

New Brunswick, N. J.
Theological Seminary

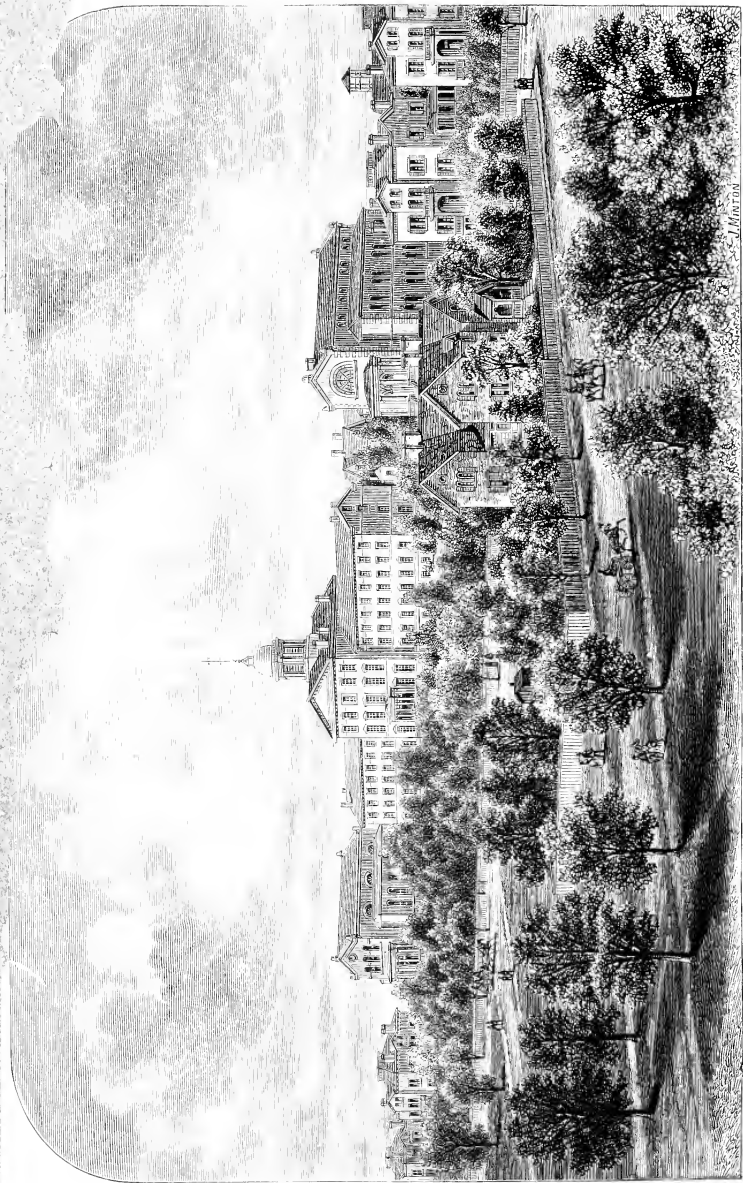
Inauguration of the
Rev. A. B. Van Zandt





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New Brunswick Theological
Seminary.
Inauguration of the Rev. A.
B. Van Zandt, D.D.





W. H. WOOD

✓
New York



INAUGURATION

OF THE

REV. A. B. VAN ZANDT, D. D.

AS PROFESSOR OF DIDACTIC AND POLEMIC THEOLOGY IN THE
SEMINARY OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA,

AT

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY.

September 24, 1872.

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NEW YORK:

BOARD OF PUBLICATION OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA,
NO. 31 VESEY STREET.

1872.

New York, October 30th, 1872

The Rev. _____

The undersigned feel it to be due to the importance of the occasion and to the interests of the entire denomination, that the exercises at the recent inauguration of a Professor of Doctrinal Theology in the Theological Seminary of our Church, including the sermon by the President of the General Synod, the charge to the Professor elect, and the inaugural address of the latter should be printed and widely distributed. For this purpose, we respectfully request a copy of your discourse on the occasion.

JAMES ANDERSON, New York
R. H. PRUYN, Albany,
GARDNER A. SAGE, New York,
SAM'L B. SCHEIFFELIN, "
P. H. BALANTINE, Newark,
JOHNSON LETSON, New Brunswick.

ALBANY, November 5th, 1872.

JAMES ANDERSON, M. D., HON. R. H. PRUYN, GARDNER A. SAGE, and others:

Gentlemen,

I cheerfully accede to your request, and will forward the manuscript of the Sermon preached at the inauguration of Prof. Van Zandt, to the Chairman of your Committee.

Very truly, yours,

J. ELMENDORF.

To JAMES ANDERSON, M. D., R. H. PRUYN, G. A. SAGE, and others:

Gentlemen,

In compliance with your request, I herewith transmit a copy of the charge delivered at the Inauguration of Prof. A. B. Van Zandt,

Yours, truly,

C. H. STITT.

KINGSTON, Nov. 12th, 1872

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, New Brunswick, N. J., Nov. 4th, 1872.

To MESSRS. ANDERSON, PRUYN, SAGE, and others:

Gentlemen,

I recognize your accustomed generosity, in proposing to publish "for distribution throughout the Church" the several discourses delivered at my Inauguration. It would, least of all, become me to decline your proposal, and I cheerfully submit a copy of my address on that occasion.

Very truly, yours,

A. B. VAN ZANDT.

ORDER OF EXERCISES.



THE services for the installation of the Rev. Dr. A. B. VAN ZANDT, as Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology in the Seminary of the Reformed Church in New Brunswick, N. J., were held in the Second Reformed Church, at 11 o'clock on Tuesday morning, September 24th.

After an anthem had been finely rendered by the choir of the church, the Rev. ABEL T. STEWART, of Holland, Mich., invoked the presence and blessing of God.

The Rev. Dr. W. H. TEN EYCK, of Astoria, L. I., read the Scriptures, which was followed by singing. Prayer was then offered by the Rev. Dr. CHARLES HODGE, the venerable Professor of Theology in Princeton Seminary, after which the 590th hymn was read by the Rev. Dr. PHILIP SCHAFF, of the Union Theological Seminary, N. Y.

The Rev. Dr. ELMENDORF, of Albany, President of General Synod, preached the sermon for the occasion, from 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17: "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*"

The Rev. CHARLES H. STITT, D. D., of Kingston, N. Y., then delivered the charge to the Professor-elect, welcoming him to his high and important office.

Upon the conclusion of the charge, the Rev. Dr. VAN CLEEF, Stated Clerk of General Synod, read the constitutional formula, to

which the Professor-elect subscribed his name in the presence of the congregation.

The Rev. Dr. CHAMBERS of the Collegiate church, New York City, then read the 468th hymn, which was sung—the congregation standing.

Dr. VAN ZANDT then delivered his inaugural address.

The exercises were closed by singing the long-metre doxology, and the benediction pronounced by Professor VAN ZANDT. The attendance upon the exercises was very good. The clergy and laity of the Church were well represented.

THE MAN OF GOD.

THE MAN OF GOD

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II *Timothy 3*: 16, 17. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

According to its appropriateness a title is an abiding power. That which by implication the apostle in the text, confers upon all true ministers of Christ, is surely the most ancient, honorable and ennobling, that can be borne by the human messengers of God. This they may not only aspire to, but in all its fulness of meaning, may legitimately appropriate in the measure of their conscious faithfulness to Him who hath called them. Employed a score and a half times in the Old Testament, and in every instance to designate a "prophet of the Lord," it seems clear that Paul—who only, of New Testament writers uses the phrase—applies it to Timothy, as to one dedicated to God in the ministry: especially, when his words in immediate connection with the text are—"I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine."

With many authoritative expositors thus understanding the apostle, let us briefly consider

I. The man of God.

My thought merely touches his *creation*, his *call* and his *commission*.

The man of God is the realized divine idea of an instrument for a specific work in the church of God. David's contemplation of the preparation of such instrument, goes back of the time of its manifestation to men. "Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect." His utterances in the connection are very obscure. Yet this is clearly his idea, that "all his members,"—the elements of his being—"all the events and influences of his life"—were written in God's book, before one of them existed.

