



The Princeton Seminary Bulletin

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No. 1

The One Hundred and Twenty-fourth Commencement

The Commencement exercises continued from Sunday, May the seventeenth, through Tuesday, May the nineteenth. As Dr. Stevenson and Dr. Erdman are being retired this year, the Trustees requested the latter to deliver the Baccalaureate Sermon and the former the Commencement Address. The service on Sunday morning was held in Miller Chapel. Dr. Erdman spoke on the subject of "The Pastoral Principles of Saint Paul". Musical selections were rendered by a male chorus from the Westminster Choir. After the sermon the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered by Dr. Stevenson.

On Monday at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees the Rev. John Alexander Mackay, Litt.D., was elected to succeed Dr. Stevenson as President of the Seminary. Five new members were elected to the Board of Trustees as follows:

The Rev. Henry Seymour Brown, D.D., Executive Secretary of the Church Extension Board of the Presbytery of Chicago; The Rev. John H. Gross, D.D., of Philadelphia, Pa., Treasurer of the Board of Pensions; the Rev. John McDowell, D.D., of East Orange, New Jersey, Secretary of the Board of National Missions and former Moderator of the General Assembly; The Rev. Frank Sergeant Niles, pastor of the First Church, Princeton; Ray Vance, Esq., of Maplewood, New Jersey.

Minutes were adopted in recognition of the services of Dr. Stevenson and Dr. Erdman.

On Monday afternoon at five o'clock a largely attended reception was given by Dr. and Mrs. Stevenson at "Springdale" to the graduating class and to the Alumni and friends of the Seminary.

The graduating exercises were held in the University Chapel on Tuesday morning at half past ten o'clock. The subject of the address by Dr. Stevenson was "The Princeton Seminary Ideal of Theological Education in the New Day". Inspiring music was rendered by the Westminster Choir School under the direction of Dr. John Finley Williamson. The address of Dr. Stevenson and a list of the degrees conferred will be found in subsequent columns of the Bulletin.

At the Alumni luncheon held in the University Gymnasium, Dr. Robert E. Speer delivered an address with special reference to the retirement of President Stevenson and of Dr. Erdman. A number of selections were rendered by the Westminster Choir.

Commencement Address

THE PRINCETON SEMINARY IDEAL OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE NEW DAY

PRESIDENT J. ROSS STEVENSON, D.D., LL.D.

There are three anniversaries in this present year which have a bearing upon the training of ministers. Four hundred years ago Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* were published. This proved to be an epoch-making book in religion, comparable to Bacon's *Novum Organum*, and Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia* in the world of science, or to Kant's *Kritik of Pure Reason* in the realm of philosophy. It is gratifying to know that the Seminary has one of the few copies of the 1536 edition. Originally intended as an elementary compendium for popular instruction in the principles of true religion, in its completed form it was designed to prepare and qualify students of theology for a better understanding of the Sacred Scriptures. That book of four hundred years ago, which clearly expressed the faith of the Reformed Church, laid the foundation of representative government, and inspired intelligent spiritual leadership for the onward march of Christ's Kingdom, is to have an international commemoration in the city of Geneva in the course of the present month. In this commemoration Princeton Seminary, like all Presbyterian institutions which acknowledge John Calvin as their progenitor, is deeply interested.

Next September the tercentenary of the founding of Harvard College is to be elaborately celebrated as befits a great event in the advancement and perpetuation of learning. This anniversary has a special interest for us on this occasion, in the recollection that the college was established for Christ and the Church, and on account of the Puritan or Calvinistic traditions which this institution still holds. While the broad and ultimate object was general culture, the education of ministers was the immediate purpose, and the fear of an illiterate clergy was the dynamic motive. During the first century of Harvard's existence, fifty-two per cent of the graduates became ministers. Churches established in the American colonies, apart from the limited education students acquired by reading theology privately with patient and over-

