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INSTALLATION

of the

REV. GEORGE H. MENNENGA, Ph.D.
Professor of English Bible and Missions

REV. LESTER J. KUYPER, Th.D.
Professor of Old Testament Languages and Literature

REV. WM. GOULOOZE, Doctorandus
Professor of Church History

Western Theological Seminary
HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1941
At Eight O'Clock, P.M.

THIRD REFORMED CHURCH
HOLLAND, MICHIGAN
The Rev. George H. Mennenga, Th.D
Professor of English Bible and Missions

Dr. Mennenga was graduated from Central College, Pella, Iowa, in 1920 with the A.B. degree. In 1926 he was graduated from Western Theological Seminary with the Th.M. degree. In 1933 the University of Iowa conferred upon him the Master of Arts degree in Psychology. Further work at the Universities of Illinois and Chicago, and at the Southern Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., enabled him to receive the Doctor of Philosophy degree from the last named institution in 1941, having done his major work in the field of Old Testament Prophets and Archeology.

Previous to coming to Western, Dr. Mennenga had rich experience both as pastor and as teacher. His pastorate was in Peoria, Illinois; his teaching experience was gained in High School, Academy, and in College teaching. For ten years Dr. Mennenga served as College Pastor and Director of Personnel at Central College.

Dr. Mennenga holds membership in the National Association of Biblical Instructors, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the American Oriental Society. He is author of "Paul's Conception of the Constituent Elements of the Self"; "A Technique for the Study of Crowd Behavior"—a collaborated work; "The Ethical and Moral Concepts of the Canonical Prophets"; and a "Study Guide for Old Testament History".
The Rev. Lester J. Kuyper, Th.D.
Professor of
Old Testament Languages
and Literature

Dr. Kuyper received his Doctor of Theology degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York in 1939, after having taken his Master of Theology degree at Princeton Seminary two years earlier. He was graduated from Western Theological Seminary in 1932 with the degree of Th.B. For his Master's Thesis Dr. Kuyper wrote on "The Ras Shamra Tablets and Their Bearing on the Old Testament". His Doctor's Thesis was on the subject, "The Doctrine of Sin in the Old Testament with Special Consideration Given to the Position of Reformed Theologians of the Netherlands, viz., A. Kuyper, H. Bavinck, and G. Ch. Aalders."

Dr. Kuyper did his college work at Hope College, Holland, Mich., from which he was graduated in 1928 with the A.B. degree. He has had previous teaching experience, and has served as pastor in two fields of our denomination.

Dr. Kuyper has membership in the Chicago Society of Biblical Research and in the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis.
The Rev. William Goulooze
Doctorandus
Professor of Church History

The Rev. William Goulooze, Th.B., came to the Seminary out of a large pastorate in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Board of Trustees of the Seminary selected him in 1939 to teach Historical Theology. After a successful two-year lectorship he was elected to become the occupant of the chair of Historical Theology.

Professor Goulooze received his A.B. degree from Central College, Pella, Iowa. He was graduated from Western Theological Seminary in 1928 with the Th.B. degree. In 1937 his church granted him a leave of absence for Post-graduate study, and he spent the year at the Free University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. He has completed all his residence requirements, has submitted his doctor's thesis, and awaits the return of normal conditions to receive his doctorate.

Professor Goulooze is the author of several books designed for use in catechetical programs, and of manuals for pastors and church officers. These books are being generally used in our churches.
REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich.—President Prof. Louis Berkhof.

Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich.—President Prof. Henry Schultze.


Chicago University—Divinity School—Prof. Marion H. Dunsmore, Ph.D., Kalamazoo, Mich.


Hope College—President Wynand Wichers, LL.D., Holland, Mich.


New Brunswick, N. J., Theological Seminary—President John W. Beardslee, Ph.D.

Northwestern Junior College, Orange City, Iowa—President Jacob Heemstra, D.D.


Also congratulations from—
Louisville, Ky., Southern Baptist.
Louisville, Ky., Presbyterian Seminary.
Omaha, Neb., Presbyterian Seminary.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Rev. Harry J. Hager, Ph.D., Chicago, Ill., President.
Rev. Abraham Rynbrandt, Kalamazoo, Mich., Vice President.
Mr. Edward Freyling, Grand Rapids, Mich.
Mr. William Westveer, Holland, Mich.
Mr. Albert Meyer, Holland, Mich.
Mr. William Hakken, Grand Rapids, Mich.
Mr. Titus Hager, Grand Rapids, Mich.
FORM FOR THE SERVICE OF INSTALLATION

Dearly beloved, it is known to you that the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, assembled in session this past June, elected to the office of Professor in Western Theological Seminary the three men whose names have frequently been published. We have now come to the happy moment when we may, by the authority of the church, induct them into their responsible positions. Let us proceed in the name of the Lord Jesus, the Head of His Church.

Inasmuch as by investiture into these offices, my brethren, your membership in the Classes will be terminated so that you may have membership in the General Synod of the Reformed Church, may I ask at this time for your letter of transfer to General Synod.

