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voiced their desire in no uncertain terms. Over 100 seventh grade pupils have asked for the privilege to continue the work they had last year.

It is impossible to measure spiritual values by statistics. Parents testify to the fact that the Bible stories and truths really do take hold of the lives of the pupils, and that the pupils bring home the lessons learned in the Bible classes. Frequent reports come from mothers and teachers of Sunday school classes to the effect that there is a renewed interest in the work on Sunday because the children have the work also during the week. It has been especially noted that some of the boys who were indifferent or disliked to go to Sunday school are more interested since they have a better working knowledge of the Bible. The interest this year is just as keen as last year, and it is gratifying to note the anticipation and enthusiasm with which the children look forward to the days in the school week when they will have their Bible lesson.

Re-organization of the Theological Seminary in the Light of the Needs of Today

HENRY B. ROBINS, PH.D.*

What is desired is not reorganization of the institution in the interest of an anachronistic system. Only as we bring our fundamental assumptions under review can we hope to achieve a thorough going reorganization. A somewhat different view of the older theological disciplines would be guaranteed were we to substitute a humanistic appreciation of the Bible for its dominant dogmatic use. Instead of a closely articulated system of final truths Christian theology would include a formulation of those massive religious convictions which enable modern life to function at its best. Instead of reviewing the development of heresy and theological scholasticism and the like, the historical disciplines would show us how that vital entity which we call Christianity functioned in a given age or in successive ages, actually constructing and using the tools which it found needful—and with the corollary that our age can do no less.

With such a view we shall preserve our vital connection with the past, while ceasing to face toward it. We shall reverence all that was highest in its disclosure, but we shall know in our innermost being that when religion ceases to be current experiment it dies. With this view, we shall be able to make fundamental place in our reorganized institution for what is now only accommodated and incidental, and we shall find time in an otherwise too crowded schedule for the study of contemporary demand.

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With these preliminary considerations in mind, let us inquire what new appreciations of our day make reorganization imperative. A glance at these will not only make clear why we must reorganize but may indicate, at least in part, the form and direction such reorganization must assume.

Our age is bound to make the democratic experiment. This is not to say that all the forces now dominant have the interests of a genuine democracy at heart; many of the deepest human motives are in fact anti-democratic. But our age will make the democratic experiment, and the great question for us is not whether democracy will vote the seminary out of existence as a vested interest, but whether, without the religious interpretation and motivation of life, we can have a genuine democracy.

Now if the representatives of religion, and the seminaries among them, hold that it embodies a finished, ultimately formulated and guaranteed interest, they are by so much unlikely to come close to an age interested in what is not finished, formulated and guaranteed—the democratic experiment. But if religion, too, is understood as a major experiment of the race, a dynamic factor in a growing world, then may religion and democracy integrate.

Among the newer appreciations discernible in this age of the democratic experiment we may discriminate the following:

1. *The Activist.* The age has a sense of movement, of change, of the mobility of reality, its plasticity and response to human will, such as no previous age possessed. It has a corresponding interest in effecting changes, in doing and achieving. In the terms of democracy, this means a willingness to assume responsibility, to grapple with social situations, to attack the problems of our common life, instead of allowing the brunt of it to fall upon the weakest and the outcome to be an accident rather than an achievement.

2. *The Solidaristic.* Two notable achievements represent the growing feeling of solidarity in our world: the achievement of an increasing common consciousness within the Christian community, and the crystallization of class consciousness within the labor world. These have grown apace within the last generation; each has achieved an ideal universality. Not only so, but within the Christian group there is a growing interest in other groups, in the labor world and in religious groups other than Christian. The new effort at appreciation which tends to temper sheer criticism is significant. The spread of this interest to the field of internationalism is now the most absorbing of topics. It can safely be asserted that the essential democratic motive roots in this feeling of solidarity.

3. *The Genetic.* Our age has won a new appreciation of process, growth, development. One thinks especially of this new appreciation in connection with educational psychology and the psychology of religious experience, which emphasize the fact that moral will and the experience of religion function in every normal life almost from

its beginning. The result is that we have a new appreciation of the pivotal character of childhood and youth. We know that the battle for character and religion is not won on some day of crisis alone but through the uneventful and continuous movement of the nurture process. The genetic appreciation guarantees the extension of democracy to childhood and youth.

