

# THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

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## I.

### ST. PAUL AND INSPIRATION.\*

WHEN looking at the New Testament collection, we find ourselves confronted by one personality in particular who, next to Christ Himself, is impressed most largely and weightily both upon the New Testament and upon historic Christianity. I refer, of course, to the apostle of the Gentiles. Of him the student of the New Testament must take particular account. He is the author certainly of thirteen, and perhaps of fourteen, of the twenty-seven books. His epistles constitute that part of the New Testament which gives to it articulated theological structure. He was the man who opened the door by which the world entered into the fold of Christ. His mission made the gospel of Jesus a universal religion. And yet he is one whose right to the place traditionally assigned him has, in various ways in different ages, been hotly contested. His own epistles show that in his lifetime itself his apostleship was denied and his mission violently opposed by many who claimed to be followers of Jesus. In the succeeding age we not only find the extreme section of Jewish Christians continuing to deny his apostleship; but we find the singular and significant fact that, while the orthodox Church acknowledged and honored him, used his epistles as Scripture and reaped the benefit of his mission to the Gentiles, yet it apparently did not grasp his real teaching, and, if its extant literature may be trusted as evidence, rejected some of his fundamental theological principles. Later on, his distinctive theological

\* [This paper contains the substance of the address delivered by Dr. Purves at his inauguration as Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis in Princeton Theological Seminary.—EDITORS.]

Men will, they must, listen to the suggestions of their brethren given in no spirit of authority, but only in brotherly affection, and they will by their conduct show the truth of the couplet,

"Sweet are the words of truth  
Breathed from the lips of love."

The example of the Reformed has been followed by our Congregational brethren, who have twice held a general Council, and by our Methodist brethren who also have twice met in an Ecumenical Methodist Conference. Let the Baptists and the Lutherans do the same, and then these large bodies can gradually grow into mutual recognition, fellowship and coöperation in promoting the cause and the honor of Him whom all regard as their common Master.

NEW YORK.

TALBOT W. CHAMBERS.

#### DR. ROBERTS' ARTICLE ON SEMINARY CONTROL.

THE General Assembly of 1892 adopted an additional report of the Standing Committee on Theological Seminaries. The preamble of the first section of the report recites the fact, that "disorders are appearing in the Church, doing great injury to the unity and purity of the Church." The preamble of the second section refers specifically to the "Overtures and all the other papers in the case of Union Theological Seminary." The action of the Assembly included in the report is based on the fact recited and the papers referred to. This action includes an interpretation of "the Compact of 1870," a refusal to break this compact in the case of Union Seminary, a statement of the Assembly's persuasion that "the Church should have direct connection with and control over its Theological Seminaries," and, finally, the appointment of a committee of fifteen, "to take into consideration the whole subject of the relation of the Assembly to its Theological Seminaries, confer with the Directors of these Seminaries, and report to the next General Assembly such action as in their judgment will result in a still closer relation between the Assembly and its Seminaries than that which at present exists."

No one can doubt that the Assembly was acting within its rights in appointing this committee. And few will doubt that the state of the Church required some action. The attitude taken by Union Theological Seminary, touching the veto by the Assembly of the election of Dr. Briggs to the Professorship of Biblical Theology, excited, as it was well calculated to excite, widespread alarm. A Professor had been appointed or transferred by the Board of Directors of the Seminary, and this action had been reported to the Assembly. By an overwhelming majority the Assembly disapproved the action. In response to this disapproval, the Directors of the Seminary, first, retained the "appointed" or "transferred" Professor, and, secondly,

repealed their memorial of 1870, by which completed elections were conditioned on the Assembly's refusal to veto them. That this repeal should have become the occasion of the appointment of a committee to consider the relations between the Church and the Theological Seminaries ought to surprise no one. The Assembly was bound to take distinct notice of the new conditions, and to proceed to some action.

It would have been well, I think, had the public discussion of the subject been postponed until the committee had made at least a preliminary report. The committee is charged with the duty of considering a question not of principle but of policy; for the General Assembly has settled the principle on which the committee is to proceed. The discussion of questions of policy involving details of administration may, in the first instance, well be left to the body charged with its consideration. But my valued friend, Dr. Roberts, of Lane Seminary, evidently looks on this as an exceptional case; for the current number of this REVIEW contains an article from his pen, in which, after an interesting history of the relations between the Church and the Seminaries, he discusses the several modes of Church control, defends a single mode as suited to all the Seminaries, and even presents for consideration a highly specialized new chapter on the subject of Theological Seminaries, for the Form of Government. Dr. Roberts' article, at one or two points, is open, I think, to criticism.

