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132nd
Commencement



WALTER RUSSELL BOWIE

Virginia Theological Seminary, '08

132ND COMMENCEMENT

Ideal weather, exceptionally fine addresses, a splendid graduating class and many alumni and friends all combined to enable the 132nd Commencement to take its place with the long list of memorable commencements.

Kenneth Heim was able to get here to preach the Missionary Sermon on Wednesday night and to receive a Doctor in Divinity degree on Thursday. After hearing him on Wednesday evening, all were convinced that the Seminary was not only honoring a great missionary statesman, but also honoring itself in conferring the degree on Ken Heim.

The graduating class, of which Hobart H. Heistand of Harrisburg is president, numbered 62. Two received statements of work accomplished, 7 certificates of special study, 8 certificates of graduation, and 45 the degree of Bachelor in Divinity. In addition, 3 men who had graduated previously and who had subsequently done the additional work required by the Faculty, to qualify for the degree, were awarded the degree of Bachelor in Divinity. They were Herbert A. Willke ('54), Donald S. Barrus ('52) and Rollin S. Polk, Jr. ('45).

Thomas C. Schmidt ('55) and his wife are going to Colombia, South America. Alfred C. Krader ('55) and his wife, and Samuel Van Culin, Jr. ('55) are returning to Hawaii and will be on hand to welcome all alumni attending the General Convention in Hawaii in September. Samuel F. Dennis ('55), after a year of graduate study, is returning to Liberia and will carry our greetings to E. Bolling Robertson ('43) and to James L. Tucker ('52) and his wife.

Thirteen men were ordained in the Chapel on Friday of Commencement Week — 4 for the Diocese of Virginia, 1 for West Virginia, 1 for Ohio, 1 for Olympia, 1 for North Texas, 1 for Massachusetts, 2 for Missouri and 2 for Honolulu.

Some 40 members of the Class of '54 returned for Seminars with the Faculty on Friday and Saturday of Commencement Week. Sixteen brought their wives and two brought off-spring! Ted Jones was secretary for the group. The class requested the Faculty to consider the feasibility of a week-long conference for graduates of the last ten years. This conference would be held at the Seminary the week after Commencement. The Faculty will consider this suggestion and report later.

DR. BOWIE

Dr. Bowie's retirement this June was marked at the Alumni luncheon on Thursday, when the Alumni Association presented him with a leather-bound copy of the sermon he preached in the Chapel in April.

The Alumni Association is also making this sermon available with this *Journal*. Dr. Bowie, more than most, typifies all that is best in the Seminary tradition. He will be missed on the Faculty, but he will still be a near neighbor. Dr. and Mrs. Bowie will be living in their new home in Alexandria.

FACULTY CHANGES

The Rev. Robert E. Cox ('43), who has been Assistant Professor of New Testament since 1950, resigned in June. Before coming on the Faculty Mr. Cox had done outstanding work in the parish ministry, and it is to that he now wishes to return. We are grateful to him for the fine contribution he made while on the Faculty.

The Rev. John Q. Beckwith ('31) has accepted his election as Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Homiletics. Mr. Beckwith has been Rector of the Church of St. Luke and St. Paul, Charleston, S. C. since 1949 and is a native of Wilmington, N. C. He will bring to his work at the Seminary a wealth of parochial experience. Mr. Beckwith and his family will move to the Hill in September. Mr. Beckwith will not have any teaching responsibilities during the first semester, but will spend his time in study and preparation for his teaching beginning the second semester.

The Rev. Murray L. Newman, Jr. will become Assistant Professor of Old Testament on September First, when he and his family will move to the Hill. In addition to his work in Old Testament, he will have some work in New Testament. Mr. Newman is a native of Oklahoma. He is a graduate of Phillips University (B.A. '45, M.A. '47), Union Seminary, New York (B.D. '51), and has done graduate work at Basel, Switzerland as a Rotary Fellow. He has taught at Vassar, at Union Seminary and comes to us from Smith College, where he was Assistant Professor of Religion and Biblical Literature.

