

THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

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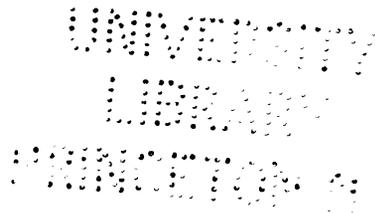
Princeton **THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

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
1912**

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PRINCETON SEMINARY AND THE FAITH

SERMON

BY THE REVEREND FRANCIS LANDEY PATTON, D.D., LL.D.

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President of the Seminary

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Jude 3.

PRICETON Theological Seminary opened its doors a hundred years ago with one professor and three students—a ratio of instructor to pupils which ought to satisfy the most exacting demands of modern pedagogy. Dr. Miller was associated with Dr. Alexander a little later, and soon after that Dr. Hodge, then a very young man, began his long career as a member of the teaching staff. These three men, as Mr. Dulles has well said, determined the character of Princeton Seminary. We like to think that the institution has not lost the spirit of fervent piety into which it was baptized in its infancy, and that the stamp of religious character which was impressed upon it at the beginning has not been altogether effaced.

Dr. Alexander was an acute thinker on theological and philosophical subjects, a man of great sagacity, keen in his analysis of religious states, and very spiritually minded. Dr. Miller was a courtly gentleman of elegant

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scholarship and wide reading. He was an industrious writer and a stalwart defender of the great principles of Presbyterian doctrine and polity. Dr. Hodge came to his position with special equipment for his work. He had enjoyed the advantage of study in Germany, and was fully abreast of the theological controversies of his day. He won enduring fame as exegete, controversialist, ecclesiastic and dogmatician; lived in the service of the Seminary to a ripe old age, and garnered the wisdom and experience of his life in his "Systematic Theology". With these men there was associated later on Dr. Joseph Addison Alexander, a man of rare literary genius and great linguistic attainments, who served the Seminary with remarkable power and efficiency until the time of his death. Dr. John Breckinridge was also a professor in the Seminary for a short time during the early years of its history, but he left it to enter upon another form of ministerial labor; and the same is to be said of Dr. James W. Alexander, whose distinguished career as pastor of what is now known as the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church is one of the brightest pages in the annals of the American pulpit.

Dr. William Henry Green, whom many of us still remember, entered upon the work of instruction in the Seminary when he was quite young, and like Dr. Charles Hodge filled the full tale of fifty years in the Seminary's service. He did conspicuous work in the department of Old Testament Literature, achieved a world-wide reputation as an able supporter of conservative views in regard to Old Testament criticism, and rendered a lasting service to the church by his defence of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Dr. Hodge had as his successors two sons who, during the later years of his life,

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acted as his colleagues. Dr. Archibald Alexander Hodge, a man of less learning than his father, but, as I think, of more genius, took the chair of Systematic Theology. He was distinguished by keen metaphysical insight and a marvelous power of extemporaneous expression. Dr. Caspar Wistar Hodge, the distinguished successor of Dr. Addison Alexander, added the work of exegetical theology to his previous duties as professor of New Testament Literature. He was a man of refined scholarship, of sane and penetrating judgment, and commanding influence. He was an inspiring teacher, and was singularly reverent in his attitude toward the Scriptures. Following Dr. Hodge in the chair of New Testament Literature came Dr. Purves, the pupil succeeding his teacher as Dr. Hodge had succeeded his. Dr. Purves, after several years of service in the Seminary, resigned his position to take the same pulpit in New York which Dr. James W. Alexander had taken years before. Dr. Purves was one of those rare men who combine in equal degree the qualities of an exact scholar and a popular preacher.

Dr. Moffat, a man of fine classical scholarship, succeeded Dr. Miller in the department of Church History. Coming to his position from the chair of Greek in the College of New Jersey, it was not to be expected that he would feel a deep interest in the discussion of theological subtleties. He preferred to look at church history on its literary side; and he accordingly presented the story of the church's life in the form of flowing and interesting narrative. Dr. Aiken served the Seminary with unflinching ability and fidelity during the twenty years of his life among us, bringing to the work of his chair the resources of a broad and exact scholarship and, though la-

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boring under the great disadvantage of growing enfeeblement during the later years of his life, is still remembered as one who with great patience and self-sacrifice devoted himself to the defence of the gospel.

Dr. McGill was a professor in the Seminary as far back as when I was a student here: a man of great subtlety of thought, mighty in the Scriptures, singularly copious and felicitous in prayer, an exceptionally fine teacher of homiletics and an able defender of the Presbyterian form of church government, though I confess that in his zeal for a *jure divino* polity he sometimes seemed to me to put a burden upon certain proof texts greater than they were able to bear. Dr. Paxton succeeded Dr. McGill, bringing with him the ripe experiences of large pastorates in Pittsburgh and New York, particularly in that historic church in the latter city whose members—I refer especially to the Lenox family—have done so much for this Seminary and for our Church at large. He was no novice in the department of Homiletics, for he had lectured on this subject before, both in Pittsburgh and New York; and the art of preaching had enlisted his deepest interest during his entire ministry.

