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HEBREWS, THE EPISTLE OF THE DIATHEKE

So far we have considered the Epistle's idea of revelation only from the practical point of view.* It has, however, a more theoretical side and this also shows the influence of the covenant-conception. More than any other New Testament document Hebrews develops what might be called a philosophy of the history of revelation. This is partly due to the fact that the writer is theologically inclined in general, and evidently attaches importance to the doctrinal presentation of the Christian faith. It would be a mistake to explain this from speculative tendencies followed for their own sake. Of a purely scholastic interest there is no trace whatever. But the writer entertains a firm belief in the effectiveness of doctrinal enlightenment as a remedial method where the soundness and balance of practical Christianity are endangered. We certainly gain the impression that from the outset he brings to the writing of the Epistle a well-defined doctrinal conception of the structure of the Christian religion. It can cause no wonder that, when a mind of this cast is led to occupy itself with the history of revelation, as is actually the case in our Epistle, a more or less philosophical or theological construction of the history of revelation results. We should, moreover, remember, that from the very earliest times the covenant-idea stood not merely in the service of revealed religion in general, but had also lent itself to the very particular use of marking the historic progress of the movement of redemption and special revelation. The successive stages of God's redemptive and revealing work in the pre-Christian era are measured by successive covenants, each introducing new forces and principles and each imparting to the ensuing

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THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE LIGHT OF PRESENT DAY DEMANDS*

Directors, Trustees, Instructors, Friends of Princeton Seminary,—The office to which you have summoned me is one of exalted privilege, but of wide-reaching responsibility. Knowing as I do the illustrious history of this noble institution; esteeming most highly the distinguished men who now serve as a Faculty; cherishing the truest regard for my honored predecessor in office and for the conspicuous service he has rendered this institution and the whole theological world; expecting, as I confidently do, that Princeton on the basis of past achievement has a still larger mission in the advancement of our Lord's kingdom, I am well aware that the Presidency of the Seminary is a high position with tremendous obligations, to meet which my dependence must be upon the sufficiency which is from God. One becomes all the more conscious of his utter insufficiency when he contemplates the appeal for greater service which is being made to all our theological colleges at this particular time. When the General Assembly founded a Seminary at Princeton it was in recognition of an irresistible demand. The supply of ministers was inadequate, and their training was of an unsatisfactory character. There was needed an institution which would attract a larger number of men to the profession of preaching and which would at the same time give them a more thorough and complete preparation for this work of Christian leadership. For theological education, such men as Archibald Alexander, Ashbel Green, Samuel Miller, Eliphalet Nott and John Romeyn recognized this desideratum,—along with the knowledge of a permanent gospel—the same yesterday, today and forever—there must be the knowledge of a time-spirit which is ever changing and projecting the new

* An address delivered in the First Presbyterian Church of Princeton, Wednesday, October the 13th, 1915, on the occasion of inauguration as President of Princeton Theological Seminary and as Professor of the History of Religion and Christian Missions.

occasions which teach new duties. The plan adopted for study and attainments did not fix rigid molds for the manufacture of an unvarying type of minister, but provided for such variations as the views and habits of teachers and the requirements of experience might suggest. Under this commission the Seminary has endeavored to serve each "present age". The modern age, which is considered as being altogether unique and which is making radical demands along every line of thought, insists that in theological education there should be a complete readjustment, if not a sweeping revolution. The Davidic champion of advance regards the traditional training as a Saul's armor, and it is proposed to scrap-heap the conventional Seminary curriculum as the synonym of futility and ineptitude and establish an up-to-date system that will be of a piece with the pedagogical experiments inflicted upon the secondary school and college and with the tentative sociological ventures of popular unrest. Much of the criticism passed upon theological seminaries, and much of the demand for change, reflect the confusions which characterize the whole field of education. The appeal for greater service, however, is of a more distinct and compelling character when it comes direct from the Church, whose servant the Seminary is. This institution bears as her official title "The Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A." While her gates are open to students of all Christian churches, and as a matter of fact her service has been of the widest interdenominational character as our Alumni Catalogue records, nevertheless by foundation anchorage, by legal ties and by covenanted obligation this Seminary is bound to heed the demands of the age as interpreted and emphasized by the Presbyterian Church. What are these demands? Four of them may well challenge our attention.