The Rev. John E. Soleau ('52) will become Instructor in Pastoral Theology in September. Mr. Soleau, since his graduation here has been Assistant Minister at St. Peter's Church, Morristown, N. J. Mr. Soleau was a fighter pilot in the Navy during the Second World War, is a graduate of Amherst, and had business experience with the General Electric Corporation. Mr. Soleau is married and has four children.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board voted in June to send the Dean to the General Convention in Hawaii. Fred Bush ('36), a member of the Board and President of the Alumni Association, is a Deputy to the Convention from West Virginia and will preside at the Alumni dinner on Wednesday, September 7 at the Oahu Country Club. See you there!

At the same meeting of the Board, Bishop Goodwin ('17) was re-elected President, Bishop Powell ('20) Vice President, Dr. Barnwell ('13) Secretary, and Mr. Boogher, Treasurer. Newly elected as trustees were Mr. Chisman Hanes (Va.), the Rev. O. Worth May ('37) (W. Va). and the Rev. Bennett J. Sims ('49) (Alumni Trustee). Mr. C. McD. Davis was re-elected as a lay Trustee-at-large.

The Board adopted the following rules regarding requests of students for permission to marry in course:

1. The student shall secure in writing his Bishop's consent to petition the Faculty for permission to marry in course.

2. The marriage shall not take place until the student has completed his middle year and his clinical pastoral training or its equivalent, except that a student of mature age who has had previous experience, as for instance in business or the Armed Forces, may in exceptional circumstances be allowed to marry after the completion of his junior year, and the completion of his clinical pastoral training or its equivalent.

3. The student must show to the satisfaction of the Faculty that his academic standing, maturity, personality, and other factors of character and conduct, justify the marriage in course.

4. The student must show to the satisfaction of the faculty, by such evidences as the faculty may require, his ability to support and finance himself and his family for the rest of his seminary career.

However, he shall not include among his resources assistance from an educational organization directly or indirectly connected with the Church.

5. The student shall remain responsible for his contractual obligations for the payment of his room and board during any academic session; and he shall notify the bursar no later than the first day of June of his intention to vacate a dormitory room.

6. The Faculty shall make its recommendation after the above requirements have been fulfilled, but final decision in all cases shall be made by the Bishop of the applicant.

The Board voted to increase the tuition fee from \$250 to \$300, the room rent from \$80 to \$100, and the Library fee from \$20 to \$35. These fees will become effective September 1, 1956. It is hoped that board can remain at its present figure of \$360 (\$90 for married men's lunch), but rising food and labor costs may change this. Provision is being made to take care of any for whom these increases will be an undue hardship.

REINECKER LECTURES

The 1955-56 Reinecker Lectures will be given by Professor Dr. Friedrich Heiler, Professor of History of Religion at the University of Marburg, Germany. The lectures will be given on November 29, 30 and December 1. The subjects of the three lectures will be: 1) "The Idea of God in Mysticism", 2) "Prayer as a Problem of Modern Man", and 3) "Belief in Miracle". Professor Heiler will be in this country in the fall giving the Haskell Lectures at the University of Chicago. He was born a Roman Catholic and as he put it "fought his way to an ecumenical position." He is a Lutheran with close relations with both

Anglicans and Eastern Orthodox. He is perhaps best known in this country for his work entitled "Prayer" written during the First World War and translated into English in 1932.

NEW CLASS SCHEDULE

Beginning this September, classes will be held Monday through Friday of each week and Faculty Meeting will be on Wednesday evenings. These changes will enable men who need to do so to seek secular employment on Thursday evenings and Saturdays in order to balance their budgets. Permission to do outside secular work is to be secured from the Dean.

ENROLLMENT

The entering Juniors in September are expected to number 65. We will have an Ecumenical Exchange student from Norway, three transfers and six specials among the new students. The enrollment in all classes will total 191.

CONCLUSION

This Seminary, like every other is made up of a number of component parts—Board, Alumni, Students, Faculty, Staff. Next to the students there is no more important group than the Alumni. Your interest and support means everything to us on the Hill. So in closing, a hearty "Thank-you" for all you are and all you do!

E. FELIX KLOMAN, *Dean*

BOOK NOTES

THE REV. ROBERT R. BROWN (V.T.S., 1937), rector of St. Paul's Church in Richmond and Bishop Coadjutor-elect of the Diocese of Arkansas, has shown how such human adversities as pain and doubt, labor and despondency are by Christian faith lifted and redeemed from their negativity in *Friendly Enemies: Putting Your Troubles to Work* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1955, pp. 159, \$2.50).

