

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE GERMAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM ON THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE.<sup>1</sup>

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IN the great Protestant Universities of Germany are to be found wonderful advantages for learned research, a mighty spirit of research, and many and great merits. The Germans, compared with the Hollanders, the British, and even the French, are a poor nation, and both munificent salaries and large incomes are rare among them; so that the endowments and emoluments of their professorships are munificent when viewed in relation to the habits of the people, although very moderate when measured by a British standard. The organization of their universities is wise and liberal, the professorships amazingly numerous, and the division of labor accordingly minute. This partition of branches of instruction, with the cheapness of living and of books, and the scale of the libraries, enables scholars to pursue the different departments of literature to their extreme ramifications with a nicety unknown in any other country. Hence, in German universities are found men devoting their whole lives to examining and teaching departments which, in other countries, are either not touched or treated as a brief appendage to some other branch. Studious effort is, moreover, honored, and literary success valued by the whole people and the governments. The appointing power is, no doubt, usually employed with great impartiality and wisdom to elevate men of real diligence and learning to distinguished chairs.

The genius of the German Protestant people also contributes in a splendid way to the fruitfulness of this vast literary husbandry. Intensely devoted to freedom of speculative thought, thorough, laborious, patient in temperament, they are perhaps the more independent and adventurous in literary inquiry because they have been allowed so little liberty of political action. This part of Germany is still the *Protestant* nation, proud of the

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right of free inquiry, and zealous to exercise it everywhere they are allowed. In no country of Christendom is the higher education so prominent and so honored, and nowhere is the *trule of scholarship* so completely organized or so persistently plied.

Hence it would be both incorrect and ungrateful to deny the indebtedness of the civilized world to German scholarship. In no department of human learning have the Germans been laggards; in some they have laid scholars under peculiar obligations. In philology, the editing of the classics and the patristic writings, the illustration of the Scripture text, the compilation of accurate lexicons and critical grammars of all the tongues which are taught in civilized countries, they have long taken the lead. And they are now coming to the forefront in the more realistic sciences of law, medicine, chemistry, which men used to consider as the prerogative of the more practical Briton and Gaul.

But in no department have the Germans attracted so much attention as in theology. Men speak of "German theology," sometimes with fear, sometimes with admiration, but often as though it were something single and unique, and separated from all other schools of theology by uniform traits. Whereas there are as many German theologies, at least, as there are British or American, differing as widely from each other in merit and in opinions. There is, indeed, so much of a pretext for speaking of "German theology" as a single system by itself, that the most of the writers of that nation, of all the various schools, have a few common traits. One of these is the use of a peculiar philosophic nomenclature, made prevalent among them by the long ascendancy of one or another phase of idealism. Another may be said to be a certain boldness of criticism in dealing with inspired declarations, which, to the orthodox apprehension of the reformed, savors of a degree of license. But German theology is yet as many-sided as that of Britain or America, and there are as wide differences between the good and the bad. Of some of their expositors and dogmatic theologians it is hard to utter praise too high.

But in settling the weight to be attached by English-speaking Christians to the theological emissions of the German press there are some very plain facts which must be considered.

1. In German Protestantism, Lutheranism is now virtually

dominant. One sufficient cause of this result is the ascendancy of Prussia and her persistent policy of unifying her state church. The University of Marburg, a small one, is now the only distinctively Reformed or Presbyterian institution left in Germany. It is not asserted that all Reformed divines are excluded from all the rest. But the general rule is, that the Lutherans are preferred, and are in the ascendant. Now, as students well know, Lutheran theology is no longer that of Martin Luther, as to the distinctive points of Calvinism. On these doctrines the most evangelical and orthodox teaching one hears in Germany is as hostile and as condemnatory as that we are wont to hear at home from Wesleyans and Arminians. But this fact is almost trivial when compared with another, viz., that the present Lutheranism, when not rationalistic, is sacramentarian. The most devout, the staunchest assertors of inspiration, like Luthardt of Leipzig, teach a phase of baptismal regeneration, and the real, corporeal presence in the supper. The fruits of this teaching there, as everywhere else, are evil.

2. The Protestant churches of Germany are state establishments, and such are their universities, with their theological departments. The theory of this relation to the state is rigorously Erastian. It is well known in history that at the Reformation the German princes usurped the power of dictating to their subjects a religion, with a tyranny at least equal to that of the popes. The motto of treaties and laws was: "*Cujus regio, ejus religio.*" The ruler of the land ruled the religion of the land. The people of an unfortunate state had to change their faith and worship backwards and forwards, from the Reformed to the Lutheran, and from either to the popish, as the sword, or the interests, or the lusts of the prince dictated. Nor is the church in Germany less helpless under an imperious Erastianism to-day. Of spiritual church government there is simply none. The church courts are either absolute ciphers, or they are but names for what are, really, *bureaux* of state administration, as little reflecting a spiritual power as a bureau of police or street-paving. The prostration of church power under the secular received notable illustration as late as 1875-'76, when the foul state of the marriage and divorce laws of Prussia (which Bunsen has cited as the one of two grand blots on the Protestant world,<sup>1</sup>) provoked a protest

<sup>1</sup> *Hippolytus*, Vol. II.

from the Lutheran pastors. The answer was an imperious edict from Bismarck, suppressing their protest, commanding them to solemnize the adulterous unions, and ordering them to expurgate the church liturgy so as utterly to suppress its implied disapprobation of the antichristian law and usage.<sup>1</sup> In England, where a nominally Protestant but Erastian church is established by law, the healthy vitality of the national conscience is expressed in Dissent. The Dissenting churches embody nearly or quite half the population, and give a place of refuge to honest and manly Christians. In Germany, Dissent is so insignificant as to be practically *nihil*. The pressure exists in full force; there is not enough vitality to evoke this form of remonstrance.

