

A. Smith

IN RE RESIGNATION OF DR. HERMAN V. HILPRECHT

COPIES OF LETTERS

ADDRESSED, AT THE DIRECTION OF THE TRUSTEES
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA,

BY THE

PROVOST OF THE UNIVERSITY

TO

VARIOUS CORRESPONDENTS AND INQUIRERS

	PAGE
1. Reply to the letter of certain European Scholars.....	1
2. Reply to the letter of certain Lutheran Ministers.....	2
3. Reply to the letter of certain Ministers of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches.....	3
4. Reply to the Director of the Imperial Ottoman Museum.....	5
5. Reply to the Rev. W. H. Roberts, D.D.....	6
6. Reply to the Rev. Charles E. Bronson, D.D., and to the Rev. Ellis N. Kremer, D.D.....	7



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THE REPLY OF THE PROVOST TO PROFESSOR
DR. H. ZIMMERN, REPRESENTING CERTAIN
EUROPEAN SCHOLARS.

DEAR SIR:—The Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania have had under careful consideration your communication written in August last. By their direction and on their behalf, I now submit a formal reply.

You and your associates, we feel sure, are sensible of the delicacy of the position in which you placed yourselves by addressing such a letter to the University of Pennsylvania. You assumed, without inquiring of us what the facts of the case really were, that our officials had deliberately violated Dr. Hilprecht's private rights and had been guilty of the wanton destruction of University property.

You will permit us to question the propriety of making preliminary assumptions such as these. Courteous as were the terms in which your communication was couched, it was hard for us to overlook what, in the case of less eminent correspondents, we should have resented as a grave breach of academic comity.

In view, however, of your distinguished attainments, and of the services which you and your associates have rendered to the cause of sound learning, the Trustees have felt constrained to ignore the unusual character of your communication, and to consider solely on their merits the charges which were therein preferred.

In order that there might be a thorough and impartial investigation of all relevant facts, the Trustees referred your communication (and certain others of which yours appears to have been the inspiration) to a committee of three of their own number. A copy of the report of the committee is herewith enclosed. A reading of it will satisfy you, I am sure, that all the important facts in the case are to the contrary of your assumptions. If the committee are right in their inference that it was by a communication of Dr. Radau that you were induced to address us, it would seem to be in order for you to hold him responsible for a series of unpardonable misstatements, as the result of

which you have been placed in a false position. When you have reflected upon the character of Dr. Radau's letter, and upon the closeness of his relations to Dr. Hilprecht, you will be quick to recognize the impossibility of considering a request for the reinstatement of the latter. There are, as you well know, certain situations in which an institution of learning must be content to forego the services even of the most eminent scholar. Dr. Hilprecht has not asked that he be reinstated in the professorship of which he was formerly the incumbent. Even, however, if such a request were to be preferred by him, the Board would now find itself compelled to refuse it.

I shall be much obliged if you will communicate this reply and the report of the committee to all the signers of your letter.

With assurances of personal regard, I remain,
Very truly yours,

(Signed) EDGAR F. SMITH,
Provost.

REPLY OF THE PROVOST TO REV. ADOLF
HELLWEGE, REPRESENTING CERTAIN LUTH-
ERAN MINISTERS.

DEAR SIR:—Your communication in regard to Dr. Hilprecht was received by the Trustees of the University at about the same time with a number of other similar communications. All of these were referred by the Board to a committee of three with instructions to investigate the allegations contained in the communications and to report their findings to the Board. This has now been done. A copy of the report is enclosed herewith. As your communication appeared to have been based upon the letter of certain European scholars, it seems proper to submit to you a copy of the reply, which, by direction of the Trustees, I am sending to them. No doubt you and your associates were profoundly influenced by the representations of these eminent persons, and were thus led to assume the truth of

charges which are shown by the report of the committee to be false. We regret that you did not give us any opportunity to correct your misapprehension on these points before you adopted the charges as your own and submitted your request for Dr. Hilprecht's reinstatement. If you had understood the facts, it is impossible that you could have made the request, and the facts being as they are the Trustees are satisfied that the acceptance of Dr. Hilprecht's resignation should not be considered. They are, moreover, of the settled opinion that it is an administrative impossibility to separate the tenure of the Clark Professorship from the rights of control to which you refer. Had Dr. Hilprecht seen fit to retain his professorship, his incidental rights would have been recognized as a matter of course. Having resigned, these rights must be exercised by his successor when chosen. It is a matter of profound regret to the Trustees that the University has no alternative but to acquiesce in the voluntary retirement of so eminent a scholar.

Please communicate to your associates who signed the letter both this reply and the enclosure which accompanies it.

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) EDGAR F. SMITH,
Provost.

THE REPLY OF THE PROVOST TO REV. DR.
GEORGE STANLEY BURNFIELD, M. A., D. D.,
REPRESENTING CERTAIN PRESBYTERIAN
MINISTERS AND TO PROFESSOR VICTOR W.
DIPPELL, REPRESENTING CERTAIN CLERGY-
MEN AND LAYMEN OF THE REFORMED
CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.

DEAR SIR:—Permit me to enclose the report of the committee to whom were referred by the Trustees of the University your communication of September, 1911, and a number of others of somewhat similar import. I send also for your information a copy of the letter which I am sending

on behalf of the Trustees to certain European scholars who were among those to address us.

