taught at the same, than at different schools. The respective advocates of each would indulge less antipathy were they thus associated, than they will cherish if widely separated. Party spirit would become less rancorous. And the education obtained at such a seminary would be more complete, because the instructors would be more numerous, and the whole apparatus for instruction more ample.

It may also be objected, that such a reduction in the number of our seminaries would bring too many young men into one society. But this is an objection which would apply to a collegiate,

rather than to a theological course; for in the latter our students are of such a character, and have attained to so mature an age, that we might expect much good rather than evil, from the attendance of large numbers at the same institution. We might expect more of literary and religious sympathy, a higher standard of character and attainment, than we find in our narrow seminaries, which are sometimes given over to one party or to a single neighborhood, and which are therefore denied the influences of an enlarged and a healthy public sentiment.

A comparison of our literary institutions with those of the old world, will easily develop one reason why those are so generally sustained, while ours are of such stunted growth. The attention of our sparse population is distracted by one hundred and one colleges and universities, and by thirty-nine theological schools. The largest of our colleges contains fewer than four hundred and fifty students; and some of them, not more than thirty. Not one of our theological seminaries contains more than one hundred and fifty students; the great majority of them contain less than forty; and some of them, less than ten. In some of them the officers and trustees are more numerous than the students, and it appears as if the suns of the firmament were revolving around a few pale planets. Germany, on the other hand, although so much more densely peopled than the United States, is content with less than thirty universities, and in these are included the theological schools of the land. The university at Vienna contained in 1841, 2700 students; that at Berlin, 2090; that at Munich, 1300. In the same year the university at Oxford enrolled on its list of pupils 5200; that at Cambridge, 5530;¹ that at Edinburgh, 2200; that at Dublin, 1350; that at Paris, 7000. We by no means wish to recommend such immense collections of young men at our seats of learning, but we insist that our tendency is to the opposite extreme, and that by multiplying our small institutions, we render it impossible to obtain that amount of apparatus and external aid, which is essential to the advance

¹ The number of actual residents at Oxford and Cambridge was much less, however, than the number of enrolled students. The number of residents at Oxford was 2749, that at Cambridge, 2873. At Oxford were 32 professors and lecturers, 37 university officers, and 199 collegiate officers; total 268. In Cambridge were 49 professors and lecturers, 20 university officers, and 179 collegiate officers; total 248. At Berlin in 1840 were 396 theological students; at Halle 402. In 1830, Berlin had 474 theological students, and Halle 570, Bonn 406, Breslau 405, Leipsic 444, Munich 414.—See *American Quarterly Register*, Vol. XIV. pp. 412, 414. Vol. XV. pp. 330, 331.

of good letters. This suggests another topic, which although alluded to already, yet demands a more distinct consideration. We add, therefore the following remark :

Much would be gained towards elevating the standard of theological education in our land, were our theological seminaries provided with more extensive and valuable libraries than they now possess. In this view the preceding topic assumes a new importance. We have already seen, that if our seminaries were less numerous, they might be more liberally patronized than at present. The same amount of funds which make three or four poor institutions, would go far towards making a single good one. If what we now have invested in more than thirty seminaries were given to a third of that number, one great evil under which we are laboring would be partially remedied. Instead of more than a score of libraries, all meagre, some of them insufficient for the mere private use of an ordinary pastor, we might have a few libraries which would exert a favorable influence upon the clerical profession throughout the whole country. We must always remember, that the same collection of works may be needed for fifty students, which are required for treble that number; and it is in vain to hope, that the community will be sufficiently interested in *all* our seminaries to furnish them with such libraries as are demanded for the highest usefulness, and the appropriate influence of true schools of the prophets. The libraries of all our theological seminaries collectively, contain about 130,000 volumes; but it is easy to see that the same number of volumes might be far more valuable, if they were procured for a smaller number of institutions, than they now are. They might then be *selected*, whereas they are now chiefly *collected*. They might then be scientifically arranged, and each department might be thoroughly provided for, whereas at present a large part of our books are ill chosen and ill assorted. True, the members of some of our theological seminaries have access to more extensive libraries, connected with colleges or universities in their vicinity; but what are the privileges of our students in this respect, when compared with the privileges of the European scholars. The royal library at Berlin contains more than 500,000 volumes; the library at Göttingen, nearly 300,000; that at Munich, nearly 800,000; the royal library at Paris, about the same number. The theological departments of these libraries are richly supplied; and it must be borne in mind, that the theological pupil, as well as professor, needs a large number of volumes which are not distinctively re-