So the plan of God with regard to every instrument of divine grace for founding and extending his kingdom, includes his creation. And such creation takes on a specific and most impressive aspect. For illustration:—in its highest conception our Bible is an organized whole, of which each Book is an *essential part*. Then the truest idea of inspiration makes each Book to have depended essentially upon the intellectual, emotional and even imaginative temperament of its inspired author "directed, controlled, made truthful and pure as became the trustworthy agent of so holy a work."

When then, the history of the kingdom of God in the world, shall be as complete as is the record of revelation, is it fanciful to anticipate, that it shall be seen that each human

instrument in the service of the church, was as demonstrably created for his specific work, as was each holy man of God through whom the Holy Ghost spoke "in old time?" Here, if anywhere the inquiry arises—what original endowments indicate "the man of God?" The question promises to be practical, if not indeed very troublesome. For the opinion is issuing from eminent and influential sources that there are too many ministers in the land, because the average preacher is not up to the intellectual standard now demanded. The cry is "give us earnest, learned, able, eloquent, live preachers." Sifting processes are suggested which shall secure the church fewer the better ministers. An arrest is to be laid upon beneficiary systems. And for consistency, of necessity, the petition taught his church by her Head must be amended so that it shall be—"Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth" *fewer but more highly gifted* "laborers into the harvest." Are we not in peril of regarding so exclusively and rewarding so lavishly mere intellectualities in the ministry, as to endanger the spiritual interests of the church and weaken her strength? Are not many sterling, Christ-like qualities overlooked or undervalued in many ministers of Christ, who are unable or unwilling to spend the time in preparation of their sermons, needed to adorn them with the charms of finished and fascinating rhetoric? Is not original, stirring *human thought*, as an object of desire in sermons, more and more supplanting the simple "truth as it is in Jesus?"

If the church will not remember and be guided by the ever conspicuous truths—constant verifications of the legend of St. Francis—that many of her heaven-approved and successful ministers have not had striking intellectual gifts: that

unpromising candidates have risen to eminence in the church and rendered her long and distinguished service—in sorrow she may be compelled to learn the meaning of the scriptures “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.” “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

We rejoice with profound gratitude, whenever God unites a splendid intellect with a loving heart and an humble, consecrated spirit and sends it forth to flash its celestial conceptions upon human minds with startling brilliancy; to melt human hearts, instrumentally, by most vivid delineations of Christ crucified; to lead enthusiastic multitudes by a radiant example “to spend and be spent” in the master’s service. We would have the responsibility fully met in every particular, which is imposed by the solemn charge “lay hands suddenly upon no man.” Yet neither the presence nor the absence of rare mental endowments, indicates conclusively “the man of God.” *God’s own call does this.*

It is not necessary here to expound the doctrine of a special call to the ministry; its scriptural authority; its definitions; the distinctions and the conditions of disposition and principles it includes. The essential thing for my purpose, is the the soul’s recognition of its own “heavenly calling.” *This must come to the spirit of the man by the Spirit of the Lord.* Apart from and below his sense of divine pardon and his resulting joy and peace in believing; below his compassion for the souls that are ready to perish and his zeal for Jesus’ glory in their salvation; below the intensest longing to “grow

in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ," to fathom heavenly mysteries and "comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge" — the conviction grows into the soul of the called one "*necessity is laid upon me.*" After the most prayerful review of all the ways in which the Lord has led him; after the most impartial weighing of his motives; after the most careful estimate of the trials, toils, self-denial, responsibilities of the sacred office; after contemplation of the possible or waiting wealth and honors and glory of this world from which it takes him — out of the depths of that disciple's soul struggles the belief — as honest as was Paul's — "*woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel.*" And they who hear this confession, so fraught with significance of divine agency, of human obligation, of temporal and eternal consequences, do well to accept the fact as a matter fundamentally between that soul and its God, and so treat it, that that other *woe*, which is for those *by whom offenses come*, fall not upon them.

Whom the great Head of the Church calls, he in his own time *commissions*.

"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." These words, interpreted by the Saviour's last charge and promise, clearly refer to all Christ's ministers to the end of time. Dr. Baier understands the expression — "the man of God" as meaning one who in the church occupies the place of God. Scarcely less exalted is the apostle's conception: "now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us." Ministers represent Christ; are to do in his kingdom, what he would do were he personally present. The

gospel message from their lips is God speaking through them: is the very wisdom of God and power of God to the salvation of those who believe. What human phrase could so declare the sublime dignity and awful solemnity with which the minister of Christ is invested?

The delineation of the poet is as true, as it may be trite—

“There stands the messenger of truth; there stands
The legate of the skies! His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders; and by him in strains as sweet
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.”

“No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called, of God, as was Aaron.” But he who *is called*, without vanity or presumption must feel and insist, that the essential quality of his commission is the principle of its divine origin and authority. This distinguishes and establishes the Christian ministry above human dispensation or ban. This clothes it with the majesty and might which his own words give—whose name is above every other name and whose is all power in heaven and earth—“I send you:” “Lo, I am with you always.”

Yet the efficiency of “the man of God,” his moral and spiritual power, are made to depend upon his character and qualifications. So we consider

II. His possible official perfection.

“That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

The high personal spirituality, which is enjoined by the text upon *every christian* as they say, who understand it as referring to *general* rather than to *official* character, is indeed the foundation of ministerial excellence. The true and successful minister must be a man of deep, experimental, consistent piety. F. Bryere declares finely what most have felt: "There are men so holy that their very character is sufficient to persuade. They appear, and the whole assembly which is to hear them, is as it were already impressed and convinced by their presence." Yet piety, however pronounced and distinguished neither constitutes nor decides one's fitness for the ministry. And perhaps the best test that he can apply, who feels himself called to the sacred office, is, whether he feels called *also* to the severe and protracted labor and self-denial, surely involved in such preparation to preach the gospel, as shall make him "thoroughly furnished unto all good works?"

"That the man of God may be perfect." The official perfection here enjoined and declared possible, corresponds with the moral perfection which the command of Christ makes obligatory upon every believer; "Be ye therefore perfect; even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." The perfection of the divine character as revealed in Jesus Christ is the believer's model of virtue, and his supreme effort and end in all the departments of his moral and spiritual life is to strive after likeness to God in purity, love, holiness.

"The disciple is not above his master; but every one that is *perfect* shall be as his master." Jesus Christ is the model "minister of sanctuary," and his ambassadors realize a pro-

gressive official perfection, as the *possible* of their endowments for work are made *actual* in his service, according to his example. He was the perfect teacher, the perfect reprovee, the perfect converter, the perfect instructor in righteousness. And these are the good works specified in the text, for the performance of which the man of God is to be thoroughly furnished. And while each work may be contemplated as distinct, yet all are related in preaching the gospel, while there is also, it seems to me, an order and advance in these offices, corresponding to the successive experiences of the subjects of ministerial effort and influence, from the darkness and deadness of sin, up to the most illumined and rapturous joys of salvation.

This leads us to notice

III. The means by which the indicated perfection is to be effected.

“That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works—all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

My purpose is not to prove the apostle's assertion concerning the inspiration of the scriptures, but to accept it with devout gratitude. We need not even notice the critical questions about “subject” and “predicate” and the like, which gather over the passage. Its clear and defensible meaning is—the sacred scripture in all its parts was divinely inspired: “inspired not merely while it was written, God breathing through the writers; but also while it is being

read, God breathing through the scriptures and the scriptures breathing him." This is the force of the word. The declaration of the text is concerning the Old Testament Scriptures and thus establishes their divinity and abiding authority; but oh, how much more important and glorious is its scope, when, as for us it does, it covers the completed volume of Revelation.

