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ART. I.—THE VARIABLE AND THE CONSTANT
IN CHRISTIAN APOLOGY.

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IN the modern, weakened sense of the word, the Church of Christ has no *apologies* to make. We apologize to no man for our faith, as though there was anything in it to excuse or extenuate. But like the “elect strangers scattered throughout Asia Minor,” to whom St. Peter addressed his 1st Epistle, we hold ourselves “ready for apology to every one that asketh of us an account of the hope that is in us.” The simple self-respect of an honest, rational believer, allows no less than this; our loyalty to our Lord may well add something to the readiness and earnestness of our vindication. For it is He that is called in question, rather than we, by the unbelieving world.

When Christ with his own lips charged his disciples, in clear view of the troubled days and scenes to which he pointed them, not to be anxious, not to prepare before hand their apology even for synagogues, magistrates, and kings, he justified the strange charge by the quieting assurance that a cause higher than their own should have an advocacy higher than their own. “The Holy Ghost shall teach you.” “I will give you a mouth and wisdom.” This was the first provision made for Christian apologies and apologists. And to the last day of the Church’s conflict with unbelief and error, it must fare ill with the defense and the defender of the faith that is not under the same teaching and endowment,—while

in the "quietness and confidence" of this trust shall be her strength.

But shall our Lord be interpreted as forbidding his disciples' concern and premeditation under any and all circumstances, when they and their master's cause were attacked or arraigned? There have been those, and they have not yet all passed away, who would deny the Church all use of gathered wisdom, cultivated powers and ripened experience, as though the Lord were by these distrusted and dishonored. With such I need hold no argument in this presence.

The "Prince of peace" came "not to send peace on earth, but a sword." With the very greeting that hailed his first presentation in the temple, there was blended the recognition of him as a "sign that should be spoken against." Much of his personal labor with his disciples was designed to prepare them for hearing themselves called Beelzebub, like their Lord. With this they were to be well content. The time of their solicitude was to be the time "when all men should speak well of them." And the result has not to this day disappointed the expectations that he awakened in them and for them.

Since our Lord went "to prepare a place" for those whom his brief work on earth should win to the faith of his Gospel, and the experience of whatever of real good or seeming ill that faith might bring with it, the Church has made long and thorough proof of the world's disposition toward it. The one actuating spirit of aversion and hate has found many forms of expression. Now, with more of patent malignity, again with more of courtliness and seductive courtesy; at one time with ribaldry and blasphemy, and at another with supercilious compliments and patronage; in one age with the array of lions' fangs or creaking racks, deserts' exile, dungeons' gloom or faggots' flame, in another, with the use of all the finest enginery and strategy of science and philosophy, the one unchanging, eternal hostility has assaulted our faith, while sixty generations of men have been in their order carried to their fathers.

The Church, in conducting her defense, has naturally accommodated her methods to the varying forms of the attack.

Yet the Christianity to be vindicated is one through all ages, all lands, and all the phases of man's condition and culture. With these two facts specially in view, I have chosen as a fitting theme for this hour,

THE VARIABLE AND THE CONSTANT IN CHRISTIAN APOLOGY.

Christianity on its defense! We may well linger a moment to contemplate such a marvel. God's full complete expression to man of the truths which it most concerns him to know; God's crowning demonstration of a love for man that should seem to have been already well enough attested; God's assertion of his own rights and enunciation of his own claims, so made as to present the issue with the utmost clearness, and yet by the most persuasive and winning utterance; an enforcement, moreover, of divine claims, which, while securing for God all his due, is yet the first full vindication ever made for man of all he owes himself, and of that by which the best interests of two worlds will be in the simplest way made absolutely secure: God's way of refining for us every real joy, dignifying every proper toil, ennobling every right relation, and making not only lighter and more endurable, but even blessed, every grief and pain and transient ill of earth; God's mode of establishing brotherhood over all the earth, and brotherhood between earth and heaven;—this is the Christianity that from the first moment of its introduction to our earth, has been suspected, distrusted, misrepresented, soberly and in caricature, denounced and assailed. Christianity has never been with the world's consent released one moment from the attitude of defense. That it should have been for a few years at the first thrown into this position, may not appear strange. The Jew found that the system which was by its claim the foretold culmination of his own divinely founded, divinely guarded faith, was to supersede it. Many hopes were withered, many proud, fond anticipations dissipated as a mocking mist. And the Gentile found that he must abhor where he had adored, and renounce what he had believed, and become in spirit and in practice much that he had most despised. He demurs, and challenges the right of those Galilean fisher sages and philosophic artisans of Tarsus to demand all this at his hands.

