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Addresses

DELIVERED AT THE

INAUGURATION OF REV. J. W. NEVIN, D. D.,

AS PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY,

IN THE

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

OF THE

GERMAN REFORMED CHURCH,

MERCERSBURG, PA., MAY 20TH, 1840.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS.

CHAMBERSBURG, PA.

PRINTED

AT THE OFFICE OF PUBLICATION OF THE GER. REF. CHURCH.

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1840.

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ORDER OF EXERCISES.

- 1 Hymn by the Chairman of the committee of Inauguration.
- 2 Prayer in the German language by Rev. B. S. Schneck.
- 3 Introductory Address by Rev. J. Helffenstein.
- 4 Propounding of the constitutional questions by the chairman and extending of the right hand of fellowship, by the committee of Inauguration, and the ministerial brethren and elders present.
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- 7 Inaugural Address by Professor J. W. Nevin.
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INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

BY REV. J. HELFFENSTEIN.

THE present occasion is one of no ordinary interest. Were we assembled to install a Pastor over a Church, we should feel that a relation is about to be formed solemn in its nature and most important in its consequences. But the relation which a Theological Professor sustains to his pupils and to the Church of God, is connected with *peculiar* responsibilities and will be attended with results which Eternity alone can disclose. The office of *Teacher* is no less of divine appointment than that of *Pastor*. Each has its appropriate duties, its trials, and its influence. Under the former dispensation, there existed the "schools of the Prophets"—of which Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, are supposed to have had the supervision. It was from these institutions, that Jehovah ordinarily selected the religious instructors of the nation, and it was here that they were trained for the services to which they were devoted. A certain writer remarks, that "in the Jewish nation, there were nearly fifty Theological Schools. None were allowed to enter the Priesthood till thirty years of age. Large funds were set apart for sustaining men both in their preparation, and in actual service—funds so ample as to take away all temptation to deviate from appropriate study and labor."

The first heralds of the cross if not educated at a Theological Seminary, received their training under him, who "spake as never man spake." During the three years he spent with them, he continually instructed them in divine things—thus while they were men of eminent piety, they also became "mighty in the scriptures," and amply furnished intellectually and morally for the great work to which they were called. What they lacked in natural acquirements, was supplied by miraculous endowments—possessing both the gift of tongues and the immediate inspiration of the Divine Spirit.

Ecclesiastical history informs us, that at an early period of the Christian Church, Seminaries were established for the education of an intelligent efficient ministry. Institutions of this kind, it is said, existed at Ephesus, Smyrna, Alexandria and other prominent places; and are supposed to have originated with the Apostles, or their immediate successors.

The importance of Theological Seminaries results from the importance of an educated Ministry. Young men may indeed be prepared for their work under the tuition of Pastors, but while this mode of training has its advantages, it has also its defects. Almost every religious denomination has therefore deemed it expedient to establish schools, expressly devoted to this object; and where prejudices formerly existed against them, in proportion as intelligence has increased those prejudices have vanished.

We are far from supposing that learning itself will constitute a Minister of Christ. Piety, eminent piety is the first qualification. Without this every thing else—Talents, Literature, Eloquence, Miracles themselves, are but as “sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.” An unsanctified Ministry is one of the greatest curses of the Church; and the pernicious influence of such a ministry is often increased by its very learning—for it is no less true, that “knowledge is power” to do evil, as well as to do good. Though we would not choose either, yet if we must choose between two evils—give us piety without learning, rather than learning without piety. There have been men whose attainments in literature have been limited, but who with well balanced minds and a high degree of consecration, have been distinguished for extensive usefulness. Other things however being equal, the success of a Minister will be in proportion to his intelligence. Not that by his own wisdom he can enlighten the mind, awaken the conscience, or win the heart to holiness. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord.” In this great work, God is the efficient agent—the instrumentality however which he employs is such as is adapted to the end. He operates upon men, not by magic power, nor by physical force, but as rational, voluntary and responsible beings. The mind is moved by truth and the more lucidly that truth is presented, the more reason have we to hope that it will be rendered effectual. It is said of Paul and Barnabas that “they so spake that many believed.” There was an adaptation in their mode of speaking to the effect produced. Now an educated man will be far more likely, to present truth with light and power, than an uneducated one. What we do not understand ourselves, we cannot convey clearly to the minds of others, and even where we have distinct apprehensions of any point, education instead of leading us to “darken counsel by words without knowledge,” directs us to such language and illustrations, as are best calculated to give distinct and forcible impressions of what we wish to communicate.

Besides—a Minister has not only to *publish*, but also to *defend* the Gospel—not only to preach the *truth*, but to combat with various forms of *error*. In these forms, like so many citadels, the enemy lies entrenched, nor is it by mere empty declamation that, he is to be driven from his retreat and “shut up to the faith.” The Goliath must be beheaded with his own sword.—Infidelity is mustering all her forces against the rising kingdom of the Messiah. She has borrowed her weapons from Geology, from Geography, from History, from Astronomy, from Chronology and from the Languages; and thus under the pretence of superior learning, has endeavored to undermine the Christian system and impose her own delusions. Let her be met on her own ground. Let it be shown, notwithstanding her boast to the contrary, that Christianity is founded in argument—that instead of shrinking from investigation, she invites it—that the more thoroughly her claims are examined, the more fully they are established.

The *increase of knowledge* in our country demands an intelligent ministry. Public attention, has been awakened to the importance of education, and efficient means are employed to enlighten the nation. Intelligence is diffusing itself throughout every grade of society. Sabbath School instruction is imparting a knowledge of the Bible to the young, which in the dark ages could not be claimed, even by the sacred office. How is this mass of educated mind to be impressed and controlled but by enlightened piety? The season has gone by when the mere *ipse dixit*, of a Minister will be regarded as authority,—men will read and examine for themselves; and when called upon to act, appeals must be made to their judgments as well as to their passions. The intelligence of the Ministry should certainly keep pace with the intelligence of our country. This is necessary not only to render our preaching effective, but also to preserve it from contempt. The doctrine of the cross will ever be offensive to the unrenewed heart, but let not that offence be increased by our personal unfitness to proclaim the truth. If men are offended, let it not be at the minister, but at his message.

