

The Purpose of the Church and its Ministry by H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams, & James M. Gustafson

Supported by intensive research, Dr. Niebuhr reevaluates the role of the church in American life and its relationship to the seminary. He arrives at a fresh concept of the ministry, and restates the idea of the theological school.

Forward

Education in general, and not least ecclesiastical education, is subject to constant processes of deterioration and hence in need of periodic self-examination. Thirty-six seminaries have given particular help by supplying information about their development during the last twenty years through The Study of Theological Education in the United States and Canada.

Chapter 1: The Purpose of the Church and its Ministry

At least in many parts of Christendom the quest for meaning, the revival of historic religious convictions about man's nature and destiny, about his lostness and his salvation, and the need to realize the significance of these convictions in relation to contemporary world and life views, have led to a renewal of the theological endeavor. The role of the seminary is here weighed in several relationships.

Chapter 2: The Emerging New Conception of the Ministry

The seminary's express purpose is to educate those who will direct the affairs of church institutions, especially local churches. They tend in consequence to neglect the first function of a theological school—the exercise of the intellectual love of God and neighbor. To this imbalance we shall need to address ourselves in other connections. The definition of the minister in the modern community is faced as well as the authority of the minister and his director.

Chapter 3: The Idea of a Theological School

Very much as local pluralistic churches and harried ministers, seminaries also have an uncertainty of purpose. The first, superficial impression is not erased by more thorough acquaintance with theological schools; many instances of self-satisfied provincialism, inert

traditionalism and specious modernization tend to confirm it. But more intimate acquaintance also brings into view a second, very different aspect of the scene. Alongside conventionality, which is sometimes downright antiquarian, one encounters vitality, freshness, eagerness and devotedness among these teachers and students.

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Forward

The following chapters on the nature and purpose of the Church, the ministry and the theological school constitute the first part of the report of The Study of Theological Education in the United States and Canada.

Hundreds of schools in the United States and Canada make it their business to educate men and women for the Christian ministry in Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. Their graduates form a large proportion of the three hundred thousand clergymen active in the numerous church organizations of North America. They work as pastors, preachers and priests, teachers and scholars, evangelists and missionaries, writers and editors, administrators of denominational, educational, social service and reform agencies, as chaplains in prisons, hospitals and military establishments. Doing splendid, indifferent or woefully inadequate work these ministers and the schools that train them are subject to praise and blame by themselves, the churches and the enviroing society. They are questioned and they question themselves. In this situation more than a hundred theological schools have agreed to examine themselves and the status of theological education in general, to raise immediate and ultimate questions about their purposes, their methods and their effectiveness in discharging their duties; to seek also ways of improving their own ministry. Under the leadership of the American Association of Theological Schools and with the financial support of the Carnegie Corporation a study center was established to correlate the work of self-examination and to formulate its results.

The general reason for the inquiry is to be found, of course, in the conviction that "the unexamined life is not worth living"— a principle that has been given a special form in the Christian demand for daily and lifelong repentance. Institutions and communities no less than individuals are subject to this requirement. It is said that an uninspected army deteriorates and this is doubtless true of all human organizations. We tend to repeat customary actions unaware that when we do today what we did yesterday we actually do something different since in the interval both we and our environment have changed; unaware also that we now do without conscious definition of purpose and method what was done yesterday with specific ends in view and by relatively precise means. Education in general, and not least ecclesiastical education, is

subject to this constant process of deterioration and hence in need of periodic self-examination.

Some special considerations have strengthened such general concern for self-study. The thought is abroad among theological educators and students that in the course of apparent repetition of traditional functions they have so adjusted themselves day by day to new pressures in the changing environment that they have lost the form and direction of inherited educational policy, so that the curriculum no longer is a course of study but has become a series of studious jumps in various directions. At the same time many of them are oppressed by the feeling that theological study does not sufficiently consider the changes that have taken place in human thought and behavior in the course of a revolutionary century. They note that in both respects they face problems similar to those that have led educators in other fields to undertake more or less promising reformations. Such examples have encouraged them to look forward to comparable efforts in the theological schools.

An even more significant occasion for theological self-examination lies in the temper of the times. In large sections of the Western world a new attitude toward theology and religion has become manifest. After a long period in which the need of many for a sense of life's meaning seemed to be supplied by the progress of civilization or by the realization of national destiny, disillusionment with the half-gods has made itself felt. Men who felt that they were born to die for the glory of nation or culture or for the sake of unborn generations or the advancement of knowledge, have been succeeded by generations who ask the ultimate questions with which religion and theology are concerned. Further, it is increasingly recognized by the thoughtful that the foundations of our civilization rest on deeper convictions than those generally acknowledged; that science and democratic life, literature and art, derive their ultimate orientation from religious faith; and that without renewal of the foundations the structure cannot endure. In this situation churches and theological schools sense that more is expected of them by their fellow men than they once thought and that they owe their neighbors more than they are prepared to give.

Moved by these concerns, in awareness of such needs, pastors and teachers of theology, administrators and boards of theological seminaries and now groups of these gathered loosely around a staff of inquirers with their advisers have undertaken for a brief space of time to examine their work and to ask large and small questions about its adequacy and improvement.

The subjects and objects of this study are, by and large, the Protestant theological schools in the United States and Canada. The community of inquiry goes beyond these boundaries at certain points; it is narrower at others. Geographically it often extends beyond the United States and Canada since the questions and answers of theological educators and churches in Germany, England and France, Asia, South America and Africa, as over-heard in the New World or as directly addressed to us here, enter into the discussion. Moreover, Christians can never forget that they are one people whatever the country of their residence. Again, the questions raised by Roman Catholic educators about their own schools and methods often run parallel to those of

Protestants and their reflections are helpful to the latter. This is true also of the schools in which Jews carry on their theological work and educate young men to be rabbis. Primarily, however, those engaged in this particular inquiry are Protestants. First among them, again, are the institutions and men federated in the American Association of Theological Schools, but many schools not belonging to the association have co-operated freely. In general the group which has been drawn into the discussion has consisted of graduate schools of theology; but those who have been engaged in the task of correlating the inquiry have become very much aware that many non-graduate schools—among them Bible colleges and institutes—play a significant role in the educational venture and have a genuine interest in the outcome of theological self-examination. Various limitations have prevented the thorough study of this group of schools, but failure to draw them into the central community of inquiry does not imply any oversight of their significance.

No one can venture to speak for all those who have participated in the process of self-examination which has been focused for a little while in the office and the staff of The Study of Theological Education in the United States and Canada. All that is possible is that this small group should state in its own way the knowledge, reflections and convictions that have come to it in the course of an inquiry in which they have participated intensively for fifteen months. The members of the study staff—H. Richard Niebuhr, the director, Daniel Day Williams, the associate director, and James M. Gustafson, the assistant director—have visited more than ninety theological seminaries. They have had interviews with the deans of most of these schools and with scores of professors; they have met with more than forty faculties and have participated in regional conferences on theological education in Texas, California and Toronto. They have examined the publications of schools they were unable to visit. All but one of the schools of the American Association of Theological Schools and many non-member institutions have supplied them with detailed information on organization, finances, enrollment, faculty, curriculum, et cetera. These reports have been studied and the statistical information has been analyzed. Thirty-six seminaries have given particular help by supplying information about their development during the last twenty years.

Considerable time has been devoted by the staff to the study of the American denominations, their ministries and interests in theological education. Denominational executives, particularly those charged with responsibility for the seminaries, have been most helpful in providing information and counsel. Members of the staff have participated in conferences of educators of the American Baptist Convention, the United Church of Canada, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Disciples of Christ, the Presbyterian Church, U.S., and the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. With the advice of denominational leaders and others they compiled a list of pastors regarded by their colleagues as "good ministers" and entered into correspondence with a number of them, chosen so as to make the whole group representative of the denominational pattern. Thirty pastors gave their time for personal interviews; conferences were held with groups of others. A hundred members of the panel wrote reflective and illuminating letters about the purpose, limitations, opportunities and hazards of the Protestant

ministry and offered their counsel on the improvement of theological education. In another phase of the study intensive and repeated interviews were held with first-, second- and third-year students at seven seminaries. Some of these interviews were conducted by the assistant director, others by members of the faculties. The reports—in some instances tape recordings—of the interviews have been of great importance to the staff in its efforts to understand how the various aspects of theological education affect students. Among other things "field work" was brought into a new perspective for them when it was seen through the eyes of the young men and women. Conferences with students in some thirty schools supplemented the data gained from interviews. Various limitations prevented the development of a program of consultation with Christian laymen. The limited number of interviews held with representatives of the business and academic communities and organized labor were very enlightening, and reports of lay assessments of the ministry made by other students of the subject were also helpful.

The data, insights and ideas gained from these sources and from the study of many special documents have been worked through by the members of the staff, individually and in many seminar sessions. Now they venture to report on what they believe to have learned in the course of their study and attempt to state what they think is the main content and meaning of the long discussion that is going on among theological educators. On many matters of fact the statement can be relatively precise and objective. But when it deals with principles and aims it must undertake to set forth what has been variously expressed by many or has been only implicit in what others have communicated. In this respect the report cannot be "objective" but must remain a somewhat personal effort to clarify and organize ideas about Church, ministry and theological education that seem to be "in the air" or that seem to be developing in "the climate of opinion." This first volume, in particular, is necessarily an essay of this sort.

The whole report is to be issued in three relatively independent publications. The present book will be followed, presumably within the year, by a volume offering a more detailed study of the schools, faculties, students, curricula, et cetera. The third portion of the report is being published in a series of bulletins dealing with subjects requiring special emphasis or statistical tables too detailed for inclusion in the general volume. Of the former sort is the *Memorandum on the Theological Education of Negro Ministers* which appeared in September, 1955; of the latter sort, a study of trends in thirty-six representative schools from 1935 to 1955 which is now in preparation.

A further book, sponsored by the study but not written by members of the staff, is to be published soon. It will contain a series of essays on the history of the Christian ministry written by Church historians who have met in several conferences and submitted their manuscripts to one another so as to produce a genuine symposium. They are: Professors Roland Bainton of Yale University Divinity School, Edward Hardy of Berkeley Divinity School, Winthrop Hudson of Colgate Rochester Divinity School, John Knox of Union Theological Seminary, New York, Sidney Mead of the Federated Faculty of the University of Chicago, Robert

Michaelsen of the State University of Iowa School of Religion, Wilhelm Pauck of Union Theological Seminary, and George Williams of Harvard Divinity School.

[There now remains the pleasant task of expressing publicly the gratitude of the directors of the study to the persons and organizations who have helped them in the inquiry. Among the scores and hundreds of these the following immediately come to mind: the chairman and members of the Executive and Administrative Committees of the American Association of Theological Schools who set the study in motion; the members of the Advisory Committee, The Reverend Theodore Ferris, Bishop Paul N. Garber, Reverend Ralph W. Loew, President Franc L. McCluer, President Walter N. Roberts, Professor Lewis J. Sherrill, Dean Charles L. Taylor, Jr., Reverend Gordon M. Torgersen; the presidents and deans of seminaries who gave their time and counsel liberally, and cheerfully answered irritating questionnaires; the denominational executives, secretaries of education, of departments of the ministry, and the secretaries of the National Council of Churches who advised us in many matters; the ministers who gave precious hours for interviews and letters; Professor Samuel Blizzard of Pennsylvania State University and Union Theological Seminary in New York who shared with us some of the preliminary results of a study of the ministry he is carrying on under the auspices of the Russell Sage Foundation; Marcus Robbins, the comptroller, and other officials of Yale University who administered the funds; Dean Liston Pope of the Divinity School of Yale University who provided ample and pleasant quarters for the office of the organization and supported it in many other ways.

All these and many others have made greater contributions than the study staff has been able to appropriate and to transmit. The defects of the report are not due to any failures on their part but are chargeable to the director.

Special thanks are due to the Carnegie Corporation of New York which made the study possible through its grant of sixty-five thousand dollars, and to its vice-president James A. Perkins whose interest in the project and whose counsel were constant sources of strength. The Carnegie Corporation, it should be said, is not the author, owner, publisher or proprietor of these or of the other publications issued by the staff of *The Study of Theological Education in the United States and Canada*, and is not to be understood as approving by virtue of its grant any of the statements made or views expressed therein.

Particular acknowledgment must be made of the work of those members of the staff whose names do not appear on the title pages of its reports. Robert Gessert, now of Smith College, rendered important service during the summer of 1955 in collating and interpreting statistical material. Mrs. Miriam C. Smith brought considerable experience in research and high competence to her work as secretary. Mrs. Fleur Kinney Ferm, the staff secretary, has worked on this project longer than any other member except the director. Her good judgment, skill and patience have made contributions to the study which though they remain unidentified are conspicuous to her associates.

Finally, the director must take this occasion to express his great gratitude to his colleagues, Professor Daniel Day Williams, now of Union Theological Seminary in New York, and Professor James M. Gustafson, now of the Divinity School of Yale University, for their faithful comradeship in service and for the deepened understanding of Church, theology and education he gained from them. Their contributions to the present essay are much greater than can be indicated on the title page. The book is the result of a co-operative effort, though in the end one member of the group needed to develop and formulate the "sense of the meeting.", He, therefore, must accept responsibility for the inadequacies and errors of the interpretation.

H. RICHARD NIEBUHR, Director

The Study of Theological Education

in the United States and Canada

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Chapter 1: The Purpose of the Church and its Ministry

I. THE CONTEXT OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

When teachers examine themselves and their schools for the sake of discovering how to overcome difficulties or how to improve their work they are quickly led to ask far-reaching questions about the nature and the purposes of education. And in the course of that inquiry they quickly discover that education is so closely connected with the life of a community that queries about the aims of teaching and learning cannot be answered unless ideas about the character and the purposes of the society in which it is carried on are clarified first of all. This was illustrated a few years ago when President Harry S. Truman appointed a Commission on Higher Education which later issued its report under the title *Higher Education for American Democracy* and began its discussion with definitions of the dogmas and the goals of democratic society. Similarly a Harvard committee appointed to explore the basis for the reorganization of college teaching was instructed to concentrate on the *Objectives of a General Education in a Free Society*. No other approach to an educational problem seems possible, since a school is never separable from the community in which it works, whose living tradition it carries on, into which it sends citizens and leaders imbued with that tradition and committed to the social values. Moreover, being itself a part of the community the school expresses the common purposes directly. In democratic society it values every individual and maintains academic freedom; in genuinely aristocratic society it seeks to cherish and nurture the excellent persons and to maintain their leadership. Of course the school also usually finds itself involved in the conflicts and confusions of purpose that appear in society.

It may seem that professional schools are an exception to the rule; that social context and purpose need to be considered only in the case of so-called "general education." Studies of medical, legal, engineering and theological education, unlike the inquiries referred to above, frequently ignore the community and raise few questions about social purposes. There are books on legal education in which such words as "nation" and "justice" rarely occur; studies of medical

education that scarcely mention "health" and make no allusions to its place in a social system of values; discussions of theological education which seem almost studiously to avoid references to the Church or even to God and neighbor. Doubtless it is often necessary to abstract special from general purposes, and immediate from ultimate problems if progress is to be made toward overcoming irritating difficulties. But it is equally necessary, particularly at critical junctures, to attend to the wider context of special problems and short-range goals. For two reasons this appraisal of immediate against ultimate ends is necessary in theological education today. In the first place such education, now as always, is concerned with the nurture of men and women whose business in life it will be to help men to see their immediate perplexities, joys and sufferings in the light of an ultimate meaning, to live as citizens of the inclusive society of being, and to relate their present choices to first and last decisions made about them in the totality of human history by Sovereign Power. It would be anomalous were an educational work directed toward such an end not under the necessity of considering itself in the same light, of living in such a universal community and of relating its decisions to first commandments and final judgments. In the second place, theology, as expression, understanding and criticism of the life of faith, is today, like that life itself, in a critical situation. At least in many parts of Christendom the quest for meaning, the revival of historic religious convictions about man's nature and destiny, about his lostness and his salvation, and the need to realize the significance of these convictions in relation to contemporary world and life views, have led to a renewal of the theological endeavor. In school and pulpit theology today is not simply an affair of translating ancient ideas into modern language, but of wrestling with ultimate problems as they arise in contemporary forms. It carries on its task in continuity with a great tradition and on the basis of convictions implanted historically into historical men; it works in a community that has a structure and a definable faith. Nevertheless it functions in a situation where many, though not all, things are fluid; education for the ministry must take place in this situation. Under these circumstances it seems imperative that churchmen considering their task in educating men for the work of the Church take their general bearings and try to state in what large context, with what definable orientation, they are going about their task.

To be sure, there are those who argue that the reform of theological education cannot wait on the reformulation of theology. The latter process is likely to be a long one and in the meantime many immediate questions must be answered. Whatever the fundamental problems of theology are, and whatever lines of inquiry may turn out to be most fruitful, the present curriculum is overloaded and the student must be relieved of some of the burden. Whatever the function of the ministry is, theologically considered, ministers must preach, organize churches, counsel the distressed, teach the immature, and they need to be trained by practice for the exercise of these functions. Whatever the Church ought to be, it is expected of schools that they furnish men well prepared to carry on the kind of work demanded of ministers by churches as they are. Again, it seems clear that many more or less technical questions of education cannot be answered theologically. Psychology of learning; social analysis of the societies in which students will work; statistical methods applied to the economic facts of ministers' salaries and the cost of tuition, and the like; and many other relatively precise procedures applied to limited data can

give guidance to perplexed administrators that no amount of hard thought about the large question of man's life before God will yield. Those who urge these considerations upon us are plainly justified in criticizing procedures that begin only with questions about ultimate contexts and final goals.

Yet it remains true that if educational questions cannot be answered theologically, neither can theological questions be answered by use of the techniques of social or behavioral sciences however relevant the insights derived from these sciences may be to theology. The situation in theological education is comparable to the one in which every minister finds himself daily. When he deals with a mentally disturbed person he cannot take the place of the psychiatrist, but neither can the psychiatrist take his place; when political issues are involved, he cannot fulfill the functions of the statesman, but neither can the statesman, as statesman, illuminate a civil crisis by bringing only ultimate perspectives to bear on it. Similar ambivalences characterize every human situation; ultimate and immediate concerns, long- and short-range goals, big and little questions, theological and technical perspectives are involved in it. The approach can never be from one direction only. No simple inductive or deductive procedure is sufficiently fruitful. Yet various approaches can meet; various efforts to understand can support each other as well as be at cross-purposes. When the question is one about the education of the ministry it will not do to ignore either the general—the theological—nor the particular—the educational—approach; the theologian as educator or the educator as theologian cannot carry on his theological and his educational critiques separately and independently, nor can he reduce them to one inquiry with one method in the hope of gaining one single answer.

II. DENOMINATION, NATION OR CHURCH?

Under these circumstances we must ask and answer questions about the social context of theological education and about the objectives of the society while we also define special problems and seek their solution. The general question is: What is the community in which the theological schools carry on their work and which they in part represent? Corollary to this is the question about the objectives of the community which the school will serve directly and indirectly.

The first, superficial impression is that the Protestant theological schools in the United States and Canada do not consciously count themselves members of one community but function as though they were responsible to many different societies. They are all "church schools" rather than state institutions in distinction from many European theological faculties; but the word "church" may mean denomination. Most of the seminaries seem to function within the specific context of that peculiar American order of church organization, the denomination. Their very number indicates that other reasons than the desire to perform an effective task in a single community have led to their establishment and maintenance. While some ninety medical schools seem sufficient to supply the United States and Canada with well-trained physicians twice as many theological schools, besides Bible colleges and institutes, are at work in these

nations to educate ministers. In their control, in the statements of their objectives, in the composition of their faculties, these seminaries for the most part reflect their dependence on, and their loyalty to, denominations. The context in which theological education is going on is the baffling pluralism of Protestant religious life in the United States and Canada. (The pluralism is somewhat less characteristic of Canada than of the United States. The Ninth Census of Population in Canada lists 28 religious groups, whereas the last published (1936) census of Religious Bodies in the United States listed 256 denominations and the 1956 Yearbook of the Churches 254. The numbers are not quite comparable, however, since in the Canadian census some of the group evidently include several separately organized bodies).

Yet despite their number, their denominational affiliation and their service of denominational purposes the theological schools usually give evidence of sharing in a community of discourse and interest that transcends denominational boundaries. And this is true of the denominations themselves. What then is this common life in which schools and denominations participate? One is tempted to define it as American or Canadian national existence or—since the schools in the two nations have much in common—as "the free society" or as "Western democracy." Something is to be said in favor of the suggestion. The separation of Church and state and the legal recognition of the principle of religious liberty in both nations have led not only to pluralism through the protection of established religious groups and the encouragement of spontaneity and inventiveness; but have also fostered voluntarism in church organization and made the clergy largely dependent on lay support. Churches so thrown on their own resources have become responsible to the felt needs of the people to an unusual degree. Spontaneity and the need for adaptation in a competitive situation have helped to give them a popular, "grass-roots" and sometimes vulgar character that removes them a long way from establishments which still bear the traces of historic alliance with privileged classes. They have had to learn the arts of popular appeal and business efficiency. So they and their schools have come to be very much alike; they seem to be the religious representatives of the American societies.

An English theologian, well-acquainted with the American religious and theological scene, has remarked on these and similar characteristics:

"I suppose that the strongest impression that the visitor from this country receives is of the immense vitality and vigor of American Church life. In this the Churches do but share in the vigor and vitality of American life generally. They seem to be an integral part of the American "way of life"—a vague phrase, but one which does signify something to the feelings of Americans even if hard to analyze in terms and propositions. This is perhaps one reason (only one) why a much larger proportion of the population are attached to Churches, and "go to Church," than in this country. It is a "done thing," not as mere adherence to accepted conventions, but as flowing spontaneously from the "Volk" or community levels of consciousness. One result of this vigor and vitality, this sense of being integrally one with the movement, drive and energy of the community generally, is the admirable efficiency with which, on the whole, the Church organization is run, an efficiency which is made possible by,

and itself helps to make possible, a sufficiency of funds for the purpose. I will not say "business" efficiency, for that might be taken to imply a derogatory value judgment which I do not intend: nevertheless it is the counterpart in Church life (there is no reason why there should not be such a counterpart) of the business efficiency which on the whole does characterize the secular side of American life generally. As organizations American churches strike one as being on the whole marvelously well run. There throbs through them the mighty pulse of American life; and it is a very American pulse."

