

ARTICLE II.

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION.

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DIVINITY SCHOOL.

AMONG all denominations in America theology is studied chiefly in special institutions founded for this single and express purpose. Abroad, except among the Roman Catholics, it is for the most part pursued in the same universities and under the same general arrangements with other professional studies. The distinctive theological seminary or divinity school among Protestants is essentially an American arrangement, although since its introduction here it has also been adopted to a limited extent on the other side of the ocean. It has obvious advantages and disadvantages, but of these it is not proposed to speak beyond calling attention in passing to a single point. Abroad, the future lawyer, chemist, philologist, and theologian are members of the same academic fraternity, and may, if they please, be attendants together on more than one of the same courses of lectures. With us, the theological student is entirely isolated throughout his course. This necessarily tends to withdraw him from his fellows, to separate him in his habits of thought from them, and make of him a *specialist*. This tendency may be overcome, but it needs to be recognized. If after all our training, young men enter the ministry without intellectual sympathy with those among whom, and upon whom, they are to exercise their vocation, they are placed at the outset at a serious disadvantage. The broadest sympathies and the most complete knowledge of the methods and of the preoccupations of other minds are the essential qualification of the well-furnished minister of the gospel. If our system of preparing him for his work is opposed to the attainment

of these humanities, or even ignores them, it is in so far defective. In a very different sense from that of the heathen poet it is necessary for the clergyman to feel,

“Homo sum : nil humanum a me alienum puto.”

The means of overcoming the naturally isolating tendency of our special schools of theology is undoubtedly chiefly in the hands of the students themselves ; but they are not apt to be aware of the danger. It needs to be distinctly pointed out to them by their teachers, and their own intelligence awakened to providing the remedy.

One other general consideration demands a word before entering upon our proper subject. Young men in the theological, as in every other professional, school are going through the latest stages of preparation for their work in life. They need, therefore, to be treated as men, rather than as children. They need to be more and more emancipated from the condition of pupilage, and introduced to that of independent manhood. This is generally recognized in the relaxation of discipline, the withdrawal of all marking of recitations, and the like ; but it may be doubted whether the importance is sufficiently recognized of accustoming them to think for themselves and preparing them to take their position in the world at the end of their course as independent entities, nay, responsible leaders of human thought. The young men of America are generally quite ready enough to appreciate their own advancement and the importance of their position ; they are ~~not~~ not so ready laboriously and conscientiously to prepare themselves for the responsibilities of that position. If they are allowed to complete this last stage of their preparatory course in an attitude of too great mental dependence, they are likely to continue such dependence through life, and to become partisan and one-sided. Independent and manly thought and action demands culture. At this last and most critical stage of preparation this culture is to be either checked and thus, perhaps, finally dwarfed, or to be encouraged and cherished, and thus prepared for a life-long growth and development.

The purpose of the theological school or seminary in its broadest statement is to fit men for the ministry. Such a school must afford opportunities for, and, in fact, must put before all other things, spiritual training, growth in the graces of the Holy Spirit, and the increasing conformity of the character and life to the example of Christ. But this fundamental and most necessary part of the training of the Christian minister does not come within the scope of the present Article, and it must, therefore, be passed by with the single remark that it ought to pervade the whole of the preparation. That no part of a theological course can be successfully accomplished without the spirit of prayer in both the teacher and the pupil is the necessary result of the organic law of Christianity. The fellowship of Christian faith and life establishes a peculiar bond between teacher and pupil in the divinity school, and the constant recollection of this fellowship should create the deepest and closest sympathy, and give to the pursuit of theology a peculiar interest and charm.

We are also constrained to pass over in these pages the element of practical work. In training men for the ministry this would be not less unwisely omitted than clinics and hospital practice in the study of medicine, or moot courts and the work of the attorney's office in training for the law. It is not, then, to be omitted or overlooked; but it should not be allowed to interfere with the intellectual training. It need not do so, and, under proper regulation, it practically does not. The activity of the ordinary layman in special work for Christ's sake does not hinder his attention to his ordinary affairs. So correspondingly, the activity of the theological student, on a more distinctly professional plane, and having a direct bearing on his own preparation for future labor, need not in any way hinder his present main occupation of intellectual preparation for the great work soon to be committed to his charge.

We are now ready to consider the principal subject proposed: The best Methods of Intellectual Training for the Ministry. Three different classes of men require to be con-

sidered: (1) Such as come to their theological studies with imperfect preparation; (2) such as, from the character of their intellectual powers, or their temperament, or from other causes, can never be expected to become eminent scholars; (3) the comparatively few who are hereafter to furnish the church and the world with scholars in the various departments of theology. With all these classes, in varying proportion, all theological institutions are required to deal. All of them are important, and the necessities of each must be fairly met in any satisfactory system of theological training.

