

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES: II.

THEOLOGICAL PROPÆDEUTIC.

Theological Propædæutic is taught in the first year in most of the larger seminaries of the republic. The word has been coined from *propaideia*, the preparatory or elementary teaching of a boy, and it means in the theological realm a general introduction to the scientific study of the Christian religion, in its origin, progress and present condition. It embraces theological Encyclopædia, which is an outline of the science of theology, giving an idea of its general character and aim, and showing the number, unity, order, variety and connection of its different branches. It includes also methodology, which gives directions how to study to the best advantage; and Bibliography, which indicates the best books to study in every one of the departments of theological investigation. It is an advantage to the student to view the whole field of theology under the guidance of a single mind, and to master a clear outline of the nature, aim and limits of the parts which constitute the whole. It will be specially helpful and inspiring if this can be accomplished so as to indicate the bearing of each of the divisions of the science on the minister's future work.

I think that if Bibliography had formed part of my course I could have carried on a more profitable course of post graduate reading; and it would have prevented me from wasting time and money on books which have been no manner of use to me. The student cannot get from books, especially those translated from the German, such information on Bibliography as can be furnished by his own professors, to whose cast of thought his own mind has been assimilated, and who have come from such pastorates as he must occupy. I dare say all professors do give their classes critical observations on various books in their several departments, but I believe that if one professor in a faculty, who has a genius for this, had it as a part of his work, it would be done in a more effective and permanently useful manner. After a life-time of reading, the critical estimates of such an one would be invaluable to the collector of a working library for a minister—at least in essentials, for there must always be room left for each student's personality and special tastes.

The late Dr. Schaff relates that when he was appointed in 1860 professor of Encyclopædia and Symbolics in Union Seminary, a doctor of divinity and editor of a leading religious periodical asked him, "Pray tell me the