

THE
CONSTITUTION
OF THE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE
Reformed Presbyterian Church;
WITH AN
ADDRESS, &c.

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth....*Isa. lxii. 1.*

For the Priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts....*Mal. ii. 7.*

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have cammanded you....*Matt. xxviii. 20.*

The same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also....*2 Tim. ii. 2.*

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ADVERTISEMENT.



THE Committee appointed to prepare for the press, *The Constitution of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church*, accompanied with a suitable *Address*, now present the same to the public.

SAMUEL B. WYLIE,
ALEX. M^cLEOD.

NEW-YORK,
April 1, 1811.

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, &c.



THE Holy Scriptures of the Old and New-Testaments, are given to miserable man, as *the lively Oracles of God, which are able to make wise unto Salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*; and it is the institution of heaven, that the living preacher should accompany the word of inspiration, in order to explain and apply its doctrines for the salvation of souls. It is accordingly, of the greatest importance to the church of God, that fallen men be regularly and extensively supplied with a legitimate gospel ministry.

The Head, Christ, in providing for his body the church, “pastors and teachers,” employs the ordinary advantages of a good education, as well as natural endowments and the gifts of grace. He will not, it is true, at any time be destitute of suitable instruments for the execution of his purpose of love: for when the ordinary course of Providence appears to fail in furnishing qualified men for the work of the ministry, he confers, by miracle, the necessary ability upon his chosen servants. In the faith of his power, it is the duty of every church to use the best exertions for procuring faithful men, who shall be able to teach others: and as it does not fall within the province of human labours to communicate supernatural gifts, it becomes necessary to provide a good system of theological instruction, for those who have it in view to preach the gospel of God. To withhold such exertions would be grossly criminal: and to

expect, without them, a succession of well qualified public labourers would certainly be presumptuous. For the necessary gifts which are beyond our power, let us pray and hope ; but for attaining whatsoever lies within the reach of ordinary agency, let the church spare no exertions. This is the dictate both of reason and religion.

Piety is the *first* qualification for ministering in holy things. No man can be lawfully admitted to membership in the christian church, much less to office in it, while evidently devoid of practical godliness.

Good sense is the *second* qualification for the ministry. A teacher without talents for giving instruction would be an injury to any society ; and an officer without discretion in the exercise of his authority would be no better. To call to the ministry a man of no talents is an incongruity not to be charged to the Head of the church.

A good theological education is the *third* prerequisite in a candidate for the office of the gospel ministry. Education itself can never be sustained as a substitute for sense or piety. Nay, learning and talents unsanctified are a curse. But the very injury, which the church has suffered, and does still suffer, from abused literature, is a powerful argument for the necessity of employing the best education in support of truth. The weapon which is so detrimental in the hand of an adversary must be valuable when wielded by a faithful friend of Zion. It is not *mere learning* that is recommended. It is christian erudition. This is always desirable to the youth of piety and sense ; and it is absolutely necessary to an able minister of the New Testament. Miracles have ceased ; and instruction must be sought for in the use of suitable means.

It behoves the sacred teacher to be acquainted with those languages in which divine revelation is written. Every ambassador ought to be able to read the text in which his instructions are delivered. An able minister must be of course a linguist.

The nature and character of mankind ought also to be understood by him who is appointed to instruct, to persuade, to direct, and to reduce sinners to the discipline of righteousness. He should therefore be acquainted with the philosophy of the mind and the kindred sciences. The pastor should be a metaphysician.

Error, in order to be refuted, and truth, in order to be taught and applied, must be understood. The correct exposition of a great part of the Bible, however, depends on a knowledge of ancient usages, and of events which have long since come to pass. The able expositor of scripture must be versed in history, both civil and ecclesiastical.

A preacher of the gospel must not be a novice; but should study to shew himself approved, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. The christian minister should accordingly be acquainted with the state of science and the other literary attainments of the age in which he lives.

The long experience of the churches proves, if proof be necessary, that such a ministry cannot be attained without a regular system of instruction in theology.

In order, therefore, to provide a succession of able men for the gospel ministry, through the medium of such a system of theological instruction, as may, with the blessing of heaven, cultivate and improve the mind of pious and sensible youth,

THE SUPREME JUDICATORY OF THE

Reformed Presbyterian Church in America,

HAS ESTABLISHED A

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

WITH THE FOLLOWING

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.

SECT. 1. The Theological Seminary shall be under the direction of the highest Judicatory of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States of North America : and to that Judicatory it shall alone appertain to alter or amend this Constitution ; to appoint all the officers employed in the establishment ; to determine the place in which the Seminary shall be established or continued ; to fix the Salary of the Professor or Professors ; and to decide upon the manner in which, in other cases, its funds shall be applied.

2. No candidate shall be licensed to preach the gospel, by any of the Judicatories of the Reformed Presbyterian Church after the organization of this Seminary, unless he produce a regular certificate of his having attended with approbation to the course of instruction prescribed for the last two years, or exhibit such testimonials as shall in the estimation of the court prove equivalent.