God has given us a perfect Book and by it, with his blessing, the man of God is to be made perfect for his work. God completed the Bible as he completed creation in our world, that the field of man's efforts in its mastery might have definite limits. These bounds while distinct are sublimely extended. Stretching from the glories of creation to the greater glories of the "final restitution of all things;" reaching from the lowest depth of "the blackness of darkness" to the infinite heights and the celestial radiance which consecrates from the crown of the King of kings, they embrace all the history, prophecies, precepts, revelation of mysteries, needed to demonstrate the problems of sin and salvation; to establish the eternal subordination of all the forces of evil to the redemptive and mediatorial triumphs and glory of the Son of God. Yielding its great and saving truths to the intelligent and joyful apprehension of the child, these send up ever profounder wonders of meaning to the cleared and strengthened spiritual vision, in answer to the prayer "open thou mine eyes." Enfolding a guilty world in the arms of infinite mercy, it concentrates almighty power and eternal love upon every poor sinner, who penitently trembles at its utterances. Learning finds in the holy Scriptures its simplest and most fathomless

subjects ; thought its most familiar and most limitless topics ; eloquence its tenderest and most tremendous themes ; duty its gentlest and mightiest motives ; benevolence its mildest and intensest stimulus ; faith and hope their clearest and most ennobling earnest. Rewarding every hour's study with divine knowledge, ten thousand lives were insufficient to begin the exhaustion of its wisdom.

It seems puerile to make the distinction a learned author does, "that the Scriptures are *profitable* towards *teaching* the person reading them, not the *making him a teacher.*" Surely that which *helps* (this is the meaning of the word) the man of God to know the will of God, best prepares him to declare that will. And because this comprehensively is his mission, the mastery of the Scriptures, thoroughly furnishes him for his work. But how shall the man of God become possessed of their sacred treasures, that he may pour them out abundantly for those unto whom he is sent ? "By the agency of the Theological Seminary," is the church's own practical answer. Her realization of a ministry "thoroughly furnished," under God depends upon the perfection of the organization of the schools of the prophets and the effectiveness of their administration. To make men "mighty in the Scriptures," the languages in which the great divisions of the Bible were written, the geography, the civil and religious histories of the people who spoke them, their peculiar habits, laws of thought and expression, are here so profoundly taught, that diligent students are prepared to receive their impressions of "all scripture given by inspiration of God," from the words which the Holy Ghost taught. Here, the approved and inculcated principles and methods of exegesis enable them to understand and expound divine truths. And

here, their classification according to the relations they sustain as component parts of a system, turns what would be disconnected, historical knowledge of them, into clear and broad comprehension of their connection and inter-dependence, and qualifies the preacher to advance with confidence and consistency in his work, and to impart solid and enduring instruction. And they who improve faithfully the facilities here afforded, do become thoroughly furnished unto the good works of *teaching, reproof, correcting or converting, instructing in righteousness*—each of which would furnish a theme for a separate discourse. They are prepared to marshal the truths of all the Scriptures to bear upon, pervade and perfect these works, with divine energy and authority. All that they make known concerning Jehovah—his perfections, works, government, glory; concerning man—his original character, his fall, relations, recovery, responsibility; concerning sin—its origin, nature, consequences, cure; concerning redemption—its author, bringer, applicer, its conditions, subjects, ends; concerning all the gracious benefactions, which are treasured in the divine mercy and which flow out in all heavenly consolations, hopes, earnest, realizations to all who believe. Not only the truths bearing upon these topics of eternal moment that lie upon the surface of the sacred page are enforced, but those so interwoven with the revelation of divine purposes and the fulfillment of promises, whose symbols are so intermingled with and reflected from the types and ceremonies of the earlier dispensations; whose relations are so multitudinous and varied, that the largest consecrated learning, the most patient investigation, the most fervent enthusiasm are exhausted in the search for them.

And for the true man of God there is no choice. He must declare the whole counsel of God. He must expound the whole volume of divine wisdom; not in formal and lifeless phrases, but so that his expositions shall reflect somewhat its treasures of language, its fervid eloquence, its sublime poetry, and thus captivate while they enrich unto celestial exaltation and glory the heirs of immortality, for whom he must give account. Thus "all Scripture given by inspiration of God" is translated into the characters of believers and its sublime end achieved, as these become "living epistles, known and read of all men."

The inferences from the remarks we have offered are these:

1st. The grave, invariable obligation of candidates for the ministry and of those in its active service, faithfully to improve the facilities afforded them, in thoroughly perfecting themselves for the discharge of "the good works," to which they are called.

2d. The exalted prerogatives; far reaching power, glorious possibilities, with corresponding responsibilities, of those who *teach the teachers* of the church of God.

3rd. If less manifest, yet as relevant and important is the inference, that the supreme object of instruction and study preparatory to the work of the ministry, must be the *mastery of the Scriptures*.

As we have seen, the principle of its *divine* origin and authority, distinguishes and establishes the Christian ministry. This doctrine, brethren, is to be contested with more determination than ever before. There are influences many and strong, direct and indirect, working sometimes with and sometimes

against the intention of those from whom they flow, which are actively undermining the foundations of this claim, in the conviction of Christian communities. Of these may be named the studied and persistent efforts to efface the external distinctions of dress and title and social habits and manners, which once marked so generally Christian ministers. It is true the ministry inaugurated and voluntarily co-operate in this effort. And they succeed in mingling with strangers without disclosing their office, and with their people and friends so familiarly, as to remove the distance of the position the man of God once seemed to occupy, and the restraint his presence exerted. Whether this change be desirable or not, we are not to consider; but it must be seen, that it involves the loss of an influential means of maintaining the impression upon the common mind, *of the ministry as a consecrated class by divine appointment and authority.*

Farther, because of the growing intelligence in the churches and in Christian families through Sabbath-school instruction and an abounding and captivating literature; and because of the rare scriptural acquirements which many teachers achieve by the diligent use of their multiplied helps, the superiority in Biblical and sacred knowledge, which once characterized the ministry and seemed their credential, is no longer so demonstrable. The expositions of the Sabbath-school are sometimes more fascinating and forcible than those of the pulpit. Gifted laymen, consecrating their powers to the work of Bible teaching, obtain not merely a local but a world-wide reputation, and the association of these in organizations which have grown to be National and even International, make them, without their purpose, competitors for the palm of highest usefulness.

This Christian consecration and these aggressive activities, —which are among the most cheering signs of the times,—greatly multiply lay-workers and lay-preachers, and are leading to the establishment of “lay-colleges” for their training. Of one of these we read recently, that it had five hundred students engaged in lay-preaching, visitation of the sick and poor and other kinds of religious work. While the systematic visitation and eloquent appeals of these brethren, necessarily, neither invade nor come in conflict with the prerogatives and work of the ordained ministry, yet they so resemble proper pastoral and pulpit efforts as to seem identical with them, to multitudes. With such, the very natural questions arise: What do ministers more than these? What *are* ministers more than these? And the answers which occur to them, are not always favorable to the maintenance of the special divine appointment and authority of the ministerial office.

Then, honest but misguided religious zeal, of which there is so much, when it pursues Christian work which interferes with attendance upon the regular sanctuary and social services of the church, disparages the ministry. The growing habit throughout Christendom, also of considering and magnifying the *personal traits*, rather than the *official character* of the minister; listening to the *preacher*, rather than to his *message*; criticising and estimating him according to his individual power, rather than by his fidelity to duty and his ability in its performance—obscures more and more, the general perception of the special sacredness of the ministerial office. And the final results, in short, of these influences and tendencies are settled opinions such as were recently published by a quite eminent author and preacher.—“To neither the seventy nor the twelve does Jesus grant any corporate powers.”

“No word or act of Jesus before or after his resurrection, can be fairly employed to sustain the modern artificial distinction between clergymen and lay-men.” Thus the conflict is coming. The testimony and seal of the church through centuries, to the divinity of the ministry, will not prevent the contest. Although her progress and very existence depend upon the doctrine, the final struggle for its maintenance is yet to be. And my thought is, that as the deepest conviction of the truth of the doctrine results in each “man of God” from his clear and abiding recognition of *his own call of God*; so his best defense of it will be, by a perfected official character, such as is furnished by mastery of the Scriptures. While he is to demonstrate that he has received the grace of God into his heart, as well as the truth of God into his head; that the cultivation of his spirit has kept equal pace with that of his intellect; and that his clearest apprehensions of doctrine have been received through an experience of their power, and of duties, by his own consecration to their performance,—yet must *the superiority of his knowledge of the Scriptures* compel the recognition of himself as their divinely commissioned expounder, by his people. This much churches may demand and ministers be prepared to give. No system of instruction, no ability and faithfulness of teachers can create genius and its electrifying manifestations. No longing can fetch the gift. “But if any man lack wisdom let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.” And he who through intellectual and spiritual perception of divine things, as “a steward of the mysteries of God,” can unfold those involved things of the Spirit and open those deep things of the Spirit, which, while the natural man receives them not, the spiritually enlightened hail as new elements of their spiritual life;

and can "make full proof of his ministry" in demonstrating the helpfulness of all scripture "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," goes forth to his "good works" *yet*, under the same solemn conditions the Saviour pronounced over the Seventy: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." And *to Him* the unreasonably fastidious must answer for touching harmfully his prophets.