But shall the attitude of the parties remain the same when Judaism has shown itself two thousand years dead, and heathenism has only varied and multiplied for twenty centuries more the demonstration of its inadequacy and enormity, and philosophy after the discoveries, speculations and hypotheses of sixty generations is as far as ever from developing such grace and truth as came by Jesus Christ? Meanwhile, Christianity has been accumulating and perfecting the proofs that it is from God and for God, for us each and for us all, for us here and for us there, for us now and for us then. Yet never was the defensive elaboration, grouping, illustration and presentation of the Christian evidences a more constant and urgent office of the church than it is to-day in the very Oxfords and Cambridges of two hemispheres. The solution of this prolonged enigma of history is not far to seek if we will rely, not on some scientific use of the imagination, but on inspiration as a competent authority.

But this is not the problem of the present hour. With our eye on the essential nature of the Christian Apology and a few characteristic and representative facts from its actual development in history, we are to mark some of its variable and some of its constant elements. For greater convenience and compactness let our illustrations be drawn from the first and last centuries of apologetic literature.

In the technical language of the schools the word *apologetics* has been employed for the last three quarters of a century to designate that branch of theological science whose province is to present in logical order and organic connection "the defense or rather the self-justification of Christianity" (De-litzsch.) This latter description is clearly the more felicitous and adequate. No true exhibition of the nature of Christianity can be purely defensive. Its credentials cannot be spread out before a rational mind without the clear announcement of its compromising claims. To remove misconceptions, to repel aspersions, to refute calumnies, is to array evidences and arguments that cannot logically end with the acquittal of the accused. The juror's formal verdict may at first be "not guilty," but a negative conviction of innocence must here be followed by a persuasion of the absolute excellence of the ar-

raigned religion. The self-justification of Christianity is incomplete unless its claim is established to the allegiance of every man. An analysis of the idea of Christianity, revealing its elements, and a scrutiny of its attesting credentials, confirms its title to the throne in every man's reason, heart and life, or dooms it to execration. It cannot stand merely as theoretically a religion, in distinction from a philosophy, a system of ethics, or a practical code for public and private life. Nor is it enough that it shall appear a *true* religion, as though other systems may share the honor with it. It claims to stand as *the* true, complete, and absolutely authoritative religion for man. To this extent must the self-justification of Christianity be made valid. Jesus Christ is not content to take his place in the *lararium*, the palace chapel, of any devout Emperor Alexander Severus, with the national and naturalized deities, and Abraham and Moses and Orpheus and Apollonius of Tyana. Christianity must be sole occupant of the shrine.

The Christian Apologist as such does not assume or attempt to put Christianity in possession of its own, but taking his stand before the tribunal of every man's rational and moral nature, endeavors there to clear and establish the title of Christianity to its own. Whether that title should be admitted he seeks in every lawful way to make evident; whether it shall be conceded he leaves to depend on the success of a higher pleading—that of Christ himself and the Holy Ghost.

Unless he would encumber and imperil his work, he must say, "one thing I do." It is Christianity—this and nothing else—to exhibit whose self-justification he appears. Christianity taken from the hands of all perfumers and costumers; Christianity divested of all that is not essential and vital; Christianity, as it has shown itself to be by what it has said and done in its own behalf, he is to vindicate, or rather to secure for it from a tribunal that should be jealous of all imposture and deceit, but candid toward all that is true and loyal to all that is right, the opportunity to vindicate itself. The materials of his plea he takes from its own records and its actual results. Just in proportion as he attempts the vindication of anything that is more or less or other than Christianity, or incorporates in his plea that which Christianity has not clearly

stamped as its own divine credentials, he ceases to be a Christian and becomes a sectarian apologist. His work is embarrassed, his rightful confidence impaired, his success put at hazard.

The self-justification of Christianity is of course the refutation of all opposing claims. These claims are all by implication disproved by the simple, complete exhibition of the Christian apology, though not one of the systems antagonistic to it should have been named. But the vindication of the truth may be made more triumphant by comparison and contrast. In detail and point by point, or by a telling accumulation of particulars, it may be shown by what one or many defects of title the contestant is proved not possessed of sovereign rights. Formally or informally these comparisons must be made. The Jewish and the Mohammedan faiths, Zeus and Olin, Brahma and Buddha, every ancient and every modern system of philosophy that would make itself a religion for the select and the illuminated, and the wide-spread religion of ungodliness, these all, and more, must pass the ordeal of this comparison and scrutiny. To refuse the trial is to be more ignominiously rejected. Christianity demands and welcomes the issue. If it can not prove itself entitled to the faith of the world, it will accept the faith of none.