The first class necessarily includes within itself every variety of defective preparation, from that which scarcely falls short of the normal standard to the minimum on which it is possible to build up any passable amount of professional education. There must, therefore, be much regard to individual circumstances and individual possibilities. It may be assumed that the normal standard of preparation, which is usually a college course or its equivalent, embraces just that amount of preparatory study at the close of which the student can most advantageously enter upon theological pursuits. Yet this standard itself is vague, not only in consequence of the great differences in the acquirements of the different graduates from the same college, but also of the great differences in the colleges themselves; and, at best, it can only be considered as a standard adopted in view of the exigencies of life, since a far higher one would form a still better basis for the study of theology. By those imperfectly prepared, then, we mean those who have failed to acquire that amount of education demanded by any respectable college as absolutely necessary to graduation. A higher standard than this will probably be found impracticable until our college standard is raised, and as this is done the requirements for entering our theological schools will elevate themselves without especial care.

Meantime, what is to be done with those who fall below this? Obviously, if placed in the same classes with those better prepared the character of the instruction in several

departments must be lowered to meet their capacities and attainments, and thus not only do they themselves receive an inferior preparation for their work in life, but they also hinder and lower that of the others. This is plainly both unjust and unwise ; yet it is believed to be the most common of all hinderances to the efficiency of most of our theological institutions. It has been a still more crying evil in other professional schools, and has come to be so severely felt in them that a movement has already been inaugurated for its removal. From the nature of theology, however, the disturbance thus arising is greater here than elsewhere. What is the remedy? In the first place, of course, proper preparation should be insisted upon in all cases where it is practicable. A year or two of delay in entering upon the ministry is of very little consequence in comparison with a man's being properly furnished for his work in all the subsequent years of that ministry. Life, indeed, may be cut short at any time, but plans for that life can only wisely be laid in view of its average duration. But there are not infrequent cases in which, from advanced age or from other causes, the requirement of such preparation would be equivalent to the refusal of a theological education altogether, while yet the men in question seem well adapted to useful work in many parts of the Lord's vineyard. They must, then, be educated as well as circumstances allow, and yet they cannot be advantageously classed entirely with those who are better prepared at the start. The evident solution of the difficulty is in a special course, or courses, adapted to their wants. These need not be wholly different from the regular course, for there are several of the departments which may be studied by any intelligent man without especial preparation — not, perhaps, as advantageously, but, at least, without hindering the progress of his fellow-students. In other departments, however, there should be distinct and separate instruction. It is idle to say that they may as well attend the same lectures and other exercises with the rest of the students, and get from them such good as they can. A con

scientific instructor cannot fail to seek to make himself understood, and to have his teaching benefit all his hearers; and if some of these require more elementary instruction, he must consume the time and patience of the more advanced in giving it; and if some could make more rapid progress they must be held back for the sake of their companions. The experience of all teachers bears uniform testimony to the hinderance to the whole class of even a few more imperfectly prepared for the study in which they are engaged. They are a clog which, in justice to the others, ought not to be tolerated. Most instructors would far rather undertake the additional labor involved in special courses for them than be obliged to carry them along with the others. In part, excellent provision might be made for their instruction by the establishment of fellowships, which will be spoken of presently. If neither of these arrangements suffice, then either additional teachers should be provided, or else such students should be sent to other institutions where they can be properly cared for. If there could be any doubt on this point, it would only be necessary to look at our common schools, and compare the advantages of the country "district school" with those of the graded schools in our larger towns and cities.

The second class will always constitute the great majority of our students — those who come in their preparation within the somewhat vague limits of the normal standard, but who yet, from their tastes or their capacities, or both, can never be expected to become eminent scholars. This may not be the most interesting class, but our theological courses must necessarily be arranged mainly to meet their wants, and those who rise above, as well as those who fall below them, be provided for by special adaptations. They are to constitute the great mass of the active parochial clergy, and the tone of Christian teaching throughout the land must depend largely upon the impress made upon their minds. It is, therefore, all important to give them a sufficient knowledge of all departments of theology to enable them to pursue their

future work advantageously and respectably, to guard them from errors, and to furnish them with a proper theological balance. They should also be furnished with such insight into the vast fields of knowledge stretching out beyond their own attainments as may suffice to impress them with modesty, and possibly may awaken in some of them a zeal for a higher culture; but their strength ought not to be wasted in the vain effort to carry them beyond their powers or, sometimes, their wishes. For them it is particularly necessary that the theological course should be well proportioned in its several parts and, perhaps, even from time to time somewhat modified, as the powers of some eminent teacher may give an undue prominence to the studies over which he has control. As the instruction designed for this class constitutes the ordinary curriculum of our theological schools, nothing need be said of it beyond these general remarks, except to suggest one or two points in which we may aim to improve the ordinary methods of instruction.