In other ways also the churches in the New World seem to be "American" or "democratic" and to participate primarily in the common life of the "free society." The pluralism of denominationalism seems to be a reflection of the pluralism of democracy. When we think of the overchurched hamlets and cities, or of the great varieties in training and ability among the ministers, or of the regional character of theological schools, or of any other manifestation of this religious heterogeneity, and then look for a parallel or parable that will make this confusion somewhat intelligible we are led to think of the form in the formlessness of economic and political activity in New World democracy. We cannot helpfully compare this "church-system" to the school system or this Protestant ministry to the profession of medicine. The "church-system" looks more like the "filling-station system," and the clergy in their varieties of responsibility and excellence seem most to resemble democratic political leaders—from town selectmen to governors, from demagogues to statesmen, from ward heelers to national party leaders. The unity present in this diversity is like the unity in the diversity, rivalry and tension of democratic political and economic life.

Yet the principle of unity in this Protestantism is not the democratic principle. Despite the American and democratic character of Protestant churches and the theological schools that serve them, an interpreter who tried to understand them primarily in this context would need to do violence to them, to twist the meaning of their affirmations of purpose and to misconstrue the character of the work that goes on in them. Canadian and American denominational and sectarian as they are in coloration, in function and objective they are churches and their schools are church schools. The community in which they work is the Church; the objectives they pursue are those of the Church. Only one among the schools, and that one unofficially and incidentally, refers in its statement of purpose to "the American way of life." About half of them, to be sure, define their purpose by reference to a denomination which they serve. However, the other half do not mention denominational ties, and even those that do so rarely name the special organization without referring to a wider Church of which the denomination is a part. (The following statements are somewhat characteristic of such schools: Bethany Theological Seminary affirms that its object is "to promote the spread and deepen the influence of Christianity by the thorough training of men and women for the various forms of Christian service, in harmony with the principles and practices of the Church of the Brethren"; Augustana Theological Seminary "prepares students for the ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church with the special needs of the Augustana Church in view"; the charter of Berkeley Divinity School begins, "Whereas sundry inhabitants of this state of the denomination of Christians

called the Protestant Episcopal Church have represented by their petition addressed to the General Assembly, that great advantages would accrue to said Church, and they hope and believe to the interests of religion and morals in general, by the incorporation of a Divinity School for the training and instructions of students for the sacred ministry in the Church aforementioned.")

What is true of the schools is true of the denominations in general, though one cannot escape the impression that both schools and parish ministers are often less intent on peculiarly denominational objectives and more disposed to think of themselves as first of all responsible in the whole Church for the work of the Church than are many denominational executives. This is not to discount the importance and value to them of their denominations. Few preachers or teachers feel that they can work in the Church, or have loyalties in it apart from work and loyalty within a particular order. But it is to say that they are concerned with the function of the genus—the theological school or the Christian ministry—and that the function of the species—the American or denominational school and ministry—is of subordinate significance to them or at least to increasing numbers of them. It is to say further that they tend to be more aware of the temptations which arise for them as members of the species than of those which come to them as representatives of the genus. Not a few, while rejoicing in the vigorousness of that "American way" of church life which the English visitor comments on, also accept his warning when he follows his statement about the "business efficiency" and popular character of Christianity in America with reflections about its dangers. This "very American pulse" that beats in these church organizations, he believes,

"inevitably and unconsciously affects the minister's apprehension of, and attitude to, his task, as it does also those of the theological student. The latter is apt to be rather more aware of himself as primarily a person being professionally trained to fulfill a key-office, as an administrator, executive and leader in a vast and important department of the community life of the American people, than as a man on whom God has laid an arresting hand calling him out of that life in the first instance in order to be sent back into it on that basis to a ministerial and prophetic task. This unconscious approach is perhaps fostered to some extent by the great emphasis placed in the seminary curriculum on "practics," and by the comparison I have not infrequently heard drawn between the minister's training and that of the medical man; that the former's work springs from, and is sustained by, a deep and continuous interior transaction with God, is apt to be somewhat overlooked."

As for the temptations which arise out of the denominational organization of the Church, warnings against them are frequent; many ministers, students and teachers become restive when the primacy of denominational loyalties is urged upon them. The denominational-interdenominational type of church organization is doubtless with us to stay, rooted as it is in the history and structure of North American life. But as its modification by means of institutional arrangements for co-operative work constitutes an enduring concern of American churchmen, so efforts to transcend the provincialism to which it tempts ministers and seminaries

constitute a striking feature of the contemporary religious scene. Denominational organization and American life are both conditioning elements in the work of the ministry and of the theological schools; from them the latter derive both strength and weakness. Yet the primary context in which the ministry and theology do their work is neither denomination nor nation but the Church in its wholeness. (The lively interaction of denominational and catholic interests in many theological schools with accompanying enthusiasms and tensions makes a variety of interpretations of the situation inevitable. A member of the Advisory Committee, commenting on this section of the report, writes: "When you write of the denominational seminaries you seem to fail to grasp the ecumenical spirit that characterizes so many of them. This fact of the ecumenical spirit in the denominational school is a tremendous thing with great possibilities for the future. It should be played up more." A colleague, however, comments: "My one question of emphasis concerns the characterization of the schools as accepting the 'whole Church' and an ecumenical context as their real base of operations.... I think the denominational tensions are a little more pervasive and difficult than you seem to suggest.... There is still a long way to go." The slight modifications and qualifications which have been made in the essay as a result of such comments, have been made in the direction suggested by the second critic. The "ecumenical spirit" in the schools today is indeed remarkable but the distance still to be traversed is more impressive than the distance covered.)

Certain direct evidence of this sense of context is given in those academic statements of purpose to which reference has been made. Either in connection with some mention of their purpose to train men for a denominational ministry or without such allusion, the theological schools tend to define their objective in such phrases as these: "spreading and deepening the influence of Christianity; promoting the "interest of religion and morals"; "training Christian leaders who are wholeheartedly committed to Jesus Christ and able to share his gospel in all its relevance through the Church and all agencies of God's kingdom"; "to provide leaders capable of bringing to others the saving knowledge of God in Christ Jesus"; "training leaders competent in this age to interpret truth and to direct activities of the Church in its related institutions at home and abroad"; "the preparation of men for the ministry of the Word and the sacraments." The schools work in the context of the Church even though they do not frequently mention that fact. They may not be as conscious of the Church as they are of its objectives, yet when they serve the latter they participate in the life of the whole Church and are moved out of the confines of sectarianism. Their libraries are neither highly denominational nor highly American or Canadian. The denominational "Fathers" doubtless have a place on many shelves and lists of reserve books, but it is also the ambition of every destitute librarian to acquire a set of Migne's *Patrologia* (it will have at least several kinds of symbolic value); and writings of the Protestant "Fathers" as well as of their sons, almost irrespective of denomination, are everywhere to be encountered. Wherever the theological student is at work he is challenged—at very least by those most catholic of teachers, the competent librarians (It is not implied that all theological librarians are competent any more than all the members of other faculty groups are so. But a heartening sign in the present situation is the increase of interest among these librarians in their work as teachers and the increase of concern among faculties for the development of school

libraries as teaching centers)—to enter into conversation with a continuous if not identical group of thinkers. To an increasing extent Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic theologians are included in that company.

The courses of study in denominational as well as interdenominational schools are even more indicative of their participation in the common life of the whole Church. Wherever they are being taught, by whatever methods and with whatever preconceptions, theological students are everywhere being asked to enter into long and serious conversations with the persons and communities of the Old and New Covenants of the Bible. The emphasis may be on the Word of God to men through that book ("Thus saith the Lord"); or on the words of men to God ("Out of the depths have I cried to Thee"); or on the words of men to men about God ("Him whom you ignorantly worship I proclaim to you"). But whatever the emphasis, theological students in classroom, study and chapel are introduced to the great historic reasoning of God with men and led to participate in it. It is not to be denied that there are many contentions about proper methods of instruction, about the possibility of understanding the Bible without the use of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek; and about its ultimate meanings. Yet it becomes clear to one who listens sympathetically and attentively to what is going on in the classes that there is a great common denominator among these conservatives and liberals, these strict and latitudinarian constructionists. There is more of the whole Biblical content in the thought of most "Fundamentalists" than "liberals" believe. Not only Genesis 1 and Matthew 1 but Isaiah 40 and I Corinthians 13 are inscribed in their minds and hearts. Conversely there is far more Biblical knowledge and conviction in the liberal mind than ultraconservatism imagines.

General participation in a common life appears also in the extent to which church history forms a part of almost every theological curriculum and in the tendency to study it as a single history of one Church with many branches, subordinating the history of the denomination and even of Protestantism and of Christianity in America to the story of the whole Christian society. The community in whose history teachers and students find their orientation is wider than denomination or country. Here again there are variations. The teaching of church history is sometimes made the occasion for developing a sense of alienation from other groups rather than for developing a sense of unity. Like every other history, it is used at times to promote indoctrination in a peculiar tenet. Yet fundamentally and generally it is taught as *church* history.

In the study of theology proper the whole-church orientation of the schools may be less evident, yet differences are less of a denominational or national than of a party character. Conservative theologians, who were Presbyterians, are studied more widely in some seminaries belonging to new evangelistic groups than among the heirs of John Knox; modern theologians belonging to Lutheran churches, such as Aulén and Nygren, may be used more faithfully in an Episcopalian seminary than in many a Lutheran school less sympathetic to Lund. With a few exceptions teachers and students do not engage in a denominationally restricted discussion but participate in a Protestant and a Christian conversation or debate about the ultimate problems of faith and life. In the so-called practical fields the unity is even greater; here there is common concern for

developing relevant, effective preaching in the local church on the basis of Scriptures; for a religious education Christian rather than either humanistic or denominational in character; for guiding men into pastoral work that meets human needs.

Other factors in theological education also point to this participation in a common life. Important among these is the work of the interdenominational schools, staffed by members of many denominations, necessarily teaching church rather than denominational doctrine, history and practice. They are attended by students coming from many church groups who return on graduation to their denominations. While these schools supply only about 15 per cent of each year's B.D. graduates they represent American Protestantism to a larger extent than such numbers indicate. A large proportion of the teachers in the denominational seminaries has had its doctoral training in these schools; and a considerable number of widely read theological treatises come from the pens of their scholars. In such schools and elsewhere the supradenominational and supranational character of theological education is also significantly indicated by the increasing enrollment of students and the employment of teachers from other areas of Christendom.

Thus implicitly and explicitly the denominations in their concern for the education of ministers, and the schools entrusted with the task, make it evident that they think of themselves increasingly as branches or members of a single community, as orders and institutions with special duties or assignments to be carried out in partnership with other branches of one society. The idea of *Una Sancta*, of One Holy Church, is very pervasive despite relatively rare expression. There are exceptions; denominations and even more frequently small parties in them, contend for the sole validity of a particular form of creed, organization or liturgy. (One school characterizes its attitude toward other denominations as magnanimous; another recognizes only two church bodies—one of these in Europe—as soundly Christian; some denominational programs for the development of theological education move easily from praise of the ecumenical spirit to exclusive concern for the advancement of the denominational ministry. Catholic interest in the whole Church does not always lead to radical change of the denominational mind.) Rivalries and contentions also exist. Sometimes these are reminiscent of the tensions to be found in the relations of states and provinces to nation as a whole, sometimes to the more acerbic dissensions among the branches of the armed forces, all equally pledged to the defense of the country; sometimes they seem very similar to the tensions found among Roman Catholic religious orders; sometimes they seem like economic competition. In the permissive atmosphere of freedom apparently wild and individualistic doctrines flourish; new founders and new religions with new schools appear; false or true prophets rise in protest against established and bureaucratized organizations of religious life; zealous groups maintain that all others are out of step except their select company. But to the sympathetic observer the increasing unity of American Protestantism is more striking than its apparent diversity. He notes that the primary context of Protestant theological education in the United States and Canada is the Christian community in its wholeness. The contention for this orientation of thought and life continues indeed to go on in many a school and poses for it its deepest problems; but the

movement toward participation in the universal Church is the dominant one.

III. TOWARD A DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH

The definition of the Church—even the awareness of its actuality—constitutes one of the main concerns of modern theology. Thus we have arrived at one of those points where the reform of theological education apparently must wait on the reformulation of theology. Much confusion and uncertainty in theological schools today seems to be due to lack of clarity about the community—the Church; about its form and matter, its relations and compassion. Without a definition of Church it is impossible to define adequately the work of the ministry for which the school is to prepare its students. It seems impossible also to organize a genuine course of study including the Biblical disciplines, church history, theology, the theory and practice of worship, preaching, and education on other grounds than those of habit and expediency unless there is clarity about the place of these studies and acts in the life of the Church. It is impossible to achieve more than superficial correlation of studies in the history and philosophy of religion, in psychology and sociology, with the older disciplines, unless the relations of the Church to religion in general, to the particular religions and to secular culture have been intelligibly defined.

The results of the inquiry into the nature of the Church in which theologians and churchmen are engaged today cannot be anticipated. The contributions on the one hand of Biblical, historical and systematic theology, of history, the sociology of religion and the theology of culture; and on the other, the practical experiments and experiences in ecumenical, national, municipal and parish organization of church life, will, one may hope, eventually be brought together in some kind of temporary historical synthesis. For the present the question what the Church is in act and potency, remains largely unanswered. The problem is new in many ways; at least it is posed in new forms at the present juncture of history. Thus questions about theological education which arise because of uncertainties in the conception of the Church may be due less to failure to maintain traditional conceptions than to a situation in which new implications of traditional ideas and new possibilities of historical institutions dawn on the horizon.

Nevertheless, we must try to take our bearings; try to formulate some of the nascent agreements about the character of that Church in which theological education goes on and for the furtherance of whose objectives the ministry is being educated. In his effort to state tentatively and in his own way such apparently dawning agreements the author of this essay must employ the method of polar analysis; that is, he must try to do justice to the dynamic character of that social reality, the Church, by defining certain poles between which it moves or which it represents. Such a method is the best one available to him.

By Church, first of all, we mean the subjective pole of the objective rule of God. The Church is no more the kingdom of God than natural science is nature or written history the course of human events. It is the subject that apprehends its Object (The objection that God is never object

but always subject often arises from a confusion of the word "object" as meaning "thing" with "object" as meaning the Other toward which sensation, thought, appreciation, worship, et cetera are directed.) that thinks the Other; worships and depends on It; imitates It perhaps; sometimes reflects It; but is always distinct from its Object. It is integral to the self-consciousness of such a subject that it distinguishes itself from its Object. Several things are implied in this understanding of the Church: negatively, the Church is not the rule or realm of God; positively, there is no apprehension of the kingdom except in the Church; conversely, where there is apprehension of, and participation in, this Object there the Church exists; and, finally, the subject-counterpart of the kingdom is never an individual in isolation but one in community, that is, in the Church. Development of these themes would require more space than the scope of the present essay permits. What seems important is the distinction of the Church from the realm and rule of God; the recognition of the primacy and independence of the divine reality which can and does act without, beyond and often despite the Church; and the acceptance of the relativity yet indispensability of the Church in human relations to that reality.

Definition of subject and object are correlative. What the Church is as subject cannot be stated without some description of the Object toward which it is directed. Though an object is independent of a subject, yet it is inaccessible as it is in itself. What is accessible and knowable is so only from a certain point of view and in a certain relation. The communal point of view and perspective of the Church, or, better, the kind of receptivity created in the Church, puts it into a relation to its Object and makes possible an understanding of it that is impossible to every other point of view. The Church is not the only human community directed toward the divine reality; its uniqueness lies in its particular relation to that reality, a relation inseparable from Jesus Christ. It is related to God through Jesus Christ, first in the sense that Jesus Christ is the center of this community directed toward God; the Church takes its stand with Jesus Christ before God and knows him, though with many limitations, with the mind of Christ. Secondly, in that situation there is made available to it, or revealed to it, a characteristic and meaning in the Object—the divine reality—unknown from other perspectives, namely, the reconciling nature and activity of a God who is Father and Son, and also Holy Spirit. Once more it becomes evident that the effort to define the Church involves us in many problems of theology into which we cannot enter in this connection. But certain implications of the historic and apparently necessary Trinitarian understanding of the divine reality on which the Church depends may be called to attention as important for the reorientation of theological education. One of these implications is that in the relative situation occupied by the Church its function is always that of directing attention to its Object rather than to itself. Another is the recognition that it is inadequate and misleading to define the church and the Object on which it depends in terms of Jesus Christ alone. It is indeed the Christian Church, but as the Church of Jesus Christ it is primarily a Church of God and so related to, while distinguished from, all other communities related to the Ultimate.

We need to define Church further by use of the polar terms "community" and "institution." A social reality such as the Church cannot be described by means of one of these categories only

and much misconception of the Church results from such exclusive use. Popularly and even among churchmen the institutional Church may be so emphasized that there is little appreciation for the Church that does not come to appearance in organizations and rites. Of the two ecumenical movements in our time the organizational effort to develop world-wide institutions takes precedence in many minds over that spiritual, psychological, intellectual and moral common life, transcending all national boundaries, which seeks institutions through which to express itself. Or again membership in the Church is widely regarded primarily as a matter of participation in institutional forms and actions, less frequently as engagement in common thought, common devotion and worship, common appreciations. But the opposite error is also possible; a common life, vaguely defined by reference to a common spirit also vaguely described, is exalted at the expense of institutional forms. (An example of this may be found in Professor Emil Brunner's *The Misunderstanding of the Church* (Philadelphia, 1953). Professor Brunner writes: "The New Testament Ecclesia, the fellowship of Jesus Christ, is Q pure communion of persons and has nothing of the character of an institution about it" (p. 17); to this "Ecclesia which is always . . . a dynamic reality and nothing more, the existing churchly institutions are related as means . . . externa subsidia—in very diverse ways and proportions" (p. 109). The Ecclesia . . . is no institution. Therefore the church can never be the Ecclesia either by purification or recreation" (p. 107).

These errors are like those made when a nation is defined either institutionally as state, or as pure community by reference only to national "spirit" or a "way of life." But it seems clear that no community can exist without some institutions that give it form, boundaries, discipline, and the possibilities of expression and common action. On the other hand, no institution can long exist without some common mind and drive that expresses and defines itself in institutions. The questions whether Church is primarily institution or primarily community, or whether one of these is prior, are as unanswerable as similar questions about thought and language. There is no thought without language and no language without thought, yet thought is not language nor language thought. The Church as institution can preserve as well as corrupt the Church as community; it can express and define through word and deed the common mind as well as thwart the common spirit. The Church as community can enliven but also stultify the Church as institution. So it was in the case of the Nazi Christian community which twisted the meaning and eventually the forms of common Christian institutions; so it is also in the confusions of the Christian with the democratic community. The American and Canadian Church scene that we have sketched indicates how much institution and community belong together, yet how distinct they are. In part the realization of the Church community in the New World waits on the development of institutions able to give it form and wholeness; in part the institutionalization in denominations expresses the variety and unity characteristic of the community on this part of the planet.

To describe the Church as a community of memory and hope, sharing in the common memory not only of Jesus Christ but also of the mighty deeds of God known by Israel, expecting the coming into full view of the kingdom on earth and/or in heaven; to describe it further as the

community of worship, united by its direction toward one God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit yet worshipped more as Father or as Son or as Holy Spirit in this or that part of the community; to describe it as a community of thought in which debate and conflict can take place because there is a fundamental frame of agreement and because there are common issues of great import—to do all this and the much more that needs to be done would be to essay the work of a large part of theology. It must be sufficient here to note that the schools which serve in the Church and serve the Church cannot abstract community from institution nor institution from community; nor can any churchman. One or the other of these polar characteristics of the social reality may be emphasized, but it cannot be defined without some reference to the other pole or served without some concern for its counterpart.

We must deal more briefly with certain other polarities in the Church's existence. Among these are the complementary yet antithetical characteristics of unity and plurality, of locality and universality, of protestant and catholic. The Church is one, yet also many. It is a pluralism moving toward unity and a unity diversifying and specifying itself. It is, in the inescapable New Testament figure, a body with many members none of which is the whole in miniature but in each of which the whole is symbolized. Every national church, every denomination, every local church, every temporal church order, can call itself Church by virtue of its participation in the whole; yet every one is only a member needing all the others in order to be truly itself and in order to participate in the whole. Without the members there is no body; without the body no members. Schools cannot prepare men to work simply in the whole Church but must equip them for particular service; yet they cannot do so unless they keep them mindful of the whole and loyal to it

The Church is local and it is universal. Where two or three are gathered in the name of Christ there he is present, but all to which he points and all that he incarnates is present also. Among other things the universal Church is present, for Jesus Christ cannot be there without bringing with him the whole company of his brothers, who have heard the Word of God and kept it, who were not created without the Word. He is never present without the company of the apostles and prophets, the patriarchs and singers who speak of him; nor without the least of his brothers of whom he speaks. The localized Church implies the universal, but the universal no less implies the local; without localization, without becoming concrete in a specific occasion, it does not exist. The school which educates men for service in this Church cannot but focus their attention on the parish and the meeting; it cannot make them aware of the significance of parish or Sunday morning service unless it turns from the localized occasion to the universal community represented and adumbrated in the occasion.

The Church is protestant and catholic. This is not only to say that there is much historic Protestantism in those institutions called Catholic churches, and much historic Catholicism in the institutions called Protestant. It is also to say that the principle of protest against every tendency to confuse the symbol with what it symbolizes and the subject with the object, is a constituent element in the being of the community, even apart from the institutional

organizations. The Church as the people of God, whether under the Old or the New Covenants, is always the party of protest against religion in the religious human world. It protests against every effort to bring the Infinite into the finite, the transcendent into the immanent, the Eternal into the temporal. The only finite symbol of God it tolerates is the symbol of emptiness—the empty Holy of Holies, the empty tomb. But protest has no meaning apart from what is protested against. The Church cannot be protestant without being catholic. The principle of catholicity—as the principle of incarnation rather than the principle of universality—is as much an ingredient of churchliness as is the principle of protest. Unless the Infinite is represented in finite form, unless the Word becomes flesh over and over again, though only as oral preaching, unless the risen Christ manifests himself in the visible forms of individual saintliness and communal authority there is no human relation to the Infinite and Transcendent. Negative and positive movements—the one in rejection of all that is little because God is great, the other in affirmation of the apparently insignificant because God is its creator, redeemer and inspirer; the one away from the world that is not God, the other toward the world of which he is Lord— must both be represented where the Church exists.

