


## Christian Thought.

### THE PROFITS OF THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION.

#### AN EXTEMPORE ADDRESS.

BY JOSEPH T. DURYEA, D.D., OF BROOKLYN, AT THE OPENING OF THE THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, OCTOBER 1ST, 1878.

FTER discussion of sundry points, Dr. Duryea concluded his lecture in the following words:—Be careful, if some of these difficulties startle you, how you back up too far in the face of a difficulty; because you may back off from all the ground there is and tumble over. I have fought Calvinism, every inch of it, tooth and nail, until I had hardly tooth and nail left; and I would give up, and give up, and give up, until, when I came to see what I had given up, I found I had given up a great deal more than I thought I had, for there was so much involved in what I had yielded that I had thrown away almost enough to drag away what was left. I have no doubt that Dr. Whedon, in the same way, had to fight Arminianism—if, indeed, he had to fight; for they say that human nature inclines more readily to Arminianism, and doesn't have to fight against it as it does against Calvinism. And I dare say he backed up in the same way, until he came to the verge, looked over his shoulder at the abyss, and then stepped forward, picked up the old ground, and stood on it. Do not think that the system is going to pieces because you have encountered a difficulty.

And once more, remember this: that, after all, in your preaching, the system is rather a safeguard than the source of the substance of your teaching. The older I grow the more I want theology for preaching, on which systematic theology is simply a line of outposts for the purposes of defence. I believe that theology proceeds from the person of Christ. We are absurd in all our treatment of the evidences of Christianity, because we do not begin with Christ. We have no other place at which to begin; for, if we will observe, our entire argument for the divinity of the Old Testament is: Jesus laid his hand on it and said, "This is the Word of God." And when we have the Scriptures completed and substantiated we should consider them chiefly as the revelation of God in his Son, and construe the truth they contain in such a manner that at last we should be