The difficult task of understanding the fundamental positions of some leading American theologians, men such as the brothers Niebuhr, Nels Ferre, Paul Tillich, was made much easier by David Wesley Soper in his *Major Voices in American Theology*. Comes now a second volume by the same author expanding the view to include eleven other religious leaders of America, including Douglas Steere, Wilhelm Pauck, W. Norman Pittenger, Walter M. Horton; it is *Men Who Shape Belief* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1955, pp. 224, \$3.50). . . . Clergy who work closely with hospitalized parishioners (and who doesn't?) and especially church people who are nurses, can find much help in a new book by a Lutheran hospital chaplain and teacher of pastoral care in Chicago: Granger Westberg's *Nurse, Pastor and Patient: A Hospital Chaplain Talks with Nurses* (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Press, 1955, pp. 96, \$1.00). Although especially concerned with the role of nurses in the pastoral care of the sick, it will open many clerical eyes to the nature of that care and to the profession of nursing as a cure of souls. . . . Westminster's latest volume in the Library of Christian Classics is *Augustine: Later Works*, ed. by John Burnaby, \$5.00; it includes the latter books of Augustine's treatise "On the Trinity", the penetrating work "On the Spirit and the Letter" and the moving "Ten Homilies on the First Epistle General of St. John".

Books received include:

DeWitt, Norman Wentworth, *St. Paul and Epicurus*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954, pp. vii 201, \$4.00.

Ferm, Vergilius, *A Dictionary of Pastoral Psychology*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1955, pp. xi 336, \$6.00.

Ferm, Vergilius, *The American Church of the Protestant Heritage*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1953, pp. 481, \$6.00.

Fridrichsen, Anton and other members of Uppsala University, *The Root of the Vine: Essays in Biblical Theology*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1953, pp. vii 160, \$4.75.

Hartt, Julian N., *Toward a Theology of Evangelism*, New York: Abingdon Press, 1955, pp. 123, \$2.00.

Leslie, Elmer A., *Jeremiah Chronologically Arranged, Translated and Interpreted*, New York: Abingdon Press, 1954, pp. 349, \$4.75.

Milton, John P., *The Psalms*, Rock Island, Ill., Augustana Book Concern, 1954, pp. viii 252, \$3.25.

Royer, John B., *Joseph of Nazareth: Meditations*, Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1954, pp. 31, \$1.00 paper, \$2.00 cloth.

Runes, Dagobert D., *Of God, The Devil and the Jews*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1952, pp. 186, \$3.00.

Runes, Dagobert D. (ed.), *Treasury of Philosophy*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1955, pp. xxiv 1280, \$15.00.

Shoemaker, Helen Smith, *The Secret of Effective Prayer*, New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1955, pp. 157, \$2.00.

W. A. CLEBSCH

WALTER RUSSELL BOWIE

THE NEWS THAT Dr. Bowie retires from the Faculty this June has brought to us all dismay, a sense of loss, deep regret. Dismay because it is hard to imagine a successor as Professor of Homiletics with equal patience, equal skill in helping students develop whatever latent capacities as preachers they may have, equal knowledge of the art of preaching. A sense of loss, for the Seminary will be the poorer without his sturdy championship of the liberal Evangelical attitude. Regret that we shall not see him daily in the Chapel, and class-room and around the Grove. Regret equally that Mrs. Bowie will not be living on the Seminary grounds.

Dr. Bowie was born in Richmond. He was graduated from the Hill School and Harvard College. (In his senior year at Harvard he was one of the two chief editors of the *Crimson*, the other being Franklin D. Roosevelt.) After graduating from the Seminary and being ordained, he followed the good Virginia habit of being married—to Miss Jean Laverack of Buffalo.

Dr. Bowie was rector of Greenwood Parish, Virginia; St. Paul's Richmond, and Grace Church, New York. His term in Richmond was interrupted by a year's service during World War I as a chaplain overseas.

Always he has battled for freedom of inquiry and speech, for justice to the less fortunate, for American participation in efforts looking toward peace. He has been possessed by a vision of a fairer America and a more Christian Church, and with tongue and pen has striven to transform that vision into fact. Consequently, he has often been embroiled in controversies over Fundamentalism, Biblical and Ecclesiastical, and over various social and political issues. He battled so doughtily that some ecclesiastics thought him a heretic and some American Legionaires were sure he was unAmerican. One post pretended in newspapers to be about to sue him for \$150,000. (One wonders where they thought a mere clergyman could get that sort of money. Perhaps in some apocalyptic moment they foresaw the earnings of some modern radio and TV religious spokesman!) Through all the struggles he has been sustained by the championship of Christ and by the beauty which his vivid insight saw everywhere.