The final polarity to be considered in this adumbration of the form and nature of the Church is that of Church and world. This is like the first polarity of subject and object insofar as it is not a polarity in the Church but one in which it participates as itself a kind of pole. The Church lives and defines itself in action vis-à-vis the world. World, however, is not object of Church as God is. World, rather, is companion of the Church, a community something like itself with which it lives before God. The world is sometimes enemy, sometimes partner of Church, often antagonist, always one to be befriended; now it is the co-knower, now the one that does not know what Church knows, now the knower of what Church does not know. The world is the community of those before God who feel rejected by God and reject him; again it is the community of those who do not know God and seem not to be known by him; or, it is the community of those who knowing God do not worship him. In all cases it is the community to which the Church addresses itself with its gospel, to which it gives an account of what it has seen and heard in divine revelation, which it invites to come and see and hear. The world is the community to which Christ comes and to which he sends his disciples. On the other hand, the world is the community of those who are occupied with temporal things. When, in its sense of rejection, it is preoccupied with these temporal matters it is the world of idolatry and becomes foe of the Church. When it is occupied with them as gifts of God— whether or not the consciousness of grace becomes explicit—it is the partner of the Church, doing what the Church, concerned with the nontemporal, cannot do; knowing what Church as such cannot know. Thus and in other ways the relations of Church and world are infinitely variable; but they are always dynamic and important. To train men for the ministry of the Church is to train them for ministry to the world and to introduce them to the conversation of Church and world, a conversation in which both humility and self-assurance have their proper place.

If our interpretation of the spirit of the Protestant theological schools is in any way correct then it is Church defined somewhat in the foregoing manner that constitutes the society in which they

function and whose objectives they serve directly and indirectly, consciously or unconsciously. Different schools and different denominations doubtless represent different perspectives and emphases in their understanding of this Church; yet they participate in the common life insofar as they respect and gain profit from each other's contributions.

IV. THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH: THE INCREASE OF THE LOVE OF GOD AND NEIGHBOR

What are the objectives of the Church? That they are many in number is clear from the statements of purpose made by schools when they define to what end they are training ministers, and by other church organizations—denominations, councils, conferences, et cetera—when they justify their activities. Some speak in individual terms of the cultivation of the Christian life or the salvation of souls; others state their goal to be the building up of the corporate life of the Church or of some part of it; again the goal is defined as the "communication of the vital and redeeming doctrines of Scriptures," or it is otherwise described by reference to the Bible as the ultimate source of all that is to be taught and preached. Elsewhere the end is defined as the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments; or, again, as the development of the life of prayer and worship. Perhaps most frequently the goal set forth is increase of belief in Jesus Christ, of discipleship to him and the glorification of his name. These multiple aims of churches and schools are again multiplied as one proceeds from grand statements about the purpose of the large organizations to the specialized goals of boards and departments, of courses and classes, of rural and urban congregations, of ministries of preaching and education and pastoral work and of preparation for such particular functions. The multiplicity of goals corresponds to the pluralism in the Church that is made up of many members, each with its own function; that stands in many relations to God, who is complex in his unity, and in many relations to a world protean in its attitudes toward God and the Church.

The question is whether there is one end beyond the many objectives as there is one Church in the many churches. Is there one goal to which all other goals are subordinate, not necessarily as means to end, but as proximate objectives that should be sought only in relation to a final purpose? When we deal with the complex activities of a biological organism or a person or a society the analogies of mechanical operation are misleading. The circulation of the blood, for instance, is not a means to the end of the functioning of the nervous system, nor is either a means only to the health of the body since that health also comes to expression in them. Still the healthy functioning of the whole body is in a sense a goal that a physician will have in view as he pursues the proximate end of improving circulation. The question of the ultimate objective of the whole Church and of the seminaries in the Church does not reduce questions about proximate ends to questions about means, but it poses the problem of the final unifying consideration that modifies all the special strivings.

Once more then we must venture to anticipate, though only in adumbrations, the answer to a

question properly answerable only by the combined and continuous work of many theologians approaching the problem with the aid of many special studies and of many experiences. Such a statement will inevitably be somewhat private, yet though personal it is the report of what has been heard and understood in a conversation in which many contemporary ministers and teachers, many churchmen of the past and, above all, the prophets and apostles participate. As such a report it may gain some assent together with much correction and may be of some aid in moving forward the debate about the objective of the churches and their schools and in overcoming some current confusions.

The conversation about the ultimate objective is many faceted. It includes many interchanges on special issues through which, however, the movement toward the definition of the ultimate issue and the final objective proceeds. There is, as we have noted, a debate between those who define the last end of the Church individualistically as salvation of souls and those who think of it as the realization of the redeemed society. But extreme individualism and extreme emphasis on society are rare. Recognition of the social character of the individual and of the interpersonal character of society brings the parties somewhat closer to each other and both are challenged by the question: What is the chief end of man, whether as redeemed individual or redeemed community? Another debate, the one about Church and Bible, is leading, it appears, to somewhat similar results. Protestantism in general and particularly in America is marked by devotion to the Bible; it often conceives its end to be the dissemination of Biblical truth and increase of devotion to Scriptures. Catholicism, on the other hand, tends to be church-centered and often finds its goal in the building and strengthening of loyalty to the Church. But the study of the Bible in Protestantism, with its demonstrations of the close relations of the people and the Book both in the Old and New Covenant periods, and historical theology with its reflections on the manner in which at different times the Church interprets Bible, bring Church and Scriptures into inseparable relations of mutual dependence. Moreover, in practice concentration on the Book is ultimately self-corrective since the Bible faithfully studied allows none to make it the highest good or its glorification the final end. It always points beyond itself not so much to its associate, the people, as to the Creator, the suffering and risen Lord and the Inspirer. This is true also of the Church; it loses its character as Church when it concentrates on itself, worships itself and seeks to make love of Church the first commandment. Tension and antagonism between Bible-centered and Church-centered members of the community is being ever-renewed but is also being evermore resolved and their debate is led to higher issues by the witness of the Bible and the Church themselves to that which transcends both. Another long debate has gone on in history and is alive today among those who agree that the chief end of the Church is to gain followers of Jesus Christ or to proclaim his Lordship. Christian humanism, present to a minor extent in denominations and schools, but widely prevalent in the "latent" church which seems large and important in America, is strong in its devotion to the Son of Man; reliance upon the Son of God is more characteristic of the ecclesiastical institutions and of the majority movement in the community. Yet exclusively Jesus-centered and exclusively Christ-centered groups contradict not only each other but also contradict Jesus Christ himself who will not bear witness to himself but to the one who sent him. The great central position of the historic Church

maintains itself amidst these variations, affirming not only the actuality and unity of both human and divine natures, the identity of the historic with the risen Lord, but also some form of the Trinitarian conviction, which does not allow the separation of the Son of Man and Son of God, from the Father and the Spirit. Devotion directed toward Jesus Christ is at least partly redirected by him to the One he loves and who loves him, and to the world created and redeemed by the love of God. Nothing less than God—albeit God in the mystery of his being as Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the object toward which Scriptures, Church and Jesus Christ himself direct those who begin by loving them.

Is not the result of all these debates and the content of the confessions or commandments of all these authorities this: that no substitute can be found for the definition of the goal of the Church as the increase among men of the love of God and neighbor? The terms vary; now the symbolic phrase is reconciliation to God and man' now increase of gratitude for the forgiveness of sin, now the realization of the kingdom or the coming of the Spirit, now the acceptance of the gospel. But the simple language of Jesus Christ himself furnishes to most Christians the most intelligible key to his own purpose and to that of the community gathered around him. If the increase among men of love of God and neighbor is the ultimate objective may it not be that many of our confusions and conflicts in churches and seminaries are due to failure to keep this goal in view while we are busy in the pursuit of proximate ends that are indeed important, but which set us at cross-purposes when followed without adequate reference to the final good?

Any adequate discussion of the theme of love of God and neighbor and of its relevance to Church and school requires all the resources of the theological curriculum from study of the Scriptures through systematic theology, the philosophy, psychology and history of religion, Christian and social ethics to pastoral theology, Christian education and homiletics. Yet in relative brevity some things can be said about this theme which, one hopes, will invite the assent of many members of the community, however great their dissent because of the incompleteness of the statement and because differences of emphasis are inevitable. The statement of a final end can never be a final statement until the whole community confesses it in the moment of its achievement.

In the language of Christianity love of God and neighbor is both "law" and "gospel"; it is both the requirement laid on man by the Determiner of all things and the gift given, albeit in incompleteness, by the self-giving of the Beloved. It is the demand inscribed into infinitely aspiring human nature by the Creator; its perversion in idolatry, hostility and self-centeredness is the heart of man's tragedy; its reconstruction, redirection and empowerment is redemption from evil. Love of God and neighbor is the gift given through Jesus Christ by the demonstration in incarnation, words, deeds, death and resurrection that God is love—a demonstration we but poorly apprehend yet sufficiently discern to be moved to a faltering response of reciprocal love. The purpose of the gospel is not simply that we should believe in the love of God; it is that we should love him and neighbor. Faith in God's love toward man is perfected in man's love to God and neighbor. We love in incompleteness, not as redeemed but in the time of redemption, not in

attainment but in hope. Through Jesus Christ we receive enough faith in God's love toward us to see at least the need for and the possibility of a responsive love on our part. We know enough of the possibility of love to God on our part to long for its perfection; we see enough of the reality of God's love toward us and neighbor to hope for its full revelation and so for our full response.

In both law and gospel the love of God and the love of neighbor are inseparably related. Historically they are associated in Judaism and Christianity, in the two tables of the Ten Commandments, in the double summary of the law offered by Jesus, in apostolic preaching, in the theology and ethics of Catholic and Protestant churches. Despite tendencies in Christian history toward solitary union with God on the one hand and toward nontheistic humanitarianism on the other the unity of the two motifs has been vindicated many times. The inseparability of the two loves has been less manifest in theological analysis than in the actuality of history but theology has pointed out often enough how the thought of God is impossible without thought of the neighbor and how the meaning and value of the companion's life depends on his relation to God. With their understanding of the divine-human nature of Jesus Christ and of the ubiquity of Christ in all compassionate and needy companions, Christians are led to see that as the neighbor cannot exist or be known or be valued without the existence, knowledge and love of God, so also God does not exist as God-for-us or become known or loved as God except in his and our relation to the neighbor. The interrelations of self, companion and God are so intricate that no member of this triad exists in his true nature without the others, nor can he be known or loved without the others. If we substitute "Jesus Christ" for "neighbor" Christians in general will accept that statement; but there is danger in that substitution as well as the possibility of enlightenment, since the relation of Jesus Christ to our other neighbors is often obscured in theology; his revelation of what it means to be a man is often forgotten in favor of exclusive attention to his disclosure of what it means that God is, and is Good. Yet the latter illumination could not take place without the former.

God's love of self and neighbor, neighbor's love of God and self, self's love of God and neighbor are so closely interrelated that none of the relations exists without the others. The intricacy and unity of the human situation before God is not less dynamic and complex than the one we encounter in nature when we explore the energetic world of the atom or of a sidereal system. Yet we can only speak in succession of what appears in contemporaneousness; in discourse we must abstract relations, such as love, from the terms related and the terms from each other, so that we are always in danger of speaking of God without reference to the being he loves and that loves him; of speaking about religion or love of God as distinct from ethics or the love of neighbor. Such dangers must be accepted and faced; theology must be content to spend no small part of its energies in the correction of the errors which ensue from its necessary mode of working.

What then is love and what do we mean by God and by neighbor when we speak of the ultimate purpose of Church, and so of theological education, as the increase of love of God and neighbor among men? By love we mean at least these attitudes and actions: rejoicing in the presence of

the beloved, gratitude, reverence and loyalty toward him. Love is rejoicing over the existence of the beloved one; it is the desire that he be rather than not be; it is longing for his presence when he is absent; it is happiness in the thought of him; it is profound satisfaction over everything that makes him great and glorious. Love is gratitude: it is thankfulness for the existence of the beloved; it is the happy acceptance of everything that he gives without the jealous feeling that the self ought to be able to do as much; it is a gratitude that does not seek equality; it is wonder over the other's gift of himself in companionship. Love is reverence: it keeps its distance even as it draws near; it does not seek to absorb the other in the self or want to be absorbed by it; it rejoices in the otherness of the other; it desires the beloved to be what he is and does not seek to refashion him into a replica of the self or to make him a means to the self's advancement. As reverence love is and seeks knowledge of the other, not by way of curiosity nor for the sake of gaining power but in rejoicing and in wonder. In all such love there is an element of that "holy fear" which is not a form of flight but rather deep respect for the otherness of the beloved and the profound unwillingness to violate his integrity. Love is loyalty; it is the willingness to let the self be destroyed rather than that the other cease to be; it is the commitment of the self by self-binding will to make the other great. It is loyalty, too, to the other's cause—to his loyalty. As there is no patriotism where only the country is loved and not the country's cause—that for the sake of which the nation exists—so there is no love of God where God's cause is not loved, that which God loves and to which he has bound himself in sovereign freedom.

What, further, do we mean by the word God when we speak of the love of God? Not less than this surely—the Source and Center of all being, the Determiner of destiny, the Universal One—God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth. 13y God we cannot mean first of all love itself as the relation that binds all things together; the proposition that God is love cannot be converted without loss and error into the statement that love is God. Neither do we mean by God any lovely being easily made the object of our affection. We encounter no demand in ourselves or in our world to love that to which we are naturally attracted. Neither is there any promise or hope in the idea that we shall come to love with rejoicing, gratitude, reverence and loyalty, all that now easily arouses in us the movements of our desire. The movement of our love toward all these things, though they go by the name of God or gods, is the way of our idolatry; it is the movement toward the many away from the One, toward the partial instead of the universal, toward the work of our hands rather than toward our Maker. The demand and the promise refer to the One beyond all these.

The problem of man is how to love the One on whom he is completely, absolutely dependent; who is the Mystery behind the mystery of human existence in the fatefulness of its selfhood, of being this man among these men, in this time and all time, in the thus and so-ness of the strange actual world. It is the problem of reconciliation to the One from whom death proceeds as well as life, who makes demands too hard to bear, who sets us in the world where our beloved neighbors are the objects of seeming animosity, who appears as God of wrath as well as God of love. It is the problem that arises in its acutest form when life itself becomes a problem, when the goodness of existence is questionable, as it has been for most men at most times; when the

ancient and universal suspicion arises that he is happiest who was never born and he next fortunate who died young.

Reconciliation to God is reconciliation to life itself; love to the Creator is love of being, rejoicing in existence, in its source, totality and particularity. Love to God is more than that, however, great as this demand and promise are. It is loyalty to the idea of God when the actuality of God is mystery; it is the affirmation of a universe and the devoted will to maintain a universal community at whatever cost to the self. It is the patriotism of the universal commonwealth, the kingdom of God, as a commonwealth of justice and love, the reality of which is sure to become evident. There is in such love of God a will-to-believe as the will-to-be-loyal to everything God and his kingdom stand for. Love to God is conviction that there is faithfulness at the heart of things: unity, reason, form and meaning in the plurality of being. It is the accompanying will to maintain or assert that unity, form and reason despite all appearances. The dark shadow of this love is our combative human loyalty which in its love of gods—principles of religion, empires and civilizations, and all partial things—denies while it seeks to affirm the ultimate loyalty and so involves us in apparently never-ending religious animosities which at the same time unite and divide neighbors, as they forge close bonds of loyalty to each other in a common cause among closed societies disloyal to each other.

Who, finally, is my neighbor, the companion whom I am commanded to love as myself or as I have been loved by my most loyal neighbor, the companion whose love is also promised me as mine is promised him? He is the near one and the far one; the one beside the road I travel here and now; the one removed from me by distances in time and space, in convictions and loyalties. He is my friend, the one who has shown compassion toward me; and my enemy, who fights against me. He is the one in need, in whose hunger, nakedness, imprisonment and illness I see or ought to see the universal suffering servant. He is the oppressed one who has not risen in rebellion against my oppression nor rewarded me according to my deserts as individual or member of a heedlessly exploiting group. He is the compassionate one who ministers to my needs: the stranger who takes me in; the father and mother, sister and brother. In him the image of the universal redeemer is seen as in a glass darkly. Christ is my neighbor, but the Christ in my neighbor is not Jesus; it is rather the eternal son of God incarnate in Jesus, revealed in Jesus Christ. The neighbor is in past and present and future, yet he is not simply mankind in its totality but rather in its articulation, the community of individuals and individuals in community. He is Augustine in the Roman Catholic Church and Socrates in Athens, and the Russian people, and the unborn generations who will bear the consequences of our failures, future persons for whom we are administering the entrusted wealth of nature and other greater common gifts. He is man and he is angel and he is animal and inorganic being, all that participates in being. That we ought to love these neighbors with rejoicing and with reverence, with gratitude and with loyalty is the demand we dimly recognize in our purer moments in science and religion, in art and politics. That we shall love them as we do not now, that is the hope which is too good to be true. That we are beloved by them and by God, that is the small faith, less than the mustard seed in size, which since the time of Abraham and of Jesus Christ

remains alive, makes hope possible, encourages new desire and arouses men to anticipated attainments of future possibility.

When all is said and done the increase of this love of God and neighbor remains the purpose and the hope of our preaching of the gospel, of all our church organization and activity, of all our ministry, of all our efforts to train men for the ministry, of Christianity itself.

V. CONFUSING PROXIMATE WITH ULTIMATE GOALS

Our efforts to define the context of theological education as the whole Church, and to describe its goal as the increase of the love of God and neighbor, have removed us a long way from the actuality of schools, churches and ministry in the United States and Canada. To be sure, these institutions reveal in various ways that this context and this goal are implied in what they do but they also make evident that very often they are not directly concerned about such apparently remote things. They usually speak of more proximate contexts and goals and often manifest an almost ultimate concern in less ultimate matters. From such confusions of the proximate with the ultimate arise some of their external and internal conflicts. Not all conflicts about proximate ends and immediate means are traceable to this source. Theological like every other type of education is involved, as has been noted, in a host of dilemmas that cannot be solved theologically; but its difficulties are increased tremendously by the internal conflict in which it is engaged when it substitutes the relative for the absolute.

Of these confusions the most widely criticized, though not the most important, is the confusion of a branch of the Church with the whole Church. The tendency to regard a denomination as the ultimate environment in which the school carries on its work or as at least the last society to whose purposes reference must be made is on the wane, as has been pointed out, in most of the seminaries and Bible colleges in the United States and Canada. But it is still strong in many places and one may expect that it will manifest itself in ever-new forms. Where it prevails theological education is necessarily provincial in character; it is neither theological nor educational, since it does not lead a student to any direct confrontation with the theological object nor induce him to participate in liberating dialogue with all companions directed toward that object. Against this tendency theology and faith will wage constant battle, though it is clear that no technical approach to curriculum construction or teaching method will enable any group to win this struggle and that no victorious party is secure against falling into the temptation to substitute a new form of this fallacy for the defeated one. That schools and churches so provincial in character and out look make contributions despite themselves to the whole Christian movement is not to be gainsaid. Neither would one be justified in maintaining that a Church of undifferentiated wholeness and unity can exist or that the elimination of denominational differences would solve the underlying problem. The confusion between part and whole is not to be avoided by denying the reality of the parts but only by the acceptance of diversity and limitation and the corollary recognition that all the parts are equally related in the whole to the ultimate object of the Church. The denominational structure of the Church in the

United States and Canada does not need to be eradicated before theological education can be put on a sounder basis, but a denominationalism that puts loyalty to the branch of the Church above all other loyalties involves theological education in internal self-contradictions that vitiate its work.

More significant today than the confusion of a branch of the Church with the whole Church is the confusion of Church, considered as whole or in its essence, with the ultimate context of theological education. Whether the term Church or the term Christianity is used, there is an internal contradiction in a theology and a Christian educational system that regard the work of the Church as the final activity to be considered. The confusion is a common one. It has become more prevalent in recent years since the fallacies of concentration on religion have become apparent. Not long ago religion was often credited with the power and grace that belong only to the God of faith; religion, it was said, inspired, healed and saved. Now that subjectivism is often replaced by another which puts the Church in the place of religion but confuses its work with that of its Lord and equates devotion to it with loyalty to the kingdom of God. The resulting confusion is similar to the one that appears in political life when a particular democratic society is made the object of a devotion that genuine democracy extends only to humanity, created free and endowed with natural rights prior to any recognition of these facts. In the case of Communism it has become plain what internal contradictions and perversions ensue when the promotion of the party is substituted for the pursuit of the party's cause. That substitution has led to all manner of corruption. Christianity and the Church have not been slow to criticize Judaism because in it the idea of a people chosen for service was often converted into the idea of a people chosen for privilege while the victory of the cause which the people was chosen to promote was frequently equated with the victory of the people. It is always easy to discern the mote in the eye of another. The beam in our churchly or Christian eye is not so easily seen. Both in thinking of the context in which we work in the Church and of the goal we pursue, it seems easy to accept and propagate the idea that the last reality with which we are concerned is the Church itself, and that the summary commandment we obey is to love Christianity with heart, soul, mind and strength. This exaltation of Church or of Christianity leads us then to an effort not to reconcile men with God or to redirect their love and ours toward God and the neighbor but rather to convert them to Christianity. These purposes are not more identical than subject and object are identical. It is one thing to be reconciled to God and to conceive some love for the neighbor and hence to participate in the community of which Jesus Christ is the pioneer and founder; it is another thing to take for granted that if one is brought into membership with the historical society called the Church love of God and neighbor will automatically ensue.

It is evident that in dealing with this confusion we are attending to a subject that is important not only to theological education but to all the work of the churches. The confusion of a proximate, churchly, with the ultimate, divine, context and the attendant confusion of goals, lies at the heart of many dilemmas in which the Christian missionary enterprise is involved in its dealings with the adherents of other religions. It is close also to the problems of Protestantism in its encounters with the Roman Church. Having begun with protest against tendencies in the latter

branch of Christianity to regard the Church as the representative of God it has often succumbed to the same tendency itself. In consequence it has found itself engaged in competition on the same ground its rival occupies and using weapons which its own principles deny to it. But if the confusion is serious in all other areas of Church action it is not the less serious in theological education. When it prevails such education necessarily becomes indoctrination in Christian principles rather than inquiry based on faith in God; or it is turned into training in methods for increasing the Church rather than for guiding men to love of God and neighbor. The confusion of the subject with the subject's object is more than an epistemological fallacy.