3. All officers belonging to this institution, whether appointed for a definite or indefinite term, shall have a right to perform the duties of office until they are superceded by the appointment of others ; and no alteration of this constitution shall take place, during that Session of Judicatory in which such alteration is first proposed.

ARTICLE II.

SECT. 1. An ordained minister of competent abilities shall be appointed Professor of Theology ; and it shall be his duty to see the plan of instruction carried into execution ; he shall himself personally execute the plan of instruction for the last two sessions ; and he shall have power, at his own discretion, while unassisted, and with the consent of such other professor, or professors, as may be appointed to aid him in the instruction of students, (in which case they

shall constitute a faculty,) to admit students into the Seminary, and to admonish or suspend for misdemeanor, subject nevertheless to the ultimate decision of the board of superintendants.

2. There shall be appointed at every stated meeting of the competent Judicatory, from among the ministers of the church three superintendants, whose duty it shall be to meet annually, on the first Wednesday of May, and in conjunction with the professor of theology, examine both students and applicants, assigning to them their places in the first, second, or third classes, according to the proficiency they may have made in the proper literature of the institution; hear public discourses from the students; grant certificates to those who may have completed their studies; and legislate, consistently with the constitution, on every thing respecting the Seminary.

3. There shall be appointed from among the officers of the church, a Treasurer, who shall have charge of all the funds of the institution, and shall exhibit a regular statement to the Superior Judicatory on each stated meeting. He shall continue in office during the pleasure of the court, and shall answer the draughts made upon him by the secretary of the board of superintendants.

ARTICLE III.

SECT. 1. No student shall be admitted into the Seminary unless he have previously graduated in some college or university; but the Supreme Judicatory may direct the superintendants to admit such applicants as, upon examination, are found to possess literary qualifications equivalent to those which usually entitle a student of college to the first degree in the arts.

2. The students shall pay strict attention to the directions of the professor of theology, or faculty: they shall pursue the course of reading, and of moral conduct marked

out for them : they shall behave with respectful demeanour towards all the constituted authorities of the Seminary ; and shall, upon their admission, subscribe this constitution.

3. Each student shall pay annually into the hands of the professor of theology, for the general fund, the sum of twenty-five dollars : and the superintendants may grant, either as a loan or as a gift, this sum, and with the permission of the Judicatory, any other necessary sum, to those whose resources are inadequate to their expenditure during the sessions of the seminary.

ARTICLE IV.

SECT. 1. The course of instruction shall occupy four successive annual sessions, and each session shall be of six months continuance ; from the first of November to the first of May. The whole course shall be divided into three several parts, appropriated to three distinct classes, the first, the second, and the third, into any one of which, students duly qualified may be admitted.

2. The *first* shall be called the *Class of Biblical Literature*, and in it shall the student, during the first session, attend, in order that he may be qualified for *understanding* the sacred text.

The students in this class shall be instructed in the languages of both the Old and the New Testaments, and in the cognate dialects, reading such portions of the Greek Classics as shall be prescribed for them : They shall attend, twice in each week, Lectures on History. And it shall be the duty of the professor to condense into fifty-two lectures, the outlines of history, sacred and profane, from the beginning of the world until the (then) present time ; following the line of prophecy, and connecting civil with ecclesiastical history, referring the students to the proper authorities, and directing them to consult the other explanatory historians.

3. The *second* shall be called the *Class of Pulpit Eloquence*, and in it shall the student, during the second session attend, in order to qualify him for *expounding* in a persuasive manner the oracles of God. It shall be the duty of the professor to deliver to this class a course of lectures on Metaphysics, (including the science of the human mind and Christian experience,) on logic, on ethics, (including political morality,) and on elocution, and the method of sermonizing, giving a corresponding direction to their reading.

4. The *third* shall be called the *Class of Systematic and Polemical Theology*, and in it shall the student during the third and fourth sessions, attend in order to establish him in the analogy of faith, and enable him to resist gainsayers. It shall be the duty of the professor to deliver to this class a series of lectures on Divinity, pursuing the plan laid down in the declaratory part of "Reformation Principles exhibited," (THE TESTIMONY of the Church) and directing the students to peruse and compare the Confessions of the Reformed Churches, together with the most approved Systems of Theology. The whole course must not exceed the number of one hundred and four lectures.

5. All the students throughout the several classes shall be directed, occasionally, to attend to reading Hebrew and other oriental languages; they shall also pay attention to sacred criticism, compose dissertations, and deliver discourses, as the professor of theology shall see meet to direct them; and they shall deliver discourses in public, at the annual examination, before the board of superintendants.

6. Those students who shall have with approbation completed their studies, shall be duly certified; they shall be delivered up for trials to the Presbyteries, and disposed of to these courts at the will of the Superior Judicatory, or at the discretion of the superintendants until such Judicatory meets; provided, however, that no such candidate shall be ordained to a pastoral charge, previous to the first meeting of the Su-

perior Judicatory after he shall have completed his course at the Seminary. Students not in the communion of this church, shall upon receiving their certificates be at their own disposal.

The undersigned entering themselves as Students into the Seminary, promise to conduct themselves agreeably to this Constitution.

<i>DATE OF ADMISSION.</i>	<i>SUBSCRIBERS' NAMES.</i>