Hence, with this state subjugation of the church, and doctrine of baptismal regeneration, every German Protestant child is baptized in infancy, and is confirmed at the approach of puberty, before it is betrothed or conscripted. All are full members of the church; all have been to their first communion; there is no church discipline in the hand of any spiritual court to deprive any of membership, however he may become infidel, atheist, adulterer, or drunkard. Every member of the church is, so far as ecclesiastical title goes, eligible to a theological professorship. The appointing power to theological chairs is virtually the state. There is no need whatever that a man be ordained to the ministry, that he have a saving, personal knowledge of the gospel, or make any profession of it. Rather is it necessary that he attain the proper academic degree, defend his *Thesis theologica* in a Latin disputation, get himself much talked of as a diligent linguist and student, and an adventurous, slashing critic; and that he be acceptable to the government. The class of theological students, from whom the appointments to theological professorships most naturally are taken, does not pretend to be in any way more spiritually-minded than the body of University students. To require a credible profession of regeneration and spiritual life, as a prerequisite for joining a theological school—or for receiving ordination and a parish, even—would excite in Germany nothing but astonishment: it would be hard to tell whether the feeling of absurdity, or of resentment, would most predominate in the German mind at this demand.

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<sup>1</sup> *Edinburgh Review*, Oct., 1880, p. 270.

It is not meant that none of this class of students are devout, praying men: there are doubtless cases of true piety. But no such profession or quality is ever demanded. Certainly there exists, between the mass of the students of divinity and the others, no marked distinction of manners, morals, church attendance, or habits of devotion. Church historians know that the theory of Spener and Francke was denounced by the general mind of Lutheran Germany, and dubbed by the nick-name of "Pietism." But that theory was, in the main, embraced by evangelical Christians in America as almost a self-evident truth. It is, at least, an accepted axiom, that the pastor, and especially the teacher of pastors, must be a man who has spiritual experience of the truth.

Hence, the American evangelical Christian must be reminded of the large abatement to be made in estimating the weight to be attached to much of the German theology. To tell our people that an author is *a theological professor*, is virtually to say that he is not only a living, experimental Christian, but that he is supposed to be an eminent one. His opinions are the object almost of religious reverence. At least, he has credit for the most thorough earnestness and sincerity in his teachings. It is supposed, as of course, that his declarations are made with all the solemn intent proper to one who believes himself dealing with the interests of immortal souls. It is hard for our people practically to feel that a man so trusted in the holiest things may be dealing with the sacred text in precisely the same spirit as that in which he would criticize a Saga, or an Anacreontic ode. To appreciate the matter aright, they should represent to themselves a Bancroft or an Emerson, with aims perhaps very genteel and scholarly, but wholly non-religious and unspiritual, criticizing the authorship of *Ossian* or of *Junius' Letters*.

Now, the Apostle Paul has passed his verdict on such men. "Christ crucified . . . to the Greeks foolishness." "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things." They "have the understanding darkened by reason of the hardening of their heart." "But the anointing which ye (believers)

have received of him abideth in you," says the Apostle John, "and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." Unless we are prepared to contradict God's Holy Spirit, we must ascribe to the unregenerate critics, however learned, this consequence, that their carnal state must cause them to dislike and misconceive true godliness and salvation by grace. Such a judgment they will, of course, disclaim and resent; they will flout the pretensions of spiritual discernment, which the children of grace derive with sanctification from the Holy Ghost, as Boëotian, or as fanatical, or as a cheap and vulgar mode of asserting one's intellectual and literary aristocracy, without paying for it the price of that diligent learning which they arrogate. If Paul and John speak truth, it is, of course, unavoidable that these men should answer the charge thus. The same "blindness of heart" which makes them unconscious of the spiritual beauty of the gospel will, of course, make them unconscious of their prejudice. They are perfectly sincere in thinking themselves dispassionate. They are in a state analogous to that of the freezing man, who, *because he is so chilled* as no longer to feel the cold, does not feel that he is frost-bitten. It is thus with the man who is so utterly possessed by a blinding prejudice against his neighbor, that it is, for the time, simply impossible for him to take an equitable view of that neighbor's acts. This is the very time he protests that he is entirely dispassionate, and is calmly condemning his neighbor from the simple force of truth and justice! It is obvious that if the apostles' verdict be true, these worldly men will be unconscious of its truth; and they cannot but resent the charge as unhandsome. But none the less, the Christian who does not wish to fly in the face of inspiration must make the charge. He makes it, not because he is glad to insult anybody, especially any learned men, but because he dares not insult God by contradicting him. We will, while making it in this case, give these scholars all the credit we can for every excellence they can claim, courteous manners, correct morals, (shaming, of course, all mere pretenders to spirituality,) diligence, minute learning, and even a commendable intellectual honesty wherever the spiritual truth, which is the object of their unconscious prejudice, does not present itself.

When it comes to the handling of the themes of redemption, there must be, then, a certain incompetency, in spite of their learning; and if the apostles have not slandered the "natural man," we must hold ourselves prepared to discount a large part of their conclusions.

3. The spiritual atmosphere which these scholars inhabit, moreover, must be judged by us extremely unfavorable to evangelical investigation, or several of our most firmly established convictions must be discarded by us. We have held it beyond a doubt, that the influence of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration must be deadening and unwholesome. But the Lutheran divines now usually hold this with a tenacity proportioned to their professed orthodoxy. We have been taught to regard the sanctification of the Lord's day as ordained by a *jus divinum*, and to believe that God has thus enjoined it, because its right observance is essential to the healthy culture of the soul. Well, Lutheranism believes that all sacred days of divine authority are as utterly abrogated as the new-moon sacrifices; that "to sabbatize is to Judaize;" and Lutheranism very diligently "shows its faith by its works." Take this sample from Luther's *Table Talk*: "If anywhere the day is made holy for the mere day's sake, if anywhere anyone sets up its observance on a Jewish foundation, then I order you to work on it, to ride on it, to dance on it, to feast on it, to do anything that shall remove this encroachment on Christian liberty." When their holiest man can so insolently reject God's ordinance, the common sense of the reader will suggest how much improvement is like to be made of the Lord's day by average Lutherans.

