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## Inaugural Address

Professor Hunter B. Blakely, Th. D.

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#### NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

Inaugural Address of Professor Hunter B. Blakely, Th.D., Department of New Testament Literature and Exegesis.

Today is never yesterday. We draw from the past a rich heritage, but we wish to stand upon our own feet. We are heirs of the ages, but we would not stagnate in our own inheritance. Each age must think for itself. Each generation of ministers, especially if they are worthy of the high traditions of Presbyterianism, must face for themselves the problems of Christianity and come to their pulpits no mumblers of dead men's words but expositors of living truths made vital by fresh discovery and new experience. church is not content to listen to representations of Hodge, Luther, or Calvin, but wishes to know what the Bible speaks to you as a living man. Luther and Calvin spoke to their age and with effect. for they were mighty students of the Word of God; but we must speak our message to our age. We can draw deeply from our heritage. There is very much to learn from expositors of past ages. John Chrysostom will tell us more about the Bible than a score of modern homiletical commentaries, but we are not to rest upon those who have gone before. Upon their foundation we must build. The best preacher in any age will be he, who, with the learning of all ages at his command, will himself patiently and carefully through tedious hours delve into the Book of books.

We are Christians, and Christianity is a historical religion. Our central truths are deeply rooted in history. Christian faith is based upon facts which took place at definite times and amid certain historical circumstances. True, indeed, Christianity is the religion of experience. Christianity never becomes the personal experience of an individual until first it has become a matter of experience to his soul, but Christian experience is definitely related to Christian fact. Unless our facts are certain, our experiences

may be more or less delusions.

The central facts of Christianity are recorded in that book, which we call the Bible. The Bible reaches its culmination in the New Testament. Before the New Testament was written, obviously the Bible was an incomplete book. Its gaze was towards the future, but in the fulness of time Christ came. He became the center of Christianity. With Him Judaism ended and Christianity began. A new era dawned in world history. The New Testament is the record of the origin of Christianity. For the Christian, the origin of Christianity is the greatest event in world history. What was the nature of this origin? For some of us it makes all the difference in the world what the facts of this origin really were. We believe that the Christianity, which we profess today, is vitally connected with the origin of our Christian faith. We are staking

our all upon the truth of certain facts, which we believe have happened in the sphere of history. The record of these facts, so vital to our Christian faith, is largely in the New Testament.

The New Testament was written in the first century: we live in the twentieth. Between us stretches a period of nineteen hundred years. Every autograph of the New Testament has perished. No preacher can look upon the original manuscript of a New Testament writer. The New Testament is no worse than other books in this respect. We believe that we have fairly accurate copies of the great authors of the past, and yet between our earliest manuscript of Greek authors, such as Euripides, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Thucydides, Plato, and the original manuscript there is a period of from 1600 to 1200 years. Among Latin authors such as Lucretius, Catallus, Horace, Terrance, Livy, Virgil the case is scarcely better; for between the earliest manuscript and the original autograph there intervenes from 1600 to 350 years. Our New Testament was written between 40 and 100 A.D. Our earliest manuscripts come from 350 to 400 A.D., with a space from 250 to 300 years intervening. The earliest copies of the New Testament, when compared with other ancient writings, get remarkably close to the original autographs. But men do not copy books without mistakes. Errors came in with every copying of the New Testament. Between our earliest manuscripts and the autograph which came from the stenographer (amanuensis) of Paul or Luke, there had arisen many mistakes of copyists. Were our New Testament no more valuable than most other books, doubtless we should pass over most of these mistakes as of slight importance. But to each of us our New Testament is the Book of books. We do not wish to know what Paul or John might have said; we wish to know what they did say. We can never be content with probability as to their words; we wish for certainty.

Here arises the science of New Testament Textual Criticism. The textual criticism of the New Testament proceeds exactly as the textual criticism of any ancient document. The purpose of textual criticism is by the exercise of knowledge and trained judgment to restore the exact words of the original document which has perished and now survives only in copies. The textual critic of the New Testament is blessed with a vast array of ancient copies, which become an embarrassment because of their number. Take for instance the work of some ancient Greek author. Perhaps it has survived the ravages of time in a dozen ancient copies. It is a comparatively easy task to place these twelve copies over against each other and weigh the evidence of the various readings. When you have finished, the text may be very uncertain, but you have at least the satisfaction, that you have exhausted your material. But our New Testament has a marvelous wealth of ancient manuscripts. The Greek manuscripts alone, which are valuable for determining the actual words of the New Testament, run to the enormous number of between four and five thousand, and besides there is most valuable evidence found in the old translations into

Egyptian, Syrian, Latin, etc. These versions bring the total manu-

script evidence into other thousands.