Holy Scripture teaches us that God, our heavenly Father, in gathering to Himself from among the lost children of men a Church to life eternal, is pleased therein to use the ministry of men. Also the Apostle Paul declares that the Lord Jesus Christ “gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” From these words the duties of the minister of the Word become perfectly apparent. These duties apply to you, my brethren, as they do to all who have been entrusted with the sacred responsibility of the Christian ministry, and have been discharged in previous places of service.

You are now, however, also to be entrusted with the added responsibility of training and preparing young men who aspire to the Gospel ministry. This duty is committed to your keeping and faithful discharge by the Reformed Church in America. That we may know your mind and purpose, allow me to address to you the following questions for your answer:

First, are you each and all willing, sincerely and in good conscience, to declare before the Lord and this congregation that you believe the Gospel of the Grace of God in Christ Jesus as revealed in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and as set forth in the Standards of the Reformed Church in America. Do you believe that these Standards agree with the Word of God, and do you reject all errors which are contrary thereto. Do you promise that you will diligently teach and faithfully defend the doctrines contained in the said Standards, and that you will not inculcate or write, either publicly
or privately, directly or indirectly, anything against the same, and that you will exert yourselves to keep the Church free from such errors?

Second, should it happen that any objections against the doctrines in the Standards of the church arise in your minds, do you promise that you will not, either publicly or privately, propose, teach or defend the same by preaching or writing until you have first fully revealed such objections to the General Synod, to whom you are responsible, that your opinions may receive a thorough examination in that body. Will you hold yourselves ready always to submit to the judgment of the General Synod, under the penalty, in case of refusal, to be censured by Synod?

Third, will you promise furthermore to be willing and ready always to comply with any demand from the General Synod for a more particular explanation of your sentiments respecting any article in the Standards, and are you ready to submit finally, without disturbing the peace of the churches, to the ultimate decision of the General Synod?

What do you answer?

God, our heavenly Father, who hath called you to this holy office, enlighten you with His Spirit; strengthen you with His hand; and so govern you in this ministry of teaching that you may decently and fruitfully walk therein; to the glory of His Name and the promotion of the kingdom of His Son Jesus Christ. Amen.
PROGRAM

Processional—“Onward Christian Soldiers” - Arthur Sullivan
The congregation will stand until the academic procession is seated.

Hymn—“The Church’s One Foundation” - Samuel Wesley
Seminary Chorus

Devotions

Professor John W. Beardslee, Ph.D.
President of New Brunswick Seminary

Music—“Over Life’s Tempestuous Sea” - Wilson
Seminary Trombone Quartet

Sermon—
Rev. Simon Blocker, D.D.
Professor of Practical Theology
President of General Synod

Hymn—“Jesus, I Have Promised” - Arthur H. Mann
Seminary Chorus
Soloist Robert Swart

Service of Inauguration

The President of General Synod

Charge to the Professors

Rev. Harry J. Hager, Ph.D.
Pastor of Bethany Reformed Church
Chicago, Ill.
President of Board of Trustees

Doxology

Prayer and Benediction

President Vander Meulen

Recessional
The congregation will remain in place until the academic procession has withdrawn.
THE SERMON
BY THE REV. SIMON BLOCKER, D.D.
President of the General Synod

A CHANGELESS CHRIST IN A CHANGING WORLD

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever."
Hebrews 13:8.

A group of Christian ministers nearing life's sunset were discussing the possibility of not being saved. They used the term "imaginary salvation." The view was expressed that a preacher of the Christian gospel may himself have only an imaginary salvation. Concerning the more than usual number of students for the ministry one wondered whether these young men are really saved. They talked in a most solemn manner, sometimes with quivering lips. They looked at one another as the conversation continued as if to say, "You have something, there, brother."

One of the group expressed some confidence because of his relish for the means of grace. His hope of salvation seemed to be grounded on spiritual appetite. His eyes were focussed on his inner state rather than on Christ. No one can tell exactly what may happen either physically or to the mental faculties when age creeps on. The question arises, "Is personal salvation jeopardized by infirmities of age?"

A somewhat younger minister ventured to quote Paul the Apostle in his epistle to the Thessalonians, "Knowing brethren beloved, your election of God." The apostolic assurance did not seem to strike home. The participants in the discussion were apparently clad in some kind of armour, but it did not seem to be "the whole armour of God." It is wise to keep reading Paul on the whole armour of God, and to make sure all of it is being used.

What Paul says about the wiles of the Devil is very much to the point. The Devil attacks at the point where a part of the whole armour of God is laid by. One of the most despicable phases of the Devil's meanness is his assault on God's servants who by reason of years and infirmities have remitted the pastorate. It may be a case of hardening of the arteries which the Tempter will use to try to induce a hardening of the heart in hope of upsetting an honored servant of Jesus Christ. But laying down the work does not mean putting off the armour. Whoever presumes to get along without the whole armour of God may presently find reason to doubt his salvation. Time is always well spent in praying for continuous experiences of the power of the Word of God, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever." "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ." "All other ground is sinking sand." Any thought of building confidence in the sphere of self must be stoutly resisted.

