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I.—LITERARY.

A SKETCH OF THE MISSIONS OF THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

In the last issue of the *MAGAZINE* we gave sketches of the Missions in the Indian Territory, in China, in Italy, in the United States of Columbia and in Brazil; in the order of their establishment. In the present paper we propose to sketch in a similar way the other missions of our Church. We shall present these, also, in the chronological order of their founding; and accordingly begin with

THE MEXICO MISSION.

This mission was opened in 1874. During the preceding year the Rev. A. T. Graybill had, with the approval of the Executive Committee, explored Northern Mexico with reference to the establishment of a mission somewhere along the borders of the Rio Grande. Matamoras was fixed upon as the site of the mission. And in 1874 Mr. Graybill accompanied by Mrs. Graybill, returned to this point to initiate what has since turned out to be a very fruitful work. Linares was opened in 1887, and Victoria in 1892. Hence there are now three main branches of the Mexico Mission.

The following laborers have been employed in the Mexico Mission, viz.: The Rev. A. T. Graybill, 1874—, Mrs. Graybill, 1874—1876; Rev. J. G. Hall and Mrs. Hall, 1877—1895; Miss Hattie Loughridge, 1879, who became the second Mrs. A. T. Graybill, 1880—1889;* Rev. L. Walton Graybill and Mrs. Graybill, 1881—1882; Miss Janet Houston, 1881—; Miss Anne Dysart, 1882—; Miss S. E. Bedinger, 1886—; Miss C. V. Lee, 1890—; Miss Minnie Gunn, 1892—; Miss Ella Cummins, 1894—; Mrs. A. T. Graybill, 1895—.

* She died in the field.

THE CLAIMS OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY UPON THE STUDENT OF THEOLOGY.

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A courteous request from the Managing Editor of the UNION SEMINARY MAGAZINE to prepare an article for its columns left me free to make choice of a theme. I have thought that perhaps at this time it might be useful and opportune to call attention to the claims of systematic theology upon the time and attention of the theological student both while he is in the Seminary preparing for the ministry and afterwards also when he is in the actual work.

In the past Systematic Theology was regarded as a very important part of a minister's training, and in the Seminary course it held a central and ruling place. All other branches of a divinity course either contributed to or made use of systematic or doctrinal theology. Of late years, however, marked changes have taken place. In some quarters there has been a decided reaction against Systematic Theology especially in its old forms, and against doctrinal preaching as it is usually understood. At the same time there has been marked advance in distinctively Biblical studies. Introduction and Exegesis, and above all what is called Biblical Theology have been brought prominently forward during recent years, so that the centre of gravity in the cyclopædia of theological science has been considerably changed.

There is much in this grand advance in Biblical studies in which we cordially rejoice. It is a wholesome sign that so much consecrated learning is devoted directly to the exposition of the Scriptures or indirectly in shedding light from every quarter upon its divine origin and sacred teachings. All this is a decided gain for the truth as it is in Jesus. At the same time we cannot but regret that this reactionary tendency against Systematic Theology should appear in this connection, for it is not at all necessary that this tendency should arise in such a decided way as it sometimes finds expression. It may be admitted that in some cases the systematic and dogmatic theologians have induced this reaction, and in a measure given reasons for it. Some theologians have perhaps intro-

duced too much that is speculative into their systems, and have removed their discussions too far from their Biblical basis. The system of doctrine was stated and simply proved by selected texts of Scripture, instead of the doctrines, in the first instance being deduced from the consensus of the teaching of the Bible.

But while we make this admission and rejoice in the progress and good results of purely Biblical studies we are constrained to think that the extreme reaction against Systematic Theology is not justified. If the pendulum in the past has sometimes been swinging too far away from Biblical studies, the danger of this age is that it is causing or allowing the pendulum to swing too far away from Systematic Theology. We would rejoice to see the true balance restored where necessary, and constantly and consistently maintained in all cases. The object of this article is to do something in this direction by setting forth some of the claims of Systematic Theology, in its relation to other branches of sacred studies, and in its bearing upon a thorough preparation for the ministry.

It is scarcely necessary to define or describe what we mean by Systematic Theology. In its simplest form and in its widest scope it may be defined as the science of religion. More definitely it may be described as that branch of sacred learning which puts into systematic form the facts and truths which are found in the sacred Scriptures, and which in many cases are related to Christian experience. This of course relates to revealed rather than to natural theology and religion, though it must not be forgotten that revealed theology and religion presuppose that which is natural. Systematic Theology as here used denotes an orderly and connected statement and vindication of the doctrines of the Christian system. The infallible and authoritative source of these doctrines is the revealed word of God, so that systematic theology is an attempt to set forth in proper Scriptural proportion the teaching of Scripture in the sphere of revealed religion. And as many of these truths are realized in Christian experience systematic theology properly deals with certain doctrines in relation to the religious experience of the Christian man. Now it is Systematic Theology thus understood whose claims we desire to set forth in this brief article.

