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than a commonplace if we reflect that the last judgment will be a last audit ; that for every sixpence we spend, and for every avenue of enjoyment open to us, we shall be held responsible. In this sense it is true that everything we keep to ourselves we withhold from others ; in the blunt language of the early fathers, we are thieves.

What have we that we did not receive ? Why did we receive it but that we might impart it to our neighbours ? It is for the preacher to enforce a new standard of life, of giving, of commercial and social altruism or fellowship, the habit of mind that looks on possessions, assets, talents, as endow-

ments. The conviction born of such an interpretation of Christianity will bear fruit a hundred-fold. How much has been done in this direction by even a few men of high character and large generosity ! But all that is suggested to some by the name of Cadbury, and to others, perhaps, by the name of Josiah Stamp, would be impossible without the diffused Christian sentiment of numbers of humbler people. True wealth can only be gathered, and preserved, by those who have learnt the Divine art of scattering. It may be that in these difficult times, wealth may yet be gained, and imparted, beyond the dreams of avarice.

The Task of a Theological College.¹

BY PRINCIPAL W. M. MACGREGOR, D.D., TRINITY COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

ON this day of new beginnings I propose to speak of the essential task of a Theological College, for, in any effective sense, this would seem to have been very variously conceived. In a loose fashion, it is understood by every one that our business is to prepare men for the Christian ministry, but people set about this task in such diverse ways as, at least, to suggest some difference in fundamental conception. Some teachers seem to be content to produce the successful examinee—the creature who can endure ordeals and secure good degrees ; others, rather disdainful of the mere examinee, seek to stimulate independent thought, and to kindle and to fan the sacred fire of the love of truth—scientific, philosophical, ultimate ; but some humbly take it as their principal object to fashion and enlarge men, more eager to see humanity enriched in them than to see perfection in verbal or technical scholarship. The methods do not absolutely exclude one another, and yet the difference in stress at this point or that is almost bound to appear in some material difference in the output.

1. The first and easiest of these, both for teacher and student, is the plain, schoolmaster's plan. A teacher of Divinity may secure for his men a certain bowing acquaintance with theories and words, so that in their future reading these may be recognized ; he gives them careful summaries of the

characteristic positions of Augustine and Anselm and Abelard, of Calvin and Arminius, of Schleiermacher and Ritschl and Macleod Campbell, so that in their minds these teachers may have labels attached to them, indicating where each stands. An attentive student thus acquires what may be very serviceable—a sort of historical chart recording the movements of opinion ; but unfortunately not all students are attentive, and a host of them read and memorize the labels, and, as soon as the examination is over, cast the subject into the lumber-room of memory, where moth and rust do corrupt. For a week, or even for a month or two, they may attain to some knowledge of what a great master thought, but scarcely of why he thus thought, or of how his thought is related to the truth of the matter, or to the working theories of men to-day. The teaching is purely objective and factual. Even a good student thus trained is exercised in memory more than in understanding, so that what he does acquire remains essentially as foreign matter in his mind, a body of unassimilated facts and notes out of the history of human opinion. Emerson declares it 'essential for a theologian not to allow himself to be excluded from any Church.' He may or may not agree with the distinctive doctrines of a particular Church, but he ought to discern what in religion that Church is aiming at, and how even its errors are intelligible. But if a true theologian is not excluded from any Church the products of this kind of training never find entrance *into* any. Each doctrinal or liturgical type in turn is ticketed as

¹ An Inaugural Address delivered October 13, 1930, at the beginning of joint teaching and classes between the Divinity Faculty in Glasgow University and Trinity College.

orthodox or heterodox, Greek or Latin or Reformed, and no unifying religious sympathy comes in to bind them all together as so many unachieved endeavours after the mystery of God in Jesus Christ. There is no doubt that this pædagogic way is the easiest for the teacher, and it is vastly the least exacting for the student, but what is it worth for the ministry? What does it matter to the people whether a man has or has not in memory some vague idea of the positions held by Socinus or Amyraldus or Barth? They want to know what is true; they want news about God and the other world, and whether they have a part to play in it. That model administrator Gallio spoke for many Christians of to-day when he said: 'If it be a question of words and names and of your law (the orthodoxy of the particular Church objectively presented) look ye to it, for I will be no judge in such matters.'

2. The second rests on a far nobler conception, and, in some measure, it is found in all the great theologians, for to them the real subject of study has never been a mere succession of theories and opinions, but the unexhausted mysteries of God. They have often handled their theme in a way partisan and embittered—as Athanasians against Arius, Augustinians against Pelagius, Evangelicals against Rome. On their way to the goal they have had to take account of men who were seeking, as they thought, to mislead, and bitter words were spoken; but the goal itself was clear. Their one desire was to rest in nothing short of the Truth, in some fuller apprehension of the Divine Nature, and they sought to infect their disciples with the same clean ambition. To this task they brought monumental learning and unslackening study; by rigorous self-discipline they sought to secure that nature in them might be at its best, and then with prayer and mystical exaltation they laboured to reach beyond themselves and beyond human opinions to 'That which is.' The splendour of this conception irradiated the whole working out of it, though this may often now seem drearily scholastic; for even when fogs gather thick, shafts of Divine light strike through. 'Das Denken ist auch Gottesdienst,' as Hegel said—thinking is also a kind of worship. This sense of occupation with the Divine extended for them even to matters on the circumference. When discussing details in Textual Criticism, Bengel said: If He counts the hairs of my head, is it a small thing for me to concern myself with the fringes of His garment? Of a Jewish saint in Eastern Europe it was observed that as he laboured over the minutiae of the Law

