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ART. I.—*Modern Explanations of the Doctrine of Inability.*

The Inability of the Sinner to comply with the Gospel, his inexcusable guilt in not complying with it, and the consistency of these with each other, illustrated, in two discourses on John vi. 44. By John Smalley, D. D. New York: 1811.

THIS little treatise has long been accounted standard among those who attach importance to the distinction between natural and moral inability, which it elaborately explains and vindicates. It is for the most part characterized by candour and good judgment. It clearly and ably sets forth much important truth. If we were to indicate objections to it, we should call in question certain portions of it, which seem to represent the inability of the sinner as being of the same sort as that of a man to perform any outward act, which he is no way unable, but simply indisposed to do. (pp. 10, 11.)

These instances, however, are few, and aside of the main drift of the treatise. The grand principle which it maintains and successfully vindicates, is that men labour under a real inability to obey the gospel; that this inability is moral, and therefore culpable, yet not, for this reason, any the less real and invincible, except by divine grace. A still more material

L. Addison Alexander.

ART. IV.—*Inaugural Address, delivered at the Danville Theological Seminary, October 13, 1853.* By Edward P. Humphrey, D. D. Cincinnati: 1854.

OF the eloquent discourses at the late inauguration of the Danville Faculty, the one before us has especially arrested our attention at this moment, as affording the occasion for a few remarks upon the Method of Church History. The Discourse itself, without affecting learned or profound discussion, either on the general subject, or on any special topic, gives a gratifying augury both of the spirit and the principles by which the historical instructions of this new Church School are to be characterized. The sound discretion, liberality of sentiment, elegant culture, devout spirit, scholarly and felicitous expression, by which different parts of this address are distinguished, conspire with a coincidence of judgment upon most of the points touched, to make us wish for something still more elaborate and professional from the same pen. To this meagre account of a performance which we may suppose to be already in our readers' hands, we take the liberty of adding some reflections of our own, upon the same or kindred subjects, partly suggested or recalled by its perusal.

There is something remarkable in the actual condition of the study of Church History. While it seems to be receiving more and more cultivation from a few among us, it fails to command the general attention of the educated public in the same proportion. There is even some disposition to depreciate it theoretically to excess, but chiefly on the part of those who, in the very act of doing so, betray their own need of the discipline which nothing but such studies can afford. The raw and blustering polemic, who mistakes every fresh reproduction of exploded heresies for something peculiar to his own church or village, is very apt to sneer at the only pursuits which could have taught him better; and the self-inspired prophet or interpreter of prophecy, as well as the transcendental dreamer and declaimer, may be pardoned for their natural antipathy to History, as the science of facts and actual events. Of such she is sure to be avenged, sooner or later, when their own

history comes to be written, or what is far more likely and more dreaded, left unwritten. But apart from these sporadic cases of avowed contempt for history, there is certainly a general indifference to historical theology, even among such as cherish no such prepossessions; an indifference which shows itself by negative rather than by positive expressions, or not so much by any expression at all, as by simply letting it alone, and failing to derive either pleasure or sensible advantage from the study. We are strongly of opinion that, beyond the requisitions of academial or professional examination, there is very little reading of Church History in any way, and that little rather as an irksome task, though only self-imposed, than as a congenial intellectual employment or indulgence. This fact is the more worthy of remark, because it is only in the way of copious continued reading *con amore*, that a real knowledge of history can be acquired. In the sciences, properly so called, whether physical or moral, much may be accomplished by mere dogged perseverance, under proper guidance, and with due attention to fixed laws and principles, even, so to speak, against the grain of taste or inclination. But historical knowledge, practical or permanent, to have any value, must be gained by laboriously yet willingly sifting grains of gold from heaps of sand, with this important difference between the literal and figurative process, that the gathering and assorting and laborious separation of the crude material is not, in the latter case, a necessary evil, to be gladly avoided by ingenious contrivances and labour-saving arts, but an absolutely necessary good or means of good, without which the product, gained by such economical or indolent expedients, would be altogether worthless, not in itself, but relatively to the intellectual improvement of the person thus securing it. What we mean to express by this perhaps ill-chosen illustration is, that the dry details of history, the proper names and dates and technical divisions, furnished by the cheap compendium or the table of contents, so far from being the quintessence of the subject, to which copious reading only adds a mass of superfluous rubbish, is itself of little value to the individual student, except as the result of his own collective and constructive labour. This view of the matter has nothing to do with what is often falsely

called the philosophy of history, but is strictly a lesson of experience, which all have learned for themselves, who have attained to any clear and satisfactory acquaintance, not with notions or theories of history, but with its bare and stubborn facts.