(1) The first and most fundamental demand, one that has always been advanced but is now appealing for clearer recognition, is for trained ministers of apostolic character. The call now, as at the beginning of the Seminary's life a hundred years ago, is for "a succession of men at once

qualified for and thoroughly devoted to the work of the gospel ministry, who with various endowments suiting them to different stations in the Church of Christ, may all possess a portion of the spirit of the primitive propagators of the gospel, prepared to make every sacrifice, to endure every hardship and to render every service which the promotion of pure and undefiled religion may require." A short time ago the Board of Missionary Preparation interrogated leaders of the Church out on the field as to courses of study most essential in training for mission service. The reply came back, a course in Spartanics, one in Vitalics, and another in Humanics. This meant that the greatest demand was for men of heroic mold, abounding in spiritual life and well acquainted with the needs and aspirations of their fellow-men. Such traits, however desirable, are not hot-house growths. No theological nursery in a three year course has as yet been able to produce them. They must be traced back to the curriculum of the home, even to the discipline and stamina of preceding generations. However, it is expected, and the expectation is most reasonable, that our seminaries should be of such a character that they will appeal to the strong young men of the Church, enlist them for the work of the ministry and give them that spiritual culture which the Church—which the great Head of the Church—deems essential. This Seminary, like others, was founded to increase the number of amply qualified ministers. This does not mean that with superb equipment the best theological education would be given the men who might be inclined to matriculate, but that the character of the institution would be such as to challenge in the name of Christ the choicest spirits from the ranks of the Church, and thereby secure a competent ministry. To this end the Seminary must ever be mindful of her high calling as "a nursery of vital piety", to use almost forgotten language, as well as of sound theological learning. This demand may seem very commonplace, and its emphasis entirely superfluous, but it was not so regarded by the founders of this

institution who were careful to declare it as an object of primary importance since "without the spirit of enlightened devotion and fervent piety all other acquisitions would be of comparatively little worth." They also went so far as to delineate the path of duty for professors and students in fostering true experimental religion and unreserved devotedness to God. Because this demand is so primary and self-evident, is doubtless the reason why it has never been fully met by any seminary. I say this not in any uncharitable or censorious spirit, but only to voice the mind of the Church. A special committee appointed by our General Assembly to take into account "a wide-spread dissatisfaction with the methods and results of theological education" reported that one of the weak points in seminary training, while making due allowance for varying conditions and unwarranted criticism, is "Lack of spiritual culture". Not that this is wholly neglected, but it does not hold the place that its importance demands. One chief cause of this weakness is the assumption that the atmosphere of a school of sacred learning is necessarily conducive to spiritual health, and that the handling of the gospel will of itself feed and strengthen the soul. Such assumption and neglect of the truth's appropriation sends out ministers who have been characterized as being like the camel which carries wholesome provision while feeding on thistles, men able to prepare food for others while dying of starvation; handing out the most nutritious viands with fingers gaunt with famine; inviting men to a feast in tones hollow of death; writing essays on faith in the dungeon of Giant Despair. Another cause of this lack of spiritual culture is over-occupation with class-room work and premature ministerial functions. Each department of instruction, groaning under the burden of its indispensability, clamors for the maximum of available time, while the American utilitarian spirit is holding out all sorts of allurèments for the pursuit of practical efficiency. Consequently there is little time, or leisure, or interest left for the lost art of reflection, for

mental readjustment, for spiritual reënforcement, for that upbuilding of the soul, which the intending minister is soon to advocate before a people distracted by the confusion and complexity of modern life. Jesus trained His apostles, not in Jerusalem amid the passing throngs where life was most congested and intense, but out in the quiet of the country, by the seashore, on the hillside where there were constant reminders of heaven, of the relation of things seen to the unseen and eternal, and where there was time and opportunity for the appropriation and application of truth in all its bearings and the life of the soul could receive its proper nourishment and equipment for spiritual leadership. Our city friends would doubtless concede to Princeton the advantage of quiet location, the atmosphere of high ideals and a freedom from the bustle and distraction which however conducive to action are not contributory to that concentration of thought and purpose, that studious and prayerful discipline of soul, to that spiritual mastery, exemplified in Christ and His apostles, and which is essential to ministerial preparedness. However, the problem is not so much one of environment as of recognized responsibility. The Assembly report to which I have alluded summons our theological seminaries to foster the spiritual life of the students, that they may become men of vision, of prayer, of reality, men of God, and it places responsibility upon professors, who are not called to be merely teachers to train the mind and to communicate the largest supply of highly specialized knowledge, but who are commissioned as pastors, that with an intimate personal acquaintance with the students, they may deal with the souls committed to their charge as those who must give account to the great Shepherd of the sheep.

