

**THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION**

**OF THE**

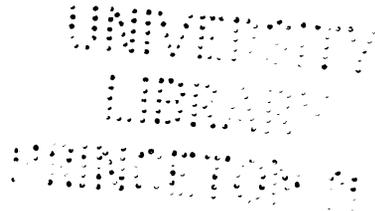
*Princeton* **THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**OF**

**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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PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PRINCETON IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION  
AND RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

ADDRESS

BY THE REVEREND WILLIAM HALLOCK JOHNSON, Ph.D.

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*Mr. President, Fellow Alumni, Ladies and Gentlemen:*

**O**NE thought is in every mind today, one sentiment in every heart, one word upon every tongue: Princeton the mother of us all!

The history of Princeton Seminary for the past one hundred years constitutes an important chapter in the history of the Christian Church. That chapter, if fully written, would contain many sacred passages from individual biographies. It would tell of the aspirations and vows of Christian parents as they dedicated a beloved son to the work of the ministry; it would tell of the development in the growing boy of a holy purpose to serve God in the gospel of His Son; it would tell of the deepening of thought and experience and the strengthening of purpose and conviction in the three years of the Princetonian Arabia; it would tell of the fruitful years of service and sacrifice for church and country in the pulpit at home, and in laying the foundations of Christian civilization abroad, in that work of spiritual imperialism which Mr. Winston Churchill of England has spoken of as the glory of the Anglo-Saxon race, and which is the glory of any race or any institution privileged to have a large share in it.

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Our hearts have been stirred as we have listened to the eloquent story of what Princeton men have accomplished in the home pulpit and on the mission field. The thought has come to me, how abundantly have the wisdom of the founders of this Seminary, the devoted labors of its Faculty and governing boards, and the generosity of its benevolent friends been justified by the result. They builded better than they knew. Where, from a business standpoint, could one find a better investment of money? Where, for every dollar invested, has there been a richer return in lasting and far-reaching influence for good?

The theme assigned to me this afternoon will, I fear, seem rather scholastic after addresses which have carried us up upon the heights; but I beg you to remember, when thinking of the achievements of Princeton Alumni, the good Presbyterian doctrine, "What have I that I have not received?" The fond mother feels that she is responsible for the successes of her children, and Princeton may well rejoice today in the service of her sons, and may even sympathize a little with the feelings of Nebuchadnezzar, when he said, "Is this not great Babylon that I have builded?", without being guilty of the deadly sin of pride. You may say that Princeton men were originally endowed with those qualities which would ensure ministerial success, even if they had gone to some other seminary. This is no doubt true, but Princeton is responsible for two things: she has attracted to herself men of large mental and spiritual calibre, and she has given them a training upon which success has in multitudes of cases, as we have heard, been built. I believe that there is a causal connection between the Princeton training and the ministerial success, whether causation be construed in terms of uniform sequence with the Humeian philo-

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sophy, or in terms of power or efficiency with Dr. McCosh, and with Professor Ormond, who has trained generations of theological students in the principles of a sound philosophy.

How shall we estimate the value of Princeton's contribution to theological education? Adopting the quantitative method, we might speak of Princeton's age, of the number of her graduates and of the number of these engaged in theological education. As the oldest seminary of the Presbyterian Church, Princeton has naturally exerted a profound influence over theological education. In the South, the Union Seminary of Richmond was founded soon after Princeton by men from the Log College, and the founders of Columbia Seminary set before them the goal of making that institution "the Princeton of the South"; while in the North, such institutions as McCormick, Western, Lane, Danville, Lincoln and San Francisco were founded by Princeton men or had Princeton men among their earliest instructors. Princeton, it has been said, cannot be jealous of the prosperity of these younger institutions, because they are in a large measure her own offspring. As the pioneer among the seminaries of the Presbyterian Church she has blazed the path which others have followed.