We do not think it necessary to enlarge upon the grounds of this opinion, or the causes of the fact alleged, or to attempt a demonstration of its truth, which is sufficiently attested by the actual experience of all successful history-readers, who are well aware that they must read much in order to learn even a little, and that no attempt to get at the little by itself can possibly succeed, because, for some cause, known or unknown, the laborious separation of the dross from the ore, and of the chaff from the wheat, seems in this case necessary to the value of the product or residuum. The utmost that the best historical instructor can contribute to the success of his disciples is incitement and direction, not abridgment of labour. He may stimulate attention and awaken curiosity, and suggest new combinations, and indeed new aspects of the truths acquired; but they still must be acquired by the pupil's patient yet spontaneous industry, which can no more be dispensed with or superseded by the teacher's combinations and arrangements, than a *catalogue raisonné* can answer for a library, or a glass case, with its shelves and pigeon-holes, supply the place of the specimens which ought to fill it.

If this be so, a want of interest in the study of Church History, not as a part of every modern theological curriculum, but as a favourite subject of professional and general reading, must be fatal to its influence and cultivation; and assuming, as we may do without much offence to any whose concurrence we are anxious to secure, that this is a result by no means desirable, especially in this age and country, where precisely such correctives of ignorant conceit and narrow bigotry are needed, we propose to offer some suggestions in relation to the probable causes of the existing state of feeling, which will be at least one step towards the discovery of a remedy.

The cause cannot be a want of interest in history, as such; for, in one form or another, it commands more readers than all other subjects; a fact sufficiently attested by the experience of

“the trade,” as it is technically called, and by the records of all lending libraries. Nor can it be the want of something to awaken curiosity and interest the cultivated mind, in the peculiar nature of the subjects treated; for they are the very subjects as to which men’s intellects and passions are most easily excited, when presented in a certain way, and which, in fact, do interest the great majority of sensible and well-informed readers, under any other shape than that which they assume as part and parcel of Church History. Discussions and intelligence, connected with church organization or with points of doctrine, are by no means unacceptable to multitudes of unprofessional readers of our public prints; while, to a more select and cultivated class of laymen, there is a peculiar attraction in the history of literature and opinion. Now, as these all enter largely, as constituent elements, into the structure of Church History, the almost universal want of taste for it must spring from something, not in the essential nature of the subject, but in the conventional and customary mode of treating it.

This goes at once to the root of the evil—if it be an evil—and enables us to state, in general terms, as the occasion of the prevalent distaste for this kind of reading, the neglected but unquestionable fact, that Church Historians have, for some mysterious reason, thought it necessary to depart from the usages of historiography in general, and to adopt a method as distinctive as the dialect and dress of the Society of Friends. That this has not arisen, by a natural or logical necessity, from the religious nature of the subject, is certain from the simple fact, that it is just as real a departure from the scriptural as from the classical models, which indeed, with all their minor variations, are entirely alike in that exquisite simplicity, which is always the fruit either of consummate taste or of divine inspiration.

Without going much into detail, it may not be unacceptable or useless to state a few historical facts, as to the form or method of Church History. Its wildest, rudest, and least artificial form, like that of history in general, is the purely chronological or annalistic, the exact enumeration of events in the order of their actual occurrence, without attempting either to distribute or connect them. This is not so much historical

composition, as an aggregation of historical materials, to be wrought and moulded by the minds of others. The absence of all literary merit, in such cases, is not always made good by exactness and fidelity in point of fact, as is known from many of the medieval chronicles.

The first departure from this lowest species of historiography—we do not mean the first in time, for the examples just referred to are posterior by ages to Tacitus, Herodotus, and Moses—is the clothing of the calendar or table of chronology, in narrative costume, so as to admit of being read connectedly, but still without attempting to combine or group the homogeneous events, and still adhering to the order of time, as the only known law of arrangement, going back to the same topics as they reappear, however often, or however sudden the transition, till the series is exhausted. This, though not in its extreme form, is a fair description of the earliest Church Histories with which we are acquainted, and of which Eusebius is at once the most familiar and most noble type. This second stage, unlike the first, does not necessarily imply the absence of artificial and ambitious rhetoric, an attribute by no means wanting in the venerable Father of Church History, though still more frequent and offensive in some of his Byzantine continuators.

Next to this in quality, though not in time, is the pragmatic method of historiography, in which the topics are selected and combined with a deliberate view to some specific purpose, but without necessarily departing from the strictest accuracy as to facts. This mode, of which Polybius was long regarded as the author and great classical example, is supposed by many modern writers to be also exemplified in one of the four Gospels, that of Matthew, which is now very generally reckoned, not a mere chronological recital of events, but a historical argument, intended to establish the Messiahship of Jesus, by showing the coincidence between his life and the Old Testament prophecies.

