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July, 1912

Inauguration of President

May 7th, 1912



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July, 1912

Inauguration of Rev. Thornton Whaling, D. D., LL. D.,
as President of the Columbia Theological
Seminary, on May 7th, 1912,

INCLUDING

Charge Delivered by the Rev. W. J. McKay, D. D., President of
Board of Directors of the Seminary,

AND

Inaugural Address of the President-elect



Faculty of the Seminary

THORNTON WHALING, D. D., LL. D.,
President and Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology.

W. M. MCPHEETERS, D. D., LL. D.,
Professor of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis.

H. A. WHITE, PH. D., D. D., LL. D.,
Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis.

R. C. REED, D. D., LL. D.,
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*Professor of English Bible, Pastoral Theology and Sacred
Rhetoric and Director of Religious Work.*

J. O. REAVIS, D. D.,
*Instructor in Home and Foreign Missions and Comparative
Religion.*

PATTERSON WARDLAW, LL. D.,
Instructor in Pedagogy and Sunday School Work.

INAUGURATION OF
PRESIDENT

CHARGE

Delivered to Rev. Thornton Whaling Upon His Inauguration as
President of Columbia Theological Seminary

By
REV. W. J. McKAY, D. D.

My Honored Brother:

Familiar as you already are with the history and traditions, the aims and purposes, the needs and aspirations of this venerable school of the Prophets, which has called you to its head, it would seem a work of supererogation that I be required to remind you of the duties, opportunities and responsibilities incident to the exalted office with which we now invest you.

As the first president of the institution, it will devolve upon you in some respects to blaze your own trail. With entire faith in your wisdom, tact, prudence and energy we confidently expect that in you will be found a worthy and adequate representative, advocate and executive of the institution, which we believe to be so vital to the enlargement and prosperity of this part of our Lord's kingdom on the earth. We also feel complete assurance that in the classroom that type of theological instruction which has been in some respects peculiar to this school of sacred learning, will continue to find in you an able and faithful expounder and defender.

And so, in addition to the exacting duties that will devolve upon you as president, we now intrust to your hands the duties incident to the Chair of Didactic and Polemic Theology—that supremely important department of sacred instruction, which in this institution has been hallowed by the distinguished services of such able and consecrated men as Goulding, Leland, Thornwell, Plumer, Girardeau and Hall. And in so doing we are confident that in your hands this vital development of Seminary training will suffer no detriment.

It is said that when Angelo would paint a great picture he fashioned his own brushes. May God so use you here as to fashion such human instruments as shall be fit to paint the radiant likeness of our Divine Redeemer upon human hearts.

The Theological Seminary Today

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

Delivered in Smith Chapel, Columbia Seminary, Tuesday
Evening at 8 O'clock, May 7th, 1912

By

REV. THORNTON WHALING, D. D., LL. D.

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Board of Directors:

I thank you for the distinguished opportunity of useful service to which you have summoned me in calling me to the professorship of theology and the presidency of the Columbia Theological Seminary. Conscious of my own weakness, I feel comforted by your confidence and by the conviction that the great Head of the Church has appointed for me the delightful tasks, which I am now to receive as official duties from your hands as representing Him.

I rejoice in this opportunity of testifying that I believe in the Columbia Theology. A singularly strong series of gifted theologians have filled the chair of theology in your institution from Leland to Hall, but in particular, two of them, Drs. Thornwell and Girardeau, working as if one single genius and impulse had inspired them, wrought out the most biblical, the most rational, the most truly advanced and liberal type of Calvinistic theology which has appeared in the history of the Christian Church; and, taught by one of these masters, it is my ambition to travel in their footsteps, developing a theological system which will rest upon the foundations they have laid, and harmonize with the monumental structure which these master builders have erected.

As an alumnus of your Seminary I share in the doctrinal and historical heritage with which Columbia makes all of her sons rich. I can never forget the fifty years of heroic service which that prince in our Southern Presbyterian Zion, Dr. George Howe, gave to this institution, nor the encyclopedic scholarship and the adamant patience and the well nigh infinite skill

which that matchless teacher, Dr. James Woodrow, devoted for over a quarter of a century to the interests of generations of admiring students; but the time would fail me to tell of Adger and Wilson and Plumer and Palmer and others, both living and dead, who are a part of the imperishable splendor which shines around this venerable school of the prophets.

I need hardly recite as a part of my creed at this hour my faith in the future efficiency and enlargement of this sacred school. Four great Synods in one of the most prosperous and enlightened sections of our country support her, and the challenge of loyalty, duty and self-interest which is to be loudly rung out through the confines of each of these Synods must rally them all in increasing degree around this necessary center of vitality and aggressiveness,—this only effective key to the ecclesiastical and spiritual life of Presbyterianism in the four great States of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Florida, viz., the Columbia Theological Seminary.

