

**PUBLIC SERVICES AT THE
INAUGURATION OF THE REV.
JOHN H. GILLESPIE, TUESDAY,
SEPTEMBER TWENTY-SEVENTH**

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VARIOUS

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PUBLIC SERVICES

AT THE

INAUGURATION OF THE

REV. JOHN H. GILLESPIE, D. D.

as Thomas DeWitt Professor of Hellenistic
Greek and New Testament Exegesis in
the Theological Seminary of the
Reformed (Dutch) Church
in America at New
Brunswick, N. J.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER TWENTY-SEVENTH

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE Rev. John H. Gillespie, D.D., was unanimously elected Thomas DeWitt Professor of Hellenistic Greek and New Testament Exegesis in the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick by the General Synod of the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America in session assembled at Asbury Park, June, 1898. The committee appointed by General Synod, composed of Rev. Dr. M. H. Hutton and President Austin Scott of Rutgers College, made arrangements for Dr. Gillespie's inauguration to take place in the Second Reformed Church of New Brunswick on Tuesday, September 27, 1898. The Faculty of the Seminary, the Board of Superintendents, the Students of the Seminary, with invited guests, met in the chapel adjoining and entered the church during the singing of the processional hymn in the following order:

1. Students of the Seminary.
2. Visiting Clergy.
3. Faculty of Rutgers College.
4. Standing Committee on Seminary Grounds.
5. Board of Superintendents.

interpret the Scripture. He argued with the scribes, as one of their own order, meeting their citations from the law with answering citations, introduced with the question, "Have ye never read?" And in the passage before us, He compared His own work and that of His apostles after Him, and so, by inference, that of all Christian teachers of every age, whose function it is to expound the word of God, with the office which was still one of honor, and which had at times been one of great eminence and power. He had just been giving a remarkable instance of His own manner of presenting religious truth, in the wonderful series of parables—the Sower, the Tares and Wheat, the Mustard Seed, the Grain of Leaven, the Treasure Hid in a Field, the Goodly Pearl, the Net Cast into the Sea—of which this chapter of Matthew's gospel is composed. And then with the true instinct and habit of a conscientious teacher, He puts to His disciples the question, "Have ye understood all these things?" They say unto Him, "Yea, Lord." And so He adds, "Every scribe, whether trained in the schools, or deriving his wisdom and authority from a higher source—as I from above, as you from me—every preacher of the truth, who has become a scholar of the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a householder which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

1. The comparison is certainly very strikingly true of the teaching of our Lord Himself. There was, of course, much in it that was old. The old laws of righteousness—with what a searching insight into their meaning, with what startling power of statement, did He set them forth! There was no subtle casuistry in His application of them. He presented no new views of moral obligation which turned their edge. They came from His lips with all the simplicity, all the

severity, all the absolute, eternal, universal authority, which had belonged to them when uttered by inspired prophets of the olden time. "Keep the commandments," He said; "Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not even hate; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Swear not at all, neither by heaven nor by earth, nor by the Holy City, for God is over and in them all, and thou shalt love, and not dishonor, the Lord thy God. Keep thy conscience fresh and pure, for if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. This do, and thou shalt live."

So too He taught, as the greatest of the scribes of old had done, as every true teacher in every land had more or less successfully taught it, the supremacy of character. The laws of righteousness which he reiterated were not merely rules of conduct; they were to be incorporated into the spiritual life. "Thou desirest not sacrifice," cries the penitent Psalmist; "the sacrifices of God are a contrite heart." And the Saviour expresses the same thought when He says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Behold," is the ancient Hebrew verse, "behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts." "If the light that is in thee be darkness," says the Galilean prophet, "how great is that darkness." His doctrine was, "Be ye perfect," and it was as old as the race.

And then the doctrine of worship, with all that it implies of belief in God, of reverent fear, of adoring trust, of penitence for sin, of atonement, of obedient service—He proclaimed it often. He illustrated it in His own practice. He gave to it new clearness, depth, universality; but in itself it was not new. And all that He did by precept and example to extend and exalt the true worship of God, was in the line of that