Princeton is not only the oldest Presbyterian theological school; she is, in the number of her graduates and former students, the largest school for theological education, of any name,<sup>1</sup> in America. Some five thousand eight hundred men have studied within her walls, her nearest competitor being the Southern Baptist Seminary of Louisville, Ky., with a total of about four thousand and

<sup>1</sup> "The total number of students up to 1910 was 5,742, of whom 3,076 were living" (J. H. Dulles in *New Schaff-Hersog Encyc.*, Vol. XL, p. 374).

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fifty matriculates.<sup>1</sup> Some one hundred and eight of her graduates have been teachers in the Presbyterian schools of theology in this country, while others have taught in other divinity schools, here and abroad, among them Dr. McCurdy, of Toronto, Dr. Jacobus, of Hartford, and one who for many years was the only native American to occupy a full professorship in a German university—Dr. Caspar René Gregory, of Leipsic, soon to give to the world the fruit of a lifetime of study in a great critical edition of the Greek New Testament. Of the theological teachers in our Presbyterian seminaries, almost one-third are Princeton graduates. Of these, there are two in Auburn, one in Western, one in Kentucky, five in McCormick, one in San Francisco, three in Lincoln, one in Newark, and four in Omaha. The distinguished presidents of McCormick and Omaha Seminaries, as well as of Princeton Seminary, are Princeton graduates.

Dr. Patton, I believe, has recently expressed the desire that he might be at the head of a school for the training of college presidents, but if he would study the statistics, he would find that his ambition is already gratified. We cannot think of Washington and Jefferson, for example, without thinking of Dr. Moffat, nor of Wooster University without thinking of Dr. Holden, whose energy has raised it from its ashes. And what would Lincoln University be without the forty-six years of splendid service and sacrifice of Dr. Isaac N. Rendall? Some of the honored guests from abroad may have been accustomed to think of Princeton as merely a center of theological learning. Now, certainly, they realize that the term Princeton has a wider extension; and those of us who are

<sup>1</sup> This is the estimate of President E. Y. Mullins. Andover reported a total of 3,538 students up to 1908.

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Princeton men in a double sense rejoice in the fact that a graduate of Princeton Seminary, Dr. John Grier Hibben, is, in a few days, to be formally installed as the head of the great University whose hospitality we enjoy today.

Beside theological and college teachers, Princeton has contributed to the Presbyterian Church fifty-six moderators of General Assemblies, and five bishops to the Protestant Episcopal Church, Bishops McIlvaine, Johns, T. M. Clark, A. N. Littlejohn and J. H. Darlington. She has not, as yet, produced a Pope, but has trained three stated clerks of the General Assembly.

The specific quality of Princeton's influence in theological education is traceable to two causes: the personality of Princeton's teachers and the high standard of her theological course.

History, it has been said, is the biography of the world's great men. The history of Princeton is the record of her great teachers, of the patriarchs and prophets who laid the foundations of the Seminary, and of those who so skilfully and so devotedly have built upon these foundations. The secret of long life and prosperity is said to be found in the choice of a sound ancestry, and no institution has been more fortunate in its spiritual progenitors.

An estimate of the four great men who have left the impress of their personality not only upon this Seminary, but directly or indirectly upon so many in the Presbyterian ministry, was given me recently by the graduate of the Seminary who is oldest in years, Dr. David Tully, of Media, Pa., of the class of 1850.<sup>1</sup> Dr. A.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. James Park, of Knoxville, Tenn., of the class of 1846, is the oldest in date of graduation.

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Alexander had "the keenness of a Kentucky rifle-man in his insight into spiritual experience"; Dr. Addison Alexander was "a whirlwind as a teacher and preacher"; Dr. Samuel Miller was "a prince in church history and the Chesterfield of the Presbyterian Church"; and Dr. Charles Hodge was "the greatest analytical mind that this country has produced, certainly since the days of Jonathan Edwards." The same authority says that he never knew any group of men who could "state truth so clearly and defend it so ably."

