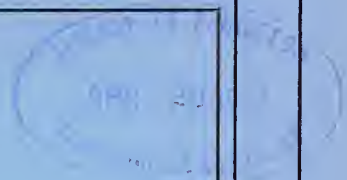


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**The
Princeton Seminary
Bulletin**

The Ministry of Grace

H. Ganse Little

Receipt for the Full Life

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The Real Presence

Otto A. Piper

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Donald Macleod, Editor

Edward J. Jurji, Book Review Editor

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CULTIVATE THE REAL PRESENCE

words of farewell to the new Graduates by the President of the Seminary

Dear Friends :

IT falls to me year by year, at Commencement time, to address some parting words of farewell to those who sit where you sit. Before I do so, let me say this: Taking you all together, you are the largest single group ever to receive degrees at one time from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Very early this morning I recalled the words I spoke twenty years ago to the Class of 1937. Re-echoing a thought of St. Paul as it is rendered in the Moffatt translation, I said to them, "Maintain the spiritual glow" (Rom. 12:11). Today, it so happens, that class is having an anniversary luncheon. When I think of those who will come together I am thrilled by the evidence I have that the "glow" is still in their lives.

On a Galilean mountain, a short time before he left this world, the Risen Christ said to his disciples, "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt. 28:20). Remember these words of the Lord Christ, and may they inspire you to *cultivate the Real Presence*.

In an African forest in a desolate, lonely moment of his life, David Livingstone recalled these same words of Christ and made this comment: "They are the words of a gentleman and he won't let me down." That is precisely the certainty I want to leave with you. As you now take to the road of life, and go your several ways, remember that Christ's Real Presence is encountered on life's highways and byways. Last

Sunday afternoon we sat down together in Miller Chapel to celebrate the Lord's Supper, Christ's farewell meal. He himself was our Host. There we enjoyed the Real Presence; Christ communicated to us his Risen Selfhood as we sat at his table.

But let us never forget, we who belong to the great Evangelical tradition, that our Lord's Real Presence is not confined to the Sacrament of Holy Communion. It is not restricted to the sanctuary or to any sacred spot. There are fellow Christians, alas, who have tended to banish the Risen Christ to the celestial sphere or to history's close, and to mediate him exclusively in the Eucharist. But on the authority of Christ himself, the Risen One who "was dead and is alive forevermore" haunts the pathways of earth. His is the Companion Presence of pilgrims and crusaders, and never is that Presence encountered so real as on the Road.

While it is gloriously true, however, that the Risen Lord is never far away, the experience of the Real Presence is conditioned on obedience. He who said that all authority in Heaven and on earth was his continues to walk with his friends. But Christ's friends are not his convivial cronies; they are his obedient servants. "You are my friends," he said, "my road companions, if you do what I command you."

But what did the Risen Lord command? What does he command you as you take to the road? He asks you, as he asks me, to join the great apostolic succession of his friends who are also his servants.

He wants you to play your part in bringing the nations to his allegiance. He asks you to do this primarily by preaching the Gospel to individuals, for there can be no new spiritual order unless this person and that becomes a "new creation" in Christ Jesus. But do not confine yourselves to evangelize individuals. When the circumstances demand, when the opportunity offers, confront the national life and the institutions of society with the Gospel. Question in the name of Christ the whole cultural order and its trends. Challenge the way in which international affairs are being conducted, so selfishly and shortsightedly, and without a tinge of the spirit of him who commissioned his disciples on a Galilean hill. Bring everything into captivity to the obedience of Christ. In that way, and only in that way, can you enjoy the Real Presence of him who died and rose again and who haunts the highways and byways of the globe.

The great Road Companion wants you also to build up his Church. Do not be satisfied with Christophiles. Demand much more of people than an admiration for Jesus Christ. Ask them to recognize that Christ's claims are not exhausted when his followers exert an influence on culture and social relations. Invite them unashamedly to be baptized into the Christian fellowship, to become members of the Church which is Christ's Body, and to accept responsibility therein. If you do this, the great Head of the Church will be with you on the road of your obedience.

Finally, echoing and commenting still further upon those immortal words from the Galilean mountain, your Road Companion, the Great Teacher, wants you, too, to be teachers, to pass on to others "all that he has commanded you." Engage, therefore, every one of you, in Christian education, whether in the church school or in college, in university or seminary classrooms. Make Christ's teachings relevant to life in all its phases. Grapple with the deepest problems of theology in our time. State in contemporary terms the faith once for all delivered to the saints so that people may understand what you are saying, or are challenged by what you convey to them.

And never forget it. He who spoke thus is not remote. He is with you and will ever be by your side if you are obedient to him. He is himself the Eternal Word of God who became flesh to be the Companion of your fleshliness. He is the Wisdom of God who will give you light in your darkness. He is the Master Teacher who will supply the right word and the right thought as the need arises.

Remember, too, that "the Lord is the Spirit." Distinguishable from one another, yes; but inseparable always: the Son and the Spirit. He who is the Truth will lead you into all truth. Walk in his holy companionship wherever you go, and keep going to the last frontier, and until the sun goes down. And may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.