Incidentally, it may be a practical object with the Christian apologist to enlighten, cheer, confirm the faith of believers. His stirring call may go forth within the Church, "Walk about Zion and go round about her; tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks; consider her palaces." But his more legitimate work aims to refute or convince those who are averse or hostile to the faith of Christ. He must therefore assume that his plea will come before a prejudiced tribunal. The reply will be made, that when the Christian evidences are spread before a believing mind, the tribunal is no less really biased. But the advocate for Christianity does not ask assent in advance of evidence, conviction before the array of proof. The sound judicial mind is not characterized by an absolute, passionless impartiality. That is a fiction of the men who are wiser than the world's Creator. Man was made to be prepossessed in favor of truth. Before the intuition or

the logical process, it may be a matter of indifference, *e. g.*, whether the sum of two and two shall appear to be four or five; but when truth is reached, the mind not merely sees but prefers the truth. The Christian apologist seeks only so far to allay prejudice and soothe opposing passion, that in some calm moment, when the mental scale is brought as near as may be to equilibrium, the self-justification of Christianity may be pondered. Unless he be more partisan than Christian he would not have Christianity itself prevail except as it is divinely true.

Such in brief outline is the province of Apologetics as a department of theological science. We do not assert, nor is it essential or desirable, that Christian apologies should always cover precisely this ground or proceed according to this or any one exact method. We do not absurdly insist that all evidences are of equal significance to all minds, nor that one kind of proof may not be better suited than another to the mental and moral temper of this age or that. But we do insist that whatever is at any age a valid proof of the divinity of Christianity is valid forever. If prophecy could ever be fitly adduced, or a miracle ever be reasonably summoned as witness, or the moral excellence of Christ and Christianity ever be pressed as soundly evidential, they may all be to-day. God has not reared this faith of ours on such foundations as the childishness of one age, the ignorance of another, the narrow prejudices of a third. Christian apologists have given proof enough that they were not inspired, but the faith for which they have stood is for humanity and for eternity. In the adaptation of their method to their age the one grand object should never be forgotten or obscured—the exhibition of Christianity that it may justify itself to men; Christianity just as it is, unchanging through all the course of years; Christianity and nothing more.

This done, the advocate of the Christian faith may dismiss his work in the hope that in the pure light of this divine truth, conviction will be wrought, assent won, and with the favor of God, allegiance of thought and heart and life thenceforth ensured. The one great aim of this Christian science should

prescribe and indicate the *constant* element of the Christian apology.

The further fact that the end to be secured is practical, and not some mere scientific symmetry or completeness, will mark at last the place for *variable* elements. Precisely what these may be in the long course of the Christian conflict with error can be neither prescribed nor predicted. The exigencies of the defensive and aggressive plea for Christianity will not only allow but exact a wide variety in proportion and method. There are political and other changes in the external relations of the Church to the world. There is the progress of civilization and science affecting both Church and world. There is with the lapse of time, under the fulfilment of our Lord's own promises, a more perfect comprehension and appropriation by the Church of that truth which has been without one authorized and inspired addition in its possession from its first century. Then there will be peculiarities, individual, local, temporal, circumstantial, influencing both sides in the great debate. The attack upon Christianity, the defense against Christianity, will thus assume many and widely different phases—and the Christian apologist must not disdain the example of the great Apostle in becoming "all things to all men, that he may by all means save some."

The Scriptures of the New Testament sketch for us the direct grapple of Christianity with Judaism for the single generation that intervened between the Lord's death and the death of the Jewish State. Inspiration has preserved for us the apologetic literature of that period, which therefore has for us a value all its own. But as those who must conduct the Christian apology without the aid of inspiration, we turn eagerly, New Testament in hand, to study the Christian literature of a somewhat later day. We would know how the life that was in the Church, and the exigencies of its changing condition, and a form of providential and spiritual guidance more like that which we may ourselves anticipate, shaped the subsequent pleas for Christianity.