(2) The Church is also demanding of our seminaries that they send out men of large positive faith and all aflame with a vital message. Influences are at work in the world which strike at the foundations of Christian belief, and which some suppose have left traditional theology with

no certain or secure basis. Criticism it is claimed, if it has not disproved divine revelation altogether, has so modified our conception of it that the Bible like other sacred books is but the record of the spiritual progress made by a race with a genius for religion, science has so transformed our views of nature, we are told, that the supernatural and miraculous, if not entirely outlawed, must be redefined in terms of evolution, while philosophy with its Hegelian interpretation of the world casts serious doubt upon the reality of sin and the personal existence of God. Unquestionably there are changed currents of thought with which the ministry of our day in all honesty and earnestness must reckon. What is the trend of these currents? Is it towards the rocks of shipwrecked faith, or is it an incoming tide of truth that will lift a struggling soul above threatening shoals and sunken perils and land it triumphantly in a sure haven of certitude? There are those who would surrender entirely to the modern mental environment, accommodating Christian doctrine to the present style of thinking. The essence of Christianity is to be extracted from its ancient formulas and placed in a new solution of current concepts. The Apostle John is accused of Philonic metaphysic and Paul of Rabbinical exegesis, all of which must be eliminated in order to precipitate a sediment of truth that will dissolve into Hegel's idealism or Eucken's activism and into a desupernaturalized interpretation of the Scriptures. Thus the accommodation which was the vice of past theology is made a present intellectual virtue. However, the traditional theology has had this to its credit, a clear positive and soul satisfying faith and a definite, consistent and compelling message. Can the compromise with present-day thought claim as much? Whether it be in the definitions of creeds, in the phraseology of our universities, or in the language of the street, the gospel to be preached must be stated in terms of faith and conviction and spiritual reality. This whole demand for a restatement of the gospel has at least this

value—that it requires the minister to make the unchanging message apprehensible to the modern mind. The pulpit dialect and emphasis of fifty or a hundred years ago would not command an intelligent or popular hearing to-day. A growing preacher cannot be tied down to the verbal repetition of old sermons. Any mature minister who has the fortitude to read through the pulpit discourses to which the people of his first charge were subjected, will have a new revelation of the patience of the saints and of the charity which believeth all things and endureth all things. A ministry for our time signifies a training which will secure the clear and complete apprehension of the saving truths of redemption as contained in the Holy Scriptures, the appropriation of their soul-satisfying power, and the ability to press their appeal upon the minds and hearts of present day people in the midst of the intellectual currents and emotional tides which are sweeping them along. This as we well know, cannot be accomplished by segregating students, by keeping them in the atmosphere of credulity, or by encouraging the spirit of suspicion and fear. There is required the immunity of the trained physician who knows the disease and the remedy, and is confident of a cure. Such confidence is not obtained by ignoring or by discounting all the disintegrating tendencies of modern thought, but by facing them with unflinching honesty and courage and with indefatigable labor of mind and of heart under the guidance of teachers who have fought their way through on their knees to the position of an attested faith and an irresistible testimony. It has been the glory of this institution that she has been thorough and fearless in her scholarship, and has sought to place and to hold men on the one and only foundation—the living Christ—God manifest in the flesh, the power of God unto salvation from sin and endless death by His atoning, expiatory sacrifice, through faith, and has furthermore, endeavored to send out ambassadors who know Christ as their divine Saviour, whose glory is in His cross, and who like the primitive

propagators of the faith are ready to hazard their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(3) The demand for such a ministry accords with a kindred demand, i.e., for a theological education equal to the social as well as the individual application of the gospel. This Seminary was called into existence soon after the great awakening of 1800, and her founders for the most part had come under the sweep of that inrushing tide of spiritual life. It was natural, therefore, that they should seek to train a body of men who would be not only lovers and defenders of the truth as it is in Jesus, but "friends of revivals of religion", to use their own language. It is not surprising that from the beginning of her history to the present time, this school of theological learning has been in warm sympathy with those special evangelistic efforts, of which it can be said, "mightily grew the word and prevailed". There have graduated from our halls notable evangelists of the Church at home and abroad, and we recall with special satisfaction that in the revival of 1857 a prominent factor and most gifted advocate was Dr. James W. Alexander. This revival spirit for which the institution has always stood enables us to hear with some degree of distinctness the present day appeal of the Church for an evangelistic ministry, for that preaching of the word which our standards recognize as the effectual means under the power of the Spirit of convincing and converting sinners. When theological education loses its soul-converting power, when it has no message of regeneration and no expectation of definite, immediate supernatural results, it has forfeited all right of maintenance by the Church entrusted with the gospel of the new birth. But the seminary training, which must recognize the primary obligation to give the gospel to every creature, must also contemplate the teaching of all things which Jesus commanded. Individual evangelization, sooner or later, compels social amelioration. In the foreign field a new disciple cannot be wholly Christian while subject to a heathen environment. When a