Finally, we gratefully rejoice, that the services of this day restores the complement of teachers in our cherished Seminary. Echoing the unanimous deliverance of the General Synod, we exult with its anticipations. "The acknowledged ability, learning and weight of character which distinguish the Professor elect, the tried and faithful services of the learned and able men with whom he is to be associated, and the hope clearly held out to the Synod of the endowment of an additional Professorship, promise to give to Hertzog Hall such eminence before our own and other churches as it has never yet enjoyed."

We expect the young "men of God" who come hence to be "thoroughly furnished unto all good works:" "mighty in the Scriptures:" workmen who need not be ashamed, and who as "wise master builders," in the places which God shall appoint them, will form and fit the "living stones" into the walls of the spiritual temple, which are to compass the earth and rise, until they meet the "New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

CHARGE

OF

REV. C. H. STITT, D.D.

TO

PROF. A. B. VAN ZANT, D.D.

MY DEAR BROTHER :

I stand here in the Church's name to bid you a hearty welcome to a higher, and wider field of labor and thought: A field whose centre and circumference is God. God's thoughts are every where, in the world around and within; sparkling in the sky, blossoming on earth, throbbing in the ocean, tingling in every nerve and heart—throb of this mysterious Microcosm, "which God has fearfully and wonderfully made." But God's most precious thoughts are here, between the Bible lids;—most precious to you and me, because they come direct from God's own heart. Some of them peer out like planets of the first magnitude; others are

finer than star-dust, as countless and yet as clear-cut as the sand. It is to be your work to gather up these scattered threads of thought, wherever you can find them, arrange them and weave them into a pattern, whose beauty and symmetry shall enstamp itself on the soul. Your work lies at the root of the Gospel and the Church. Somehow you stand back of the commission "go into all the world and preach, etc.," back of the living preacher and nearer to the divine Christ that sent him.

Oh, what a fearfully responsible position: To teach the teacher and fit him for his work!

If Isaiah felt that his lips needed to be touched with fire, as he stood between the people and the glory that shook the door-posts of the temple;—How much more, you, who stand between the minister and the Lord of glory that sends him. You feel doubtless as Isaiah did when he cried, "woe! is me, etc.;" but take courage, my brother, I believe that Christ's church and Christ himself have sent you, the right man in the right place, and that he will touch your heart and lips with heavenly fire. Christ never sent a man to do his work, or fight his battles on his own charges and with his own weapons.

Though he has given you but sling and pebbles, he has given you the power and skill to wield them so as to make the giant form of error bite the dust.

Your work is the same that it has ever been—to furnish the minister of Christ with the system of gospel truths necessary to subdue the world Himself. And yet it is not precisely the same.

Yours will not be the *same system of truth* that was taught before the mode of the Divine existence was assailed and Nicene Trinitarianism arose out of the conflict;—not the same as before the living truth was buried under dead forms, and the seed-germs of the doctrine of “a standing or falling Church,” were taken out of the ruins and planted in the Reformation soil, and grew ‘till “*it shook like Lebanon* ;”—not the same system, as it was, before the semi-Pelagianism of the remonstrants began to corrupt the simplicity of the gospel, which compelled the Christian world to lift up the standards of Dort and Westminster ; nor yet is yours to be the same system that was taught before the reign of Rationalism and Neology of the nineteenth century, which by the priests of intensified, scientific analysis eliminates facts and probabilities from the hearers above and the earth beneath, only to throw suspicion on the records and Christianity and the character of its author.

It will not do to sit brooding upon the old systems that have been reared by the upheaval of errors buried centuries ago. If we do we shall go under. No, we must plant our system *above and beyond the high water mark*, where the last wave of error has spent the fury of its force. We need a *theology of the times, adapted to present exigencies and surroundings*. God is permitting the enemy to make his last desperate throw in these latter days. The old modes of attack and defence will not do. We must bring “treasures out of the word of God, both new and old.”

The grand, essential, saving truths of the word of God of which the cross is the centre, are to constitute the warp and woof of the system.

Yet I fearlessly assert there must be *progress and development* in theology.

TRUTH cannot be enlarged or diminished. Truth as it relates to God and his creatures is as eternal and unalterable as God himself. Truth relating to sin and redemption, dwelt with God before the world was, for Christ is the "*Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*"* But theology is not necessarily or strictly truth, but the human conception and expression of it; and I ask, is not that human expression *imperfect, inchoate, germinal*, and necessarily subject to the *law of growth and development*?

Truth is like the light of heaven, white and transparent. But the moment it enters a plant or flower, it is decomposed and becomes blue or green, or violet, according to the nature of the substance. And yet it is the same truth still—only it takes on its hue from the constitution of the human subject. So with God's Truth. The moment it enters the human mind and receives its subjective tinge or hue, it becomes DOGMA OR DOCTRINE. Dare we then claim INFALLIBILITY? No.—What then? Is our theology uncertain, unstable, unreliable? *God forbid!* Every conflict with error has brought out the *clear white light of God's truth.*

It was the error of Hymenas and Philetus that developed St. Paul's sublime argument for the resurrection in 1. Cor. : 15.

It was the assault on God's sovereignty in redemption that established and developed the Doctrine in strong contrast with human freedom and shut down as futile, every future

* Rev. 13: 8.

attempt at reconciliation, with the Apostle's quietus "*who art thou, oh man, that repliest against God,*"* etc.

It was bald Arianism, that brought out into white light the doctrine of the Trinity. It was Pelagian self-merit, that developed the doctrine of justification of faith, so as to command the *consensus* of the Church in all future time. Let us hold on to every form of sound words; to every truth of God, and weave them into our Theology. They are like the asbestos; they have been purified by the fire. Every one of them is dripping with martyr's blood shed in their defence; aye! dripping with the blood of the Great High Priest of our profession, in whose cross they centre and from which they radiate.

But shall we sit still and fold our arms, while other truths are dimly seen and still others perverted and denied? Who that glances at the situation can fail to see room for progress?

The prince of British essayists,† was never so unphilosophical as when he denied progress to Theological thought. If he was right when he affirmed that a Christian in the fifth century with the Bible in his hands, was on a par with a Christian of the nineteenth century, then Copernicus was on a par with Newton and Herschell, and Agassiz, and Guyot, on the same level with Sir Thomas Browne and the King of the Alchemists. I feel that I cannot dismiss this subject of a Progressive Theology without urging home a three-fold argument which enforces it as a present necessity.

It is the NECESSITY—the DEVELOPMENT, UTTERANCE and DEFENCE OF THE TRUTH.

* Rom. 9: 20.

† McAuley.

1. See the necessity for the *development* of the truth. Modern Exegesis has made no uncertain progress during the last half century. It has swept away many a trusted text out of our *Classis argumentorum* and substituted new ones in their stead, and planted trembling feet more firmly on the Rock against which sophistry and scepticism have been dashing for centuries.

But without touching on the *arcana* of Scripture, which call for exposition, let me point to the vast field of unfulfilled prophecy, which calls for a still more searching Exegesis to evolve God's hidden truth. Take for example the Apocalypse. Between the Dogmatism of Adventists who are not agreed among themselves, and the conflicting critical theories of spiritual Interpreters, what a farrago of erudition has arisen like mist to darken counsel by word without knowledge. Amid the darkness and confusion the church is yearning for something positive; some exegetical Columbus who shall cross the unexplored sea and plant his foot upon the "*terra incognita*," and lead the church into the predicted transition—triumph.