The evangelical Christian accordingly recognizes the spiritual atmosphere of these great centres of learning as *fearfully cold*. One index of this is, that American students of divinity around them, although sufficiently masters of the language to attend German lectures, feel themselves instinctively drawn to set up separate preaching. Devotional meetings are rare. Sunday is, to most, merely a holiday. The average university student is heard to boast, not seldom, that he has not entered a church for a year, and hopes not to do so until his marriage, when he will have to enter it once more. But he is none the less a baptized and confirmed member of the Lutheran Church. The state of church attendance tells the whole story as to the spiritual atmos-

phere. Berlin now has more than one million one hundred thousand people. It has about thirty-two Protestant places of worship, of which many are very small, and scarcely any have a full attendance. Göttingen is a little city of twenty thousand. Its university has about seventy professors and one thousand students. In the whole town and university are four places of Protestant worship, two of which are small. The "University Church" has *one sermon a fortnight* during the sessions. On a good day one may see there from fifteen to twenty-five young men, who may pass for students (or may be, in part, genteel merchants' clerks). The theological department counts from eighty to a hundred students! Where are these on Sunday morning? "In the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg an inquiry was made in 1854 into the condition of the Lutheran Church, and it was found that no service had been held in the head churches for two hundred and twenty-eight times, because there had been no congregations."<sup>1</sup> No one has drawn this picture in darker colors than the evangelical divine, Christlieb, of Bonn. He says: "There are large parishes in Berlin and Hamburg where, according to recent statistics, only from one to two per cent. of the population are regular church-goers. Elsewhere it is somewhat better. But speaking of Germany in general, we may say that in the larger towns the proportion seldom exceeds nine or ten per cent., and in the majority of cases it is far lower."<sup>2</sup> In fact, the general aspect of Protestant Germany, on the Lord's day, is prevalently that of a civilized pagan country like China. The bulk of the population does not enter God's house, but does go to places of amusement. The only marked religious activity in the larger part of Germany (there are happy *oases* of spiritual fruitfulness, like Elberfeld), is among the papists. Their churches are thronged; and during the hours of mass the worshippers remind one of a busy swarm of bees about their hive. The contrast is, to the Protestant, most mortifying.

The inferences which the practical mind must draw from this picture are two: the spiritual atmosphere is not one in which we should expect evangelical views to flourish, and the fruits of German theological criticism in its own country are not such as to encourage its dominancy here. While German scholarship has been busy with its labors, it has suffered almost a whole

<sup>1</sup> *Eдин. Review*, Oct., 1880, p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> *Mod. Doubt. and Chr. Belief*, p. 27.

nation to lapse into a semi-heathenish condition. It has had popery within the reach of its arm ever since the end of the "thirty years' war" (*Peace of Westphalia*, 1648), and has won nothing against it. Tried by its works, German divinity is found wanting.

4. The writings of the rationalistic schools betray this spiritual blight in a defect which the living believer must ever regard as a cardinal one. This is the failure to appreciate and to weigh at all that class of internal evidences for the gospel and for the doctrines of grace which is presented in the correspondence between them and the experiences and convictions of the gracious soul. This is, indeed, the vital, the invaluable evidence. The class of criticisms alluded to know nothing of it. They dissect the evangelists, epistles and prophets, just as they do Homer or the Vedas. They have never felt that declaration of our Saviour: "The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." The response which is made by the profoundest intuitions of the human heart and conscience, quickened by the Spirit, to these lively oracles, immediately avouching them as the words of the Creator of the human soul, is unnoticed by these critics. They propose to settle the authenticity or falsehood of the records by antiquarian processes only, similar to those by which Niebuhr proposed to test the legends of early Rome, or Wolf the genuineness of the Homeric epics.

5. The sober and practical mind finds the best argument of the real value of this species of discussion in its history. Let us glance over a small part of it. The time was when Rosenmüller and Kuinöl were ranked as marvels of critical acumen and learning. Now, the mention of their special conclusions excites a smile, and their works are obsolete. In the latter part of the last century, Semler led off in what was then the new school of rationalism, explaining away everything in the sacred records which transcended human conception. To-day, while there are plenty in Germany who hold to his skeptical results, none follow or believe in his criticism. He was first *professor of theology* in, and at last head of, the divinity school of Halle. Eichhorn was a famous professor of Oriental languages and literature at Göttingen up to 1827. He also is a disbeliever in all the supernatural, and explains all the miracles of the Bible as natural events. The book of Isaiah he regarded as entirely unauthen-

tic—the product of a plurality of writers put together at random. De Wette was theological professor in the University of Basle. He is usually regarded as the founder of the historico-critical school in Germany, which was, though less extreme than the Tübingen school, tinged largely with rationalism. He does not believe that the Chronicles are scripture, or that the apostle Paul wrote Ephesians or First Timothy. The latter he rejects because it has un-Pauline phrases, and because it portrays a too advanced state of the gnostic heresy for Paul's day, and a church government too mature. In these points he has been utterly refuted by Bunsen's *Hippolytus*.

Paulus, professor of theology at Heidelberg, 1811, was a thorough rationalist, who "sat down to examine the Bible with the profound conviction that everything in it represented as supernatural was only natural or fabulous, and that *true criticism* consisted in endeavoring to prove this."

Baur (Ferd. Chr.) was professor of Protestant theology at Tübingen from 1826 to 1860. He is usually regarded as the founder of the "Tübingen school," which arrogates to itself the name of "*the critical*." He has been both represented and contradicted by his pupils and successors, Volkmar, Keim, Hilgenfeld, *et al.* Its principles may be said to be two: that nothing supernatural can ever have really occurred, and that the Christianity of the first age was from the first divided by two hostile and contradictory schools, the *Petrine* and the *Pauline*. For this notable hypothesis the only tangible pretext is the narrative of Gal. ii. 11-16. The advocates of the two doctrines had, he thinks, each their gospels, compiled to suit their views, and the later gospels, especially John's, were forged to smooth over this fatal breach and hush up the squabble, long after the deaths of the men whose names they bear. Hence, the source of the materials used for these pious frauds must be guessed. The guess of Baur and Volkmar is, that at first there was a brief writing of somebody, possibly the evangelist Matthew, strictly Petrine, or Judaizing, in tenor. Somebody on the Pauline or Liberal side got up a life of Christ in Luke's name. Of this the Luke now in our Bibles is a later rehash and expansion. Then, somebody, to make weight against this fuller Luke, about A. D. 134, wrote the book which now passes by the name of Matthew. And after this somebody forged the gospel of Mark, as it now stands, in