A similar confusion to which Protestantism is even more prone ensues when the Bible is so made the center of theological education that the book takes the place of the God who speaks, and love of the book replaces devotion to the One who makes himself known with its aid. The problem of the relation of Scriptures to revelation, of the Word of God spoken through the prophets and incarnate in Jesus Christ to the living Word, is one that has greatly concerned theology especially since the days of the Reformation. It is of particular importance in contemporary discussion. But it is not necessary to await the outcome of a long debate before one arrives at the conclusion that whatever else is true about these relations, the identification of the Scriptures with God is an error, a denial of the content of the Scriptures themselves. To give final devotion to the book is to deny the final claim of God; to look for the mighty deeds of God only in the records of the past is to deny that he is the living God; to love the book as the source of strength and of salvation is to practice an idolatry that can bring only confusion into life. Without the Bible, as without the Church, Christians do not exist and cannot carry on their work; but it is one thing to recognize the indispensability of these means, another thing to make means into ends. There is much theological education that suffers from inadequate attention to the Biblical history of divine words and deeds; there is more that suffers from so close a concentration on these that the One to whom Scriptures bear witness is overshadowed by the witness. The lines between theological education and Bible study are hard to draw. Genuine Bible study is theological and genuine theology cannot succeed without Bible study. But there is a Biblicism that is not theological because it does not make God so much as Scriptures the object of its interest, and which depends for law and grace not on Father, Son and Holy Spirit but on Bible. This kind of Biblicism involves theological education as well as the churches in inner contradictions.

The most prevalent, the most deceptive and perhaps ultimately the most dangerous inconsistency to which churches and schools are subject in our time (perhaps in all the Christian centuries) arises from the substitution of Christology for theology, of the love of Jesus Christ for the love of God and of life in the community of Jesus Christ for life in the divine commonwealth. Once more we touch upon a problem with which theology in our time is deeply concerned, and which makes evident how much the reconstruction of theological education depends on the reconstruction of theology. Yet as in the case of Biblicism it is hardly necessary to await the outcome of many inquiries before concluding that substantial error involving many further confusions is present when the proposition that Jesus Christ is God is converted into the

proposition that God is Jesus Christ. If the long story of the Trinitarian debate in Christendom is to be re-enacted in our present time its outcome may result in somewhat different formulations from those of the past, but scarcely in a substantive change of the affirmation that God is One and that however the doctrine of the Personae is stated it must still be affirmed that the Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Father and the Spirit cannot be equated with either. Yet in many churchly pronouncements the faith of Christians is stated as if their one God were Jesus Christ; as if Christ's ministry of reconciliation to the Creator were of no importance; as if the Spirit proceeded only from the Son; as if the Christian Scriptures contained only the New Testament; as if the Old Testament were relevant only insofar as it contained prophecies pointing to Jesus Christ; as if Jesus Christ alone were man's only hope. When this is done the faith of Christians is converted into a Christian religion for which Jesus Christ in isolation is the one object of devotion and in which his own testimony, his very character, his Sonship, his relation to the One with whom he is united, are denied.

This kind of Christian religion has many forms. It is present in popular forms that are similar to Eastern Bhakti and Amida Buddha faiths. It is present in a liberal cult of Jesus and of "the Jesus way of life"; present also in mystical forms as the cultivation of personal companionship with the divine Christ. Historically and theologically we are dealing here with devout yet aberrant forms of faith that are unable to illuminate the more profound problems of human existence, suffering, guilt and destiny or to answer questions about human history in its wholeness. They tend moreover to make of that faith a religion much like all other human religions instead of a relation to the Transcendent that goes beyond all our religions. This confusion of the proximate with the final introduces many internal conflicts into the work of the churches and of theological education. It leads directly to the effort to emphasize the uniqueness of the Christian religion, to define it as the "true" religion, to recommend it because of its originality, to exaggerate the differences between Christian and Jewish faith, to re-erect walls of division that Jesus Christ broke down, to exalt the followers of the one who humbled himself, to define the neighbor as fellow Christian. That the confusion has not led to greater spiritual disasters than have been encountered is doubtless due to the fact that Jesus Christ in his nature and witness is a constant corrective of the perversion of his worship.

Denominationalism not the denominations; ecclesiasticism not the churches; Biblicism not the Bible; Christism not Jesus Christ; these represent the chief present perversions and confusions in Church and theology. There are many other less deceptive, cruder substitutions of the proximate for the ultimate. But the ones described seem to set the great problems to faith and theology in our time. In them the need for a constant process of a radically monotheistic reformation comes to appearance.

If many theological schools today seem uncertain about the context in which they are working and about the purposes they serve this may be due in no small part to the confusions present in that contemporary Christianity itself in which they participate. These internal conflicts are doubtless rooted in the perennial human condition; there is no way to eliminate by any single

movement of reformation the temptations and the failures from which the last rebirth alone can set us free. But unless the forms in which idolatries appear at any particular time are illuminated and criticized there is no prospect for ultimate health. The critique of education requires the critique of theology and the critique of theology involves the critique of the Church. Such self-criticism in seminary and Church is always part of that total repentance which is the counterpart of faith.

The Purpose of the Church and its Ministry by H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams, & James M. Gustafson

Chapter 2: The Emerging New Conception of the Ministry

I. THE PERPLEXED PROFESSION

A school, we have noted, is related in a double way to the society in which it carries on its work. Participating in the common life it devotes itself to the social objectives in the special way these can be served by a company of scholars or learners who exercise intellectual love of the values toward which the society is directed. In the second place, as one community agency among many, the school also serves the ultimate social objectives indirectly, insofar as its immediate concern is to teach men who will be able to guide and carry on the activities of other agencies; so it functions as a community of teachers. A medical school, for instance, is a research and often also a healing center, directly concerned with the increase of knowledge about the human organism and with its health; but it is also a training center where men are prepared to work in many other institutions of the society, from private practice to public health offices. So also a university in a free society is devoted in intellectual freedom to the pursuit of the universal, liberating knowledge and wisdom that are objectives of the society; it is on the other hand a teaching institution where men are equipped to direct the affairs of the governmental, legal, cultural, educational and economic institutions of the society.

The Protestant schools of theology in the United States and Canada along with all other schools are subject to the tensions inescapably given with this duality of academic functions. But on the whole they are less bothered by them than they might be, for in their relation to the churches they have chosen or been required to devote themselves primarily to the second, that is, to the teaching function of schools. Their express purpose is to educate men who will direct the affairs of church institutions, especially local churches. They tend in consequence to neglect the first function of a theological school—the exercise of the intellectual love of God and neighbor. To this imbalance we shall need to address ourselves in other connections. For the present we must only point out that whatever just criticism may have been made of theological schools in other countries and times because they were too remote from parish and national church activities and

because they overlooked their responsibility for training preachers, pastors, evangelists and priests, the North American schools with which we are concerned have not erred in this direction. (Theological schools are characteristically defined in previous reports as institutions for the training of ministers. So William Adams Brown and Mark A. May in *The Education of American Ministers* (New York, 1934), I, 74; III, 3. See also Robert L. Kelly, *Theological Education in America* (New York, 1924), pp.vi,vii-ix, 23-28. The idea of a theological school the present study presupposes is described more fully in Chap. III.) Their concentration on the task of educating ministers gives them their unique character; it determines the content of their courses of study and influences decisively their choice of students, teachers and administrators. It also involves them in great difficulties, since the contemporary Church is confused about the nature of the ministry. Neither ministers nor the schools that nurture them are guided today by a clear-cut, generally accepted conception of the office of the ministry, though such an idea may be emerging.

Similar confusion seems to have characterized some other periods of the Church's history but we shall derive more help toward understanding our situation and its possibilities if we attend to those times when a definite conception of the ministry gave to both those who filled the office and those who prepared them for it a standard by which to judge their work. Such a well-defined idea seems to have prevailed in the Middle Ages. The Pastoral Rule of Gregory the Great formulated and disseminated the medieval theory of the minister as the pastoral ruler or the ruling pastor. The pattern was not imposed on the churches by external authority; it grew out of tradition, practice, experience and the needs of the time. Similarly the conception of the minister as priest, though supported by the formidable institutional authority of the Roman Church and its Council of Trent was not legislated into being. The law formulated and gave precision to a conception or a standard that had developed out of traditional and Biblical origins under the influence of historic experiences, resolutions and needs. The theory of the ministry in the churches of the Reformation was also precise; the minister was fundamentally the preacher of the Word, an idea which later, in the days of Pietism and Evangelicalism, was modified in the direction of the conception of the minister as evangelist. In all these instances the men who exercised the ministry, those to whom they ministered and those who prepared them for their task knew with relative precision what was expected of the man who held this office.

The confusion about the conception of the ministry characteristic of the time from which we seem to be slowly emerging was pointed out twenty years ago by Professor Mark A. May. The conclusion of his study of *The Profession of the Ministry: Its Status and Problems* (May, *The Education of American Ministers*, II, 385-94.)

was that this confusion presented theological education with its chief problems. On the one hand, he pointed out, the very definite concepts of the ministry held in some quarters conflicted with the desires or needs of students and congregations and with the temper of the times. On the other hand, and partly because of such conflict, the idea of the ministry was vague and uncertain.

What is the function of the minister in the modern community? The answer is that it is undefined. There is no agreement among denominational authorities, local officials, seminaries, professors, prominent laymen, ministers or educators as to what it is or should be. This lack of agreement, even along the most general lines, is a characteristic feature of the situation today and accounts in a large measure for the low educational status of the ministry. The work of the lawyer, the physician, the teacher, the artist, the writer and the engineer, is clear-cut and rather sharply defined (at least in the mind of the average man), so that when a young man chooses one of these professions he has some idea of what he is getting into. But not so with the ministry. Entering the ministry is more like entering the army, where one never knows where he will land or live or what specific work he will be called upon to perform. This lack of clear definition of the functions of the pastor that can be widely accepted influences theological education.... How can the seminaries train men for a work that is so tenuous, and concerning the nature of which such a diversity of opinion exists?

Much has happened in Church and world, among ministers and laymen, in the years that have elapsed since this judgment was made, and what has happened has led in directions that could not then be foreseen. We can speak today of an emerging new conception of the ministry. But emergence is not yet appearance and in large areas the indefiniteness, vagueness and conflict characteristic of thought about the ministry in the 1930's continues to prevail.

A decade after Professor May's observations had been made Professors Hartshorne and Froyd undertook to study the ministry of the Northern (now American) Baptist Convention. Making their approach from the functional point of view they tried to discover how ministers defined their more important objectives, how they rated the relative importance of their various tasks and how they divided their time in the performance of their duties. The findings of this study indicated how great was the confusion in 1944 even in a single denominational group. It was noted that in the case of a considerable group of ministers "the more conventional patterns are being broken up as these men face the actual needs of their people in the light of increasing knowledge of what these needs are"; that for many others the ministry tends "to drop to the level of a trade, each man being sent into a church with a set of routine procedures, which he is supposed to use indiscriminately in all situations," unequipped, however, with a set of principles such as are necessary for the exercise of a profession. (Hugh Hartshorne and Milton C. Froyd, *Theological Education in the Northern Baptist Convention: A Survey* (Philadelphia, 1945), pp. 42, 119.)

The evidence that perplexity and vagueness continue to afflict thought about the ministry is to be found today in the theological schools and among ministers themselves. Some schools and some pastors are highly conscious of the problem; others are in a more difficult state because they have not realized the source of their perplexities. In the schools the lack of a clear-cut conception is evident there where a frankly pluralistic approach to the work of the ministry has been accepted and where men are prepared for the varieties of the ministry as well as the

varieties of ministerial work without reference to a common function to be carried out by all ministers and by every minister in all the things he does. In these places the course of study consists of a series of preparations for a series of loosely connected acts. In this situation each one of the more general disciplines—such as study of the Bible, theology, church history, psychology, sociology—may then be directly related to a specific function such as preaching, educating, counseling, social action. In the same and in other schools uncertainty about the meaning of the ministry comes to appearance also in the feeling of conflict in a faculty between its loyalty to a traditional idea, such as that of the preacher, and its sense of obligation to denominational officials, alumni and churchmen in general who urge a more "practical" education. Such faculties feel that they are being deflected from their proper work by outside pressures, that they are compromising their ideals and making concessions to expediency when they yield to these demands. Again uncertainty about the meaning of the ministry may be indicated by the silence of many faculties when they are asked to speak of their precise objectives, or by the great generality of the phrases employed when they answer.

Ministers no less than the schools give evidence of the prevailing mistiness of the conception of the ministry. Those who have fought their way through to a clear-cut definition of their task and office often say that they have had to do this in isolation, without real help from school or Church, and that the maintenance of their sense of specific vocation is a highly personal responsibility. Such men will also point out that the over-busyness of some of their colleagues and the great sense of pressure under which these men work may be due to failure to define what is important and unimportant in a minister's work. The minister who knows what he is doing, they say, is able to resist the many pressures to which he is subject from lay groups in the churches, from the society, from denominational headquarters, and from within himself, however hard he must fight to keep his ship on its course; but the man who has no such determinative principle falls victim to the forces of all the winds and waves that strike upon him. There may be a connection also between indefiniteness in the sense of vocation and the fact that sloth or "downright laziness" is often mentioned by ministers as a reason for failure in the ministry. Doubtless a significant temptation to sloth or "accidie"—as this vice was called in older days—is to be found in the frustration a man experiences when he has no clear sense of his duties and no specific standard by means of which to judge himself. One must not, of course, ascribe too much responsibility to the vagueness of theory. At all times human frailty and sin make the ministry whose business it is to point to the highest reality and the profoundest faith a morally perilous vocation. That "we have this treasure in earthen vessels" is generally very clear to ministers, Church and world. Special temptations abound for men in this calling—temptations to authoritarianism, to pretentiousness, to self-deception, to love of prestige, to the cultivation of popularity and visible success, et cetera. No matter how definite the theory of the ministry, the individual pastor and the whole profession will never be able to drop their guard against these and more common human temptations to faithlessness. Yet when the Church's and the minister's idea about his work is uncertain it is not unlikely that some of "our calling's snares" are more than usually difficult to understand and avoid.

Many reasons have been given for the prevalence of this uncertainty and many remedies have been suggested. Some men believe that it is due to a loss of Christian conviction on the part of young men and women entering the schools and applying for ordination or to the weakness of their sense of call to the ministry. Others, who also see the situation only as a result of human failure, believe that ministers and schools have been deflected from their purpose and have lost their sense of mission because they have succumbed to the temptation to improve their personal and professional status by doing anything that might make them pleasing to the greatest number of people. The voluntaristic system of the free churches in North America, it has been said, has tended to transform their officials into merchants who offer all sorts of wares so that as many customers as possible may be attracted to their ecclesiastical emporiums. Those who approach the subject sociologically have sometimes maintained that the difficulty arises out of the fact that many functions the ministry once discharged have been taken over by new agencies.

If then, the educational functions of the church have been taken over by the state, the charity functions by local agencies, so that

"pastors now regard the educational and civic among the least important of their activities; and if the number of mid-week prayer services, evangelistic meetings and Sunday evening meetings are declining: if more marriages are being performed by justices of the peace and civil authorities; if attendance at the Sunday morning service is declining owing to golf, radio, good roads, etc.: then what is left for the pastor to do?" (May, Education of American Ministers, II. 389.)

So Professor May wrote twenty years ago and his ideas are occasionally echoed in our day, especially in circles that have not participated in or observed the renewal of the Church. It is also pointed out that uncertainty about the office of the ministry may be a by-product of that more intimate interaction among denominations and communions which has been characteristic of recent times. Various ideas are merging: the idea of the preacher as this was worked out in the churches of the Reformation, of the evangelist as this developed in the churches founded during the Revivals, of the priest as represented by the Anglican Catholic movement but also as it becomes effective on Protestants in their relations to the Roman Catholic Church. Yet they are not meeting in such a way as to give rise to a definite new conception but only so as to obscure the definite outlines of each traditional idea. Another sociological explanation of the phenomenon is that the traditional functions of the clergy are not adjusted to the needs of the modern world and that the responsibility for the prevailing uncertainty must be placed on the Church as a cultural laggard which has not kept up with the times.

There seems to be a measure of truth in each of these statements. Temptations to abandon the proper work of the ministry because of ambition or the desire to please are encountered—and succumbed to—at all times. Temptations to continue a traditional course by virtue of sheer inertia are also familiarly human. But what critics who point to these reasons for the loss of

certainly seem too often to forget is that the Church is never only a function of a culture nor ever only a supercultural community; that the problem of its ministers is always how to remain faithful servants of the Church in the midst of cultural change and yet to change culturally so as to be true to the Church's purpose in new situations. Those who suggest that the ministry should provide for its continuation by turning itself into a kind of social or counseling service ignore the nature of the ministry and really provide for its discontinuation. So do those who seek a remedy for present ills by insisting on unchanging adherence to a form of the ministry developed in some earlier cultural period.

During the time in which analyses of the sort we have alluded to were being made and such remedies proposed, and in part tried, an unspectacular process of reconstruction has been going on in Church and ministry so that we can speak today of an emerging new conception of the ministry, a conception which leaves it ministry and does not change it into something else. It is a conception which has not been manufactured in the study, though theologians in their studies have contributed to its development. It has grown out of the wrestlings of ministers with their problems, out of the experiences of the times and the needs of men, yet it has its roots in the Bible and in the long tradition of the Church. In time it may be so formulated that schools training men for the ministry will have as clear a picture before them of their immediate objective as their predecessors had when the ideas of the pastoral ruler, the priest, the preacher and the evangelist prevailed. Ministers also and the laity of the Church will know what is expected of those who hold this office. For the present it is possible only to feel after and to describe in sketchy outline what this new conception is, a conception that we may believe is at least as much gift of grace as consequence of sin and perhaps more something produced by historic forces under divine government than the creature of human pride and fickleness. Before we undertake to set forth our understanding of this emerging new idea we need to analyze what the elements are that constitute any such pattern.

II. PASTORS, PREACHERS AND PRIESTS

Whenever in Christian history there has been a definite, intelligible conception of the ministry four things at least were known about the office: what its chief work was and what the chief purpose of all its functions; what constituted a call to the ministry; what was the source of the minister's authority; and whom the minister served.

a. *The Work of the Ministry.* Since the days described in the New Testament Christian ministers have preached and taught; they have led worship and administered sacraments; they have presided over the church and exercised oversight over its work; they have given pastoral care to individuals in need. Though at times these functions have been distributed among specialized orders of the clergy, still each minister, in his own domain, has needed to exercise all of them. Yet whenever there has been a clear conception of the office one of these functions has been regarded as central and the other functions have been ordered so as to serve, not indeed it, but, the chief purpose that it served directly. In the case of the medieval pastoral ruler of Gregory's

description it seems evident that the chief ministerial function was the exercise of that "art of arts," the government of souls. The pastoral ruler also preached; he also administered the sacraments and led the service of worship; he also supervised the activities of the church; but all these other indispensable activities were directed toward the same end as the care and government of souls. Preaching and sacrament and church administration were dominated by the purpose of so directing needy souls that they might escape from the snares of sin and achieve everlasting life. The great motive was love of neighbor and this was found to be in a certain tension with the love of God, since the latter prompted a servant of the Lord to shun worldly duties as well as distractions and to give his life to adoration and contemplation in monastic seclusion. The great purpose of saving souls from hell was most directly served through the penitential office, but it was also to be achieved through preaching, teaching, prayer and church administration.

Similarly the preacher of the churches of the Reformation carried on all the traditional functions of the ministry. He preached and taught; he administered the sacraments and led in prayer; he presided over the church and he cared for the needy. Yet there was no question about his chief office nor about the chief purpose which he had before him in the performance of all traditional or new functions. His main work was preaching the gospel of forgiveness, declaring God's love for man as revealed in Jesus Christ. And in all his other work the objective of such preaching was the guiding purpose. The objective was salvation. Salvation meant for him as for the pastoral ruler deliverance from the pains of hell, yet not quite so much this as forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God with all their consequences. The purpose of the ministry was the renewal of life by evangelical faith in God's love for man. As the minister's first work was always the preaching of the gospel of divine love, so all his other activities were directed to the same proximate end of bringing men to a personal, internal apprehension of the good news, an apprehension which resulted in genuine repentance and trust. The meaning of worship and of the administration of the sacraments lay in their preparation for, or their response to, the gospel. The care of souls was a matter of personal admonition and consolation addressed to men who needed to apprehend in penitence and confidence the forgiveness of sin, the great love of God extended toward them, so that in life and death, in sin and sorrow, they knew they were in the hands of a holy, loving God. Churches were organized and administered with this purpose in view. The church building was designed as a place where the gospel could be preached; the laity was organized to support the preaching; the instruction of youth was in catechisms that set forth the content of the gospel. The minister might be tempted, as Richard Baxter's *The Reformed Pastor* points out, to conceive his office too narrowly as consisting only of public preaching. But even for Baxter preaching was the most excellent part of the pastor's work. Moreover, for the ministers of the Reformed churches "preaching" was a symbolic word; it meant not only public discourse but every action through which the gospel was brought home and men were moved to repent before God and to trust in him. Public discourse was never enough; private admonition, catechetical instruction, personal pastoral care, the administration of the sacrament the leadership of public worship—all these needed to be faithfully attended to; but in everything he did the preacher had one thing to do, namely, to bring home to men the

gospel of divine love.

The evangelist of the Wesleyan, Evangelical, Pietist movement represented a variation on the Protestant idea of the preacher. Even more than the minister of the Reformation churches he found his chief function in preaching; insofar as he was often a traveling evangelist he discharged the other traditional functions of the ministry less frequently than the Reformed or Lutheran pastor. So long, however, as he was only evangelist he needed to consider himself as belonging to only one of several orders of ministers, an order which like that of the preaching friars of the thirteenth-century required the accompanying work of the "secular clergy" or of the local parsons. When he became the settled minister of a local church he needed to add to the preaching function the other activities of the ministry—the care of souls, the administration of the sacraments, the conduct of public worship, the government of the church. But the organizing principle of all these activities was the evangelical conversion and sanctification of souls, which was the direct purpose of the evangelistic sermon.