Our methods, chiefly by lecture and by recitation, have been handed down from generation to generation and followed by us without much reflection as a matter of course. Meantime there has grown up around and among us a new set of studies, those of natural science, which are proved to have a very great charm for the human mind, and which are chiefly pursued by a very different method. Can we not in theology learn something from science, and impart to our studies also something of the freshness and charm which so fascinates the minds and awakens the eagerness of the students of natural science? With them, too, the lecture and the recitation are largely used, as is necessary in all instruction; but the tone and character of these is determined by another prominent feature in their system — the actual investigation of truth by the student himself under the guidance of his instructor. What would the study of chemistry be without the laboratory; or of botany without work in the field; or of zoölogy without dissection and comparative anatomy? Scientific institutions are ever increasing the

facilities for, and the requirement of, this sort of study. Physical laboratories have been only added to their appliances within the last few years, and still more recent is the furnishing of their course in mining with a full set of actual mining machinery, which their students are required to work practically as a part of their training. Even our colleges are coming more and more to work their scientific departments by courses of actual investigation in the various scientific laboratories. Of course, all this is done under the eye and the guidance of the instructor, and would be very useless labor for the tyro if it were otherwise. But it has for him all the charm of discovering the truth himself. It is a recognized principle that what is thus acquired becomes impressed upon the mind with a firmness of conviction that can be attained in no other way. Moreover, he thus learns to study for himself, and, if he have sufficient intelligence and skill, can afterwards go on to further knowledge by the same processes when, in the progress of life, he must necessarily lose the direction of his teachers. Can we not introduce very much more of the same system into our teaching of theology with corresponding advantage?

Superficial objections may easily be made to such a proposition. It may be said that the prime object of a theological institution is to teach its students, not merely to give them an opportunity to teach themselves. Strange pictures may be exhibited of the wild vagaries into which students would be likely to run if thus set upon working out their theology for themselves. But it is no more suggested that this should be done without careful guidance and instruction than that the student of chemistry should be turned loose in the laboratory to mix acids and alkalies, or heat fulminates, at his own sweet will. In fact, the method proposed would require an increase of labor on the part of the instructor in the intelligent guidance of the student, and the adaptation of the task to his capacity. But why should not the student be taught the criticism of the text by the actual handling, first in easy, then in more difficult cases, of the apparatus by

which the true reading is to be determined? Why in exegesis, after some training in its principles, should he not be required to work out expositions himself, and by showing him wherein and why he has gone astray in his earlier attempts, be led on practically to a sound system of interpretation? Why should he not be trained to prepare monographs on particular points or characters of ecclesiastical history, and to investigate for himself the causes or the consequences of certain particular events, his teacher all the while directing him where to find and how to use his material? Even in doctrinal theology much may be accomplished with the happiest results by teaching the student how to find out for himself from scripture, and from the history of the church, the due proportion of doctrine, and the proper limitations and qualifications of the statement of doctrine itself. In pastoral theology, the practical work spoken of at the beginning of this Article is already the foundation for the kind of teaching intended, only that it needs to be connected scientifically and systematically with the instructions of the lecture room. This plan is largely and most happily used in the *Seminar*, system in the German universities. Original work is required of all the members of the *Seminar* executed under the supervision of the professors; and, not infrequently, work has been done in this way of permanent value to the theological as well as to the general literary world.

The method suggested has been only imperfectly and inadequately described. Teachers who have made use of it at all are ever looking about for the means of giving it a wider application. It is capable of being so used as to give a new zest to the study of theology, and to fit men by means of that study in the seminary to become independent thinkers and sound reasoners in their later life. It has been naturally spoken of in connection with the largest class of students, but it applies to all, and is of especial importance in regard to that smaller class of which we come now to speak in the last place.