order to smooth over this ugly Petrine and Pauline difference, and give homogeneity to the Christian scheme. Then, finally, about 170 A. D., still another forger wrote a gospel, with the object of completing this amalgamation, and affixed the apostle John's name to it. But Baur's pupil, Hilgenfeld, supposes Matthew was completed first, then Mark, and then Luke. Köstlin thinks there was first a Mark, then Matthew, then another Mark, then Luke. Ewald, once at Tübingen, but later at Göttingen, teaches that there was (1), a gospel of Philip; (2), some *Logia* or speeches of Jesus of unknown authorship; (3), a short biography ascribed to Mark; (4), an anonymous gospel; (5), the Matthew now in our Bibles; (6, 7, 8), three short writings of unknown authors, detailing incidents of Christ's early years, of which there are no extant remains or proof, but of which Ewald speaks as confidently as though he had them in his hand.

But an anonymous critic of this Tübingen school cuts the matter short. The "Anonymous Saxon" concludes that the fourth gospel was the work of John, but that it is wholly unreliable and false. His theory is, compared with the learned Ewald's, refreshing for its simplicity. It is that John did his own lying.

Would the reader see a specimen of the "criticism" on which the date of John's gospel is settled by this school? Hilgenfeld argues that John omits the circumstance that Simon the Cyrenian was impressed to bear the cross for the fainting Saviour. The synoptic gospels narrate it. But Basilides (second century) made a pretext of that narrative to support his gnostic crotchet, that the person crucified was an ordinary Jew, and not the Messiah. Therefore John's gospel was written after Basilides! If this is argument, one might as easily prove that the Declaration of Independence was written after the fourteenth amendment.

But the admirable harmony of this criticism displays itself in the date the school assign for the forgery of John. Baur is certain it could not have been earlier than A. D. 160. Bunsen fatally refuted him in his *Hippolytus*. Zeller places it at 150. Hilgenfeld 130 to 140. Keim in A. D. 130. More recent examinations by Luthardt, of Leipzig, of the orthodox school, refute the whole of them, and demonstrate the genuineness of the gospel as the work of the apostle John in the first century. Bunsen even carries it up to as early a date as A. D. 60-65.

Schenkel, in his sketch of the life of Jesus, undertakes to construct a biography of the Saviour, wholly omitting the supernatural powers, by the violent supposition that the gospels were later works, embodying a number of superstitious legends of the early Christians. But David Friedrich Strauss crowned this work by his *Life of Jesus*, fashioned on the mythical hypothesis. This learned professor of divinity studied for a time at Tübingen. He was elected divinity professor at Zurich, Switzerland, but by a popular *émeute* was prevented from taking his chair, though he continued for the rest of his life to draw a part of his salary. He married an actress, from whom he was afterwards divorced. The use he made of the leisure, subsidized by this Christian annuity, was to publish a second *Life of Jesus* more anti-Christian than the first; and at last to carry his anti-supernatural position to its consistent extent—*atheism*. His last work adopts the evolutionism of Huxley and Hæckel, denies the existence of the soul and God, and makes man a helpless subject of mechanical fate. The English reader may see a full, moderate, and intelligent account of these speculations in Lectures VI., VII., and VIII. of Christlieb's *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief*.

Now, the purpose of this bird's-eye-view is not to attempt a refutation in this place of any of these conclusions. The reader is only requested to note the following facts: Each of these mutually destructive speculations has been advanced by theologians. Each has had in Germany a large following, and has claimed to be the final result of sound investigation. Each has been superseded in its turn, and while a virtually infidel result is still reached, the old methods are discarded for some newer hypothesis. None of them has been able to do what the old orthodox doctrine of inspiration has always done, retain the hearty and permanent confidence of a mass of Christians great in numbers, respectable in learning, and venerable for character.

Another trait of this part of the German theology is its submission to the sway of successive schools of philosophy. One century has witnessed the triumph of Kant's, of Schelling's, of Fichte's, of Hegel's system, and the death of all of them. To-day one must look out of Germany for learned Hegelians, the last of the schools mentioned, and the unorthodox philosophy of Germany to-day sways towards the opposite extreme from idealism, that of materialism. But it has been the weakness of the

popular German theologians to mould their creeds into the forms of these unsubstantial and fleeting philosophies. A Feuerbach, following Hegel, as he supposes, reduces God to the mere objectified reflex of his own consciousness. A pious and eloquent Schleiermacher imbues his whole system with idealistic pantheism.

The unhealthiness of the theological atmosphere is revealed also in a way still more painful and significant by the foibles of the so-called orthodox. What name is more venerated by Americans than that of the sainted Tholuck, the beloved theologian of Halle? But even he charges the apostle Paul with making "a false construction." He seems to confess that, on Rom. ix. 17, he intimated that the apostle had misrepresented Exod. ix. 16 (Septuagint), "because he believed he could in that way better refute the Calvinistic view. (*Hallane on Romans*, pp. 741, 742, Edition of 1870.) Tholuck's semi-Pelagianism, and his utter unconsciousness of man's natural state of ungodliness and enmity to God, seemed to have perverted his view of the Epistle to the Romans. Again, the pious Neander seems to give the weight of his assent to that deficient theory of inspiration which makes it only an elevation of the prophet's own rational consciousness. A Bunsen (*Hippolytus*, Vol. I., p. 10,) declares with passion that the cloven tongues of fire at Pentecost were only lightning flashes from a thunder cloud, and flouts the idea that the twelve really spoke in unknown tongues. Meyer, the so-called conservative, the vaunted bulwark on the orthodox side, began his career an Arian. He seems to have gotten no further than Homoiousianism, admitting that Christ has a nature like his Father's. But he admits that his divinity would be proved by 1 Tim. iii. 16, *were the epistle only genuine*. He teaches that man has two souls, the *ψυχή* and the *πνεῦμα*. He holds the gnostic doctrine, that sin resides in the "corporeo-psychical" part of man's constitution, and that the *πνεῦμα* is only trammelled by it like an unwilling but chained captive. His theology is distinctly semi-Pelagian. He declares that Paul borrowed the allegory of Hagar from the Rabbins, and holds that he was sincere, but erroneous, in thus arguing. "If these things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