These men of course were not all alike; but they all spoke the same thing and there were no divisions among them. There may be some advantage in giving students object lessons in independent thinking by allowing them to hear the opinions of one professor flatly contradicted by the teaching of another professor in an adjoining classroom. But this advantage, whatever it be, is in my humble judgment more than counterbalanced by the advantage of institutional solidarity which has been so conspicuously manifested in the history of Princeton

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Theological Seminary. Some of the men to whom I have referred brought with them the ripe results of a long experience in the pastorate. This is a matter for which we should be profoundly grateful. There should always be in the Seminary—as there are today, and never in larger proportion than today—a number of men who when they speak to students in regard to the work upon which they are about to enter can speak out of an affluent ministerial experience. But of course it would hardly do to say that every professor in a theological seminary should first of all go through the apprenticeship of pastoral experience. We should at least find it difficult to adjust such a view to the attitude we have taken toward some of the most distinguished men who have adorned the chairs of this Seminary. Dr. Charles Hodge never had a pastorate so far as my knowledge goes. Dr. Addison Alexander was never a pastor. Dr. Green I believe was a pastor for a short time, but I do not suppose that his experience in that capacity was of much help to him as a student of Old Testament criticism. Dr. Caspar Wistar Hodge was a pastor for a few years, but I imagine that this can be regarded as a negligible element in his equipment for the chair of New Testament Literature. It is safe to say that a man can no longer enter upon a professorship that calls for exact scholarship and wide reading after long service in the pastorate and hope to render the kind and degree of service that is expected of a professor in these days. The reason is obvious. The functions of the pastor and of the professor have been so differentiated in these latter years that the minister of a modern church has no time for the acquisition of highly specialized learning, and the work of a professorship, at least in some of the departments of the

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theological curriculum, involves such exact knowledge and wide reading that the best results can be hoped for only in one who enters early in life upon the duties of his chair and gives his undivided interest to them.

The theological attitude of Princeton Theological Seminary is, I think, pretty well understood: but lest there should be any misapprehension as to what that attitude is, I wish to say a word, even at the risk of taxing your patience somewhat, in regard to our theological position. I do not for a moment deny that there may be a place in the world for an institution the professors of which work in the unhampered exercise of their judgment in the search for theological truth; but in the nature of the case the seminary which is ecclesiastical in its origin and relationships and which does its work under the rubric of confessional obligations cannot have that sort of freedom. Princeton Theological Seminary, as you all know, is the creature of the Presbyterian General Assembly, and is committed by the terms of its constitution to the propagation and defence of the Reformed Theology. Therefore you need not be surprised when told that during the hundred years of its history it has been a conservative institution. Now, I am not ashamed of being conservative on any subject, and least of all have I any misgivings in regard to conservatism in theology; but then there are several kinds of conservatism, and if you will bear with me I will say a word or two in regard to some of these forms of conservatism.

There is, for example, what I may call the conservatism of ignorance. I do not use the expression in any disparaging sense; and, what is more, I have great respect for conservatism of the kind I have mentioned. We cannot well begin our work in any department with-

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out some assumptions. Just what these assumptions shall be will depend upon circumstances. You do not expect a political economist, for example, to preface his lectures with a theory of the universe, though some theory of the universe must underlie what he has to say. It may therefore very easily happen that a man who starts with the assumption that the Bible is the word of God may do very valuable work as an expounder of the Bible though he know but little of the arguments where-with his assumption is discredited. If in our chairs of historical criticism our object is so to discuss the questions regarding the authorship of the books of the New Testament that our students may thereby be the more confident of their position as to the divine authority of the New Testament, who shall say that those who without any minute acquaintance with contrary positions already believe in that authority may not do a most important work in the presentation of the truths of Scripture to their congregations? If a man should say to me, "I take the Bible as the word of God. This is my great assumption; and with such fluency of speech and power of exposition as have been given to me, I preach it to the world", I for my part am ready to say that he is fulfilling a most important function. If our object in our chairs of historical criticism is to lead men to a sure knowledge that the Bible is God's word, and there are men who have already got there without being led there, and they with this supreme unchallenged assumption are ready to go out and preach the word, then in God's name let them go and may God bless them! I have nothing to say against this sort of conservatism, but I ought to say at the same time that this is not the type of conservatism which we are seeking to illustrate here.

