

self an American: "The preachers who have moved and held men have always preached doctrine. No exhortation to a good life which does not put behind it some truth as deep as eternity can seize and hold the conscience." There may of course be a great difference of opinion as to what is meant by doctrine, but it is difficult to conceive of definition which would include the matter contained in most of those sermons.

These men are not referred to because of any recognised prominence as teachers of modern Christian doctrine, but only because they furnish ready illustrations of this modern tendency. Differing widely in education and training, writing under very different circumstances on different subjects and in different style, we naturally expect their treatment of theological questions to be widely different. Whatever point of agreement may be found must have some other foundation than similarity of conditions. As a matter of fact the differences are very great and the points of agreement very few. They agree chiefly, perhaps only, in their lack of regard for doctrinal teaching. And even this is shown in different ways characteristic probably of the different stages reached in two countries. The Scottish writer certainly knows something of the great doctrinal ideas, but we look in vain for any indication that the American writer ever heard of them.

Since this neglect of doctrine is a modern tendency, it is worth while asking what are its advantages and disadvantages. That there are advantages is quite evident, and one or two of the more important may be noted. In the first place it has the great advantage of advancing peace and christian unity. Everybody must lament the great amount of time and energy that have been wasted in quarrelling over matters of belief. To say nothing of the earlier times, it is a notorious fact that the Reformation was hampered and its triumphs lessened by the dissensions of the Reformers themselves. And from the days of Luther and Zwingli to the present hour, great has been the dissipation of christian energy in the wrangling between different parties and different sects. The name of Christ has been dishonored and his cause weakened by such dissensions, and it is an incalculable gain if these could be forgotten and the spirit of unity pervade