his face glowed 'as if a lamp had been kindled within him.' The details might seem trivial, but then they were of God's appointing, and to be busied with them was to be busied with Him, so that study became sacramental. Hazlitt records about his father, an obscure Unitarian minister, that whilst in the books he read there was 'nothing to dazzle or to excite modern curiosity, yet to his lack-lustre eyes it was enough that in the unwieldy, neglected tomes there appeared the sacred name of Jehovah in Hebrew capitals. There were glimpses, glimmering notions of the patriarchal wanderings, with palm trees hovering on the horizon. Moses with the Burning Bush, and types and shadows—the great lapses of time, the strange mutations of the globe were all unfolded as the voluminous pages were turned over. My father's life was very much a dream, but it was a dream of infinity and eternity.' The splendour of God inspired such learned studies, for what engaged the student was not the vagaries of human opinion, but the ultimates of truth.

The same preoccupation with what is true is seen, in less exalted and romantic forms, in the modern conception of theology as science. A famous teacher in an American university is accustomed to impress on his students that theological investigation is subject to tests as austere as those in chemistry, and that, in the one as in the other, anything of the nature of bias, any wish for a particular result, must operate as a disqualification. If such a maxim were driven too hard it would readily topple over into absurdity, for a man who loves God, or who knows whom he has believed, might be held disqualified even for investigating the nature of God. The maxim is paradoxical, and yet there is a certain grandeur in the austerity of such an attitude. Pride must be humbled, traditional and customary preferences must be set aside; there must be no wresting of Scripture to one's own edification or to the support of one's own opinion, for it is truth we are after. Our concern is with the naked fact of things; and here supremely we are taught that humility and openness of mind are the prime intellectual qualifications of a theologian.

But at this point objections rise from more than one quarter. For one thing, there is a psychological question: is the truth about God which we seek to make our own to be attained by just these scientific instruments? Our Lord Jesus and His servant Paul, like Plato before them, were clear that the highest ranges of knowledge are not to be reached by merely logical process. There are 'things hidden from the wise and the clever, said Jesus, and revealed to babes.' When Paul writes

of the amazing commonplaces of God's mercy he borrows a phrase from Isaiah, but gives it a significant twist: the prophet had spoken of unimagined things as assured to 'those who *wait for God*,' but the apostle alters this to 'those who *love God*.' For in Paul's view, love is like another nobler sense, and those who are without it may miss what is clearly outspread before them. 'The heart,' as Pascal says, 'has reasons of which mere reasoning knows nothing.' Thus in these higher ranges an approach too narrowly intellectual may defeat itself, and the wise and the clever be left outside. But in view of the purpose of our ministry there is another very real objection. Too resolute an indulgence of intellectualism, even in the pursuit of Divine truth, tends to produce a certain spiritual isolation, cutting men off from their fellows and from the activities and purposes of life. Even on a humbler level many students of to-day in their later university terms profess that they grow stale and lose interest, because even if they mastered all that is set before them what the better would they be for life, with its manifold calls to help their fellows? Hazlitt complains that 'learning is the knowledge of that which none but the learned know.' A man, as he says, may be able to translate a word into ten different languages, and not know what the *thing* denotes in any language; and yet it is this which people, engrossed in the task of living, wish to know. It is possible for any one in his eagerness for scientific truth to become like a tortoise, so securely enclosed in the armour of his special learning as scarcely to touch the common life of men at all. Through holes for his feet that he may walk and his head that he may eat he 'leaks out on to the exterior world,' as Samuel Butler says, but otherwise he remains secluded and apart. The truth which he attains is scarcely what Wordsworth calls 'truth fit to be communicated.' And, unfortunately, there are theologians and even ministers of this kind, resolute in their love for truth, but essentially outsiders as regards the life and the needs of men.

3. But now we come to a conception of our task ampler and more inclusive than either of those we have considered. Our business, as every one at least in word agrees, is to train men for the ministry, which means that we train them so that, by preaching and by life, they may make God known to their fellows. But this cannot be achieved merely by furnishing them with a store of more or less relevant information, it cannot even be achieved by inflaming them with love for abstract truth; for when either or both of these is accomplished, what about the

people to whom they are to minister, with their great, gaping needs and their slow minds, with their rushes of appetite and their poisoned and embittered suspicions? Has anything substantial been done to make the teaching bear upon that life? Dr. Chalmers's ever-urgent precept was to get 'the theology of the Chair transmuted into the theology of the pulpit.' There is always a danger, as it seems to me and as the experience of Germany and Holland suggests, when men are appointed to Divinity chairs who have been students but never evangelists. 'The great danger in our own country,' says Principal Selbie, 'is that there should be a divorce between theology and personal religion. We must keep the two together. We must realize that in dealing with theology we are dealing with what affects man as well as God.'