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Then again there is the conservatism of the advocate. A man, that is to say, may feel that he holds a brief for a certain opinion or set of opinions and that he is called upon to defend these opinions with a certain amount of enthusiasm. The objection will immediately be made that he is not free in his search for truth, that he is handicapped by having his conclusions made for him in advance, and that he knows when he begins his inquiry just what is to be looked for at the end of the road. There is a certain amount of force in this criticism which I do not overlook, though I think that far too much is made of it. But we must be careful, in acknowledging the element of justice in the criticism, not to fall into the very common mistake of supposing that a man's position as an advocate operates to the prejudice of his full knowledge of the facts. Biassed he may be, but ignorant he need not be. When the muniments of title are assailed, it is likely that the defendant's counsel knows the strength of his opponent's case quite as well as he does himself. He is none the less possessed of legal knowledge and forensic skill because he has espoused a cause and advocates it with the warmth of a partisan. He may not be as dispassionate as the judge, but he ought to know quite as well as the judge the full value of the facts. It is quite possible, however, that an apologete may come to feel that he has espoused a cause that he cannot honestly defend; and under these circumstances, if he is an honest man, he will throw down his brief and retire from the case. I am not ashamed to admit that our Princeton theologians have to a great extent been advocates. They have felt that their function was forensic as well as didactic. They have spoken and written in the warm glow of enthusiasm. They have

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used well the weapons of controversy, and they have given expression to their thoughts through the copious vocabulary of invective, ridicule and sarcasm, and in the use of the hot rhetoric of telling phrase and pungent argument. I confess that I miss this in the theological discussions of today, and I sometimes think that we lose in force what we gain in politeness.

There is, however, a third type of conservatism; and that is the conservatism of calm scientific conviction. Now this scientific attitude toward open questions in theology is more suited to the psychological climate in which we live today. Men feel that epithets are not arguments, and that you can get better and more permanent results through a calm statement of the facts than you can through fine writing and florid rhetoric. I sympathize with this view very heartily. And still I miss the enthusiasm of the old controversies too; and I would like to remind the younger theologians of the fact that they are defenders as well as investigators. Princeton Seminary, it is true, has taken a leading place in theological controversy; but she has shown herself capable also of placid scientific inquiry, and we have a good illustration of both the polemic and the scientific conservatism of the Seminary in the controversial articles of Dr. Charles Hodge on the one hand and in his "Systematic Theology" on the other.

Let us remember, then, that Princeton Seminary by its constitution is committed to that body of divinity known as the Augustinian or Calvinistic Theology. This theology presupposes of course the great truths of Natural Theology and the divine authority of the Bible. The whole area of controversial theology was therefore properly within the purview of the Princeton theologians.

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Still the great debates were on grounds which presupposed the theological prolegomena to which I have just referred. In the early days of the Seminary's life philosophy did not enter largely into the reading of a minister. In fact philosophy was very little read by anybody. Mr. Riley, in his book on American Philosophy, brings together the evidence of philosophical activity in this country during the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century, but it makes a poor showing. There was some idealism in New Haven; Priestley had a few followers in Pennsylvania; and there was some literary and a somewhat amateurish pantheism in New England: but philosophy was not a large factor in our theology; and in our colleges the Scottish philosophy of common sense was what was generally taught. It is likewise true that acute interest in the questions of the Higher Criticism came at a later date. We were slow to recognize the immigration of German thought as having any important bearing upon our theological life. Accordingly theological controversy was largely of an interdenominational sort. We discussed Presbyterianism *versus* Prelacy; and infant baptism in opposition to those who denied its Scriptural warrant. We had debates on the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ. We fought over again the battle between Calvinism and Arminianism; and against the sects that rose up to contradict it, we defended the traditional doctrine of future retribution. These discussions for the most part proceeded upon exegetical grounds, each side maintaining that its position was the doctrine of the Bible, and neither disputing that the Bible was authoritative. In all these discussions Princeton Seminary bore an honorable part and rendered important service.

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There was also in the family of Churches holding the Reformed Theology an intra-Calvinistic development. Under the influence of the New England theologians, such as Emmons, Hopkins, Edwards, Taylor and Park, there grew up certain modifications of the Calvinistic system which constitute a very important chapter in the history of opinion in America. I always had great respect for the New England theologians. I used to read them, and have never ceased to admire them, and by that I mean that I still cherish the admiring recollection I have of them. They were original, they were independent. These discussions were largely ethico-metaphysical. They dwelt on the problem of God's relation to the world, and of the human will. They entered with great minuteness of discrimination into anthropological inquiries respecting original sin and the distinction between natural and moral inability. Our friends in New England did a great work, and as I have already intimated opened a splendid chapter in the history of opinion. They built their tabernacle with strict regard to the plans and specifications of their architects. We have nothing but admiration for the fine lines of the structure, but we somehow feel that they departed somewhat from the pattern shown us in the mount.

Now Princeton Seminary, it should be said, never contributed anything to these modifications of the Calvinistic system. She went on defending the traditions of the Reformed Theology. You may say she was not original: perhaps so, but then, neither was she provincial. She had no oddities of manner, no shibboleths, no pet phrases, no theological labels, no trademark. She simply taught the old Calvinistic Theology without modification: and she made obstinate resistance to the modi-

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fications proposed elsewhere, as being in their logical results subversive of the Reformed faith. There has been a New Haven theology and an Andover theology; but there never was a distinctively Princeton theology. Princeton's boast, if she have reason to boast at all, is her unswerving fidelity to the theology of the Reformation. *Semper eadem* is a motto that would well befit her.