What Christ has been to believers in past ages, He is to believers today. What Christ has been in a believer's yesterday, He is in a believer's today and will continue to be. Christ never lets those who trust Him down. Christ's personal promise
is, “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.” No Christian will ever have reason to say, “Christ gave grace for grace for thirty, forty, fifty years, but got tired of it and stopped giving.”

A Christian has the treasure of his salvation in an earthen vessel. The vessel is fragile but the salvation is eternal. The vessel is easily broken but the salvation survives the shattered vessel, and includes its ultimate restoration and transformation.

God puts infinite beauty in finite containers. God works miracles of regeneration in poor, weak, sinful human beings. But the inspired words of the apostle Peter apply to all who have experienced God’s redeeming grace in Christ, “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

It is not amiss to test the Scripture, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever” at the point where the sun of life is sinking in the west. Who could preach a Christ Who gives you the cold shoulder when you need Him most? That Jesus Christ is forever the same guarantees a strong finish for those who have trusted and served Him. Not a strong finish perhaps to the naked eye, but a strong finish to one who has eyes to see the things not seen.

When General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, got on in years, blindness and other infirmities preceded his departure from this life. The poet, Vachel Lindsay, subsequently wrote a poem under the title, “General William Booth Enters Heaven.” He pictures Booth entering heaven, blind to be sure, but leading his converts in a rousing Salvation Army meeting, beating his big bass drum, while the large group kept singing, “Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?” Remember the astonishing contrast of the poet’s description to the weakness of a death-bed:

“Booth led boldly with his big bass drum—
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
The saints smiled gravely and they said, ‘He’s come.’
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
Walking lepers followed, rank on rank,
Lurching braves from the ditches dank,
Drabs from the alleyways and drug fiends pale—
Minds still passion-ridden, soul powers frail:—
Vermin eaten saints with moldy breath,
Unwashed legions with the ways of Death—
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”

At this point the poet introduces the playing of banjos while he continues to depict an exciting and hilarious scene:

“Every slum had sent its half a score
The round world over (Booth had groaned for more)
Every banner that the wide world flies
Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes.
Big voiced lasses made their banjos bang
Tranced, fanatical they shrieked and sang:—
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”
PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROGRAM

Hallelujah! It was queer to see
Bull-necked convicts with that land make free.
Loons with trumpets blowed a blare, blare, blare.
On, on upward through the golden air!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)"

Then as the bass drum beats more slowly and more softly, the
description goes on:

"Booth died blind and still by faith he trod,
Eyes still dazzled by the ways of God.
Booth led boldly, and he looked the chief:
Eagle countenance in sharp relief,
Beard aflying, air of high command
Unabated in that holy land."

At this point flute music is introduced.

"Jesus came from out the court-house door,
Stretched His hands above the passing poor;
Booth saw not, but led his queer ones there
Round and round the mighty court-house square;
Then, in an instant, all that blare review
Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new.
The lame were straightened, withered limbs uncurled,
And blind eyes opened on a new sweet world."

The bass drum now becomes louder as the poet continues:

"Drabs and vixens in a flash made whole!
Gone was the weasel-head, the snout, the jowl!
Sages and sibyls now, and athletes clean,
Rulers of empires and of forests green!"

There follows now a grand chorus of all instruments, with
tamborines to the foreground.

"The hosts were sandalled, and their wings were fire!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
But their noise played havoc with the angel choir.
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
Oh, shout salvation. It was good to see
Kings and princes by the Lamb set free.
The banjos rattled and the tamborines
Jing-jing-jingled in the hands of queens."

The instruments cease and there is reverent singing.

"And when Booth halted by the curb for prayer
He saw his Master thro' the flag-filled air.
Christ came gently with a robe and crown
For Booth the soldier, while the throng knelt down,
He saw King Jesus. They were face to face,
And he knelt aweeping in that holy place.
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)"

So the poet pictures it, showing General Booth, the good
soldier of Jesus Christ, weeping for joy at the sight of Jesus
and in possession of a crown and robe, symbols of heaven's
coronation. This imaginary poetic portrayal of General Wil-
liam Booth's entrance into heaven is true to the fact of a real
salvation and of Christ's purpose and power to bring His re-
deemed followers to promised permanence and plenitude. To
Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever, the weakness, dishonor and corruption which attend the collapse of mortal life are swallowed up in the victory which is ours in Him.

Christ can never fail. He is in the place of power at the right hand of God. He is doing now and will continue to do all He ever did as the qualified Redeemer of the world. Time changes men and men change with the times. Time does not change Christ and Christ does not change with the times. Christ is above all times and above all time. Christ can change both men and times, making bad times and bad men good and keeping watch over His own.

Consider the Christ of history. What Christ did in the days of His flesh has striking reference by Luke as he begins his book on the Acts of the Apostles. "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach." One who would know the measure of this beginning learns what he seeks in the last verse of John's Gospel, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written everyone, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." Vast as is the measure of what Jesus began both to do and to teach, and innumerable as are the many other things which Jesus did in that immense historical beginning, the supreme thing of being the world's Divine Redeemer was carried through to triumphant conclusion.