So also with History. The buried facts of History are continually coming forth from the cells of the Convent and the ruins of Egypt and Syria and Palestine, to confirm the record of the Old Testament, and the personality and the divinity of Jesus.*

2. So likewise in regard to *UTTERANCE*. There must be progress in the *statement* and *illustration* of the *truth*.

There is but little of absolute truth in the world. Termin-

* See the recently discoursed uniform inscriptions of such, confirming the Deluge of the Bible, and of Berossus.

ology and modes of expression cannot resist the inevitable law of the mutation of language. And shall these Formularies of the early Church and the Reformed Church, that have been forged by the white heat of controversy be an exception to this law ?

Surely they must be explained and qualified so as to harmonize with the analogy of Faith.

I know there is a toning down that blunts the edge of the Truth. But who does not see that a little softening of the wire-edge will make the Truth cut the more keenly ? The dry, frigid didacticism of former centuries was a skeleton strung on logical wires. We want the bones clothed with the flesh, blood and muscle of the *living truth*. The great demand of the age is TRUTH, *vitalized, incarnated by actual personal experience*. We must make the *abstract* to stand out in the *concrete*. God so taught the truth in the Levitical rites and Prophetic announcements. Jesus did it in his Parabolic utterances. He never buried the truth, but vitalized it, and fixed it in the mind of the disciple.

No man can clearly grasp a principle till he has seen it *LIVING* and breathing in real life. King William the Third, confessed to Bishop Berkley that he never believed in the doctrine of Predestination till the doctrine of a personal providence become a part of his life experience. Here lies the power of the Teacher of Theology, as well as the Preacher of the Gospel. There is no limit to this field of illustration and analogy. Nature and its millions of ramifications in God's universe are so many types of the spiritual kingdom—chords which are in harmony with God's hidden thought ; and shall

we not teach them and bring out the slumbering harmonies of Heaven?

3. So likewise must there be progress in the DEFENCE of the Truth. The enemy is indeed "coming in like a flood," and the Spirit of the Lord, through his servants, must lift up a standard against him." Philosophy and science, by new and subtler processes, are analyzing the stars, sapping and mining the earth, unpacking its surface, and denying mosaic record of the age, the unity, and the origin of the race. Beside this, the rationalism of France and Germany, of Oxford and Boston, that baptises itself with the name of Christian, by its exhaustive researches and analogies, is seeking to crush out the INSPIRATION of the Bible and turn the Gospels into the vagaries of honest enthusiasts. Men everywhere are losing their moorings and drifting about in the open sea of scepticism. The *Dry-Rot* has reached the Pulpit and its thunder-tones have been suppressed into uncertain sounds. The boldest heroes of the Pulpit who have been loudest for human rights and human reforms, have been silent, or spoken with bated breath, before this overshadowing colossus of scientific self assertion.

Do not these new modes of assault imply new defences? The old ones are crumbling or standing useless. Must we not meet the opposer squarely and dislodge him in his chosen position, opposing parallel to parallel, battery to battery, and point to point? Must we not have a Theology that will neutralize the shock of the student at the first blush of these bald inferences and assertions--and tide him over the shoals into good anchorage? It will not do to dodge the issue by crying "Avaunt," "Brocul este profani!" It won't do to decry

science, and hold up the "shield of ignorance against the arrows of light." No, we must take the drill and powder blast and dig deeper into the bowels of the earth, and prove how superficial are the dogmas of science and how God's truth in nature harmonizes with every utterance of his word. We must keep pace with true sciences, and if we cannot bridge every chasm, we can point to the rainbow-arch that surely spans it.

The Theologian of to-day is a mighty instrumentality, under God, in the fulfillment of Prophecy and in shaping the world's destiny and the church's destiny. No mortal can estimate the *tremendous* power that emanates from this chair! Dear Brother, I must magnify your office. As a student of past opinion the Theologian must point the coming preacher to the *specious imitations* of the Truth. He must tell him of the influence of the Philosophy and science of a people on their Theology; show him how much evil unsanctified learning has done, and how much more sanctified ignorance has done;—and above all point out the quicksands which underlie a broad Church and a creed which ignores all creeds.

If I have insisted on a fully developed Theology and a strengthening of *out works*, it is to make the *citadel impregnable*; it is not to develop new doctrine, but to fortify the old ones, which are dearer to us than life. Progress in the right direction not *innovation*.

When Luther and Zuinglius and Calvin let go their hold on Human Dogmas, they took a firmer hold on Christ and Him crucified.

Here is your glory and defence. Never be ashamed of the Gospel. Never lose sight of the Cross for a single mo-

ment. Lift it up on high, in all the fulness and freeness of a personal, positive, God-satisfying, God-determined Redemption, so that, like Zion's golden turrets in the sunlight, every part of your system may reflect the glory of the Sun of Righteousness.

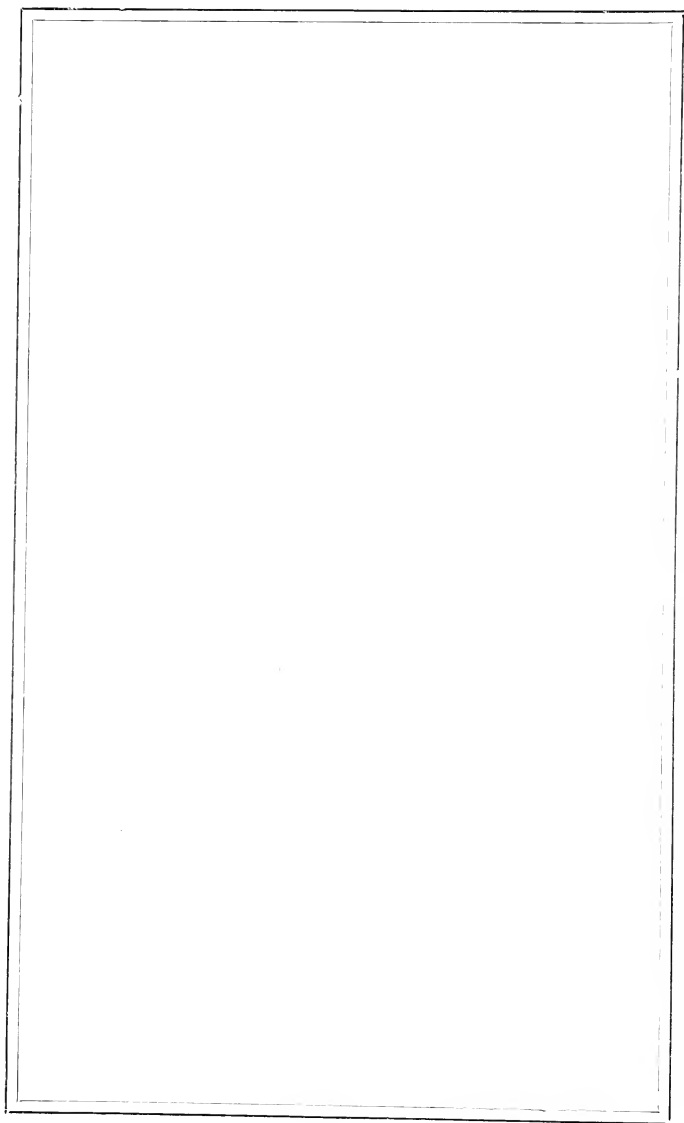
Here, my Brother, is the beginning, middle and end of your teaching and of our preaching. I look on the past and bless God for a line of the predecessors, every one of which, from the sainted Livingston to the late lamented Berg, have shown so illustiously in their love and loyalty to Jesus and his Cross. If your past record has any meaning, I know my dear brother, that you will not be a whit behind the chiefest of them.

Finally, take heed, my Brother, not only to thy Doctrine, *but to thy life*. You are the *mould* into which the *doctrine and life of the future ministry* and Church are to be cast. You are the *spark*, which, under God, shall set the train in motion and give it velocity and direction. You are to impress your principles, life, spirit, manhood, upon the coming ministry and age. Make full proof of your ministry. Get into *complete sympathy with your pupils*. Get close up to them, and let your humanity touch them at every point. Get down to the level of the minds you are dealing with. When the musician is teaching a child to sound a high note, he does not stand above the octaves and cry "higher!" No, he comes down to his pupil's tone and leads him on with his voice, till he has reached the lofty key. Get down to their level, be identified with their doubts and difficulties and you will strike a responsive chord, which will lead them up to your highest level. Creep with them and they will

walk and run with you bye and bye, and it may be out-strip you. Oh, you have a peerless example here. Jesus came down to our lowest level of darkness, doubt and death, that he might lift them up to his own light and immortality. Excelsior! Lift them up. This is eminently your mission, my Brother.