The theological position of Princeton Seminary is exactly the same today that it was a hundred years ago. This may seem like a strange statement to make about a living institution in this very progressive age. We have of course put a new interpretation on the "days" of Genesis; and in other particulars have used the results of science to help us in the interpretation of the Scriptures. I am speaking now, however, of the distinctive dogmatic content of the Reformed Theology. We are in possession of new material for studying the historical problems connected with the origin and growth of Biblical Literature. We have a better text of the New Testament and a better understanding of the meaning of the New Testament than were possessed by those to whom this Seminary owes the beginnings of its life. But have any of these improvements made necessary any modification of our belief as to the authority of Scripture or as to the dogmatic content of the Scripture? I am not aware of any such necessity. Why then should our doctrinal position undergo a change? I can think of several things that might be said in reply to this question, but I do not feel that any of them should influence us very materially. "Do you mean to tell us"—I can imagine some one saying—"that you still adhere to that old theology of the Reformers which men in these days have so generally abandoned?" I am not aware, to begin with,

that it is so generally abandoned. But if it were, that would not prove it to be untrue. It would only prove that it is not fashionable. Professor James remarks somewhere in one of his later books that "souls are not fashionable". Some of us nevertheless go on believing in "souls", hoping that by and by there will be a reaction, and that some of our philosophical friends will reconsider their hasty attitude toward the spiritual side of our nature. This is the way we feel toward the old theology. It may come into fashion again.

"Has not modern philosophy made it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain the positions of the old theology?" some one else may ask. I am not aware of that state of things. I know that certain forms of philosophical opinion are incompatible with dogmatic Christianity, but I do not know of any necessity for adopting those forms of philosophical opinion. "Can you continue to hold", one may ask, "the numerical distinction between God and the world in view of the teaching of contemporary metaphysic?" Quite as well, I answer, as we could when Spinoza identified *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*. Not all philosophers are pantheists, and if they were, I should not feel under obligation to accept their teaching. I know that psychology is invading the field of theology, and some of its representatives are trying to explain "conversion" by expressing the change involved in it in the terms of a natural process. My judgment is that they have met with very indifferent success in their endeavor to desupernaturalize conversion: but it interests me to notice that just now when the ministers seem disposed to stop talking about conversion the psychologists are turning their attention to it.

Still again it may be said that the Christian conscious-

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ness, if it has not changed the meaning of the great doctrines of Christianity, has given us a new scale of values in regard to them. But that is only on the assumption that the so-called Christian consciousness has a right to supplement the Scriptures or contradict their obvious meaning. If there is any value at all in the argument based on the Christian consciousness, it is to the effect that the New Testament is itself only an expression of the religious consciousness of the period in which it was written and may therefore be set aside by the Christian consciousness of today whenever the religious experiences of the two periods do not coincide. I should like to know, however, by what process we could secure a consensus of opinion that might be taken as an expression of the religious consciousness of today, and I should like to know, moreover, what authority it would possess if we had it. What basis should we have for religious certitude, once we conceded that our only reason for faith is found in the religious consciousness, and that as the religious consciousness of yesterday is set aside by the religious consciousness of today, so also the religious consciousness of today may be contradicted by the religious consciousness of tomorrow?

Once more our objector may say that it is not a difference in the interpretation of the Scripture but a difference of attitude toward the Scripture which makes the old theology unpalatable to the modern mind. "Our change of belief", he would say, "is not due to exegesis or historical criticism. Grammar and logic have had little to do with our changed theological position. We reverence the writings—say those of Paul—but we do not read them literally; we see in their concrete statements the embodiment of great transcendental ideas."

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This is an implied admission that if we do read Paul literally it is hard to escape the conclusion that Paul believed what the Christian world has always supposed that he believed. And the issue I am convinced is really whether we shall go on believing in what Paul teaches or give him up altogether. I cannot attach much value to what I have just referred to as a new attitude toward Paul and the other writers of the New Testament. And yet I would not be wilfully blind to a certain element of truth that may underlie this view of the matter. For I am not prepared to say that the language of the New Testament, with its imagery borrowed from the world of sense, adequately expresses all that it was intended to convey. I am not prepared to say that there are not some great ideas pertaining to the world of spiritual values which Paul's language borrowed from the world of fact but imperfectly adumbrated. Be that as it may, however, it is still true that when we impute to Paul a meaning which in all probability had never entered his mind, and deny to his words the meaning that he evidently meant them to have, we are handling the word of God deceitfully: and whether we do so in the icy speech of Hegelian philosophy after the style of Edward Caird in his Gifford Lectures, or in the fervid words of a vague and almost pietistic mysticism after the manner of Father Tyrrell in his "Christianity at the Crossroads" matters not. In either case we are reading into the New Testament what the writers of the New Testament never intended. There is then but one honest course to follow: either give up the Scriptures as no longer having authority, or take them at their face value and in their plain and obvious meaning.