No one scholar, however industrious, is able to cope with all the mass of New Testament evidence. One must build upon the labors of the other. Magnificent work has been done in the past. The most decisive labors in this department were performed before 1888 by those great textual scholars, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Westcott, Hort, and others. So well was this work done that Hort could write in his introduction to the edition of the New Testament published in 1881 by himself and Dr. Westcott, "that the amount of what can in any sense be called substantial variation from the original words can hardly form more than a thousandth part of the entire text." God has been wonderfully good in making the text of our New Testament so sure to us. But New Testament students are not content to let the matter rest here. The work of Textual Criticism has continued since the time of Westcott and Hort. New manuscript evidence has been discovered, known manuscript evidence which was not at that time available has been compiled, and the world is waiting today for some scholar or group of scholars to give the students of the New Testament a new edition of Tischendorf's monumental compilation of textual evidence, which will embody all more recent findings. Textual criticism is one of the most exact of sciences. It works with almost mathematical precision. Every minister ought to know at least the principles of Textual Criticism. He ought to know enough to be able to judge for himself exactly of what the New Testament books really consisted as they came from the hands of their authors.

On the linguistic side, the study of the New Testament has been progressing with the interest of a romance. The New Testament has a Jewish background; its authors were for the most part of the Hebrew race; but the whole of it was written in Greek. Jesus spoke for a native tongue the current Aramaic of Palestine, but the record of what He said has come down to us only in Greek.

For a long time linguistic scholars were puzzled about the Greek of the New Testament. It did not correspond with the Greek of the classical period of Athens, nor was it even like the literary Greek of the first century. During the close of the last and the beginning of the present century it has been proved that the language of the New Testament fits perfectly into the development of the Greek language. During the last thirty years there has been coming to light a vast lot of papyrus-writing from the sands of Egypt. These papyri record the colloquial language, which men were accustomed to use in business, in the home, and on the street. These scraps from the waste baskets of long ago give us the very language of the common man of the first century. With ever increasing clearness the papyri are showing that the writers of our New Testament were not, like the writers of many other books in their age, attempting to imitate classic Greek and writing in a dead, stilted style; but the writers of our New Testament were writing in a language which was intelligible to the

common man. They were preaching for a verdict from the masses. Marvelous was the preparation which God had made for His preachers in the language given for the spread of the Gospel. This Greek "Koine" in the first century became nearly a universal language. Paul could pass from Antioch in Syria, to Ephesus in Asia Minor, to Athens and Corinth in Greece, to Rome in Italy, and to far off Spain, and it was unnecessary for him to spend months in mastering a language, or to lose the power of the spoken word as it passed on through an interpreter; but Paul passed from city to city, with the Greek "Koine" at his command. He could be understood anywhere.

Recent scholarship in the field of New Testament language has advanced much since the discovery of the non-literary papyri. The grammar of the Greek New Testament has been rewritten by such men as Radermacher in Germany, J. H. Moulton in Great Britain, and A. T. Robertson in America. All New Testament Greek lexicons must be revised in the light of the new findings in the papyri, and today men are working at this task in various parts of the world. From these new discoveries light from time to time is thrown upon some obscure passage, which has defied the labors of interpreters of past generations, and the passage stands

forth in new beauty.

The contemporary world of New Testament times has received fresh study as it is related to the origin and spread of Christianity. Often this study has been carried forward by those who would explain all religions on a naturalistic basis. Most emphatically do we differ with those who would offer such an explanation for our Christian faith. But we are confident that the New Testament student has much to learn from the history of the period in which the New Testament was written. The historical setting of the first century is the background for our Christian Faith. lived in the first century. We wish to know the environment in which He lived. The early Christians lived and preached and died in that first century, and we understand them better when we understand the conditions in which they lived. All serious study of the history of the centuries preceding Christianity and of the century in which it arose contributes to New Testament scholarship.

