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SCHOOL REVIEW.
VOLUME 33, WINTER
1968, NUMBER 1, 2 AND 3**

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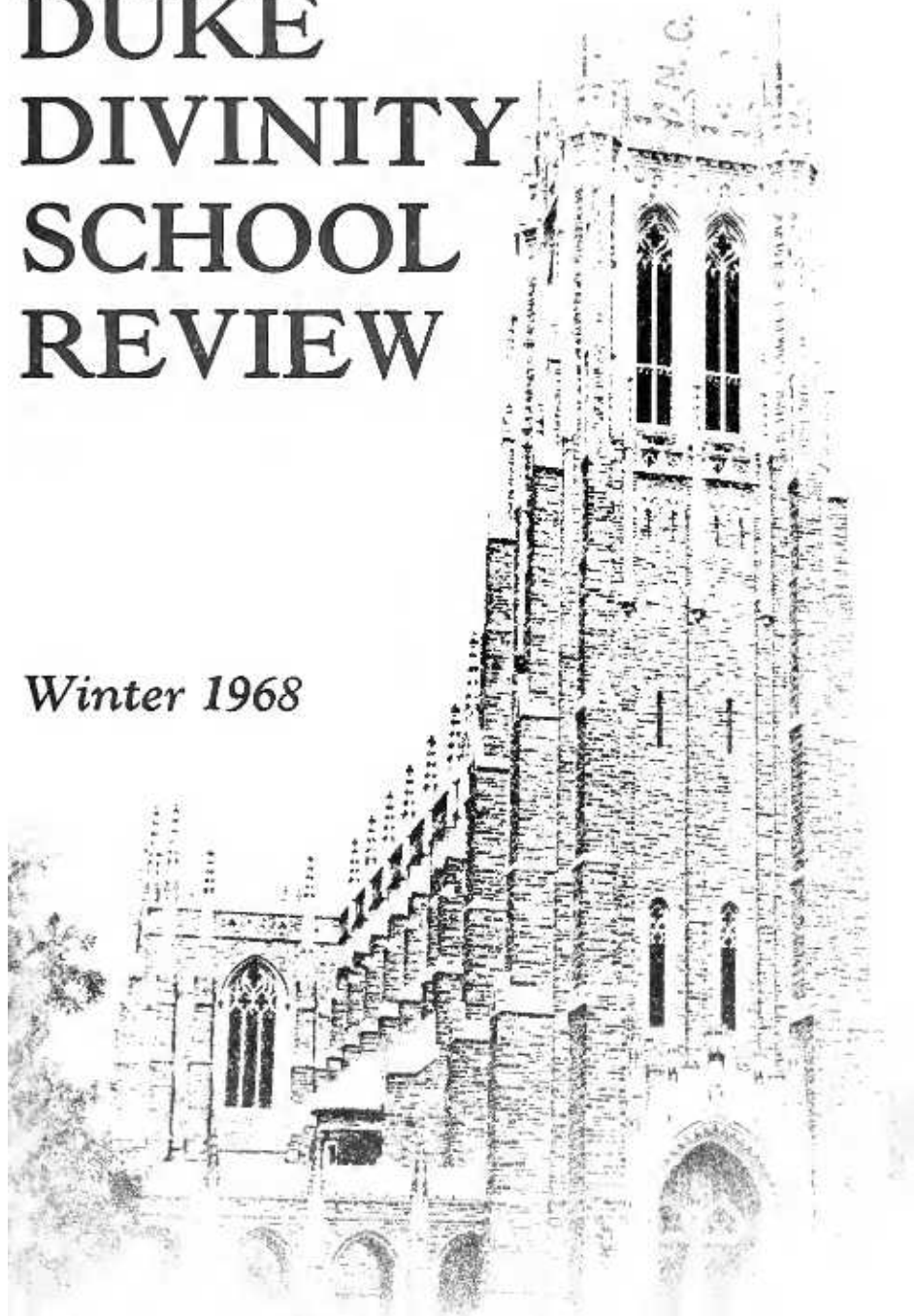
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A Post-Easter Prayer

Our Father God, it is time to pray, and so we bow our heads and close our eyes. We have learned the words of thanksgiving and praise, and we recite them to thee. We have been taught to confess our sins, and we have said the words. Some have become so pre-occupied with their guilt that it has become their only concern. If forgiveness should come and the sins were forgiven, for these, the center of faith would be removed. But most of us come to thee, not to be cleansed, but to be blessed as we are. . . .