The distinction of the priest-minister from the preacher-minister is relatively easy to make. Though both perform the same functions these are organized in different ways both in relation to each other and to a central purpose. From Chrysostom ("On the Priesthood") to Pius XI ("On the Catholic Priesthood") the idea of the priesthood is marked by emphasis on the importance and greatness of the work of administering the sacraments. The priest also teaches and preaches; he governs and cures souls; he presides over the church; but above all he offers the sacrifice of Christ in the Eucharist and is the minister of those sacraments "through which the grace of the Savior flows for the good of mankind." The purpose of the sacraments is the reconciliation of God and man, a reconciliation of God to man as well as of man to God, for the priest is always the mediator between God and humanity. This reconciliation is the precondition for the exercise not only of man's love to God and neighbor but also of God's love to man. It is the proximate purpose of the chief sacramental act but also of every other exercise of the priestly office. Few exponents of the priestly idea want to confine priestly activity to the administration of the central sacrament, just as few Reformers understand the preaching minister as solely a preacher. The priest exercises "the ministry of the word," says Pope Pius XI, describing in some detail what this ministry is; the priest, furthermore, leads in public and official prayer, in intercession, adoration and thanksgiving; he is the "tireless furtherer of the Christian education of youth," defends the sanctity of marriage' contributes to the solution of social conflicts, and is the "most valorous leader" in the crusade of "expiation and penance." But in all his acts he serves the purpose chiefly served in the administration of the sacrament—the purpose of mediating between God and man.

As these examples of typical ideas of the ministry all indicate, a clear-cut conception always includes not only an understanding of what the most important work of the ministry is but also the recognition that it must perform other functions. Unity is given to such a conception not only by ordering functions in a scale of importance but by directing each function to a chief, though still proximate, end. Now that end is the salvation of souls from eternal punishment,

now the cure of guilty souls through their apprehension of the love of God, now the reconciliation of God and man through sacrifice and sacrament and works of expiation. If there is confusion in the conception of the ministry today, whether only among those who once held to the ideal of the preacher or also among those who have maintained the ideal of the priest, that confusion appears at both points—in inability to define what the most important activity of the ministry is and in uncertainty about the proximate end toward which all its activities are directed. If a new conception of the ministry is emerging it will be marked by the appearance of a sense of the relative importance of the activities and a definite idea of the proximate end sought by the minister in all of them.

b. *The Call to the Ministry.* A definite understanding of the ministerial office also includes a relatively clear-cut conception of what constitutes the call to the ministry. How and by whom are men appointed to this office? Once more, differences in historic definitions of the ministry are less due to exclusive insistence on some one interpretation of what constitutes a call than to variations in the emphasis placed on the various elements present in every call. Christians of all ages and churches have encountered in their reading of Scriptures socially appointed, institutionally recognized priests, prophets and apostles, but also extraordinary, "natural" or "charismatic" leaders—non-Levitical priests, prophets without human appointment and apostles chosen like Paul. In their contemporary experience they have dealt with both types of ministers and have found virtues and vices attached to both types. Even the most highly organized churches which insist on the importance of "legitimate" orders recognize with the Church of England that "there always remains the power of God to give to the Church prophets, evangelists and teachers apart from the succession," and even the most spiritualistic groups will elect certain men to interpret the sense of meetings in which anyone moved by the spirit is allowed to speak.

It appears that there is general though only implicit recognition of the fact that a call to the ministry includes at least these four elements (1) the call to be a Christian, which is variously described as the call to discipleship of Jesus Christ, to hearing and doing of the Word of God, to repentance and faith, et cetera; (2) the secret call, namely, that inner persuasion or experience whereby a person feels himself directly summoned or invited by God to take up the work of the ministry; (3) the providential call, which is that invitation and command to assume the work of the ministry which comes through the equipment of a person with the talents necessary for the exercise of the office and through the divine guidance of his life by all its circumstances; (4) the ecclesiastical call, that is, the summons and invitation extended to a man by some community or institution of the Church to engage in the work of the ministry. At no time have the Church and the churches not required of candidates for the ministry that they be first of all men of Christian conviction, however such conviction and its guarantees were interpreted. The Church everywhere and always has expected its ministers to have a personal sense of vocation, forged in the solitariness of encounter with ultimate claims made upon them. It has also generally required that they show evidence of the fact that they have been chosen for the task by the divine bestowal upon them, through birth and experience, of the intellectual, moral, physical

and psychological gifts necessary for the work of the ministry. Finally, in one form or another, it has required that they be summoned or invited or at least accepted by that part of the Church in which they undertake to serve. But ideas of the ministry have varied as Christian call, secret call, providential call and church call have been related to one another in varying orders of importance and modes of relationship. In the cases of the pastoral ruler of Gregory the Great and of Chrysostom's priest the summons of the church to men whom it found divinely chosen by Christian and providential call was of the first importance. The secret call, the summons and decision that occurred in solitariness, usually came after the public or church call. In the case of the evangelist, however, the order of these calls was reversed. "I allow," said John Wesley, "that it is highly expedient, whoever preaches in his name should have an outward as well as inward call; but that it is absolutely necessary I deny." More extremely, early Friends not only maintained that the "inward call, or testimony of the Spirit" was "essential and necessary to a minister" but denied the validity of the church call and seemed indifferent to the providential call, at least insofar as they discounted the significance of "birth-right" Christianity. Whatever the variations, it seems true that when a clear idea of the ministry prevailed there was also a clear idea of what constituted a call to the ministry and for the most part such a clear idea took into account the necessity of all four calls and ordered their relations.

Modern vagueness in thought about the ministry appears in the uncertainty of the churches, the ministers themselves, of boards and schools about the nature of the call. This vagueness doubtless is partly due to the conflict of traditions—a conflict in which exponents of the primacy of the "secret call" may take the position that it alone is adequate while others who emphasize the first importance of church call come to the indefensible position of renouncing the importance of command and obedience enacted in solitariness. It may be due also to the inapplicability to the Christian experience of young persons in our time of a theory of call developed in another age of Christian experience—the age of revivalism and evangelicalism. Whatever the reasons for the uncertainty, there is evidence that a new idea of call is emerging among Protestant churches and is contributing its share to the emerging new concept of the ministry. The idea is not a simple one but an idea of order and relation in the complex action and interaction of person, community and God, governing providentially, working by his spirit, active in history. But the further description of this idea of the call must be deferred for a moment while we undertake to analyze other elements that enter into the definition of the ministry.

c. The Minister's Authority. In those periods when clear-cut ideas of the ministry prevailed pastors and people were relatively agreed on the acceptable answer to the question: By what authority do you do these things, i.e., preach, care for souls, preside over the church and administer the sacraments? Today, however, answers to the question are frequently uncertain and vague.

Authority, to be sure, is a complex phenomenon and some elements in the power which office-bearers exercise at any given time and place as well as in the respect accorded to them cannot

easily be stated in conceptual terms. An effort to analyze the authority of the ministry as this was exercised and recognized in the early and medieval Church and in the centuries immediately after the Reformation would lead us deep into social history and psychology, into theology and political science. The further effort to account for the loss of pastoral authority in the modern world would require no less extensive researches into the effects on men of the democratic, industrial, technological and scientific revolutions. Such detailed inquiries lie beyond the scope of this study; we must content ourselves with a few reflections on the various answers to the question about ministerial authority that have been given at different times.

In those answers there has always been indirect reference to the ultimate power that lies behind all human authority, but the defined source of authority has been some mediate principle. Only in the case of the prophet or some other exceptionable person has the answer pointed more directly to God as the giver of the authority. The ministry in general and the Church, as community and as institution, have been highly aware that false prophets claiming immediate empowerment by the Divine always greatly exceed in number the true spokesmen for God, that there are more lying visions than authentic ones, and that personal inspirations must be subjected to social or historical validation. Hence though the minister in all times is "man of God" he does not as minister undertake to prophesy with a "Thus says the Lord," and to claim that his words are the Word of God. He is "man of God" at least in the sense that his office is as such a human acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God, as the Church in its very existence is a confession of faith in God. But the authority which accrues to him as such an official witness to divine authority is neither under his nor the Church's control. In times of great unbelief his social authority will be diminished by the fact that the office points to divine authority; he will participate in the humiliation rather than in the exaltation of Christ. While then the office of the ministry refers to ultimate authority the reference is more by way of indication than of representation. Even prophecy points to divine power more than it regards itself as the vehicle of that power; and the ambassador for Christ is no plenipotentiary. Hence when we ask about the authority of the ministry we leave aside, though we do not forget, his authority as "man of God" and "ambassador for Christ."

We must also leave aside, and in this case try to forget, several sorts of incidental authority that have accrued to ministers at various times because of the interactions of Church and world. Among these is the authority of government which is attached to the ministry when Church and state are so closely united that the minister is also an official of the state and represents it in the discharge of his functions. Something of this ambivalent authority remains even when Church and state are separated, as in the case of the military chaplaincy and in the authorization of ministers by governments to perform civilly sanctioned marriage rites. Again the authority of the minister as representative of the community of learning is incidental and not essential to the office. That he ought to be well educated is one thing, but that he ought to have the authority of learning is something else. For a long time in Western history clergymen, like the priests of ancient Egypt, were the only learned group and hence represented the mystery and power of learning. Now it is often bewailed that they have lost that authority and it may be maintained

that the fault is theirs or the Church's for not insisting sufficiently on an educated ministry. But the loss of this authority seems due far more to the rise of a large and varied group of learned men in many other professions than to a failure on the part of the Church and ministry as such to maintain previously established standards. The loss of social power by the ministry as a result of the spread of education and the transference to scientists of the representative authority of learning is comparable to the loss ministers suffered when Church and state were separated. Neither civil power nor learning in itself form the basis of ministerial authority however much they may contribute at certain times to the prestige of the ministry.

Ministers have derived their immediate authority to preach and teach, lead worship, care for souls and perform their other offices from the Church and from Scripture. When they have been asked about their authority they have pointed to these two "powers" as the ones they represent. Accordingly they have been questioned about the extent to which they truly represented them and have been accorded the kind of respect which was extended at the time to Church and Scriptures. But within this framework of validation by Church and Scriptures there have been many variations in the ministers' and the churches' conceptions of pastoral authority. For one thing there have been differences in the order of precedence as between Church and Scriptures. For another, there has been variation insofar as now Church as institution, now Church as community has been the source of authority. And again changes have occurred as in some instances the delegation, in others the acquisition, of power has been emphasized.

Ministers at all times have exercised authority as representatives of churchly institutions and the dignity of the institutional Church, the respect accorded to it—whatever its measure at the time—have been in some ways transferred to them. They have also been spokesmen of the Church as community, have represented the mind and tradition of the Church, and so they have exercised the kind of communal authority that accrues to the person who represents the community to itself; for instance, in the parallel case of a national community a leader such as Abraham Lincoln, quite apart from his institutional authority as president representing the state, has particular power as the exponent of the national mind and spirit. Ministers have been, further, representatives of the Scriptures, as interpreters possessing the authority of teachers, and often as judges charged with the responsibility of deciding definitively, though not infallibly, what the meaning of the Church's constitution is in a particular situation.

Finally, it has been expected of ministers that they should acquire the authority possessed by those who have directly experienced what they commend to others. This also is a kind of teaching authority, but even more the authority of the witness. As preachers of the gospel it is expected that they themselves have experienced its power; as guides to the life of penitence and faith they need to know directly the nature of the humble and contrite heart. They cannot teach the law without being under the law nor unlovingly seek to increase love; when they attempt to do so their work lacks authority. Though the authority of experience and character is gift of grace it is also achievement on the part of men who work out their salvation with fear and trembling because God works in them.

These various kinds of authority—church authority as institutional and communal, Scriptural authority as teaching and judicatory, personal authority as spiritual and moral—are intricately interrelated. In some conceptions of the ministry one or the other sort may be entirely lacking, or, as in the case of judicatory authority, may be transferred by communal or institutional decision to certain ministers or companies of them or to representative bodies of clergy and laity. Nevertheless, when we ask the pastoral ruler or the priest or the preacher and evangelist by what authority he carries on his work his answer usually seems to include reference to all these sources of his empowerment. But there are striking differences in the order in which they are mentioned.

The authority of the priest is first of all institutional. His ordination is mentioned first, then his personal discipline of life, and his study of the Scriptures and the mind of the community. His "august powers," says Pope Pius XI, "are conferred upon the priest in a special Sacrament designed to this end." These powers include "power over the very body of Jesus Christ" to make "it present upon our altars" and "the power which . . . 'God gave neither to Angels nor Archangels'—the power to remit sins." The priest, however, must exercise other functions besides administering the sacraments and institutional means cannot empower him to fulfill these duties; hence he needs to practice spiritual discipline, cultivating all the Christian virtues; he also needs to study, for "how can he teach unless he himself possess knowledge" and have gained a "full grasp of the Catholic teaching on faith and morals?"

The sources of the authority of the pastoral ruler Gregory the Great describes are doubtless the same, but as his functions are differently ordered from those of the modern priest so also the bases of his power are mentioned in a different order and with a varying emphasis. The primary source of his authority seems to lie in the personal discipline that enables him, as one who knows how to govern himself as Christian, also to govern and guide others. Ordination can be taken for granted but it seems clear that ordination cannot give the pastoral ruler the strength he requires. Personal experience and discipline as well as study of the Scriptures are the foundation stones of his authority.

The preacher of the Reformation needs institutional empowerment, but ordination plays no such role in his accreditation as do first of all the study and personal appropriation of Scriptures and especially of the gospel, and, secondly, the corresponding discipline of life. In the case of the evangelist institutional ordination can become a matter of wholly minor significance and even the study of Scriptures is often made secondary to personal experience of the power of the gospel. To the priest, the pastoral ruler, the preacher and the evangelist we may add the churchman, the kind of minister, appearing in many periods, who exercises authority in the interpretation of the Scriptures, in the direction of the church, in the leadership of prayer and the care of souls as one who participates deeply in the mind of the community and who has acquired communal authority by study and discipline. Such men—Bernard of Clairvaux is one representative of the type—will also be institutionally authorized, but their authority comes

from the community more than from the institution, and their relation to the Scriptures is that of members of the interpreting and obeying community rather than that of isolated individuals.

The confusion in modern Christendom about the meaning of the ministry makes itself evident in uncertainty about pastoral authority as well as in the vagueness present in thought about pastoral functions. Outside the Roman Catholic Church institutional authority is generally weak, partly because in their pluralism the institutions too clearly represent something else than God, Christ and Scriptures or the Christian community. These local churches and denominations, greatly loved as they are by their members, are not so hedged by divinity that pronouncements made in their name invite reverent attention. The ambiguous, sometimes slightly amused attitude many laymen betray toward ordination may be somewhat indicative of the lack of power in the institutional aspect of the ministry. The power of the Scriptures remains very great but that power is ill-defined today when the older theories about the nature of Scriptural authority have been eroded and the Christian's present understanding of it remains still to be formulated. The minister who is a faithful interpreter of the Word continues to exercise considerable authority because of the actual power of the Bible, but not a few ministers themselves have been uncertain about its authority and have not mediated it since they were not subject to it themselves. Communal authority has been weakened by the individualization of religious life in the fragmented modern world and by loss of continuity with the past. To many men there has remained only the spiritual authority they derived from personal religious life, or, as a spurious substitute for any kind of authority, personal attractiveness whether genuine or fictitious. One may speak of a general weakening of the authority of the ministry in the modern world. This weakening may be the ecclesiastical counterpart of that decline of respect for authority which has occurred among men who first having thought themselves masters of their fate then, as mass-men, became the prey of powers which moved them about not as persons but as things or bundles of conditionable reflexes. To such men no power was anything but brute force, unentitled to respect; every word was simple propaganda.

Since this problem of authority among men is always ultimately theological the crisis in pastoral authority is symptomatic of the crisis in civilization, though it is not as some apologists for the Church seem to believe the cause of the latter crisis. At all events it seems true that with increase among men of respect for the Church and Scriptures, above all with increased awareness of the sovereignty of God, the authority of the pastor who represents or at least points to these powers also increases. But the problem remains how and what he is to represent in the first place and how such representation can come about.

d. *The Idea of the People.* The final element in a theory of the ministry which we can consider here is the notion of the people to whom the ministers are sent as servants. When the idea of the ministry is relatively well-defined both of these questions are answered: Is the minister primarily sent to the people of the Church or to those of the world? What, in the light of Christian faith, is the greatest need of the people to whom he is sent, that one need which amidst all their needs is always to be kept in view by the minister?

The relations of Church and world being what they are no ministry has ever been exclusively directed to those within or to those outside the Christian community. Even when the minister begins as missionary to some people in the world he soon gathers a Church that claims his special attention; even when he begins as a shepherd of a separated flock he is bound to have relations to those who seem to be the wolves that prey upon it or the dogs that protect it. Still, there are differences of emphasis. When the Church is regarded as all-inclusive and locally becomes the parish Church, universally the ecumenical Church, then the ministry knows itself to be the servant of all it can reach since all are nominally in the Church. When the Church is regarded as exclusive, separated from the rest of society, an ark of salvation in a great flood of destruction, then the emphasis falls on service to the elect few. Today there is uncertainty about the ministry in Church and world partly because it is not clear whether the Church is fundamentally inclusive or exclusive, whether therefore the minister's concern is to extend to all in his reach or only to a faithful elite. Is the rural, the suburban, the inner-city, the college minister a parish parson or a builder of a separated community? Is the theological teacher a minister of a separate, ecclesiastical science or of a university subject?

A definite theory of the ministry always includes, furthermore, specific awareness of the nature and fundamental need of the people it serves. When Gregory wrote his Pastoral Rule there was present to his mind the immature and sinful yet immortal race whose members needed the service of the pastoral ruler on their wayward course of life that they might escape hell and enter into heaven's joy. The understanding of man characteristic of the Reformers was that of a sublime but perverted creation, a ruined work of art, Milton's Adam. He was a highly dynamic, willful, loving and rebellious being, whose power was thwarted, whose will was in bondage, whose love and anger were misdirected. His fundamental need was for reconciliation to God through repentance and faith. All other wants were secondary to the need for the experienced forgiveness of his sin. Gregory as well as Luther and Calvin knew that man lacked many other things besides the one thing needful and that the cure of all his other diseases would not ensue automatically on the healing of his deepest wound. But they knew where to begin their ministry, to what human need ministers as ministers needed to address themselves in all their words and deeds, whatever else they might be required to do because physicians, social workers, teachers and lawyers were not available.

For a long time now the Christian understanding of man has been obscured by theories of his nature built on other dogmas than that of the sovereignty of God and constructed out of observations of his behavior made from other points of view than those of Christian faith. As the conception of nature to which man is always related has changed, churches and ministers have often succumbed to the temptation to substitute the needs of natural man (that is, of man as primarily related to nature) for the needs of theological man (that is, of man as primarily related to God). Or again' as the great significance of the individual's relation to society became clear the needs of social man seemed to be primary. But the traditional work of the ministry in teaching the Word from God, the word to God and words about God, of administering the sacraments, of building the Church and caring for souls seemed to have too little direct

relevance to the needs of men so naturalistically or socially understood. Was not the approach to the needs of such men from natural or social science more direct and more helpful than the circuitous approach from divine science? Hence great discussions developed over the question how to make the gospel relevant to needs it never had had primarily in view. It was translated into evolutionary and social terms, though it resisted efforts to cast it into such strange forms. Confusion was bound to result. The political needs of men struggling for survival or status, the economic needs of hungry and competitive men, the psychological needs of anxious and guilty interpersonal beings, these and other highly important wants seemed to require the ministrations of the Church. And to justify themselves churches and ministers had before them the example of the Great Physician and Reformer who had compassion on every man in natural need and prophesied to an oppressed, divided nation threatened by disaster. The context in which he did these things, the cause for which he came out and why he was sent was often forgotten.

In this situation some ministers abandoned the ministry for medicine or social service, while others attempted to transform their traditional work into semiclinical or social service activity. The great mass of clergymen remained true to their primary calling but they were puzzled. There was good reason for their perplexity, for the theological view of man is always bound up with natural and social views of man and what had happened was that old views of nature and society had changed radically. How to understand men as fundamentally related to God when their relations to nature and society had so changed presented a most difficult practical as well as theoretical problem. The temptation to try to convert the concept of the ministry from one directed to the needs of man-in-relation-to-God to one directed toward the wants of natural or social man was the more attractive because the alternative seemed to be a ministry that could not speak of God and man in their relations to each other without employing thirteenth- and sixteenth-century conceptions of nature and society. Often the ministry seemed to be divided between those who sought to make the gospel relevant by allegorizing it so as to meet the needs of modern men and those who regarded its earlier translations as so literal that any new translation was betrayal. Most clergymen probably avoided these extremes, but their problems were so much the greater.

The confusion is lifting somewhat. Out of the great wrestlings of men with their personal and social problems, out of renewed study of Scriptures and critical reflection on history, a view of man is emerging that sets in the forefront again his relation to God. The scene in which the divine-human encounter takes place is not, to be sure, a flat earth canopied by a heavenly tent; the scene has become stranger and vaster. The human protagonist in this encounter is not a being that thinks with heart and kidneys; he has become an even more mysterious creature. The history of his wrestle with God is not confined to a few thousand years of dramatic events occurring in Asia Minor, though the crucial importance of those events seems even greater as the story expands into remoter pasts and futures. -But still, man is seen as man engaged in conflict, conversation and reconciliation with God. Before the new yet old view comes clear an incalculable amount of work must be done by poets and theologians, by historical scholars and Biblical students, by ministers dealing at close range with men in this encounter, and especially

by these men themselves. Those among them most conversant with nature and society in their modern aspects must make particular contributions. Nevertheless, as soon as man has been understood as man-before-God confusion about the nature of the ministry has begun to disappear, no matter how great the remaining problems of "demythologizing" and translating the gospel and the law.

III. THE PASTORAL DIRECTOR

In the foregoing analysis of the elements that enter into any well-defined theory of the ministry some indications have been given of the character of that theory which seems to be emerging out of contemporary study of the Bible, participation in the tradition of the Church, the experiences and reflections of ministers in our day, and the needs of the time. Each of these is an important source of the emerging idea and signs of its appearance are to be found in all the centers of church activity—in the theological schools, in the conferences and discussions of churchmen, and, above all, in the work and thought of ministers themselves. The new idea is not equally significant everywhere, for in some areas older conceptions—those of the priest, the preacher and the evangelist—remain more pertinent than the new. Yet the developing idea seems more widely significant and applicable than is often believed by those who are holding fast to the earlier conceptions. Priests are affected by it as well as preachers (Cf. Joseph H. Fichter, S.J., *Social Relations in the Urban Parish* (Chicago 1954), Chap. X, "Social Roles of the Parish Priest.") rural no less than urban ministers are challenged to develop a ministry in accordance with it; it applies to the ministers whose provinces are denominations or regions as well as to those whose concern is a neighborhood. We cannot here raise the question about the part cultural changes on the one hand, renewed Christian convictions and the new sense of Church on the other, play in its development. Our problem is to describe the theory that seems to be emerging and to be gaining ground in the thought as well as the practice of ministers. For want of a better phrase we may name it the conception of the minister as a pastoral director, though the name is of little importance.