“To soar to brighter worlds and lead the way.”

Let me congratulate you in the position which you occupy to day. Be assured, Dear Brother, you have the confidence and sympathy of the Church which has called you to this high office, and the cordial co-operation of your brother professors. Shrink not from the ordeal of its labors and responsibilities—for you have the strength and presence of a personal Christ to lean upon. Your success and reward are sure. If you faithfully feed them, that feed the flock of God “when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.



INAUGURAL DISCOURSE,

BY PROFESSOR A. B. VAN ZANDT, D. D.

A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY—ITS METHOD AND PROGRESS.

THE friends of sacred learning have reason to rejoice when those to whom God has given wealth, have given to them also the spirit of enlarged and enlightened liberality. It is to men of this spirit that our Seminary is a debtor for its appointments and resources, to an extent which will perpetuate their names in honorable mention, so long as an educated ministry is counted among the blessings of the Church, and gratitude is numbered among the cardinal virtues.

It will not be deemed invidious to any of these noble benefactors, if we yield to the impulse of the present occasion, by a grateful reference to that venerable man, whose honored name has so long been identified with the benevolence of the Church, and by whose princely munificence the chair now to be filled has been so amply endowed. His enforced absence from these solemnities, by serious illness, is the one painful circumstance of this occasion. The heart of the entire Church will respond to the prayer, that he may yet long be spared to witness the fruit of his wise benefactions,

and to enjoy a present reward in, a still increasing, able, devoted and efficient ministry.

Entering upon the untried and responsible duties now before me, I find my encouragement in the assured sympathies and prayers of my brethren of the General Synod and of the Church at large—in the hearty welcome, co-operation and counsel, of the able and experienced professors, my associates in office—and in the early and earnest expressions of confidence and kindness, which have come to me from the honored president and faculty of Rutgers's College, the institution most nearly allied to our own.

To meet the requirements of the position I will need all these supports; and besides and above them all, I will need that help which comes only from God. I am the more sensible of my own deficiencies, when I recall the distinguished men who have occupied this chair, and adorned it. And my estimate of its importance and responsibility becomes well-nigh appalling, when I consider the new questions involved and new resources demanded, by the advanced condition of theological science. Then only, does my consent to assume this responsibility appear to myself as less than presumption, when I remember that truth is always stronger than error, and the God of truth is the promised guide and helper of the honest and earnest inquirer.

The usage which calls for this address has also sufficiently defined its scope, and we shall endeavor to meet the requirements of the occasion, by presenting some general intimations of the spirit and methods proper to the instruction committed to this chair.

To the department of Didactic and Polemic Theology, belongs the scientific statement of received truth, in its logical relations, together with its defence against opposing errors and heresies.

Of the truth with which it is concerned, God is the author and God is the object; and its factors are found in all those manifestations which God has made of Himself in the works of His hand, the ways of His providence, the word, His truth and the experience of His people.

The questions upon which it is exercised have respect to the existence of God, His nature and attributes, the modes of His subsistence, the final cause of creation and providence, and the relations, nature, obligations, conditions, and destinies of His intelligent creatures.

A single glance at the field of inquiry reveals its extent, as commensurate with all that man can know of his Maker, of himself, of the world in which he lives and of the future which lies beyond it. To such investigations all knowledge is subordinate, and all possible attainments are applicable.

For theology, in its broad sense, we can claim no lower place than that of queen of the sciences and the ultimate philosophy. In her broad scope theology embraces the whole circumference of truth; and from her infallible conclusions those principles are derived, which underlie all phenomena and harmonize all relations.

The method of investion in theology, is substantially the same, with that which during the last two centuries has proved so fruitful in physical science and philosophy, and it is a conviction which each new development is strengthen-

ing, that honest inquirers along these different lines of thought, will ultimately arrive at conclusions that are coincident.

“He who gave the Bible built the universe, and His voice must be heard in the utterances of both.” A true science in its final demonstrations, and a true theology in its last induction, will always harmonize with a true interpretation of the Scriptures. God cannot deny Himself, and the scientist who rightly reads His record in the starry heavens, or His footprints in the rock ribbed earth, will recognize in both the Jehovah of the Bible. There is no conflict between true science and revelation, and it is the mark of a scientist, understanding neither, to persist in proclaiming a feud. It is a weak device of the enemy, to represent an antagonism in order to create it.

And it is the part of unwisdom, for the friends of religion either to fear or to flout the discoveries of science. Her achievements are written in imperishable results, and all who love the progress of the race will bid God-speed to her well-directed research. But when tortured nature shall have yielded her last response to the interrogatories of science, there will yet remain those problems to be solved, concerning which nature is silent; and in the presence of which only revelation can take up the fallen clue, and witness to her divine origin and authority, by guiding the bewildered inquirer through the labyrinth of doubt and uncertainty to the knowledge of a personal God and Father, and the way of salvation through His grace.

But we should do injustice to theology if we claimed for its teachings no higher office than that of supplementing the

discoveries of natural science and philosophy. It is not too much to say, that all inquiry, into things material or spiritual, owes its birth and beginning to the pressure upon the human soul of those problems upon which theology is specially exercised. The questions of being, causation, responsibility and destiny, awakened less by the appeals of external nature than by the voice of God within the soul, have in every age kept alive the energy of thought, and preserved the race from the stagnation of mental and moral death. From the starting-point of these problems all the civilizations of the world have emerged, and their progress has been proportioned to the measure of truth, drawn from the depths of the interior life or from partial revelations, and formulated into religions more or less consistent or absurd. We go still farther, and assert as a historical fact, that natural science and philosophy owe to the theology of the Bible the discovery and application of that only method of inquiry which has ever proved remunerative, and by which alone they have reached their present advanced position. It is a well-known fact that those sciences which now claim the "inductive method" as peculiarly their own, were a chaos of contradictions, or a congeries of disconnected facts, until Bacon had unfolded and applied to the study of nature, that system which has immortalized his name. And it is more than a coincidence that by the, perhaps unconscious, application of that system to the study of religion, nearly a century before, Luther was emancipated and the Bible unchained. The great iconoclast who beat down the images of superstition in the temple preceded and prepared the way for that other, who smote the "idols of the tribe, the den, the market and the forum." Tyndal's translation of the English Bible pre-

ceded, by nearly a hundred years, the publication of the *Novum Organum*. And there never could have been a Bacon without the Bible.

That philosophy which is the mother of all true science is itself the product of the Reformation, and belongs to Protestant Christianity, under the influence of which it obtained recognition and has achieved all its triumphs.

Moreover, this inductive method, in its application to theology, finds the ultimate test and grandest illustration of its utility. The facts and phenomena which are the contents of natural science, are all within the contents of theology, and besides and beyond all these, there is a whole department of truth which is peculiarly its own. It is the province of science to trace and expound the fundamental laws of the physical universe; theology unfolds the uniform laws of God's moral and spiritual government. The utmost generalizations of the former reach only to relations which are natural and finite; the conclusions of the latter extend to those which are supernatural, and take hold upon the infinite and incomprehensible. And yet all the facts which it is the province of theology to collect and combine into the unity of a system, consistent and complete, are gathered within the compass of a book—*the Book*, which is itself the standard by which all conclusions must be tried. Thus the analytical method here finds its utmost scope, and its capability and conclusions are alike brought to the test of an infallible standard.

The fact just referred to marks a peculiarity in Christian theology, on account of which some have been disposed to exclude it from the circle of the sciences. Its materials are

not gathered by observation and experiment, but are given immediately by revelation. Many of its conclusions also transcend our reason, and rest alone upon the authority of the Scriptures which contain them.