6. Why is it that men of undoubted learning and diligence thus pursue speculations so convicted, by the result, of evanes-

cence and futility? The more profound solution has doubtless been given in our picture of the State Church and its results. Another solution is to be sought in the defects of the German system of university education. These are so great that, after conceding all the praise these universities deserve, we cannot but ascribe the main credit of German scholarship to the *Gymnasia*. In the universities there is no regimen exacting diligence in study. There is no roll-call, and a student need not even present his body with any punctuality in any lecture-room. But if his body is there, absolutely no means are used to secure the exertion of his mind. The university professor never asks questions, never holds any recitation. With the most of his students he most probably never speaks one word on the subject he teaches, and many remain utterly ignorant whether the man before him is an idiot or is mentally rejecting every item of instruction he offers him. Unless the student is a candidate for a degree, he is not even examined at the end of the session or the course. The excuse for this fatal neglect is, that the student has had enough of this species of drill in the *gymnasium*, so that now it is sufficient for him to have the lecturer's example and guidance in the work of study. But this plea is wholly inadequate. The mere lecturer maintains only a one-sided relation to his pupils' minds. If they listen, they may learn his mind; but he never learns theirs. Every mind has its own idiosyncrasy, out of which arise its own peculiar weaknesses, wants, and misapprehensions. The experience of the writer as a teacher of bachelors of arts, in studies properly post-graduate and of a university grade, who may be presumed to bring to their work at least as much mental discipline as the lads from a German *gymnasium*, confirms this view. This experience proves that lectures without recitations would leave his students only half taught. All but a few would carry away the queerest possible half-views and misconceptions of the doctrines enounced to them. The recitation, the personal dealing, the detection of the individual's peculiarity, the testing and correcting of his apprehension of the ideas delivered to him, are worth more than the lecture. Consequently, the one-sided instruction must result in a one-sided culture. Is not this the solution of that feature of the German mind that, while the memory is stored with such a

multitude of facts, the logical power remains so inaccurate, and the mind is so often the victim of its own hobbies?

There is another feature which presents an instance of the law that human imperfection permits no good to exist without its evil, even as there can be no tree without its shadow. The great division of labor in the German universities has been spoken of, with its grand advantage of enabling scholars to pursue the *minutiae* of scholarship at their leisure. But hence result the known evils of *specialism*. Judicious medical men have recognized it. The specialist, who devotes all his mind to the study and medical treatment of a particular set of nerves, acquires, of course, an amount of knowledge and dexterity about them beyond the attainment of the finest general practitioner. But unless this specialist is a very wise and self-restrained man he gains this at the expense of one-sidedness of mind; he becomes overweening in his thinking; he makes his set of nerves his pet crotchet; he exaggerates their influence, until his judgment in pathology becomes weak and even absurd. Doubtless there is too much specialism in German erudition, and hence, while the pursuit of particular branches is thorough beyond that of any other scholars, the views of truth are not well coördinated, and the scientific judgment is infirm.

There is reason also to believe that the overweening applause so long given to German scholarship has borne its natural fruit, undue inflation of the applauded. It is not asserted that there are no men in their learned circles who pursue a cosmopolitan learning, but certainly the general result is that their scholars consider Germany sufficient unto herself. Their boast is, that Germany is "the schoolmistress of the world." They feel that they can give to all, but have need to borrow of none. The best recent efforts of learning and study in other countries remain usually unnoticed by them, and discounted from their appreciation. A German theologian, for instance, when told that the American students are waiting with eagerness for the final work of Dr. Philip Dorner, complacently accepts it as perfectly natural and proper, as much so as that one should "go to Newcastle for coals." But when one mentions the final work of the American Dorner, Dr. Charles Hodge, the exceedingly learned man, who has read the Vedas, and is deep in the latest Sanscrit and the most recondite German discussions of Egyptology, knows

nothing of Hodge. He feels that for him to read any other than German scholarship would be more like "carrying coals to Newcastle." An exception to this contemptuous discounting of all the rest of the world exists in favor of a few British and American authors. These are men who studied in Germany, who have continued their correspondence with the German scholars, and who make a boast of retaining in those foreign lands the German methods. A few such scholars, Professor Max Müller, Professor Robertson Smith, for instance, receive some recognition, because in smiling on them Germany is still, in a sense, exalting herself.

If the late Dr. J. Addison Alexander may be believed, there was still another exception to be noted in his day. In the last conversation the writer had with him (June, 1856,) the character of the English scholarship of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was mentioned, as at once thoroughly modest and honest. The works of Prideaux were mentioned as fine specimens of historical research, exhaustive in their learning, and yet plain, perspicuous, and modest in their method. Dr. Alexander replied about in these words: "I am extremely glad to hear you say so, because such is just my estimate of those scholars. And I will tell you what you, who are so much younger than I am, and who have not been in Germany as I have been, are not in a position to know so well as I do. That is, that these Germans, with all their affectation of ignoring British learning, sometimes make a quiet use, nevertheless, of these old scholars, as convenient quarries to dig ready material out of, which they use without acknowledging. You have mentioned Prideaux. Now, it is singular that there is a late German work, very pretentious, on a part of the ancient church history, which has almost made its fortune out of plagiarisms from Prideaux." This is given on the authority of Dr. Alexander solely.

