

# The Princeton Seminary Bulletin

Published Quarterly by the Trustees of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church.

*Entered as second class matter, May 1, 1907, at the post office at Princeton, N.J.,  
under the Act of Congress of July 16, 1894.*

Vol. XXXI

PRINCETON, N.J., NOVEMBER, 1937

No. 3

## THE RÔLE OF PRINCETON SEMINARY

THE primary and most important function of a theological seminary is to prepare heralds of the Gospel and shepherds of souls. This function is worthily discharged when the Seminary makes adequate provision for the progress of its students in learning and piety. For "religion without learning or learning without religion in the ministry of the Gospel must ultimately prove injurious to the Church." (Plan of Princeton Theological Seminary) Neither of these can be a substitute for the other in a Christian minister. He must possess those "holy affections," regarding which Jonathan Edwards said: "True religion in great part consists in holy affections." He must possess equally a clear understanding of God's revelation in Christ and of the implications of this revelation for life in its fullness and its every sphere. Princeton Seminary has been consistently loyal to this great insight of its founders which they transmitted in the Plan of the Seminary as a mandate to their successors.

Some seminaries, however, of which this Seminary is one, have a further part to play in the religious life of their time. In addition to discharging the task common to all seminaries, it is theirs to match in the sphere of evangelical learning the studies offered by influential graduate colleges in the several branches of secular culture. That Princeton Seminary should discharge such a rôle is inherent in its nature and consonant with its tradition. It is a rôle, moreover, which the Seminary has fulfilled with distinction at different periods during its long history.

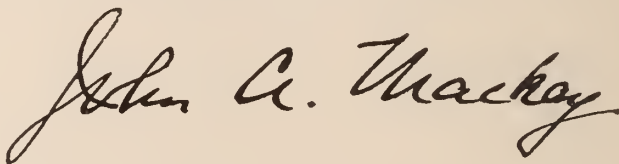
The religious crisis that besets mankind today is a call to Princeton Seminary to assume once again its historic rôle. It should aspire to nothing less than a place of decisive leadership in the theological world. Many circumstances favor the fulfillment of this aspiration. New winds and tides of God are in motion. To begin with, theology is more needed in the life and thought of today, and is more earnestly studied, than it has been for many a generation. Evidence multiplies among high school boys and university students, among ministers and laymen, of a craving to understand the Christian faith and to possess a luminous and well-articulated system of belief. It is well that this should be so, for otherwise the Christian Church would run the risk of being out-thought by its new rivals, those totalitarian political systems which have assumed the rôle of churches.

It is not, however, theology in general that is needed most, but confessional theology, theology that is hammered out within the fellowship of the Church and becomes an instrument of the Church Militant at a time when new rivals challenge her claims. There are professors of theology who teach in independent seminaries or in the theological faculties of universities who today would welcome chairs in church-related institutions.

Still more significant is the fact that the theological tradition which is most relevant to the deepest needs of our time is the theology that is ordinarily designated "Cal-

vinistic" or "Reformed." In these days of the totalitarian state with its claim to absolute sovereignty, the doctrine of the sovereignty of God has a pungent, contemporary flavor. It is the theology of Karl Barth that put iron into the resistance of the Confessional church in Germany. It is Reformed theologians like Barth and Brunner who have smashed the presuppositions of theological modernism and rekindled faith in the Scriptures and historic Christianity.

A strong graduate school of Reformed theology at Princeton is imperatively needed. The renaissance of evangelical learning which has flushed the horizon of European thought must come to America. Certain false conceptions regarding the Reformed faith which have been devastating in their influence must be dissipated. Our Seminary must seize the present providential opportunity to give vital theological leadership in our Church, our country, and the world of today. If we are to match this hour, we who are Princeton Seminary alumni can do so, under God, only in close-knit comradeship behind our alma mater, and with the cooperation in teaching positions of the best minds that our Church and other Reformed churches can supply. We have a distinguished faculty today. Its distinction must be maintained and increased tomorrow.



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## THE ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

THE Seventh Alumni Conference of the Seminary was held on the campus on Thursday and Friday, September 16th and 17th. The Alumni were present in such large numbers that the capacity of the dormitories was taxed. On Thursday afternoon President Mackay gave an address on "The Church's Task in the Realm of Thought," in which he presented his reflections on the Oxford Conference. Supper was served at the Princeton Inn, after which the Alumni returned to Miller Chapel and were addressed by Dr. J. Ross Stevenson. He took as his subject "The Church's Task in the Achievement of Unity," which was a summary of his impressions of the Edinburgh Conference.

On Friday morning Dr. Charles T. Leber, who as Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions had just returned from an extended visit to the mission fields of the Orient, addressed the Alumni on "The Church's Missionary Task." Following this address an impressive Communion Service was conducted by Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer. Dr. Hugh B. McCrone, Chairman of the Executive Council of the Alumni Association, presided. The music was under the direction of the Westminster Choir School. It is a pleasure to publish in this issue of the BULLETIN the three addresses that were delivered at the Conference.