In the historical section of Dr. Roberts' paper, he gives names to the several plans adopted by our Church for the control of its theological institutions. The first he calls the "Assembly method," and the last the "Coöperative method." "Coöperative" is the name he gives to the method adopted by the Church at the Reunion of 1870. This method assigned to the Directors of several Seminaries the duty of filling vacancies in their number and the duty of electing Professors, subject to the veto of the General Assembly. Dr. Roberts has stated accurately some of the details of the method as it is employed in Princeton Seminary. But his employment of the adjective "Coöperative" to describe it is entirely misleading. The Board of Directors of Princeton Seminary is as much the creature of the General Assembly as it has ever been. It is simply the agent of the Assembly to execute the Assembly's own "plan." How thoroughly the institution is now under the control of the General Assembly may be gathered from the following section of the article relating to that body:

ART. I, SECT. 3. The General Assembly shall, at all times, have the power of adding to the Constitutional articles of the Seminary, and of abrogating, altering, or amending them; but in the exercise of this power, the contemplated additions, abrogations, alterations, or amendments, shall, in every case, be proposed at one Assembly, and not adopted till the Assembly of the subsequent year, except by a unanimous vote.

Besides this, the Board of Directors is to be composed only of "ministers and ruling elders." Each member, previously to his taking a seat, is to approve the plan of the Seminary and to promise to endeavor to carry into effect its articles and provisions. Every election, whether of Director or Professor, is made subject to the veto of the Assembly. The Directors are to submit an accurate transcript of their records to the Assembly for "the unrestrained inspection" of the Assembly's members. Though the Directors may make rules for the performance of the duties assigned them, or for the preservation of order, and though they are bound to direct the Professors of the Seminary in regard to the topics on which the latter are to instruct the students, these privileges and duties are limited not only by the "plan" of the Seminary, but specifically, also, by "the orders of the General Assembly." Though the Directors may suspend a Professor pending an investigation of charges against his life or doctrine, yet his removal by them, like his election, is subject to the Assembly's veto. The General Assembly, it will be perceived, under the present plan, can interpose at any time and at any point. It can override the action of the Directors. And if on any subject it shall seem necessary to do so in order to initiate action, it can change the plan of the institution.

This being the case, it is, as I have said, misleading to describe the relations between the Directors and the Assembly as coöperative. One might as well say that the Assembly and the Board of Home Missions are coöperative bodies.\* It is true that the General Assembly, at the Reunion, granted to the Directors the power to fill vacancies in their own number and to elect Professors, both being subject to the Assembly's veto. The history of this grant is honorable to the General Assembly. Before the action was proposed to the Assembly, it was thoroughly discussed. Both the New School and the Old School parties in the united Church thoroughly favored it; and it was unanimously adopted. But no one, I take it, supposed that the effect of this action was to release the Seminaries, which before had been administered by the Assembly, from the Assembly's control, and to transform their Boards of Direction, which had been the Assembly's administrative agents, into bodies of another class, properly called "coöperative." The Boards of Direction are to-day the Assembly's agents as really as they ever were; and the institutions are as really and effectively as ever under the Assembly's supervision.

In view of the proposal by Dr. Roberts to repeal the method of control in operation since the Reunion of 1870, the history of the adoption of that method, and the reasons that led to its selection out of several methods proposed, need to be stated anew. The Assembly's

\* Dr. Roberts, in another place, calls the Boards of Directors "virtually self-governing bodies." If he means by this, "sovereign" or "independent of the Assembly," he is in error. If he means only that they have a large discretion

Seminaries were all Old School Seminaries; they had been endowed by Old School benefactors; in some cases (as at Princeton) these benefactors made specific provision for the diversion of the endowments in case of a change in doctrinal teaching.\* It was felt that these facts should be regarded by the united Church as controlling, when it should begin to make changes "in the method of the Assembly's control." To have continued the election of Directors and Professors by the General Assembly would have been, as was well said at the time, "to invest the branch, lately New School, with a full share in the legal control of the Seminaries of the other branch; because these are all by their charters placed under Assembly supervision, leaving those of the other body entirely independent of the Assembly and of all supervision by any portion of the late Old School Church." I am quoting the language of the late Dr. Charles Hodge in the *Princeton Review* for April, 1870. He adds, that this action would involve "an inequality which has been more deeply felt than expressed, especially by some of the principal donors to the funds of Princeton and other Old School Seminaries."