Christ made possible, by His atoning death, a new creative beginning in the bankrupt life of rebel man. In all His matchless doing, Jesus Christ made possible what a recent writer calls "the unheard of miracle of forgiveness" and thus repaired the breach between man and God. The heart of the Gospel is the Gospel of God's heart toward a world of lost sinners. In His life and saving deeds, Jesus Christ was Immanuel, God with us. "It pleased God that in Him should all the fulness dwell." "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

There is thus an historical yesterday in which Christ did something once for all as the Saviour of the world. It had to be done if there was to be a door of hope in the black-out of a sinner's despair. Man could not do it, he being the sinner who needed to be saved. God being God and holy and a God of love wanted to do it, and did it in the Son of His love. At the time and in the place and manner appointed, the birth of the holy child Jesus marked the coming of God into our human lot. The incarnation of the Son of God was an act of God giving a lost world Redeemer and redemption. The Redeemer achieved the redemption in the field of history. That is what is meant when Christianity is called an historical religion.

Jesus Christ is God pitching His tent among men for a season, as it were, to do a saving work of permanent significance in a passing world. "The one perfect sacrifice for sins forever" is in the form of a life laid down, the life of the God-man, the life of the incarnate Son of God. It is important to stress time, place, and form of God's supreme redeeming self-
revelation. In the sequence of human events, in world history, what Jesus was and did as the Christ of God had time and place and manner of expression. His life and work were accommodated, so to speak, to the temporal and spatial scheme of things. Men could fail to see and understand what was really going on and Who it was Who was functioning as Saviour. The carnal eye might regard this Divine visitor and victor as victim, and advertise its blind spots by ill-conceived slander and opposition. They who see with grace-washed eyes know Who it is that came, where He came from, why He came, what He did and what He is forever qualified to be and do. They who thus see know that God was in Christ; that what the Christ of history did, God did; that over the Gospel records of Jesus the eye of faith sees written the words, “An Act of God” or “God’s Answer to Man’s Sin.” That act and answer of God are God’s all-inclusive, once-for-all, permanently valid and operative act and answer to our human predicament as sinners. It means that in a universe constructed as a moral order, created and controlled by a righteous and loving God, rebel man has possibility of restoration to Divine favor and of a new creative beginning through Divine redemption.

Time marches on, but that is no reason for supposing that such an act of God is doomed to oblivion. Historical happenings grow dim as new times and events claim interest. Oblivion, however, cannot be the fate of that part of history which is so specially the story of God’s purpose and power to redeem. God made suitable provision. The Jesus of history made His disciples men of the secret by His disclosures concerning the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was sent to reveal Christ, to guide into all truth, to convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. The Day of Pentecost marked the coming of the promised Spirit. The Holy Spirit came upon the believing, waiting primitive Christian church. He did for those early believers what Christ had promised.

The Holy Spirit makes Christ the contemporary of every true believer. He makes the Jesus of history the Christ of the ages. The Holy Spirit makes the Christ Who died and rose and ascended into heaven a perpetual presence in the heart of a Christian. The Divine intention is that the body of a Christian shall be a temple of the Holy Spirit and his heart the home of the living, reigning Christ.

The Holy Spirit is God’s provision for making the historical Christ the Christian’s personal possession. The Holy Spirit makes Christ a universal Presence, available to all believers of whatever race and time. Christ is thus personally present in a Christian in all the grace and power of Divine Saviourhood. Christ is never out of the world He died to redeem. Christ is never out of the heart that wants Him. Bad as world conditions are, Christ is on hand, ready to forgive and mighty to save. The Gospel bells are still ringing. Blessed news of free salvation is still in process of being proclaimed. The Great Deliverer lives and is here with valid offer of immediate deliverance. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.”
The one sufficient asset of the Christian church, the Christian ministry, and the Christian laity is the living, reigning, ever-present, universal, ageless, deathless, contemporary Christ. The church as a divine and supernatural institution has what the world needs, and what it takes to fulfil her function in society. Omnipotent resources are as available and sufficient as dependence on God is absolute. The triumphant Christ is forever the same to equip His church for her task and to be the competent Saviour of all who turn to Him.

The unanimous testimony of the primitive Christian church expresses the united witness of nineteen centuries of Christian experience, “And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” All generations of Christians subscribe to the statement, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and forever.” Here surely is an astonishing phenomenon, the reality and preciousness of Christ to so many millions of people through the centuries. Every one of them, each in his own time and place, believed in the living Christ as personal Saviour and Lord, and learned by experience what it means to have Christ, the living Christ, dwelling in the heart by faith.

“Christ liveth in me,” said Paul the apostle, and in his testimony is spokesman for universal Christian experience. The Christian life is at once dependent and supernatural. Christ lives in His body, the church. The crown of all possibility for the human spirit is to afford residence to Christ, our contemporary. However low man sinks, the church sees what is possible, and is charged to fulfil its function of realization and expression.