A *prima facie* case can be fairly made out for the claim that systematic theology should have a foremost place among

sacred studies from the relation which it sustains to other departments of theological science. It is really the crowning result of all the branches of Biblical studies. Every study which has for its aim the better understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures but contributes to the materials which Systematic Theology constructs into its orderly and organized whole. This being the case there is an important interdependence between Biblical Science and Systematic Theology. The former prepares the way and provides the materials for the latter, while the latter completes the work and crowns the results of the former in a systematic way. To give scant attention to Biblical Science is to incur the danger of providing a weak Scriptural basis for our doctrines, and to underestimate the value of Systematic Theology is to incur the very serious defect of incompleteness and unequal balance in our views of divine truth. This simple consideration may be a rebuke to both extremes of view upon this point. It exhorts the Systematic Theologian not to indulge too much in speculation, but to rely on sound Biblical science for his facts. It exhorts the Biblical expositor not to forget that his work will remain fragmentary if he ignores the service of the systematic theologian. But this consideration does at the very outset abundantly justify the claim of Systematic Theology to have a large and controlling place in relation to other sacred studies, and in the course of study which is intended to prepare young men for the gospel ministry.

In addition to this consideration we desire to set forth several other aspects of the case which we are inclined to think will enforce very strongly the claims of Systematic Theology for its rightful ruling place in the scheme of theological studies.

In the first place, as a study it is very useful as a means of training and disciplining the mind of the student. The theological student should aim to secure the complete and harmonious training of all his powers of mind and heart. Some studies train certain faculties, other studies develop different powers of the mind. To secure the proper balance of training and the even development of all the powers which are to be used in the Master's service is most desirable. Now the different studies in addition to other things should be utilized so as to secure this desirable end. The purely Biblical studies do secure the training of certain faculties in a very high degree.

The study of the original languages of Holy Scripture renders invaluable service in training the memory, in developing the power of careful comparison, and in cultivating the taste and judgment in many ways. Exegesis, too, trains the mind to make clear and necessary distinctions, to balance and judge of different views of a passage, and to exercise the powers of analysis in a correct and comprehensive way. So in like manner homiletics or sermonizing and the study of church history are important in respect to the mental discipline which they provide for certain faculties of the mind. And in this respect Systematic Theology is of the highest value. The word *systematic* indicates the nature of the valuable service which it is suited to render to the mental service of the theological student. If exegesis is analytic and comparative systematic theology is comparative and synthetic in the service it renders. If homiletics is synthetic and constructive, systematic theology is the same in even a more extensive way. If church history trains the reflective and philosophical powers, it can be safely said that in an equal degree these powers are cultivated and stimulated by the study of systematic theology. Perhaps the very highest service which systematic theology renders to the mental powers of the student is in the exercise which it gives to the synthetic and constructive powers of the mind. It cannot be denied that the discipline of these mental powers is important in itself, and the exercise of the mind involved therein is of the very highest order. To be able to put together in a proper synthetic way the elements which careful exegetical analysis and exposition of Scriptures have supplied, and to possess the ready ability to construct these elements into a well compacted organism of sacred truth is a gift to be earnestly coveted by every student of theology. This gift we believe will be granted to him who pursues diligently the study of systematic theology.

In the second place, systematic theology properly conducted will foster and aid in the study of the Scriptures. It will prove in turn a stimulus to the student of Biblical science. For its material systematic theology depends upon Biblical science, and it is but natural to suppose that it should desire to have its material of the very best possible quality. This will compel the student to search the Scriptures diligently in order to discover their teaching by careful interpretation, and in this way Biblical science will receive an impulse which it