7. But the worst literary influence remains to be explained. As the German university is actually administered by its teachers, its "final clause" is not to communicate knowledge to pupils, but to manufacture professors. The professor does not lecture so much for the purpose of teaching the ascertained and recognized body of his science—the student is presumed to have gotten that already, in the *Gymnasium*, or by his own reading—the prelection is rather designed to set him a pattern of the me-

thods of new research in the outworks of the science. The aspirant is perpetually taught that to get into the line of promotion he must "do new work," which means that he must make some addition, not known before, to the science which he has adopted as his specialty. The test of ability is not the man's capacity to acquire an intelligent, perspicuous knowledge of the science, however thorough and extensive. Nor is it to be able to make useful applications of the principles of the science, already established, for the benefit of mankind. Nor is it to be able to teach the whole known science effectively to other minds. All this is not enough. The aspirant must "do new work." He must also evince independent powers of research or invention by extending his science in some quarter not explored before, however minute, or merely curious and trivial. Hence, "Do new work" is a sort of *shibboleth* with them. The "dissertation," which introduces the candidate to the privilege of an examination for an honorary degree, must profess to "do new work." When the young aspirant has become a "*privat docent*," his main hopes of promotion and a salary repose on his getting the name of having "done new work." When he becomes at last a "professor extraordinary," his prospect of elevation to the rank of a full professor depends still on his "doing new work." One peculiarity of the German university is, that this "*professor ausserordentlich*," or assistant professor, is not really the assistant of his senior, but his rival. He may have a miserable pittance of salary, but he has the privilege of lecturing on any part of the course he pleases; on the very same parts his senior is lecturing on, at the same time; and instead of following, he may move abreast of, or in advance of him. It is supposed that this license stimulates both senior and assistant, and keeps them both diligent and pushing. It certainly stimulates the assistant; for he is grasping up after his "bread and butter." Hence, it is not unkuown that the superior shall lecture to six or seven students, and his assistant to forty or sixty. And the case is probably found to be this: that the old superior professor is still delivering the same course which, twenty years before, made him *Magnus Apollo* in the university, and delivering it with all the increased efficiency derived from experience in teaching and successive reexplorations of his ground, while his assistant is "doing new work." The senior *has done* his "new work" a few years ago. Probably it

was really important work, constituting really grand extensions in the domains of his science; possibly it was work so valuable that it really left little except the gleanings of trifles in that sphere of science for those who come after him; but, alas for this senior! it is no longer "new work" to-day. And so his students pronounce that he is no longer "fresh." They forsake him for his young aspiring assistant who is "doing new work;" the new work, namely, of whittling and polishing some little angle of the science which his senior has left "in the rough," and which is never going to be anything more than a curious triviality after it is polished. And the enthusiastic young gentlemen fancy that they are mastering the body of the science, because they are assisting so zealously in this polishing of the useless angle, when, in fact, what they need is to be studying the old work, which is not fresh, so as to ground themselves in the rudiments of their science.

The consequences of this system are in part admirable. It begets in a numerous body of young aspirants a restless, if an innovating, activity in research. A multitude of minds are pushing the outer boundaries of knowledge in every direction. In the physical sciences, which partake of the almost boundless variety of their subject-nature, and in antiquarian researches, where the documents are so numerous, this plan may work well. The young man who would teach mineralogy, or chemistry, or botany, or electricity, cannot indeed hope to add a whole province to the domain of his science, like a Davy, a Franklin, or a Linnæus. But he may hope to construct some acid or neutral salt never combined before, and give it a learned name; or to detect, analyze, and classify a few weeds or mosses which the books had not before recorded. Nor should these minute industries in the scientific field be wholly despised; for it may be, that in some future induction, which really leads to important truth, the little facts may bear a useful part. No one can predict.

But obviously, the results of this system are far from healthy in the spheres of philosophy and especially revealed theology. The facts and *data* with which the philosopher can properly deal are limited; they can properly include only those contents of consciousness which are common to sane men. That is all. Hence, when this imperious injunction is still imported into phil-

osophy, that the aspirant in this branch of study must "do new work," or else remain an underling, with no professorship, no honor, no fame, and very little "bread and butter," he is placed under violently unhealthy influences. What can he do? He can only innovate; he can only attack existing doctrines; and if it happens that the existing doctrines are already settled aright, he must unsettle them to get them wrong. Let us suppose, for example, that the venerable Dr. Archibald Alexander, while teaching in Princeton that beautiful course of elementary ethics, which is left to us in his little volume of *Moral Science*, was condemned, according to the German system, to have under him this "professor ausserordentlich," with the privilege, not of assisting, but of rivalling his senior, with a starveling salary of \$250 per annum, and a nice young lady in some New Jersey church, betrothed to him some five or seven years ago, with no chance of marriage under present circumstances. This young gentleman is told that his getting a full post and salary in some younger western seminary, (as the Allegheny or Chicago,) depends on his "doing new work" in his department. It will not be enough for him, adopting the system of his venerable senior, to add some more resources of diligence in illustrating it and successful perspicuity in teaching it. This is not really "doing new work." It does not evince original, creative, philosophic talent. Let us suppose again, that the ethical philosophy of Dr. Alexander is the true one. We now have precisely the German conditions. Unless the assistant professor is almost miraculously a saint, of course he gets a "bee in his bonnet." He can only rise by differing substantively from his senior's philosophy. But that is the right philosophy. Then he must rise by inventing a false one, and by exerting his learning and ingenuity to make the false one look like the truth.

But it is when this law is virtually applied to the student of theology that it works the most deadly mischief. Here, as we believe, is a divine science. Its whole *data* are given to us in revelation, and are therefore limited and definite in number, and immutable, because infallible in character. There can be but one right system. All others, so far as they vary from this, are wrong. There is, indeed, much scope for exegetical diligence. But this continued exegetical labor can never introduce substantial modification into a single essential member or relation of the

system; it can only add the lesser, and as the industry proceeds, increasingly minute, confirmations to the main results accepted from the first by true believers. Here is a vital distinction which is more and more overlooked in days of pretended "progress." And the proof of its justice is this: that the revealed code, containing all these *data* of the science of redemption, was avowedly and expressly given by God to the common people, with the pledge that it was sufficient to give them the infallible knowledge of salvation; and the qualifications required for its right apprehension were not any antiquarian learnings and sciences of criticism to be acquired in the future development of civilization, but an obedient heart and spiritual discernment given in answer to believing prayer. (John vii. 17; xvi. 13 and 23; James i. 5; 1st Epistle of John ii. 27, etc., etc.) In short, that revealed theology *cannot be a progressive science*, is proved by this short argument. It was equally given by its Author to save sinners of the first century of the Christian era, and of the last. He declares that it saves by its truth, and by the reception of its truth alone. If, then, the system by which we are to be saved in the last age is the result of a progression in science, it could not have been a system to save the sinners of the first age.

