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THE
S E R M O N,
DELIVERED AT
THE INAUGURATION
OF THE
REV. ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, D. D.
AS PROFESSOR OF DIDACTIC AND POLEMIC THEOLOGY,
IN THE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
IN
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.
TO WHICH ARE ADDED, THE
PROFESSOR'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS,
AND
THE CHARGE
TO
THE PROFESSOR AND STUDENTS.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

NEW-YORK :

PUBLISHED BY WHITING AND WATSON, THEOLOGICAL AND
CLASSICAL BOOKSELLERS, NO. 96, BROADWAY.

J. Seymour, printer.

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1812.

Extract from the minutes of the Board of Directors of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, at Princeton, August 12th, 1812.

THE Directors of the Theological Seminary, desirous of making known to the christian public the views and designs with which the Institution under their care has been founded, and is now open for the reception of pupils; and believing that these views and designs cannot be better explained, than by the publication of the Discourses this day delivered, at the Inauguration of the first Professor:

Resolved, that the thanks of this board be given to the Directors and Professor who delivered those Discourses, and that they be requested to furnish copies for the press.

Dr. Romeyn and Mr. Zachariah Lewis were appointed a committee to superintend the printing, distribution, and sale of the impression.

A true extract,

JOHN Mc DOWELL, *Sec'ry.*

CHARGE,
TO
THE PROFESSOR,
AND
STUDENTS OF DIVINITY.
BY
PHILIP MILLEDOLER. D. D.

CHARGE, &c.



Reverend and dear Brother,

THE engagements you have formed this day, are peculiarly solemn and affecting. The charge devolving on the Pastor of a congregation, in entering upon the duties of his office, is deeply interesting, but not so interesting as yours. You are not called by a particular branch of our church to minister in holy things, but by her highest ecclesiastical judicatory, to superintend the education of her sons. Under the direction, we trust, of the great Head of the Church, you have been invited to train up for her service, bands of intelligent, intrepid, and faithful champions of the cross. The characters you are to form for active service, are the flower of our youth; young men from whose lips, at some future, and not far distant period, multitudes of souls may receive instruction; who may be destined to fill the chairs of *teachers* and professors in our schools, and on whose fidelity, under God, may depend the future peace and prosperity of the church, and the salvation of thousands, perhaps millions, yet unborn.

Suffer me, under these circumstances, to give a brief exhibition of the views of the general assembly in founding this institution, and to point out some duties incumbent on you, in the accomplishment of those views. The assembly, in founding

this school, are desirous of securing and perpetuating to the church, a learned, orthodox, pious, and evangelical Ministry.

We want a learned Ministry.

Whatever mischief has been done to the world by philosophy, falsely so called, we are persuaded that true learning has never injured the church, and never will. Such is the harmony subsisting between the works and word of God, that discoveries in the former will never cease to promote our regard for the latter. It has been said, that ignorance is the mother of devotion; that aphorism we utterly and indignantly reject. To instruct others, and especially in divine things, men must first be instructed themselves. On this principle God himself has acted from the beginning of the world to the present day. In former ages, he himself spake directly to the prophets. The messages they delivered were formed under the immediate influence of his grace, and the inspiration of his Spirit. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*."

At the entrance of our Saviour upon his Ministry, he chose twelve disciples. These were prepared by himself for their work, and that too especially

* 2 Pet. 1. 21.

in the first instance by a regular course of instruction and discipline. It was after that course of instruction, and not before, that they were sent out to evangelize the world. Of completing the designs of God toward our race, in their day, these servants of Christ had no expectation. Their number was small, their lives precarious, the opposition they met with, powerful and constant; and their influence confined to regions which, however extensive in themselves, were yet small when compared to the whole world. They were therefore solicitous to provide for the future wants of the church, and took immediate steps for transmitting their power and authority to others. Hence that charge of *Paul to Timothy**: “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” Thus early provision was made for the supply of the church with an able and faithful ministry. Beside the instruction they had received from their Lord, the Apostles and their immediate successors were qualified in a miraculous manner for their work.—They were endowed with the gift of tongues. Devils fled at their rebuke; diseases, the most inveterate, were healed by a word or by a touch. They had also the power of discerning spirits †; a power which gave them no small advantage over ordinary teachers. All these gifts, from their extraordi-

* 2 *Tim.* 2. 2.† 1 *Cor.* 12. 10.