The *design* of the ministry affords another proof of the importance of education. That design is not merely to arouse, but to instruct—not merely the conversion of sinners, but the “edifying of the body of Christ.” Like Paul, we must “*reason* of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come”—“*in meekness instructing* those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth,” “*teaching every man in all wis-*

dom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." The believers growth in grace, is to be promoted by his growth in knowledge. He is to be fed not merely with *milk* but with *meat*. Having been taught the "first principles of the Oracles of God," he is then to be led forth into the boundless ocean of divine truth, until he is able "to comprehend what is the breadth and length, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that he may be filled with all the fulness of God."

Now, it is easy to perceive, that, these ends can no more be accomplished by an ignorant than by an unsanctified ministry. The Proverb is as true at this day as it ever was, "Like Priest like people." "The Priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth." "Every scribe which is instructed into the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." The Church of Christ during her millennial glory, will attain a degree of knowledge and piety far surpassing any attainments in her previous history; and the means by which this object will be secured, will be an able and efficient ministry. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." "I will give pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."

The Epistles to Timothy and Titus, are addressed to *Ministers*, and describe very specifically their peculiar qualifications. The culture of the mind is no less enjoined than the culture of the heart. "Neglect not" says the Apostle "the gift that is in thee." "Till I come give attendance to reading," "*meditate* on these things," "*study* to show thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." "Sound speech that cannot be condemned," "apt to teach," "not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the Devil."—Timothy was exhorted to "lay hands suddenly on no man." "The things," says Paul, "that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

The most efficient ministers in all ages, have connected with piety a high degree of intelligence. Whom did God choose as the deliverer and guide of his people Israel? It was one who was "learned in all the wisdom of Egypt?" Under whom was it that the remarkable revival of religion took place, after the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the restoration of the Jews? It was under one who was a

“ready scribe in the law of Moses,” and who “caused the people to understand the law.”—Who was selected as the great Apostle to the Gentiles, and as the principal writer of the New Testament? It was one who had been “brought up at the feet of Gamaliel.” “Though I be rude in speech,” says Paul, “yet not in *knowledge*.” If the Apostle was not a *classical* scholar, he was at least well versed in the Scriptures, and endowed with strong powers of intellect. Who were the Reformers—Luther, Melancthon, Erasmus, Zuinglius, Calvin, Knox, Cranmer and Latimer? all educated men. Who were the Wesleys and Whitfield? men of cultivated as well as sanctified minds. Who were Edwards, Martyn, Brainerd, and the Tenants? men of deep research and of extensive acquirements.

Let the Church then labor to secure such a ministry. The wants of the world demand it. At least 600,000,000 in foreign lands are perishing for lack of vision, and require for their supply 600,000 devoted ministers. In our own land, there is also a most alarming destitution. Every where, “the harvest is great and the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send laborers into his vineyard.” Let Beneficiary Education be encouraged. Many of our most distinguished men, owe their introduction into the ministry to this system of benevolence. The Treasury of our Board needs immediately to be replenished, and there is wealth enough in our churches to meet the demand.

Let *Ministers* seek out young men of promise, and encourage them to “serve God in the Gospel.” It is computed, that in the Churches of our country, there are about 130,000 young men, between the ages of fifteen and thirty, and yet of these, only about 4000 have the Ministry in view. We would by no means urge every pious young man to become a Minister; yet it must be acknowledged that many who ought to devote themselves to the work require to have their attention particularly directed to the subject, and need the counsel and encouragement of their Pastors. In a church with which I once had the privilege of laboring, thirty young men were prosecuting their studies for the sacred office. Of the Rev. James Patterson, it is said, that he was the means of introducing not less than sixty young men into the ministry. If each of our churches will furnish only one, our Seminary will be full and our moral wastes eventually supplied.

Let *Parents* like Hannah devote their Samuels to the Lord. Let them agonize in prayer for their early conversion, and then offer

them up willingly to preach the Gospel, wherever God in his providence may direct. What a privilege to have a son an "ambassador of Christ!" What Parent does not aspire after the honor?

Let *young men* listen to the appeal, which comes from the four quarters of the globe. With your Bible in your hands, go to your closet, and there beseech God that he would direct you into the path of duty, and enable you to spend your life to the greatest advantage. The world is perishing in sin and calling for help. While, I am speaking, immortal spirits are passing to the judgment. Another—and another is gone,—gone beyond the reach of warning, and of mercy forever. Whose sympathies are not moved at the thought? Whose zeal does not kindle to save a dying world? Think of the compassion of the Savior—think of your obligations to redeeming mercy—think of your solemn vows—think of the judgment to come—think of the shouts of the ransomed—think of the wailings of the lost.

CHARGE.

BY REV. ROBERT DOUGLAS.

Reverend Sir :

IN the order of exercises on the present occasion, it devolves upon me, to deliver to you the charge, as Professor of Theology now inducted into office. I do this, not by way of dictation, nor to instruct you in your duty, but to comply with a regulation which custom has established.