The force of the objection thus urged by Dr. Charles Hodge to the continuance of the election, by the united Assembly, of either Directors or Professors was felt by the whole Old School Church and was

in acting for the Assembly, he should show that that has been a disadvantage. But this he does not do. On the contrary, he thinks the Boards of the Assembly Seminaries have done well.

\* The language in which some of the large gifts to the Theological Seminary at Princeton are conditioned may well be quoted. The language of one deed of gift is the following:

"*Provided*, However, that if at any future time, the said Seminary shall pass from under the supervision and control of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, now known as the Old School General Assembly and its successors, or if at any future time the leading doctrines declared in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church, such as the doctrine of universal and total depravity, the doctrine of election, the doctrine of the atonement, the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to all His people for their justification, the doctrine of human inability, the doctrine of the necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration, conversion and sanctification as these doctrines are now understood and explained by the aforesaid Old School General Assembly, shall cease to be taught in said Seminary," etc.

The condition in another gift is stated as follows: "That if the said Seminary shall at any time hereafter be separated from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (now known as the Old School General Assembly), or cease to be subject to its supervision and control through any act or default of the party of the second part, or if the said Theological Seminary, or any of its Professors shall depart in their professions and teaching from the opinions and doctrines specified and set forth in the recital of this indenture, or if the Professor for the time filling the Helena professorship shall in his profession or teaching depart from the said opinions and doctrines and the persons having the power of removal of the Professors in the said Seminary shall not, on notice from the Trustees of said Seminary, or from the Trustees of the College of New Jersey, or any three of them, shall not restrain him from no departing, or discharge him from his office, then in that case," etc.

recognized by the New School Church; and it may safely be said that the change actually made in the electing body was a *causa sine qua non* of Reunion. It will be observed, that the very same objection would have been urged with equal force to any proposal to place Princeton Seminary under contiguous Synods or contiguous Presbyteries (which is Dr. Roberts' proposition) of the united Church. For these contiguous Synods or Presbyteries, like the Reunion General Assembly, were, and still are constituted in part of ministers and commissioners from Churches formerly New School. Had a plan of control like that embodied in Dr. Roberts' paper been proposed, its adoption would simply have made impossible the Reunion of the Presbyterian Church.

In order, then, to secure the Reunion with all its benefits, those active in promoting it formulated a plan, by which bodies distinctively Old School (the Boards of Directors representing the former Old School Assembly), should thereafter initiate all action in the Old School Seminaries; the General Assembly retaining its power always to veto elections, and in great crises to interpose by original action. Meanwhile, the New School Seminaries gave to the General Assembly the right to "veto" the election of Professors. In this way Princeton, Allegheny, McCormick, etc., were allied with, but were not put in danger of control by, the New School party; and Union, Auburn and Lane were allied with, but were not put in danger of control by, the Old School party.

Now Dr. Roberts' proposal involves precisely what the Old School Church not only declined to do, but protested against, and what, if it had been seriously proposed and persisted in, would have been regarded by the Old School Church as a sufficient objection to further action towards Reunion. Moreover, he presents this proposal without showing any reason for it in either the bad or the unwise conduct of the Boards of Directors of the former Old School Seminaries, or in the condition of the Church at large. Had the Board of any one of these former Old School institutions been guilty of malfeasance or non-feasance, the question of the general policy of taking their immediate direction from the hands of the bodies selected as the representatives of the former Old School Church and of putting it directly into the hands of some composite body (*i. e.*, partly Old and partly New School) might perhaps properly be considered. But Dr. Roberts' article contains no such charge. So far as appears these Boards have all been faithful to their great trusts, and the Seminaries have flourished under their management.

It will not, of course, be seriously alleged, that the withdrawal of Union Seminary from union with the Assembly is a good reason for changing the plan of control in Princeton, Western and the other Old School Seminaries. This would be to diminish the power of the Princeton Board of Directors, which has kept its agreement, because the Board of a neighboring Board of Directors has, in the judgment of the Assembly, broken its agreement with that body. And yet,

except the desire to make a uniform plan for the control of all the Seminaries, nothing but the strained relations between Union and the Assembly is alleged either as the reason or as the occasion of Dr. Roberts' proposal.