It is only perhaps a more ambitious and elaborate variety of this same species that is honoured, by itself or others, with the questionable name of philosophical or scientific history. Or if there be a more decided difference, it is, that in the latter case,

the purpose which gives shape to the whole composition, is more abstract and recondite, an adaptation of the narrative, not to some practical design, but to the general principles or laws by which it is supposed the sequence of events is governed, and by which the form of their recital ought to be determined. Both these modes of composition, however available for good in competent and faithful hands, are evidently liable to great abuse, not only from the *mala fides* of a Baroni-
nius or a Pallavicini, but even from the honest zeal of a Sarpi, much more from the self-deified infallibility of a Hegel. It is, therefore, likely that the general suffrage of intelligent and unbiassed men, in full possession of the knowledge necessary to a sound decision, would be quite unanimous in rejecting both extremes of this ascending series—that of a rude inelegant simplicity, as well as that of artificial and extreme refinement.

What we have now said has been often better said before, and is as true, in its essential parts, of one kind of history as of another. We have introduced it only as a basis, or a fulcrum, or an entering wedge—or any other metaphor of equivalent import that the reader pleases—for the main fact in this history of historiography, to which we wish to call attention, and in which we hope to find a key to the mysterious distaste with which the friends both of History and of the Church so frequently regard Church History, as if the combination of these factors—to employ the modish modern term—were like some chemical mixtures which evolve a product wholly unlike both ingredients.

The fact from which we undertake to draw so much is closely connected with the very birth of Ecclesiastical History, as a modern science. It is a very interesting circumstance, that this branch of theological literature sprang not from the old trunk, Greek or Roman, but from the wild olive bough grafted in by Luther. Besides the bare fact of paternity or pedigree, which is intrinsically full of meaning, there are several collateral considerations coupled with it, and directly bearing on the end for which it is here cited. The origin of Church History, in its modern form, was not only Protestant and Lutheran, but, in the highest degree, controversial and polemical. In no case, probably, before or since, has the prag-

matical character been stamped so legibly on any history as on that noble monument of industry and learning reared by Matthias Flacius the Illyrian and his fellows, and for ages even popularly known by the name of the *Centuriæ Magdeburgenses*.* It was in fact the first Church History that deserved the name, and it derived a large part of its worth and power from the definite avowed design with which it was composed—that of proving the corruptions of the church of Rome and the consequent necessity of the Reformation. Besides the influence which such a purpose may have had upon the temper of its authors, and of which we are by no means disposed to complain, it had an influence upon the form and structure of the work, which we think has not attracted due attention. As the purpose of the writers was to show the changes for the worse that had occurred, it was important that these changes should be rendered singly as distinct as possible, and presented in the boldest and most prominent relief. This could hardly be accomplished by the ordinary methods of historiography, which call for some harmonious blending of the lights and shades, and some attention to the rules of perspective, in this as in every other kind of painting. But such a process, however agreeable to taste and usage, would have failed to answer the pragmatic and polemic purpose of these brave old partizans and champions. In the true spirit of reformers, therefore, they invented a new method, such as the world had never seen before, but such as it has seen too often since. For it is literally true, that from the days of Flacius to those of Schaff, this great thesaurus of invaluable documents and facts, which but for it would have been lost, has served not only as a spur to the ambition of all subsequent historians, and an exhaustless storehouse of materials, but as a literary norm and model, not to be sure in style or diction, but in structure and arrangement, even as to points in which the Magdeburg Centuriators differed from the whole world of historians besides, throughout all ages, from Melanethon up to Moses.

The grand peculiarity of this new method, thus entailed

* The real title is: *Ecclesiastica Historia, integram Ecclesiæ Christianæ ideam complectens, congesta per aliquot studiosos et pios viros in urbe Magdeburgica.* Bazel, 1559—1574. (13 centuries in 13 volumes.)

upon Church History, we fear for ever, is the destruction of its unity, by breaking it up into a system of co-ordinate or parallel histories, or rather of lines radiating from a common source, and afterwards converging to a joint conclusion, but in the mean time quite distinct, or only so far connected as to make "confusion worse confounded." This innovation in historiography, the final cause of which has been already hinted, was effected by a system of rubrics or categories, under each of which the narrative was to be successively drawn out, so as to constitute a little independent history, connected with the rest by a federal rather than an organic union. But as the separate history of doctrine, of church government, &c., carried through a millennium and a half, was too much even for the patience of old Flacius himself, the continuity was broken by dividing the whole work into centuries, and then applying the Procrustean framework to each century in turn. By this arrangement the great work in question acquired not only its distinctive name, but a complex synthesis of vertical and horizontal subdivisions, not unlike those of a chess-board or a multiplication table.