That the office which you are called to fill in this department of the Christian Church, is without a rival in importance, sacredness, and responsibility, is a truth of which you cannot be insensible. Your past experience as a Professor of Theology for many years, has no doubt fully satisfied your mind upon this point. You are well aware, that in the discharge of the high functions of this sacred office, you occupy in a large sense, the exalted position before the world and in the Church, which Christ occupied when he was upon the earth. He not only preached the gospel with unexampled fidelity and perspicuity, but it seems to have been the special purpose of his mission, to instruct and qualify others for preaching it when he should have ascended again to heaven. He began in person the work which they were to propagate, when his earthly labours should be closed. For this purpose, he selected a few poor, but devoted men, whom he instructed with an assiduity and attention, well worthy of the imitation of religious teachers in every age. The things which he taught, were such only as had peculiar relation to the welfare of souls in the eternal world ; and this qualified them for the office of instructing others also. It is true indeed, that his teachings are inimitable by man, for he "taught as man never taught." Nevertheless, he is to be your example in all the instructions you impart to the students placed under your care. You have been called to the high and responsible office of teaching and preparing young men to go out into the world and preach righteousness in the great congregation—to warn, reprove, exhort, counsel and charge sinners as in Christ's stead—at least in his name, to be reconciled to God. You are to train them up for the highest, the holiest, and the best work ever entrusted to the hands of man. It is the noblest warfare in which it is possible for finite creatures to enlist.—In short, it is the

cause of God and perishing humanity. You are to infuse into them, by your precept and example, the spirit of Christian courage, faith and perseverance ; teaching them that having once put on the panoply of the gospel, they are neither to disgrace it by an unworthy action, nor lay it aside until the battle is fought, the victory won, and the crown secured. The banner of the Cross being unfurled, and they having enlisted under it, they can never desert its standards but at the peril of their own souls. They are to go forth into a revolted world ; its conquest is to be their ultimate aim ; their eye, like an Alexander's, is to be fixed upon this and nothing less, and having drawn their sword in the cause of their common Lord, they are never to lay it down until they behold an apostate world subjugated to his authority and restored to his allegiance ; and if in this holy warfare they fall victims, they fall like the hero on the field of his glory—they will fall mid the standards of the Cross ; their names will be inscribed high up, upon the columns of eternal fame and their souls will be borne amid the shouts of Angelic triumph to the Paradise of God.

This is the work, for which you are to train up young men, and surely under heaven, there can be none of greater magnitude or importance. If the work of the ministry of reconciliation be one of such high importance to men, and one of such deep interest to God and angels—if it be a work laden with such weighty responsibilities, what must be the importance of your office, and the weight of your responsibilities as one called to instruct in the School of the Prophets—to lay the foundation upon which they may build with honour to themselves and glory to God ? And if the wo pronounced upon unfaithful ministers of the gospel be awful, how much more awful must be the consequences to an unfaithful professor of Theology !

You are undoubtedly well aware, that the responsibilities of your office are exactly in proportion to the value of immortal souls in the estimation of Jehovah, and the importance of the offices they are designed to fill in his moral government. In view of these things therefore, I charge you, *First*, with regard to your doctrines. It is of the first importance to the student himself, to the Church, and to the world, that you teach as becometh sound doctrine ; that your doctrines be purely evangelical—those of the Bible only ; that they be not presented under the covering of human glossaries, or dressed up in the garb of speculative philosophy, which may be calculated to dazzle the eye and attract the attention, but only to deceive the



soul. You are to teach the doctrines of the Bible in faith and unity, putting the brethren in remembrance of these things, nourishing them up in the words of faith and good doctrine, "wherunto thou thyself hast attained." "Take heed unto thyself and to thy doctrine," said the Apostle Paul to Timothy his son in the faith, and surely his words are not less applicable to you to-day. This above all things is important in your high station, especially in this age of speculation and error. The evils that have resulted to the Church of God and to the souls of men, from the corrupt doctrines and false principles taught in institutions of learning, is known only to God, and can be revealed in their true character only in the last great day; and their bitter consequences will be experienced through an endless duration by numberless multitudes of undying souls. Let then attention to sound doctrines be your first great business in teaching and "you will save yourself and them that hear you." But on the other hand, should you impart false doctrines to the students, they will in like manner teach them to others, and thus hundreds of thousands of immortal souls may be shipwrecked and lost forever, whose blood may ultimately be required at your hands.

Secondly. I scarcely deem it necessary to charge you with regard to that attention to preparation, which will at all times be necessary to qualify you for a faithful and profitable discharge of the duties devolving upon you in this office. Undoubtedly, past experience has taught you, as it must have taught every gospel minister, that unless we are continually gathering knowledge from every accessible source, we will be but badly qualified for the great work of imparting useful information to others. In the present day, God works no miracles to qualify men for the discharge of this, more than any other duty of life. The old doctrine once so prevalent in the world, of supernatural preparation for the discharge of the sacred functions of this holy office, is now nearly exploded, and wise men have their eyes opened to see, that in order to teach others, they must first themselves be taught. Thus, then, give attention to these things; improve by diligent application the gift which God has given you, so that you may be a workman that need not be ashamed, dividing aright the word of God; yea that you may approve yourself a man of God, qualified to commit these sacred doctrines to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all," was the language in which Paul addressed Timothy, and in which God

would address every teacher of righteousness. This language is especially addressed to you.

Thirdly. With regard to communicating instruction, I have but little to say. As to the most proper and successful mode of teaching, you will, as a matter of course, be the best judge. And as to the time to be set apart for communicating instruction, you will of necessity so arrange that, as best to suit yourself and the students under your care. This is a point upon which no definite instructions can be given.—But here permit me to observe, that in imparting instruction to the young men under your care, you are not at liberty to teach them a part only of the sacred truth and to withhold the rest. You are not at liberty to accommodate yourself to their peculiar views, or prejudices, but as in the fear of God, you are to teach them the whole truth as it is in the Bible. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for instruction, for reproof, for correction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfected, thoroughly furnished to every good work.” All peculiarities with regard to favourite doctrines or views must here be laid aside, and by a careful and prayerful comparison of scripture with scripture, the true sense must be ascertained according to the generally acknowledged rules of interpretation. Your principle aim in instructing must be to make the students well acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, to teach them how to arrive at the true meaning of the sacred text, and to propound the Scriptures impressively and perspicuously in your frequent lectures before them, so that they may be able with clearness to propound them to others. The teacher of Theology should lay aside every motive and desire, but that which shall promote the glory of God, the good of the Church and the best interest of undying souls. He is not to teach himself, but Christ—not the commandments of men, but the doctrines of the Cross—not to hold up himself as a pattern worthy of the student’s imitation, but Him only who came to be a pattern to men. By holding up Christ constantly before the eyes of the students as their great prototype, godliness will be promoted in the institution and implanted in the minds of the students, and their youthful souls will be fired with zeal for the glory of God and the best interest of his kingdom on earth.

