

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED.

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THEOLOGY, if she has taken delight in styling herself "the queen of the sciences," must more than any other branch of learning allow her faults to have themselves shown up in the proverbial bright light to which such a royal position is exposed. These faults are serious. The hostile critic lays the charge of obscurantism and *odium theologicum*; the impassioned preacher taxes her with the barren intellectuality of the cloister. An "orthodox" theologian is scorned on the one hand for being unscientific, or treated as a fossil scored by the outworn and unreal controversies of long ago.

It is not my concern to vindicate theology's rights, nor to deny that some of these charges are true. There are spots in the sun where Dante put theologians, but discover what spots you will, divinity is still the sun in the intellectual universe of more men, whether professional theologians or not, than ever before, for:—

The vagrant soul returning to herself
Wearily wise, must needs to her return.

It must, however, be admitted that in our churches there is much impatience, if not unrest with regard to methods and even results of recent theological enquiry. It is useless to deny that our younger men often approach their studies with an expectancy of discoveries in a land which a past generation had supposed to be already fully explored. There is zest in our schools today for the first freshness is still upon recent methods. This very fact has its own evils. Theology if not to be branded as the most unreal of shams cannot allow herself to serve as a handmaiden for intellectual fancy, nor at all acknowledge those clever young men who find in her, subjects for new theories in which to disport themselves. Christian theology is based on Him who is the God of all truth, and that truth itself brings life eternal. Hence, she must repudiate equally him who follows paths that are new merely because of romance or notoriety, and him who for worldly safety mumbles over accepted propositions with a superstitious conviction that some how they may possibly galvanize somebody into life. The former boasts of the errors that he has in his cleverness discovered in the Bible; the latter having used three fourths of his sermon to give a compendium of systematic theology, tacks on one or two "applications" at the end, as a sort of walking-stick in the hand of his very dry skeleton.