But to bring out these conclusions, and arrange them in their order and coherence, requires a patience, diligence and rigid accuracy of induction equal to that which is demanded by the most searching scrutiny of nature. In both cases, the materials lie scattered in apparently the utmost disorder. Yet in both there is a unity of design, a key of harmony, and an articulation of parts, which it is the business of science to discover and of philosophy to unfold. The theologian collects his data, scattered through histories, poems, prophecies, precepts, promises, and epistles of the Bible, and from these derives his doctrines, and builds his divinity, just as the philosopher gathers his facts from the broad field of nature, scrutinizes and combines them, and builds up his science. To the inquiries of both alike, there will also be a necessary limitation in those ultimate truths beyond which finite minds cannot go. In the one case, the conviction of these truths may rest upon an induction of facts, certified by observation and experiment. In the other case, an equal certainty may be as philosophically reached by an induction of facts, certified by consciousness and revelation.

For it is a marvelous assumption which yet forms the basis of many a deceptive theory, that positive truth has no relations with the supernatural, and is to be sought for only within the possibilities of rational demonstration. Revelation itself, as a fact to be ascertained, comes within the range of demonstration, and demands it. But its divine au-

thority once conceded, and all its forms of truth are as positive as any demonstrations of physical science. Hence, when its disclosures carry us beyond the bounds of the comprehensible, we may yet rest in the conviction of an ultimate truth, equally as when science has reached its last analysis.

Thus we arrive at the true idea of a Biblical theology. It is not a system of dogmas, arbitrarily assumed, or implicitly received, and for the defence of which texts are to be gathered and marshalled, and strained and twisted, until the tortured record yields up a meaning that can be made to square with the doctrine. The cardinal principle of the Reformation, which afterwards wrought also the emancipation of philosophy, was the rejection of human authority and the right and responsibility of private judgment. In the sense originally intended by the phrase, "The Bible and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants." But in their investigations of truth, Protestants do not start even with the assumption that the Bible is true. The theologian is not bound to assume anything, except those fundamental laws of the human mind which must be admitted before reasoning can begin or discovery is possible.

From the remotest starting point of philosophy itself he may advance, step by step, with a true induction, in establishing the credibility and authority of the Scriptures, until his argument shall have gathered the force of a moral demonstration. And after he has reached that point, he will still pursue the same method of induction in ascertaining what the Scriptures do actually teach. A recognition of the divine authority in the Scriptures is no more derogatory to the exer-

cise of the human reason, in ascertaining what is taught by them, and what are the relations of truth, then a recognition of the law of gravitation is derogatory to the exercise of ingenuity and skill, in its application to the purposes of practical science. In both cases there is an ultimate truth ever before the mind, to which all its reasonings and inventions must still be held subordinate. But in both cases that ultimate truth no further restrains us than as it limits a lawless speculation, and holds it to the anchorage of fundamental principles.

But an important distinction meets us here, between the use of reason as an interpreter of Scripture, and its perversion when it is made the arbiter of truth.

A "*revelation*" must reveal something, and the claim of the Scriptures to be a divine revelation cannot be maintained unless they disclose to us what could not otherwise be known. If the human reason is able to pronounce what they ought to contain, the implication is unavoidable that reason might also have discovered their contents, and thus the necessity of a revelation is superseded, and its credibility fatally impaired. We may judge of the reasonableness of a revelation, and of the evidences by which it is accredited. We may also employ all our powers, with the aid of the highest culture, in ascertaining the contents and meaning of the record. But just in proportion as it bears an impress of the Divine hand, and is recognized as the word of God, we will expect its teachings to rise above the plane of the human understanding, and that its mysteries will transcend our finite reason. Hence any so-called "philosophy of religion" which assumes to explain the *rationale* of divine things, will always end in a denial of the distinctive doctrines of the Bible, or, what is

equivalent to a denial, such an exposition of them as eliminates all their vitality.

For reason to judge of the truth of doctrines clearly revealed is as absurd and irrational as for reason to judge of the truth of the facts revealed in nature. The office of reason, in either case, is to ascertain what *are facts*, and then to believe in them, however incomprehensible and apparently contrary to other facts or preconceived opinions they may be. Whenever it attempts more than this, reason is unreasonable.

The truth and comprehension of a fact in nature, or a doctrine in revelation, is not the province of reason, but only the ascertaining of the testimony and the determination of the evidence by which they are proved *to be facts* in nature, or doctrines of revelation.

Thus in its method, as well as in its conclusions, a true Biblical theology stands opposed, alike to the dreams of fanaticism, the superstition of Romanism, and the license of Rationalism, in all their multitudinous forms of development. The fanatic consecrates the vagaries of his own bewildered imagination, and accepting them as the direct illumination of the Spirit, is careless to ascertain the meaning of the written word. The Romanist has no further use for the reasoning faculty, after it has brought him to what he regards as an infallible Church, whose dicta are to be received, regardless alike of the contradictions of his senses, his reason, or the word of God. In opposition to both, the Rationalist exalts his own reason to the throne of judgment,

accepts it as a sufficient guide, and refuses to submit to the guidance of God, or to assent to what has all the inward and external marks of truth, because he cannot fathom the incomprehensible, or give a rational account of those deep things which God has not seen fit to explain or which lie beyond the grasp of the finite mind.

By these opposite errorists the reason is either deified or debased. But in the method which has been indicated we find its true position, as neither a sovereign nor a slave, neither all-sufficient nor hopelessly imbecile, but as that faculty, divinely given, by which we are enabled to apprehend the voice of God, when He speaks in His works or in His word.

From this brief statement of its materials and its method it is easy to infer the nature and elements of true progress in theological science. "A *progressive theology*" is one of those popular phrases which by a constant iteration, with divers and discordant meanings, or with no meaning at all, rapidly degenerate into cant. From its frequent abuse, as a convenient cover for all sorts of theological absurdities, this phrase has come to be regarded with suspicion by conservative thinkers. And yet, in its true sense, it is an apt expression of a desirable and necessary movement. The history of theology is the history of progress, nor can it be supposed that the whole field of inquiry has already been explored, and every question been subjected to so exhausting a scrutiny as to leave no ground for its revision—no possibility of a modification of results, with a nearer approximation to truth. If there is danger that speculation will become erratic, and a craving after novelties become chronic and destructive, there may be danger on the other hand, that conservatism will be-

come stagnation, and authority usurp again the place of intelligent research and responsible judgment.

With improved apparatus, consequent upon the advance of those sciences nearly related to interpretation, the sacred text becomes daily more luminous. Portions of it, long neglected, assume a new importance from a clearer insight of their meaning and connections, and a broader comprehension of the grand scope and miraculous unity of the whole. As the relations of truth are better understood, its doctrines arrange themselves in logical order, and out of the seeming chaos of disjointed dogmas grows up a coherent system, symmetrical and complete.

For what has already been attained in this direction we owe more than can be expressed to the pious labors and eminent learning of the past. And it is the height of empiricism to ignore its results, or contemptuously discard its established conclusions. There is a manifest divine providence which has guided the Church through all the great epochs of her theological development. And that same God who gave the written word, in successive accretions to the canon, as His purposes were unfolded in the history of redemption, until He had closed the Book and sealed it with His anathema, in like manner has led on the bride of heaven to the understanding of her charter, as the exigencies of her condition demanded the support and consolation of its truths. And in like manner He will lead her still, with ever-increasing apprehension of its significance and value, until the light of the written word shall give place to the light of His presence who "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Thus there is a development of doctrine, a "progressive theology," but it is wide as the poles from that modern theory which is the convenient invention and favorite refuge of errorists. It is one thing for the Church, under the discipline of Divine Providence, and urged by her own needs, to be brought to a more earnest and thorough research into the meaning of Scripture, and into a deeper insight and more exact definition of its doctrines; and it is another and very different thing, under pretext of "development," to project these doctrines on to conclusions outside of the record, overlaying the truth with human additions, and making it void with doubtful speculations.

We cannot abandon the fundamental principle that the Scriptures contain all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and are always the ultimate and infallible standard, without casting ourselves adrift upon a shoreless sea, to be driven by every wind of doctrine, through the rayless gloom of never-ending uncertainty. All truth is in the Bible, but is there like treasures hid in a field, and that field is so vast, and those treasures so abundant, that the research of all ages, so far from exhausting, will only develop new stores of wealth as new exigencies arise.