This third and last class is composed of those who are to become the future scholars in theology and the leaders of

theological thought. Their number relatively must be small, but in view of the future they constitute a very important class, and in any sufficient system of training their wants should be most carefully considered and amply provided for. Two considerations must form the basis of all plans in regard to them: (1) No man can be alike eminent in every department, and (2) every man must have a certain knowledge of all departments in order to prevent one-sidedness, and to give him, in a general theological culture, the proper basis for the higher researches in his own chosen specialty. The same considerations are at the basis of all higher education of every kind, and have elicited so much thought in other departments that we have much to guide us in their application to theology. Everywhere it is found that general culture must be insisted upon up to a certain point, and that beyond this the greatest result is to be attained by the introduction of specialties. So far it may be considered that we have only the enunciation of an indisputable maxim of all education. The difficulty is to fix the point where the general shall give place to the special. In fact, it may be said that all education is a continual progress from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, from uniformity and generality to differentiation and specialty. The earliest school instruction is the same for all, but before the academic course is run the pupils begin to be separated somewhat, either into different schools or different classes, according to their ulterior purposes in education. Having selected those who are to pursue a college course, and placed them there, experience has proved the necessity of introducing among them something of the elective system. This is not a question of whether one college may have carried that system too far, or another not far enough; it is believed to be already the conclusion of experience that something of the system must be adopted in all to develop the best results of a college course. The general statement must be the same for the study of theology, or of any other branch of knowledge; the general study must be pursued to a certain extent by all, and beyond

there must be electives for the higher training of each in his own chosen specialty. In following up the stream of knowledge as its branches ramify we must choose which of the branches we will pursue as our main study, and again, which of the branches of these, and so on to their ultimate ramifications. More than one, indeed, may be taken, and breadth is not to be sacrificed to thoroughness; still the general statement holds good, that the more advanced is any study the more special it must become. If this is generally true of preparatory studies, it must pre-eminently hold good of theology, which is the last preparatory study before the actual entrance upon the work of life.

But how shall this principle be applied to the study of theology? We are accustomed to regard the ordinary theological curriculum as embracing only that general theological culture which is necessary to every well-furnished minister; how can anything be deducted from this to make room for electives? Several methods have been proposed, prominent among which is the establishment of fellowships providing the means for post-graduate courses. Before considering these, let us distinctly set before our minds the object to be attained. A certain number of the better scholars are to receive the general culture deemed necessary for all, and, in addition to this, such special instruction in departments for which they have special taste or adaptation as shall fit them for the further pursuit of studies in those departments in after years. For this purpose the most obvious plan is that just mentioned, of establishing fellowships. This plan has the additional advantage, that the fellows could be employed in instruction in the special courses for those imperfectly prepared, and in other ways could be useful in the general economy of the institution. But excellent and desirable as it is, it may be doubted if it would be sufficient alone. It is unlikely that for a long time to come fellowships will be numerous enough to meet the required want. Again a post-graduate course requires a longer time devoted exclusively to study than can be given by many of those

whom it is most desirable to reach. In the hurry of our American life many of those best fitted for advanced study feel that they must press on; others, who can consent to the delay and can afford it, think to find a greater gain in a year of foreign travel, especially if a part of this can be in the East. Thus, while fellowships are exceedingly desirable and important, they cannot be entirely relied upon to meet the want. If they should become at all common, doubtless better provision would be made than there is now for courses of study adapted to them; but at present the absence of these is a further objection to placing much reliance upon them. At present, whatever is to be done practically must be accomplished within the term of the ordinary curriculum. What then can be done in this?

Practically the actual course of study in our theological institutions is, in many instances, something less than the theoretical requirement. Necessities arising from poverty, from sickness, and from a variety of other causes, almost always conspire to let men pass on and enter the ministry with something less than the accomplishment of the full curriculum. There has thus arisen a practical, though very indefinite, minimum of theological attainment, which is considerably below the normal standard. The suggestion is made that this ill-defined and scarcely acknowledged minimum should be openly acknowledged and distinctly marked; that it should then be absolutely required of all, and that the falling below this minimum standard should constitute an absolute bar to passing into the ministry; that above and beyond this the same amount of study should be required as is now demanded; but that it should be elective. For example: some knowledge of Hebrew should doubtless be required of all but those who pursue only a special course; and it should be required, not so much for the sake of the language itself, or in any expectation that its study will be continued beyond the seminary walls, as because a certain knowledge of its structure gives the student — often, perhaps, unconsciously — an insight into habits of thought and modes