nary nature, and the well known disposition of mankind, were calculated to excite curiosity, to attract attention, to draw men within the sphere of the Gospel, and to carry home, by divine grace, irresistible conviction to their understandings and hearts. They enjoyed another advantage; they were under the influence of the Spirit of God, to a degree, of which now, alas! owing to our most awful supineness, we can hardly form a conception. This influence of the Spirit gave dignity to their manners, intrepidity to their zeal, and a general character to their ministry, which commanded the admiration of both friends and foes. With such advantages, it is not to be wondered at, that they towered with eagles' flight above the philosophers of their day, and outstripped in their progress all the wisdom of the sages, and all the eloquence of the schools. But the gift of tongues, with other miraculous endowments of the Holy Spirit, began gradually to disappear with the extension of the Gospel. This circumstance had a considerable influence in changing the face of the church, and especially in regard to the education of her ministers. That the scriptures might be read in the languages in which they were originally penned, or translated into the tongues of foreign nations; that young Gentile converts might become mighty in the scriptures; and that the sons of the church might be qualified to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, against learned and subtle adversaries

without, as well as against sectaries in her own bosom, it was soon perceived that a learned, as well as pious, ministry, was indispensably necessary. The most distinguished of the primitive fathers were advocates for a learned ministry. They well knew that learning without piety might be abused to the worst of purposes; but they were unwilling to allow that the abuse of what is good in itself, can ever detract from its intrinsic value. In this view of the subject, they were followed by the Reformers; and it is a principle which has been acted upon, and contended for, from that day to the present, by the best and purest churches in Christendom. In the careful instruction, then, of our Youth, dear Sir, for the work of the Gospel Ministry, you will neither stand upon new or untenable ground. And, assured as you may be, that you are doing the will of Christ, you may safely employ in it all the stores of your learning; all the resources of your genius, and all the powers of your soul. But whilst there can be no doubt, either of the lawfulness or expediency of such a work, it is not to be concealed, that it is a task of great labour and difficulty. To say nothing of that diversity of disposition, taste, and intellect, in students themselves, which renders the art of teaching, as well as government, so exceedingly intricate; waving also at present all observations on *methods* of instruction, I will venture to say, that the work itself is one of the most arduous in the world. The scriptures are a mine of inexhaustible wealth, but to be enriched

with their treasures will require close and constant application. To exhibit divine truth in a lucid and systematic manner; to show the unity of Scripture in the connexion and dependence of its parts; to make of our young men sound Biblical critics, and able casuists; to furnish them with gospel armour of proof, offensive and defensive; to give them an extensive acquaintance with Church history and government; but especially so to indoctrinate, and, if I may use the expression, leaven them with heavenly truth, that they may ever after hold, and defend it for themselves, as well as communicate it to others; is a work indeed of no small magnitude. In this work you will soon, we hope, be aided by faithful colleagues; but a large and important part of it will still rest, under God, upon yourself. To cultivate such a field as this, dear sir, will be sufficient to call forth the exertions of the most active and enterprising mind; it will therefore behoove you, notwithstanding *all* your present acquirements, not only to cherish the attainments you have already made, but also further to enrich your mind with the spoils of science, and to extend your inquiries into almost every department of literature, sacred and profane.

Another charge devolving upon you with peculiar weight, dear Brother, is the faithful maintenance of that system of doctrines handed down to us by our fathers, and for which in numerous instances they have sacrificed “ their fortunes, their liberties,

and their lives." Strongly attached to the doctrines of the reformation contained in her standards, jealous of innovation, and anxious to transmit the truth as it is in Jesus inviolate to posterity, the Presbyterian church will expect, and permit me to add, Sir, after the signal mark of her confidence reposed in you, will have a right to expect, that her doctrines, and especially her distinguishing doctrines, will be taught in this school without adding to, or taking aught from them in any wise, or under any pretext whatsoever. It is also expected that these doctrines will be explained in terms used by her best writers from almost time immemorial, and which from long use have become familiar to, and are best understood by, her members. By observing this plan, there will be an agreement of theological terms used in the instruction of our youth, with those used in our standard books, as well as an agreement of terms used by our future licentiates and ministers, with those to which our congregations are accustomed. An object this, of no small importance to the future harmony of our churches. The Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, and form of government connected with it, will be an important book in this seminary. Containing a form of sound words drawn from the lively oracles of God, and tested by experience, it has long served, and will hereafter serve, as a bond of union to the churches. As every minister in our connexion is required to subscribe this Confession, they should be well acquainted with its