What the term is meant to designate is indicated rather indirectly by the character of modern church architecture and by the perverted form in which the idea occurs. The place in which the minister mainly functions always signalizes the Church's idea of his task. The building and room in which the priest discharges his office is designed for the celebration of the mass; it is dominated by the altar, though provision is also made in it for preaching and confession. The space in which the preacher does his work is a room in which the pulpit with its open Bible is the central feature though provision is also made for the administration of the sacraments and sometimes for meetings of the ruling elders. The period of greatest confusion in Protestant conceptions of Church and ministry was marked by the conversion of the room into a place in which organ, choir, pulpit and communion table simultaneously claimed first attention and Akron-plan Sunday School rooms were extruded from an amoebic nucleus. To be sure, contemporary church architecture continues to betray how uncertain and groping are the efforts of the Church to define the nature of its ministry. Some of it is symptomatic of an

experimentation controlled by no leading idea but only by vagary and the desire to please as many potential church visitors as possible. Yet there is a dominant movement so that the modern Protestant church building, not to speak now of the Roman Catholic, becomes a sign of what is being done in it. What is being done is evidently a very complex thing for these many rooms of the parish house or religious education building, are designed for a great number of meetings besides those of Sunday School classes and official boards. But the manifoldness is not unorganized. The focal center of the complex building is a room for which no name yet has been found. To call it either auditorium or sanctuary seems false. It is the place of worship and of instruction. The prominence given to Holy Table or altar, to cross and candles, does not indicate so much that this is the place where the sacraments are celebrated as that it is the place of prayer. The pulpit, however, has not been relegated to a secondary place as though preaching were not now important. Another architectural feature is symptomatic. The minister now has an office from which he directs the activities of the Church, where also he studies and does some of his pastoral counseling.

A second indirect indication of the character of the new conception of the ministry may be gained from a glance at its perverse form—the one in which the pastoral director becomes the "big operator." When ministers comment on the kinds of men who are failures in the ministry they frequently describe among these types the person who operates a religious club or a neighborhood society with much efficiency and pomp and circumstance. He is active in many affairs, organizes many societies, advertises the increases in membership and budget achieved under his administration and, in general, manages church business as if it were akin to the activities of a chamber of commerce. In their reaction to such secularization of the office some men try to return to the idea of the preacher or of the priest. But the needs of men and the responsibilities of office prevent them from doing so. Then they realize that the "big operator" represents a perversion of the minister's office not because he is an executive but because he does not administer the church's work. The pastoral director of a contemporary church has his historical antecedent. His predecessor is to be found in the bishop or overseer of an ancient church, a man who, unlike modern bishops, was not primarily entrusted with oversight over many clergymen and local churches but was elected to oversee a single local church. As bishop of Hippo Regius Augustine was such a pastoral director. The bishops described in the First Letter to Timothy were such men—the heads and overseers of the Household of God.

In his work the pastoral director carries on all the traditional functions of the ministry—preaching, leading the worshipping community, administering the sacraments, caring for souls, presiding over the church. But as the preacher and priest organized these traditional functions in special ways so does the pastoral director. His first function is that of building or "edifying" the church; he is concerned in everything that he does to bring into being a people of God who as a Church will serve the purpose of the Church in the local community and the world. Preaching does not become less important for him than it was for the preacher but its aim is somewhat different. It is now pastoral preaching directed toward the instruction, the persuasion, the counseling of persons who are becoming members of the body of Christ and

who are carrying on the mission of the Church. It is therefore at its best more inclusively Biblical rather than evangelical only; it is directed indeed to sinful men who need to be reconciled to God but also to men who need in all things to grow up into mature manhood in the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ and who are to interpret to others the meaning of Christian faith. Leading the "royal priesthood" of the whole Church in worship becomes more important for this pastoral director than it had been for the preacher; this worship is not simply the accompaniment of the preaching of the gospel but the effort of the Church to demonstrate its love of God, whose love of man is being proclaimed in the gospel. The activity of the Church as a priesthood making intercession for all men, offering thanks and praise on behalf of all, now requires the minister's devoted leadership in a particular way. The activity on behalf of individuals is for this pastoral director not only a matter of pastoral rule or of the pastoral cure of souls, though it will include both, but is best designated as pastoral counseling, a counseling that has them in view as needing reconciliation to God but also to men, yet knows that reconciliation is not automatically productive of wisdom. It is a counseling, moreover, that calls into service the aid of many other men and agencies able to help a person in need, and, very frequently, it is a counseling of counselors. So also as teacher, the pastoral director becomes the teacher of teachers, the head of all educational organization which he cannot simply manage but must lead as a competent Christian educator. These and other less central activities of the ministry of all periods are carried on by the pastoral director, but the work that lays the greatest claim to his time and thought is the care of a church, the administration of a community that is directed toward the whole purpose of the Church, namely, the increase among men of the love of God and neighbor; for the Church is becoming the minister and its "minister" is its servant, directing it in its service.

It is significant that when ministers reflect on their theological education they are likely to regret more than any other deficiency in it the failure of the school to prepare them for the administration of such a church. What these men have in mind was expressed by one of them who said in effect: The seminary prepared me for preaching and taught me the difference between preaching and public speaking; it helped me to become a pastoral counselor and not simply a counselor; it prepared me for the work of Christian education; but it gave me no preparation to administer a church as Church; what I learned about church administration was a nontheological smattering of successful business practices. It may also be significant that a superintendent bewailed the fact that while he would like to find for the churches under his care the best preachers available these churches themselves were not so concerned about preaching; they wanted "all-round men."

In the contemporary situation the idea of the minister's call is undergoing a change in the direction of greater emphasis on the significance of the call extended to a person by the Church on the basis of its understanding of his Christian and providential calling. The secret call as always remains important, but in the conception of the ministry that is emerging out of the Biblical and systematic theology of the day and out of the personal reflections of young people and their pastors, the divine action whereby men are chosen for their station and calling is less

spiritualistically understood than was the case for the past hundred years. The mode of election whereby God appoints individuals to their lifework is seen as not different in character from the mode whereby he elects them to serve him as men or women, as American or Asian, as first- or twentieth-century men. In every case, to be sure, the call requires internal apprehension of the divine will, the response of human will, the acceptance of the yoke of the kingdom. Without a personal sense of vocation gained in the solitary struggles of the soul with its Maker and Redeemer the minister will always be deficient. But the call to the ministry is not for our contemporaries first of all a mystic matter enacted in the solitariness of lonesome encounter; it is rather a call extended to social man, the member of a community, through the mediation of community. It is more like the call of Stephen than of Paul, of Ambrose and Augustine than of Francis of Assisi, of Calvin than of Fox. Young men and women today feel themselves challenged to identify themselves with the community and institution devoted to the service of God rather than with an ideal; the human need of which they are made aware is one that only the community can minister to; the words through which they hear the Word of God addressed to them are likely to be the words of the Church. As the conception of the work of the ministry changes into the idea of the whole Church ministering so the conception of call changes into the idea of the called and the calling Church—always, of course, as Church under the authority of God. In such a situation the providential call assumes increased importance, for the question the Church raises through its various agencies is which young men and women have been endowed by God with the spiritual, moral and intellectual qualities necessary to this work, which of them through the guidance of their lives have been led by God toward the ministry, which of them it ought therefore to call. Hence also the Church requiring young people to consider whether they are not called of God to this work asks them to reflect especially on the requirements he has laid upon them by his watchful providence over the whole course of their lives and by bringing them into being in this time with its needs.

As in the cases of the ministry's functions and of the call so also when the minister's authority is in question the Church moves nearer the center of the picture in the emerging new conception. The ministry of today and tomorrow must indeed represent all the kinds of authority associated with the office in the past—institutional, teaching or Scriptural, communal and spiritual; but as institutional authority was central in the priest's office and Scriptural in the preacher's so communal authority becomes of greatest importance to the pastoral director. He will continue to be ordained by the institution and will, if he is faithful to it, have as much authority as the institution he represents has; spiritual authority is as necessary to him as to ministers of every other type; he is not less under the authority of Scriptures or less representative of it than the preacher; but his relation to all these authorities is different.

This is most evident in connection with the pastoral director's Scriptural, teaching authority. Community and Scriptures have been brought much more closely together in practice and in theory than was the case in the older view of the minister as preacher. Historical studies have made clear that both under the Old and the New Covenants the people and the book were far more closely associated than was once thought to be the case. Then individual men, personally

inspired, were regarded as the original mediators of the Word of God and individual preachers obedient to these writings mediated the Word to men. Now we are aware that frequently the authors and always the editors of the sacred writings were communities which in obedience and by inspiration selected true prophecy from false, genuine gospels from spurious ones, apostolic letters from epistles written by men who had no divine commission. Now it becomes apparent that one cannot know the Scriptures without knowing the community which recorded what it had seen and heard; and that one cannot know the mind of the community without knowing the Scriptures. The result of two centuries of Biblical criticism, as this has affected the thought of the Church, has not been an impairment of the power of the Scriptures but it has been an increase of the sense of the communal character of the book. For this and other reasons the best Biblical preaching going on in the churches today undertakes to interpret the Word of God as a word spoken to Israel and the Church. The minister who is obedient to Scriptures and represents its authority does so as one who is interpreting the mind of the community-before-God. When he undertakes to think with the logic of the community, he does so under the discipline of Scriptures. He must learn to think Biblically if he is to think Christianly. So Scriptural and communal authority begin to fuse but the nature of each changes in the process.

The significance of the communal authority of the minister in our time appears also in his relation to the tradition of the Church. Tradition has assumed a new significance for Protestants in a period dominated by the historical understanding of human life. So long as the Church was understood as primarily institutional, in terms of its parallelism to a state rather than to a cultural society, and so long as tradition meant resistance to reform, conflict between the principles of traditional and Scriptural authority was inevitable. But in our time tradition is conceived otherwise than it was in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. It appears in a different form partly because the problem of social continuity has become as great for us as the problem of change and reform, but even more because the historical, cultural character of human existence has come into fuller view. We know tradition now not only in the form of social rigidities resistant to change but as the dynamic structure of modifiable habits without which men do not exist as men. Tradition means a society's language, its conceptual frames of reference, its moral orientation in the world of good and evil, the direction of its science, the selection of the best in its literature and art. We know tradition as a living social process constantly changing, constantly in need of criticism, but constant also as the continuing memory, value system and habit structure of a society. Partly under the influence of comparable movements in a world that has become aware of the significance of tradition in politics and literature, partly under the influence of its own studies and needs, the Church has begun to pay a new attention to its tradition. It sees it not as a dead thing once and for all given for acceptance or rejection, but as living history constantly being renewed, rethought and re-searched for meanings relevant to existing men. The minister of today and tomorrow represents that tradition to a greater or lesser extent. If he knows it and lives in it as the tradition of the great Church he has an authority in the local and the contemporary Christian community which the man who represents only the tradition of a national or denominational or localized community cannot have. If he knows the great tradition he will also know that it is his duty to represent it,

interpreting the mind of the Church rather than acting as the representative of a fleeting majority of living and local church members. At worst the effort to exercise this authority becomes a servile representation of old forms, a religious antiquarianism; at its best, however, such communal authority speaks in contemporary language and to contemporary needs out of the long experience and painfully gathered wisdom of the Christian centuries.

It is questionable whether the prominence of communal authority in the new idea of the ministry has special significance for the development of spiritual authority. The latter always remains a highly personal matter; the minister is fitted to exercise this authority by the personal crises through which God leads him. It is conferred upon him only in the inner chamber where ordinary thanksgivings, intercessions, confessions and petitions are daily made and where the extraordinary humblings or clarifications take place. Highly personal, however, as this authority is the experiences out of which it grows can also be affected by the participation of the lonely individual in the life of the whole Church, including its life of prayer.

Whether the minister's institutional authority in Protestantism is being established in our times so that we can speak of the emergence of a clearer idea at this point may remain questionable. American Protestant institutions in general are in flux; the common life of the Protestant church is in part seeking institutional forms through which to express and discipline itself, in part it has developed such forms without officially recognizing their presence, continuing to think in terms of historic structures or polities that do not fit the actual situation and operations of the various agencies. New organizations and activities in the Church are being analyzed with the aid of ancient categories in somewhat the same way that in economic society problems of the distribution of rights to income are discussed with the use of private property concepts applicable to lands and houses but not to stocks, bonds and wages. It seems to be clear that the Church in America in our time like Church in any place at any time is deeply influenced in its institutional forms by the political and economic society with which it lives in conjunction. As the polity of all the churches, whether they are episcopal, presbyterian or congregational by tradition, has been modified in the direction of the political structures of Canada and the United States, so the institutional status and authority of the ministry are being modified in the direction of the democratic type of political, educational and economic executive or managerial authority. In this situation the temptation of ministers to become business managers is balanced by the opposite temptation to maintain the kind of status and authority their predecessors enjoyed in more hierarchically ordered society. The question is not whether the ministry will reflect the institutional forms of leadership in the world but whether it will reflect these with the difference that Christian faith and church life require, whether, in short, the minister will remain "man of God" despite the fact that he is now a director instead of a ruler. Perhaps the kinds of studies that have been made of the art of administration, of the relations of policy and administration, of organization and management in other spheres will be carried forward into the sphere of the Church and may show how much the pastoral director of our time, as pastoral preacher, teacher, counselor and leader of worship has also become the democratic pastoral administrator, that is to say, a man charged with the responsibility and given the authority to

hold in balance, to invigorate and to maintain communication among a host of activities and their responsible leaders, all directed toward a common end.

Something has previously been said above about the final point in the emerging new conception of the ministry. The people to whom ministers are sent are first of all the people of the Church but the Church is recognized to be the ministering community whose work is in the world. Hence the minister directs his attention as much toward the "world" as the dean of a medical school has his eye on the potentially and actually sick people of the society outside his closed community of healers, or, to use a wholly different analogy, as much as the mayor of a city keeps in view the nature and the needs of the cultural and economic society of which his city is a center. But the relations of Church and world are as unique as they are constantly changing so that no analogy does justice to the situation. What seems most evident in the case of the modern pastoral director is that he can think of himself neither as parish parson responsible for all the people in a geographic area nor as the abbot of a convent of the saved, but only as the responsible leader of a parish church; it is the Church, not he in the first place, that has a parish and responsibility for it. The minister confronts many of his greatest difficulties at this point, since on the one hand he may lose himself and his ministry among the manifold demands made upon him by the neighborhood, and on the other hand, if he directs his Church as though it had no responsibility for the enviroing society, he will develop an institution of narrow scope and outlook. Clear understanding of the nature and mission of the Church are prerequisite to any effective solution of the problems that present themselves.

The human needs that the Church exists to meet are much the same at all times. Whether the stars are as near as they seemed to the Psalmist or are removed by the millions and billions of light years to which we must accustom our imagination, still the question is the same: "When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast established; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him?" (R.S.V.). Whether Israel is exiled by Babylon or a modern people displaced, whether Rachel or a twentieth-century mother mourns for her children they need the same assurance that "your work shall be rewarded.... There is hope for your future, ... and your children shall come back to their own country(R.S.V.)." When the social gospel was at the height its greatest exponent in America, Walter Rauschenbusch, despite his animadversions against traditional religion, saw clearly how much the human problem would remain the same in the best of all possible worlds. He wrote:

"In the best social order that is conceivable, men will still smoulder with lust and ambition, and be lashed by hate and jealousy as with the whip of a slave driver.... No material comfort and plenty can satisfy the restless soul in us and give us peace with ourselves.... The day will come when all life on this planet will be extinct, and what meaning will our social evolution have had if that is all?"

We can make far too much of the changing needs of men in changing civilizations. Religion is a

highly conservative thing because the fundamental needs of men as finite and delinquent creatures aspiring after infinity and wholeness do not change.

Nevertheless our views of men change somewhat with the changing forms in which the ultimate dilemmas of existence present themselves. The cry, "What shall I do to be saved?" is made in various ways. At one time it is the cry, "What shall I do to be saved from hell?" At another time, "How can I have a friendly God?" Again men ask, "How can our lives be rescued out of dissipation and dispersion into unity?" It is always the same cry, with the same implications, yet always newly phrased. The form in which it is uttered and heard today is variously interpreted. For T. S. Eliot and the many for whom he speaks it is the cry of salvation from "The Wasteland." For Paul Tillich

"[man] experiences his present situation in terms of disruption, conflict, self-destruction, meaninglessness, and despair in all realms of life. This experience is expressed in the arts and in literature, conceptualized in existential philosophy, actualized in political cleavages of all kinds, and analyzed in the psychology of the unconscious.... The question arising out of this experience is not, as in the Reformation, the question of a merciful God and the forgiveness of sins; nor is it, as in the early Greek church, the question of infinitude, of death and error, nor is it the question of the personal religious life, or of the Christianization of culture and society. It is the question of a reality in which: the self-estrangement of our existence is overcome, a reality of reconciliation and reunion, of creativity, meaning and hope." (Systematic Theology, Vol. I (1951), p. 49)

The cry for salvation here has become the cry for rebirth. There are others who understand the human situation more in terms akin to those prevailing in certain areas in New Testament days, when it seemed to many men that they were in the control of forces indifferent to their fate and that God, however potentially powerful, was very far off. Not a few men today experience their dilemma as that of creatures who were born to be free but are everywhere in chains. Nature for them is a power whose iron laws or chance throws of the dice decide the time and place and race and endowment of the child at birth. History, whether interpreted as the realm of determinism or of chance, moves on its way like a tide carrying individual drops and waves of water to melt into the sands or to disappear on the horizon. Social forces, economic movements, machines and inventions that neither inventors nor statesmen can control, biological movements multiplying populations despite leagues for planned parenthood, psychological powers mysteriously hidden beyond the reach of consciousness—these and many other lesser forces direct the course of life and determine its destiny. And God is a God who hides himself. They are not unbelievers, these men; but for them the dominions, principalities, powers and rulers of the darkness of this world have a reality that makes the difference between ancient and modern mythologies of little importance. The cry for salvation that such men make is the cry for freedom from bondage, or to use a contemporary phrase, from the "other-directedness" and heteronomy of existence, from the life of mass-man. "

As it becomes aware of the specific form in which ultimate human problems present themselves in our own time, the ministry, and therewith the schools that prepare men for it, begin to understand more sharply what the pastoral function is, in what language the gospel speaks to this need, and what form the Church must take in serving such men in such a time.

The Purpose of the Church and its Ministry by H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams, & James M. Gustafson

Chapter 3: The Idea of a Theological School

I. SEMINARIES IN QUANDARY

The theological schools of the churches in America share all the perplexities of the contemporary Protestant community and its ministry. Though they also participate in the movements toward clarification and reconstruction apparent in the latter the first impression they give is like the one produced by the pluralistic churches and a harried ministry: an impression of uncertainty of purpose. We have, indeed, found in the schools evidence of that pluralism and harassment; for they reflect in the multiplicity of their numbers, the variety of their statements of purpose and the conglomerate character of their courses of study the lack of unity symptomatic of their social context. They are also surely partly responsible for the situation since as educational centers of the Church they are in a better position to modify it than are most other agencies.

Perhaps it is a mistake to say that the first impression given by the theological schools is one of multiplicity and indefiniteness of purpose. The first impression many observers receive is one of inertia and conservatism. Though such successive innovations in theological study as the social gospel, social ethics, religious education, psychological counseling and ecumenical relations may receive much publicity the schools seem to go on their accustomed way, teaching what they have always taught: Biblical and systematic theology, church history and preaching. The adjustments made here and there to meet the demands of changing times and the pressures issuing from alumni and church boards scarcely affect the main tenor of their work. They are like the great majority of ministers in this respect, for the pastors also carry on their traditional functions with only slight modifications despite the stir caused by those who want to change the profession in some revolutionary manner. Yet the apparent conservatism is indicative of perplexity. For in the case of the schools as of the ministers, doing the traditional things does not mean doing them for a traditional reason; nor does it mean that these acts are internally integrated. It is the difference between the repetition of separate, habitual actions and the continuation in novel movements of a historic line of march. So traditionalism in painting repeats the same old themes of portraiture, genre, seascape and landscape in ever sleeker forms;

it repeats; it does not move. But in its living tradition that art—moving for instance from Rembrandt through Daumier and Van Gogh to Rouault—brings unitive and fresh perception, contemporaneousness of understanding and inventive technique to the ever-new discovery and revelation of man's and nature's faces and forms. Though it makes its discoveries in the same world in which the conventionalist moves, it is as different from imitative traditionalism as it is from the anti-traditionalism that tries to find newness for the sake of novelty itself. Similar distinctions between dead and living tradition may be made in every realm of human workmanship.

So considered the conservatism of the theological schools does betray a certain repetitiveness of individual actions and lack of great unifying conceptions. Usually they teach Bible, theology, church history and preaching as separate subjects. Some few new and again distinct subjects are usually added for the sake of modernization, but the conventional disciplines remain in the ascendant. Each of them is regarded, doubtless rightly, as very important; but why it is important and what its place is in a definable whole eludes the definitions of catalogue writers and apparently of most curriculum committees. Studies in the history, literature and theology of Old and New Testaments occupy a large part of the time of almost all theological students. Why they should do so is rarely clearly understood by them and perhaps only somewhat more frequently by their teachers. That the Bible is very important all Christians understand; but why and in what ways it is important requires explanation. It has always been studied in theological schools and doubtless always will be. The question is not whether it will be studied but with what sense of its unity, in what context and in what relation to other subjects. Neither the medieval nor the sixteenth-century understanding of its significance seems wholly cogent today. Yet no generally accepted new analysis of its meaning has been formulated. If Bible study has become a specialty or series of specialties today the reason is not to be sought simply in the development of specialization among teachers of theology but in the loss of a controlling idea in theological education—an idea able to give unity to many partial inquiries. Similar reflections apply to the other traditional disciplines of the theological schools. What has always been taught is now being taught so far as the elements are concerned; but one thing previously implicit in all that was taught is not now being transmitted: the unifying idea. Thus the apparent conservatism of the schools is really indicative of uncertainty of aim.