When the Clements and Justin Martyr, Origen and Tertullian were the champions of the faith, instead of Peter and Paul and John, how did they defend, how did they commend

Christianity? It was natural that the literature of the first two centuries should partake largely of this apologetic character. While the canon of the Scripture was forming, and gaining recognition, and moulding more and more widely and deeply the individual and organized life of the church, Christianity as a system could not very much attract attention. The attack was personal upon the Christian leaders, upon the body of Christians, upon some aspect of their life—or if to some extent directed against their faith, it was some single obnoxious fact or doctrine that was called in question. This was the case both before Jewish and heathen tribunals, and the first vindications were chiefly personal and mutual—defenses of Christians rather than of Christianity.

“We are not addicted to abominable immoralities, as is charged upon us, but scrupulously moral, and moral because Christian; the charge might be sustained against you and your very gods. We are not atheists, impious, and worshippers of monstrous things. Although our religion is a novelty having no legal sanction, our secret organization can excite no just suspicion; we have no sinister object, no disloyal schemes. We are neither dangerous nor profitless citizens, although for convenience sake we do decline what you call civil or social duties when these are forbidden by Christian loyalty. You worship many gods when but one should be worshipped—gross, vile gods, despised by your own best thinkers, feared it may be by many, but loved by none. To worship them degrades and pollutes yourselves. Your philosophies are but human, uncertain, and mutually destructive, wearying the minds that they for a time excite, incapable of nourishing souls. Our faith befriends and exalts the whole man, body, soul and spirit.”

Such as this is to a large degree the vehement personal character and style of the apologies of Justin and Tertullian, Origen and Lactantius. Although not strictly comprised within the Christian literature of the first three or four uninspired generations, it is precise enough for our present purpose to call these the apologies of the first century. The struggle for life came on a little later in the Western than in the Eastern Church, and in neither was it exactly bounded by

any one hundred years. But these were the great exigencies of that period, and before that time had fully passed, the Church had outwardly reached a new position, and inwardly a more mature development. Even those Fathers who were foremost representatives of the Church in its battle for existence, were Apostles as well as Apologists. They contended for their faith as well as for themselves. Toleration and an opportunity for the quiet unfolding and enjoyment of their own Christian life were not enough; their assailants and persecutors must be won for Christ. The characteristics and the claims of Christianity were unfolded to Jews and Gentiles, that it might justify itself to both and bring all to "one fold and one shepherd."

The position of the Jew had greatly changed since Caiaphas and Herod and Pilate held strange counsel against the Nazarene Messiah, who for a purpose must be made to appear dangerous to Roman supremacy. "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." Had they never heard him say, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's?" They had not learned, nor would they know that his sceptre need never clash with Cæsar's—that he was a king to whom Cæsar might do homage and reign only the more securely. Was it the Christians or the son of a high priest that had forbidden temple offerings for the Emperor, and so had brought down the strong arm and trained valor of Vespasian's legions to desolate the land and sack the Holy City and burn the temple? Was it these Christians or was it their last Jewish persecutor, the pretended Messiah, Barcochba, who, two generations later, had refused tribute to Cæsar, and had brought a second more terrible and final desolation on Jerusalem, and had called forth Hadrian's decree of perpetual exile from that hallowed ground? The Christians not only had not occasioned, but had escaped these disasters, and had from them gained broader, deeper, more spiritual views of Christianity than could have been easily reached so long as David's beautiful city invited the returning sceptre of David's son. It was to the Jew burdened, maddened by these memories and experiences that this abhorred Christianity must be made to justify itself. Himself stripped of all power to hurt

he had been breathing in the ears of heathen magistrates of high and low degree in every province of the broad empire, suspicions and calumnies against the Nazarenes. How should the Christian apologist so present the faith in the crucified, as to win the crucifiers on whom God had so terribly set his mark? This was part of the apologetic problem of that day, involving one of the variable elements. The spirit of Christ was surely needed in large measure by those called to its solution.