The more we know of the Jews of the inter-Testament period, of their struggles and their hopes, their failures and their courage, the truer picture we have of the Palestine in which Jesus lived. We understand Him better, as we understand His people. Christianity soon became a world religion. It was not slow to advance from Palestine to the conquest of the Roman Empire. We understand our New Testament better as we know more of the world into which the Gospel was carried. To understand the church of Christ in Corinth in the first century, we need to understand Corinth in the first century. A large part of our New Testament grew out of the problems of churches in this pagan environment. The letters of Paul especially are sent to churches which need

guidance for members who are trying to live as Christians among pagan neighbors. To understand these epistles we must study their contemporary history. Recent years have been especially helpful in bringing this history to light. Before the student of the New Testament today there lies a vast amount of information concerning the social, political, moral, and religious life of the world in the first Christian centuries. Some of this information has been gathered by devout Christians and some by unbelievers; but all can be turned to use, so far as it is accurate, in establishing the background of early Christianity. The purpose of this department will be to teach the New Testament in the light of the his-

tory out of which it has grown.

Literary questions of date and authorship must always concern the student of the New Testament. In the field of literary criticism New Testament studies have been moving more and more towards firmer ground. Seven Pauline epistles are accepted as unquestionably genuine by scholars of all shades of opinion, with the minor exceptions of a few insignificant radicals. Many decidedly liberal theologians would no longer question the Pauline authorship of Ephesians, Colossians, and II Thessalonians. Some liberal theologians would even grant the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles. More and more the writings of Luke are being placed on a solid basis, both through the work of more conservative scholars such as Sir Wm. Ramsay and of more radical scholars like Harnack and Edward Meyer of Germany. Out of the dust of years of controversy, Luke is gradually emerging to a firm place as one of the accurate historians of ancient times. The problem of the Synoptic Gospels rests still largely upon the old solution of a "two document hypothesis." Mark is generally considered the oldest of the three Synoptic Gospels, and as a source from which the others drew much of their material. Besides Mark, it is generally agreed that there was a collection of the sayings of Jesus, called in theological parlance "Q" or "Logia of Jesus." In addition to these two primary sources, both Matthew and Luke are supposed to have had other independent sources of information. The Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel is still, of course, denied by those who would give a naturalistic explanation to the origin of Christianity; although, in late years, advocates of the Johannine authorship of this Gospel have been arising from most unexpected places. All in all, upon the basis of literary criticism, New Testament scholars have a rather wide and generally accepted basis for the beginnings of New Testament study.

Scientific Textual Criticism places the New Testament in our hands, assuring us that with the possible exception of minor variations, it is giving us a text so accurate that there can only be the possibility of substantial error in one one-thousandth of the whole. New Testament grammar opens up before us the usage of the Greek language in those very years during which our New Testament was being written. New Testament Lexicography compiles for us with a nicety of expression the meanings of words and phrases

used in the New Testament and in contemporary Greek speech. Historical investigation of the first Christian century presents us with the picture of the conditions under which Christianity began in the world. Literary Criticism gives an agreed basis for the beginnings of our research. Then comes the all important task of deciding what the New Testament has to say for itself. What does the New Testament say about the origin of Christianity?

What is Christianity according to the New Testament?

A clear, binding principle of grammatical-historical exegesis is that the New Testament must be allowed to speak its own message. We are to bring all the information to bear, which research has placed at our command; but our duty is to determine what the New Testament actually says. This differs widely from expressing our opinions concerning what the New Testament writer should have said. The New Testament probably says many things which do not fit in with our presuppositions. It may say things which the twentieth century New Testament scholar believes he could say far better. The New Testament writers may have written things which the modern scholar considers dead wrong; but the duty of the New Testament exegete is to let the New Testament speak its own message. Too often the New Testament scholar has forced the New Testament to become but an echo of his own opinions; too often the supposedly fair-minded student has read his own theology into Paul or John: but such is not The New Testament must speak its own message and exegesis. not ours. I, for one, am persuaded that it is the message of the New Testament for which men hunger. After all they do not care very much for the private opinion of men, even though they be preachers; but they would like for the preacher to tell them honestly what Jesus had to say about life's problems and what Paul said to sinning men and women, who amid the perplexities of earthly life were seeking to be followers of Jesus of Nazareth. The New Testament is a book, which, when allowed to speak for itself, has always had a peculiar ability to jar men out of their preconceived notions. It opens blind eyes, unstops deaf ears, starts dull minds to thinking. We need twentieth century preachers who will let the New Testament speak its own message.