The gifts of God to the theological seminary are first teachers, then scholars, then preachers. Often in Princeton's history these three offices have been happily united in the same man, but always she has included within her Faculty some of the greatest preachers, the most gifted teachers and the profoundest scholars of the Christian Church in America. Her Faculty has often been recruited from men prominent in the pastorate and pulpit. Two, for example, both famous as models of pulpit eloquence, were taken from the pastorate of the First Presbyterian Church, New York. One of these was Dr. William M. Paxton, to me a beloved pastor as well as teacher; and in his pulpit in boyhood days I have heard the thoughtful and spiritual sermons of Drs. A. A. and C. W. Hodge. The other was Dr. Samuel Miller, of whom history records that he preached occasionally before the Tammany Society, once on the Fourth of July, upon the theme, "Christianity, the Grand Source and the Surest Basis of Political Liberty." Two Princeton professors have been called to the pulpit of the Fifth Avenue Church, Dr. J. W. Alexander and Dr. Purves. In student days, we regarded Dr. Purves' Sunday night sermons as a regular part, and not the least important

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part, of our theological course, while a sermon by Dr. Patton was in student days (and was yesterday) more than a sermon—an event in our intellectual and spiritual history.

The two great pillars in the temple of Princeton were Drs. Archibald Alexander and Samuel Miller. Princeton's history is but the lengthening shadow of these two great teachers, leaders of the church and devoted servants of God. Even to enumerate the distinguished teachers who have followed them would be impossible in this address. Dr. Addison Alexander, teacher, linguist, commentator, preacher, signally gifted in all these rôles, was an intellectual and spiritual giant, of whom it has been said that "to have possessed any one faculty in the measure in which he possessed all, would have been enough to constitute a man of mark." How shall we do justice to the memory of Dr. Charles Hodge in the presence of many who have sat under his instruction and revere his memory? Even among his colleagues in Princeton, Dr. Hodge stands out, like Agamemnon, pre-eminent among many and foremost among heroes. Measured by the number of students that he taught (some three thousand) or by the years of his service, or by the depth and permanence of his influence in molding conviction and shaping character, or by the affection and veneration felt for him by successive classes of students, or by the persistence of his influence in the generation since his death through the use of his published works as text-books in most of the seminaries of the Presbyterian faith, Dr. Hodge stands out as easily the foremost theological teacher in the Christian churches of America.

We cannot speak in detail of those contributions to theological scholarship which have caused the name of

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Princeton to be known and respected in all parts of the learned world. The richest contribution which the scholar can make to the world of sacred learning is perhaps a learned and devout commentary upon some great book of the Bible. To unfold the rich treasures of Scripture through exegesis is its best defence. Drs. Addison Alexander and Charles Hodge did not anticipate all the discoveries and discussions of later years, but their commentaries are still widely studied, and may be studied with profit as examples of thorough scholarship, sound judgment in exegesis, and spiritual insight. Exposition of the Scriptures has in Princeton ever led to theological construction: theology without exegesis, to adapt Kant's well-known phrase, is empty; exegesis without theology is blind. Upon the writings of Princeton men in systematic theology a large part of her reputation may be said to rest. In other departments, such as philology and archaeology, Biblical introduction, apologetics, church history, church polity, Biblical theology, ethics and philosophy of religion, Princeton has kept abreast of, and helped to advance, the scholarship of her day. The founders of the Seminary and their descendants by ordinary generation and spiritual inheritance have exerted a steady stream of influence through books, pamphlets, addresses, articles in periodicals and Bible dictionaries. "The Princeton Review," inseparably associated, under its several titles, with the names of Alexander, Hodge, Dr. Green and Dr. Warfield, has been recognized for three generations as the foremost organ of the Reformed faith; it has been an engine of power in the church and the country, "spreading the fame of Princeton among the nations." To the contributions of her own scholars must be added those of her occasional

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lecturers upon the "Stone" and other foundations. The list includes such names as those of Drs. Storrs, Mark Hopkins and Henry J. Van Dyke, of America; of Drs. Flint and Orr, and Sir William M. Ramsay, of Scotland; and Drs. Kuyper and Bavinck, of Holland; together with many names notable in the world of missionary literature.