ligious in their character. Now the libraries at Cambridge, New Haven, New York, Andover, Bangor, Princeton, Auburn, Newton, and Cincinnati, contain together less than a quarter of the number of volumes, which are accessible to the theologian at Munich or at Paris.

The objection often meets us, it is true, that no one can ever read so many books as are collected at the European universities: but one can refer with great advantage to volumes which he need not thoroughly peruse; the various professors of an institution, can derive from its extensive library the means of vast profit to the pupils; and the collection of volumes is immense, which is sometimes necessary to supply the demands of even an individual scholar. Hundreds of treatises must sometimes be consulted on a single subject; and where the stimulus of a great library is wanting, many important themes, which might be most profitably considered, will never be discussed. It is now impossible for us to prepare in this country some literary works, which are important for our national scholarship. Some of our most erudite volumes must be written, like Robinson's *Researches*, in the vicinity of the European universities. It is not right, that our free and independent country should be so much beholden to foreign lands. In some departments, indeed, we cannot hope to possess such rich materials as the libraries of Europe contain. We cannot expect, for instance, to be furnished with such valuable ancient manuscripts as are found in those old universities. But in other departments we may be more amply supplied even than they are; and our duty to the cause of sacred learning is not done, until our present extreme deficiency in this respect is remedied. Nor in this respect alone; for the department of libraries is but a single one in which our theological schools are far too scantily provided with the means of instruction. The same train of remark may be adopted with regard to several other facilities of mental progress, for want of which the science of theology is more depressed among us than it ought to be. We have not, indeed, a single theological seminary which furnishes to its professors or students all the means of usefulness, which might well be provided in such a land as ours. The most affluent of our seminaries are obliged to withhold many of those instrumental aids, which are essential to the completeness of education.

Again, in order to improve the state of our theological science, we must receive more stimulus to literary effort from the laity than we now have. The churches must feel it to be their duty

not only to sustain, but also to enlarge the institutions of learning which they have originated. In our efforts for other lands, we must not forget our interests at home. Let our schools of science languish, and all our foreign charities must be likewise diminished. The vital connection of these schools with the interests of true piety, is too much overlooked. Every bequest of funds to endow professorships, and to enlarge libraries, is a direct stimulus to candidates for the ministry, as well as to ministers themselves, to furnish themselves the more thoroughly for their great work. It exalts the character of the clergy, and therefore of the people. It tends to diffuse through the world the virtues of our national character. At the present day, there is imperative need of incentive to high literary attainments among our pastors. The people are making rapid progress in intelligence, and the preachers are bound to advance faster and further than their hearers. Our laymen must be convinced of the importance of extensive theological learning among the clergy; and must be led to feel, that their own highest spiritual good is dependent upon the patronage which they give to the cause of sound christian literature. It does not seem impracticable, to induce our intelligent laymen to provide large clerical libraries, which shall be the property of the churches for the use of their pastors; libraries composed of standard works in all the various departments of theology, such as cannot be purchased by the ministers themselves, but such as no minister can neglect without hazard to his mental growth. Nor does it appear impossible to convince our people, that the pecuniary support of their pastors should be more liberal, less regulated by considerations of the minister's immediate, absolute wants, and more regardful of his enlarged and ultimate usefulness. As our clergy are at present sustained, they seldom have the means of procuring such libraries, as are in any degree commensurate with their necessities, and they not unfrequently pine for want of fitting intellectual sustenance. Above all, we deem it highly important, that more encouragement to study should be given to the minister by his people. He should not be invited, and almost compelled to be long absent from his books. So much pastoral labor is now exacted of him, so much preaching, so many conferences and lectures, and other similar forms of service, that he has little time for unbroken study, and when he does sit down for continuous reading, his mind is distracted by cares for even the temporal interests of his family or his friends or parishioners. Let the proper

helps and encouragements come to him from the people, and a new impulse will be given to his mind.