Dr. Bowie was elected bishop once; served as deputy at five General Conventions, and on many committees of the Diocese, the Episcopal Church, the Federal Council of Churches and the World Council. He was awarded three honorary doctorates, delivered the Lyman Beecher Lectures at Yale and the Hale Lectures at Seabury-Western, and has been much in demand as preacher in parishes and universities. He was an editor of, and contributor to, the Interpreter's Bible and editor of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

Dr. Bowie is the author of 25 books, (among the best known of which are four volumes of children's sermons, and *The Master, The Inescapable Christ, The Renewing Gospel, Some Open Ways to God, The Story of the Bible, Preaching*. He has just completed the manuscript of *The Story of the Church*.). But some people think the greatest thing he ever wrote is the hymn (No. 522 in our hymnal) "Lord Christ when first thou cam'st to men, Upon a cross they bound thee."

A devoted alumnus of the Virginia Seminary, Dr. Bowie delivered The Reinecker Lectures in 1931, published under the title *On Being Alive*. In the Preface he asked, "Do we really live, not with part of ourselves but with the whole—with alert awareness to all life's possibilities, at full stretch of our finest energies, with power, with joy? Life which is merely prolonged is a poor thin thing. What of its width and depth and height?" Russell Bowie has lived at the full stretch of his finer energies, with power, with joy.

The sermon printed here was his last one in the Chapel as a professor on active duty.

A. C. ZABRISKIE

May, 1955

CHANGING CONCEPTIONS

AND

UNCHANGING TRUTH

THIS IS THE last time that I shall stand in this pulpit for our Thursday Faculty service. Therefore I think tonight of those who have stood here in the long years past, and of those who will be preaching here in the years to come. The immediate words and emphases will differ, but underneath these always is the unchanging reality of God. What we say in any generation is like the movement of waves that roll according to the direction in which the wind is blowing, but whatever power they possess depends upon the profundity of the underlying sea. So the movements of thought and faith in any generation come out of forces deeper than ourselves. As John Robinson said in his farewell sermon to the Pilgrims as they set forth on their adventure into a new world, "There is always more truth ready to break forth out of God's holy Word."

Tonight therefore let us try to see our present moment in the living relationship to what has been and what is to be.

Jesus said: "Every scribe who has been trained for the Kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old (Matthew 13:52)." What then are some of the treasures of truth which we inherit? And how shall we estimate their value?

I

In the early years of this century, the Christian who would have been accounted to be the scribe trained for the Kingdom of heaven was the so-called *liberal*. What he brought forth seemed to be the ultimate treasures given by God. In the thought-world of our present day, and in the conversation patterns of this seminary, he is not now a subject for fulsome praise. On the contrary, it might seem as though there were none so poor to do him reverence.

But for the first stage of our thought tonight, let us consider him and his short-comings—and his virtues, if any.

Some of his shortcomings were obvious. He had not lived long enough to learn the words that the initiated speak: paradoxical, dialectical, existential, eschatological. He did not know that life might be meaningless, or at any rate, that a person must appear very unsophisticated if he did not consider that life is supposed to look that way. He had an innocent liking for those great words of St. Paul: "*Rejoice* in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." He had not been persuaded that to be thoroughly Pauline and orthodox he must change his emphasis to demonic, the devil and doom.

If those were the lesser shortcomings, there could be a graver one. That is to say, there was a type of so-called liberal who had such an easy confidence in the virtues and abilities of himself and of others like him that he could develop a patronizing unconcern for the greatness of God. That kind of left-wing liberal, carelessly supposed by the unthinking to be typical of the liberal spirit generally, actually belonged in another classification and under another name. He was not a liberal in the deep, true meaning of that word—a meaning which we shall presently consider. He was a non-Christian humanist, and no more than that. It is that type of humanist who has been made to look shallow and empty by the catastrophic facts of the last forty years. "Glory to man in the highest! for man is the master of things," sang the poet Swinburne in the bland confidence of the Victorian Age. Man as the master of things! Out of the jungle of those fearful depths which lie beneath the smooth surface of our civilization emerged the dark forces which would show whether man was master or not: the blind impulses, the passions, the ferocities which have mocked our human self-righteousness and pride. Man is not master of himself, much less of his world. As T. S. Eliot wrote in "Murder in the Cathedral"

"Sweet and cloying through the dark air
Falls the stifling scent of despair."