It is to be your study, gentlemen, and mine, to make this Seminary minister more effectively to the life of the Church in our day and in our own favored region. No institution can preserve a rigid and iron inflexibility from generation to generation and be really alive; there must be the delicate and successful adjustments which proclaim a living organism relating itself to the changing conditions which confront all life everywhere. In considering the work of the Seminary today, there are three fundamental questions which may be helpful in regulating our thinking and which revolve the whole theological encyclopedia before our vision.

First, from the standpoint of the truth; what are the modes in which the Seminary is to give to its students the truth which they in turn are to preach and to teach? The answer, of course, points us to the Book which contains the record of the revelation which God has given to men, and which must of necessity occupy always a unique and supreme place in the curriculum of the Theological Seminary. The usual fundamental disciplines can never be displaced, but must ever remain the chief features of the prospective minister's preparation for his work. For example, the Exegesis of the Old and New Testaments in the original language can never go out of

date, because nothing else can give the well equipped preacher the same conscious certitude in his pulpit exposition or impart to him the same authoritative influence in convincing and instructing his hearers. The Greek and Hebrew have come to the Seminary to stay, and adjustments which wipe them out represent not progressive evolution, but degeneration and decay. Again, the history of the Church, especially of the development of doctrine within the church, is equally indispensable, because we have found out in our day that no one understands anything who does not know that thing genetically. A cardinal truth like that of the atonement, for illustration, is best grasped in all its full significance, as the student sees in turn the efforts of the Patristic, Mediaeval, the Reformation and the Modern Mind to scientifically state in well defined terms the essence of this divine idea, with its necessary implications for ethics and philosophy and certainly Historical Theology has an enduring field pre-empted as its inalienable possession. Still again, Systematic Theology will always remain the crown and completion of any rational course of theological study, for it is the aim of this discipline to present the substance—the very essence of revealed truth—in the light of the best philosophy and science of its own day. The system does not change, but the angle from which it is viewed may alter and the emphasis upon its parts may be modified to meet the changing and shifting heresies of every new human day. The systematic theologian has not done his duty, if he relates his science to Neo-Platonism, or Mediaeval Scholasticism or even the Spencerian Agnosticism which was in vogue twenty-five years ago, but his science must have its fortifications today built facing or not just as the facts require the Naturalism, Idealism, Pragmatism, and New Realism of the year 1912. Now, these fundamental disciplines of Exegetical, Historical and Systematic Theology must stand as the classic and essential elements in a well ordered course of theological study.

But are there any others which may be added, and which the dawn of tomorrow will demand shall be added? I venture to think there are. I mention three: (1) Christian Ethics is yet to come into its own. No theological seminary, so far as I can learn, either at home or abroad, gives the subject its due place in the curriculum. That Ethics is a science and that Christian

Ethics may be a science, goes without saying. That the preacher's staple subjects are largely ethical, in the sense of biblically and Christianly ethical, will be admitted without argument. That the preacher ought to have the ethical ideas and ideals which he desires from the Scripture built into a system, in order that he may handle them like a master, is just as necessary as that he should have the doctrinal ideas derived from the Scriptures built into a system. The source of much of the haziness and uneasiness regarding the intrusion of what is called Sociology or Christian Sociology into some of the seminaries is due to the fact that any valid biblical Sociology would be only a section of biblical or Christian Ethics, and could only be handled scientifically and rationally, as related to the whole sum of human duty, as stated in the Scripture. To try to teach Sociology as an independent, self-containing unity, apart from ethics, would be like trying to teach the verb in Greek or Hebrew apart from the other parts of speech—apart from the language itself.

(2) Experiential or Experimental Theology is yet waiting for Orthodox recognition. I recall a little history here, which will show that Columbia Seminary is in the lead in this field. A third of a century ago Dr. B. M. Palmer was called to a professorship in this Seminary, largely that he might use his splendid gifts in developing this great unexploited field. He saw the opportunity. He accepted the appointment. Unfortunately the Presbytery of New Orleans was shortsighted enough to veto his plans. And orthodoxy yet waits for some master to do the work which would have been a fitting crown to our great leader's career. We have many so-called interpretations of the Christian Consciousness from the standpoint of rationalism or heterodoxy, but none by a competent hand from the standpoint of belief in the full inspiration of the Scriptures, combined with adequate philosophical and theological attainments, and united with a sincere and glowing religious faith. Dr. Palmer's unfulfilled ambition still remains a beacon beckoning some worthy successor who one day shall carry to completion what remains as yet a splendid ideal—a real scientific construction of the Christian Consciousness.