Thus there is, and ever must be, "*progress*" in theology. But it is not by the accretions of new truth which the mind is able to evolve from the germs of revelation, but by that clearer apprehension of the relations, significance and power of truth already given, by which the Church, under the guidance of the providence and Spirit of God, comes ever to a deeper consciousness of the exhaustless treasure she possesses in the written word.

We enter this field, then, not as explorers of a territory before unknown, where discovery waits upon adventure. It is not by the boldness of speculation, but by the labor of research and the illuminations of the Spirit, that results are here to be reached. The Bible was written for all ages, and the truth which it reveals is always the same, though not always equally apprehended. Preceding generations, according to the measure of their wants, have enjoyed of its fullness; and our advantage lies in being availed of their labor; so that, letting go nothing of the past that bears the evident impress of truth, and has been wrought out in the experience and conflicts of the Church, we also may unfold new aspects of that truth, as we encounter the new questions of our day. It is within the limitations of this view alone that we can apprehend or justify the notion of a progressive theology.

On the other hand, it is this view also which justifies the high estimation and continued use of those creeds and confessions, those symbols and systems of doctrine, in which the Church, from the earliest days, has sought to express and embody her faith.

Systems of theology, whether in the condensed brevity of a creed, the more ample statement of a confession, or the full and formal elaboration of a body of divinity, are in their nature synthetical, and it is still an open question with many how far their adoption and use in investigation is favorable to the progress of sound theology. It may be said that if all our theology is in the Bible, then the Bible should be our text book, and all theological investigation should be strictly exegetical. It is also urged that the principles of the inductive method require that, without any accepted hypothesis, or

prearranged system, the student should take up the scattered revelations of Scripture, as so many phenomena to be classified, generalized, and brought to a true induction, just as the naturalist uses physical data in framing a sound hypothesis.

Further, it is objected that the uses of these accredited systems give them an undue authority, restricting the freedom of thought, and tending to a forceful construction which will shape every declaration of scripture to the exigencies of the system. But admitting that indolence may abuse, by accepting without verification the results which industry has gathered, yet it must be remembered that theology is a science, and not merely an interpretation.

Exegesis gives us the facts, in separate propositions, but there is a logical relation between them to be traced, and there is a discoverable unity and harmony of the whole, necessary to the understanding and appreciation of its parts.

Moreover, no science can make progress, without profiting by the generalizations of the past. The end of all induction is the establishment of a sound hypothesis, which shall explain the relation of facts. But all the results of the most careful analysis must perish, with those who have achieved them, unless they are crystallized into those formulas and statements which endure, and may be easily verified. Life is too short for every man to work out for himself a science *de novo*—too short for any man to be left to the hazard of running through the whole cycle of errors and heresies before he arrives at the truth.

Still more, it must be remembered that the Church's understanding of her own faith has, under God, been evolved by the progress of her own life. As the individual believer

gains larger and clearer views of truth by his own experience of its power, so the history of the Church is to her an experience, and her symbols and formulas are the monuments of those struggles and conflicts which have clarified her apprehension and intensified her love of the truth. This process may go on, but it cannot be repeated, and in the records of it we discern the manifest guidance of God in settling "the analogy of faith," only less distinctly than in the written word. At any rate, we may be more confident that we are following the leadership of the Great Shepherd, when we can clearly trace "the footsteps of the flock."

We have no fear of an undue bias of mind from the free use of those accredited systems in which the sum of our doctrines is clearly set forth. The notion is chimerical and absurd that the mind must be, or can be emptied of all preconceptions, and brought to a condition *in equilibrio* in order to an impartial study and interpretation of Scripture. For though emptied it may be of all correct hypothesis, yet teeming it will be with crude and erroneous views, which only the discipline of study, and the efficacy of grace can extirpate. Impartiality of mind and a true induction are in no degree secured by the absence of a correct hypothesis; for there is a partiality of self-sufficiency and intellectual pride, a partiality of ignorance and innovation, no less dangerous than the predilections of a creed.

Whilst, therefore, always ready to postpone what is human to that which is divine, and acknowledging no authority of standards which are not verified by Scripture, yet I count it a happiness, to have marked out for me a system so unexceptionable and complete, as that which is contained in

those venerable formulas to which it has been my duty, as it has also been my pleasure, to subscribe in your presence this day. Without any mental reservations or misgivings, I accept the time-honored standards of my Church, with the full conviction that the doctrines which they contain are the clear, consistent, catholic, and scriptural exposition of "the faith once delivered to the saints."

In obedience to the call of the church, I now enter upon the work of teaching and defending those doctrines, as a theological professor. And they are no idle words, when I say that I enter upon this work with trembling solicitude. When first the hands of the Presbytery were laid upon my head in the solemnities of an ordination service, I felt that no heavier weight of responsibility could be laid upon any man, than that which is involved in the active work of the ministry. For thirty years I have constantly borne that burden, finding it grow heavier every day, and yet rejoicing in the blessed privilege of bearing it still. But in my apprehension of the obligations of the office to which I am now called in the solemnities of this hour, there has been devolved upon me a responsibility immeasurably greater. In the trust thus conferred, the interests, not of individuals or of a single congregation, but of the whole Church, are involved. And nothing less than the soundness and efficiency of her future ministry depends, under God, upon the perilous issue. The impulse of conscious weakness is to shrink from such a burden. But the conviction of duty still binds it upon the conscience, whilst faithgathering confidence from the past, is trustful and obedient, in the remembrance of that strength which is made perfect in our weakness.

Immediate results that shall meet the desires and gladden

the heart of the Church are more than I can promise. The issue is with God, and without the advantage of a name or reputation in this new field of labor, I must cast myself upon His grace, and upon the forbearance of Church. To my brethren in the ministry, and especially to those by whose influence and suffrages this responsibility has been laid upon me, I have a right to appeal. And by all their personal regards, by their attachment to this venerable institution, the prosperity of which is identified with that of the Church to which we belong, and by their concern for the honor of Christ, I appeal to them this day; and I utter the earnest and utmost desire of a burdened heart, in those touching and comprehensive words of an Apostle:

“ Brethren, pray for us ! ”



NOTICE OF MR. JAMES SUYDAM.

MR. SUYDAM was born on Long Island toward the close of the last century, but at an early period removed to this city, where he engaged in mercantile pursuits. He brought with him habits of industry, frugality and integrity, which marked his entire career as a merchant, and procured under God's blessing the prosperity which he enjoyed. He passed unscathed through the financial storm of 1837; but the revulsions which he then saw and the distress he experienced on account of others' embarrassments, prematurely bleached his hair, and induced him while yet in the vigorous prime of his years, to withdraw from the responsibilities of active trade.

The leisure thus acquired was spent not only in the care of the competence he had achieved, but also in the discharge of domestic and social duties, in the service of public institutions, in official labors for the church, and in the exercise of a very wide and intelligent charity. Determined to forgo all extravagance and parade, he yet dispensed a graceful hospitality, and while in the work was not of it nor conformed to it. He held an open hand on every occasion when free-will offerings were called for. It was his pleasure to do good by stealth, to send benefactions where their source would not be known, and the various almoners of his bounty were cautioned to sound no trumpet before them.

His liberality grew with his years, and was often marked by a peculiar foresight and largeness of heart, as for example in the case of the reserve fund given at an early period to the Board of Foreign Missions, to serve as a basis for loans in case of extremity, and in his special gifts to the American Bible Society, at times when circumstances demanded extraordinary efforts from its friends.

But in the closing period of his life his benefactions assumed very large proportions, such as the liberal endowment of a Professorship of Didactic and Polemic Theology in the Seminary at New Brunswick, N. J., and the erection of a stately building for the use and advantage of students for the ministry. In these gifts he wronged no one, nor disappointed any reasonable expectation on the part of his kindred or friends, but according to his own princely disposition, made provision for the wants of the church, for the present generation and for many that are to come. But what he was is more than what he did. He was greater than any or all of his gifts. His simplicity, integrity, purity, piety, and zeal, his devotion to God and love for man, his unblemished walk and stainless name are a richer legacy than endowments or estate, and the church has reason to rejoice that competent hands are preparing a suitable memorial of a life at once so consistent and so useful.

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