That is the bitter and humiliating lesson which the humanist has been made to learn.

Such is the fact, but a critical mistake may follow it. The unthinking, misled by loose use of words, may assume that all who belong to the liberal spirit are identical with the humanists, and so everything that is called liberal may be despised.

Whenever that is true, something precious may be lost from the treasures that ought to be brought into the Kingdom of God.

In its richest use the word *liberal* is not a noun but an adjective. It represents not the whole but a part of what the Christian may dare to be. I have known many men in the great lineage of this seminary—and I would want to be among them—who called themselves *liberal evangelicals*. There, you see, it is *evangelical* that is the basic fact. To be an evangelical is to be devoted first of all and deepest of all to the *evangelium*, the gospel, which means the good news. That good news is the everlasting story of the love of God revealed in Jesus crucified and risen—the Jesus who is the saviour not as a dim figure from a dead past, but as the living and adored Master whom the disciples knew, by whose cross and passion they and we have been redeemed, and who can be the great companion on our roads of life today.

That is what it means to be an evangelical. And what when the adjective *liberal* is added? It means a conception of the gospel so glad and confident that faith is set free from little fears and inhibitions. It means a wider area of thought and action to which the Christian can reach out unafraid. The liberal evangelical did not have to be apprehensive lest his gospel should be lost if he followed honestly on the ways of biblical scholarship. Neither did he have to think that his gospel, or his church loyalty, would be lost if he had an open and generous mind toward the truths that might come to him through other churches. Part of our inheritance which we might take for granted ought to wake in us instead a lively gratitude toward those who won it for us. We might assume as a matter of course today the fact that we are free to study and interpret the Bible in the light of everything we know about it. But that freedom was bought with a price. It was bought by the brave men who dared loneliness, unpopularity, and ecclesiastical denunciation in order to push the frontier of accepted truth beyond the narrow bounds where timid conservatives would have held it. We might assume also that it is natural for us to want more Christian cooperation and—by God's grace—Christian reunion. But the fact that we do want it did not develop accidentally. It has come nearer because men of liberal sympathies tried with all their hearts to bring it near. If we move in a larger and more generous world of Christian thought today it is because men like great old Dr. Sparrow have dared to say "seek the truth; come whence it may, cost what it will." That is the liberal spirit at its highest. Anyone among us who should ever speak the word liberal with glib disparagement, could do so only because of carelessness, or ignorance, or a flippant effort to sound smart. And those who understand the richness of our inheritance know that the liberal mind is one of the treasures that must never be lost from the Kingdom of God.

II

Treasures new and old—said the words of the Gospel. In religious experience the new may become the old; and what had been old returns as the new again. So it may seem with an aspect of the truth which is in the forefront now—*neo-orthodoxy*.

It is like the old come back because it is a reversal from the humanism which had lost the awful dimensions of life and destiny that belonged to men who knew the Bible. The neo-orthodox return to the Bible has brought us face to face once more with the Lord "high and lifted up"—the majesty of God, the power of his eternal purpose before which our imagined self-sufficiency and our human pride are brought down to the dust. With a new sincerity we confess that we have erred and strayed from his ways, and that in the light of his holiness there is no health in us. The almost jaunty optimism about our world that prevailed a generation ago stands now under the shadow of the recollected consciousness that everything which rests upon ourselves alone will perish. Our accumulated sins may destroy our civilization. And whether that happens or not, as individuals we move every day nearer to the dark gate of death. Whenever the bell tolls, it is not some unrelated summons: it tolls for you and me.

In the deeper aspects of ourselves we can give thanks therefore for this recovered note in the proclamation of eternal truth. It teaches us again the *solemnity* of existence. It is not so easy now to drift like the careless crowd that is satisfied with the neon-lights and the cheap glitter of a carnival. We stand as souls that have lost their way in an awful emptiness and lift our eyes to find again the guidance of the eternal stars.