May the Great Head of the Church direct you in your course and keep you in all your goings. May he sanctify and bless the solemn and important connection this day formed between you and this branch of his spiritual Zion—may it redound to his own glory, the best interests of the Church, and the salvation of souls.—Amen.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS,



OF C

PROFESSOR NEVIN.



THE institution of the CHRISTIAN MINISTRY stands foremost, in point of importance, among the arrangements on which the welfare of life, in its proper civilized form, is found to depend. No other enters so deeply and steadily into the inward moral economy of society ; none links itself more vitally with all the radical interests of the individual and all the primary necessities of the state.

Viewed simply as a human worldly arrangement, apart from its higher purposes and aspects altogether, it may well be considered the most important form of power that has ever been brought to bear on the human mind. What agency can be imagined more fully adapted to produce effect, than one which thus spreads itself out through the social mass, and renews its action upon it incessantly from week to week, in the same direction and under the same general form ! The simple unostentatious character of the force that is employed, and the silence with which it may seem to work, prove nothing against this representation. Rather may we say, they serve to establish it as true. For are not the most powerful forces in life always simple, and always comparatively quiet ? It is the superficial and the transient, generally speaking, which are characterised by parade and noise. Silence is the surest argument frequently of depth and strength. It is so in the natural world. So is it also in the world of mind. The agency of the pulpit, under this view, is of more might by far than the agency of the Senate chamber. The pastoral office, distilling its influence like gently falling dew or rain, in just those circumstances which are best adapted to open a way for it to the secret fountains of thought and feeling, is an institution whose operation will be found in the end to go deeper, and to reach farther, than the policy and state machinery of cabinets can ever do.

In every christian community, the education of the people is, from the very nature of the case, mainly in the hands of their ministers. Their situation and character give them always, to a greater or less

extent, a direct control over the schools and colleges and literature generally of the country to which they belong. But it is not to this influence particularly that I now refer. The true idea of education, comprehends vastly more than is included in any schemes of study contrived for colleges and schools. It takes in all the influences, of whatever kind, that go continually to form and mould the spirit to its ultimate shape, and to work out gradually but surely the problem of its destiny for eternity as well as for time. Under this view, it is not easy to say what an amount of educational power is exerted by the christian ministry over those who acknowledge its authority. The man who stands up before a congregation from week to week, as the authorised expounder of truth and duty, can never fail in the end to leave the image of what he is himself, more or less fully impressed on all that come under the sound of his voice. His people, especially those of them who have grown up under his ministrations from childhood or early youth, catch something even of his external manner. The tones and inflections of his voice, become in some measure theirs. His whole appearance and deportment, especially in the pulpit, work in this way educationally on the minds of his hearers; so that it is very far indeed from being a matter of indifference what a minister's looks and tones and gestures may be in the sacred desk, as many persons are apt to suppose. But all this is only the outward sign of a much deeper effect, which in these circumstances is sure to be produced. The minister's style of thinking, as certainly as his style of speaking, will after a time show itself among his hearers. His taste, if it be bad, is found to be contagious; while it works with an influence that is universally refining, where it may happen to be chaste and good. The character of his understanding, his processes of reasoning, the frame and structure of his thoughts, all communicate themselves in some measure to the congregation over which he presides as a public teacher. The result of the influence will of course be different in each separate case, according to the mental character of the subject on which it falls; but all, and especially the younger portion of the congregation, will after a certain time undergo some modification from its power. Their intellectual conformation will not be in the end what it would have been in other circumstances.

I have often been surprised with the observations which it has fallen in my way to make with regard to this point. In almost every instance in which I have had an opportunity for comparing the char-

acter and manner of students, even after they had finished their college education, with the character and manner of the ministers, under whose preaching they sat in early life, the evidence of such an educational relationship as I have now described, has been quite clear. How often have I been reminded in this way of the tone, and manner, and mental style of some clergymen with whom I have been acquainted, from meeting a reflection of the whole, shadowy but not obscure, in the person of a youthful candidate for the ministry who was found to have sprung originally from his congregation. In other cases the hearing of a strange preacher has forcibly called up to my thoughts the manner of some young acquaintance, of whose early connections I have had little or no knowledge; and on inquiry it has turned out that the first had been, in some distant part of the land, perhaps years before, the pastor and pulpit teacher of the second. So invariably has the case led in this way to the same observation, that I have come now to take for granted the fact of such a correspondence between students and their former pastors universally.— And it is not to be supposed that this correspondence results from any studied effort on the part of such young men to copy the style of these venerated teachers. They have never been conscious of any such effort; and they have no idea in the end of having borrowed any thing at all from any such quarter. The effect is the natural, necessary result of the ordinary laws of mind. And what becomes thus apparent in the case of students, is only the outward expression of what all in the same circumstances have experienced in the same way. The mind of the congregation is always modified educationally by the mind that acts upon it steadily from the pulpit.

But the importance of the sacred ministry rests on grounds far deeper and universally more solemn than these. Its grand object is the moral improvement of those who come under its power. Righteousness and truth in the souls of men, are the vital interest to which its energies are by special consecration devoted. And this interest it regards, not simply in the character of an institute planned for the purpose by human wisdom, and embodying a political aptitude for its end in its own natural constitution. It is something more than a device of the state; something more than a benevolent agency originated by wise and good men for the spiritual benefit of the world. It is a *divine* institution. Planned and sanctioned by infinite wisdom, as the best possible arrangement that could be made to carry forward the vast design of the gospel, it carries along with it from age to age

a divine supernatural force also, for the accomplishment of spiritual effects with reference to this design. In its proper form, it is "the wisdom of God and the power of God," for the salvation of the world. It works with irresistible power on the hearts of men, and thus takes hold on the very foundations of character and life.—It is mighty "through God to the pulling down of strong holds." All other forms of power are weak in comparison with this.