Hence, when the injunction to "do new work" is thrust upon the theologian, it is almost a direct incentive to heretical innovation. The *animus* which this trait of the German erudition has imported into theological study, is poisonous to orthodoxy. It begets an endless and ever restless spirit of innovation. To the current inquiring mind, the doctrines which are accepted and established are presumptively obnoxious because they are accepted. The Protestant principle is that nothing is to command our faith merely because supported by human prescription. Educated Germany is prone to push the truth to this extreme: that because a proposition happens to be supported by the prescription of the day, therefore it is not to be believed.

When the influence of this usage is properly appreciated, the American Christian becomes aware that he has been under a species of hallucination in attaching any serious significance to this species of critical and theological speculations. Devout and evangelical men among us are, of course, "in dead earnest" in handling the topics of redemption. They believe that it is by

these topics immortal souls are to live or perish forever. Through these topics the holiest attributes of God, and the most sacred compassions of the incarnate Saviour, receive their manifestation. We remember that there is an ever-present responsibility resting on all who touch them, for the manner in which they handle them. Hence, it is hard for us to apprehend the footing which doctrines, and facts concerning the sacred writings, hold in these minds as merely interesting antiquarian subjects for an intellectual sword play. The Rationalists are, of course, not oblivious of the ephemeral life of the previous speculations of their comrades. They know that the usual term of their life is not more than a generation; and as all the previous ones have had their day and died, there is a tacit understanding that the ones they are studying will have the same fate. To the resident in Germany there is, as men say, a "feeling in the air," that no one regards these critical theories as final. This admission betrays itself in a hundred hints. One inquires, for instance, whether a given great man is a leading power in his department of literature. The answer is: "Oh, not now: he has been before the German public too long. Blank is now the coming man" (mentioning a younger celebrity). Does one ask why, if the writings of the first were true and just, they should not continue to lead the mind of the country, inasmuch as truth is never old? The answer is a shrug, and the remark, "Why, his last great work has been out twenty years!" The new contribution is recognized with favor, not as destined to establish final conclusions, but as furnishing a new scholarly theme, as creditable to German erudition, and as placing a literary comrade in the way of promotion.

In a word, much of this writing is the literary "student's duel." The young German of fashion is the model of military courtesy, and member of a fashionable university *corps*. He fights two or three duels per session with gentlemen of other *corps*, with whom he has not the shadow of a quarrel, and with whom he will be thoroughly warm and cordial at the next "kneiper." He seeks to slash him with his sword, and shed his blood—in a mild way. Now should this antagonist take his discomfiture *au grand sérieux*, and pursue his quarrel, after the fashion of the British or American duelist, with real deadly intent, the men of fashion would view this as clear proof of lack

of breeding, almost of lack of civilization. So when German *litterati* learn that we take their attacks on the Scriptures and the doctrines of grace in this solemn way, they are affected with a somewhat similar sentiment. It is a combination of amusement and disgust; our making a life-and-death affair of them is an index of "deficient culture," indeed of a state of very imperfect civilization. It proves that we have not experienced the liberalizing influences of letters which educate a man out of intolerance. Had we the full German culture, we should be too courteous and tolerant to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;" we should not allow a consideration so prosaic as that "there is only one name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved" to obstruct the freedom of learned inquiry.

8. Our indictment against the spirit of this theology, then, is, that it tends to unsettle everything, and settle nothing. It has mistaken license of mind for liberty of mind. It claims the privilege of pursuing the Protestant freedom, "to prove all things and hold fast that which is good;" but it perverts that right to a questioning of good things which results in the holding fast to nothing. It is said that the truly philosophic method is to question every position in our beliefs, and that this is a duty which one man cannot do for another more than he can eat and breathe for him, so that even the most fundamental and settled dictates of belief shall be held subject to debate by each new comer. It is sneeringly asked, Would you have the pastors of the church especially hold their creeds on ignorant prescription? Shall they preach dogmas as Bible truths only because a Synod, confessedly not inspired, said three hundred years ago, that the Bible taught them?

We reply, of course not. But let it be supposed that possibly that Synod was right; that the canonical Scriptures are God's Word; and that the creed formulated by the Synod from them is the meaning of God in them. If, on the one hand, the "say so" of this naughty thing, a Synod, does not prove this true, neither does it prove it untrue. Suppose, now, for argument's sake, the Synod true. How then will this universal right and duty of free inquiry combine with that fact in the results? This question reveals at a touch the shallow and impertinent sophism. Does this right of free inquiry take the form of a right to reject

the truth, and that on the ground that some good man, before us, in the legitimate exercise of this same right, ascertained that truth for us? Hardly! In the case supposed, then, the individual right of free inquiry resolves itself simply into this: the right (and duty) of embracing heartily and intelligently the truths given to us. That is all. The sophistical assumption in this innovating criticism is, that this individual right can only be fully exercised by differing from all previous uninspired results. But this would be true only on the supposition that all previous results must be erroneous, because uninspired. If this were true, then all the exertions of these last (uninspired) critics are thereby shown to be thoroughly impertinent. How baseless the theory is appears from a simple *dilemma*. Either this method of criticism and free speculation is not a method for the ascertainment of truth, or it is. If it is not, it is worthless, and the sooner we have done with it the better. If it is, then it leads to the permanent establishment of truths. Therefore the Protestants who come after these critics can no longer exercise their freedom of inquiry without claiming a license to *criticize and reject truth!* Any other science of ascertained truth may offer us good and sufficient instances. The teacher of geometry does not inhibit free thought. He does not teach the conclusions of his science by dictation, but he knows that the right exercise of free thought by his pupils will inevitably lead to their readoption of the same old theorems taught ever since Euclid. How is this? Because they are clearly true. Ah! but this is an exact science; a science of absolute truth, says one. Let another instance be taken, then. The German antiquary teaches his pupils that Dionysius, Paul's convert in Athens, *did not write the Celestic Hierarchy*. He by no means teaches this by mere dictation. He invites his pupils to the fullest freedom of inquiry. But he expects them inevitably to readopt his conclusion.