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But while I say that the theological position of Princeton Seminary has remained unchanged I am very free to admit that the issues of today are different from those of a former generation. The Calvinistic theology is a view of the world which takes account of the whole field of human conduct. All in fact that pertains to being, duty and destiny falls within its purview. Believing in the existence of a personal God we feel bound to interpret all events in the terms and under the great category of the divine purpose. If we believe in the incarnation we must believe that it was included in that purpose. If we believe that salvation is through faith, it is very hard to escape the conviction that both the salvation and the faith which is instrumental to it are to be included in that purpose.

All problems of ethics, all questions of duty, all phases of individual and social morality are therefore legitimately within the sphere of the Calvinistic theology. All the moral sciences and all the speculations of philosophers in regard to human conduct must come under the view of him who looks upon conduct as related to a supreme norm of Right and an ideal conception of the Good. In the nature of the case, therefore, we must occupy a great deal of territory in common with our brethren in other communions. With our friends in the Roman Catholic Church we protest against all forms of naturalistic and pantheistic philosophy; and we share with them the common heritage of the Christian world as it is embodied in the Nicene and Chalcedonian theology. With our brethren in the Lutheran, Anglican and Arminian communions we hold to the great principles of Protestantism and repudiate the corruptions of doctrine which have crept into the Church of Rome. And

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more than that, the things wherein we agree with our brethren of other Christian communions are more important than those in which we differ. We can therefore enter cordially into sympathetic relation with the irenic spirit which is so characteristic of our times, and that without ignoring or pushing into the background the distinguishing features of the Reformed Theology. Those distinguishing features I need not say concern the position of the Reformed Theology in regard to the divine purpose and the doctrines of grace in relation to that purpose. I know you will understand me when I say that the points which distinguish our theology are not necessarily those of greatest controversial importance at the present day. Intrinsically they are as important as they ever were, but relatively they are of less importance. In other words, there has been a subsidence of interest in regard to some questions due largely to the emergence of acute controversial interest in other and more fundamental issues. Men are not discussing the question regarding the subjects or the mode of baptism. The day of hot controversy between Calvinists and Arminians has passed. Men are not writing treatises on theories of inspiration. They are not discussing the question of the Adamic relationship or of this, that and the other view of the atonement. The reason is not that these questions are of no importance or of little importance—and I think there is far too much indifference to their significance—but that the thought of the theological world has been occupied in recent years and is still occupied with questions which bear more radically upon the truth and value of historic Christianity.

Into the discussion of these questions I do not propose to enter. But I am safe in saying that the emphasis of

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contemporary debate is placed upon questions that are in their nature philosophical and historical. If the Bible is a divine revelation there is practically no difficulty in ascertaining the dogmatic content of Christianity. But is it? That is the fundamental question with which Christian theologians are called to deal. That question involves a number of historical inquiries in regard to the origin of the books that constitute the Bible. These inquiries again are in many cases conditioned by the theory of the universe which constitutes the philosophical presupposition of those who enter upon historical investigation. I am far from saying that all who accept the results of negative criticism are advocates of a naturalistic or pantheistic view of the world. But it is quite certain that, for the man who holds an antisupernaturalistic philosophy, a supernaturalistic theology is impossible. Nor is it too much to say that antisupernaturalistic bias has been the determining influence in much of the historical criticism of the last century. It would be idle to say, as some perhaps may say, that we can afford to be indifferent to the questions mooted in philosophy and history, since our religion is one that is rooted in a personal relation to Jesus and makes no demand upon us for metaphysical subtlety or historical erudition: for the value that we attach to our personal relation to Jesus must depend upon the place which Jesus occupies in the scale of being, and that precisely is the question which is under discussion at the present day. We are being made familiar every day with the effect of a naturalistic construction of the phenomena of the world upon the attitude which men assume toward Jesus. There are, for example, those who think that Jesus was a normal man, pure-minded and the teacher of an exalted type of mo-

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rality, who was cut off in the beginning of His days, but not before He became the founder of the Christian religion. They look upon the supernatural elements of His life as the additions of a later generation of His followers who fitted to Him the prophecies of the Old Testament and imputed to Him the supernatural elements regarding His birth and resurrection which we find in the Gospels. Some of those who take this view of Jesus are very much interested in what they call the creed of Jesus—that is, in what Jesus believed. I can understand that there may be some intellectual interest in discovering what Jesus believed, just as there is in finding out what Confucius or Plato believed. But I cannot attach much importance to it. If Jesus was a human being like the rest of us and His range of vision was limited to His times, I fail to see any great advantage in knowing what He believed. He did not know the Copernican theory of astronomy; He had no knowledge of the doctrine of evolution and therefore had not seen how that doctrine has affected the entire philosophy of conduct.