might not experience if the student felt that he could rest content with the scattered results of exegesis without any thought of putting them into a system. This is a relation between systematic theology and Biblical science which is apt, perhaps, to be overlooked. Yet we are inclined to believe that it has received many practical illustrations in the history of sacred learning. In the case of Calvin we find high exegetical ability and matchless constructive power combined, so that it is not easy to say whether Calvin was greater as an interpreter of sacred Scripture or as a systematic theologian. There can be little doubt that if his exegetical labors gave him the materials of his system, his construction and frequent revision of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* greatly stimulated and aided his exegetical work. The elder Hodge has given us some exceedingly able commentaries on certain books of Scripture, and he has also produced one of the most important treatises on Systematic Theology in modern times. Thornwell had unquestioned ability as a systematic theologian, and had he been spared he would in all probability have given us as satisfactory a system of doctrine as any writer upon this continent. From some of his early writings it is evident that he also possessed exegetical ability of superior order. And Dr. Dabney in his work on Theology exhibits many instances of high ability as an exegete. We are inclined to think, therefore, that those who lay little stress upon Systematic Theology, and exalt the value of purely Biblical studies make a serious mistake. They are in danger of overlooking the fact that the work of construction such as systematic theology performs in turn stimulates the still more diligent study of the contents of Scripture. Above all it stimulates the work of comparison in regard to the results of exegesis in various passages of scripture when the same general doctrine or truth is dealt with. In order to systematize it is necessary to compare the exegetical results with care at every turn, and this again may lead to new and closer exegetical inspection of many passages of the Scriptures. If, therefore, we say that Biblical science provides the materials for systematic theology, systematic theology in turn stirs up Biblical science to provide that material in the very best form and of the highest possible quality. We urge this as a strong claim in favor of systematic theology.

In the third place, the study of systematic theology presents

one important means by which the Christian religion may be defended. This may be described as the apologetic value of systematic theology. So long as the truths of Christianity set forth in the Scriptures are viewed in an isolated way, and not considered in relation to each other in a system, they are more open to attack, and have less resisting power lodged in them. But when they are reduced to a system and marshalled in their logical order the truths, facts or doctrines support each other, and form, in the hands of the systematic theologian, a fortress of impregnable strength. To say that a complete statement of the doctrines of the Christian religion is its best apologetic is simply stating this important position in another way. By such a statement the systematic theologian exhibits the completeness of the system of doctrine, he shows the relation and harmony of the various factors in the system, and he indicates the inner divine unity which gives immense resisting power to all assaults against it. Just as in the case of an army it is of great importance that all the regiments and brigades should be united under one commander, so as to be able to resist the attacks of the foe or, in turn to assault the enemy, so systematic theology renders the important apologetic service of binding all the elements which Biblical science sets forth into a unity which possesses both offensive and defensive qualities in a very high degree. It is, in our judgment, a loss of apologetic power to join in the cry against systematic theology; and Biblical science should be the last to open the ranks of the defenders of the Christian system to the inroads of the enemy. Biblical science in its various branches is the recruiting officer, and the drill sergeant of the Lord's host, and the systematic theologian is the commander who unifies all the companies thus mustered and trained, and prepares them for combined and efficient work in the field. Both render necessary service, and the apologetic value of the latter should not be underestimated. If this is kept in mind at the present day, when systematic outlines of apologetics are being drawn up, the claim of systematic theology from a somewhat unexpected quarter may be fortified very materially. A coherent system of divine truth where all the factors which enter into the system are bound together, has a self-evidencing power which illustrates the autopsistic quality of the truths of the Christian system in a striking way. This service systematic theology renders, and we should honor her for it all.

In the fourth place, the claims of systematic theology upon the student are greatly enhanced by the fact that it gives a connected and complete view of all the doctrines of the Christian system, in an orderly way, and in their proper proportions. The system of truth which is implied in the Christian religion as set forth in the sacred Scriptures is very extensive, so that if it be left in the somewhat fragmentary form which it presents when it comes from the hand of the exegete, or which it exhibits even when Biblical theology has done its important work, it is almost impossible to secure a clear and comprehensive grasp of the whole, and consequently there may be lack of balance in regard to the parts of the system, and perhaps in some cases the emphasis will be placed at the wrong point. To obtain the right principle upon which the facts are to be reduced in a natural logical way to a system, and to follow the proper and comprehensive plan according to which the systematizing is to be done, are tasks of prime importance. This is precisely the task of the systematic theologian. In this respect systematic theology is a science, and it has all the superiority over purely Biblical science that the scientist has over the mere explorer and discoverer of the facts in the department of nature to which science pertains.

In addition, everything that can be said on the practical side in favor of an orderly connected system of truth in any department can be urged as a strong claim in favor of systematic theology. It presents to those who desire to know what the doctrine of Christianity is a clear and intelligible outline, and it gives to those who profess the Christian faith a definite statement of the things which they believe to be the teaching of the Scriptures in regard to the doctrines which they profess. Then, too, the scientific instinct in the mind of man is satisfied in its craving for unity and order in this department of human knowledge. This is an important scientific gain, and it enhances the claims of systematic theology in addition to and side by side with the purely Biblical studies. The task of the systematic theologian is a noble one at this point. He is to take the several gems which Biblical science has found, cut and polished, and place them in the diadem of the system of divine truth. He is to take the several stones which the workmen in Biblical science have quarried from the Scriptures and cut into their proper shape, and with these construct the splendid temple of the truth of God. The work of both

classes of laborers is needed, and that of the latter has strong claims upon the worker who would be efficient.