Now we come to the heart of the New Testament study. What is New Testament Christianity? What is the origin of our Christian faith? This is a vital question which lies not only at the heart of New Testament study but at the heart of our Christian Faith as well. What is Christianity? The New Testament is the

most decisive witness in the answering of that question.

What is Christianity? There can be but two answers to that question, however differently the answers may be stated. Christianity is either from God, or it is from man. It is either supernatural, or it is natural. The line is sharply drawn, far more sharply than the great number of American preachers have yet realized. One explanation pictures man struggling upward through a long and painful process towards God. Here there is

no finality. Christianity is but a part of a never ending upward struggle. The other explanation believes that God has moved in a supernatural redemption to save mankind. Man helplessly lost in sin could only cry to God. God moved to save in Jesus Christ our Lord. The first explanation makes Christianity of the earth earthy; the second says it is the power of God from heaven.

Today, in theological circles and in preaching, the naturalistic interpretation takes, generally speaking, two rather well marked forms. Within each there is much overlapping, and often these naturalistic preachers and writers stand halting between two opinions, undecided which naturalistic explanation is best fitted to explain the phenomena of the Church and Christian faith, but at all events agreed that Christianity has no supernatural element.

The older of the two current forms of the naturalistic explanation of Christianity, for want of a better name, may be called "liberalism." Christianity is simply the Jesus way of living. Jesus appeared in Palestine, a simple, gracious figure, teaching more beautifully and living more nobly than any man had ever lived before. Inspired by high convictions of the Fatherhood of God, the infinite and equal worth of every human soul, the duty and joy of self-sacrifice and brotherliness, and the inwardness of true religion, He preached a marvelous ethical gospel. Due to the regrettable necessities of the environment of the early church a divine halo was placed upon the person of this gracious teacher. Through primitive misunderstanding on the part of humble disciples and high reverence for a great leader, Jesus emerges through the years clothed in divinity. But for the liberal theologian the Christ of Pauline and Johannine theology stands far removed from the Jesus of history. "Back to Jesus," was their slogan. Jesus never intended that men should worship Him. He wanted them to worship God, as He was accustomed to worship God; to love one's fellowman as He loved His fellowman. Christianity must get back to the simple Jesus with His love of God, his teaching of human brotherhood, His maxims for daily life. We love Jesus because He lived so beautifully. Our highest ideals are to be true to the same ideals to which Jesus was true. But that is all. Christianity is a noble ethical philosophy by which to live. The best Christian is he who has a religion like the religion of Jesus. Consciously and unconsciously, this liberal Christianity is proclaimed up and down this world today from thousands of pulpits. Often it is expressed beautifully and winsomely.

The new Testament Scholar asks is this the Jesus of the New Testament. The only historical Jesus that we know is the historical Jesus of the New Testament. The last fifty years have brought forth many liberal lives of Jesus, but none which have spoken the facts of the New Testament. The New Testament knows no liberal Jesus. It knows a Jesus of imperious claims, of unheard-of promises, of supernatural power and vision; but the New Testament knows no simple humble Jesus of Galilee. Liberal

Christianity would make Jesus only a gracious teacher; the New Testament makes Him something far more.

Modern radical criticism has dealt a deadly blow at liberal Christianity. The radical critic says that the New Testament knows no such Christianity as liberal critics would invent. They deny that the essence of Christianity has been the beautiful ethical teaching of the beautiful Christ, whom the liberal has sought to find under the supposed theological rubbish of his New Testament. The radical critic says that the heart of New Testament Christianity is the message of a supernatural redemption. He finds the death of Christ and the cross standing at the center of Christian faith. He says when the New Testament speaks for itself it tells of atonement, redemption, sacrifice, a dying and a risen God, and the believers mystical union with the Divine. But then, with the liberal he agrees that there can be no such thing as the supernatural in this world, at least no such supernatural as that of which the New Testament speaks. The New Testament record of the supernatural must receive a naturalistic explanation.