The tendency toward pluralism and the participation of the schools in the confusion of churches and ministers becomes even more apparent in their efforts to add to the traditional core of theological studies new disciplines which are to serve as bridges between the heritage and modern men, or, more immediately, between it and the needs of ministers in modern churches. During the course of the last two or three generations the theological curriculum has been "enriched"—like vitamin-impregnated bread—by the addition of a long series of short courses in sociology and social problems, rural and urban sociology, the theory of religious education, educational psychology, methods of religious education, psychology of religion, psychology of personality, psychology of counseling, methods of pastoral counseling, theory of missions, history of missions, methods of evangelism, theory and practice of worship, public speaking, church administration, et cetera, et cetera. Almost every school catalogue gives evidence of such

additions, particularly when it is compared with one of its predecessors from the year 1900. These additions—which have again in part been subtracted—show the great awareness of the schools that they must mediate between the heritage and the contemporary situation. But the way in which such additions have been made also indicates how little guidance schools have received or given in the task of thinking through the whole work of the Church from a unified and unifying point of view, how much they have been caught up in the tendency to respond to varying external pressures and needs without stopping first of all to come to a new self-collectedness. For these courses have been added piecemeal and almost each one of the new specialties has appeared with a new theological rationalization of its existence so that missions, the gospel for society, religious education and pastoral counseling each found itself tempted or compelled to develop its own theology.

The present curriculum of the theological schools in general shows the effects of this development or, rather, lack of development. It may be more unified than most college curricula are but nonetheless it impresses the observer as a collection of studies rather than as a course of study. When he participates in meetings of theological faculties or their curriculum committees his impression is verified by the manner in which requirements for graduation are mathematically calculated and distributed among departments. The lack of unity is also indicated in the efforts that are made to provide for "integration" by adding examinations, theses or interdepartmental courses which will insure that students will combine in their own minds what has been fragmentarily offered them.

Other indications of the lack of a sense of direction in theological education today are to be found in the hidden and open conflicts present in the schools. Such conflicts usually reflect an exaggeration of inevitable tensions that are probably healthful when they are understood, accepted and ordered into a whole life. The tension associated with the nature of the Church as one body with one Head that has many members becomes conflict when the members think themselves self-sufficient and refuse to accept their fellow members as equally related to the Head. In the form of denominationalism that conflict is not as acute today as once it was though there are schools in which the question whether they are to teach church or denominational theology is the unacknowledged background of sharp debates about courses and teachers and there are others that regard themselves and their denominations as the sole guardians of "the truth." Denominationalism, as meaning priority of loyalty to denomination over loyalty to the cause of the Church, appears more frequently in the form of provincialism than of antagonism to others. In its exaggerated form of conflict the tension of members and body seems to appear most often in the antagonisms of liberalism and conservatism or of high and low churchmanship. The sort of liberalism which looks with contempt upon conservative groups and their schools or even on conservative tendencies in theology in general, calling them all "Fundamentalist," and the kind of conservatism that abhors all critical movements alike, cut themselves off from each other in the theological world more effectively than do Baptists from Presbyterians, Methodists from Anglicans.

This antagonism is akin to another, the one between exponents in theology of the self-sufficiency of the Church and exponents of the interdependence of Church and world. Given the polarity of the Church as Church-in-the-world, conflict arises when the polarity is denied either in the refusal of one party to accept itself as part of the Church or the refusal of another to accept the world as the Church's neighbor. Antagonisms of this sort appear in theological education mostly in hidden form, as faculty members debating about the admission of students, about the inclusion or exclusion of courses or about the place of graduate studies in theology, suspect each other of too much worldliness or too much church provincialism. Doubtless such suspicions may be traced back as far as the college of the apostles and Paul, but our ironic participation in them today still leaves us with the feeling that something else is amiss besides common frailty and sin. What can we assume about one another's ideas of the Church? And if we have no great ideas to which to assent or from which to dissent how can we achieve even compromise?

The constant rivalry between advocates of the "academic," or "content," or "classic" theological courses and promoters of "practical training" presents us with a similar situation. There are few theological schools where these groups do not compete for the students' interest and time, where some members of the former group do not feel that the scholarliness of theological study is being impaired by the attention claimed for field work and counseling, where teachers of preaching, church administration and pastoral care and directors of field work do not regard much of the theological work as somewhat beside the point in the education of a minister for the contemporary Church.

Such is the first, superficial impression: our schools, like our churches and our ministers, have no clear conception of what they are doing but are carrying on traditional actions, making separate responses to various pressures exerted by churches and society, contriving uneasy compromises among many values, engaging in little quarrels symptomatic of undefined issues, trying to improve their work by adjusting minor parts of the academic machine or by changing the specifications of the raw material to be treated.

II. SIGNS OF NEW VITALITY

The first, superficial impression is not erased by more thorough acquaintance with theological schools; many instances of self-satisfied provincialism, inert traditionalism and specious modernization tend to confirm it. But more intimate acquaintance also brings into view a second, very different aspect of the scene. Alongside conventionality, which is sometimes downright antiquarian, one encounters vitality, freshness, eagerness and devotedness among these teachers and students. Alongside perplexed preparation for manifold tasks one finds present in many of these men a drive toward knowledge of the essential, a search for central Christian wisdom about the fundamental issues of life. Alongside tepid birthright loyalties to denominations and schools of thought, one encounters in faculty and students the fervent convictions of new converts about the greatness of the common Christian cause. And amidst the confusions and perplexities of many men doing many things only institutionally connected, the sense of the

great tradition of the Church emerges in many places as the idea of a line of march to be taken up, of a direction to be followed, a continuing purpose to be served. Though no clear-cut idea of the theological school or of theology as a whole is as yet in prospect, a sense of renewal and promise, a feeling of excitement about the theological task is to be felt in the academic climate and it is accompanied by invigoration of intellectual inquiry and of religious devotion.

Examples of such a spirit—which is always a new spirit however frequently it has manifested itself in the past—may be found in whole schools. It is also represented on almost every faculty, even the most discouraged, by one or two young men or perennially youthful veterans, and in every corps of students, even the most somber assortment of theological-student stereotypes. Our examples, however, may be more wisely chosen from departments of study and types of educational work.

A remarkable thing has happened in recent years to the study of the Old Testament. There was a time, not too remote, when this subject was studied and doubtless sometimes taught with the kind of enthusiasm one associates with high school recitation periods at two o'clock on drowsy days in May. But now the study of the Old Testament has become a fascinating and exciting business in school after school. Students from various institutions speak of the illumination that has come to them from historic yet living participation in Israel's encounters with God, in the sorrows and exaltations, the judgments and deliverances of patriarchs, lawgivers, psalmists and prophets. In explanation of the phenomenon it may be said that an unusually brilliant group of teachers happens to be at work today in this field; yet such reasoning does not carry very far for these teachers had their peers in previous generations. Perhaps the explanation is to be found in the hints some students give of the extent to which the Old Testament has become for them an introduction to the fundamental problems of man's life before God, a revelation of the greatness, freedom and power of the Sovereign Lord, of the meaning of the people of God and of human history. The indications are that many of them came to theological study with a religion so sentimental or so narrowly Christ-centered that it had left them without answers to their deepest questions about the reason for their existence, about the meaning of human tragedy, and the significance of mankind's history. They had accepted what had been told them, but had remained ill at ease. For instance, they had learned that Jesus Christ is the answer to human problems but the Christ to whom they had been introduced was a figure unrelated to the great context in which he appeared and one who left them without answers to many of their personal questions as existing and historical men. In the study of Old Testament they had now been led by their teachers to discover what their human questions were and to what questions Jesus Christ is the answer. If this means that the Old Testament is being taught in such schools today as a part of theology it does not mean that the historical and critical approach to it is ignored or that inspiration and devotion have taken the place of scholarship. It does mean that the books of the Old Covenant are studied in the context of an intellectual love of God and neighbor, of a faith that seeks understanding.

In the case of New Testament studies a similar though less remarkable development is taking

place. Partly again because very able theologians are studying and teaching in this field, partly because critical, historical scholarship is being combined with existential awareness of that human dilemma and of that divine grace with which the New Testament writings are concerned, partly for other reasons, vital interest in the meaning of the New Testament is increasing. In this case as in that of the Old Testament there are differences between conservative and liberal seminaries, but in any case it is the New Testament not as literature in general, or as record of the religious experiences of people remotely related to our generation, or as collection of dogmatic statements of right belief, or as an anthology of wise ethical maxims, but as the story of the central event in the divine-human encounter that is being studied.

The concern for theology, not as a particularist discipline but as the search for human wisdom about the wisdom of God in the creation and redemption of man, is manifest in other disciplines besides Biblical studies: in systematic theology frequently, occasionally in Christian ethics, homiletics, religious education and pastoral counseling. This concern is accompanied by great interest in the Church and its relations to culture. Special courses have been introduced in some schools to deal with the nature of the Church, especially in the perspective of the ecumenical movement. New work is also being done in an effort to interpret the religious or Christian meanings found in modern secular literature, philosophy, science and art. But the measure of these interests is not to be taken by counting the number of such special courses. The question is really how courses in Church history, missions and practical theology on the one hand, in systematic theology, Christian ethics and philosophy of religion on the other, are being taught. An impression one gains from many teachers of these subjects as well as from their students, is that often now a robust sense of Church is accompanied by great willingness to enter into conversation with secular society. That conversation is being conducted in no apologetic tone but with the humility and openness of mind possible to those who are not self-defensive and who are neither ashamed of being churchmen nor hostile to the world outside the Church.

Other symptoms of this new spirit are to be found in the increased interest in the common worship of the academic community, though this is by no means universally evident; in the widespread and intensive discussions of faculties about the purpose and organization of the course of study; in the experiments that are being carried on to relate the work of the seminary more intimately to the work of other church agencies, particularly to the local churches.

Yet it remains questionable whether all these movements and interests are leading in one direction, whether such clear principles of unity and of central purpose are being discovered that the schools are now enabled to correlate their particularistic endeavors to prepare men for multiple services in heterogeneous churches. It is clear, of course, that no single pattern will suffice for a church so complex as the Protestant church in America and for schools with so many heritages and responsibilities. Nevertheless, if a common sense of Church is nascent among the many members of one body and if a relatively clear idea is emerging of the one service to be rendered by ministers in their many duties, then some common idea of a theological school ought also to be possible. Such an idea would not be applicable as a blueprint

for the reconstruction of the several institutions but only as a kind of general prescription of the elements every blueprint would need to provide for. No single pattern will suffice as a plan for the building of houses adequate to the needs of all American families in our time; their histories and tastes and duties are too various. But any house built today will provide for all the necessary functions of family life with the use of those instruments that modern civilization affords and with consideration of the services that the larger community now makes available to the home. It will also take into account the special form that family life has assumed in modern times while continuing the long tradition of the home. So it is possible to define the idea of a modern dwelling in the abstract while allowing for the infinite variations necessary before that idea can be made specifically useful for a particular family. The question is whether a general idea of a theological school can be formulated which might be comparable to such an abstract modern version of the traditional idea of a dwelling. Any effort to answer that question today in North America cannot undertake to state an apparent and growing consensus. It can only be a somewhat private essay offered for the sake of furthering and drawing together a lively but rather scattered discussion going on among many groups in the one room of the Church.

III. THE CHARACTER AND PURPOSE OF A THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

We begin that effort by defining the theological school as intellectual center of the Church's life. Though anti-intellectualism within the Church and anti-ecclesiasticism among intelligentsia outside it will object to the close correlation of intellect and Church, their ill-founded objections need not detain us. We content ourselves at this stage with the reflections that to love God with the whole understanding has ever been accepted by the great Church, if not by every sect, as part of its duty and privilege; and that there is no exercise of the intellect which is not an expression of love. If love is not directed toward God and neighbor it is directed toward something else, perhaps even toward the intellect itself in the universal tendency toward narcissism.

To speak in Aristotelian language, the efficient, material, formal and final causes of the theological school are identical with those of the Church. Its motivation is that of the Church—the love of God and neighbor implanted in human nature in creation, redeemed, redirected and invigorated by the acceptance of the good news of God's love for the world. Its membership consists of churchmen: existing and historic individuals, gathered together in a common life of faith which among other things seeks understanding of itself, of God and neighbor. Its form is the form of the Church—the subject before God, the institution and community, the local and universal, the critical and constructive companion of the world. Its purpose is the purpose of the Church—the increase among men of the love of God and companions.

Of course, the theological school is not Church in its wholeness. It is not even the intellect of the Church; but as an intellectual center it is a member of the body. While intellectual activity is as widely diffused throughout the whole Church as are activities of worship and of compassion, there are also centers or occasions of special intellectual activity in it as there are centers or

occasions of special adoration and charity. Wherever and whenever there has been intense intellectual activity in the Church a theological school has arisen, while institutions possessing the external appearance of such schools but devoid of reflective life have quickly revealed themselves as training establishments for the habituation of apprentices in the skills of a clerical trade rather than as theological schools. The intellectual activity of the Church which centers on occasion in a theological school and for which the theological school bears responsibility is like all intellectual action yet derives specific characteristics from the objects toward which it is directed and from the love that guides it. Like all intellectual activity it compares, abstracts, relates; by these means it seeks coherence in the manifoldness of human experience, unified understanding of the objects or the Other in that experience. It also undertakes to correct through criticism, false ideas of the Other and inappropriate reactions to it. Like all intellectual activity it is carried on in constant conversation among many subjects, whose ideas of the common object and whose reactions to it are compared, related and criticized. But theology is differentiated from other kinds of intellectual activity by being the reflection that goes on in the Church; it is therefore the kind of thinking that is directed toward God and man-before-God as its objects and which is guided by the love of God and neighbor. Both objectives and motivation are important in distinguishing its special character. Insofar as it is genuine church-thinking it is distinctly different from all intellectual activity guided by love of self or love of neighbor-without-God, or of intellect itself, or of knowledge for its own sake—if there is such a love. Intellectual activity motivated by such interests may indeed make Ultimate Being and man its objects of study and so seem to share in the thought of the Church; but insofar as it is directed by a love that is not love of Being and of man it cannot see or understand what love understands. Theology differs from such modes of thinking about God and man because it is a pure science, disinterested as all pure science is disinterested, seeking to put aside all extraneous, private and personal interests while it concentrates on its objects for their own sake only. On the other hand theology differs from intellectual activities directed toward other objects than God and man-before-God. Such activities may indeed be motivated by the love that animates theology, but they abstract the objects to be understood from the objects of ultimate love, focusing attention on some part or aspect of creation without making them objects of devotion. Historically theology has not always been aware of the differences between its relations to the former and the latter kinds of "secular" intellectual activity. Sometimes it has relegated both sorts to the realm of "worldly" sciences; sometimes it has presumed to assert its queenship over both though in the course of that assertion it has itself become worldly, allowing itself to be guided by self-love or love of the Church, not by the Church's love. When it follows its own genius it is related to these various sorts of intellectual activity in the various ways that Church is related to world. In all relations it is not a queen but a servant, though its service may at times need to take the form of criticism and polemic.

As center of the Church's intellectual activity, animated by the Church's motivation and directed by its purpose, the theological school is charged with a double function. On the one hand it is that place or occasion where the Church exercises its intellectual love of God and neighbor; on the other hand it is the community that serves the Church's other activities by bringing reflection and criticism to bear on worship, preaching, teaching and the care of souls. Intellectual gifts

whether used in one way or the other are indispensable to the functioning of the whole community but they are not pre-eminent as intellectualism asserts. There are theological as well as psychological reasons for denying to the idea-forming, abstracting, comparing and critical work of the mind the kind of superiority to physical action, imagination, emotion and unconscious operation that is often claimed for it. All the warnings Paul uttered, and the Church in principle has accepted, against the tendency of any function of the body to claim priority over others apply to the relation of intellectual to other activities. But granted that "heart and soul and strength," or feeling and intuition and will, or sentiment, the unconscious depths and physical vitality, are all to be employed in exercising love to God and man, yet the "mind"—intelligence and understanding—also has its rightful, indispensable place in the economy of human and of Church life. Though intellectual love of God and neighbor is not the supreme exercise of love, yet it is required and possible since man is also mind and does not wholly love his loves if his mind does not move toward them. He cannot truly love with heart, soul and strength unless mind accompanies and penetrates these other activities as they in turn accompany and penetrate it. The coldness of an intellectual approach unaccompanied by affection is matched by the febrile extravagance of unreasoning sentiment; the aloofness of uncommitted understanding has its counterpart in the possessiveness of unintelligent loyalty. When the whole man is active the mind is also active; when the whole Church is at work it thinks and considers no less than it worships, proclaims, suffers, rejoices and fights.

The theological school is the center where both types of intellectual activity are carried on: the kind that, supported by other actions, moves directly toward the objects of the Church's love and the kind that supports the other movements toward those objects. The theological school in this way is like any other intellectual center where both "pure" and "applied science" are pursued, with the proviso that these phrases are misnomers for the intricate interaction of the science that confines its interest to its object only and the science whose disinterestedness in personal and private concerns is disciplined by interest in humanity. As pure science theology is that response of man's nascent love toward God and neighbor which seeks to know the beloved, not with the question whether it is worthy of love, but with wonder; not for the sake of power over the beloved but as overpowered. Or, speaking by reference to the end rather than the beginning, it is the movement of the mind toward the hoped-for God and the hoped-for neighbor. This is not to say, as some philosophers do, that thinking itself is worship of God; an element of worship is present, to be sure, in all objective thinking but the worship may be that of an idol or the sort of self-worship which desecrates the object of thought by making it a means to the end of self-glorification. It is to say, however, that thinking may be truly worshipful, and that theology is not only ancillary to other actions of the Church but is itself a primary action. Such a movement of the mind toward God and the neighbor-before-God is characteristic of the Church in all its parts but it is the first duty and a central purpose of the theological school.

From everything that has been said it should be clear that theology so considered as a pure science does not have as its object God in isolation. The word "theology" in its literal sense as the science of God is as applicable and inapplicable to the intellectual activity of the Church as the word "medicine" is to the studies of the healing community. The God who makes himself

known and whom the Church seeks to know is no isolated God. If the attribute of *aseity*, i.e., being by and for itself, is applicable to him at all it is not applicable to him as known by the Church. What is known and knowable in theology is God in relation to self and to neighbor, and self and neighbor in relation to God. This complex of related beings is the object of theology. In the great, nearly central figure of Christianity, the God-man, this complex appears at least symbolically, though theology is distorted if it is converted into Christology. The nature of theology is most pertinently expressed by the Thomist and Calvinist insistence: "True and substantial wisdom principally consists of two parts, the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves. But while these two branches of knowledge are so intimately connected, which of them precedes and produces the other, is not easy to discover." To the present writer it seems better to say that true and substantial wisdom consists of three parts: the knowledge of God, of companions, and of the self; and that these three are so intimately related that they cannot be separated. For self-knowledge and knowledge of the other, even though the other be the human neighbor, remain two different things. This point, however, is not necessary in our argument which is simply that theology has as its complex object God in his relations to the self with its companions, and the self with its companions in their relations to God. With this object the reflections and experiences of the Bible deal, with it the great theologians were concerned. It is only broken into parts for convenience as when Christian ethics as study of man is separated from systematic theology as reflection about God. What this definition of the object of theology means for the organization of theological studies cannot here be developed. What is at issue is the reflection that theology as a "pure science," motivated by love of its object, is directed always toward both God and man, or that as intellectual activity it is subject to the double commandment of love of God and neighbor. The proper study of mankind is God and man-before-God in their interrelation.

The second function of theology as the intellectual activity of the Church and so of the theological school as a center of this activity, is the service of other activities of the Church through the exercise of theoretical understanding. Worship unreflected upon, not understood in its relations to God and to other service of God, or in its relations to works of discipline and mercy, or in its context in the whole life and history of the community, uncriticized in its perversions, tends to become habitual repetition of rites; it becomes magical or theurgistic, or is impoverished by sectarian or temporal rejection of the heritage of the whole community. The worshiper and especially the leader of worship needs not only to worship but to know what this action means in the complex of all his doings, of all the deeds of the Church and of the deeds of God. The worshipping Church needs a theology of worship not as preliminary or as addition to, but as accompaniment of, its action. So also in the case of preaching and teaching. The proclamation of the good news of divine love, of the forgiveness of sin and the deliverance from evil; exhortation to lead the Christian life; instruction of young and old in the Christian faith—these evidently require not only that the minister have heard and apprehended the gospel, comprehended the law and learned the creed, but that he have gained insight into the ways of God and men and that he grow continually in his understanding of them; that further he have grasped the meaning of preaching and teaching in relation to all the other activities he and the Church carry on. The care and cure of souls requires theological comprehension in the broad

sense of the word "theology." Psychological understanding of self and other men, sociological perception of the communal setting in which individuals suffer, sin, grow guilty, anxious and despairing, the human empathy and sympathy needed by the men of the Church as they seek to help the needful—these must all be united, informed and transformed by theological understanding of man-before-God and God-with-man if the work of the counselor is to be the work of the Church. The building of the Church as a community with complex organizational structure, with manifold functions and leaders, with various responsibilities to the society around it, can easily degenerate into the building of religious clubs, of sororities and fraternities and of national associations for the promotion of good causes, if the understanding of the Church's purpose, of its responsibility to God, of the nature and action of God, of man and his history, of the meaning of the Church's work in all the complex of human activity and of the interrelation of the various aspects of its work are lost to view.

The need for theological understanding and criticism on the part of the preacher and teacher has always been understood, perhaps especially by the churches of the Reformation though it is probably no accident that theological studies in the Roman Church have been especially developed in times past by the preaching orders. The need for theological preparation and continuous study on the part of the priest or leader of worship and the pastoral counselor has not always been as clearly recognized and these functions of the Church have suffered in consequence. Today, if it is true as has been previously suggested, that the work of the minister centers in his activity as pastoral director of a church, the necessity for profound understanding of the meaning of the Church but particularly of that reality to which it points in all its action seems to be very evident. As a general physician needs a knowledge of the structure, functioning and pathology of a whole psychosomatic person in his physical, social environment; as a statesman needs to understand the constitution, the dynamics, the history, the value system, the social evils, and the international relations of the society he governs, so the pastoral director of a church needs to know the nature, the purpose, the relations, the structure, the history, the deformations, and the responsibilities of the Church. And no such understanding is possible apart from knowledge of God before whom and for whom the Church exists, and apart from knowledge of man in his responsibility to God.