Dear God, we hope the talk of the death of God will soon cease. It disturbs us that there is so much said about death in our faith, anyway. Crosses and graves are not pleasant subjects. We prefer Easter lilies to empty tombs. We accept the empty tomb, even though no one can prove it, for it is a part of our faith. Yet, why is it, Lord, that we do not feel the wonder of the empty tomb as the disciples felt it, or in the way that we used to feel it?

Could it be that something has died in us? We know our souls are bathed in the brightness of Easter, but we do not sense that anything has changed. We have not really participated in the resurrection. Why does its reality elude us? We know that it is thy mercy that withholds thy blessing from us as we are, for we cannot bear to remain as we are. Heavenly Father, as we come before thee, must we face the fact that it is not the talk about the death of God that disturbs us, but the fact that we are not more alive than we are. It is not the empty tomb that troubles us, but the emptiness in our souls. Yet, we know they are not empty. Our beings are fat, stuffed and overflowing with our self-centeredness, our greed, our pride. We have eyes that do not see the living Lord. We have ears that are deaf to the call that thou dost speak to us. We have hearts that do not feel the needs to which we should respond.

Dear divine Father, grant that the new life of Easter may even yet be ours. Bless us with a new hunger for righteousness. Make us alive to the demands of thy kingdom. Strengthen us to take up our crosses and to follow with joy our risen Lord. . . . Amen.

—Paul Carruth, '43

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Contents

A Post-Easter Prayer.....	Inside Cover
<i>by Paul Carruth</i>	
Theological Education: A Reconsideration of Its Nature.....	3
<i>by Robert E. Cushman</i>	
Comments on Dean Cushman's Address.....	14
<i>by William F. Stinespring, Waldo Beach, Frederick Herzog, Moody Smith, and C. Randal James</i>	
The Place and Task of "Confessional Families".....	28
<i>by Lukas Vischer</i>	
The Reformation—Then.....	43
<i>by Hans J. Hillerbrand</i>	
The Dean's Discourse.....	52
<i>by Robert E. Cushman</i>	
Looks at Books	54
Selected Bibliography on Theological Education	
<i>by Harriet V. Leonard</i>	
"Out of the Vineyard, Back to the Big House"	
<i>by Henry Clark</i>	

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Theological Education

A Reconsideration of Its Nature in Light of Its Objective

ROBERT E. CUSHMAN

I

Our opening Convocation each fall is intended to gather the re-assembled Divinity School community for corporate worship. It celebrates our mastering end as a school, namely the greater glory of God. It is the hope and purpose of all, I am sure, that, in the day-by-day acceptance and discharge of our common tasks, we shall likewise be celebrating God's glory and advancing his purpose, for it is in the common tasks of life that devotion is most keenly tested, as it is, also, most fittingly visible.

For the Convocation address of this morning, I believe I have a text from Scripture. It is the familiar line of 1 Corinthians 13:13: "But now abideth faith, hope and love, these three; and the greatest of these is love." However, entering students are cautioned not to look to my example this morning for an instance of good expository form, for the bearing of the text will only become evident at the end, and that is very poor preaching indeed!

What, in fact, you are going to have to endure is a discourse of some length. It is beamed toward all, but especially in the direction of the entering class of Junior students. The subject is theological education and the question of its nature as correlated with its proper aims and goals. These should be appropriate considerations, both for those who are just setting their course and for those who, for many years now, have been trying to find their way. This pretty well covers the spectrum of those assembled. Hence, with some confidence at least in the relevance of the subject matter, although with much less in its treatment, I will launch my craft upon the sea of your excited attention!