The main interest of the Bible is its Christology in the totality of its vast significance. The reason for studying the Bible and teaching it is that both study and teaching may be God’s technique in making the Christ of history and the Christ of the ages the Christ of experience.

Why are we here and why do we carry on? It is because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. The permanence of Christ explains the Christian church, theological seminaries, Christian colleges and academies, and the multitude of Christians the world over. The Christian gospel is the Gospel of the Christ Who lives forever in the power of an endless life. By the preaching of that Gospel sinners are converted and delivered from the penalty, the power, the pollution of sin. Those who turn from self to Christ find Him more than equal to the necessities of our human predicament. The Changeless Christ gives those who have recourse to Him a great life, sustaining them on high levels of character, vision, service and well-being.

It is the purpose of theological instruction to make known and real the Christ of history in terms of personal realization. Specialization in Christian living is as imperative as specialization in chosen field of Christian scholarship. The aim is to know Christ to preach and to teach Him in the power of the Holy Spirit, so to preach and to teach and to love and to live Him that those taught may enter more and more deeply into the experience of Christ’s personal and cosmic significance.
One concomitant of Christian theological instruction is the elevation of Seminary life to Pentecostal levels. The late Elbert Hubbard once wrote in his pungent magazine this statement, “The last place to find God is in a theological seminary.” The currents of human life tend naturally to godlessness, and even theological instruction can be caught in the sweep of prevailing humanism. An undertaker is apt to lose reverence for the human body because it is a corpse when he handles it. So one who constantly handles the Word of God may come to handle it professionally, as a cold, formal, lifeless thing. This surely is to handle it deceitfully, that is to say, to be a crook in the handling of it.

No man has more reason to walk humbly with God and to pray without ceasing than a theological professor. He brings to his task quite a stock of the wisdom of the world on which God has long since rendered the verdict of foolishness. Now God can make even this foolishness to praise Him if it is humbly held, and if the professor holds it loosely with a due sense of detachment. The God Who sets lilies in scum-crowned ponds can exhibit diamonds of revealed truths in worldly-wise settings. The exhibition calls for special grace in the person who is God’s agent.

The maxim, “Beware of the man of one book” is worth pondering if the book in man and maxim is the Bible. The Bible is the book of Christ and for that reason the book of the hour. One who specializes in it, in relevant commentaries and other pertinent Christian literature, becomes possessed of a wisdom of God which alone can speak to the ignorance and confusion of the time. Prayerful dependence on God for the Holy Spirit must be constantly operative because insidious pride lurks in advancing knowledge, even in advancing spiritual knowledge.

The Bible is the story of the Divine crusade of redemption, a crusade which leads up to Christ and centers and is completed in Him. Study of the book and the teaching of it must therefore be Christ-centered. Psychology to the contrary notwithstanding, it is better for Bible study and Bible teaching to be Christ-centered than to be student-centered, or problem-centered, or period-centered, or doctrine-centered, or progress-centered, or what have you. Fortunately the methods are not mutually exclusive, seeing that student, problem, period, doctrine and progress may have Christ at the very heart of them. One can go at it both in study and teaching, in the spirit of the hymn, “What will it be to see Jesus?” One will take time out now and again from intellectual sweat and travail for a spiritual song and raise the roof with it,

“When I behold the King,  
Robed in glorious majesty,  
I shall rejoice and sing, etc.”

Study and teaching in the field of Christian scholarship may at any moment become mounts of vision and transform theological instruction into prophetic and apostolic utterance.
Jesus Christ is the same forever. This age of man's self-deification and self-reliance is blind to His glory. But Christ has not dropped out of the Bible, or out of His church, or out of the hearts of His people, or out of the life of the world. Christ's present operations are still the world's biggest business. Every time a sinner puts his trust in the Saviour there is a miracle of redemption and resurrection. The miracle of grace which causes a poor sinner to walk in newness of life is bigger news than the sinking of a ship with crew and cargo. It takes no genius to kill, although genius is applied to it, and makes it possible on a bigger scale. But to create spiritual life under the ribs of carnal death is God operative in the eternally living Christ.

The preaching of the true Christian gospel is the Divine technique for bringing souls, dead in trespasses and sins, into regenerative contact with the living Redeemer. Here lies the only promise of a better world. Wonderful as man is in creative genius, he cannot behave himself without a new birth from God. He builds cities in his own honor, and bombs them from the sky. His will to destroy matches his will to construct, with savagery to spare. The only alternative before our bleeding world is, "Back to Christ or on to hell."

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever." The same Person, God incarnate; occupying the same position, the place of power at God's right hand; the same in purpose, to seek and to save that which is lost; the same in power, able to save unto the uttermost; the same in permanence, living in the power of an endless life; the same in preciousness to all true believers, the fairest of ten thousand to the soul; the same in His preeminence, with name above every name; the one, solitary, unique and only saving name; the same in fundamental principle of life, the spirit of sacrificial, redeeming love; the same in presence in His church and with His people; the same in perfections as pattern and power of holy living; the same in promises, exceeding great and precious promises; the same in patience toward those who grieve Him by a thousand falls; the same in plenitude of gifts, gifts of pardon, peace, purity, power, prospects to believers of every age and race and land.