(3) The English Bible has had a hard fight to win its way to its rightful place, and even yet has in some quarters a grudging

and stinted recognition. But surely it is evident that the English Bible is the Bible of the people, and is the Bible which the preacher will use most largely. A mastery of the factual contents of the English Bible, of the Biblical History, Biblical Ethics and Biblical Theology can be had from the study of the English Bible alone, and every theological student is entitled to have his theological seminary compel him to the mastery of the contents of the English Scriptures. If the preacher is weak at this point, he will be like Daniel's famous image, his head may be gold, his breast silver, his thighs brass, his legs iron, but his feet will be of clay, or of iron mixed with clay, and will break in pieces and there will be little spiritual movement, certainly no gallant speed in pulpit and pastoral work. How can a man preach to the people unless he know the people's Bible?

But there is a second fundamental question. From the standpoint of the people: How is the Seminary to prepare its students to know the condition of the mind and character of those to whom the truth is to be directed? Some necessary theological studies emerge at this point.

(1) The psychology and the philosophy of religion are of the highest value in equipping the preacher for the skillful presentation of the truth to the human nature he must understand if he would not blunder. There is a biblical psychology and a biblical philosophy which can be educed from the Scripture and taught the student just as truly as the biblical ethics or the biblical theology. Every ethical and every theological system has psychological and philosophical foundations, and if these foundations be left to haphazard, the ethical and theological superstructure is built as in our Lord's parable, upon the sand, and the record must be, "The rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon the house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." The systematic theologian may erect a vast architectonic system, and the Christian moralist may construct his biblical ethics by its side, but they will both dissolve and, like the "baseless fabric of a vision, leave not a wrack behind," unless they are builded upon enduring philosophical foundations. The situation is not peculiar today, but has obtained in all days; that there is no more fundamental work possible in the theological seminary than to lay bare the founda-

tions which have been laid in the biblical psychology and philosophy in order to erect theology solidly upon these.

(2) Apologetics cannot be ignored, whose mission it is to furnish the rational refutation of the objections made now against our construction of Christianity. Historical Apologetics, while valuable, is not sufficient, the objections made in the name of twentieth century science and philosophy must be answered. It is the duty of the Apologete to furnish a map of the intellectual, moral and spiritual condition of the world and to show our Christianity as it is related to the present intellectual, moral and spiritual condition of our own age. The Seminary graduate ought to know the orientations of the period in which he is really to live. I met recently a very bright theological Seminary graduate who said, "I have been trying to find out where I am at." No particular section of theological study has been more dominated by an antiquated scholasticism which presented answers to past attacks and ignored the battle which is raging today than has Apologetics. To answer the Humian attack on miracles or to expose the subtle materialism of John Stuart Mill is good, but to uncover the subtler naturalism of that most seductive and attractive of our modern popular psychologists, James, or the still more subtle idealism of Royce is better still, in equipping the student to live in the intellectual life of his own times; and he cannot really live in any other time. Nor need Apologetics be altogether polemical, for an Irenic Apologetics may show how much current philosophy and science may be appropriated by theology, or regarded as matter of indifference so far as the queen of all the sciences is concerned.

Neither of these great fields has yet had adequate cultivation and development, or adequate recognition in the Seminary curriculum, viz.: First Biblical Psychology, and the Biblical Philosophy of religion; and, second, Apologetics, Historical, Polemical and Irenic. Either of these departments is of the first rank from either the utilitarian or disciplinary point of view, and they cannot much longer be ignored by any theological seminary, which is not the fossil product of a past age, but which lives to "serve its own generation by the will of God."

The third fundamental question is to be asked from the standpoint of method: How shall the Seminary train the minister

to present the truth to the mind and consciousness of his own time? The whole field of Practical Theology here rises into view, but I can only sketch in vague outline its different sections.

(1) Homiletics, or the Science and Art of Preaching. There is no need to emphasize this discipline, for the Church long suffered from the mistake that the sole business of the minister was to preach, and has just discovered that he has other duties which are just as important.

(2) Pedagogy, for the minister following the example of the only perfect and ideal model of his profession is both to teach and to preach. The one is just as important as the other. Homiletics may tell him how to preach, but will not tell him how to teach. Pedagogy is the only discipline which instructs one to teach, and it ought to have equal dignity and scope in the Seminary curriculum with Homiletics. The minister who cannot teach his teachers, and who cannot also teach his teachers how to teach, is going to be without a job in a shorter time than some whose eyes are looking backward can be made to believe. The teachers' meeting where the pastor as teacher teaches his teachers will soon be, and ought to be, as essential a part of the life of the Church as the Sunday morning service, where the pastor as preacher preaches to his people; and the Seminary which does not prepare its graduates to do both is a hopeless anachronism.