Out into the religious world of the first century the radicals go. Here they find a supposed similarity to some element of Christian faith, and there an apparent likeness, until after a marvelous assortment of varied and sundry religious forms and ceremonies and beliefs are amassed, they proceed to prove that Christianity is but a part of a universal religious development.

Radical criticism maintains that the early Christians had a marvelous power of gathering from various lands and countries the elements of their religious life. They begin with a purely human Jesus, who has very little relation at all with the Jesus of our New Testament. Here a little was added to his representation and there a little. Miracles were attached to His name from current pagan and Jewish sources. Somewhere out in the Gentile lands some one added the title "Lord" and the thought that Jesus was ever present with His followers. The doctrine of the deity of Jesus was born. On the snow ball rolled, gathering with every turn. Paul and his associates borrowed from Jewish apocalypses and pagan mystery religions, from current philosophy and theology, until finally there appeared the theology of the Pauline Epistles. On the process went, gathering here and there, building a new religion out of the old religions, until finally the fully developed New Testament doctrines appeared in the writings under the name of John. Out of the religious turmoil and syncretism of the first Christian centuries grew the Christian Church. For such students there can be no finality in our Christian faith, for as one of the most able exponents of this view has said "Religion grows by the death of religions." Christianity is but a stage in a more complete religious development, embracing all faiths and religions. It in turn awaits a more worthy religion to which it will in turn give place, and this again to a higher form of religious faith.

The New Testament student must boldly face the issue. Can

these hypotheses explain our Christian Faith? Is this the witness of our New Testament? With books flowing from the modern press in a continual stream advocating one or the other naturalistic explanation of Christianity, the New Testament scholar must go deep into the field of scientific investigation. The facts will decide the issue. Truth alone can stand.

To many of us the naturalistic explanations of our Christian faith have left the origin of Christianity entirely unsolved. We do not believe that in any of its forms naturalistic criticism offers an adequate explanation for historic Christianity. It stands refuted by the evidence. But the student who goes forth to preach in this

doubting age needs to know something of this evidence.

The New Testament presents a supernatural explanation for Christianity. The New Testament explanation adequately explains the origin of Christianity. But the New Testament explanation involves the supernatural, and many in this age have ruled the supernatural out of their thinking. The New Testament explanation for the origin of Christianity is that at a definite time in the world's history, God wrought a great redemption for mankind by sending His own Divine Son into this sinful world, who died upon a cross and rose again. The doctrine of atonement lies at the very heart of New Testament Christianity; but it was a real atonement accomplished by God himself. Christ was not a mere man who lived heroically and who died bravely. He was very God Himself. The Christian religion is not man's futile attempt to lift himself up to God; but God's intervention in the order of things to save mankind. Christ stands at the center of our Christian faith. "What think ye of Christ?" that question is the touchstone of our Christian faith. Jesus is presented in the New Testament not as a mere teacher; but as Lord and Redeemer. Jesus died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.

I believe that the unique in Christianity is Christ. His teachings are marvelous in their compactness and glistening beauty. But I dare say that by ransacking the literature of all ages, almost every beautiful teaching of the Christ can be matched by some equally beautiful teaching by another: but the Christ of the New Testament is matchless. Christ's Golden Rule may be duplicated in other faiths, but not the uniqueness of His person. Other teachers have taught that man should love his brother; but Christ alone promises to make His followers sons and daughters of the living God. The Jewish scholar, Klausner, has criticised the ethics of Jesus. He says they are impractical, while the teachings of the Rabbis are superior for they are practical. True indeed for one who does not accept the New Testament account of Christ's person, His ethics are impractical. Because He is God, He gives us ideals impractical for the ordinary man, but with the ideal He

promises to supply the strength to attain to the ideal.

There can be no compromise between the conflicting views of our Christian faith. Christianity is one thing if Jesus is my noblest example, but it is quite another if He is my Divine Saviour, who by Hs own death and resurrection has redeemed me from sin. It is one thing to regard Jesus as the Founder of Christianity, because he was the first to live the Christian life: but it is quite another thing to believe that he made Christianity possible by His redeeming work. Jesus was not the first Christian: He stands in a more fundamental relation to Christianity than that, for except for that which Jesus accomplished, Christianity would have been impossible. It is one thing to have a faith such as Jesus had; but it is quite another to have a faith in Jesus. It is one type of preaching to proclaim the ethical teaching of Jesus as a remedy for the plagues of this world; but it is an entirely different thing to proclaim Jesus Christ and Him crucified, to the Jew a stumbling block and to the Greek foolishness, but to such as believe the power of God unto salvation.