You can count on Christ. The church can count on Christ. The world, self-condemned in universal ruin, can count on Christ. Whoever fades out of the picture, Christ abides. Whoever fails his fellowmen, Christ is sure standing ground. Whatever goes stale, Christ is source and secret of perennial refreshment. The Ancient of days continues the Fountain of life to famished souls. No one can die in any real sense with such a Christ. Life does not begin until one has Christ. Whatever is shaken, there are things which cannot be shaken because the stamp of Christ guarantees stability. What Christ creates, lasts. What Christ gives is for keeps.

A Christian is saved and kept safe by Christ. Salvation and security depend not on feelings or health of body or mind, but on Christ. The arm of flesh is bound to fail, but Christ can never fail. He is the Rock of Ages, the only safe Pilot, the sea of life smooth or rough.
Jesus Christ has survived all heresies and schisms, all intellectual movements to argue Him out of existence, all rebellious uprisings to banish Him out of His own universe, every way of life that would end His reign. "Why do the nations tumultuously assemble? The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, against Jehovah, and against His anointed." "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord will have them in derision. Then will He speak unto them in His wrath, And vex them in His sore displeasure: Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."

The fact that Jesus Christ is forever the same settles everything. Why worry? All duty becomes clear in Him. There is no wrong that shall not be righted, no crime that shall not be avenged, no penitent sinner who will be denied mercy, no suffering for Christ's sake which shall not have reward of true well-being and rapture.

Theological Seminaries must go on giving instruction in the inexhaustible significance of Christ. They must continue to send forth God-intoxicated young men to proclaim the adorable and incomparable Saviour. The changeless Christ explains everything, inspires, empowers, guarantees, sustains and completes all Christlike endeavor. All lost good is being conserved, even our tears are divinely bottled, and every dream dreamed in Christ shall have millennial realization. Christ is all, more and greater than all problems, difficulties, fears, hatred, bitterness, weakness, sickness, sorrow and death.

"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under Thee."

The passionate prayer of Charles Wesley expresses how Christ's servants may become Christ's arrows:

"Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart
With boundless charity divine;
So shall I all my strength exert
And love them with a zeal like Thine;
And lead them to Thine open side,
The sheep for whom the Shepherd died.

My talents, gifts and graces, Lord,
Into Thy blessed hands receive;
And let me live to preach Thy word,
And let me to Thy glory live;
My every sacred moment spend
In publishing the Sinner's Friend."
THE CHARGE TO THE PROFESSORS

THE REV. HARRY J. HAGER, PH.D.
President of the Board of Trustees

"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." 2 Timothy 2:2.

These words of Paul to Timothy are in the form of a charge, and as such may well furnish us with both the substance and the pattern of the charge to be delivered for the occasion of this evening. It is evident that Paul has in mind a certain deposit which he had entrusted to Timothy and which he in turn is now challenged and charged to commit to faithful men, who should become qualified to teach others also.

You three men stand as Timothys before our denomination tonight. One is Professor of Bible, which book is the light entrusted to you as a keeper and transmitter. One is Professor of the Old Testament which is the base of the lamp out of which the taper of the New Testament draws the oil of its fuller radiance. One is Professor of Church History a record that recounts the tale of that light and its transmission, how it flickered, flared, or flamed as it was handed down from one generation to another. One is also Professor of Missions, that tells of those to whom the light is being handed or must still be passed. In each case it is a deposit which you are charged to keep, one and the same deposit, a torch to pass on, one and the same torch. Let us explore the significance of this solemn committal by addressing two interrogations to our text. First, whose deposit is this that Paul has committed to his son in the faith and is charging him to re-commit in true apostolic succession? And, secondly, what is its content?

I. WHOSE DEPOSIT?

The Church is a complex organism and a versatile institution. She is the body of Christ, the Bride of the King, the arsenal of Christ’s Army, a hospital for the wounded, an oasis for the pilgrim, a shelter for the tempted, a haven for the derelict, the vineyard of the Husbandman, the school of godliness, a light on a hill, a salt in society. But among all these, she is especially the depository of the gospel, the pillar and ground of truth. God has embedded the golden ore of truth in many mountain ranges and along many swift streams of His great revelation, but the church of Christ is the special depository, the Fort Knox where the mined and minted metal of the truth of His special revelation is laid up in safe-keeping for each successive generation of believers. The ascended Head of the church, having led captivity captive, is the benevolent bestower and committer, who, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, gives good gifts unto his body, which is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

You men, therefore, like Timothy stand here as before the whole church, and particularly before the Reformed Church in America, to receive a definite commitment from the heart of
Christ by the hand of your denomination. The seminary which is committed to your care is a school of the church. Let it never degenerate into “just another school of higher learning.” Keep it a church school. Waste no time aping the modern university graduate divinity schools, most of which are better adapted to produce research specialists than to supply the churches with well-trained and thoroughly devoted shepherds.