Nor does the fact that Union Seminary has disregarded the veto of the General Assembly contain the slightest ground for Dr. Roberts' sweeping generalization that "the veto power of the Assembly cannot be generally and effectively applied from the side of the Seminaries;" that the "oversight" of the Assembly is merely "nominal," and that the Boards are "a law unto themselves." Dr. Roberts knows that had Dr. Briggs been a Professor in one of the Assembly Seminaries, the veto of the Detroit Assembly would have been applied with immediate and conclusive effect. The only support this generalization has given to it in the article, is the remark, "It is sufficient, in this connection, to name the present complication with the Union Seminary."

In this connection, it is right to call attention to the charge that Union Theological Seminary has receded from and therefore broken a solemn agreement with the reunited Assembly of 1870. The Assembly, quite correctly, as I think, regards this charge as true, for it declines "to be a party to the breaking of the compact with Union Seminary." But, if the reunited Assembly of 1870 made a compact with Union Seminary it made one just as real with Princeton and the other former Old School Seminaries; and it is this compact with these other Seminaries, which Dr. Roberts now, unconsciously, I am sure, but really, suggests that the Assembly break. If Dr. Roberts' proposals should be adopted, the Assembly could not, with consistency, say one word against the action of the Union Board of Directors.

Dr. Roberts proposes to confine the *personnel* of the Board of each Seminary to Presbyters of a specific locality. He cites the plan of Auburn Seminary and makes it the basis of the new chapter he has formulated. This feature of his proposal is peculiarly unhappy. The Seminaries of the Church ought, one would say, to be Seminaries of the whole Church. They ought to be connected with the body which represents the whole Church and which expresses the Church's unity. They should be under its supervision, and not under the supervision of local judicatories. Perhaps I have no right to say a word about the plan of Auburn Seminary. Why the classes in that institution have not been larger I do not know. Certainly, the reason is *not* that the institution has lacked, at any time, an able, learned, orthodox and devoted Faculty of Instruction. Its teachers, living and dead, have by their conspicuous talents and attainments and industry blessed and honored the whole Church. I cannot but believe, however, that their opportunities would have been enlarged, had the control of Auburn been conducted by a Board of Directors acting for the Assembly, instead of by a Board elected by, and acting, therefore, immediately for a specific number of contiguous Presbyteries.

Besides, something is due to history. Princeton and the other Old School Seminaries were "Assembly Seminaries" at the time of the Reunion. Why they should be changed into Synodical or Presbyterian institutions, it is impossible for me to conceive. I had the great honor to be a member of the Faculty of the McCormick Theological Seminary and to know something of its history. The Church may well be proud of this great institution, which has increased since 1880, in students, from fifteen to more than two hundred, and whose endowment has been increased many fold during the same period. What McCormick Seminary is doing and is likely to do for the Presbyterian Church in the central section of the country is so great as to be beyond the power of one not intimately acquainted with it adequately to conceive. But, had McCormick Seminary been confined, in the selection of its administering Board, to its immediate vicinity, as Dr. Roberts wants to confine all the Seminaries, the Church would have no such splendid and commanding possession, as it now has, in the central metropolis of the country.

The truth is, that Dr. Roberts' plan of localizing the Boards was placed before the Church at the Reunion, and it was rejected. Article ix, of "the concurrent declarations," suggested, as a permissible "method of control, the watch and care of one or more of the adjacent Synods." But with this suggestion before them all, no Seminary adopted it. All preferred the Assembly to the Synods; and, of course, therefore, to the contiguous ten or twenty Presbyteries of Dr. Roberts' plan. The reasons for this preference were distinctly given. They may be read, for example, in the article already quoted from the *Princeton Review* for April, 1870, and written by Dr. C. Hodge. Precisely the same view was taken in the Southern Church by Dr. Dabney, in an article in which he favors the very plan adopted by the General Assembly in 1870.\* Unfortunately, instead of this plan, a plan, in its essential features like Dr. Roberts', obtained in the Columbia Seminary. That is to say, each of several judicatories elected its proportion of Directors. What confusion and bitterness was the result, those who recall the recent Woodrow case will remember.

The committee appointed by the Assembly is charged with the consideration of a difficult and delicate subject. I should not have written on it at this time, but that the REVIEW has opened its columns to an article discussing it. In these circumstances, it has seemed proper to call the attention of our readers to aspects of the subject not treated by Dr. Roberts, and especially to call attention to the fact, that if his proposal were adopted, we should as a Church be in no position to criticise Union Seminary for receding from its engagement of 1870.

PRINCETON.

JOHN DEWITT.

\* *Discussions*, Vol. ii, pp. 51, 52.