man turns from the darkness of savage barbarism to the light of the cross, the missionary who would train him must take into account a wretched, corrupt, polygamous home, social customs that are vile, together with many superstitions and cruel tribal practices; or in a country like India, he has to take into consideration the influences of the harem, and of caste and other hoary and degrading institutions. If he has any of the Good Shepherd's compassion he will seek to safeguard Christ's little ones, and to do so he will be compelled to fight the wolves of an unchristian and rapacious social order. Mission Boards recognize the necessity of sending out medical, educational, industrial and other agents whose work is largely of a social character. When we recognize this need abroad, we should not hesitate to give it generous consideration at home, and we will not if we are true descendants of John Calvin. We are prone to forget the reforms which that intrepid champion of the gospel brought about in Geneva in the interests of evangelical Christianity. The minutest detail of city government engaged his attention. He insisted on the removal of all filth from the houses and from the narrow and crooked streets; the markets were superintended and the sale of unhealthy food prevented; low taverns and drinking shops were abolished; mendicancy on the streets was prohibited; a hospital and home for the poor was provided, and efforts were made to give useful employment to every man who could work. His motive in writing the *Institutes* was to show that the teachings of the Reformation were not subversive of sound morality and good government. The social significance of the teachings of Jesus, found in his conception of the kingdom of God, naturally lends itself to the Calvinistic conception of the supremacy of God's will in all departments and relations of life. It is a great mistake to suppose that an institution which still holds to the Reformed Theology has no interest in social problems and no gospel for their solution. When the Presbyterian Church wished to prepare a deliverance which should con-

cern itself with the application of the gospel to the acquisition and use of wealth, to the relations between employer and employed and between capital and labor, and to the existence of unnecessary poverty in a land where there is more than enough for all, it designated one who had his training in this Seminary to take the responsibility for the issue of such a deliverance. So admirably was the service performed that the declaration adopted has commanded the assent of all who have the best interests of society at heart. I would not for one instant contend that this institution, or in fact any other, is adequately responding to the demand of our day for a more complete and conscientious application of the principles of Jesus. The prevalence of gigantic social evils, lust, intemperance, greed, national vanity and race prejudice, the ghastly tragedy of "civilized warfare", the enthronement of the war spirit, is a lurid commentary on twentieth century progress, and an inexorable demand upon the Church to be the "moral guide of society" and upon the ministry to proclaim the holiness of God, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the sacrificial life imposed upon those who claim to appropriate the redemptive issues of Christ's cross. To glory in the cross as a means of salvation becomes a mockery when there is no glory in its power to crucify a man unto the world, and enlist him in self-sacrificing service for all whom Christ's compassion embraces. To overcome the evils of selfish competition with the sacrificial ministry of Christ's gospel, to establish a city of God in which there will be no slums is the task of the Church of the living God, which demands an especially qualified ministry, which it is the business of theological education to provide.

(4) One more demand which the Church is making upon our theological seminaries is for a ministry that is not only equal to the local needs of city, town or country, but that has a national and international outlook and a humanity embracing passion. This demand is accentuated by the judgments of the Lord which are in the earth, by those

crises which are determining what the coming civilization is to be if we are to have any at all. Nations have been brought so closely together that their moral and religious differences, as well as their social, economic and political divergencies are clearly recognized, and the question has become acute, what type of nationality and of character is to dominate mankind? The total inadequacy of a non-Christian culture is being demonstrated in oriental lands. The failure of a semi-Christian culture is forced upon the world's attention by the gruesome slaughter of men who have a common religious heritage and should be living together as brothers. What power can enable nations to dwell side by side and intermingle as one racial family, the strong bearing the infirmities of the weak and all working together in entire good will for the attainment of a common destiny? The religion of Jesus is the only religion which contemplates this international problem, and claims to furnish the ideal and the power for its realization. Now, if ever, it should be insisted that Christianity shall be put to a fair and complete test by the application of its principles to all departments and relations of life—home, foreign, social, industrial, commercial, national and racial—a test which has never yet been made, but which is laid down as being essential by Him who will have no divided allegiance, but must be crowned Lord of all.