4. *The Realistic.* Our age wants the facts. It is intensely impatient of pettifogging in politics or religion. How manifold have been the reactions of our soldiers against unreality! "Speak the truth and shame the devil!" is the demand of the times. "No matter what authority says, no matter what antiquity thought, give us the facts!" It is amazing how much political wisdom, diplomacy, philosophy and even theology is thus disposed of. All this means that our age is impatient of efforts at complete, all inclusive, final formulations. When it asks for the facts, it wants just what has direct and immediate bearing upon life. Moreover, it doesn't want truth in occult form which can be understood only by the learned, the ordained, the initiate; it wants truth in plain terms that the wayfarer may understand. This also is democracy.

5. *The Idealistic.* For all its realistic bent, our age is also idealistic. It was the persistent and growing idealism of the Allies which won the war. It was a constructive propaganda of idealism which maintained the morale of the troops. It is an undaunted idealism which demands a league of nations. Even Bolshevism's blind thrust toward democracy has a half formulated idealism behind it. Our age is persistently idealistic and futurist, for all its materialisms and futilities; and only a persistent and self-clarifying idealism can ever fully establish democracy throughout the world.

If the seminary continues a system of thinking, an attitude toward life, which is in any degree a despair of human effort, an acute individualism, a static donationism, an occult mystification of the plain man or a denial of his dreams, it will counter the profoundest appreciations of the age it seeks to serve. By every contemporary consideration, the seminary must stop looking backward and take a look around and a look ahead.

The ministry of our day needs an ample acquaintance with the past, because the present springs from the past; but its crying need is a more accurate acquaintance with contemporary life—with its organization and definition; its aspirations and motives; its idealisms and defects. Especially does the ministry need a more accurate knowledge of those psychological and sociological principles which condition all constructive effort in modern society. To say that the ministry needs a more immediate, human, personal, experimental acquaintance with contemporary life, is just to say that it needs a more scientific grasp of it; for the humanistic approach to the world of men is also the scientific approach. Only such a knowledge of contemporary life can give one a knowledge of the technique of experimentation and

construction. The minister must have this, because religion is both an individual and a community experiment; it is the one because it is the other. It is the minister's business to see the experiment through, not merely to initiate it.

This approach to the matter makes clear certain requirements to which the seminary must give heed in its process of reorganization.

1. *Reduction.* A reduction of the standard disciplines is necessary, or, at any rate, a reduction in the proportion of available time given them in the older curriculum. If some such view be taken as the earlier part of this paper suggests, it will be found quite possible to reduce the requirement without impairing scholarship.

2. *Diversification.* The curriculum must be diversified by the inclusion, on equal footing with the older disciplines, of newer disciplines, several of which—such as Religious Education, Christian Sociology, and Christian Missions—have received recognition within the last decade or two.

3. *Experimentation.* There must be an elaboration of clinical and laboratory facilities and the extension in every possible direction of the principle of learning through self-activity. This requirement contemplates not so much the acquisition by the student of contemporary standard methods as, in addition thereto, the development of ability to set up and carry through independent experimentation in his major field and to evaluate results.

4. *Specialization.* There is needed an articulation of the elective system with the group system, in such fashion that the demands of a diversified ministry can be met by definite professional training for the discharge of a special function. Specialized training in a particular function or group of functions can be secured by giving the last year or two years of the course to the prosecution of studies within a professional group of subjects. To make this system most effective, there should be close personal supervision of each student's work. This has been secured by the appointment of faculty advisors who are held responsible for the personal direction of a limited number of students working in their department.

5. *Self-criticism.* Institutions need to elaborate a technique of self-criticism and evaluation whereby they shall be able to determine when adjustments are required and to test the results of new ventures.

Thus only can we keep close enough to human need to make articulate the voice of God which speaks through that need to our generation. Thus only may we hope to equip a ministry which shall appeal to men as a voice and not an echo, an interpretation and not an anachronism.