

The Princeton Seminary Bulletin

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The One Hundred and Eighteenth session of the Seminary began on September twenty-fourth with the matriculation of new students and the choice of rooms. The formal opening of the Seminary was held on the morning of September twenty-fifth with a service in Miller Chapel. For this service the Alumni of the Seminary and other friends gathered in large numbers with a good fellowship that reminded one of the gatherings at Commencement time. President Stevenson presided. The Rev. John Dixon, D. D., a Trustee of the Seminary, offered the prayer. The invited speaker of the day was the Rev. Floyd W. Tomkins, D. D., Rector of the Church of the Holy Trinity, Philadelphia. Dr. Tomkins is the successor of Philips Brooks in that pastorate and perhaps more than any other man of the day also is his successor in the spirit and scope of his ministry. Dr. Stevenson in introducing him, called attention to the fact that in three preceding years the opening addresses had been made by veterans in Christian service, all octogenarians, the Rev. F. B. Meyer, D. D., of London, the Rev. George Alexander, D. D., of New York City, and the Rev. Wallace Radcliffe, D. D., of Washington City, who had spoken out of the rich experiences of their long ministry. In succession to them Dr. Tomkins, who is in his eightieth year but still one of the most active ministers, brought the message of one far on in the Christian race to the young men who are just beginning it. The brief outline of the address published on another page of the Bulletin gives the line of thought but does not convey the fineness of feeling, the spiritual uplift, and the beauty and simplicity of expression which the hearers of the address enjoyed.

This service, together with the knowledge that the Seminary has opened with a large student body and with notable additions to the Faculty, helped to create an atmosphere of harmony, goodwill and confident expectation for the year and for the future of the Seminary. Now that two months of the Seminary year have passed, it is notable that this spirit of peace, harmony, good will and earnestness is dominant in the campus life.

The Seminary's Doctrinal Position and Misrepresentations of It

The reorganization of the Seminary undertaken and completed by the General Assembly was concerned only with the reorganization of the administration of the Seminary. It had nothing to do with its theological position, except to strengthen the safeguards whereby it should be held to the teaching of the Reformed Theology in accordance with the Standards of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. According to the old Plan, members of the Board of Directors were required, on their election and re-election by the General Assembly to the Board, before taking their seats, to subscribe to the following formula:

"Approving the plan of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, I solemnly declare and promise, in the presence of God, and of this Board, that I will faithfully endeavor to carry into effect all the articles and provisions of said plan, and to promote the great design of the Seminary."

To the Board of Trustees, according to the provisions of the Charter and of legacies and deeds of gift, belong the care of investments and of the property, the safeguarding of trust funds for their designated theological purpose, the approval of the salaries of professors, the administration of the library, including the appointment of the Librarian and his assistants, and the selection of books. This Board has been a self-perpetuating body, not elected by the General Assembly, and not required to sign any declaration of fidelity such as that signed by the Directors.

Under the provisions of the amended Charter and Plan, all the members, elders as well as ministers, of the one governing Board, which absorbs the rights and duties of both Directors and Trustees, are required recurrently to sign the following formula:

"Believing the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice; sincerely receiving and adopting the Confession of Faith of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; approving the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America; promising to study the peace, unity, and purity of the Church; and approving the Plan of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, I solemnly declare and promise, in the presence of God and of this Board, that I will faithfully endeavor to carry into effect all the articles and provisions of said Plan, and to promote the great design of the Seminary."

Not only have all the members of the new Board signed this declaration, but in order that there might be no question as to its position, the new Board at its first meeting made the following corporate declaration:

"In the one hundred and seventeen years of its history, Princeton Seminary has stood with firm steadfastness for the propagation at home and abroad, and for the scholarly defense of evangelical Christianity as formulated in the Standards of the Presbyterian Church. In taking up the duties assigned to it by the General Assembly, the temporary Board of Directors feels that it has a solemn mandate from the Assembly to continue unchanged the historic policy of the Seminary and to do nothing whatever to alter the distinctive traditional position which the Seminary has maintained throughout its entire history."