Indeed whatever of strength there is in the gospel itself, it may be said to develop itself mainly through this institution. It is by the "foolishness of preaching" especially, that God confounds the wisdom of the world in displaying the wonderful power of the cross. It has been found accordingly, that the character of the ministry has been pretty accurately the true measure of the power of the gospel, and of the prosperity of the Church, at any given time, in all ages. So long as the sacred office has exhibited to any considerable extent its proper spirit in connection with its proper form, religion has flourished in the Church and exerted a divine power upon the world. And just so soon, on the other hand, and so far, as this may have ceased to be the case in any part of Christendom, the effect has been a general prostration of the spiritual energies of the Church itself, and a general interruption of the light and power with which the truth had previously shone on the benighted waste around.

To any community then, I repeat it, the Christian ministry is an interest of the most vital consequence. Under its proper healthful form, it will be found encircling with conservative power all that is sound and wholesome in the social state, elevating men to their true dignity, and bearing them successfully forward towards their proper destiny. And where it may happen to be shorn of its true strength, society must be held to be out of joint in the most serious respect. Defect or corruption here involves a heavier calamity, than defect or corruption in any other department of the social system. The want of a proper judiciary would be an evil less worthy of being deprecated, than the want of an adequate gospel ministry. A bad administration of the state is not so great a calamity, as the absence of all proper light and power from the pulpit. The heaviest affliction which can fall on any community in this world, is comprised in the fulfilment of that terrible word, "I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place." Compared with this, burdensome taxes, disordered finances, governmental abuses in general, are entitled to small consideration. The question, how the currency

should be regulated, is of less account by far than the question, how shall a proper provision be made for supplying the people with sound and wholesome religious ministrations. The pulpit is a more vital institution immeasurably to the commonwealth, than the bank. Let all our banks fail; let all our canals and rail roads and our whole system of internal improvements, perish; let trade decline, and a universal depression pervade the market; let a false political economy preside over the legislature of the land, or a corrupt party spirit sap the principles of the constitution itself, for the sake of its own sinister and selfish ends; let all this or any part of such misfortune, fall upon us, if God so please, rather than that we should hear no voice from the sanctuary, or have the blind only for our spiritual leaders, in the pastoral office.

Institutions then and efforts, which propose to do something towards a proper provision for this great religious and social interest, are always entitled to respect; and so far as they may be found suitable and sufficient for their proposed end, they may well challenge the sympathy and support of all true patriots as well as of all true christians. In this country particularly, where this whole interest is by the civil power formally rolled over upon the free care of the people themselves, the duty of thus co-operating in the work of providing an adequate ministry, may be held to be specially imperious and solemn. That it will not be regarded by multitudes is always certain; and it becomes so much the more important, on this account, that the real friends of the country, in their concern for its welfare, should not overlook or undervalue this momentous trust. They should feel, that in lending their help to the efforts which are made for providing and maintaining in this nation a competent and efficient gospel ministry, they are rendering to their country and their race the highest kind of service of which they are capable.

The enterprise of the *German Reformed Synod* with reference to this object, which has led to the establishment of the Theological Seminary and College now located in this place, must be allowed by all who consider the case intelligently to stand high among the various efforts, which the Church at large is making at the present time in the same direction. No one will venture to say, that the field of action immediately contemplated in this instance is of small account, or that the enterprise itself might well have been spared, in view of any arrangements previously existing that could be supposed

sufficient to cover the same ground. The field is in its own nature one of the most interesting and important, and may I not add, one of the most promising, offered to view in the whole land. The territory comprised in the bounds of the German Reformed Synod is very great, and includes a large portion of the finest soil that is to be found in the United States, under the highest cultivation. The character of the people belonging to its connection, or falling naturally and properly under its care, is full of encouragement. The original elements of the German mind are still retained in their moral constitution, only modified to some extent, and cast as it were into the American mould, by the peculiar influences to which they have been subjected, (under a remove of two or three generations from their ancient birth-place,) in the new world. Qualities of sterling value are imbedded in their spiritual nature; which need only to be properly developed by means of knowledge and religion, working hand in hand, to place them as a people in the very foremost rank of excellence and greatness. The German mind is constitutionally vigorous and free. Simplicity, honesty, and integrity, characterise it strikingly under all circumstances. It leans towards nature and truth. It is thoughtful, meditative, quiet. It abounds in sentiment and feeling; and it always suffers a sort of unnatural violence, when it is found through the prevalence of selfish and low aims, belying its native temperament in this respect. No people are more susceptible than the Germans of all the deeper and more spiritual emotions of our nature. None have a greater aptitude naturally to be wrought upon by music and painting and poetry, and all that addresses itself to the aesthetic faculty in the soul. None naturely have a quicker sense of the beautiful and the sublime, whether in the world of matter or in the world of spirit. None are more susceptible of all that is deep in friendship or sacred in love. In none is the instinct of religion more powerful, or the congeniality of the soul with all that is vast and awful in faith, with all that is profound in devotion, more readily and strongly displayed. Indeed the *faults* of the German character themselves, stand in more or less affinity with the favorable susceptibilities and tendencies which have now been mentioned. They are perverse, onesided developments of forms of life, the native excellency of which cannot fail to be perceived in some measure even under such distortions. These it is the business of a proper religious culture to remove or prevent; and happily in this country the state of society and the reigning tone of thought are well suited to counteract just those moral aberrations to which the mind of Germany at

home is most exposed; thus placing it in the most favorable circumstances with regard to such culture, and contributing greatly to the efficacy of it so far as it may be employed.

Such is the character of the people, to whose spiritual welfare the enterprise of the German Reformed Synod has primary respect. It is a character which involves a great deal, not only for the German population itself to which it belongs, but to the American nation generally. Commercially, politically and morally, the influence of the people is already immense; and the influence which, from their resources and relations, they may be expected to exert hereafter, and which it is desirable they should be brought to exert under a healthful form as quickly as possible, may be said to be beyond all calculation.