These students, entrusted to your discipline, are the church’s students, here first of all by the call of Christ, by the prayers of the church, and on the recommendation of their local consistories, and subsequently to be received back into the channels of the church’s throbbing life through the same gateway of a local consistory, congregation and classis. Be sure always that it is with the brand of Christ, the hall-mark of the church, and the initials of the R. C. A. that they leave these halls, and not simply with the stamp of professorial individuality.

You yourselves also, are first of all Christ-men and church-men. Beware of the detachment of the average modern scholar, the ultramundane atmosphere of the academic which is often the prelude of “a grammarian’s funeral.” All three of you have for some years been faithful and successful ministers in the thick of the conflict, bearing the burden and heat of the day. Continue to think of yourselves first of all as ministers of the Word of God and only secondary as professorial specialists in particular fields of theological discipline. Esteem the letter V.D.M. (Minister verbi dei) more highly than the most deserved academic distinction.

Receive, then, the high and holy responsibility which has just now been entrusted to you from Christ the great Head, and from the Holy Spirit His Great Administrator, and from the affianced hand of the church, which is His Bride. “For just as there are many parts united in our human bodies, and the parts do not all have the same function, so collectively we form one body through union with Christ and are individually linked with one another. And having special gifts differing in accordance with the diversified work graciously entrusted to us, if it is preaching, let us employ our talent up to the full measure of our faith, if it is a gift of administration, let it be exercised with a sound sense of duty, and if it is the gift of teaching, let him that teaches exercise his talent with the same sense of responsibility to the body as a whole.”

II. WHAT DEPOSIT?

Let us address another interrogation to our text, “The things thou hast heard of the apostles (by) many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” What are these things which Timothy received among many witnesses from the Apostle and which he is charged to transmit to faithful men who also shall be able to communicate it to others? The substance of them may be culled from a perusal of the Timothy letters themselves.

One of Paul’s principal concerns in these epistles is the inviolate preservation and the pure transmission of sound doctrine. “Charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither
give heed to fables. O Timothy, keep that which is committed
to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and opposi­tions of science falsely so called: which some professing have
erred concerning the faith. Hold fast (even) the form of sound
words, which thou hast heard of me. For the time will come
when they will not endure sound doctrine: but after their own
lusts shall they heap up to themselves teachers having itching
ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth.” The
present-day plague of pernicious heresy and widespread apos­tasy calls for a ministry that is thoroughly grounded in the
truth of God’s Word, and adequately equipped to detect, diag­nose, and controvert every recurring afflatus of strange and
counterfeit doctrine.

Let the emphasis in your teaching then, be first on the
“what”, and then, secondly on the “how” of true apostolic
preaching. Both are necessary, but the man with a message
may by the rigorous pedagogy of trial and error, overcome de­fi­ciencies of manner and method, whereas the pulpits of America
are cluttered with “copy-cat” masters of rime and rhetoric
and petty practitioners of the art of clever epigram.

When young men (present with us tonight) launch out from
this School of the prophets, their audiences will forgive them
many a seminariai deficiency, but two things they will assume
and expect: first, that they will be thoroughly saturated with
Bible lore, and second, that they will be completely equipped
to propagate and defend sound doctrine with perfect under­standing of and commitment to the confessional standards of
their own denomination.

In addition to this Paul had committed to Timothy also the
deposit of a sacred office “with the laying on of the hands of
the presbytery.” In the course of some months each graduate
of this seminary will also in the providence of God under the
direction of the Head of the Church attain to that most solemn
moment of the laying on of hands. It is your high obligation
as Timothys in our church to hold up before these prospective
selectees for the holy office of the gospel ministry the blue
ribband of their heavenly calling, the dignity of their ambas­dorship, the “towel and basin” insignia of their royal service.
Charge these faithful men, who shall be able to teach others
also, that they learn even now to magnify their prospective
office, that they make full proof of their forthcoming ministry,
that they seek to emulate the great company of noble men who
in the generations of the past have graced and adorned this
most responsible and difficult of all callings.

The Apostle writes to Timothy also in terms of a high and
strategic military mission to which he has been assigned.
“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to
the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them
mightest war a good warfare, enduring hardness as a good
soldier of Jesus Christ, and not entangling yourself with the
affairs of this life; that you may please him who hath chosen
you to be a soldier.” Among its many functions our Seminary
is also outstandingly a West Point of Christian military serv­ice. The noble company of Reformation martyrs and the ser-
ried ranks of battle-scarred veterans who have held the front trench in the defense and propagation of the Reformed faith look to our West Point of service, and cry to these prospective captains of the faith:

“To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.”