And how should this same faith be made to justify itself before the heathen world, whose masses surfeited with their superstitions, were rioting in new devices and combinations of idolatry; whose rulers were indifferent to all foreign religions that would come quietly under the broad shield of the empire, contributing to the quietness of the people and the stability of the State, but to whom all aggression upon the State religion was treason; whose wise men looked with curious distrust on each new philosophy, but with undisguised disdain on all wisdom that did not wear the robe and speak the dialect of some school? No heathen system had continued to satisfy all these as the crowded pantheon proved, and the philosophers' very common rejection of the people's faith. Could Christianity commend itself to all? Calumnies must first be repelled and prejudices allayed. To follow this by a bold attack on the deficiencies and enormities of the heathenism in whose power the infant Church seemed to lie so helpless, might inspire respect for courage, but hardly for deep sagacity. The courage of a foe had always won a Roman's respect, but never long arrested the effort to subdue him. And to the furtherance of the ultimate object of the Christian Apologist, what would it avail to unveil all that was barren and all that was revolting, either in the current mythologies or in the prevalent religious practice, unless the wearied and sickened spirit were pointed to worthier objects of faith and worship? In what was the skepticism of the schools more satisfying than the faith of the masses? And in what, unless it be by an æsthetic difference, was the pollution of the schools (with few noble exceptions,) better than the pollution of the temples? With a view to

lasting, saving issues, the apologetic attack were better not made if not followed by some wise, winning presentation of Christianity that should at least give it opportunity to justify itself to these idolaters and skeptics. It is more than the beginning of wisdom in such a case to make the right approach.

The development of heathenism had plainly reached a crisis. Let St. Paul tell us how full of temples and smoking altars he found the heart of Athens, though encompassed by the Lyceum and Academy and Porch, and all the other protesting and scoffing schools of philosophy. And as to Rome, the tramp of the barbarian hosts that a few generations later overwhelmed the empire, was hardly more countless than that of the divinities thronging from all the provinces to the greedy Capital. Isis and Serapis, Astarte and Mithras brought with them a worship less trite and more exciting to the palled senses than the familiar and more decorous faiths of the West. And, elbowing their way through this motley crowd, there might be seen familiar forms of feared and detested Emperors impatient to be adored as gods. If the idolatrous frenzy of such a time seemed unfavorable for the presentation of the Christian cause, there was another side to the case. The very multiplication of gods and rites is cogent proof that man's religious wants are not yet satisfied. The simple, spiritual worship of one god at least offers relief in a new way. What neither multiplied and intensified idolatries, nor the negations of philosophy have effected, may be sought, perhaps found, by a new venture. And it is not all a venture. The new faith is not all a novelty, without a herald to either eye, or mind, or heart of man.

To unfold here in Alexandria, Athens, and Rome, the typical import of the Mosaic economy would bring no conviction. To quote David and Isaiah would be equally idle; but Plato and Aristotle, Pindar, Æschylus and Aratus, Cicero and Seneca, Ovid and Propertius, may gain a hearing while they testify to the defects and the destructive results of the popular faith, as well as to the existence of sober convictions and earnest longings that were the uninspired prophecy of a coming blessing. And so a willing ear is gained of which the

apologist takes quick advantage to present the object, the grounds, the spirit and result of the Christian's faith. It was Christianity, not as a creed, but as a worship and a life, that was set forth as offering satisfaction to the weary, longing souls of men. The system of Christian doctrine had been as yet but little discussed and defined within the Church itself; and if it had been developed ever so symmetrically, this was not the side to be first presented to the masses in the heathen world. Even to the philosophers, bewildered in the shaping and comparison of systems of abstractions, it was fortunate that the Church had little to offer but simple truths, vital truths, truths surcharged with power, truths rich in golden fruits. The Christian life was an absolutely new phenomenon, and disciples lived this life, not accidentally, but because they were disciples. Their conscientious fidelity, their fervent mutual love, their goodly charity, their courage loftier far than that of the soldier and the gladiator, the full strong body of their virtues, could not fail to commend their faith even to the benumbed sensibilities of men to whom virtue had never been at all commended by the example of their gods, nor with any persuasiveness and binding power by all the moral codes of all the sages. To the early Church the personal and vital elements rather than the doctrinal implications of their faith filled the foreground, and so they exhibited it. To the world there was a novelty, at first startling and shocking to old habits and prepossessions, but deeply refreshing and attractive, in this presentation of a worthy object of worship, and a faith that constrained by love and to love. The transfer of allegiance was made with less revulsion of feeling when all that was normal and natural under the old systems was shown to have its fuller satisfaction in Christianity. A little later another step was possible, and the Church, more confident of its ground and better instructed in regard to the import and relations of its faith, could press new arguments. "It was reserved," says Canon Westcott, "for the Latin Apologists to apprehend the independent claims of Christianity, and establish its right to supplant as well as to fulfil what was partial and vague in earlier systems."

But it is time that we pass from these illustrations of the constant and the variable, in the earlier Christian Apology to some that may be suggested by the experiences and demands of our own century.