of life of the people and the writers of scripture which can be acquired in no other way. In the scheme proposed, therefore, exemptions from the study of Hebrew should not exist at all, except for those professedly taking a partial course. But, on the other hand, it can hardly be doubted by any one separated by the lapse of several years from his theological course that a large part of the time usually spent upon Hebrew is to some of the students, if not time actually thrown away, yet time far less profitably spent than it might have been. Many, moreover, actually attain, as things now are, only the most elementary knowledge of the language. We would rescue this time for an elective, giving opportunity for greater progress in some other department; and, again, for some of the students we would rescue time from another department for a more thorough study of Hebrew with its cognate languages of Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic. Similarly in ecclesiastical history; a certain knowledge of the general course of the church, of its great critical periods, and of the history of doctrine is absolutely essential to any theological culture, and should be absolutely required; but beyond this much is usually taught which makes almost no impression at all upon those who have little taste for history. After attaining what may be considered as the necessary knowledge of history, such students can evidently better give extra time and labor to some other department. It is unnecessary to particularize each of the several studies in this way; what is true of any one of them is, to a greater or less degree, true of all. There is something in all of them now nominally but not actually required, and this something, be it more or less, we would make elective, but elective in the sense that if not chosen some other elective must be taken in its place.

By such a system time would be saved in those studies to which the student is less inclined and, therefore, ordinarily (we speak of those having the maturity and the principle which must be supposed to belong to the theological student) less adapted; and the time thus saved would be devoted to those studies for which he has a special aptitude, or, at least,

in which he feels a special interest. The effect would be greatly enhanced if with this system were combined those modifications in the method of study which have been already suggested. By these means it is believed that, without imperilling the sufficiency of the ordinary course, a certain number of students may be carried far enough in particular studies to continue their pursuit in after life with zest and earnestness. As our course is at present arranged, the studious young man completes its requirements and enters upon life determined to keep up his studies, but with no very marked preference for, or advancement in, one rather than another. His parochial cares press upon him; he finds abundant occupation for his time; he studies a little in this department and a little in that; he soon finds that such dallying with a variety of subjects leads to very little result, and unless he be a man of strong purpose and of decidedly scholarly habits, he soon acquiesces in mediocrity, and comes to look upon the aspirations of his youth as vanished dreams. Had those aspirations had a more definite aim, and had he been carried through the first difficulties of advanced study upon any one subject, the result would probably have been very different. He would have known precisely what he wanted to study and also how to study it, and he would have been likely to study to purpose. A few generations of men thus trained to be scholars, some in one department, some in another, would tell powerfully upon the standard of theological culture in our land.

Can such a system be carried into effect with our existing means and appliances? Undoubtedly if carried to the extent which is desirable it would require more professional work, and ultimately more and special professors. But it may be brought into operation to a very important and useful degree just as we are. For the sake of its results as well as for the enjoyment of instructing them, most of our theological professors would gladly undertake a certain amount of extra labor for the benefit of special students whose electives would be directly in the line of their own chosen work. Beyond

this it would not be impracticable for men in one theological institution especially eminent in any department, by being relieved of something of their ordinary work, to help in another in their own specialty. When these means should fail the system would have advanced so far, and have developed so great usefulness, as to make a recognized demand for the establishment of special professorships, and meantime the men would have been in training to fill these when established. Thus we might even look forward to facilities in our own country for a degree of completeness and thoroughness of training in each specialty of theological acquirement which can now only be obtained by going abroad.

ARTICLE III.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE ORIGINAL TEXT OF GENESIS I. AND II.

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§ 5. "WITHOUT FORM AND VOID."

"Now¹ the land was without form and void." It was the *me'ah*, "the solid land." It was in existence, and in the state here described. But, as God himself testifies by Isaiah

¹ The Hebrew particle Vav (ו), like the Greek *kal*, has a great variety of meanings. Noldius, in his Concordance, specifies some seventy or eighty. It is sufficient here to say, that not infrequently it has the force of our word "now" in its sense of "at this time," as in our version Gen. iii. 1; xii. 1. And again, the force of "now" as a conjunction to introduce an explanation, as in Gen. xviii. 1: "Now, he sat in the tent-door," etc. In this case, the account which follows is "explanatory" of how, or in what manner, "the Lord appeared unto Abraham,"—the statement immediately preceding. The conjunction ו intervenes to indicate this explanation. A case, we conceive, precisely parallel to the one in hand, "God created the heaven and the earth. Now (ו) the earth was," etc. The Vav indicating a coming explanation of the preceding statement: "Now" (i.e. it was on this wise that God did create them) "the earth was without form," etc., to the close of the narrative. In either of these cases, the natural effect of the translation "and," which appears in our version, is to reverse the time-order of the statements. In Gen. xviii. 1, to represent that God first ap-