In the fifth place, it is a consideration in favor of the claims of systematic theology to remember that systematic theology, properly conducted, affords a measure of protection against imperfect or incorrect views of divine truth. It is only when the truths of the Christian system are seen and understood in their relations to each other that we are safe from onesided or incorrect views. It is here, perhaps, that both the value and defects of the somewhat ill-defined branch of theological learning known as Biblical theology appears. Its value consists in following out the way in which a single doctrine is presented in the Scriptures, or in tracing out the doctrinal teaching of any given author. Its weakness lies in the danger to which it exposes us of incorrect and one-sided views in regard to the consensus of Scriptural teaching upon any given doctrine, as it is set forth in the whole of the Bible. It is frankly admitted that Biblical theology may render a useful service, although it is not yet quite clear where its proper field lies between exegesis and systematic theology. If exegesis is complete it will have brought out the meaning of each author in a detailed way, and if systematic theology keeps as closely as it should to its Biblical basis it will take the results of exegesis as a whole and construct these into its system. Biblical theology has perhaps done good to both exegesis and systematic theology, by introducing the historical factor into the former and the Biblical more largely in the latter. It may, in the course of time, appear that it was raised up for this very purpose, and that when its task is done it will really be without a logical status among the various branches of theological science. Meanwhile it is doing a good service, but even with all its service it cannot take the place of systematic theology. And above all we are convinced that if systematic theology were abandoned, and Biblical theology alone pursued, the danger of incorrect and perhaps seriously heretical views would speedily threaten. Hence systematic theology vindicates itself because of the good service it renders in preserving sound views of truth, and setting up a barrier against heretical views. In the early apostolic ages of the church before the system of truth taught in the Scriptures was reduced to systematic form many of the most serious heresies which the Church of Christ has had to contend with arose. Out of the fires of great contro-

versies the grand doctrinal statements of that early age arose, and ever since the church has been greatly protected at these points. And to systematic theology this safety is largely due. And so it is at the present day. If the clear statement of the fundamental verities of the Christian system which systematic theology makes be cast aside, there is great reason to fear that before a century has passed that serious doctrinal corruption will invade the church. Hence the work of systematic theology and the value of definite doctrinal statements of truth are vindicated from this particular point of view. The theological student, therefore, will surely find the claims of systematic theology upon his time and attention fortified by this consideration that it serves to protect him and the church from erroneous, defective or one-sided views of doctrine.

In the sixth place, systematic theology asserts its claim upon the theological student by reason of the fact that it supplies strength and symmetry to the preaching of the word. For the pulpit and teaching work of the minister of the gospel this is a consideration of much value. Preaching needs stamina, and teaching requires truth. Systematic theology supplies these most necessary and indispensable qualities. This does not mean that the minister shall always set forth bare doctrinal outlines in his sermons, but it does imply that his preaching will not be mere sentiment, or barren of doctrine. In preparing sermons, the clear outline of the great scheme of truth which systematic theology exhibits will be very serviceable, even if it be only kept in the background all the while. The minister is to preach the word. This word in all its fulness and with great faithfulness is to be preached. The preacher must know the truth in its completeness, in order to preach it in its fulness. Systematic theology is his servant in this connection. Unless a minister's preaching has a strong background of doctrinal truth firmly held in definite form, he will be apt to wear out in a short time. The truth must not be held merely in solution in the mind, but must be crystalized into definite form that it may be made to sparkle with all its divine glory before the minds of the people as it is preached. The preacher who so knows the doctrinal outline of the Christian system, and so preaches it, is the preacher who will hold his hearers, and edify them more and more from year to year. If some in former ages erred by excessive doctrinal

form in their preaching, the danger of today is in the tendency to run to the opposite extreme. Short sermons, no doctrinal expositions, and no searching preaching is the cry in certain quarters. Those who join in this cry forget that all the great preachers who have moved people, and led them to act, and who have left a deep moral and spiritual impression on the people of their time gave due prominence to doctrine, and did not withhold even the supposed hard doctrines of Scripture. Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, Whitfield, Edwards and Spurgeon are all great examples of the truth of this statement. Hence if the preacher of today would be strong and steadfast in his work in the pulpit, which is really his throne, he cannot afford to ignore the diligent study of systematic theology. As one has said—"He should preach doctrine practically, and practice doctrinally." There must be the blending of the various elements in his preaching, and the claim of systematic theology is undoubtedly plain in the interests of effective and really useful preaching.