When we say that this broad and promising field is, to this hour, most inadequately occupied with the means of grace, we do but utter a truth which all are ready to admit, and of which the painful evidence stares us in the face from every side. The harvest emphatically is great, but the laborers are comparatively scattered and few. Most of our ministers serve three or four congregations; some of them as many as six or seven or eight. Vast bodies of people that belong to us naturally, and that might be gathered into the fold of the visible Church if they were looked after in a proper way, are left as sheep without a shepherd, because no one can be found to take the charge of their souls. It is reckoned that if men of the proper sort could be had, as many as one hundred additional pastors might at once be settled and supported in the churches already organized within this Synod; and in the end, as any one who considers the number and wealth and territorial diffusion of the people, must at once allow, at least one hundred more should be found settled and steadily laboring on the same ground. But the case does not stop here. A vast German population is already planted beyond the Allegheny mountains; and an emigration which never ceases is still transplanting the very heart of Germany itself, by thousands and tens of thousands, into the great valley of the West. On this broad field we behold another section of our own communion, struggling to provide for its spiritual necessities, under circumstances of want still more deplorable than our own. The German Reformed Church in the West looks to us, and has right to look to us most certainly, for sympathy and co-operation, in the efforts she is making to fulfil the mighty trust with which she is charged. It is high time indeed that,

the German Church on this side of the mountains should be in a state to lay out its full strength for the benefit of the West, having all its own home necessities previously provided for and its energies free for this most important missionary service. For it is not merely to churches already organized, that our zeal should be directed, in this quarter. The German population of the West generally, always increasing, and as it would seem outrunning more and more every year the measure of its religious opportunities, has claims upon us unutterably deep and solemn. Who may be expected "naturally to care" for these desolations, if it be not the German population of the country, found in more favorable circumstances, especially on this side of the mountains? Who may be considered, by their nature and position *qualified*, in the same way, to work successfully on such a field?

These are the circumstances, in which the German Reformed Synod has felt itself bound to move in the present enterprise. In doing so, it has undertaken a work which is strictly and properly its own and to which it may consider itself solemnly appointed by a commission from heaven itself. No other agency can be expected fairly and fully to cover the ground, which this action is intended to occupy. If the German population of this country is to rise at all to its proper rank in a religious point of view, it must be within the framework of its own ecclesiastical institutions, and by means mainly of its own exertions. Its interests cannot with propriety or safety be devolved upon others.

What have foreign institutions and influences, (if we may thus speak of *English* action so called, in distinction from German,) yet accomplished for the German population, as it regards its religious improvement, in any part of the country? Look for instance, at Eastern Pennsylvania, where the two classes of people have been intermingled, and closely joined together in their political and social relations, for so long a time; and where the religious institutions of the English have exhibited from the beginning as vigorous and prosperous a character as in any other section of the land. What have these accomplished, I ask, for the German community, in the midst of which they have been in operation for so long a series of years? That some salutary influence has resulted from them, in this direction, at certain points, need not be doubted. But is it not clear, that this has been generally only in the most partial and indirect way; while in fact, no proper substantial impression has been so much as intend-

ed or cared for in the case? Our English churches have strangely overlooked and neglected the German, even after the partition wall of his language had begun to give way, and it seemed in some cases only necessary to take him kindly by the hand, in order to draw him into their communion. It did not seem to come into the mind of our good *Scotch Reformed* brethren for the most part, that a German might be considered proper stuff to work with, in building up their own churches; not even, though he had been born a Presbyterian himself, and had been taught from his mother's knee to reverence the doctrines of the Heidelberg catechism as the true orthodox faith. And so it has been a common thing, to see large and flourishing congregations gradually wasting away to absolute desolation, before the steady growth of the German community, with scarce an effort to save themselves by any thing like an overture towards a religious alliance with these sturdy neighbors.

What *have* the English churches done for the Germans of Pennsylvania, in times past? What *are* they doing now? Do they feel themselves charged with a commission, to look after their spiritual welfare? Are their institutions framed at all, on the principle of embracing and occupying this peculiar and highly interesting tract of mind? Are they laying themselves out to provide suitable ministers for our congregations, or suitable missionaries for our waste places? Have they their eye on this broad field, "white already to the harvest," in their education boards, in their colleges, in their theological seminaries? Are students, and candidates for the ministry, ready to come forth from their halls of science, and meet the Macedonian cry that still ascends from this Synod only, to say nothing of the sound that is heard from Ohio, Indiania, Illinois, and Missouri?

These questions are not asked invidiously, as it regards our brethren of the English churches. We may change the form of inquiry, and thus put the case more fully in its true light. *Can* the English churches thus provide for the necessities of the German population? Are not their hands already full, with work more directly and immediately their own? Have they ministers, or candidates for the ministry, to spare? Are their resources more than they already need? Is the field we are now considering open and free for their occupation, if they were ever so much disposed to enter upon it in the name of the Lord? Is it so open and free at least as to justify them, if they should withdraw their activity and zeal from other

quarters, where all and more than all are still wanted, to turn them in this direction? Can they break through the barrier, which is still interposed between the two people by difference of language to a great extent, and not less perhaps by difference of national temperament? Are our German churches ready to merge themselves in the religious systems of England and Scotland, on this side of the Atlantic? Or are they willing generally to have their pulpits supplied from abroad, if the thing were proposed; or to see even their own proper missionary ground wrested from their hands, and made to "blossom like the rose" by a different agency, when it should be their ambition as it is plainly their solemn trust to accomplish the work themselves?