The influence of Princeton's teachers has been felt wherever the gospel has been preached by Princeton men. The secret of her influence in theological education has been the succession of apostolic men who have occupied her professorial chairs. These have been men who have magnified their office, not content merely to give formal instruction in the truths and doctrines of the Word, but ambitious to inspire as well as to instruct, to animate with zeal for the work of the Kingdom, and to set before their students a strong and attractive example of Christian and ministerial manhood.

Another reason for the prestige and influence of Princeton as a school of the prophets has been her high standard of ministerial training. We have been passing through a period of educational transition and perhaps of confusion. The wonderful development and ever-extending boundaries of the sciences, the obvious utility of scientific study as a preparation for many vocations in life, the relative depreciation of the classics, the demands of a not infallible, but very human student body, seeking the line of least resistance, the development of elective courses, the application of candidates for the ministry without classical training, the marked popular interest in sociological questions growing out of our industrial organization and the progress of democracy, all of these causes have had their effect upon the theory and

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the actual arrangement of our theological curricula. Coupled with these changes in general educational policy, have been changes within the theological field itself, affecting the traditional views of the Bible and of its doctrines, and so of the gospel which ought to be preached. We are met with the question: Why not dispense with the dead languages and the dry bones of scholastic theology, and study the living problems of the day? Why not take this sorry theological scheme of things—this curriculum—entire, and shatter it to bits, and then remold it nearer to the heart's desire?

I know that we are here on controversial ground, and that every seminary has its own problems, and must decide for itself how it may best serve the church and the cause of ministerial education. I congratulate Princeton Seminary, however, upon reaching her one hundredth anniversary without finding it necessary to make her theological course any easier, or to change the principle upon which that course is organized. In the midst of changing conditions and theories, Princeton has stood her ground requiring a high standard of admission, requiring for graduation a knowledge of Hebrew and of Greek, and requiring exegesis in the original tongues.

Those hours of Hebrew in the junior year are indeed for the average student a hill of difficulty, but it is good to bear the yoke and to endure a little intellectual hardship. The mental discipline itself is not to be despised, and may help the preacher in later years as he grapples with a difficult text, and says, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." The short cut into the ministry, it is well to remember, may lead to the short cut out of the ministry, and the road may be made so smooth and

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easy as to lead readily into the by-paths of a real estate and insurance agency.

In these days of specialized Biblical criticism, it would be certainly a misfortune if the decision of Biblical questions should be taken out of the hands of the ministry, and relegated to a learned and cloistered caste. Critical discussions about the Pentateuch or the Psalms, or Isaiah or the Synoptic problem can only be appreciated by those who have some knowledge of the ancient languages. It is not necessary that the preacher should be a specialist in philology, but it is desirable that the ministry, to whom are committed the oracles of God, should have in their hands the instruments of scholarship, and be able for themselves to "search the scriptures whether these things are so."

In a scientific age, it will be a serious handicap to the preacher not to be able to refer to the fundamental documents of his faith. The necessity of the ancient languages in a theological course stands or falls, indeed, in my opinion, with the importance of exegesis, and our estimate of the importance of exegesis is bound up with our views of the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures. If there is no water of life, there is no need to draw from the fountain of the original text. If the preacher is not to preach the Word, his time will be wasted in studying the languages in which it was written. But the preacher, who believes that only in the Bible can he find his message for the salvation of men and the good of society, will wish to know all he can about the Bible. He will shrink from no labor which may make him a "workman that needeth not to be ashamed." Whatever the changes of the future, I hope,

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that in these days of higher standards of professional preparation, Princeton will not let down the bars in deference to the clamor for an easier course.

Our hope and dream for Princeton is that with expanding resources, she should offer, in some way, as extra-curriculum or elective, or fourth year or graduate courses, all the subjects which might be taught by the theological university. Let her offer courses in all the religions, and in all the languages, in all the philosophies, in all the Biblical books, in all the doctrines, in all the periods of church history, in the philosophy and psychology of religion, in ethics and economics and sociology. Let her send out Oberlins into the country churches who shall improve the roads and the schools and the methods of agriculture. Let her send out sociological experts, men with the modern outlook upon social problems, and able to apply the most exact and scientific methods to their study and to their solution. Let there be courses that will give to the foreign missionary a specialized training for his work. Let elocution be emphasized so that the preacher, on fire with his message, may deliver it in a manner commensurate with his theme. Let the circumference of the course be as wide as possible, but let the center, about which and upon which all else shall be built, be the study of the Bible. Thus will the Seminary give to the preacher a message large enough to fill his heart and mind, and great and important enough to carry to the ends of the earth.