The amended Charter and Plan also continues to require of professors at

their inauguration the signing of the historic formula of subscription, which for more than a hundred years has safeguarded the orthodoxy of the institution, and which is as follows:

"In the presence of God, and of the Trustees of this Seminary, I do solemnly, and *ex animo*, adopt, receive, and subscribe the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, as the confession of my faith; or as a summary and just exhibition of that system of doctrine and religious belief which is contained in holy Scripture, and therein revealed by God to man for his salvation: And I do solemnly, *ex animo*, profess to receive the Form of Government of said Church, as agreeable to the inspired oracles. And I do solemnly promise and engage not to inculcate, teach, or insinuate anything which shall appear to me to contradict, or contravene, either directly or impliedly, anything taught in the said Confession of Faith or catechisms; nor to oppose any of the fundamental principles of Presbyterian Church government, while I shall continue a professor in this Seminary."

These provisions of subscription by members of the governing Board and of the Faculty, and the power of the Presbyterian Church through its courts to bring to trial the Board or Faculty as a whole, or any member thereof for violation of pledges, constitute as thorough a safeguarding of the doctrinal position of the Seminary as can be conceived.

It has been made most evident that the constant and persistent purpose and effort of those who are shaping the plans of the Seminary are to maintain the historical theological position of the institution.

Nevertheless, before the action of the Assembly last May the assertion was

made and given wide publicity that the reorganization of the Seminary would lead to the abandonment of this historical position, and since the action was taken it has even been alleged that the Seminary has been "lost" to evangelicalism and will go over to a position vaguely described as "liberal" or "modernistic." This propaganda has taken the form of an attempt to awaken suspicions as to the orthodoxy of members of the Faculty and of members of the governing Board, rather than the form of open charges of doctrinal unsoundness or the orderly method of bringing to trial those against whom suspicions were being aroused.

For example, it has been insinuated that professors of the Seminary and members of the Board have in some way departed from their former Christian faith. For such insinuations and for these attacks upon the Seminary there is not the slightest foundation. They are false statements, wrong inferences or groundless suspicions. No Professor of the Seminary has voiced the slightest doubt as to the authority of Scripture, as to the miraculous birth and acts of Christ, as to His atoning work, His resurrection, His personal return, or any other doctrine of the Presbyterian Church.

Most of the present Faculty have been serving the Seminary for years. Their loyalty to the Bible as the inspired Word of God and their zeal for the great doctrines of the Reformed faith are known to the students who have gone forth from their instruction. Some of these professors have taken a prominent part in the life of the Church. They have preached widely throughout the Church; they have

spoken at Bible Conferences over the country; they have published commentaries on the New Testament, and books and articles on various phases of truth and doctrine; they have taken their part in the service of the Church as members of its Boards and Agencies, and as officials of the Church have advocated earnestly the maintenance of sound doctrine and loyalty to the organizations and institutions of the Church. No one has ever been able to cite a single utterance or line of theirs which would justify the least suspicion or distrust of their fidelity to the truth. On the contrary, all their activities are open and positive evidence of their adherence to their ordination and professional vows and of their devotion to the living Gospel of the Divine Saviour.

One of the first acts of the new Board of control was to invite all the members of the then existing Faculty to continue in their respective professorships, so that any disappointment in the minds of Alumni that Princeton Seminary has not just the same Faculty that it had last year, cannot be laid to the charge of the present authorities of the Seminary. Further, if any alumnus will examine the list of the Faculty as published on the inside cover of this Bulletin, he will see that Systematic Theology, Biblical Theology, Church History, New Testament and Practical Theology are being taught by the same teachers who have been giving instruction for the last twenty years. As for the new teachers, they have given the new governing Board their positive assurance that their instruction will be in accordance with the conservative doctrinal position of the Seminary.

