

Period. 2006
v. 10
1898-99

ANDOVER-HARVARD
THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Union Seminary Magazine.

Vol. X.

October-November, 1898.

No. 1.

I.—Literary.

AN AIM OF THE MINISTERIAL STUDENT.

Faculty Address delivered by Prof. T. C. JOHNSON in the Seminary Chapel, Richmond, Va., October 6th, 1898.

II Timothy, 2:15.

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

These words, my young brethren of the Seminary, were originally addressed to a young man who looked on life very much as you are supposed to do.

True, he was already in the active ministry. He was in no formal theological training school, but out doing the work of an evangelist, preaching and organizing churches in the regions beyond; and Paul addressed the exhortation of our text to him while so employed. He wrote to Timothy in the field: “Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of Truth.” But if Paul had had such a body of students as sit here to-day—a body of young men looking forward to months, and some of them to years, of study before entering the active ministry—he might have addressed the very same words to them.

You, young brethren, have reached a point where your life is dominated by a conscious sense of unity. You think

FADS AND FREAKS IN CREED AND CONDUCT.

An alert observer must be struck with the strange departures in doctrine and in experimental religion which have marked the last few years; first one and then another phase of theological speculation has had a transient popularity and in the strength of it, claimed an epochal character, won a wide and instant acceptance and led out into the wilderness of theological vagary, that somewhat ambitious school which in every age seems ever ready to hear some new thing.

Concurrent with this spasmodic activity in purely speculative thinking has been also a very decided, somewhat similar, and equally "freakish" development in the line of experimental religion or practical piety; the very opposite extreme of the former, having no apparent interest in, and no ostensible connection with it, suggesting rather a complete divorce, perhaps offering a formal protest, coming forward as the avowed rebuke and timely corrective of the dangers of harebrained, unbridled speculation.

I am of the opinion that these two developments, though so diverse and even antipodal in appearance and purpose, are really at bottom merely manifestations of the same great movement, simply different but perfectly consistent expressions of one coherent tendency; just as the broad surface of a large stream may show many eddies, back-waters and reflux waves, all of them nevertheless the natural expressions of the deep under-current which sweeps irresistibly forward.

1. Amid all the bewildering variety presented by modern theological speculation, there is one element that will be at once recognized as a constant characteristic of it all and this is that it is generically rationalistic; so far as my study extends, this is an unailing mark, the tendency towards rationalism is as uniform and seemingly as irresistible as gravitation. Sometimes the writer will appear to recognize the drift, will protest against it, will earnestly repu-

diate the principles of rationalism, will maintain and assert the contrary, but as well might the hapless boatman on the verge of Niagara resist the relentless current that holds him in its unyielding grasp—he goes over protesting as he goes!

This current of modern theology is patent to all students.

But it is a well established law that the tendency is from one extreme to the other. It is the uniform experience that rationalism at a certain point in its development inevitably reacts towards its own opposite, and the periods during which it prevails most powerfully, are just the very periods which are sure to be marked by a credulity simply fathomless and a superstition well nigh drivelling.

2. Along with this pervasive rationalism, and a very natural outgrowth of it, is an excessive individualism; a sort of practical protest against all authority, tradition and precedent.

This tendency is marked in every development of doctrine and in every exhibition of character; its indications are seen in theological thinking, in personal behaviour, in ecclesiastical affairs, in civil and social relations; it presents us with a kaleidoscopic variety in political parties, it multiplies heresy trials in church courts, it shocks the world with the craze of lawlessness, and finds its normal expression in the awful conflicts between capital and labor.

It is the idea of "personal sovereignty" run mad, and it affects every calling and relation in life and every department of doctrine and duty.

3. I have long been of the opinion that the doctrinal development of this age of the church's growth must be that of the Spirit. The conviction has been growing upon me for years that the final form of the church's faith as to the Person and Work of the Holy Ghost has not yet been reached. Every period of the church's history has been characterized by the development and the formulation of some great fundamental doctrine of her faith. I think that the present dispensation is destined to do for the doctrine of the Holy Spirit what a preceding age has so magnificently done for the Person and Work of our adorable Redeemer.

A formative period, however, is always a trying period.

The church struggles forward through many misconceptions and much darkness; with much difficulty and many blunders is led finally into the full blessed truth which becomes the priceless heritage of succeeding generations. We need not be surprised to see this progress marked and marred with many crude theories advanced and much absurdity exhibited by those who are struggling, stumbling towards a future light whose very beams may sometimes perchance mislead the purblind eyes that are longing for its revelation.

Such considerations tend to explain the fads and freaks that sometimes astonish us; they may also serve to keep us from losing hope in the ultimate triumph of Truth and the assured victory of Righteousness.

