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I. THE NEW CHRISTOLOGY.

THE completion of Dr. Gerhart's *Institutes*¹ prepares the way for a full consideration of the theory which the distinguished author sets forth and maintains. The volumes give us a new work on systematic theology. They emanate from the Reformed (German) Church. They are able and entertaining. The spirit of their author is calm and reverent; his mind is broad and grasping; his method is positive and constructive rather than polemical and controversial; his style is plain and vigorous. The work possesses great value, but that value is chiefly negative, because these volumes are a concrete demonstration of the utter inability of modern progressives to fulfil their promises of a new theology and to make good their criticisms upon the old. Others of this school have written incisively upon topics in theology, and have had the polemical advantage of having that particular topic separated to itself, so that it could not be reinforced from the general system of truth to which it belonged; but Dr. Gerhart, bolder, braver, fairer, and truer than all his school, undertakes the construction of a system. His mind sees, and his heart feels, that, if the new principle be

¹ *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. By Emanuel V. Gerhart, D. D., LL. D., Professor of Systematic and Practical Theology in the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church at Lancaster, Pa. Complete in two octavo volumes, 1744 pages; per volume, \$3.00. New York, London, and Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls Company. 1894.

time accept the other doctrines of grace, which are equally difficult of explanation.

Presbyterians are, as a rule, nobly loyal in their love and pride of church, but there is need of a heartier and more earnest assertion of the doctrines of the church. We should not hide these great Bible principles under a bushel. We should delight to magnify them to the glory of God.

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SEMINARY STUDENTS' TEMPTATIONS.¹

In the customary course of Seminary events, it falls to my lot to utter the words formally beginning the labor of the sixty-eighth year of this institution.

It is not proposed, in what shall follow, to single out any topic whose discussion would anticipate the treatment it should and probably will receive during the year, in some one or more of the departments, but to deal with some points of general interest and practical utility.

And first of all, I wish to utter a word of mutual congratulation and of thanks to Almighty God, that our lives and health have been spared, and with a Faculty of unbroken ranks and with a goodly number of students, we are now once more assembled to start in making up the record of another year's service to the church through this venerable institution. May the Master's approval and blessing rest upon us as in past years!

I desire to note for the students a few distinct points, in few words.

1. The first is this: That we want you individually to look on the several members of this Faculty as your personal friends. By any other view, you wrong us and also yourselves. If, after such an announcement and assurance, you choose to stay away from our homes, ignoring our hospitality persistently, and, after awhile, formulate in your own minds or give expression to a complaint, that the members of the Faculty take only an official and no personal interest in you and show you no personal attentions, the fault will be your own; and even such a thought will show a querulous, unamiable disposition and temper of mind. Ordinarily and chiefly and as a matter of course,

¹ Extracts from the opening address delivered before the Faculty and students of Columbia Seminary, September, 1895, requested for publication.

our business is with you in the class room. This is beyond question. You are here to acquire theological scholarship with our help. If you are sick or in distress, it is your rightful claim and our pleasure that you should have every possible and needed attention, and none of you shall experience neglect. How many professors, and among the most helpful of them, have I had whom I never knew personally, never met nor spoke to out of class room. We have a right to assume that you are grown young men and mean business, and not little boys or children that need to be dandled, cozened and coaxed. The Faculty should not be expected to act as wet nurses. Samples of simpering simpletons are liable to find their way into any body of students.

1. The simple hard fact, however, is that you are not here for social and sentimental reasons, but for business, and social attractions are one of the many thieves of time against whose seductive reprisals you need to be warned and constantly on your guard. The social element is like condiments in your food, a little is delicious and appetizing and wholesome, but there are cases on record where too much common table salt has proved to be a deadly poison.

I would impress upon your minds, and stamp on your social lives, this governing idea: *Be not chameleons in your social intercourse*, taking on the shades of worldly mindedness, of indifference to religion, or, perhaps, the positive ungodliness of those about you; but be manly Christians, with such prepotency of Christian character that, whatever society you enter, it shall fully reflect your religious sentiments and tastes, instead of impressing on you its religionless tone. If a simple minded godliness be your temper, it will be as a bouquet of sweet roses and load the atmosphere wherever you go with the delights of its fragrance. There was no pharisaical severity, nor lordly pompousness, but ease and loving gentleness in all the Saviour's life with us; and in no instance did he compromise himself, or fail to impress his character on all about him* instead of chameleon-like reflecting theirs. Assert yourselves as Christians, which means to assert Christ always and everywhere.