In the seventh place, the claim of systematic theology upon the theological student is further enforced by reason of the service which it renders to the strong and full development of the life and service of the Christian man. We group these two things of life and service together, for they imply each other. The position is taken here that if Christian life is to be strong and filled with ethical virility, and if service in the cause of Christ is to be efficient and persevering, there must be a firm grasp upon truth. And if these truths are comprehended in their relations in the system the effect will be all the more thorough in the life and service of the Christian man. He is to be sanctified by the truth, and the truth is the sword of the Spirit, who is the agent in sanctifying. The better the truth is known, and the more completely it is apprehended, the more thorough will be its sanctifying effect. This is important for the minister himself, and it is important in his relation to his people. He should be able to feed the men in Christ with strong meat and yet supply the babes with the sincere milk of the word.

The benefit of solid and systematic instruction in the case of the young people of our homes and of the Church is generally admitted. If it be good for the young to have this instruction it cannot be a bad thing for those in riper years. And if the minister is to be qualified to instruct believers and build them

up in knowledge and holiness, he must himself have a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of the whole system of truth contained in the Scriptures. This is precisely what systematic theology provides for him, and he should heed the claim that comes upon him from this quarter not to neglect this particular branch of sacred learning. And to Presbyterians this consideration has special force. They stand to represent a very definite system of doctrine, as also for a severely scriptural polity. If they would hold intelligently this system of doctrine they must know what it is, and systematic theology is the instrument which puts them in possession of that system. Let it not be forgotten that Presbyterianism, with its particular religious life growing out of its definite system of doctrine, has much at stake in connection with the reaction in certain quarters against systematic theology and doctrinal preaching. Should it permanently prevail, the Presbyterian type of life and service would certainly lose most, just because it has most to lose. If doctrine conditions life, and if faith fashions conduct, as we believe it does to a very large extent, then if life and conduct are to be strong and growing, doctrine and firm faith in a definite system of doctrine must be given a large and determining place. This we believe is the crowning claim on behalf of systematic theology. It is necessary to the development of the life of the Christian man, and the minister of the gospel should furnish it to his people. To do this he should be furnished with it himself very fully.

But at this point we must close our article. We have put forth a plea on behalf of the study of systematic theology as a very important part of a minister's training, both in the Seminary and afterwards in the work. We have no charge to bring against Biblical science either in the sphere of Exegetics or Biblical theology. But while we rejoice in the progress these studies have made in recent years, and the interest shown at present in them, we would still remind our readers that in our judgment a great mistake will be made if systematic theology properly understood is relegated to a secondary place. And this judgment is based not merely on a theoretical view of the whole matter, but upon experience and observation, first during two years as a student of theology, then for nearly eleven years in the active work of the pastorate, and now for nearly eight years trying to do something to train young men for the ministry. Year by year the conviction

deepens that much as purely biblical studies may do to qualify a young man for the ministry, and they are indispensable, still to give completeness and good balance to his training, systematic theology must receive adequate attention, side by side with all the other branches of study. Theology is, indeed, the germ of all sciences.

Nor can we conclude this article without adding two remarks. The first is, that for the effective pursuit of the study of systematic theology the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary. The Spirit first gave the Word, the Spirit interprets the Word. As He interprets it we find that it is an organic unity, and the teaching of the same Spirit is most necessary to enable the student rightly to construct the system, or to follow the construction of the system at the hands of another. The second remark is to the effect, that from all we have said we are not to assume that the Church is to be tied down absolutely to any given set of words, no matter how sound these may be. Each age has its own special work to do, and the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church may from age to age lead her into a deeper knowledge of the scriptures, and so enable her systematic theology to give a fuller statement of the contents of Scripture. Of course there will be no addition to the scriptures as the Rule of Faith, but there may be a fuller understanding of them by the teaching of the Spirit. No product of the systematic theologian, being but a human product so far, can be taken as final, but still in regard to not a few essential doctrines there is no reason to believe that the Church militant will be led much further in their statement. And so far as our own standards are concerned, our impression is that they still lead the van in the fulness of their scriptural proportions, and the Church in our judgment will be some time before she outgrows these standards. Above all it is to be remembered that if the time ever comes to revise our standards, and recast our doctrinal system, this must be done not to express more fully the life of the Church, but to state more adequately the contents of the scriptures as the Spirit may have taught them to the Church. And in view of all this, systematic theology must not be neglected, lest when the time for restatement comes, there will not be found a man, or set of men, who are able for the task.