The political and social surroundings of the struggle between the Church and the world are greatly changed. Christianity is not now excluded from all the high places of the earth, persecuted by all that are in power, and under the ban of all good society. The change if not in all points favorable to Christian simplicity, modifies the position and work of the apologist. Nor is all the thought and culture of the earth either ignorant of Christianity or contemptuous towards it. It is not so unknown that in any Athens of the world its proclamation would merely furnish a new sensation to the curious and novelty loving. Nor need it now be anywhere the first preliminary office of its advocates to show that it is not a foe to the stability of states, or to the mutual fidelities and moralities of private life. All these changes make the real issue more direct and simple. Besides, the plea of the advocate for Christianity has been reinforced by all its secular results for fifty generations and more. All that work of beneficence, by which it has made the world its debtor, stands to its account. Not with pharisaic ostentation, but in all quietness, prolonging through the centuries its illustration of the spirit which its founder enjoined in the matter of private charities, "not letting its left hand know what its right hand was doing," it has lavished its alleviations, enlightenments and refinements upon a world that know not to this day the source of half its store.

For superficial reasons new courtesies may be in vogue in the world's treatment of Christianity. But not on this ground is it to be assumed that there is any relenting in the old antipathy, any gradual assimilation, any increasing probability that the Holy Spirit will be released from his converting work and regeneration become an antiquated experience. Just in proportion as the world in this advanced, enlightened day is confronted with pure and simple Christianity will the actual facts appear; but if it be with a Christianity that has lost its Christ, or a Christianity that has hid-

den him behind his instrumentalities and furnished him with improved devices and appliances for the more agreeable accomplishment of his saving work, then the world may fancy that it too is Christian. The apologist who is loyal to Christianity and desires triumph for truth will then make it his first object to clear away all side issues, to disentangle the subject of all complications, that Christianity may justify itself to men. In this as the ruling principle of his work the Christian champion of the nineteenth should be at one with him of the second century. The problem has increased in difficulty and complexity as the generations have multiplied and modified the creeds and rituals. Many things have been called Christianity that are base counterfeits, and many things that are it with a *differentia*. It is most salutary to the apologist himself, and greatly helpful to his future work, that he must first indentify the Christianity in whose vindication he is to appear. On his loyalty to Christ let him say, what is Christianity? As he reaches a true answer his vision is cleared, his work simplified; his own purified and quickened affections are concentrated upon that work; he feels his oneness with the Lord and all who are the Lord's; and as one who is not part of a hand or a foot but of the whole body of Christ, he is raised in dignity and worth. He gains in impulse, consecration and competence, and goes forth a new man to a new and glorious work. That work is not chiefly to defend by the might of his own arm the assaulted faith, nor by his own prowess to reverse the attack, put the assailants upon their defense, and press the aggressive claims of Christianity; it is to farther in every way the self-justification of Christ to men. But he may not on any plea decline defense, or refuse or neglect to take advantage of his opportunity to silence the assailants of Christ, his doctrine and Church and cause. It is not enough to assume that the refutations of the past have perfected and finished the defense; for although Lucian and Celsus and Prophecy are continually returning to the attack, generation after generation, and few fresh foes come with them, they come in new panoply, and are versed in new arts and subtleties. For those who dream that Christianity can be overthrown by endlessly

minute and petty carpings at the external form, and the material (as distinguished from the spiritual) substance of the Christian records, a highly developed and pretentious historical criticism offers new encouragements and facilities. Few may be really added to the historical difficulties brought out in imposing array by Celsus and Prophecy, but they are more adroitly and scientifically handled.

The significance of miracles among the Christian evidences is no new discovery, but there are new devices for robbing Christianity of this confirmation. Celsus could ascribe miracles to hidden forces in the deep heart of nature evoked by magic. The modern Celsi, being scientific, will not talk to you of sorcery, but in these forces, daily less and less hidden in the deep heart of nature, they have a firmer and more intelligent belief. Can they not *correlate* and *conserve* them, and are not the marvellous applications of science hourly making closer approximation to the miracles of Scripture? The majesty and sway of natural law those early thinkers had not seen even "in a mirror darkly." No Baden Powell had written: "The enlarged critical and inductive study of the natural world can not but tend powerfully to evince the inconceivableness of imagined interruptions of natural order, or supposed suspensions of the laws of matter, and of that vast series of dependent causation which constitutes the legitimate field for the investigation of science, whose constancy is the sole warrant for its generalizations, while it forms the substantial basis for the grand conclusions of natural theology." But now it must be, if there is nothing to be known that science does not know after its method, that the numerous "interruptions of natural order" recorded in the Scripture and laid at the foundation of many an argument and many a new life, were all "imagined," and that we must rule them out at whatever cost as "inconceivable." A clerical writer in a leading English Review (the *Contemporary*) for the present month says: "We receive Christianity, and therefore we receive the miracles; but they are really in the way of faith and cannot by any possible alchemy be made evidences of the truth of Christianity to the men of this generation. * * * The miracles of the Bible are probably true, but