The substantial truth of this description, and its relevancy to our purpose, would remain unshaken, even if it could be shown that subdivisions of the same essential kind had been often used in history before. Even granting that they had been, it was never on so great a scale; or, even granting that, it was never in a work destined to exert so powerful an influence on subsequent historians. The main fact of the case is, not that Flacius or his collaborateurs invented this device, but that they perpetuated and immortalized it, giving shape and complexion, more or less, to almost every book since written on the subject, and practically teaching men to think that the history of the Church is so specifically, nay, so generically different from every other history, not only in its facts, but in its principles or essence, that it cannot be written on the same plan, and as a necessary consequence, so far as the immense majority of readers is concerned, cannot be read on any plan at all. For we do conscientiously believe that this peculiarity of form, indelibly imprinted on Church History, by men of mighty intellect and prodigious learning, and of a noble zeal for

truth and godliness, but wholly swayed by controversial motives, and entirely destitute of anything like taste in composition or arrangement, has done more than any other cause whatever, to make this branch of history insipid, not to say repulsive, even to those who have a strong partiality for history in general.

We are well aware that one part of this statement would be charged with inexactness, not to say with falsehood, by the Germans and their indiscriminate admirers. We mean the statement that the method introduced, or rendered current, by the Magdeburg Centuriators, has been since retained by all church historians of any note, especially in Germany. In seeming inconsistency with this, we know that almost every German book upon this subject, even in the very act of giving due praise to the Centuriators, as sources and authorities, professes to repudiate their faults of method, and to go far beyond them in all that relates to form and structure. But profession and practice are not more invariably connected in the making of Church Histories than in the more common walks of life, and we must take the liberty of looking somewhat closely into this pretension of the late historiographers.

The plan of the Centuriators, as we have already seen, is complex, and includes two distinct methods of division, which might be presented to the eye by the vertical and horizontal columns of a table. One of these is the division into centuries, the other the division into heads or rubrics. The first may be called the Chronological, the second the Topical part of the arrangement. Although intimately blended in the actual structure of the work, these methods are entirely distinct and independent of each other, inasmuch as either of them might have been employed without the other; that is to say, each rubric might have been continued through the whole without distinguishing the centuries; or on the other hand, the history of each century might have been chronologically stated, without any classification of topics. It is the formal combination of these methods that gives character externally to the great standard work of which we have been speaking.

Now in reference to both these features of the plan, the later German writers claim to have made great advances on the

ground assumed and occupied by the Magdeburg Centuriators. Let us see in what this improvement consists. In the chronological arrangement it consists in having professedly discarded the division into centuries, and substituted for it a division into periods of unequal length, determined, not by arbitrary measurement, but by the salient points or epochs of the history itself. There is no alleged improvement in historiography, on which the German writers seem to dwell with more complacency, and fuller persuasion of its reality and value, than on this. It is no longer spoken of as something that admits of doubt or question, but as an admitted or established truth, to be assumed in every new advance towards perfection. It is in this spirit, although not precisely in this form, that the centurial arrangement is referred to, as an obsolete absurdity, by the two latest writers on the subject in this country, Dr. Schaff and Dr. Humphrey. This weighty and unanimous prescription, in behalf of the new method, makes it all the more incumbent upon those who venture to dissent from its conclusions, to inquire into the specific grounds on which they rest for their validity.

The favourite objection to the old arrangement is, that it is arbitrary and mechanical. But so, to some extent, are all expedients to assist the memory, not arising necessarily from something in the very nature of the subject, but the fruit of "art and man's device," however rational and well contrived. Their being contrived at all, subjects them to the charge of being arbitrary, and, in some degree, mechanical, since every periodical arrangement that has ever been proposed is after all an artificial frame-work, which requires some effort of the understanding to insert it in its proper place, and still more effort of the memory to keep it there. The mere degree, in which it can be justly called mechanical or arbitrary, is not now in question. The essential fact is, that these qualities do not belong exclusively, even admitting that they do belong pre-eminently, to the old division into centuries.

Sometimes this vague charge is made more specific by alleging that the centurial arrangement already presupposes all the various series of events, and sequences of causes and effects, to be simultaneously wound up at the end of every

hundred years; whereas the threads are of unequal length, and while one falls short of the century, another overruns into the next. Besides the false reproach thus cast upon the old arrangement, which professes to be only an approximation and a practical convenience, this plausible objection quietly ignores the fact, that the very same thing may be said with equal truth, though not of course true to the same extent, of every periodical division that can be imagined. However nearly such divisions may approximate to the ideal standard, it will not be seriously alleged, that any of them has succeeded in making all the threads of history coincident in their commencement and their termination, so that nothing overruns the mark or falls below it. That this is peculiarly the case with the centuries, because they are more numerous and uniform, is true, but may be made good by peculiar advantages of other kinds.