2. You know the story of Atalanta losing the race by being diverted from the straightforward course to pick up the golden apples that her competitor flung to her view, on either side of the course.

Literary attractions and miscellaneous reading constitute another golden apple. I sometimes look over the entries in the Library book. You call on some one, and, perhaps, an exhibition is made of an acquaintance with the latest butterfly novel. You are somewhat dazed

and nonplussed, but your vanity is touched and you keep in the swim, it may be with a bevy of these beautiful humming birds, to the neglect of the strong mental pabulum of Hebrew and Greek roots and the strong meat of other Seminary dishes. But spoon victuals will not give you theological fibre. Flabby class-room work is the inevitable and sad consequence. The possibilities and opportunities of becoming a good and useful preacher are soon spoiled. In regard to these diversions and relaxing attractions, the aphorism, "drink deep or taste not," is not only out of place but reversed. By students in their theological course, such things are merely to be tasted, and even that may intoxicate some brains. But tasted they should be, and if any are so feather-like as to be blown away by such zephyrs, the sooner it happens the better. Let me commend to you a rule: Do your reading in the line of class-room labor. Religiously turn your back on all else; and even that reading should be judiciously chosen. As enforcing the practicability of gaining the most refined æsthetic culture by pursuing this course, it may be worth while to dwell on this point a little. . . . Such, then, is the Bible; such its poetry, its history, its philosophy, its religion, its anticipations of the greatest achievements of man. As a farther illustration of the estimation in which the Bible is held by men of genius, and in perfect keeping with our subject, we may refer to an incident taken from Halsey's *Literary Attractions of the Bible*, which is one of the most touching and beautiful to be found in modern biography. It is an incident in the last days of Sir Walter Scott.

"If there is any one among all the brilliant writers of this nineteenth century who may be said to have raised himself above his fellows by the force of literary genius, and to have won the very highest position in the world of letters, so as to be fairly entitled to a double chaplet of poesy and prose, it is that gifted son of the North, the author of *Marmion* and of *Waverley*, who held the world so long spell-bound while he was only known as the 'Great Unknown.'

"When he, thus crowned with honors at home, and with the laurel-wreath of a world-wide fame, was at last crowned with length of days, and confined to his bed by that sickness from which he never recovered; and whilst he lay there at Abbotsford in the bosom of his family, calmly awaiting the hour of death, then near at hand, on one occasion of partial relief, he requested a friend to read aloud for him. 'What book shall I read?' asked the friend. 'Why do you ask such a question?' said the dying man. 'There is but one; there can be but one now; bring me the Bible.'

“Verily, there is a time in every man’s life when the Bible is the only book, the last and only book for the peasant and the prince, for the dying child and the dying man of genius.” This book is not only your manual in death-bed scenes, but the book of your lives.

“Holy Bible, book divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine.”

You can afford to be men of *one book*. Let it be the sun of your literary and scholarly heavens, around which all your acquisitions shall cluster and revolve. Then will your religion be a life indeed and ye shall be living epistles known and read of all men.

Would that this thought had been urged on my own attention when at your stage of life, as I would now urge it on yours.

3. In the case of Atalanta she yielded to the tempting of three golden apples and lost the race which she had undertaken. The misleading influences of social and literary attractions have been instanced, and now let me with emphasis mention as a third peril, *preaching* out of the seminary *in term time*. On this subject a very decided and wholesome change has come over the mind of our church, in the past year, in the way of correcting the irregularities on the part of candidates. As some of you may not have seen it, I make no apology for using in this connection two extracts from an argument by myself entitled *Premature Licensure*, published in the *Southern Presbyterian*, March 21, 1895, against a plan then pending before the presbyteries. The plan was overwhelmingly defeated, only thirteen out of seventy-four presbyteries giving a straight vote for it.

According to the scheme laid down on pp. 216 and 217 of the *Minutes* of the Southern General Assembly, 1894, col. b., there are two distinct curricula proposed, though not entirely different, for several subjects overlap: (1), One is the *Licentiate curriculum*, and (2), the other is the *Ordination curriculum*.