burdened pastors, for a hundred years and more had to depend upon colleges or academies for a trained ministry. In 1806 the College of New Jersey appealed to the Presbyterian Church for enrollment of her candidates for the ministry, offering as an inducement free tuition, board at a dollar per week, and instruction by the one Professor of Theology and by the President, who, along with his administrative duties, was prepared to teach Moral Philosophy and the kindred subject, as then regarded, Hebrew. This kind of preparation for the ministry was felt to be inadequate, and at the beginning of the last century there appeared a characteristic product of American soil—the Theological Seminary. Princeton Seminary began as a *new kind of institution*—one consecrated solely to the education of men for the gospel ministry. One hundred and twenty-five years ago this month the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church adopted a Plan for the establishment and proper conduct of a Theological Seminary. This embodied the ideal of the Presbyterian Church as to theological education, an ideal which has been a dominant factor ever since, not only in our own denomination but in others as well. It is therefore deserving of anniversary consideration, even to the extent of classifying it with the other glorified events already mentioned.

Let me recall for you the great minds which shaped this ideal of 125 years ago. The first suggestion of a Theological Seminary evidently came from Archibald Alexander, evangelist, pastor, preacher, college president, theologian, a commanding figure in the councils of the Church, and he naturally became the first professor of the Seminary. President Timothy Dwight of Yale College, as a delegate to the Assembly of 1809 from the Congregational Association of Connecticut, took a prominent part in promoting the new project. The chairman of the representative committee which formulated the Plan was Ashbel Green, President of the College of New Jersey, and the Moderator who presided over the Assembly of 1811, which adopted the Plan, was Eliphalet Nott, who, apart from his unique name and outstanding ability as a scientist, teacher, preacher, and statesman, has the great distinction of having served as the President of Union College for sixty-two years. The Plan thus conceived, worked out,

and adopted, has been to the Presbyterian Church like a pattern shown in the mount—followed by Princeton Seminary ever since without any substantial change, appropriated by other institutions, and in a very real sense it deserves to be called immortal, if we may use the term which President Butler has applied to the ideals of Columbia University.

I. As necessity is the mother of invention, the immediate occasion for adopting a new ideal for theological education was the need for a more numerous and a better qualified ministry—a need which seems modest as compared with present day requirements. At the time there were only seventeen states in the Union, with a population of 7,239,000 souls, equal to the present population of the State of Illinois. The whole Presbyterian Church, North and South, had only 23,689 members, a smaller number than that now listed by the Synod of Oklahoma. There were 820 Presbyterian churches, and 460 ministers and pastors, and there were then more available ministers in proportion to the churches than there are today. It is commonly supposed that too many ministers are being trained for the work of the Church, and that there should be a closed season of several years' duration for our theological seminaries. There probably are too many ministers when we take into account the fact that fully 30 per cent of them in the Presbyterian Church are short-cut men, who have gotten into the ministry without adequate preparation, because of the laxity of Presbyteries. As for the Presbyterian seminaries, they are not graduating enough men to fill up the ranks diminished by death, to say nothing of "regions beyond", which the Church should enter with an increased leadership. It was the pioneer work of the Church which the spiritual leaders of a century or more ago had in mind—that work which sent Marcus Whitman and Henry Spalding across the Continent for love of the Crucified. In 1806 our Church put herself on record as being under obligation (to use the language of the time) (1) to gospelize the Indians, (2) to provide for negroes and others destitute of the means of grace, (3) to purchase and dispose of Bibles and other religious literature, and (4) to provide a fund for the more complete instruction of the gospel ministry. The inspiration for this evangelistic and missionary