Another reason for believing that this boasted change in the chronological method of Church History is not so philosophical in principle or useful in practice as its advocates imagine, is the endless diversity of periodical divisions, which have been proposed to take the place of the exploded centuries. It seems as if there would be no end to the process of invention on the part of the prolific Germans, so that really there may be ground to fear that it will soon defeat itself by making all points salient, and every notable event an epoch. Instead of striving after uniformity, and trying to let well enough alone, each new competitor for fame in this department seems to think it necessary to attempt a fresh improvement in the period and epoch manufacture. The extent to which it has already gone, may be learned by a glance at Dr. Schaff's concise and clear account of the most important schemes, prefixed to his own ingenious schedule, which we look upon as much the most complete and beautiful of all these modern chronological arrangements. To avoid technical minutiae, we refer the reader to that passage, with the simple additional suggestion of a mode in which the information there afforded may be brought to bear, in a concentrated form, upon the question now at issue. For this purpose, let the reader take some noted event of ecclesiastical importance, and observe into which

division and subdivision it will fall according to the several arrangements there described. We must also add, in order to complete the statement there made, that Kurtz, in the latest of the many forms through which his valuable history has passed, not contented with the changes he had made already in the periodological arrangement of the subject, makes another, by establishing the year 692 as a great epoch, with an evident assurance that instead of adding a new element of strife to the existing chaos, he has brought the whole affair perceptibly and measurably nearer to perfection. Now the practical question to be solved is, how are we to choose between these various schemes of periodology, and after we have done so, how are we to keep the chosen scheme in mind, amidst the constant variations, not of others only, but of the very man, perhaps, by whom it was discovered and revealed at first.

In opposition to this picture of the discord which prevails among the periodologists, it may be said, that there is now a very general agreement as to the division of the whole subject into three great parts, the Ancient, the Medieval, and the Modern; and that this agreement vindicates the new school of historians from the sweeping charge of endless and incurable diversity. We answer, first, that some of those who thus agree as to the three divisions, in defining the limits of the first and second, differ by two centuries. Neander, for example, makes the middle age begin at the close of the year 590, Kurtz in 692, Hase in 800! Yet they all agree in the general assumption of three great divisions. We answer, in the next place, that this general division, far from being the invention of the new school, is, even in its modern form, as old as Mosheim, and is perfectly consistent with the old division into centuries, by grouping which it is in fact obtained. Apart, then, from this obvious and general division, which is common to all recent schemes and methods of Church History, we hold that the interminable variations of the modern periodology are proofs that it is founded upon no just principle, but in its measure as "mechanical and arbitrary" as the old 'centurial arrangement, which, with all its stiffness, has the merit of being just what it pretends to be; and at the same time, from its very uniformi-

ty, is perfectly intelligible, readily available, and easily remembered.

A further confirmation of these views may be derived from the notorious fact, that even those who clamour loudest for the Periods and against the Centuries, are after all obliged to make the latter the substratum of their own arrangement, so that while they parade periods of their own invention in the running title, they tell us in the body of the page that such and such events belong to such and such a century, and even indicate the characteristic features of whole centuries, as such; so that instead of superseding the old method by a new and better one, they spoil both by mixing and entangling them together.

Besides all this, we have another serious objection to the disuse, whether theoretical or practical, or both, of the centurial arrangement. It is this, that it inevitably tends to widen the already yawning chasm between ecclesiastical and civil history. It seems, indeed, to be regarded by the modern German school as an advantage to increase this separation, and so far from seeking to avail themselves of epochs and divisions previously familiar, they endeavour to avoid such synchronisms, and to plant their stakes as far as possible from those already in the ground for other purposes. Even in the *History of Doctrine*, which is really a large part of Church History, they seem to make a merit of drawing lines of demarcation wholly different from those already drawn in other parts of the same general field. This preposterous passion for variety and novelty has no doubt been fomented by the artificial and excessive division of literary labour in the German school, which, while it tends to make the treatment of each minor subject more exhaustive, at the same time tends to rob the whole of uniformity and unity. And this is not a mere esthetical defect or fault, but a practical aggravation of the evil into which we are inquiring, that of too great a diversity between the forms and methods of ecclesiastical and other history. No wonder that the general reader, even the most cultivated, feels himself repelled from this great subject, when he finds that at the entrance he must leave behind him the

familiar and time-honoured methods of remembering dates, with which all his other historical studies are associated.

Our conclusion, then, as to the modern chronological improvements in the method of Church History, is, that they are, to a great extent, illusory or only nominal, and, so far as they are real, rather injurious than useful to the clearness, unity, and beauty of the compositions, whose distinctive form and structure are determined by them. The true use of these numberless and endless periodologies is not to shape the history itself, but to indicate its salient points, and aid the understanding and the memory, by furnishing an adequate number of convenient epochs. There is no more need of cutting up our books to match them, than there is of marking the meridians or parallels of latitude by furrows in the soil, or fixing the imaginary lines of the terrestrial globe by hedges, ditches, or substantial walls. The taste which would incorporate all such divisions into the very structure of a history, is similar to that which used to make, and often still makes, the title page of books a table of contents, if not a laudatory puff into the bargain. The proper place for such contrivances is in the index or synoptical table, not in the body of the book itself.