Our laymen, too, should feel their responsibility in regard to the theological treatises which our writers are from time to time preparing for the press. Through want of this feeling of responsibility our literature not unfrequently suffers. Works that would be of great value are not undertaken, lest their authors or publishers, should find the enterprise injurious to their interests. Even some important works that are fully prepared for the press, are withheld because there seems to be an insufficient demand for them. The Ecclesiastical History of Neander has been translated by one of our most accomplished scholars; but why is it not seized with avidity by our publishers? Why is it allowed to remain a day longer from the shelves of our booksellers? Our clergy need and desire the work; but too many of them feel unable to patronize it, and therefore do not urge its publication. Now our private church-members should regard it as their duty to take away our reproach in this particular. They should extend a spontaneous and liberal patronage to every author, who contributes his quota to the store of theological learning, and should come forward liberally to the sustaining of those enterprises, which require a greater outlay of capital than can be fully refunded by the clergy and the professed literati. They should feel it to be a christian duty, to extend the usefulness even of those treatises which are designed expressly for the learned. Their obligation to furnish their pastor with the means and the opportunity of perusing expensive and elaborate works, should be felt to be as real, if not so pressing, as their obligation to provide for him a place of residence, or any other means of physical comfort. Is not the life of the intellect more than meat?

Finally, our theological science will never be improved as we wish it to be, until it is pervaded with a more elevated religious spirit. Let it not be surmised, that the profound and varied learning which has been recommended in this essay, will be adverse to the piety of its possessors. Such learning leads the mind away from the common temptations of life, and tends to elevate the minister above those degrading sins to which the indolent and ignorant are exposed. Nor does it legitimately tend to flatter his pride. It rather inspires him with humility. His safety lies in confining himself to his appropriate duties; and of these duties, the diligent occupation of his intellect is one. His danger arises

from neglecting his proper vocation, from devoting his mind to themes of ephemeral interest, rather than to subjects of high and eternal moment. Nor will the extensive researches which we have recommended, interfere with the practical duties of his office. It will rather incite to their performance. Attention to one duty predisposes to the discharge of another. He who is faithful to the souls of his fellow-men, while he is in his study, is prepared to be faithful while he is in more intimate converse with them. He will soon learn that piety is the spring of his mental progress; that his speculations are successful, in proportion as they are regulated by holy feeling, and that without faith it is impossible either to please God, or fully to understand his character. Let our theological science cease to be animated by a religious spirit, and its declension is sure. Let it be enlivened by a deeper love of spiritual truth, and it will be necessarily more comprehensive, more thorough, more enlarged in its compass and its aims. We rejoice that so many of our theologians have been distinguished for their christian fervor; we pray that many more of them may here shine as lights in the moral world, and hereafter as stars in the kingdom of heaven. We would offer up with devout hearts the Student's Prayer which Lord Bacon has left us: "To God the Father, God the Word, God the Spirit, we pour forth most humble and hearty supplications, that He remembering the calamities of mankind and the pilgrimage of this our life in which we wear out days few and evil, would please to open to us new refreshments out of the fountains of His goodness for the alleviating of our miseries. This also we humbly and earnestly beg, that human things may not prejudice such as are divine; neither that from the unlocking of the gates of sense, and the kindling of a greater natural light, anything of incredulity or intellectual night may arise in our minds towards divine mysteries. But rather that by our mind thoroughly cleansed and purged from fancy and vanities, and yet subject, and perfectly given up to the Divine Oracles, there may be given up unto faith, the things that are faith's. Amen."