outlook was in the aftermath of the Great Awakening of 1800, that wide-sweeping revival of religion that aroused the Church from lethargy and girded her for the stupendous tasks of the last century. Ministers had witnessed the gospel's transforming power. Every Assembly commissioned a long list of men to go forth as evangelists into regions where Christ had not been named. They (the leaders of the church) were, to quote an old report, "lovers as well as defenders of the truth as it is in Jesus, and friends of revivals of religion". They saw about them and stretching far into the unexplored distance, fields white unto the harvest, and having an unswerving conviction of the gospel's incomparable worth, they embodied their ideals in an institution for the training of a New Testament ministry, an institution which according to its expressed design was "to raise up a succession of men at once qualified for and devoted to the work of the gospel ministry, who with various endowments suiting them to different stations in the Church of Christ may all possess a portion of the spirit of the primitive propagators of the Gospel, prepared to make every sacrifice, to endure every hardship, and to render every service which the promotion of pure and undefiled religion may require".

II. In the design of Princeton Seminary there was specified this objective—"to preserve the unity of the Church". In order that the world might believe the message of good news, Christ prayed that His disciples might be one—manifestly one—an object lesson as to the unifying power of Christian faith that worketh by love. Down through the ages the Church has been slow to learn the lesson that division means defeat, a solid front means victory. The early churches in America—opposed by infidelity, confronted by stupendous tasks—saw the necessity of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and measures were taken not only to bring denominations together but to hold together the members of a particular communion. To promote a common loyalty and harmonious service was the purpose of the Presbyterian Church in adopting the Confession of Faith in 1729. To constitute a bond of union in a series of church courts culminating in a General Assembly was the design of the organization of Presbyterianism in 1788. An article of our Creed stresses the Communion of Saints,

or, as we would put it, Christian unity, not merely as an ideal to be realized in the millennium, but as a present obligation involving fellowship in the worship of God and in performing such other spiritual and benevolent services as tend to mutual helpfulness.

To promote this Christian unity within the Presbyterian Church by a ministry brought into harmony by common views, sentiments, and aims, was in the minds of those who planned one strong central school of theology. When they decided to call the institution a *seminary*, their conception may have been that of a seed plot where plants are raised for transplanting. The term nursery was also employed, which suggests the idea of saplings placed temporarily in a garden that they may be rooted, trimmed, and trained, and then given a permanent location as trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He may be glorified. However, it is more in keeping with the design of the institution to regard it as a seminar, in which a group of students, under an instructor, engage in common intellectual pursuits. The original ideal of Harvard was a collegiate way of life, on the theory that while book learning may be got by lectures and reading, it was only by studying and discussing, working and praying as members of the same collegiate community in close and constant association with each other and with their instructors, that the precious gift of character could be imparted to young men. The declared expectation of the Seminary founders was that theological students, educated in a well-equipped central institution, would be more united in the same views and would contract an early and lasting friendship, circumstances which could not fail in promoting the harmony and prosperity of the Church. But this ideal of one hundred and twenty-five years ago was frustrated by the multiplication of seminaries, due to the wider settlement of the country, the increase of the population, and the desire of one region after another to train its own ministers. This gave church leaders grave concern in the fear that the establishment of sectional seminaries would not only lower the standard of theological education, but would occasion sentiments and situations serving to break up the unity of the whole Church. To counteract such a menace, the General Assembly, in 1853, constituted a Standing Com-

mittee on Theological Seminaries, to which all institutions desiring Presbyterian patronage and professing loyalty to the Church must report. More recently a Council of Presbyterian Theological Seminaries has been organized, in the interests of that standardization which the Princeton ideal contemplated. A still more comprehensive organization has been projected to include all the Protestant seminaries of the United States and Canada, which under representative continuing committees and biennial conferences has made a study of the education of ministers from different points of view and is investigating standards of admission, curricula—in a word, the very thing specified in the Princeton ideal as to the ministerial training which makes for the harmony and prosperity of the Church.