O Timothys, acquaint these faithful men beforehand with the crucial testings and fiery trials, the head-aches and the heart-aches, the buffetings and revilings, the weariness and the painfulness, the watchings and wrestlings, the intermittent fastings and the daily dyings, and besides all these things the sapping care of the churches. Keep in the thick of the struggle yourselves, and inspire them with the all-compensating grace of the promise, “For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.” Inspire them, too, with the joy and privilege of spending and being spent for such a great-hearted Commander. When early in the middle ages the White Friars were being recruited for missionary service to the Mohammedans of Northern Africa, a bishop wrote over the credentials of a young applicant, “Visum pro martyrio”—“passed for martyrdom,” and looking up into the face of the young novice, he inquired: “Son, are you ready for that?” Swift came the answer: “Sire, I came for that.”

“The Comradeship of souls supreme
Conscripts of a mighty dream
Brave souls who took the perilous trail,
Who knew the vision could not fail.”

As Paul was a spiritual father to Timothy, so Timothy must be a father in Christ to the faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. Remember, many of these “novitiates” are for the first time away from the home church and the household hearth, far from the constant kindly counsel of their own parents, their pastor, their respected elders, their former Sunday School teacher. Whose is the responsibility, then, of watching over the inner culture of their souls? Who shall prepare them inwardly for their ultimate examination in “personal piety?” Who will charge them to exercise themselves unto godliness; to be an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in love, in spirit, in faith; to follow after righteousness, patience, meekness; to flee youthful lusts, and keep themselves pure? Never shall I forget the pastoral visits of one of my seminary professors at a time of illness in my own student days, and how from such and similar kindnesses we as a student body were impressed more from his presence than from his precept that we servants of Christ must be before we can do, and that when a sermon has been fully prepared, there still remains the preparation of one’s own self.

Christ also commits to every minister of Christ the keeping of His church as a household of faith. Paul charges Timothy with this responsibility in these words: “That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to conduct thyself in the house of God,” and declares that an overseer should rule well His own house lest he be disqualified from the care and management of the church of God. This is one of the most stag-
gering of all ministerial responsibilities for the shoulders of youth and inexperience to assume, and especially today with the "zeit-geist" of anarchy and lawlessness insinuating its way into the very sanctuary of God's own house. As Moses was faithful in all his house, and his antitype endured all manner of contradiction against himself, so must the spiritual householder of today strive, spite of fightings without, and fears within, to maintain decency and order in the church as a colony of heaven in the midst of the growing inferno of revolution in society and chaos in the world.

And lastly, mid this chaos Christ has given to his church the lamp of prophecy—"the more sure word whereunto we do well to take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the daystar arise in our hearts." With this lamp in hand the twentieth century servants of the message can stand on Zion's walls as sentinels who have understanding of our strange and perilous times.

O Spirit of the living God,
In all Thy plenitude of grace,
Where'er the foot of man hath trod,
Descend on our apostate race.

Give tongues of fire, and hearts of love,
To preach the reconciling word;
Give power and unction from above,
Whene'er the joyful sound is heard.

Be darkness, at Thy coming, light,
Confusion, order in Thy path;
Souls without strength inspire with might;
Bid mercy triumph over wrath.

O Spirit of the Lord, prepare
All the round earth her God to meet;
Breathe Thou abroad like morning air,
Till hearts of stone begin to beat.

Baptize the nations; far and nigh
The triumphs of the cross record;
The name of Jesus glorify,
Till every kindred call Him Lord.

O mighty age of prophet-kings, return!
O truth, O faith, enrich our urgent time!
Lord Jesus Christ, again with us sojourn;
A weary world awaits Thy reign sublime!

Edmund Burke once said that he knew not how to present an indictment against a whole nation or people. And so, especially since no provision is made in this program, I hesitate to "charge" our whole denomination whose servants in an official sense these men have now become. Let the whole denomination on this occasion be reminded, however, of the apostolic injunction "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived;
God is not mocked: for whatsoever a denomination soweth (sparingly) that shall it also (sparingly) reap." Let the denomination through its generous support make it always possible for our professors to be in the very forefront of theological equipment and training and since they are less intimately related by pastoral bonds to any particular flock, let all churches bear them up in constant intercession before the throne of grace.

To you, faithful men, who are now being taught, but who presently shall be able to teach others also, an added word in closing may not be out of place. Receive these, your professors, as your denomination's duly appointed overseers and ministers of theological instruction. Seldom does the average student awake to the sense of gratitude to his professor till the gray dust of the relentless campaign has begun to settle on his brow. A minister who knew that he was definitely called of the Lord to his new charge served out his first year in the frigid and hostile atmosphere of a most uncordial reception of himself and his message. In desperation, on the occasion of the first anniversary of his acceptance of the call, he asked the great Head of the Church to lead him to the right text. The text was laid on his heart. Then after much wrestling in prayer he brought its message with mighty, moving and transforming power. And these were the words of his text to that stolid Dutch congregation: 2 Corinthians 7:2 "Geef ons plaats" ("Receive us," or better, "give us a place in your hearts.") And so we also say to this student body, "Don't let your respect and gratitude for your mentors wait upon the maturing of the years, but give to these men of God both in your affections and in your prayers the place that Paul had in the life of Timothy: "for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."