A theological school, then, is that center of the Church's intellectual activity where such insight into the meaning and relations of all the Church's activities is sought and communicated. It is sought there first of all by those who are preparing to assume responsibility for the Church's work. The theological school is a place where young men are taught to understand the world of God in which the Church operates and the operations of the Church in that world, but it is clear that they cannot be taught unless those who teach them as well as they themselves are constantly in quest of such understanding. It is also, however, the place whither maturer leaders of the Church resort for longer and shorter periods of intensive intellectual work in a community of intellectual workers.

How a theological school so defined as intellectual center of the Church's life differs from a

trade school, from a bookish center where not understanding of God and man but of books is sought, from a school of philosophy, a Bible school, a school for preachers, a monastery, et cetera, does not need to be described in detail. We shall need, however, to inquire into the chief methods by which theological understanding is gained.

IV. THE THEOLOGICAL COMMUNITY

An intellectual center of the Church's life which serves the purposes of theological activity necessarily has the form of a college, that is of a collegium or colleagueship. It is a community of students in communication with one another, with the common subjects or objects studied, and with companions of the past and present in like communication with the objects. Every genuine school is such a society in which the movement of communication runs back and forth among the three—the teacher, the student and the common object. When communication is a one-way process, proceeding from an authoritative person to an immature learner who is not in direct relation to the object of the study, intellectual activity is at a minimum in both parties; such a school is not a community of students but a propaganda or indoctrination institution. The study of nature is unreal when textbooks and purely verbal communication take the place of laboratories so that natural entities or activities are not the instructors of both tutors and pupils. In view of the nature of the common object of theology—God and man in their interrelations—it is particularly evident that the intellectual community cannot be bi-polar, consisting only of teachers and students. It is even more dependent than the scientific community on the direct relation of the knowers to theological reality—the God of faith and believing men, the subjects and objects of ultimate love, the commander and the commanded, the forgiver and sinner. Indeed the infinitely active and inexhaustible nature of the subjects of theology reduces to relatively small significance the distance between the more and less mature members of the community of inquiry. Teachers and students form one group before their common objects, which are, indeed, subjects, actively making their presence felt in the community.

The presence in the theological community of the ultimate objects or subjects of study, like its engagement in serving the ultimate purpose of the Church, means that theological students are personally involved in their work to an unusual degree. The study of the determination of personal and human destiny by the mystery of being beyond being, of the tragedy and victory of the son of man, of the life-giving, healing power immanent in personal and social existence, of the parasitic forces of destruction that infest the spiritual as well as the biological organism, of the means of grace and the hope of glory—this cannot be carried on without a personal involvement greater than seems to be demanded by the study of history, nature or literature. If students are not personally involved in the study of theology they are not yet studying theology at all but some auxiliary science such as the history of ideas or ancient documents. Hence theological study is hazardous; the involvement may become so personal and emotional that intellectual activity ceases and the work of abstraction, comparison and criticism stops. Other hazards appear because intellectual activity requires that the objects of ultimate concern in the study be often set at the fringe of awareness while ideas and patterns, forms and relations are put

in the center. The avoidance of temptations that arise in this situation will need to concern us later. The point to be insisted on here is that the theological community is constituted not by teachers and learners but by these and the subjects of their common inquiry.

In other respects also it is necessary to think of the theological enterprise in terms of community and as an affair of genuine back-and-forth communication. The course of study is a course of constant conversation with members of a wide circle of men who live in community with God and with neighbors-before-God. The necessary introduction to Christian theology is through Biblical studies and these need to occupy the theologian throughout his work, whatever be his specialty. But Biblical studies are in essence participation in the life of the Biblical communities that found their source and their focus in God. To study the Bible is not to study impersonal writings, Utopian ideas, heavenly patterns. It is to participate in the life of Israel and the early Church, in their hearing and interpretation of the Word spoken through all the sounds that assailed their ears, in their obedience and disobedience to the Will beyond all wills, in their mindfulness and understanding of the mighty acts of ultimate judgment and deliverance in all the arbitrations and liberations of history. It is to share in their appeals for mercy, in their questionings and reasonings with God, in their disputes, disagreements and reconciliations among themselves. There is no other way to learn, organize and apprehend experience, think and speak Christianly, than by long and continuous participation in the life of the Biblical communities. In this conversation with those who being dead yet speak we learn the logic as well as the language of the community that centers in God. Whatever the discontinuities between Israel and the early Church on the one hand, the modern Church on the other so far as their participation in natural, cultural and political events go, fundamental continuity prevails so far as divine-human and inter-human relations before God are concerned. For, as was pointed out previously, the knowledge of God and man with which we are concerned in the Church is precisely the knowledge available to those who stand in this historic community and apprehend reality from its point of view. In this communication between the Biblical and the modern communities the movement is not all one way; it is not simply the Bible that speaks to the theological student; he also speaks to the men of the Bible. Nothing is more evident from the history of Biblical interpretation in the Church and from the self-critical conversations of modern Biblical scholars than that the movement is reciprocal. New light does break forth from Scriptures as inquirers learn from their social and personal experience to ask new questions of the old communities and to read apparently familiar communications in a new setting. Every classical literature possesses such power of continuing its life and of developing new meanings in the minds of those who study not only it but the realities with which it deals. So Plato and Aristotle, Aeschylus and Virgil, Dante and Shakespeare continue to play active roles in Western cultural society. Far more than they, Moses and Isaiah, the Psalmists, Paul and John, Matthew, Mark and Luke participate in the life of the modern Christian community.

The theological community includes also the men and societies of Christian history. The Reformers, to be sure, revolted against the dominance of tradition at the expense of the Bible. The Reformation both established the priority of Biblical studies and tended to exclude from the theological community the theologians, prophets and churchmen of the post-New Testament

period. It seemed sufficient that theology should combine with the present questionings of men in encounter with God and neighbors intense participation in the life of the men of Scriptures. In fact, however, tradition became established again as soon as it was banished. The second generation of Protestant theological students attended at least to Luther's and Calvin's words about attending to the Word of God. There is no Bible school or Biblical seminary that does not also study the mind of some founder of its method of interpreting Scripture, or of some other groups of Bible students besides itself. The question is not really whether the theological community should include only immediately present human beings and the men of Scriptures; other, historic men and groups will always be included. The question is how representative of the whole Church these men and societies will be, whether the Augustines and Thomases, not to speak of the Senecas and Ciceros, who belonged to the Reformers' community of discourse are to be heard directly; whether the response of Christians to the fall of the Roman Empire is to be understood or only their response to the decay of medieval civilization; whether the thirteenth-century revival of the Church or only its eighteenth-century awakening is to be regarded; whether only the fathers of a denomination or also the Church fathers on whom they relied are to be included in the community of discourse.

The study of historical theology and of the historical Church, whatever the limits within which it is undertaken, is as necessary as it is an inevitable part of theological inquiry. Under the influence of theories of progress or decline or development in history such study has frequently been carried on for the purpose of explaining the differences between Biblical and modern life before God. But, in effect, historical study is always far more important than these patterns of interpretation indicate. What happens in it is that men and communities of the past, confronting strange situations, making new responses and mistakes, yet always concerned with the one God and the same Christ, are included in the conversation of the present theological society. In this conversation chronological priority and posteriority are often unimportant. Augustine's reflections may be more illuminative of the common subject than the later ideas of Thomas Aquinas; Luther may answer more questions of the modern student about his puzzling situation in guilt and anxiety before God than Schleiermacher; Bernard of Clairvaux may clarify the meaning of the love of God and neighbor more than a twentieth-century theologian. Historical study in theology, when theology is directed toward its chief objects, is always more like a conversation with a large company of similarly concerned and experienced men than like the tracing of a life history, whatever values there are in the latter procedure. But a theological inquiry that narrows the historical community, that excludes from the conversation such men as the early Fathers of the Church, or the medieval theologians, or the Reformers, or the sectarians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or the Puritans, Pietists and social gospellers, or such movements as monasticism, scholasticism, Biblicism, et cetera impoverishes itself from the beginning. The study of history is never only the effort to understand the past, or even to understand the human present that has grown out of the past; it is an extension of the effort to understand objects and situations common to the past and the present. It always involves a kind of resurrection of the minds of predecessors in the community of inquiry, and an entering into conversation with them about the common concern.

The principle of communication applies also to the relations of the theological school to other groups and activities in the contemporary Church. The isolated school, out of touch with other intellectual centers of the Church, out of touch also with the worshipping, serving, educating Church, uncognizant of and uninfluenced by the work of the preachers, priests, pastoral counselors and pastoral directors, uncritical and uncriticized, is not an intellectual center of the Church but only of some academic or religious sect. In such a school only fragments of theology can be studied; its partial views are never corrected or illuminated from other perspectives than its own.

Finally, the theological community as a Church center is always in companionship with the "world" and in communication with secular learning. In its participation in the life of the Biblical communities it participates with them in their conversation and conflict with ancient cultures; in its re-enactment of the life of the Church in history it also re-enacts the conversations of theologians with Platonists and Neo-Platonists, with Aristotelians and Averroists, with idealists and realists; it recapitulates the encounters of the institutional Church with Church-reforming and Church-deforming states, of the Christian community with rising and declining cultures. In its dialogue with contemporary churchmen it is involved in their engagements with the metropolitan, industrial society of our time. As center of the contemporary Church's intellectual activity it is also directly responsible for continuous conversation with the intellectual centers of secular society. Its relations to the philosophies, sciences and humanities studied in the latter will be as various as are the relations of the Church to its companion, the world. At times the conversation will be debate and polemic, but even conflict is creative for a theology that has been cured of defensiveness by the faith that infuses it. Frequently the relations will be co-operative, as when views of human nature developed in secular centers illuminate areas inaccessible, though highly germane, to theological understanding, or when the latter supplies insights otherwise unattainable.

This responsibility of the theological school for intercommunication with the world is not discharged by its requirement that those who wish to participate in its work must have previously received a liberal education. Theological inquiry is not something that can be added to humanistic and naturalistic studies. It needs to be constantly informed by them and to inform them. Hence also this responsibility is not met merely by the addition to theological studies of courses in the old or the new humanities—the study of literature, history and philosophy on the one hand, of culture, psychology and sociology on the other. The question is never one of adding bodies of knowledge to each other but always one of interpenetration and conversation. A theological school that is closely related to a university may be in a more favorable situation to maintain connection with humanistic and scientific studies than is the isolated school. It can also more readily make to the body of human learning the contributions that are required of theology. But proximity to a university, even organizational connection with one, does not guarantee that this interchange will take place, nor does distance from such an institution prevent the lively conversation of theology with other disciplines of thought.

This outline of the aspects of theological community activity offers no prescription for the manner in which duties are to be distributed among the members of a school. The division of labor in any society, including the theological school, will always doubtless be somewhat arbitrary. But whatever convenience and expediency require about the way in which the unity of theological study be broken up into manageable parts, the first requirements laid on all the specialists in the community seem to be: that their intellectual participation in the life of the Biblical, the historic and the contemporary Church always have in view the common theological object—God and man in their interrelations; and that it always be carried on in acute awareness of the "world" in which the Church has been assigned its task. One may say that the complex object of theological study always has the three aspects of God in relation to man, of men in relation to God, and of men-before-God in relation to each other, while the method of such study consists of intensive participation in the life of the Biblical, historical and contemporary churches in their encounters with God and interactions with the "world."

V. THEORY AND PRACTICE

Our reflections on the nature of a theological school and on its methods of study have emphasized the theoretical character of its work. Whether its function as the exercise of the intellectual love of God and man or as the illumination of other church activities is stressed, in either case the work of the school is theoretical. As intellectual center of the Church's life it is the place where in specific manner faith seeks understanding. As guide of the immature it seeks to lead them to a knowledge of the whole complex of action in which they are to act; as illuminator and critic the school endeavors to aid the Church to understand what it is doing and by understanding to modify or redirect these actions. Hence it deals with the theory of preaching, of Christian education, of social action and of worship as well as with the theory of divine and human nature, of God's activity and man's behavior. So its work is theoretical through and through.

Objections to this emphasis will arise in various quarters. It will be pointed out that in the past great cleavages between theology and the Church have resulted from a one-sided interest in theory; that the development of the schools, particularly in America during the past hundred years, has been in reaction to the dominance of theory; that the Church needs men who have been practically trained in its work. These objections have some cogency, yet it may be questioned whether they are not directed against a kind of theorizing very different from the sort that has been described and whether they in turn have not led to practices that now stand in need of criticism. This problem of theory and practice which arises in many other contexts in theological schools itself needs theoretical illumination. Though our difficulties in the development of the schools have arisen in part from failure to achieve adequate understanding of our ultimate purposes and our total activity, they seem also to be partly due to inadequate theories of the relations of action and reflection.

Two views of this relation seem to guide and by their antagonism to perplex us. According to the

intellectualist theory all human action begins with theory, with an understanding of ideas presented to the mind; the movement is from idea to action, from thought to voluntary deeds. First, it is supposed, we conceive the idea of God, then move toward love and obedience and faith; first we conceive the idea of salvation, then accept this healing work; first we understand the nature of the Church, then proceed to increase and edify it. Directly opposed to this view is the pragmatic theory which regards theoretical activity as an affair of rationalizations, essentially irrelevant to practice; practice is valued both for its own sake and as more directly contributory than thought can be to the welfare of men and the glory of God. The contention between advocates of these two theories of the relations of theory and practice becomes, in theological schools as well as elsewhere, a debate between two kinds of practitioners—the practitioners of theoretical activity on the one hand, of nontheoretical on the other. But in the course of the debate it becomes apparent that a host of issues is involved, not a simple and definable single issue. In consequence members of what seemed to be two parties are forever changing sides and confusion is increased rather than diminished.

Neither an intellectualist nor a pragmatic understanding of the relations of theory and practice has been presupposed in our definition of the theological school as the center of the Church's intellectual activity and as the college in which the Biblical, the historical and the contemporary Church are included in one community of discourse. What has been implied is the conviction that reflection and criticism form an indispensable element in all human activity, not least in the activities of the Church, but that such reflection cannot be independent of other activities, such as worship, proclamation, healing, et cetera. Reflection is never the first action, though in personal and communal life we can never go back to a moment in which action has been unmodified by reflection. Even when we prevision an act, such as worship, and reflect on what we have not yet done, the act contemplated does not grow out of the contemplation; its sources in the complex human soul are more various. Reflection precedes, accompanies and follows action but this does not make it the source or end of action. Reflection as a necessary ingredient in all activity is neither prior nor subservient to other motions of the soul. Serving these it is served by them in the service of God and neighbor or of the self. It serves them in its own way, by abstracting and relating, by discerning pattern and idea, by criticism and comparison. It is served by a will that disciplines, a love that guides, by the perception of incarnate being, by hope of fulfillment.

The work of a theological school is necessarily reflective but if it is carried on in complete abstraction from other action, or if it is reflection on the actions of other men only, it soon becomes theory in the bad sense of the term—a vision of reflections of reflections. The theoretical work of the intellect needs to be carried on in the context of the Church's whole life; hence those whose special duty it is to do this work must participate in that life if they are to discharge their peculiar duty. One cannot understand the meaning of preaching in the total work of the Church apart from direct personal hearing and proclamation of the gospel, nor know the character of worship, its direction, the requirements it makes on the self and its relations to proclamation and service unless one is a worshiper. How shall one understand Christian education in theory without engaging in it as teacher and student, or church administration

without participation in the organized common life of a Christian community? The point is not that we learn by doing. Sometimes we learn nothing by doing except the bare deed, as when children are taught to read by being required simply to read but never learn that written words refer to a whole world beyond them or when theological students are taught to "preach" by being required to make public addresses but never discover the difference between a sermon and an oration. The point is rather that we do not learn the meaning of deeds without doing. If action unexamined, unreflected upon and uncriticized is not worth doing, examination, reflection and criticism which are not the self-examination, the self-reflection and self-criticism of a living agent also are scarcely worth carrying on.

A second equally or more important reason why theological study must be set in the context of the Church's whole activity if it is to be genuine theology, lies in the nature of theoretical activity. The intellect abstracts, compares, conceptualizes; it notes relations and forms ideas of them. In theology it turns to ideas of being, of God, of fatherhood and sonship, of sovereignty and mercy, of judgment and salvation. It turns from selves in their concrete personal and communal existence to ideas of the image of God in man, of the soul, of mankind, the people of God, of sin and blessedness. Endeavoring to understand the Church it tries to discern its pattern and to see analogies between churchly and other realities. Now the proper work of the intellect lies in the accurate, critical discovery, definition and testing of such ideas. But this work of theory cannot stand alone because it is a work of abstraction that proceeds from, and must return to, the concrete reality of life. Moreover, engagement in theological inquiry involves the student in personal hazards because he is tempted to regard the abstract as the real and even to make it the object of his love. This danger can be avoided only if theology is set within the larger personal and social context of a life of love of God and neighbor.

While it is true, as has been said before, that theology requires personal involvement on the part of its students, the fact cannot be ignored that in the activity of the intellect the ultimate objects and subjects of love, faith and hope must be set somewhat at the fringe of awareness. In the moment of his study God and neighbor are not present to the theologian as Thou addressing or being addressed by this I. What is immediately present are forms, patterns, ideas ingredient in the Thou. Furthermore, the mind that contemplates ideas is not the self in its whole concrete character with its anxieties and hopes, its highly personal guilt and need of deliverance from evil but rather a kind of common mind, an abstracted self. In the terms Martin Buber has made familiar, theology is an affair of I-It rather than of I-Thou relations, and the I in this I-It relation differs from the I in the I-Thou relation. To be sure, theology does not think of God as an It nor does it make a thing out of the neighbor, but the abstractions it attends to are its, things, rather than selves in their living power. Sin and salvation do not become ideas; but ideas of sin and salvation do occupy the foreground of attention. Neither is the self reduced to the studious, mental self; yet the vocation of the student takes a certain precedence for the time being over the man who among many other things also studies. Because intellectual work requires such attention to the impersonal therefore it is necessary that it be constantly corrected and made serviceable by activities of another sort, especially by the worship of God, the hearing of his

Word, and direct service of the neighbor. In worship and in the hearing of the proclamation the eternal Thou and the concrete selfhood of worshiper or hearer of the Word are in a confrontation never actualized in study. In the service of the neighbor not only he as a real person but the self also, in all its weakness and need, with all its concrete obligations, are brought into awareness in a manner never achievable by a student of theology so far as he remains a student. Hence while a community which centers in worship is not a theological school, a theological school in which worship is not a part of the daily and weekly rhythm of activity cannot remain a center of intellectual activity directed toward God. Preaching and hearing the proclamation is not theological study; but if students of theology, in all their degrees of immaturity and maturity, do not attend to the Word addressed to them as selves their study represents flight from God and self. A community of service to men is not as such a theological center; but a school that only studies man-before-God and man in relation to neighbor without the accompaniment of frequent, direct encounter with human Thous, serving and being served, has become too irresponsible to neighbors to be called a divinity school.

Consideration of the relations of study to worship, to the preaching and hearing of the Word, and to the service of men calls our attention to the significance of these activities as they need to be carried on by the theological community itself. But it also puts into a frequently neglected perspective the meaning of participation by students and faculty in the Church's work outside the confines of the school. All too often "field work" (why not call it "church work?") is regarded and directed as though its purpose were the acquisition of skills for future use. Students, it seems, should teach Sunday School classes because sometime in the future they will need to organize Sunday Schools; to do "clinical work" in hospitals because they will learn something beneficial for their later practice as counselors; to practice preaching so that in other times and other places they may proclaim divine righteousness and mercy. When such considerations are urged upon them an inner contradiction comes to appearance; a kind of professionalized self-love has been substituted for love of God and neighbor. The children in the Sunday School class, the patients in the hospital, the hearers of the "practice sermon" have been put into a secondary place; they have become means to a personal end. Fortunately, the situations in which students so sent into "field work" find themselves, their own sensitiveness and the grace of God active in many secondary agencies counteract the influence of the theory that such participation in the Church's work is self-loving preparation for the exercise of future other-loving action. It demands immediate self-forgetful service of others; it puts into the center of attention God on whom the servant is dependent and the neighbor who is in need of service. It requires the young man or woman engaging in it to be a minister now, rather than to look forward merely to future ministry. It puts the intellectual love of God and neighbor into the rich context of the present moment. Doubtless participation in church work by students of theology has educational value, since devoted and intelligent men are bound to learn from experience, especially if they can compare it with that of others. But neither self-education nor the undergirding of intellectual activity constitutes the purpose of work that can have only the glory of God and the welfare of companions as its ends. These and other considerations underscore the significance of participation in church work by those who are engaged in theological study. It is important that their studies be set in the context of the Church's work not simply because theology is thereby

enriched, but also because it is not a way of life and because a person is not definable in terms of his vocation even though it be the vocation of theological student. Theology is only the intellectual part of a way of life and the young person's problem is not simply one of attaining intellectual comprehension but of growing up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Yet all this does not mean that the theological school should turn away from its own proper work of intellectual activity. It means that theoretical activity can be only provisionally and partly separated from the Church's total action, or that as the theological community is necessary to the functioning of the Church so also the Church's other agencies are necessary to that community. Once more the old parable of the body and its members finds its application.

These adumbrations of the idea of a theological school will seem to some who have followed the course of our argument to be so general or so Utopian as to be irrelevant to the existing seminaries in the United States and Canada. How shall administrators and teachers gain help from such generalities as they struggle to find answers to pressing questions about the extension of the curriculum to four years, about the place in it of Greek and Hebrew, about making better provisions for the theological education and employment of young women? Such questions cannot be answered on the basis of a general idea of theological study without further theoretic inquiry into the specific situations in which they arise. (A further volume on theological education in the United States and Canada, now in preparation by the staff of the study project, will come to closer grip with some specific problems.) But the problem of theological education, as it presents itself to administrators, boards and faculties, does not consist simply of a series of detailed questions. It is also a problem of the over-all goal and context of the seminaries' work. The reflections here offered on that subject have not been developed in abstraction from the practice of theological education but only in some abstraction from the confusion of many details. The idea has been worked out in the midst of practice and in consultation with hundreds of fellow practitioners.

Like every such theory, like theology itself, it remains incomplete and open. It is an effort to understand in the moment, while the conversation in the Church continues, what are the intelligible outlines of the structure of theological study in the Protestant schools. A theological education which does not lead young men and women to embark on a continuous, ever-incomplete but ever-sustained effort to study and to understand the meanings of their work and of the situations in which they labor is neither theological nor education. Similarly, a theory of theological study which does not lead toward new endeavors toward better, more precise and more inclusive understanding of the nature of theological endeavor under the government of God is not a theory of theology but a dogmatic statement backed by no more than individual authority, that is, by no authority at all.