Courses in psychology of religion, in religious education and in ethics will be attractive and useful to the preacher, and other studies, in history, literature, science and philosophy, will be broadening and helpful. But in the name of efficiency, let us put the most impor-

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tant things first. Let us not crowd in the squash courts and Turkish baths and palm gardens, if we have to crowd out the life-boats.

I have seen efficient ministers without scholastic training—Paul had more training in the schools than Peter; but I never saw an efficient minister without the Bible in his hand and in his heart. When we speak of efficiency and social service, let us not forget our church history. Let us look at Luther and Calvin, and what they accomplished, and how they accomplished it. Luther and Calvin might have studied history and psychology and political and social science till they were as old as Methusaleh, and they would not have produced one tithe of the political and social results that they did achieve by studying the Bible, by translating the Bible, by expounding the Bible, and by building, as they believed, upon the Bible great systems of doctrine and of duty.

Turning, for the few moments which remain, to the second part of our topic, we may say that Princeton's influence upon religious thought has been constructive, conservative and comprehensive, and that it has flowed notably in two channels, those of Biblical criticism and doctrinal theology.

Princeton's influence has been constructive. She has not been content with a repetition of the old formulas. Out of the Scriptures, as she believes, she has reared an imposing and positive system of truth, not novel in its essential features, but built up in full view of opposing systems, and with constant reference to the science and philosophy and criticism of the time. The articles of Princeton's creed have not been prefaced with a "perhaps" or an "I don't know", yet at times her words spoken in moderation and wisdom (for example, upon

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the principles of subscription to the Confession, or upon the atonement as adapted to all, sufficient for all, open to all and honestly offered to all) have brought assurance and relief to the whole Presbyterian world.

Her influence has been conservative. She has not believed with Ibsen that "the life of a normally constituted truth is twenty years at the outside". Her appeal has been from the fashion of the age oftentimes to the mature verdict of the ages. Her faith has been liberal in the sense indicated by Bishop Brooks, who said the term should be used not of a faith which believes little, but of one which believes much. Whether with approval or not, we must recognize the notable consistency of her position. She has exemplified her favorite doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. For one hundred years, she has stood like a Gibraltar amid the shifting tides and currents of human opinion.

Princeton's influence has been comprehensive. She has expounded and defended both the Old and the New Testaments, which the history of criticism has shown to be joined together as closely as ever, for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer. She has taught the great central doctrines of the Christian faith, human sin, a Divine Redeemer, and redemption through the blood of His Cross; and she has defended the outposts of the Reformed theology. She has expounded the doctrines of revealed religion, and has defended those fundamental truths of natural religion which lie at the basis of all religion and all ethics.

In analyzing Princeton's influence upon religious thought, we find that two principal streams may be distinguished; her influence in the spheres of Biblical criticism and of doctrinal theology. In considering ques-

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tions of Biblical criticism, her attitude has been reverent rather than patronizing. She has not sat in the seat of the scorner. Her attitude again has been scientific in that, whether her conclusions have been correct or not, she has, at least, considered the available evidence from tradition, from philology, from archaeology, from comparative religion, not omitting the testimony of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts. Her attitude has been courteous, toward criticism and toward the critics. Dr. William Henry Green stands as Princeton's leading exponent of the higher criticism. He has been called "the most influential Hebrew teacher of his time among English-speaking men"; he was the chairman of the American Old Testament Revision Committee; but he will be longest remembered as "the leading defender in this country, if not in the world, of the authenticity and integrity of the Mosaic books." It was his work in this field which led Dr. Willis J. Beecher to say that he had "caused American scholarship to be recognized throughout the Western, the Eastern and the Australian continents." Dr. Green, as a scholar, a Christian and a gentleman, was a model to all those who would enter the field of theological discussion.