III. In discussing the Seminary ideal one hesitates except in the presence of Princeton men, to comment on the ambitious title designated in the Plan—The Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. This suggests the ideal of a national institution. Other seminaries have been established to meet adjacent needs. Now that Union Seminary is celebrating its 100th anniversary, one may be pardoned, as a Princetonian, in recalling the fact that this strong and influential sister institution, according to the Preamble of her Constitution, was primarily designed for the theological education of pious and indigent youth in New York and Brooklyn who found it inconvenient to leave home. Speaking of Union Seminary, it is worthy of note that its establishment originated in a group of New Yorkers—five laymen and four ministers—and that these ministers had their theological training in Princeton Seminary. Most theological schools had a local origin and bear local names; but in marked contrast, the first Article of the Constitution of Princeton Seminary reads: "As this Seminary derives its origin from the General Assembly, that body is to be considered its patron and the fountain of its power". The late President of Hartford Seminary, Dr. Douglas Mackenzie, once remarked to me, "Princeton Seminary is fortunate in having a whole denomination back of it". I am not unmindful of the claim that in this era of supposed broad-mindedness the ideal seminary should be interdenominational, not subject to any particular Church, but the voluntary servant of all. There

are such institutions in mission lands, which render a necessary and important service. It should, however, be observed that the Trustees and Faculties of such institutions are officially appointed by the Churches being served, are answerable to them for the proper conduct of the institution according to a plan which the cooperating Churches have approved. Strictly speaking, a seminary under no ecclesiastical control is undenominational, acknowledging no obligation to serve the interests of Churches except as their principles and aims may be suitable items for investigation. An institution which tries to be neutral generally ends in being negative. That the theology of any Church is a proper subject for inquiry cannot be denied. But it is something more. An institution the professors of which work in the unhampered exercise of their judgment as they search for theological truth, and in which students are given object lessons in independent thinking by allowing them to hear the opinions of one professor flatly contradicted by another in an adjoining room, may serve a useful purpose in training theological bacteriologists, skilful in detecting the germs of fermentation or disintegration, rather than ministerial practitioners, specialists in the cure of souls. Dr. van Dyke has been quoted as saying that the coat of arms of the present age is three bishops prone, and above them an interrogation point rampant. The seal of Princeton Seminary is an open book, representing the Holy Bible, with an eye of inspection above it. This symbolizes Bible study, in the conviction that Christianity, to be a power in the world, must be a definite, positive, soul-saving message. The Church has the right and obligation to demand from any seminary graduate a message, presupposing divine revelation, thought-out, tested by experience, and charged with reality.

IV. The specific problems of the Church in the new day may be summarized in two universal Christian conferences—one the World Conference on Faith and Order, and the other the World Conference on Life and Work. Both of these propose such a union of Christian forces as will enable the Church to fulfill her commission as given by Christ, the Head of the Church. The Conference on Faith and Order recognizes the fact that a real and vital union must be based upon the fundamental principles

for which the several Churches stand. To belittle or ignore denominational differences, to wipe out all lines of distinction between Churches, would simply secure the kind of union John Buchan describes as being attained through "a general lack of interest, a weary peace based not on a common faith but a common apathy".

A union of Churches, to be worth while, will not be a colossal aggregation of indifferent members, but an enriched and expanded organism to which each particular denomination will contribute something of lasting value. The minister who does not know or appreciate the distinctive principles of the several Churches, of which all of us will agree there are too many (our own excepted), and in the proper regard for such principles the necessity of consummating a peaceful and vigorous unity, is not likely to serve as an influential apostle of "Faith and Order". Christ and His Father were one, but the distinction between fatherhood and sonship was not obliterated. John Calvin was willing to cross seven seas to bring the prostrate and defeated Churches together in one compact body, and the Presbyterian Church has always cherished noble ideals as to Christian fellowship. Her definition of the Church is broad enough to include all who profess the religion of Christ. Christian fellowship, according to the mandate of the Confession of Faith, is to be extended to all who call upon the name of the Lord, and since differences are bound to take place, forbearance in love is to be the principle of action. The representative form of government of the Presbyterian Church has modified prelacy on the one hand, and independency on the other, and in principle has been adopted by all American Protestant Churches. In theory, if not in practice, Presbyterianism is in a strategic position consistently to advocate and helpfully to promote church cooperation and union. This unitive service is embraced in the Princeton ideal. From the first class to be enrolled, small in number as it was, two students were ordained in the Dutch Reformed Church, one in the Congregational Church, and one in the Protestant Episcopal Church. The Princeton Seminary classmate of Dr. Charles Hodge, and his lifelong friend, was Bishop Johns of Virginia. The student enrollment of the Seminary this year is typical of each period of the Seminary's

history, twenty denominations being represented.