And speaking of the sea (which, indeed, can be very unpredictable), one reason immediately suggests itself for the importance of goal-identification. As in seamanship, so in theological education,

The Opening Convocation Address, Duke Chapel, September 21, 1967.

one cannot chart a course unless he has a fairly clear notion of where he is going. But the analogy does not fully hold, because the voyage in search of Christian understanding is, often, more like Columbus' voyage of discovery than the sailing of the Queen Elizabeth from Southampton to New York or Calcutta. And it is just this distinction between voyages based upon already identified destinations and voyages of discovery that may assist us to differentiate between the proximate and the ultimate goals of theological study.

II

Lately I have been giving second and more careful attention to an impressive study of the state of theological education in North America directed by Charles R. Feilding and published in 1966 under the title *Education for Ministry* by the American Association of Theological Schools. It is the fruit of long research by a team of knowledgeable and concerned educators. The study, assigned by the Association and with the usual Foundation support, was inspired by a fairly widespread misgiving as to whether the theological schools of the Association were succeeding in discharging their roles and fulfilling their aims as educational institutions claiming to prepare a Christian ministry. The Feilding Report is an important instance of the kind of self-scrutiny to which theological education, quite generally, has been subjecting itself for nearly a decade. What the really solid findings of self-study are remains, no doubt, still uncertain. No general consensus as to the value of several findings is established. Nevertheless, throughout the community of theological educators, complacency has been largely replaced by an earnest concern to square the methods and practices of the educative process with more or less acknowledged goals to which, it seems, seminary education, by its very nature, must be committed.

We must note without attempting comment that one pervasive finding of the Feilding Report is that the Protestant ministry, in role and function, has been and is, by force of cultural circumstances, in process of enforced alteration. The country parson and parish of an earlier day are no longer serviceable norms or images in the face of the vast urbanization of life in North America. The ministry entails different roles and functions in greatly altered contexts. In urban society the ministerial role has been vastly diversified, both by new demands and by unprecedented opportunities.

All this is wholly familiar, almost to the point of tedium, in view of the flood of publications devoted to the matter during the past several years. One observation only I make, namely this, that recent sociological conditioning of the role of ministry in North America, contained in the word "urbanization," has undoubtedly greatly pluralized the ministerial function, fostered uncertainty among ministers as to their role, and contributed, thereby, to a blurring of the ministerial image. Accordingly, the manifest and sometimes scandalous ineptitude of churchmen and ministerial leadership in applying the Gospel to the malformations of urbanized society is attributable not merely to insensitivity and inertia but, rather, a plain inability to know *how* to relate the Gospel redemptively in and to rapidly altering and uncomprehended burgeoning societal disorganization.

Plainly this external situation, this altered context for the work of the ministry, carries important implications for the educational program of schools charged with the educational preparation of the ministry. One is not surprised, then, yet he may be startled, as I was, by a crucial sentence of the Feilding Report. It is this: "*Ministry today is generally discontinuous with the preparation provided for it.*" To a conscientious seminary educator this sentence is or, I believe, should be shocking for reasons that are manifest. What indeed are the aims of theological education? Are they in fact implemented by existing curricular provisions and arrangements; or are the curricular arrangements provided in the schools simply incompatible with, or at least only obliquely relevant to, the ministerial tasks for which their graduates are allegedly prepared? Or, further, have the aims of seminary education been inherited from another day, prevailed with the years without adequate scrutiny or revision, and become somewhat inviolable and sacrosanct? Have they, in fact, been premised upon other purposes than those publicly announced for a long time in catalogues?

For example, have theological schools, and not merely university divinity schools, taken as their model, as the Feilding Report strongly suggests, a style of "theological education based on graduate schools in the humanities"? The Report testifies to a "growing dissatisfaction" with this model and makes the following statement with reference to it: "Earlier, there had also been an abhorrence of turning a theological school into a trade school. In place of either model, I