We venture, somewhat timidly, to add, that in this, as in many other points relating to the outward part of literary labour, we regard the Germans as still far behind the very nations who depend upon them for things more substantial. To evince this, we need only refer to the continued practice of some German writers, preposterously copied by their slavish imitators here and elsewhere, of dividing the same matter into large and small type, often without the least discoverable principle to regulate the process; or the still more objectionable habit of appending all additional matter to the text as notes, instead of working it into the appropriate portion of the text, as the best English writers, and the French, almost without exception do. This practice, frequently occasioned by the stated periodical revision of the lectures, out of which most learned German works are made, is sometimes carried to a length almost incredible to English readers; every afterthought, however unimportant or essential, being thrown into the margin in a manner perfectly mechanical, and utterly unworthy of the intellect and

learning of the author. Another instance of inferiority in taste as to externals, more immediately connected with our present subject, is the almost puerile gradation of divisions, subdivisions, and sub-subdivisions, which even the most celebrated German writers seem to think conducive to the clearness and completeness of their books, but which only serve to make them repulsive to the eye and burdensome to the memory. Let any one compare such a nest of puzzles, with its endless systems of concentric circles, to the simple series of consecutive chapters, in which Gibbon or Thiers presents a complex history to the reader's eye, with perfect ease and clearness, and without the least confusion or asperity. The two things are as different as a public building, so symmetrically planned and ordered, that the stranger can scarcely lose his way if he would, and one in which he is directed or restrained at every step by sign-boards, hand-bills, barriers, and other marks of division, which may all be theoretically in the right place, but, so far as comfort and convenience are concerned, are very clearly in the wrong one, being much better suited to the architect's design, or to the map of the building hung up in the vestibule, than to the interior of the house itself. Even Dr. Schaff's volume, the literary excellence of which is so generally and justly praised, would have commanded still more admiration, if its formal structure, no less than its words, had been translated out of German into English.

We may be thought, however, to have lost sight of the end which we proposed to accomplish, that of showing that the later Church Historians have adhered unduly to the model set before them by the Magdeburg Centuriators; whereas we have really been showing that they have departed from it for the worse. But this is true only of the chronological part of the arrangement, in which they have indeed exchanged one simple, well-known, and effective method, for a number far more complex, and at variance with each other. In the topical arrangement, on the other hand, they have adhered, with still more unfortunate results, to its essential principles, although they are entitled to the praise of having simplified its outward form. This improvement lies in the reduction of the number of distinct heads or categories to a smaller number, and in the more

symmetrical adjustment of these few to one another. The essential principle retained is that of carrying the history through each of these divisions under every period, and then recommencing with another topic. So far from being relieved by the alleged chronological improvements before mentioned, the inconveniences of this arrangement have been aggravated. For if the history is thus to be divided into shreds or slices, the more they are limited in length the better; for the sooner then can we return to the point of departure, and connect the various shreds together. It is far less tiresome, after going through the history of Church organization during some one century, to go back and enter on the history of its doctrinal disputes or changes, than it is to go through the same process in relation to a period of several hundred years. With all that is attractive in Neander's great work, there are probably few patient, persevering readers, who have not felt something like a faintness of spirit, when, after reading a whole volume on the controversies of a certain age, and notwithstanding the instruction and delight afforded, feeling pleased that they have finished it at last, they find, on taking up the next part, that they are to go back to the same distant, half-forgotten starting point, and travel over the same ground in search of something else before neglected; that after having gathered all the flowers through a hundred or a thousand miles, they are to start afresh and gather all the pebbles, and then make the journey for a third time, catching all the butterflies. If history, as some have represented it, is really a mighty river, down which the historian is conducting a company of travellers, how distressing is the very thought of first descending one bank, then the other, then the middle of the stream, then the channels upon either side, throughout the whole course, from its rising to its estuary! How much more delightful, and more useful too, to make but one descent, surveying both banks and the stream itself, passing from one side to the other, with irregular, but, for that very reason, less fatiguing changes, and receiving every moment the entire impression of the undivided landscape! The first named method may be best for the surveyor or the engineer, but surely not for the great crowd of voyagers in search of health and of general improvement. The

other may be difficult to manage well: but so is everything intended to secure, by complex means, a great harmonious result. If possible, it surely is worth trying. Let the Church Historian, in his own preliminary studies, act the engineer or the surveyor; but before he undertakes to pilot and to entertain a great mixed multitude of pleasure-seeking passengers, he ought to be prepared to take a less professional and more attractive course.