This human being, however, men are willing to accept as embodying their ethical ideal: and I am safe in saying that with some people Christianity consists in regarding Jesus as an ethical ideal. Let us give a moment's thought to this view of Christianity. It is quite clear that if Jesus is simply an ideal man we need no faith in God as the presupposition of our attachment to Jesus. An atheist may be a good father and a public-spirited citizen; he may admire the character of Jesus and be willing to join a society membership in which consists simply in a promise to live according to the teachings of Jesus: atheistic Christianity is therefore quite a possibility and if by and by we have an organization of athe-

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istic Christians we need not evince any surprise. But that is not all; for if Jesus is simply an exponent of ideal morality, there would seem to be no need of the historic Jesus. It is not the man Jesus but the ideal embodied in Him that is of value; and all efforts to realize that ideal in our own lives will proceed upon the basis that it corresponds to the judgments of moral value of which we find ourselves in possession. No great harm would follow, therefore, if we lost the historic Jesus altogether; as lose Him we are very likely to do if we follow the naturalistic methods of historical criticism to their logical results.

It is very interesting to watch the efforts of critical thinkers to escape from the obvious supernaturalism imputed to Jesus in the Gospels. They fall into hopeless difficulties. Those, for example, who regard Jesus as an ideal teacher are confronted by the eschatologists who say that Jesus was primarily not a teacher at all, but that the motive of His ministry was to preach the near approach of the end of the present social order and the setting up of the Kingdom of God. They hold that He shared the eschatological opinions current in later Judaism, and that He believed Himself to be the Son of Man who, in a short time, was to come again in the clouds of heaven, in power and great glory. His ethics were no ideal scheme of human conduct but were of an interimistic character, intended to serve the purpose of the short interval between His first and His second appearing, their alleged defects making them inadequate as a permanent norm of conduct in the existing socio-political order, as obviously also in that condition of things when men neither marry nor are given in marriage but are as the angels in heaven.

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If the Bible is to be interpreted on a naturalistic basis, and it is merely a human Jesus who is presented to us in the Gospels, there is great plausibility in this view. How the eschatological and the ethical conceptions of the life of Jesus are to be harmonized, it is hard to say. But we can hardly be expected to feel much interest in a Jewish visionary who succeeded in convincing a few followers that He was the Son of Man who was within the space of a single generation to bring about the end of the present order of things and set up the Kingdom of God. And whatever be the genetic relation of present Christianity to the eschatological teachings of Jesus, one can not help feeling that a great strain is put upon human belief when we are taught that the world-conquering religion of Christ had its origin in the deluded judgment of a Jewish enthusiast respecting the end of the world. If the view which we are considering is correct, we are left to wonder how Christianity survived the disappointments of the primitive believers and how the followers of Jesus maintained their faith in the second coming by successive postponements of the event. We wonder that a religion can still call itself by the name of Jesus after it has given up the idea to which He consecrated His life. Those who put a naturalistic interpretation upon the eschatological feature in the teaching of Jesus and who, at the same time, regard this as the leading feature of His ministry are fond of showing that it has undergone changes of interpretation until now, in the minds of some, it has vanished away. The parousia, looked for as imminent at first, has come to be regarded as indefinitely postponed; or it has been exchanged for the problem of *post mortem* destiny; and this, in turn, is giving way in some quarters to a doctrine of the Kingdom of God synony-

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mous with social regeneration and the uplift of society. ~~So the eschatological and the ethical conceptions of a merely human Jesus meet at last on common ground, and Christianity resolves itself into an effort for the spread of good-will among men.~~ The success of Jesus, in other words, is the victory of a social programme against which the life of Jesus was, in a certain sense, a protest.

I can well understand that men will hesitate to think that the growth of Christianity has been adequately explained by such a view of Jesus. Men may be easily forgiven for finding Jesus too uninteresting to be the subject of much consideration in these later days. When, therefore, still in quest of an adequate cause for the great religious phenomenon which we call Christianity, some turn to Paul and find in his strong supernaturalism, his wide world-view, his faith in the resurrection of Jesus and the atonement, his belief in the doctrine of sin, and his philosophy of salvation, the real secret of victorious Christianity, I do not wonder. It is true that Paul's theology was supernatural through and through, but it was not the superficial supernaturalism of a visionary looking for the speedy end of the world. It was a supernaturalism that made its appeal to what Paul believed to be accredited facts and, at all events, it did not belie its claims by building them upon a confessed historical failure.