they cannot themselves be converted into proofs." Is this our Lord's view of the import and worth of his miracles? Were they a mere trick to catch men of his own age and race, fastened upon Christianity to embarrass and encumber the faith of men of other ages and races? Is the fault with Christ and Christianity, or is it with "the men of this generation," if miracles have lost their convincing power? Our faith may be vain, we may be yet in our sins, if the miracle of our Lord's resurrection be unreal, or the proof of it invalid; the Apostle Paul has such an argument inspired or uninspired; that will little disturb the serenity of science. For what number, character and competence of witnesses can establish the inconceivable? The early age was credulous, and believed in and on testimony; we have defined the bounds and gauged the possible power of testimony, and stand calm and scornful against the affidavits of a generation of gaping Jews. Did Christ and the prophets before him, and the Apostles after him, stake much on the significance of prophecy? Porphyry can tell us as well as any modern Eichhorn that the prophecies of Daniel were written after the occurrence of the events described. But the self exaltation of humanity over against the self justification of Christianity had not then reached such height as now, and men had not assumed to themselves (in so readily ascribing to their fellows) the possession of prophetic and all other needed inspirations. The modesty or ignorance of those days made inspiration a rare endowment; but now what genius among us all may not claim to be the peer of Isaiah and John? The coarseness of Lucian's attack upon the character and work of Christ may find few imitators; but what cannot French politeness do when it would depict in a religious novel an amiable visionary and impostor?

The quick, sound instinct of both parties in this great debate of all the Christian centuries (what a question it must raise in the mind, what a pang it must send through the heart of many a skeptic that he must date his letter or his book from *the year of our Lord 1871*,) has concentrated attack and defense more and more about a few vital points. There will be earnest work elsewhere, but the day will be won or

lost according to the issue there reached. Is the co-existence and co-working of the supernatural and the natural in this world of ours conceivable and possible? Can such an active co-existence be proved to the satisfaction of a rational mind? Is the supernatural present and working in, with, and for Christianity? These questions have been abundantly answered in the negative. Nature may be made so great, so strong, so sacred, that its maker (if it had a maker) may not manifest his presence in it, or touch in any new way, for any new purpose, this superdivine work of his hands. Or, if the supernatural be not impossible, we cannot be convinced of its actual appearance anywhere, so completely are the laws of belief based upon the natural, so indissolubly linked with the natural. Or if the supernatural might be established by evidence, it has not been so accredited to us in Christianity; the documents are not what they should be in form or contents; we would not have undertaken to effect so great a persuasion with such limping testimony. So doubters think and talk.

Following our deepest judgment and our warmest impulse we, fulfilling the true office of the Christian Apologist, seeking that Christianity may justify itself, would answer the last of the three inquiries first. We would hold up Christianity that men may see the supernatural there present and working; Christianity in the person of its founder; Christianity in the history and life of his Church; Christianity in the experience of any one believer. In each of these behold the supernatural, and if your theory of the place and bounds of the natural, or your doctrine of the laws of evidence requires rectifying, rectify it. But the Christian Apologist need not fear to take the earlier queries by themselves, and maintain that God has neither shut himself out from his own world, nor from the minds whose laws of belief he fashioned.

But I must turn from the crowding suggestions of my theme, noting but one grand result that shall be realized when the whole Church of Christ shall become apologists for Christianity. We Christians bear too many other names beside the Christian, and value them far too highly, thrusting

them too often into the foreground. Shall we lift so high above our heads the symbols of our several *isms* as we move to the vindication of one faith against the common foe? How many Christianities have we to defend? For how many Christs shall we plead? Let one great love for our one glorious Lord swallow up our petty divisive loves, and one great zeal consume us. This more visible and vitalized unity of the Church would nobly meet many anxious questionings and many eager doubtings, and afford us more than a double augury of hastening victory.