contents. When adopted, it cannot be renounced without renouncing our communion; nor invaded, without a species of sacrilege. If important doctrinal errors are ever introduced into our churches, they will be introduced by a gradual departure from our standards. These should be guarded, therefore, with inviolable care. Is any man dissatisfied with them, he is not bound to receive them; and if he does receive them, he is by that very act sacredly bound to cherish and maintain them. To surrender truths deemed of *minor importance* is only to prepare the way for other demands, and greater sacrifices; and if first attempts are not repelled, they will soon be followed by others, till all is gone that is worth contending for. To give our young men an early acquaintance with these standards, is therefore an object of primary importance; and should they be required, during their theological course, to commit to memory the greater part, if not the whole, of our confession and book of discipline, it would be attended with incalculable advantage. It would not only give them a decided superiority over others in ecclesiastical councils, but would also tend to guard them against error, as well as to secure their attachment to the truth. Peculiarly set for the defence of the Gospel, it will be expected of you, dear brother, that you will stand as a bulwark for truth against the encroachments of error. In this respect also, the assembly have deposited in your hands a most sacred trust; and one we are persuaded, that will never be abused. With

pleasure we anticipate the period when the youth of our seminary will not only exhibit sound principles themselves, but will also be disposed, and prepared to hand them down inviolate to others.

And as it is desirable that we should have a learned and orthodox, so we also need a pious and evangelical, ministry. Whatever may be the talents of ministers, they are like, without personal piety, to be of no lasting advantage to the church; nay, such characters have often inflicted upon it deep, and almost incurable wounds. That they are utterly unfit for the sacred office, is manifest. How shall they feed the flock of Christ purchased with his blood, who have no interest in that purchase? How shall they sympathize in the sufferings of God's people, who have no spiritual feeling? Or how shall they speak a word in season to weary and tempted souls, who themselves never felt, and therefore never mourned, under the awful pressure of their sins? Their godly hearers can be satisfied with them no longer than they shall have address enough to conceal their real characters, and they not unfrequently become the scorn even of the careless and impenitent. We hope the time is far distant, when our churches will be satisfied with mere exhibitions of learning, or eloquence, or with the substitution of dry moral lectures for the preaching of the cross. The apostle Paul was determined to know nothing among his hearers but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

—He was convinced that nothing under heaven could exhibit the divine character in a clearer light, and that nothing had equal influence on the human mind, to control, reform, and change it into the image of God. He had fairly made the experiment, and hath taught us, both by precept and example, that the true ministry of reconciliation must be pious and evangelical. In preparing such a Ministry for the church, it is desirable that such, and such only, should be sent forward to the school as are hopefully pious. What remains to the professors of the institution, is continually to insist upon the necessity of it, to cultivate it where it exists, by precept and example; to honour it with marked respect, and in every instance in which they shall be satisfied of the want of it in any pupil, to take effectual steps to prevent his entrance upon an office, for which in such case he is so evidently disqualified.

Thus, reverend and dear brother, I have endeavoured to mark out your glorious work, and have ventured a few thoughts on the best means of its accomplishment. We want a learned, orthodox, pious, and evangelical ministry. To such, and such only, can we confidently and comfortably commit the affairs of the church; and to leave another ministry in it, if we ourselves are faithful, would plant thorns in our dying pillows. As no greater curse can fall upon a people than to commit its spiritual interests into the hands of weak and unskilful, but

especially of unprincipled, men ; so, on the other hand, we are persuaded that an able and faithful ministry, is one of the most distinguished blessings to the world. Its influence in the church must be obvious to all ; and its benign influence on our schools, as well as on the general good order and happiness of society, will be denied only by the thoughtless, or the profligate. This seminary then, even in its infant state, is an object of public interest ; an object not only calculated to call forth the good wishes of our own church, but of the church at large, and even of the nation. Though its origin be small, the voice of its sons, we trust, will one day be heard to advantage from one extreme of these United States to the other ; nay, the time may not be far distant, when they will vie with their transatlantic brethren, in carrying the lamp of eternal truth, and planting the standard of the cross, on the remotest shores of heathen lands. The blessings that flow from such a ministry, are not blessings of a day, of a year, or even of an age.—These men will in due time transmit their knowledge and authority to others, and these again to their successors, to the final conflagration of the globe. In this view of the subject, Reverend Sir, you will feel a weight of responsibility upon you sufficient to bow the shoulders of an angel. The infant state of the institution will add to that weight. The General Assembly have stamped it with grand and impressive features, but they have only drawn the great outlines of its character. Much yet remains