I would not have you summarily dismiss either of the conceptions of which I have spoken. A detailed knowledge of the history of the movements of opinion is indispensable as a guide in theological thought; it gives us a kind of mental chart. Without this a man may plume himself on his own originality, when he is simply reviving opinions which were commonplaces to Origen or Aquinas. And still more indispensable for our work is the sacred thirst for truth—for the thing as it is. This belongs to our worship and reverence of God, and it is a supremely wholesome discipline of our temper as teachers and students. We need to realize that things will be as they will be and not as we should like to have them, that Scripture has a meaning and is not to be twisted or diluted to suit our opinions or our sentiment. We need to unlearn our predilections and to grasp the fact that it does not matter what we may think or prefer, since it is truth and the fact of things we are after. This humbling discipline must attend us in every part of our theological training, for God is always greater than any thoughts we have formed of Him, and reverently we must follow on to know the Lord. But this need not withdraw us from the life and the needs of men. 'Deep theology is the best fuel for devotion,' says Faber, for once it catches fire it burns long. To make God great to men—that is the soul of any preaching or any worship that is worth considering. Of Ebenezer Erskine it was said by a contemporary that a man who had not heard him preach had not 'heard the Gospel in its majesty,' and this quality of the preaching was the outcome not merely of a great nature deeply moved, but of profound and spacious thoughts of God. The deep theology found expression through a man, and thus to the multitude it came with power; but

to provide for the first and to leave the second out of account would be to break off our work when it is less than half done. The man can never be taken for granted. 'To teach religion,' says Carlyle, 'the first thing needful and the last, and indeed the only thing, is to find a man who *has* religion. All else follows from this—Church building, Church extension, and whatever else is needful follows ; but without this nothing will follow.' In comparison with the question of the man any consideration of orders is insignificant. A priesthood, when challenged to declare what it can do for men, may protest that it is of God and invested with authority ; but such protestations do not deserve a hearing. It is the man that counts and not the office : 'cucullus non facit monachum'—the cowl does not make the monk. As he stands to communicate the life that is in him he must on the one side be continually open to the fresh revelations and discoveries of a God who is never completely silent, but on the other side he must ever be open to the appeals of men—their ignorance and obstructions and blunderings, and their fierce assaults of trouble ; and in everything he must consider how the two may be brought together. This means that as he must be a man of God so he must also be a man among men, touched with the feeling of their infirmities. A great teacher of the Secession Church—Dr. Lawson of Selkirk—claimed that there are three main necessities for a Divinity student : that he be a true Christian, that he store up knowledge which he can afterwards communicate, and that he acquire a faculty for communicating it. This last does not mean acquiring a budget of elocutionary or rhetorical tricks, for the fewer of these you have the better for your real ministry, since it is the man that counts and not his tricks ; and there is scarcely a limit to what a man can be and do to his fellows, if only he be a whole man. Seneca stands as a world-renowned moralist, but Emerson says grimly of him what applies to many sermons : 'His thoughts are excellent, if only he had the right to utter them.' A preacher cannot always count on reason and nobleness in those who listen to him, and therefore he must be prepared

to give them of his own reason and nobleness ; but how if he has none but only a few pulpit dexterities ? A brilliant German woman said of Goethe : 'Other men I love with my own strength, but he teaches me to love with his strength' : for in contact with him she felt herself carried out into a world of richer powers and enthusiasms, where the familiar restricted world was left behind her.

Since, then, the equipping of the man is so vital, our work in all its departments must have this in view. Dogmatic is not to be handled as an abstract science, for its main theme is the nature and the life of a God who reveals Himself, and whom to know is life and life that lasts. The theology of the Chair ought to be such as can readily be transmuted into the theology of the pulpit. In Church History it is notable how Harnack, in a piece of research like his *Expansion of Christianity*, gave us one of the most impressive as well as instructive missionary books of our time ; learning there joined hands with life. Lindsay's masterly book on *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries* was largely the outcome of his missionary tour in India, and his volume on the German Reformation is, in many of its sections, directly a book for the soul. We whose business it is to teach the Old and the New Testaments have, in many ways, an easier task, if we do not lose ourselves in verbal subtleties, for we deal with a literature which everywhere is throbbing with human life. 'My impression is,' said A. B. Davidson, 'that literature is the most profitable study for the preacher ; for in it the human mind in all its breadth, its emotions, its aspirations, its idealism, its griefs and cries over failure—in a word, its humanity—is best to be seen.' That was spoken of literature in general, but it is certainly not less true of this Divine literature which tells of men's discoveries of God, and of how He sought and found them. At the centre of all our life must be prayer and the sense of dedication to a high adventure, and in this you students of the college can help one another, and thus do something to make our association here a living fellowship of faith and service in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.