The preacher who proclaims the redeeming grace of a mighty Saviour will not be neglectful to proclaim a mighty ethic. The difference between such ethical preaching and that of the liberal, whose whole message is the proclamation of the ethics of Jesus, is, one proclaims ethics and power and the other ethics and words. The man in sin needs power to put the ethics of Jesus into practice. The New Testament presents a Jesus who claims not to be an example of faith, but an object of faith. Our Lord came into this world, according to the records we have from His early disciples, not so much to say something as to do something, and the value of that which He did depended upon who He was. The Son of God can do much for me, the best Jew who ever lived nineteen hun-

dred years ago can help me but little.

It shall be the aim of the New Testament department of this seminary to draw a clear line of distinction between the divergent explanations of Christianity. In our classes we shall invite our students not to follow blindly, but themselves to go to history and the New Testament to find what Christianity really is. We have no desire for blind-minded preachers; but our hope is that this seminary will send forth into the Christian ministry men who are willing to take every fact of history, science, or discovery, and with a trained intellect weigh the evidence and squarely face the issue. Our hope is that as they go forth from this department they may not say "I have been told" but "I know"; and our prayer is that with this knowledge born of study they may also add that knowledge born of Christian experience which adds, "I know Him, whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day"; and that, stepping into the pulpits of this nation, they with a faith grounded in knowledge may say in the words of Paul, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

#### CHARGE TO PROFESSOR HUNTER B. BLAKELY, TH.D.

By President John T. Brantley, LL.D., Board of Directors, Columbia Theological Seminary

Your assumption of the obligation required by our Plan of Government brings to all those who love the Seminary, and especially to those who are responsible for its conduct, a feeling of deep satisfaction, for well do we know it means that you have dedicated to its service all the talents of heart and mind with which God has endowed you. We have not failed in our need to look to the Holy Spirit in humble prayer for guidance, and now you are come, as we believe, the answer to our prayer. It is, therefore, in full trust and confidence that we place on your shoulders the mantle of your beloved predecessor, assured that the record of his long, faithful and distinguished service will be an inspiration to you. With his mantle I give you the pledge of our love and of our loyal co-operation and support in the duties which are now

yours.

As Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis it will be your duty to so direct the studies of those who sit at your feet, that with you they may clearly apprehend the supreme purpose of God in the salvation of men as revealed in the triumphant mission of Jesus Christ, His Son, and in the work of the Holy Spirit. You will seek to give them such grasp of the truth as will enable them to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ with convincing and convicting power. And you will try to so root and ground them in their faith in the Word of God that they will be enabled to withstand and combat any storm of doubt and criticism which may hereafter rage about them. You will let your own strong belief in the love of God shine through your teaching. You will carefully nurture in them the evangelistic fervor which accounts for their presence in the Seminary, that it may grow in strength and not abate. We would have the Seminary strong in Biblical knowledge and in sound scholarship, but we would also have it strong in evangelistic power. We would have its students know what and how to preach, but we would also have them preach out of hearts filled with love for God and man. Not only should they preach the gospel, but they should live the gospel that lips and lives may bear witness to its supreme worth. You will seek to so mold and direct their minds and hearts, as to make them flaming evangels of His Word.

To you is an exalted privilege for which the Holy Spirit has adjudged you equal—the training of men for the gospel ministry. By precept and example you will impress your faith and your spirituality upon receptive hearts and minds. You will enable them to see God through your eyes, imbue them with your spirit,

divide with them your talents. What they thus receive from you they will pass on to others, and they yet to others. You will thus set in motion spiritual forces which will enrich and bless the world, save men from their sins, and make workers for the Kingdom of God. To you will be the exquisite joy of returning the talents entrusted to you by the Lord of the Harvest, multiplied manifold. It is our prayer that God may abundantly prosper you in your new responsibility and that upon you and your work may rest His smile.