This demand is further emphasized by the opportunities for mission service which are being pressed upon the attention of the Church. The openings for Christian investment at home and abroad have never been so large, so inviting and so promising, and to enter in as we should will tax the resources of the Church to the utmost limit. Along with this consideration we need to take into account the spiritual awakening with which many of our churches are being blest. It is a harvest time in the home field, as the records of the past few months will show, and such ingatherings broaden the vision of Christendom, enlarge the heart, and nerve the arm for world-wide reaping. To meet this situ-

ation, which would have made the apostles quiver with eagerness and expectation, there is needed what brought this institution into existence a hundred years ago,—a more numerous and a better qualified ministry, a new apostolic company of men, like the children of Issachar, who have understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do. In the training of such men this Seminary should take a peculiar interest and part. Let us never forget the missionary spirit which founded and built up this institution, specifying as a dominant purpose that it should be “a nursery for missionaries to the heathen and to such as are destitute of the stated preaching of the gospel, in which youth may receive that appropriate training which may lay a foundation for their ultimately becoming eminently qualified for missionary work.” The first student in the Seminary served the Church as a home missionary leading that noble succession,—the largest number of missionaries sent out by any institution in our land. Of every thirteen graduates, one has been a missionary. Since 1875 one out of every nine has gone into foreign mission service, and in recent classes the proportion has been as high as one out of every four. Of the twenty-four missions of the Presbyterian Church, two-thirds of them were founded by Princeton Seminary men. It was a son of Princeton who rallied the forces which brought into being the organized missionary life of our Church, Dr. E. P. Swift. He laid down the principle that Church courts are not merely for routine business and for litigation, but for the corporate prosecution of Christ’s commission to disciple the nations. It was because of the stirring appeal of another Princeton son, Dr. James W. Alexander, that the General Assembly declared in 1847, “The Presbyterian Church is a missionary society, the object of which is to aid in the conversion of the world, and every member of the Church is a member for life of said society and bound to do all in his power for the accomplishment of this object.” This spirit of missions has been quickened by the blood of our martyrs, to the

glorious company of whom there has recently been added another name, a graduate student, massacred in Armenia. The spirit of internationalism is being fostered today by the presence in our halls, among the students from thirty-one states and territories, of fifteen students from foreign lands. I mention this only to say that the missionary spirit of the Church and the demands growing out of it, Princeton has to a large extent encouraged and stimulated, and loyalty to our own sons and heirs compels us, the stewards of a large legacy of missionary interest, achievement and expectation, not only to conserve our apostolic estate, but to enlarge and enrich it, and do this by making ample provision for the thorough and complete training, according to the highest standards, of those who are to engage in missionary service.

The guiding hand of God, who has so signally blessed and used this school of Theology in the years that are gone, would seem to have been conducting her into a realm of power and influence for such a time as this. Hers is a unique position of confidence because of a century's faithful service, sending out more than six thousand men to minister in Christ's name—a position of confidence because of a representative directorate and trusteeship, which knows and possesses the mind and spirit of the Church; because of a tried and trusted Faculty,—a united body—not easy to secure in these days of acute theological differences, and yet essential to a harmonious and prosperous stewardship; because of a multitude of alumni, scattered all over the world, and upon whose coöperation we may depend. These should be gathered into associations at strategic centers in order that the Seminary may be of service to her sons, and in order that they in turn may help to keep their Alma Mater young and vigorous, in touch with living issues. It is commonly supposed that our income is adequate for the financial burdens which the Church would place upon us. But although we may have enough for immediate sustenance, we shall require a great deal more for the proper

care of the increased number of students required for the waiting harvest fields of the earth, and for the enlargement of departments which the more highly specialized work of the Church has made a necessity. Since we desire only the fruit that increaseth to the Church's account, we are sure that broadminded and large-hearted and missionary-consecrated Presbyterians will have fellowship with us in the matter of giving and receiving, and through some Epaphroditus there will be provided that aid which has the "odor of a sweet smell" to any institution that is much alive and growing.

"I want to live" was the burden of Phillips Brooks' thought shortly before he died, giving as his reason that the next twenty years would offer greater opportunities for the Christian minister than any other like period of history. For any time, but more particularly for the time just before us, there can be no higher, nobler calling than that of leading the forces which are to establish a kingdom of truth and goodwill,—the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ,—which is to rule over all and endure forever. To train these leaders is a task whose grandeur and range engaged the three years' service of the greatest of all teachers, and today challenges the largest investment of consecrated life for its adequate prosecution. And who is sufficient for these things? Who can lead the leaders of the coming day, so that through them the knowledge of God shall cover the earth and the kingdom of His truth and love be established. Thanks be unto God, who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ and maketh manifest through us the savor of His knowledge in every place; and to Him whose is the kingdom and the power, shall we give glory forever and ever. Amen.

Princeton.

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