(3) Missions are to the front on all accounts, and the Theological Seminary ought to occupy the position of missionary leadership by teaching both the science and the art of Missions. Whether to qualify future missionaries for their service on the foreign field, or future pastors for their service on the home field, the history, principles and methods of missions ought to be taught in logical and systematized form by a competent instructor to every theological student. There is a magnificent opportunity here for the right man to blaze the way for the whole Christian world in making clear the place of missions on the Seminary curriculum. And I believe that the man and the opportunity have met in the instructor who in behalf of a waiting world now faces this problem in Columbia Seminary—a missionary expert, a missionary pastor and now missions professor in our Seminary.

(4) Personal Work and Evangelism taught thoroughly and practically by the same teacher, who also assumes the function of Director of Religious Work. These subjects can be reduced to systematic form and taught as a science, and they can also be practised as an art under the direction of a master and specialist. The principle of the Clinic and Dissecting Room can thus be applied in theology, and practice may re-enforce theory and the art based on the science be incarnated in deed while the doctrine thus becomes truly pragmatic and influential. Now all these departments of Practical Theology are capable of being made just as scientifically accurate and scholastically exacting as any of the other theological departments, and, therefore, their disciplinary value may be as great, while their utilitarian and practical use puts them in the very front—in fact, entitles them to contend for the primacy in the theological curriculum. The other great department of Exegetical, Historical and Systematic Theology are means to the end which is found in Practical Theology, which in its field uses the materials gathered by Exegetical, Historical and Systematic Theology. From this point of view, therefore, Practical Theology is the crown and consummation of the whole territory of the Theological Encyclopedia.

This rapid survey of Theological Encyclopedia which I have asked you to take with me shows that there are four great words which must soon be taken account of. (1) Expansion of the traditional curriculum cannot long be delayed. Christian Ethics, Experimental Theology, Apologetics, Philosophy of Religion, Pedagogy, Missions, Personal Work are not consenting today to the small recognition accorded them. If the older disciplines become jealous and refuse to admit the newer, the Theological Seminaries will languish and finally die. (2) Extension of the Time of Study is a practical issue. Both Law and Medicine have lengthened the period of study required for their professional degrees, and three years is too short a time for theology to require for its degree in divinity. The Southern Baptist Seminary has blazed the way by having three degrees, the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctor's Degree demanding a longer time and more scholarship than usually is the case. (3) The principle of election is already knocking at the door. Some men who do not choose Hebrew or Greek may be, yea, are called to the ministry

even in the Presbyterian Church, and ought to have the option of studies which are of equal disciplinary and utilitarian value. In this day when the B. S. and B. A. degrees are given upon so many scientific courses, the graduate upon such courses who chooses the ministry ought to find a seminary adjusted to his needs, with a curriculum just as scholarly and exacting for him as the old curriculum manufactured for the traditional B. A. degree on the old classical foundations. I visited recently a great university with six hundred students and found that there had not been in that institution a student of Senior Greek for four years. This is an example of a condition of things of which no one ought to approve, but as bluff Grover Cleveland is reported often as saying, "Only a fool butts his head against facts." (4) Increasing specialization is in evidence everywhere, and the breadth of the Christian Ministry calls for its application. A curriculum which prepares preachers alone is onesided. The teacher is scriptural and historical and there well might be groups of courses designed to prepare the teacher, as well as others fitted for the preparation of the Missionary. It may well be that the Theological Seminary is yet to undertake the work of organizing courses which will prepare all those who are to hold office in the Church, or even further than this to prepare those who seek to render the highest forms of effective service in the kingdom of which they are capable. Ezra Cornell said, "I wish to found a university where anybody can study any subject," and the Theological Seminary may eventually become a Theological University where any qualified person may study any theological subject they may elect.

Brethren of the Board of Directors, I have frankly given you the ideals by which, as president, I shall be dominated; and I confidently hope that the Church of fifty or a hundred years to come will not find the program of your first president a petty and inadequate one. We are serving a great and rapidly growing constituency, and nothing will rally them to their utmost enthusiasm for us except a plan which they believe is really worth while. We are not likely to err by projecting our institution upon too high a plane, with too lofty standards, for we have all the years in which to grow "into the measure of the stature of the fitness of these ideals. We shall not reach them in one swift

leap, nor in a brief term of years, but by a steady and persistent advance which knows no pause and no retreat. Our most winning appeal shall be that we have here a Theological Seminary which conserves all the rich fruits of the past, but is living today to serve the strenuous and insistent present, while its outlook is toward the ever widening future, where the golden consummation always lies. May He whose wisdom never fails guide us by His unerring counsel that through us His Spirit may give the largest measures of usefulness to our Beloved Seminary.

Amen and amen.