But it is pleaded that the human mind is an imperfect instrument of cognition, and this imperfection cleaves, in some degree, to its most fundamental exercises. Hence, it is argued, the only way to secure accurate knowledge is to hold all conclusions, even the foundation ones of the science studied, subject to reëxamination and possible modification by every student. This conception implies, that the only way to build the temple of truth securely is for each builder to relay for himself all the stones,

including the foundation stones. Another proposition is far more certain: that if everybody is to be continually moving the bottom stones, no temple of truth can be built at all for anybody. Each builder should, indeed, acquaint himself intelligently with those foundation stones, as with all above them in the wall, but not for the purpose of moving them. He acquaints himself with them for the purpose of approving their position, and satisfying himself they are in the right place. This overweening critical spirit overlooks an all-important truth, that the attainments of sound, healthy research are cumulative. The results of the mental labor of previous generations should count for something. Some things should get settled by the progress of knowledge. Truths ascertained in one way reflect their light of evidence on other truths; so that these latter become perfectly clear in their certainty, and are most thoroughly settled for the most enlightened and just-minded men. There is no theory which is really more dishonoring to the rights of the human intellect than this innovating criticism, for its tendency is to mark all the efforts of men continually with practical futility. It seems to say, that man's intelligence is never to attain conclusive results. If this were indeed so, we see not how such a faculty is worthy of rights to any prerogative or any freedom.

When we see the rationalistic theology and criticism, then, perpetually announcing new results, we ask: Have any new and important *data* been discovered, such as justify the laying anew of the foundations? Have any more primitive documents been discovered? What are they? The Moabite stone, the Rosetta stone, with the readings of Egyptian monuments deduced therefrom. The cuneiform remains in Mesopotamia. The Sinai MS. of the Scriptures, found by Tischendorf, the lost work of Hippolytus of Portus (if we may trust Bunsen). But every one of these is favorable, and only favorable, to the old conclusions as to the canon and text of Scripture, so far as they touch the subject at all. Have any new lights of importance been thrown upon dates or the genuineness of patristic writings since the era of Cave, Bentley, and the other great critics who settled the estimation of this literature? Have any testimonies as to the canon been unearthed more authoritative than those of Caius and Eusebius? None. *The materials* remain substantially as they were, when the renewed and exhaustive research of a Hug,

an Alexander, and a Sampson, made a final settlement for fair minds of the canon. But the new criticism goes on, shuffling its pack of cards over and over, without any ground, making its new deals of pretended conclusions, which have nearly as much fortuity, and as little authority, as the deals of the fortune-teller's cards.

But it is claimed that, though the materials remain substantially the same, the advance of philology has given a new *apparatus* of exposition, and the methods of the new criticism place the *data* in new lights.

No one can be readier than the writer to recognize every collateral ray of light thrown on exegesis by philology with gratitude. But the recent beams are, compared with the great flood thrown by the Reformed exegetes of the previous ages, slender side lights, and they are in the main confirmatory of the old orthodox methods and conclusions. To say that modern philology has furnished any grounds for revolutionizing exegesis, is simply a boastful misrepresentation. Let Winer be taken as the most illustrious example. His rationalism was probably so entire as to create for him the conditions of a complete grammatical equity and impartiality, by means of his very indifference to the doctrines extracted from the text. It made no difference to his prejudices or feelings whether the Scriptures were so interpreted as to teach Calvinism or Semi-Pelagianism, since to him they were no inspired authority for anything. Hence, he could investigate their grammatical laws with the same equanimity as those of Tyrtaeus or Pindar. What has been the result? That the principles of his grammatical constructions give the same conclusions in exegesis usually reached in Calvin's. In the minuter details and accomplishments of exegesis, he completes Calvin's exegetical results, in a few cases he differs from him, usually not for the better.

As for the methods of the new internal criticism, we meet the claim by a direct denial of their correctness. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Their most pungent condemnation is from their clashing results in the hands of their own advocates. On such critical premises an ingenious man might prove almost anything about any authentic writing. A much more plausible argument could be made to prove that the history of the first Napoleon is mythical (as Archbishop Whately showed), than

that the gospels of Jesus are mythical. One maxim of the common-sense of mankind contains a refutation of the most of these criticisms: "Truth is often stranger than fiction."

Only one of these so-called critical principles, one now exceedingly fashionable, will be mentioned in conclusion.

Protestant expositors have always admitted the utility of learning all that is possible of the personality of the human penman of the inspired document, of his times, education, opinions, modes of thought, idiosyncrasy of language, and nationality. Why? Because it is possible that any of these, when authentically known, may throw a side light, usually a dim one, on the interpretation of his words. But now, this obvious old admission is travestied and reappears in this form: that the human author's ascertained doctrinal "standpoint" is to dictate our construction of his inspired writing. And this, sometimes, when the doctrinal standpoint is the one he held before his conversion to the gospel! Clearly, this principle begs the whole question of that writer's inspiration. On the orthodox theory of inspiration, that the Holy Spirit, using the man as his *amanuensis*, did not suppress the human element of thought and style, but directed it infallibly to the giving of the form of expression designed by God for the composition, the penman's personal traits would naturally appear in the verbal *medium* of the divine thought. But, even then, they would not be allowed to vitiate the perfect truth of that thought. But to say that the propositions themselves were the results of the human writer's education and opinions, is simply to say that he had no inspiration. If the sacred writers claimed inspiration, and sufficiently attested the truth of the claim, then this theory of exposition is naught.