Dropping these figures, which we have not strength or skill to manage, let us briefly compare this favourite method of Church History with the general usage of historiography. Why has it been so much confined to the school of the Magdeburg Centuriators? Why do we find so little trace of it in classical or sacred history? How have the most eminent historians of other kinds been able to dispense with it? If the life of Washington or Bonaparte, each really the history of an age and nation, can be skilfully and powerfully written on the old and simple plan, without continually going back to start afresh and run a parallel to what we have already done; if, with a few insignificant exceptions, wholly or partly generated by this bad example, no one thinks of giving us the life of Washington, from end to end, first as a man, then as a soldier, then again as a statesman; if, should any one be able so to write it, no one save himself could read it; why is it utterly impossible to write about the Church and its vicissitudes, except in the peculiar form impressed upon the subject several centuries ago, by men whose strength lay not in taste and form, and that too for a temporary purpose, which has long since been accomplished? It is equally curious and provoking to observe, that the contemporary Germans, with all their characteristic scorn for old opinions, and spontaneous preference for what is new as to substantials, should philosophize and reason about this venerable relic of the Magdeburg Historians, as an axiomatic principle, to be assumed in all their reasonings and plans, without the least doubt or discussion of its truth or its necessity. We wish that, in America at least, while every lawful use is made of their researches and accumulations, a return may take place, in the mode of exhibition, to the primitive and

simple method sanctioned by the usage of the Bible, the Classics, and Historians in general.

But what is this method? Leaving out of view all peculiarities, personal or national, and looking at the great authoritative models just referred to, as a class, we have no hesitation in answering that the only genuine historical method is that which aims to exhibit the ingredients as elements of history, not in independent strata, but in one homogeneous composition; not as separate pictures, but as figures in the same; and this not merely with a view to more agreeable effect, but as essential to the highest intellectual and moral end to which history itself can be conducive; and which no detached and desultory inspection of the topics can secure, without a simultaneous and harmonious view of all together.

If it be still asked how these views are to be realized, and put in practice, we reply, first, by discarding all traditional, unnatural, and peculiar methods, and by bringing Church History back into connection with its kindred branches of the same great subject. In the next place, we suggest, as highly probable at least, that this is not to be effected by the use of any one expedient, any more than medical empiricism can be remedied by simply substituting one patent nostrum or quack doctor for another. What we most desire for this department of theology among ourselves, is freedom and variety of form with unity of substance; a wise dependence upon those who have gone further than ourselves in the discovery or illustration of historical truth, with an equally wise independence of the same men, as to things in which we are at least their equals. In realizing this idea, we should not regret to see different experiments conducted by the hands of native authors, not excluding those of foreign birth and education who have freely made this their adopted country. One such corrective might be tried by following the example, set already both in Germany and elsewhere, of giving history a more biographical or personal character, exchanging rigid chronological or topical divisions for the living individuality of great men, into whose lives contemporary history might easily be wrought, without either violence or undue refinement. Another equally desirable experiment would be to let the chronological arrangement

be entirely superseded by the topical, or rather absorbed in it; that is, by treating in succession the great subjects of history in the order of their actual occurrence; now a council, now a controversy, now a critical event, now a typical or representative man, without applying the same set of stereotyped rubrics to each period in succession. This would, it seems to us, approach most nearly to the form and usages of history in general; but as some might find it difficult to navigate the stream without a fixed point to steer by, we would also recommend an improvement on the Magdeburg method, which might still retain whatever advantages it really affords. This modification of the system would consist in substituting for the several co-ordinate topics of inquiry, one alone to which the others should be incidental and subservient. But which would be entitled to this preference? On this point, we propose to say a few words in conclusion.

We have said already that the later German writers have reduced the categories of the old Centuriators to a smaller number, and to better relative proportions. The crude mass has been boiled down, as it were, to a more manageable size and shape. According to the views of the best modern writers, Church History exhibits Christianity in three great aspects—as an Organization—as a Doctrine—as a Life; and as these three phases are produced by the revolving of the same orb in its orbit, we may add a fourth important topic, as included in all recent exhibitions of the subject. This is the area or sphere within which Christianity has operated. Under this head is included the extension of the Church, and, as a kindred topic, its relation to the world, society, and human government. This covers the whole history of persecutions, church establishments, and missions. Under the head of Christian Life is comprehended all that relates to its public or private manifestations, *i. e.*, to worship, and to Christian morals, or practical religion. Under the head of Doctrine is included the history of controversy and opinion, together with that of theological literature. Under the head of Organization are included the two topics of Church Government and Discipline.

Now, in order to determine which of these four phases of the subject is entitled to the preference as the leading topic of

Church History, we have only to inquire which is the least dependent on the others for its own existence or importance, and at the same time most essential to theirs. If this test be applied to the external relations of the Church, it cannot be sustained at all, for it is evident that these derive their very being from the Church itself, and that the Church itself might have existed as a self-contained or esoteric institute, without any such relations at all.