This spirit of catholicity, combined with evangelical conviction, embraced in the Seminary ideal, has inculcated a friendly attitude towards other Churches, has rendered a service of incalculable value in promoting interdenominational projects at home and abroad, has fostered the sprit of true Christian unity, and has served to establish the Seminary in the confidence and good will of sister Churches at home and abroad.

V. The Universal Conference on Life and Work is at present concerned with one of the gravest dangers which confront the Christian Church—the blind, self-centered, and exclusive craze of nationalism and the trend everywhere toward a *totalitarian state* which seeks to dominate, direct, and control the whole life of man. Such a state refuses to recognize the independence in their own sphere of religion, culture, education, and the family. It sets up an authority of its own as the source of all authority, and in effect declares itself to be not only a state but a Church, imposing upon all its members a philosophy of life which is purely secular. In preparation for a World Conference to be held in Oxford in July, 1937, commissions are now at work studying the subject, which will be considered at Oxford, "The Church in Relation to the Community and the State, a World Issue". Calvin's *Institutes*, which ought to be restudied during this anniversary year, laid down the clear and lasting principles of constitutional government in the Church and in the state, and gave a clear witness to the rights of civil and religious liberty under properly constituted authority. In the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, the function of the civil magistrate is clearly defined and limited, and this confessional teaching gave unswerving conviction and unflinching valor to our forefathers, who waged the War for Independence. Their spirit, embodied in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church and the companion document, the Constitution of the United States, will serve as a bulwark against fascism on the one hand, and communism on the other, that is, until constitutional government is overthrown by a misguided and corrupted people. Those who planned Princeton Seminary were patriots, the real sons of the American Revolution, and they stood for a ministry in accord with the Constitution of the State and of the Church,

whereby an even balance between perfect freedom and a well-ordered society should be maintained. This required a Christian citizenship, to be realized in a kingdom of redemption, Christ the Saviour of mankind alone being competent to rule in every human relationship and all departments of life.

A National Preaching Missions is to be inaugurated this coming autumn, after earnest prayer and thoughtful planning on the part of prominent church leaders. It is to follow the Apostolic method of concentrating on strategic centers throughout the land, where conferences regarding the immediate problems of the Church will be held. Section meetings and mass meetings of an evangelistic and inspiring character will be conducted by leaders chosen from the ministry at home and abroad. Its possibilities of good are incalculable, if Christians will only lend their support in prevailing intercession and consecrated endeavors. Such a project is in accord with the Princeton ideals of the past, ideals which are being realized in the present, since our students, during this last winter, going into concentration camps and city missions, have been instrumental, under divine grace, in winning three hundred souls to Christ, and leading sixty-two to rededicate their lives to God.

Young brethren in Christ, whose course of training under the ideals of Princeton Seminary has now come to a close, we send you forth on a world wide preaching mission. The design of your *Alma Mater* with reference to the churches you are to serve may be summed up in the language of 125 years ago. Listen—"To furnish congregations with enlightened, humble, laborious pastors, who shall truly watch for the good of souls and consider it their highest honor and happiness to win them to the Saviour and to build up their several charges in holiness and peace!" "And who is sufficient for these things? Such confidence have we through Christ to Godward, not that we are sufficient of ourselves to account anything from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God."

Degrees, Fellowships and Prizes

The degree of Bachelor of Theology was conferred upon the following students who hold the degree of A.B., or