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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION  
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THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
AT PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

MAY FIFTH—MAY SIXTH—MAY SEVENTH  
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND TWELVE

PRINCETON  
AT THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
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“Majestic sweetness sits enthroned  
Upon the Saviour’s brow;  
His head with radiant glories crowned,  
His lips with grace o’erflow.”

I join with you in saying—

“No mortal can with Him compare,  
Among the sons of men;  
Fairer is He than all the fair  
That fill the heavenly train.”

FROM PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

BY THE REVEREND JOHN GRIER HIBBEN, Ph.D., LL.D.

President of Princeton University

*Mr. Chairman, President Patton, men of Princeton, both  
of the University and of the Seminary:*

I AM speaking this afternoon not only for the present, but also for the past. Many voices come to us today, long since stilled, it is true, but eloquent in our memory; I speak not only for Princeton University, but by virtue of our historical continuity, also for the College of New Jersey, and back of the College of New Jersey, the Log College, and back of the Log College, the school house on the hills of Scotland and of Ulster in Ireland.

I am aware of the fact, and, indeed, it is one of our most cherished possessions, that the men who founded the College of New Jersey were men of the same spirit and of the same faith who founded the Princeton

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Theological Seminary one hundred years ago, and the names that are conspicuous in the history of this last century, intimately associated with the Theological Seminary, are names to be found on the roll of the College of New Jersey and Princeton University; the Greens, the Alexanders, the Millers, the Hodges and all the long roll of honor, which I have not time to repeat name by name. There has been a close connection of friendly affiliation between our two institutions, but at the basis of it all is the foundation of a common faith and a common hope.

With that as our present day inheritance, upon this occasion, we, who are here representing the present Princeton University, pledge you that we will endeavor, so far as lies within us, to preserve the faith and hope of our fathers and to remain true to the gospel which they professed.

As president of Princeton University, I am not only representing today the various branches of the Presbyterian Church, but I represent all the denominations, I think, which are also represented in your gathering here, all the Churches that have come to bring their greetings to Princeton Theological Seminary. We, in a broad spirit of tolerance, uphold the ideals of the Christian faith in Princeton University, not in the name of any one denomination, but with a catholicity that extends a welcome to all the sects of Christendom. There has been a note sounded throughout this celebration of Christian unity, and we can, I believe, in Princeton University, furnish a contribution towards this end; because there we are able to bring together these various faiths of Christendom.

The point of contact between the University and the

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Theological Seminary today is that of the department of philosophy. It is in the department of philosophy that most of the Seminary students come to us as graduate scholars; it is in the department of philosophy that the questions emerge which are the great central questions, not merely of the theology taught by Princeton, but the great central questions of life. And I wish to state to you who are here today, that as regards the teachings of Princeton University, we stand for a spiritualistic philosophy in an age of materialistic and utilitarian creeds. By spiritual philosophy I mean that we would interpret the great central humanizing power of the universe not merely in terms of Force or of Power—spelling these words, if you please, with capital letters—but in the name of a person, a person like ourselves.

I am not afraid, gentlemen, of the charge of anthropomorphism that is so often made. It is urged upon us that we should abstractly interpret God, and that we should assign to Him only negative attributes. When we take the sum total of negative attributes, however many there may be, the sum always amounts to zero. In the place of that interpretation we would put that of the personal significance of God, a spirit whom we can worship in spirit and truth. I am not afraid of interpreting God according to the highest and best and noblest that we find in human nature; man who was made in the image of God must be, in the last analysis, the standard for the interpretation of God. And that is not humanizing the Divine. It is because we recognize in our consciousness the divine spark, and where we find it aflame in the highest and noblest quality of man, we may take that as an indication—an intimation, if you please—an intimation, if not a definition, of the nature of God. I

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refer particularly to man as a purposeful being, man as you find him today, dominating the whole face of the earth. God as a person is a God likewise purposeful in the universe. Man is not like the plants and animals, incapable of adapting his environment to himself and compelling his surroundings. I am not speaking of his physical surroundings, but of the moral and mental and spiritual surroundings of his life. Is it not the great glory of these men who have gone out from this Seminary, as they were praised yesterday afternoon, that they have not accepted the environment of the world, but have gone to the very ends of the earth with the one purpose of creating the moral, mental and spiritual environment in which the light of reason might shine forth and the goodness and glory of God be manifest?

The great strife today in philosophy is in reference to the doctrine of personality; it is not merely whether there is a personal God in the universe, but whether in the heart of the human being there is a person or only a state of consciousness.

We stand, in Princeton University, for the central doctrine of personality, that the man is a soul, that he is a person in a universe of persons. And the one doctrine today that grows out of this, which we must insist upon, is that the persons of the world are bound together in one great family, that we are all one organization. We cannot say to man, "Go out into the world and follow the law of the animal and plant evolution; go into the world with one creed, one idea, of the survival of the fittest; do what you please, do your own work, push forward, and let the devil take the hindmost." We insist that this is not the doctrine of life. It is not the survival of the fittest; it is that other doctrine which has come

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down to us from the beginning of the Christian centuries, that man is in this world, like his Master, "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister." These are some of the fundamental doctrines that our philosophy has emphasized, and we believe finally, that all philosophical thought culminates in some great system of ethics, the philosophy of conduct, and that we cannot have a philosophy of conduct, as a great German philosopher once insisted, without presupposing the fundamental postulates of God, of freedom and of immortality.