The same is true, though in a less degree, of Organization, *i. e.*, government and discipline, which derive their value from the ends which they secure, namely, purity of doctrine and holiness of life. We can conceive, indeed, of an organization existing for its own sake, without reference to any thing exterior or ulterior to itself. But no one will pretend that the Church, as depicted in the word of God, is such a system.

The choice must therefore lie between the two remaining topics of Church History, corresponding to the two great aspects of the Christian system as a Life and as a Doctrine. With respect to the relation between these, there has occurred a very marked change in the prevailing modes of thought and expression. It has become a favourite idea, with the Germans and their followers, that Christianity is not a Doctrine, but a Life; by which they do not mean, of course, to deny its doctrinal contents or substance as a system of belief, but simply to decide the question now immediately before us—what is the grand distinctive character of Christianity, to which all others may be made historically incidental? The answer given by the class in question is, that it is not a Doctrine, but a Life. This admits of two interpretations. It may mean that the Church has a personal life of its own, in which its members must participate. Thus understood, it is a mystical and dangerous conceit, to which we have sufficiently done justice upon other occasions. Or the words may mean that the great end of Christianity is, not to communicate the truth and stop there, but to engender and promote the spiritual life of its professors. This is true; but it is only true because it represents experimental or practical religion as the fruit or the effect of truth: and as the cause, whether primary or secondary, must precede the effect, it follows that the history of

Christianity, considered as a Life, presupposes its existence as a Doctrine or a system of belief.

On the other hand, this system of belief, though really designed to stand connected with an outward government and discipline on one hand, and with a religious experience and practice on the other, and to be maintained within certain definite external limits, and in certain relations to the world around it, is perfectly conceivable apart from each and all of these concomitants, and yet, as we have seen before, essential to the being, and, of course, to the historical description of them all. It follows, therefore, that the priority, in such a scheme as we have been considering, is due to this great aspect of the subject; or, in other words, that a complete Church History must be a history of the true faith, as rejected or received, expounded or corrupted, by the men to whom it has been sent, and as producing, in various degrees of purity, according to the mode of its reception, a system of government and discipline, adapted to preserve it and enforce it, and a definite religious life and character, both inward and outward, individual and collective, within certain limits, both of time and space, and under certain definite but varying relations to civil rulers and society at large.

If this result of our induction be a just definition of Church History, it suggests a very practicable method of determining its form and structure, by making it a history of Christian doctrine, and subordinating all the other topics to it, not as separate subjects of historical inquiry, but as elements of one unbroken narrative. It is true the Germans have made "*Dogmengeschichte*" a thing by itself; but that is no more a reason for denying it its just place in a system of Church History, than any man or number of men choosing to recount the history of Washington's administration, or his history as a statesman, without any reference to the rest of his life, would require or authorize his subsequent biographers to pass this most essential portion of their subject by in silence, or to slur it over as of small comparative importance.

We are glad to see that this correct view of the place due to the doctrine of the Church in the construction of its History, is recognized, not only by Professor Humphrey, in the excellent

address which has occasioned these remarks, but likewise, if we may rely upon the somewhat vague and irresponsible reports which we have seen of his inaugural discourse, by Professor Shedd of Andover, the two most recent additions to the corps of Church Historians in America. We use the title in the wide sense of historical instructors, whether from the chair or through the press, in which more permanent and extensive mode of influence we hope to welcome and to learn from both hereafter.

Matthew S. Ballsteron.

ART. V.—*Pamphlets issued by the Chinese Insurgents at Nanking*, to which is added a *History of the Kwang-se Rebellion*, gathered from public documents, and a sketch of the connection between Foreign Missionaries and the Chinese Insurrection; concluding with a Critical Review of several of the above pamphlets, compiled by W. H. Medhurst, Senr. Shanghai, printed at the office of the “North China Herald,” 1853.

THE attention of the Christian world has lately been directed to China in a greater degree than ever before, by the remarkable revolution now going on in that most populous of empires. We propose in the present article to give a brief synopsis of all that we know, from the sources of information within our reach, respecting the origin, progress, and character of that revolution which has convulsed a great nation, and threatens the overthrow of a once powerful dynasty. Definite and reliable information concerning the true character of this revolution, and the views of the insurgents, was first obtained by the visit of the English steamer “Hermes” to Nanking in May, 1853. Previous to that time, indeed, rumours were current among the Chinese at the ports open to foreign commerce, that the insurgents destroyed the idols in the places taken by them; but such rumours were not generally considered worthy of much confidence. It was also said that the leader of the insurrection, who adopted the title T’ienteh, was a professed believer in Christianity, and had been baptized in Hong Kong