The *solemnity* of our existence,—and the *tragic* element in it: many of you have learned that too. You know that we are caught by evil forces within us, and by evil forces in our world. There is no plain way out. As with St. Paul, again and again it happens that the good we want to do we cannot do; and the evil we would not do, we do. The shadow of a great frustration falls upon us. We cannot escape from the demands that conscience lays upon us. Yet we cannot meet them. What is left then but defeat and near-despair?

The answer is that exactly then, when nothing seems left, all that is great and redeeming begins. The new-old truth comes to us again out of the treasures of the gospel. We may call it salvation through grace. We may call it justification by faith. But what matters most is not the name but the reality. There are those of you who have known

that reality. When you were most down—and because you confessed that you were down—a power from above you has lifted you up. When you were ashamed at your failures and your unworthiness, it was as though the voice of God had spoken in your heart: "My child, you do not have to be perfect for me to love you and to draw you to myself." Then with a rush of gratitude you have felt the burden of your attempted self-sufficiency drop from you. Like a spent swimmer, with inexpressible relief you have let go the tension of the struggle that was drowning you, because you knew now that you could let the rescuing hands of God take hold.

III

Such then are some of the treasures that may be brought by the scribes trained for the Kingdom of God. The treasures—which are the changing emphases of truth—may be different according as the scribes may be those who are called liberal, or are called neo-orthodox. But the gifts, or the seeming gifts, they bring will be pure treasure in so far, and only in so far, as they belong to the perfect gift. And that perfect gift is this: *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.*

It is toward him then that our thought supremely ascends. It is the name above every name that we remember. And that name is Jesus.

It is possible for us to talk so abstractly about Christianity that we lose any vivid awareness of him who is our Christ. But Christianity is no abstraction. It is not another mystery religion of a remote and unknowable dying and rising God. It is the story of one incomparable actual Person who in the way he lived and the way he chose to die has shown us the heart of the eternal Father.

In "The Student in Arms," a book written during the first World War, there is a chapter on an officer in the British Army who became "The Beloved Captain." It tells of this commander of his men, "tall, erect, smiling. So we first saw him, and so he remained to the end." His devotion to his men, his courage, his self-forgetfulness, won their devotion. Their whole morale was lifted when he was near. "We loved him," they said. "And there isn't anything stronger than love, when all's said and done." When he was killed as he went to the rescue of some of his men wounded in the front-line trenches, for the spirit of his company he was still alive. "We feel his eyes on us. We still work for that wonderful smile of his." And although any comparison from our life falls short of the infinite reality of Christ, that illustration at

least suggests the transfiguring influence of his spiritual presence. Out of the Gospels can come to us again that living figure round whom the first disciples rallied, and contact with him can bring to us the kind of Christianity which is not a speculation but a rejoicing power. Salvation by Christ is no anonymous and formless matter. It is no miscellaneous New Being. It is a quality of life that to some degree at least can inspire those of us who have seen both the strength and tenderness, the challenge and encouragement of Jesus. He can be to us the incomparable "Beloved Captain."

If thus we do try to come close in our spiritual apprehension to Jesus as the Lord of life, the first gift that comes from him is *confidence*.

Have you any doubt that we need confidence? We need it most of all because of what some of the theologians have done to us. They have made it appear that a proper religion ought to be a kind of sanctified depression. The word *meaninglessness* echoes in our conversation and in too many of our sermons like the hollow notes of a cracked bell. Our minds are beginning to appear as Hamlet said his body was, "in customary suits of solemn black, and the dejected 'havior of the visage." "This is an age of anxiety," we are told again and again; and in the insidious power of suggestion, we make ourselves into the pattern of the words we use. As David Riesman has written in "The Lonely Crowd": "Contrary to the situation prevailing in the 19th century, pessimism has become an opiate and the small chance that the dangers menacing the world can be avoided is rendered even smaller by our use of these menaces in order to rationalize our resignation."