I should be one of the last to countenance or encourage national prejudices, in any case; and especially within the sphere of religion, where there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, but Christ is all and in all. Least of all would I be willing to justify any sentiment of this sort, as it regards the relations of the Church I have recently left, with the one which has now taken me as an adopted son into her bosom. Though two communions in one aspect, they are in another altogether the same. The Reformed Church of Scotland and the Reformed Church of Germany, as well as the Reformed Church of Holland and the Reformed Church of France, are so many twin sisters by birth, not merely of the protestant Reformation, but of that Reformation in its purest form, as it was perfected finally at Geneva, under the instrumentality of the gigantic spirit of Calvin. The Heidelbergh Catechism, drawn up in the 16th century, may be regarded as the groundwork doctrinally, on which the Westminster confession of Faith was erected in the century following. Both Churches stand on the German platform as to faith. Both are formed on the same Presbyterian plan of government. In no sense do they constitute different religious *sects*, according to the proper use of that term. They constitute in this country substantially one and the same interest, and should feel themselves bound together by an unceasing mutual sympathy of the most active sort.

In view of all this however, I do not hesitate to say that the German Reformed Church ought not to think of laying aside her distinct national character, and merging herself in a foreign interest. Nothing is clearer than the fact, that the people generally have not the least idea of thus quitting their national position at the present; but

independently of this, I would say that the thing itself is not to be desired, and if any disposition of this sort did exist it ought not to be encouraged. Even in the case of the *Dutch* Reformed community in New Jersey and New York, it was wise probably to establish a separate system of action, for its religious improvement, within the distinct pale of its own national institutions. But if this may be admitted in this case, it must be allowed on all hands, that a similar policy has far more reason in the case of our German Synod.

The Dutch Reformed Church covers comparatively but a small space. It required no great time to change the old language. There was no prospect of new ground opening for its enterprise, by emigration from Holland. But how different from all this are the circumstances of the German Church? All the ministers in the Dutch Reformed Church, (and it is now fully supplied) would scarcely be sufficient, if added to our own, to meet the necessities simply of this Eastern Synod. The German language still holds its ground in a large portion of the Church, and is likely to do so for a long time to come. Then there is a large mass of German mind within the limits of the Synod, belonging to other denominations, or to no denomination at all which ought to feel the force of our religious character, though we might have no anxiety whatever to proselyte it to our own ranks. But to be felt in this way, the Church must continue to be known distinctly as a German Church. In Eastern Pennsylvania especially the predominant form of mind will be German; and that influence in the Church which is visibly of German constitution and German growth, must in the end prove more effective in controlling its character than any other. For the German Reformed Synod to renounce its national character, would be a sort of treason to the German interest generally. Our brethren of the Lutheran and Moravian Churches might complain, in such a case, that they were left to bear alone the heat and burden of a day which belongs by divine appointment equally to us all. They have no right to desert us. We have no right to desert them. The united weight of all standing fast to their national standard, will all be needed to make a right moral impression on the wide-spread community to which they belong, and to withstand successfully the force of those various forms of infidelity and error to which it is coming more and more to be exposed.

And then, as was said before, there is the new Germany of the West teeming with life already, and every year swelling into new

greatness. A field for home missionary action, which a German Christianity only can ever adequately occupy, spreads out here to our view in almost boundless grandeur. Have we any right to denationalize the German Church, in view of its special adaptation to this high mission? Were not this to rob the West of one of its brightest forms of hope? May the Church prove recreant to her trust? May she sell her *birthright*?

The case is clear. The German Church must rise within herself, and mainly, under God, by and from herself. She must adhere to her own standards. She must have her own ministry; and in order to this her own institutions, for bringing her sons forward to the sacred office. She should continue to cherish still her national sympathies, and the hallowed associations of her own faith and worship. All her children should unite in seeking her prosperity as a distinct Church, under this view. As Germans the best service they can have it in their power ordinarily to render to the cause of religion in this country, will be to abide in their own Church, and to do all that in them lies to assist it in putting on the full strength of the Lord.

This enterprise of the German Reformed Synod then, may well challenge the regard of all who have at heart the prosperity of religion and the true interests of this country. The object of it is to raise up a proper ministry for its own bounds, as well as to send forth ministers to still more destitute regions in the West. A proper supply of rightly qualified men for the sacred office, is more important to the country, as we have seen, than any interests whatever of a merely political or economical kind. The field for which it is contemplated particularly to make provision in *this* case, is one of incalculable importance in all respects; and it is one which no other action can be expected at all effectually to cover. It is only when all these considerations are taken into view together, that we are prepared rightly to estimate the importance of the work which the Church has entered upon in the case under notice. Present appearances furnish no measure at all of the interest of the undertaking. It lies in the nature and design of the undertaking itself.

We have a right to expect confidently the sympathy, (and may I not add, the friendly co-operation) of our brethren in other Churches in this work. Especially may we so look to the Reformed Churches of Irish and Scotch extraction, who may be considered in a certain

sense doctrinally and ecclesiastically one with ourselves—this extraction only excepted. Can *they* be indifferent to the fortunes of the German Reformed Church in these United States, embracing as it does such vast resources, and exhibiting such mighty capabilities? Shall their charity and zeal travel across the Atlantic, to assist the Reformed Church of *France* in its efforts to rise from the dust; and will they look coldly on the Reformed Church of *Germany*, struggling at their very door to build up the waste places of many years, and to take her proper high stand in the "sacramental host," which God is mustering for himself in this new world? If orthodoxy, in the Calvinistic sense, is to prevail finally in Eastern Pennsylvania; if Presbyterianism is destined to be to any extent a leading interest, in the same section of country; it must be under the standard of the Heidelberg Catechism especially, and the Discipline of the German Reformed Church. Scotch Presbyterianism may be strong enough to rely upon itself for the preservation of these great interests, in other parts of the land; but it ought to be plain to all that is no longer sufficient for such purpose here, and that it is likely to be still less so in time to come. Ought it not then to be matter of thankfulness and joy, that this cause may be expected thus to keep its ground on so fair and rich a soil, even though the form and costume in which it has heretofore appeared should undergo some change. There ought to be no jealousy of such a change as this. Rather our English Presbyterians should do all in their power, to encourage and sustain the German Reformed interest at every point. Better that a weak English congregation, which is unable to support the gospel, should itself fall in wholly with their German neighbors and aid them in building up a German Church which may be expected to live and grow, than that by clinging hopelessly to their own separate organization, they should endanger perhaps, on both sides, the entire interest to which they would show themselves so much attached.