We appreciate your expression of regard for the University of Pennsylvania. We regret that, holding the institution in such esteem, you did not make some inquiry of us, your fellow citizens, not unknown in the community, respecting the allegations assumed in your letter to be true. Such an inquiry would have elicited a statement of the facts summarized in the enclosed report. From this report you may learn exactly what was done by the Director of the Museum and his assistants during Dr. Hilprecht's absence. You will perceive that the course of the Director was in strict accordance with administrative propriety; that everything done by him was done in the discharge of his duty to safeguard the valuable property of the University, and that no private rights of Dr. Hilprecht were violated and no damage of any kind done to anything belonging to him.

As to the suggested reinstatement of Dr. Hilprecht, the Trustees see no reason to reconsider their deliberate acceptance of his voluntary resignation. As a matter of practical administrative necessity, the rights of control to which you refer are inseparable from the tenure of the Clark Professorship. These rights, as incidental to his office, were secured to Dr. Hilprecht for life. In spite, however, of the attempted reservation in his letter of resignation, the necessary consequence of his retirement from his chair was to devolve these rights upon his successor, and having this result in mind the acceptance of his resignation seemed at the time, as it does now, to be the only course consistent with the best interests of the institution. If any doubt upon this point could have existed it would have been removed by the record of events set forth in the committee's report.

Even if Dr. Hilprecht were to disclaim responsibility for the allegations and charges made in his interest by Dr. Radau, it would be impossible for the University to regain lost confidence in sufficient measure to make his connection with the institution either useful to it or agreeable to him. If, as seems more likely, Dr. Hilprecht by his silence makes

the Radau charges his own, it must be plain to everyone that the restoration of his official relation to the University is not for a moment to be thought of.

I trust that you and your associates will agree with the views which I have expressed above. If you do not, I am sure that you will accord to them that respect which is due whenever grave administrative problems have been carefully considered and disposed of by those charged with the responsibility of dealing with them.

Kindly communicate this letter and the enclosures to all who signed the letter with you. Please accept my expressions of personal esteem.

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) EDGAR F. SMITH,
Provost.

THE REPLY OF THE PROVOST TO M. HATEL
EDNEM, DIRECTOR OF THE IMPERIAL OTTO-
MAN MUSEUM.

*M. Hatel Ednem, Director of the Imperial Ottoman Mu-
seum, Constantinople.*

DEAR SIR:—Your courteous communication to the Provost of the University of Pennsylvania has received the careful consideration to which it was entitled. By inquiring what were the facts of the case, instead of assuming in advance that University officials had been guilty of maladministration and vandalism, you avoided the serious mistake made by others who have addressed us on this subject.

To the end that the facts might be investigated with impartiality and thoroughness, the Trustees referred your communication and others to a committee of three, who have now made their report to the Board. A copy of it is inclosed herewith. I trust that after reading it you will be of opinion that your inquiry has been satisfactorily answered. If, however, there are any other or further data with which you would like to be furnished, or if there is

any other investigation which you would care to conduct in person or by an acceptable representative, you may be assured of the desire of the University to aid you in any possible way.

I have the honor, Sir, to remain,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) EDGAR F. SMITH,
Provost.

THE REPLY OF THE PROVOST TO REV. W. H.
ROBERTS, D. D.

*Rev. W. H. Roberts, D. D., Witherspoon Building, 1319
Walnut Street, Philadelphia.*

DEAR SIR:—The Trustees of the University have given respectful consideration to the request contained in your letter of October 14th. No doubt the documents to which you refer were copies of the communications which the Trustees have recently received from certain European scholars, and from a number of clergymen of the Presbyterian and Lutheran Churches. These communications, with yours and others, were duly referred to the committee, whose report is herewith enclosed. I also submit for your consideration a copy of the reply which, on behalf of the Trustees, I am sending to the European scholars. Their letter has evidently served as the basis of the other communications. For this reason our answer to them has some interest for all who addressed the Board.

Permit me to say that the form of your letter was in perfect keeping with your reputation for fairness and good judgment. Instead of assuming, without proof, charges of improper conduct on the part of University officials, you confined yourself to a request that the services of an eminent scholar be retained by the University, if the way thereto was clear. After reading the document which I enclose, I am sure that you will agree with the Trustees in thinking that it would be inexpedient

to reconsider the acceptance of Dr. Hilprecht's resignation, even if he should request such action. Let me assure you, however, that suggestions from you in regard to University matters will always be welcome. It is our desire to keep in closest touch with the leaders of thought in the community.

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) EDGAR F. SMITH,
Provost.

THE REPLY OF THE PROVOST TO REV.
CHARLES E. BRONSON, D. D.

Rev. Chas. E. Bronson, D. D., 4050 Aspen Street, Philadelphia.

DEAR SIR:—It has seemed impossible to give an adequate reply to your letter of October 3d until after the Trustees should have received and acted upon the report of the committee to which your communication and others on the same subject were referred. That report has now been received and approved. A copy is enclosed herewith, together with copies of replies which I am sending to some of the communications other than your own. I need hardly assure you that the loss of the services of an eminent scholar is deeply regretted by the University. In the present case, however, I do not see how the Trustees of the University could have acted otherwise than as they have done.

Thanking you for the considerate tone of your letter, I am,

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) EDGAR F. SMITH,
Provost.

NOTE.—A reply substantially similar to the above letter was sent also to Rev. Dr. Ellis N. Kremer, President of the Board of Education of the Eastern Synod of the Reformed Church, in response to a courteous communication received from him under date of November 9th, 1911.