What must we say of such a mood except that it is pitifully out of keeping with the spirit of Jesus, which moves through the Gospels like a shining light? He has been called the man of sorrows, and that is true, for his great compassion went all the way into the utmost depths of our human sin and grief. But shall we forget that in the very night before his crucifixion he told his disciples that all he had taught them ought to lead to this: "That my *joy* might remain in you, and that your *joy* might be full." And what is the source of that joy, that can run like the strong current of a river, whether at the moment its surface is in sunlight or in shadow? It is *confidence* in God. And more than that. It is *confidence* in God's creation, and an expectant trust that everywhere in his created world his greatness and his goodness will draw near. There were ugly facts in Jesus' world. Did he dwell on those? He did not. His eyes took in the beauty of the Galilean lilies, the play of children in the marketplace, the look on the faces of the mothers who lifted

up their babies for him to bless. Did he say, as he might have said, "This is an age of anxiety"? He did not. He said "Be not anxious, for your Father knoweth—." Did he ever bear himself as though he might be asking whether life is meaningless? How incredible in relation to him such a question seems! There were the deep moments when he could not see the Father's final pattern, but he never doubted that there *was* a pattern which his Father would fulfill. Therefore every moment of the day had meaning, every familiar sight and sound its great suggestion—the sun and the rain, the miracle of the sown seed, the flight of birds to their nests, the sheep with their lambs coming home to the fold; the pleading eyes of the repentant sinner, the light on that sinner's face as he turned to the forgiveness of Christ.

Would you like to move out from the shadow of an anxiety which sometimes seems almost deliberate—out from that into the light of the *confidence* that belonged to Jesus? Then learn to be more sensitive to all the wide ways in which God's glory can be revealed to you. Do not let anybody make you think that it is only in the miserable dark alleys of your introspection and your wrestling with your sins that God comes to you. Find him also as St. Francis did in the beauty and wonder of his world: in leaves budding with the spring, in the song of the mocking bird, in the look of eyes where love is shining, in the voice of the little child that calls to you, in all deep gratitude for the fulness of life which makes you know that "There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea." When thus you get out from your poor little worried involvements and open your minds and hearts to the realities which praise God and magnify him forever, then you touch the deep springs of the joy that must have belonged to Jesus. Then because God has actually come near to you in so many common ways, you can have *confidence* that he is with you in the times when you cannot see.

As we gain from God in Jesus the gift of *confidence*, so there comes to us also a greater *courage*.

One of the dangers in some contemporary theology is that instead of increasing courage it may destroy it. Too much emphasis on our own sinful weakness and on the evil of the world in general may paralyze the nerve of effort. Some of you are beginning to recognize that already. "I wonder," wrote one of you a few weeks ago, "if the younger men in the ministry are not allowing themselves to be sucked into the maelstrom of misery which seems to be widening its arc so much these days." And then you went on: "There is part of me that desires a more heroic ideal of the ministry than that of the minister struggling hopelessly in a fallen world."

May God kindle that same desire, and give you *courage* for it as you go out from the Seminary in these days which because of their very difficulty are a great time to be alive! In every community there will be evils for true men to see and brave men to fight against: needs of the neglected poor; of negroes or other minorities pushed about and exploited; of lonely men denied their right of independent thought and speech and silenced by fanaticism; of children allowed to grow up in rotten slums; of men and boys corrupted in some foul jail which decent citizens have never looked at,—and all the ugly evils which vicious politics and community indifference have kept hidden. You will meet some who have grown disillusioned about a crusading Christianity. They may talk about God's Kingdom at the end of history, but they are not trying to shape the history of their own town more closely to God's purpose now. And you? Like the priest and Levite on the Jericho road, will you pass by the crying human needs on the plea that they are not your or your church's responsibility? Or will you bring a more gallant resolution? Never mind if the fight is hard. Pray for the *courage* that your Lord had in the face of Herod and the high priests and the traders in the temple. And if it seems sometimes that you have gained nothing but disappointment and near-defeat, nevertheless let this be your battlecry:

“Oh, yesterday our little troop
was ridden through and through.

Our swaying, tattered pennons fled,
a broken, beaten few,

And all the summer afternoon
they hunted us and slew.

But tomorrow

By the living God, we'll
try the game anew!”*

And so, our thought tonight comes to its end. Many gifts may be brought to us out of the treasures of the Kingdom of God. Among these may be the better *confidence* and *courage* that can belong to those who are saved from themselves by the crucified Lord. But he who died as a sacrifice for all our human sins has given us something beyond his death. He has given us the *companionship* of his risen life. When you try to be loyal to him you will not be alone. He will go with you as light and life and power. He will be no memory only from an ancient time. He will be “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

*John Masefield