While there is a contest between faith and unbelief, while men approach historical evidence from different philosophical standpoints and hold their philosophy dear, the Bible with its revelation of a Divine Christ will be the great storm-center, the great battle ground of controversy. Progress may be made by research, by reflection, by calm discussion and the weighing of arguments, by proving all things and holding fast that which is good; but perhaps no final agreement will be reached until we come to know even as we are known, or until we reach a

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condition of moral and spiritual indifference, and, like Gallio, care for none of these things.

I am not a prophet to forecast the probable course or duration or outcome of the controversy over the authorship and the trustworthiness of the books of the Bible; but I may venture to predict that an institution whose delight is in the law of the Lord will continue to enjoy the promise of continuous vigor and seasonable fruitfulness. And I may express the conviction that that institution which in the coming years of the century does most to train men to preach the Bible, and to induce men to study the Bible, to believe in and to obey the Bible, as the revelation of God's will and God's love for the salvation of men and society, that institution will not be at the end of the procession, but will be marching right in front in the vanguard of the world's advance.

Princeton Seminary has been for a century the consistent champion of that system of doctrine which has been variously called Augustinian, Calvinistic, Reformed, Westminster, or simply Princetonian. Princeton has produced the greatest textbook, the great monumental treatise, of this type of theology in the English language, its best popular exposition (in Dr. A. A. Hodge's "Popular Lectures"), its most genial and persuasive teachers, its keenest polemical defenders. Not all of us, as students, were able to bear all that we were taught by our theological professors; but I believe I speak for the great body of the Alumni when I say that we have absorbed a surprisingly large amount of Calvinism, and in our deepest convictions, as these have been deepened by experience, are true to that system of doctrine which places God's will above man's will, God's power above human weakness, God's grace above human

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merit, and makes God's glory the supreme end of man's existence.

We live in a time when there is a general desire for a fuller outward expression of the essential unity of the Christian church. The branches of the church, engaged in a common work, animated by a common purpose, are longing for some fuller expression of their essential unity in Christ, the great Head of the church. The middle walls of division, which have stood for centuries without a breach under the heavy guns of theological controversy, may at last be melted by the fires of Christian love. But whatever the movements and readjustments of the future, under the guidance of God's providence and of His Spirit, we believe that the essential truths which Princeton has taught with such conviction, for which she has contended so earnestly, and which she has made men see so clearly, whether they accepted her teaching or not, that these truths in the church of the future, coming down through Augustine and Calvin and the Westminster and the Princeton divines, will be a possession for all time, and that they will be incorporated as a valuable and integral part into the great stream of catholic Christianity and catholic Christian thought.

To these "five points" of Calvinism, may Princeton continue to be true. First, a lofty ideal of Christian and ministerial character, an ideal which has produced in history such men as Coligny, William of Nassau, John Knox, Dr. Alexander "the great", and Charles Hodge "the gracious". Second, an intelligent faith and a high standard of training for the ministry. Third, the authority of the Bible, given in the lovingkindness of our God, as the rule of faith and life. Fourth, the sovereignty of God in His grace and in His providence. Fifth, the

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doing of the will of God upon the earth; for the Reformed faith is in its very essence a reforming faith.

As we review the record of one hundred years of the Seminary's life, we cannot repress a feeling of profound gratitude for the streams of influence which have gone out from the Princeton fountain into the pulpits of our land, into the mission field and into the deepest thoughts and convictions and experiences of men.

As she faces the new problems of the newer age may Princeton go on her way, forgetting the things that are behind. May she go forward to a larger usefulness in the service of the church and of humanity. May she go forward with new hope and courage, with wise leadership, with holy ambitions, to great constructive achievements, and may all of us, her sons, set our faces in hope and expectancy to the coming of the better day, when the glory of all human achievements and of all human institutions and the glory of the ministry and the crown of a redeemed humanity shall add lustre only to the Saviour's brow, and all shall join in the song, "Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name give glory".