It is not needful or possible here to indicate the exact course that will be pursued in the new department of theological instruction, whose establishment has its first public recognition to-day. No like department has been anywhere organized, and my work must be for the present somewhat tentative. Regard must be paid not merely to what would be theoretically the most complete and effective apologetic teaching, but also to what is already incidentally done in other departments. The development of Didactic and Polemic Theology must be and is (must be and is do not always go together) full of strong pleas for the divinity of Christianity. Both departments of Biblical Literature, and that of Church History, would not and cannot be cut off from the earnest and telling presentation of the credentials of our faith, supplied by its records and its living products. But complementing and compacting these, or combining for one purpose what they present for their several purposes, other courses of instruction may be supplied, having directly and exclusively an apologetic aim. So far as Apologetics has a recognized place and form as a branch of Christian Science, this should be sketched at least in brief outline. Through these future preachers of the Word, Christianity is to make great claims on many men in many lands. What clear and decisive warrant shall they be taught to show? On what in the nature of man, what in the nature of God, what in their mutual relation, what in the bearing of Christianity on all these, shall they be taught to rely and to insist? They will need a strong reliance for themselves, and a strong plea to

press, as they confront all that "opposes itself to the obedience of Christ."

Partly as an expansion of this general apologetic course, and partly as auxiliary to it, three others are for the present proposed, distributed as inward fitness and outward convenience shall suggest through the Seminary curriculum. One of these will attempt the vindication of Christianity as a *historical* religion, another illustrate and enforce its *ethical* bearings, and a third defend its claim to be received as *rational*. The first will deal mainly with the historical facts involved in and underlying our Christian faith, and with its authenticating documents. The second will gather what it may from the broad field of what we call Christian ethics. It will not so much aim to show how philosophical ethics may be modified, complemented or enforced by Christianity, as to vindicate Christianity by its moral and practical results. The honored and lamented Christian lawyer, so long a member of this Board of Trust, whose earnest thinking and liberal purpose gave the first impulse to this organization and endowment, (I refer to the late Stephen Colwell, Esq., of Philadelphia,) whose unexecuted plan has been in more than full measure carried out by his family, looked mainly to the exhibition here of a Christian Social Science—Christianity in its bearings on human society, on political economy, and the manifold civil and social relations on which Christianity has so deep and mighty and benignant a work to accomplish. What Christianity has done for man's secular welfare, and what lies in its purpose and power to do, will fall within the scope of this part of the course. And a third series of lectures will take up, in such order and proportion as may from time to time seem best, the defense of our holy faith against all those forms of speculation and science which would put this faith under the ban of reason. Never were there more than now of "imagination and high things," that in the name of reason "exalt themselves against the knowledge of God;" these are in our warfare, as Saint Paul depicts it, to be "cast down."

It will commend itself, I am sure, to all who cherish an interest in this seminary, as it has to the liberal donors to this

foundation, that the chair should bear the name of the revered father whose presence and whose spirit have been from the first so great a power here. The precise objects contemplated in this department are objects with which his name has been in our Churches, our Christian homes, and our literary institutions, very closely identified. Far beyond the bounds of his particular ecclesiastical connection, Christian Evidences and Moral Philosophy have made the name of Archibald Alexander a household word.

Humanly and historically we might desire no better auspices than the memories and sympathies thus engaged for us, and the encouragement afforded by the prompt and generous liberality of the friends who have added this endowment to the other resources of the Seminary. But our trust is in the Lord our God, and in this blessed faith of his Gospel, which has not stood all the tests of the past to be found in the utmost future trial, a spider's web to trusting simplicity, a bane to any part or any interest of humanity, the crowning offense of earth against heaven.

ART. II.—THE THEOLOGY FOR OUR AGE AND COUNTRY.

By PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D., Professor in Union Theological Seminary.

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

Christian Theology is the science of the Christian religion, or the knowledge of God, of man, and of their mutual relation under its threefold aspect of original union, subsequent separation on account of sin, and reunion or reconciliation by Jesus Christ the God-Man and Saviour of mankind. It is the noblest of sciences. It surpasses other sciences in proportion as the Bible, its text-book, excels other books, and as religion, its object, towers above the secular concerns of man. It is occupied with the deepest problems which can challenge the attention of an immortal mind. The boundless wealth of God's revelation, of God's word, of God's plan of salvation, the spiritual experience of