SAMUEL M. SMITH.

Columbia, S. C., Manse of First Presbyterian Church.

II.—Editorial.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

The close of the first quarter of this century witnessed the establishment of Union Theological Seminary at Hampden-Sidney, Virginia, the close of the last quarter witnesses the re-establishment in the city of Richmond, Virginia.

Though an obscure movement, compared with the great events which have transpired in our midst at this time, it is nevertheless one of tremendous importance in that it effects the heart and core of the Southern Presbyterian Church. It means the removal of the leading theological school in our church to new environments; the beginning of a new life among a new people.

The mighty influences for good in the spread of the kingdom which the Seminary wielded in its old home cannot be overestimated. They were many and varied and have reached to the remotest portions of this earth.

The power for good which was exerted under the leadership of Rice, Sampson, Smith, Peck, Dabney, and others, can only be measured in the light of eternity.

But the time for an onward movement had come, and we trust and believe that under God's hand it was for the glory of His Great Name.

Two causes operated to produce this movement: *One*, the church in fulfilling her mission must come in contact with the world and *know* it. People, nations, the world, can only be influenced by personal contact. The world will not come to the church, hence the church must go to the world; living in it but not of it, knowing and cherishing the good, hating the evil.

Equally well does this principal apply to the training

schools for the ministry where the very life of the church is to be generated and supplied under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. Those who are to lead the van of the Christian army must be trained in all particulars for the warfare in which they engage. If the ministers of our day are to be efficient leaders they must have all possible earthly wisdom which with God's help may be used for His glory. Nowhere do we find better opportunities for acquiring this knowledge than in the centres of population, the strongholds of sin as well as the seats of learning and culture. Recognizing this fact the Synods of our sister States decided to place their school of the prophets where the ministry might be fitted in every particular for the field, where every advantage would be given to those men who are to stand at the sacred desk and unfold to others the unsearchable riches of the kingdom of heaven.

The *other* cause, which brought about the removal of our Seminary, was that the church and her institutions must go to the places where their influence for good is greatest.

The Holy Spirit gave His approval to this plan in the case of Paul. The souls on the plains of Bithynia were as valuable as those in Athens, the seat of Grecian culture and learning, but the Apostle's commission was to go to the cities, even to Rome, and his whole life shows him to have been consistent to this policy.

True it is, that the commission to preach has not yet been delivered to the students of the Seminary. Their mission in the Seminary is to *study* and not to preach.

But the Seminary, while not an institution whose primary duty is to preach, is one that ought to shed a light far and wide, to wield a mighty influence for God and the kingdom by the holiness and uprightness of life to be found among the Professors and students, by the standing appeal it makes to the world and the multitudes it may reach—"Go preach the gospel to all nations, giving yourself a living sacrifice unto God, which is your reasonable service."

The advantages of the city are numerous, the power for good which the Seminary may command is great, but from these facts arises a very solemn thought—"greater opportunities bring greater responsibilities."

The sermons which the Seminary will preach through the lives of those connected with it will be heard and read by more souls than ever before in its history. Hence the institution must preach with no uncertain sound.

The temptations to lax living are greater, the chilling blast of worldliness does blow stronger. Yet in the strength of the Spirit this school of the prophets should rise above all that besets its spiritual life, above all that dwarfs the soul, not a card-board castle to be blown down by any wind of temptation, but indeed a fortress,

“Standing full foursquare to all the winds that blow.”

In the power of His might Union Seminary, its Professors, its students, can alone stand firm, yet with this power they may look up and write on the eternal skies the record of great things done for the Lord and King.

THE MAGAZINE.

With the opening session the UNION SEMINARY MAGAZINE begins its tenth year. The marked and unexpected success with which it has met in days gone by, both from a financial and literary point of view, is an assurance to its friends that it has a right to live and will continue to do so.

The circulation is at present the largest in its history. The contributors are found throughout the Southern Presbyterian Church.

As the name indicates, the MAGAZINE is the organ of the Seminary. Yet, in addition to the contributions from the Faculty, its pages will from time to time contain papers from those interested in literary, educational and religious matters. Articles may be expected from the University of Virginia, Washington and Lee University and other institutions of learning, and from the pastors and laymen of our Church.

The Editorial Department will be made to express as far as practicable the views of the students.

A special department will be maintained in which will be presented the intellectual life of the Seminary, public

celebrations, addresses and lectures. It is hoped that in this way the alumni may be better informed as to the mental and religious interests of the Seminary and what concerns its welfare.

As the mouthpiece of the leading theological school of the Southern Presbyterian Church, the MAGAZINE ought to command the constant support and interest of the ministry, and it is the earnest hope of the staff that this may be the case to an even greater extent than in the past.