This is viewed by some as virtually instituting a new order of ministry. But the avowed idea is that, on this plan, a more thorough education or mastery of the ordination curriculum will be secured to the ordained preacher than on the present plan.

It is conceived that there is one feature of the proposed plan which is fatal to the realization of that cherished purpose, and that is the preaching of students during term time. This is confessedly a working feature of the plan, and is urged as a virtue of it. In the nature of the case, it may be confidently affirmed that it is not possible to

make such a combination as that a success. Let us glance at it. There is a solid and irreversible principle underlying the working possibilities of the student, and of all other workers, which is here violated. In every educational institution, the course of study is organized on the basis of the average ability of the students. Some may be able to do a little more and rise above it, others may fall below. But the average mental ability of a sound mind in a sound body, coupled with persevering diligence, is demanded for success.

Every man has, within any twenty-four hours of his life, a given quantum of nerve energy on which all his activity depends. Assume his bodily and mental state normal. This nerve energy may be used up by both mental and bodily effort. All study involves physical endurance; and if the organized exercises of the institution equal the average mental energy and physical endurance of the students, then both the student and his study must suffer by his taking on any serious additional labor. A possible extraordinary exception furnishes no criterion for our guidance. Hence it is a wise rule observed by some Faculties that when the labors have been apportioned to the students, no Professor can give additional work without the knowledge and approval of his colleagues, and if need be a re-apportionment.

How, then, can preaching or trying to preach, under such inauspicious conditions increase or improve, as is urged, the mastery of the divinity course, *i. e.*, the *ordination curriculum*, to be consigned to this experiment? Can these youths be expected to beat their oil for lighting the sanctuary with more facility than full-fledged preachers? Dr. B. M. Palmer in his Biography of Dr. Thornwell gives an incident which may serve as a side light on this vexed question. In speaking of their "experience" in sermonizing, Dr. Thornwell remarked to him:

"Take, for example, two days for a sermon, knowing that it must go up in that time, and you will concentrate your powers of thought, so as to complete the address before it is worn out."

There is a somewhat extravagant incident from the life of Robert Hall, the great Baptist orator of England, which may be placed alongside of this. When asked how many discourses a minister could get up in a week, it is related that he gave this answer: "If he is a deep thinker, one; if he is an ordinary average man, two; if he is an ass he will produce half a dozen."

This is enough to enforce the view that sermonizing in term time by students in the Seminary *must* seriously mar their scholarly acqui-

sitions. Instead of aiding it is more likely to emasculate class-room work. And to the extent that there is reasonableness in this criticism of the supposed excellence of the proposed scheme, it should "give pause" to such as may seriously think of its adoption.

These are certainly cogent reasons for apprehending that the proposed scheme of mixing active preaching with active Seminary work forebodes only evil, evil to the young men, evil to the Church, I mean especially the Presbyterian Church.

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We need not suppose that it was affectation that induced the great Ambrose whose eloquent preaching was so serviceable in the conversion of the greater Augustine, to flee and hide himself when chosen bishop of Milan. Augustine was thirty-eight when he began to preach; Chrysostom was about the same age and Origen was 45. These three names are the most distinguished for influence on their own age and on subsequent ages among the church fathers of the first five centuries—the first as a philosophic theologian, the second as perhaps the most wonderful pulpit orator that has arisen in the Christian church, and the third for his unsurpassed though erratic genius and learning. Tertullian of the second and third centuries, like Chrysostom of the fourth and fifth, was a lawyer before he became a preacher, and Jerome was a mature man and scholar when ordained a presbyter.

No young man with the ministry in view can make a more serious mistake than to suppose that the sum total of the usefulness of his life as a minister is at all likely to be increased by hurrying into its active work before making the most thorough possible preparation for it. The few cases instanced, as occurring at the moment of writing, are sufficient and such as inculcate impressively this important lesson of holy reserve and conscientious self-control.

Indeed, the wonder is that there should not be a spontaneous demand that no licensure should be given, in this age, sooner than at the end of the three years' course, and that a fourth year should not be more in demand.

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HOME MISSIONS IN OUR SEMINARIES.

It is a fact worthy of note and full of richest promise to the church that in most of our institutions for the education of the ministry special emphasis is now laid upon the subject of Home Missions. Three of