to be done. The perfection of their plan will be the result of time and experience, and will greatly depend on the wisdom and diligence of their professors. In all this work, dear brother, you will have the eyes of God, of angels, and of men, upon you; but you enter upon it with great encouragement. You may promise yourself the good wishes and prayers of the whole church of God. You may also promise yourself the cordial co-operation of your brethren in the Lord. In their personal friendship, as well as interest in the work, you will find pledges of future consolation and support. But above all, you may promise yourself, if faithful, the constant blessing of the great Head of the church: there lies your strength, your wisdom, your every qualification for the work. The promise, "Lo, I am with you always," has never been forgotten by him, and never will. I have only to add a wish that when the book shall be opened that records the transactions of this day, that you may have cause to rejoice in them for ever.

Permit me, also, young gentlemen, on this solemn occasion, to address myself to you. You will have the honour of being the first whose names are enrolled in the register of this Seminary. They will stand, we hope, at the head of a host of worthies, whose future labours shall bless the church of God, and do honour to their country. As you are first in order of time, so we pray, that you may be numbered with the first, in devotion to God, and

usefulness to mankind. The studies in which you will be engaged, are not only delightful, to the pious mind, but are also calculated to enlarge your souls; to ennoble and transform them into the very image of God. The privilege you will enjoy, of consecrating your time to the study of the scriptures, and your persons to the service of Christ, is too great for expression. You are now, young gentlemen, to lay the foundation of your future character and usefulness in life; and, in some measure at least, as connected with it, of your future and eternal felicity. Permit me then to urge, with all possible earnestness, a diligent improvement of time and opportunities afforded you in the good providence of God. Your stay in this seminary may seem long in prospect, but it is really short; short in itself, and especially so, when compared with the work you have to do. Observe the plan of education marked out by the Assembly, and you will see at once, that the most diligent application will barely suffice, to give you, not to say a perfect, but even a competent knowledge of the subjects it embraces.

If any suppose that occasional application, or superficial reading, will constitute an eminent divine, they are exceedingly mistaken. In searching after, illustrating, or defending truth, the whole circle of the sciences may be pressed into the service of Christ. The study of the scriptures, especially in their original languages, is a work of time, as well

as of deep research. To obtain an accurate knowledge of scripture types, prophecies, and doctrines; to be acquainted with the sophistry of enemies, and qualified to expose it; to be well informed in church history and government; and to acquire facility in collecting, judgment in arranging, and gracefulness in the delivery of your thoughts, will all require time and labour.

But whilst I thus urge preparation for the altar in the acquirement of useful knowledge, let me also insist, particularly insist, on the cultivation of personal piety. As you are now to lay the foundation of solid learning, and literary eminence, so also of good character. Many eyes will be upon you, and more expected than from other young men of the same age, engaged in other pursuits. To the youth of this venerable seat of learning and the arts, you are especially called, to set examples of piety worthy of imitation. Not to speak of actions grossly derogatory to your Christian character, and the stain of which might follow you to your graves; remember, that you have in great measure passed that period of life, in which folly is extenuated by juvenile indiscretion. A short time will place you, God willing, upon the theatre of the world, under the august character of Ambassadors of Christ. Bear this in constant remembrance; and if you ever hope to fill that station with dignity to yourselves, usefulness to others, and glory to God, learn now to live by faith in the Son of God; govern your pas-

sions, deny yourselves, and consecrate your whole souls to the service of the Redeemer. Whatsoever things are true, just, lovely, and of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Let the world take knowledge of you, that you have been with Jesus; let it appear evident to all that you have entered upon your work with due reflection, and from proper motives, and you will in no wise lose your reward.

With piety toward God, my young friends, be careful to cultivate respect for your instructors. It is the sign of an ingenuous mind, and a debt of gratitude you owe them. They will deserve well at your hands. The hero of Macedon revered his father much, but he revered his instructor more. He viewed him as a second father; as one who had formed his mind; and acknowledged a debt of gratitude he never could repay. Christian youth, in regard to their christian teachers, must not be outdone by the gratitude of a heathen.

Beloved pupils, who have commenced with me your theological course—I now resign *you* with pleasure into other hands. Divided between parochial duties, and the care I owed you, I have found the task of instruction difficult, and sometimes oppressive; your future teacher, unincumbered by other cares, can, and will cheerfully, devote his whole

time to your improvement. I am happy to bear this public testimony to your former diligence and good conduct, and trust you will secure, by your future deportment, the approbation of your teachers, of the public, of your conscience, and your **GOD.**