But the kaleidoscope of criticism is capable of still another twist. Liberal Christians who are satisfied to find in a human Jesus, possessed of unusual ethical insight, a sufficient explanation of Christianity must reckon now with a more radical school of thinkers. When it was the fashion to reject most of the Pauline

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writings and put the Gospels down into the second century, it was not difficult to suppose that the supernaturalism which envelopes the life of Jesus was a matter of comparatively slow growth. But with Paul's writings rehabilitated and the Synoptic Gospels, particularly the Gospel of Mark, forced back to a period in all probability prior to the capture of Jerusalem, it is not so easy to place a mythical interpretation upon the Gospels or to regard the miraculous features of the life of Jesus as the harmless exaggerations of admiring disciples or the idealized representations of a later generation of Christian believers. So deeply embedded is the supernaturalism of Jesus in the earliest records of Christianity that we must accept this supernaturalism as orthodox Christians have always accepted it, or we must construct a pre-Christian Jesus out of the eschatological and apocalyptic literature of the period covered by a century or more before the Christian era. In other words, according to the radical school of which I am now speaking the historical Jesus never existed. To the liberal Christians, they say, in effect, "Give up belief in the historical Jesus altogether, or else accept the supernaturalism with which the earliest Christian records invest Him."

I do not mind having these men fall out and quarrel among themselves; I like to read the biting sarcasm with which they attack one another, because I feel that when they fall out the old faith may come into its own. But the position which they have brought us to is this: you can not get the supernatural elements out of the earliest records of the life of Christ, and you are compelled either to seek the origin of the Gospel portraiture of Jesus in a pre-Christian myth or to stand by the simple, plain narrative of the supernatural as it lies on the face of the

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Gospels themselves. Clearly, then, the issue is sharp between a natural human Jesus and the ever-living and incarnate Jesus, between a Christianity that is supernatural in its inception and a Christianity that can be explained by a system of natural causation.

When, however, you have explained Christianity on the basis of natural causation and eliminated the supernatural, it is a religion for this world and it has no reference to a world to come. You can make Jesus what you like, and say, if you please, that He is a prototype of the modern socialist; but whatever you say, this remains—He and His methods have nothing whatever to do with anything outside the boundaries of this earthly life. Abolish poverty if you can, but you can not abolish death. Give us pure food and better sanitation, equalize the luxuries of happiness in as large a measure as you can—it makes no difference: it is but a little time until the rich man will leave his plenty and the poor man will leave his want; death will come alike to both, and to neither has the gospel a word to say with respect to eternal life.

It must be remembered, however, that many who are unable to accept the full account of miraculous Christianity given us in the Gospels are yet far from denying that there are unescapable elements of supernaturalism in Jesus. Whatever doubts they may have in regard to the Virgin birth or the story of our Lord's resurrection, they are impressed with His unique personality; they feel that He is the fullest revelation of God; and that for the purposes of their religious nature He is to them as if He were God. Moreover, they make a great deal of the Messianic consciousness of Jesus. I can not help feeling, however, that the argument for the super-

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natural element in Jesus, based upon the reports of His subjective states given us by the evangelists, is but a poor substitute for the objective supernatural facts which are presented to us in the Gospels, and that when faith in these objective facts is weakened, men will be disposed to account for those subjective states which go by the name of the Messianic consciousness by regarding them as the offspring of an unbalanced mind. It is so easy apparently for some men to pay flattering compliments to Jesus after they have discredited the facts which justify them. The truth is that non-miraculous Christianity is not alluring. Men are slow to give up the traditional supernaturalism of the gospel story. We honour the faith and religious fervour which still retains a minimum of the traditional doctrine regarding the Divinity of Jesus, even though it be at the expense of a rigid logic, and though it do more credit to the religious feelings than to the intellect. But, nevertheless, we feel prompted to say, "You have discarded the great supernatural facts of the life of Jesus; you have stripped Him of the insignia of divine royalty; what boots it now that you pin upon His breast the gaudy decorations of a minimizing theology?" It seems impossible to compromise between the naturalistic and the supernaturalistic view of Jesus. If we give up the account of His divine mission as the evangelists present it, then we must conclude that no authoritative divine message has ever reached us and we are no better off than men were in the days of the Greek philosophy. We have had Platonists and Aristotelians, Stoics and Epicureans, idealists and materialists; we have had agnostics in abundance from Protagoras down to our own times. But they brought no message from the other world, and none since then has come to us. We

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are as ignorant as they were in regard to the great problem of destiny. The hypothesis of a merely human Jesus makes Christianity a moral philosophy and kills its claim to be a message from God. Think of what this means to us. How we have boasted of Christianity! How we have looked upon it as the only ark of safety! How we have urged men the world over to take refuge in it and have God shut them in! This proud ship of Christianity! we have freighted her with all our hopes and we have embarked in her the fortunes of our souls. She has plowed the ocean this well-nigh two thousand years; she has weathered the storms of persecution; she has sailed through the fogs of superstition; she has encountered the collisions of philosophy; she has been swept from stem to stern by great waves of scepticism; but in spite of it all, we have paced her decks with a sense of unwavering security; we have felt sure that no wind could harm her, no sea could swamp her, no obstacle arise to check her onward way, until, at last, in an unhappy moment she struck the iceberg of historical criticism, and down she went to a fathomless grave.