But it is of course to the German community itself, within the connection of the Reformed Synod, that the interest which we are now contemplating may be expected to commend itself with special force. If ever there were a case in which a people were bound to rally round a common cause, as with the spirit of one man, it seems to me we have it here. Who that has the heart of a German can refuse to lend it to a work, which looks so directly to the moral elevation of a community, so great, so powerful, so full of promise, and to which

he feels himself bound by so many sacred ties ! Can we conceive of an event, within the same range of possibility, that would be so auspicious to the interests of truth, and freedom and human happiness, in this country, as the general triumph of light throughout this mighty mass of mind, between the Atlantic and the Allegheny only, rousing it to action worthy of itself, and clothing it with the full strength of its constitution fairly developed ? Would it not be to the whole land emphatically as "life from the dead ?" Only think of the fair territory over which it spreads, as fully planted with schools and churches ; an able and faithful ministry, commensurate with the field, diligently plying its evangelical task ; the body of the people formed into intelligent, well instructed Christian congregations ; the vast resources and manly energies of the whole consecrated mainly to virtue and religion. Where should we find, in such a case, in these whole United States, a community of the same extent so interesting to look upon, or that might be considered more necessary to the religious and political prosperity of the land ? No other section of the Church perhaps could come up with so much strength, "to the help of the Lord against the mighty." None would have greater resources in the way of wealth. None would enjoy a location, more favourable for putting forth a powerful moral influence on all sides. None would embody elements of character more worthy to be relied upon in the formation of the human soul ; or which, in proper combination and development, would be found to constitute a better proportioned or more healthful and vigorous Christianity. The character of the Church would be suitable to its central situation. Calm, firm, solid and compact, it would form a proper barrier on both sides to forces which ought not to meet ; and might be expected to mediate with becoming dignity, (as by divine designation,) between the spirit of the North and the spirit of the South, imposing a wholesome check on each.

And why should the picture *not* become real ? Will it be thought a thing incredible that God should thus raise our German Zion, and cause gladness and joy, thanksgiving and the voice of melody to be heard through all her streets ? Or does the idea involve any thing so great and contrary to all promise, that centuries must be considered needful for its accomplishment ? May we not say rather, that the whole case is of a different complexion ? The dawn of such a day as we have imagined, might seem already to have broken above the horizon. The German mind has begun to awake from

its slumber, and may be expected soon to make itself felt in a new and extraordinary way. The Church is struggling to rise, with a resolution and energy which bid fair to increase every year. What a change has taken place in this respect, within the last ten years? How manifest it is, that the people are prepared for greater and more rapid advances, in time to come! Never perhaps did so rich a field show itself so ripe for an immediate harvest. With the intelligence and favorable religious tendencies of the people and their full ability to uphold at once all needful religious institutions among themselves, can it require any very long series of years, in the use of suitable Christian zeal, to bring the work to its proper issue? It is but a short time since the Dutch community of this country, in the States north of us were found in circumstances more unpromising than ours are now. May we not hope to rise, as rapidly at least, as they have done, to our proper station in the American Church, if only our hearts and hands be enlisted fully in the undertaking?

With such views of the grandeur and solemnity of the work in which the Church has embarked, would I enter on the office to which I am this day set apart. With such views, I would at the same time most earnestly and affectionately bespeak in favor of this great cause, the friendly interest and hearty co-operation of all who fall in any way within the range of our ecclesiastical connection.

Let it be remembered continually, in the sanctuary and in the closet. It is by prayer in the end, that such a cause as this is destined to prevail, if it ever prevail at all. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Pray ye, says Christ, the Lord of the harvest, that HE may send forth laborers into his harvest. If there be any interest around which the hearts of God's people should be always clustering in prayer, it is surely such an one as this.

But there must be action here, as well as prayer. Our institutions are not yet complete. They need to be extended and made strong. And all this should be done without delay. The case calls for the most prompt and vigorous measures. Every year is precious. At the same time the resources of the body are ample. All that is wanted might be furnished in a single year, without being felt. Why then should the work languish or drag? How many men have we in the German Reformed connection, who would be able single-hand-

ed to endow a professorship or build a college, and scarcely miss the donation when it was done? And why should such men *not* be expected to devise and execute liberal things, in a case so important as this, which patriotism and religion both conspire to commend to their regard? They can hardly find an interest more worthy of their generosity, or more likely to make it tell in perennial blessings on the people to which they belong.

Young men also, of proper capacity, are needed in large numbers for carrying forward this great design. Parents who can afford it, may confer a high favor on the community, as well as on their sons themselves, merely by giving them a liberal education. Let our substantial German farmers send their sons to college. It is not to be expected of course that all who are thus educated will go into the sacred office. They may find an ample field for usefulness in other stations. The German body in general, and the German Church in particular, has an interest in the case of every student proceeding from its own bosom. At the same time, the great want among us at present is ministers. It should be the concern of all who have our interests at heart, to bring forward and educate young men, who may be qualified in the end for this service. Parents who can thus bring forward a son for the use of the Church, should feel that in doing so they make the richest offering they have in their power to present. Young men too, who have a heart to devote themselves in this way, should come forward and offer their persons for the service. Let none such betake themselves to other denominations. The German Church lays her hand on her own children, and claims them solemnly for herself. If standards are to be changed at all, it is fitter far, that zealous young men should come over to us, from other sections of the Church, than that we should lose any who are ours already by birth. It were worth the ambition indeed of such as covet usefulness on a large scale, to pass from other bodies into ours, and even to master the German tongue as a necessary key for their object, that so they might find access more fully to our waste places, beneath the banner of the Church. How much more should every young man of German extraction, who has the ministry in view, cling to the communion of his own people, honoring their institutions, cherishing their language, and identifying himself with them in the gospel, as a high birth privilege not to be parted with during life!



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