More recently those who are seeking to discredit the Seminary have been endeavoring to connect its present and future policy with some of the doctrinal implications of the so-called "Auburn Affirmation," on the ground that two members of the new Board signed this document five years ago. The insinuations are that such doctrines as the Inspiration of the Bible, the Virgin Birth, the Vicarious Atonement, and the Resurrection of our Lord are no longer to be taught in Princeton Seminary, or that men may be invited to preach in the Chapel or teach in the classrooms who do not hold these doctrines. The fact is that the Auburn Affirmation, issued in 1924 at a time of heated controversy in the Church, was signed by many, including alumni of the Seminary, who understood that this declaration was primarily a protest against the action of the General Assembly in specifying certain particular doctrines as "essential" doctrines of our Church, without the concurrent action of the Presbyteries as required by the constitution of the Church. When the new Board of the Seminary was being constituted by the General Assembly in May, 1929, the names of two signers of the Affirmation appeared on the list of nominees submitted to the Assembly. A whole day intervened between the nomination and the election of the members of the new Board, but no exception was taken to a single name, though some of the leaders in the present public attacks on the Seminary were commissioners with the privileges of the floor. Inasmuch as both of these signers of the Affirmation have publicly attested their acceptance not only of the

doctrines above mentioned but of the whole system of doctrine held by our Church, and have further signed the solemn formula required of members of the new Board, it is manifestly as unfair as it is disingenuous on the part of the defamers of the Seminary to try to make it appear that these two men have any intention or even desire to represent a doctrinal policy out of harmony with that of the thirty other members of the Board; or that, even if they would, they could seriously affect the doctrinal position of the Seminary.

In view of the facts stated above, it is evidently in order to call upon the Alumni and friends of the Seminary to come to the defense of the Seminary and its individual professors against the false statements which are being made. Let those who know the facts from their own connection with the Seminary and observation of it and from their acquaintance with its professors and trustees, render service to the truth and justice to the persons involved and to the Seminary, by aggressively refuting prevalent slanders. This is a time for the Alumni of the Seminary to make their loyalty active in support and furtherance of everything that is being proposed to make Princeton Seminary the best possible exponent of sound doctrine, of Biblical scholarship and of efficient training for Christian service and world-wide evangelism.

Additions to the Faculty

The Alumni will be interested in knowing something of the personal history and service of those added to the Faculty of the Seminary either as

permanent members or as acting teachers.

THE REV. SAMUEL M. ZWEMER, D. D., LL.D.,
F. R. G. S.

Dr. Zwemer, Professor-elect of The History of Religion and Christian Missions, is not a stranger to Princeton Seminary, as he has twice delivered its course of Missionary Lectures; has been a resident during one of his furloughs in Payne Hall, the Seminary's Missionary Apartment House; and has given instruction in Missions during semesters of the years 1918-19, 1922-23, and 1928-29. Having accepted the chair of Missions he will in January, 1930, take up his residence and begin instruction as Professor-elect of Missions and give his full time to the Seminary.

Dr. Zwemer was born at Vriesland, Michigan. He studied at Hope College, Michigan, receiving the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1887 and the Master of Arts in 1890. He had his theological education at New Brunswick Seminary, from which he was graduated in 1890. In 1904 Hope College conferred upon him the degree of D. D. and in 1919 he received the same degree from Rutgers University. Muskingum College conferred upon him the honorary degree of LL.D. in 1918. He was ordained to the ministry by the Reformed Church of America in 1890, and with his brother and another young man went at once to the Orient to found a practically new mission in the great unoccupied field of Arabia. He served as a missionary at Busrah, Bahrein and other stations. Not only was he a missionary in the usual aspects of that work, but early developed and manifested rare qualities of leadership. He interested the Church at home in Arabia as a mission field, secured support for it and called into the service of the Arabian Mission a group of strong men. He displayed masterly skill in making friendly contact with the people of Arabia and became unusually adept in the knowledge and use of the Arabic language. He has been a student of the political problems of the Orient and of Mohammedanism so that he is now recognized as a leading authority on Mohammedanism and the Moslem world.

His interest extended beyond Arabia to missions to the Moslems throughout the world. He