Are you ready to take that view of Christianity? Oh! you who think perhaps that a theological seminary is a place where men spin gossamer webs of metaphysical divinity, get heated in controversy over the dating of a few books, and discuss the relative merits of various theories of the atonement, I want you to understand what the real issue is; and when Mr. Lovejoy would have us break the entangling alliance of religion and history, I want to know whether you are ready to have that alliance broken. Do you realize the situation? Do you hear with calm complacency and unconcern the order that is given to leave the proud ship of Christianity, and lower the boats

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of philosophy? Are you ready to sit in your little dory of philosophy and, under an unlighted sky, look out over the waste of black water and hope that somehow, somewhere or sometime you will drift to some shore of happy destiny? Is that your position? You have cut loose from history, but you can not cut loose from reason. What are your prospects? You are sure of your own selfhood. You have satisfied yourself that mechanism can not explain the world. Some will tell you of a pluralistic universe of separate souls bound together by no common tie. Some will tell you that our separate selfhoods are only momentary manifestations of an infinite self; and some again will tell you that there is a numerical distinction between God and the finite spirits which He has created. You will argue, and you will do well to do so, that the truths of reason point unmistakably to God. You will say that these judgments of worth and value need God to give them meaning. Men will tell you that the religions of the world—Christianity among them—are simply separate modes of God's manifestation of Himself. You have ideals that you say ought to be realized and which are index fingers pointing like prophecies to a world to come. You call this man good, and this man bad; this man, you say, is brave and that man a coward. What do you mean? You look forward to the fulfillment of your ideals; but look back, look down: where did you get these ideals? They are but nature's way in the broad process of change which has adjusted you to an environment and which makes it possible for you to live. You are the victims of a wholesale deception. A gigantic imposture has been practised upon mankind in order that nature might secure to herself the perpetuating of the life of humanity. What are you going to say? Are you

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going to say that you have no interest in philosophy and that these things do not concern you? You repeat, "I don't care what philosophers may say, I believe in historical Christianity." If you do, have you no interest in other people? Do you not desire to help them, to prevent them from making shipwreck of their own hopes? Have you no interest in showing them that the philosophy which robs the world of Christ and religion of God, which puts the world of ideals under the imperious sway of meaningless fact, which makes the word "is" the be all and end all of existence and has no place for ethical norms and moral obligation, is only one way of explaining the facts of the universe; and that there is another way, a better way, a safer way, a more logical way of construing the same facts, which will rehabilitate us in our old faith in God and in Jesus Christ whom He has sent; will save us from the disappointment that speaks in the bitterness of regret and says, "We hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel"; and from the depths of the despairing pessimism which says, "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him"? Would you not like to help them? My friends, that is what this Seminary is for. Will you help us? Will you give us books, will you give us buildings, will you give us professors, will you give us men with special learning and peculiar aptitude to enlist in the greatest work the world can do? Will you do it? Will the great, rich Presbyterian Church say "No" to Princeton Seminary which is ready to do what needs to be done, and withhold from her the sinews of war? I put this upon the conscience of the great Church that I am privileged to serve. And, my colleagues, my friends, my brothers, what are we for? What can we do in the face of what some regard

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as an appalling disaster? I think we can do something. I think we can rally the crew and cheer them up; I think we can stop a panic among the passengers and let them know that the ship is safe. I think that there are some of us—and I speak the more confidently because I am not included in the number—there are some of us who have a right to speak in the expression of expert opinion and declare with the authority of ample knowledge that no harm has come to the ship, but that she will go prosperously on. I admit there are two ways of looking at theological study. There is a scientific way—and there is a large place for it—where we regard men of every shade of opinion as with us engaged in the same scientific pursuit, dispassionately seeking to get the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. There is a place for philosophic calm and the placidities of scientific inquiry. But there is another view. These men who are arrayed against us are the King's enemies, and we who hold commissions as officers in his army owe it to that commission that we draw sword in defence of the King's dominions.

“Soldiers of Christ, arise!
And gird your armor on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through His Eternal Son.”

And you, my friends, who are about to go out after the period of training in this Theological Seminary, bear with me if I say a single word to you on the nature of your calling. If you go out with a feeling that you are simply representing the moral aspect of society, that your great work is to engage in the development of social morality, that your great object is to be considered as au-

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thorities on civic righteousness; if your rallying cry be the uplift of society, which means, in its last analysis, simply more luxury for the poor and more self-denial for the rich; then let me tell you that you have misunderstood the real meaning of your work. You are to bring a message of hope from another world to dying men. Your thought must move in a transcendental sphere of unseen realities. You are called to deal with a set of emigrants who are setting sail for another shore; your work is not so much to furnish them luxuries on the voyage as to put into their hands a passport that will be useful to them when they land. Men will deride your message; will challenge your credentials; will speak of your work in the patronizing tone of worldly disdain. You will sometimes be tempted to surrender to the current of anti-Christian sentiment. But be strong. Know well the strength of the cause which you have espoused and be unwavering in your loyalty to it. And remember that no small part of your duty is to see to it that you earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints.