

was not found convenient, and I can only express my regret that I must address you with very inadequate preparation.

I have thought that it might be not unfitting for me to take as my subject to-night,—The Spirit of Theological Enquiry. The value of College training does not depend so much on the abundance or even on the excellence of the instruction given in the various fields of learning, as upon the spirit with which it inspires the student. Its chief end and merit should be not mere acquaintance with doctrinal systems, but the cultivation of clearness, breadth, and solidity of mind; not something which can be directly taught, but that which is the consummation of well-directed and faithful study, the development of power that shall find expression in character and in service. It is a matter, therefore, of supreme importance for us in what spirit we pursue our studies; for, if this be at fault, the very highest field of enquiry may be barren of all good result.

What, then, is the true spirit of theological enquiry? or rather, let me ask, What are some of its leading features? for here we cannot sketch a portrait, we can only try to outline and emphasize a few important characteristics.

For one thing, it must be a truth-loving spirit. No man should be so ready to welcome truth, from whatever quarter it may come, as the student of theology, since wilfully to shut out truth is to shut out God. We have sometimes heard it said that we need not fear the truth; but merely to receive it without fear of being disturbed by it is but an indifferent greeting, for nothing is safer than truth. Rather, we should receive it with eager welcome, anxious to be delivered from any views or opinions that cannot abide in its presence. If our minds are narrowed and our hearts are closed by any prejudice, if we fear lest the systems we have built might be endangered by new discoveries, then we may hear a voice calling to us, Enlarge thy tents, Strengthen thy cords, Lift up thy gates that the King of truth Who is the King of glory, may enter in. For, there are not different kinds of truth any more than there are varieties of God. Polytheism might divide up the world into realms of earth and air and sea, and these again into sub-divisions, assigning each to a separate divinity; but modern science and Christian thought enthroned the one living God in place of those vanished deities. A false philosophy might imagine that the universe of truth was divided like the polytheistic picture of the world, that truth in one part might be at war with truth in another part; but, instead of that, all truth is one even as God is one. We may not always detect the perfect harmony of truth, just as we cannot always reconcile the acts of Providence; but, as we should welcome every fact that helps to disclose to us the character of God, trusting that in time we shall see how all these blend in perfect harmony, so we should welcome all truth, by whatever channel it may come to us, assured that, even if now there may seem to be some disagreement, this is due to the limits of our vision, and we can wait for the fuller light and perfect reconciliation.

The disclosures of science have often been regarded with fear or with suspicion by the theologian. He has been compelled by them, and may yet further be compelled, to modify his interpretations of the Bible; but