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SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY IN THE LIGHT OF
FORTY YEARS.

THE REGULAR ADDRESS AT THE OPENING OF THE
SESSION, OCTOBER 1. 1897.

—BY—
REV. F. H. KERFOOT, D.D., LL.D.,
PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND PASTORAL DUTIES.

PRICE, TEN CENTS.

LOUISVILLE, KY.
CHAS. T. DEARING.
1897.

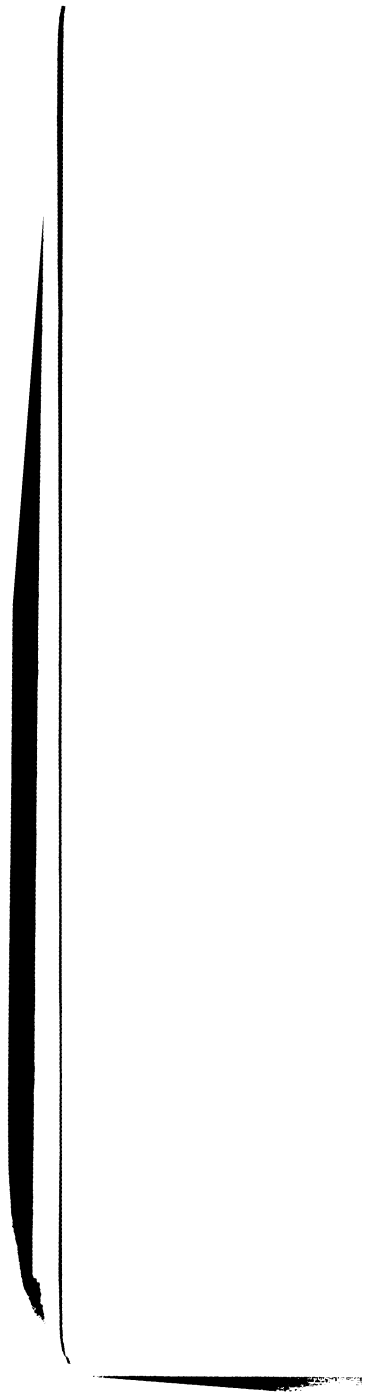
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Introduction	5
I. Conditions That Led to the Establishment of the Seminary	8
II. Historical Sketch of the Founding of the Seminary.	10
III. The Peculiar Character and Genius of the Seminary.	14
Intended to Provide for the Adequate Training of Larger Numbers	15
Intended to Provide also for the Most Advanced Scholarly Training	17
Intended to Provide for Guarding the Orthodoxy of Professors	19
Intended as a Common Seminary for the Whole South	23
Intended to Be Under a Real Denominational Control	25
IV. These Characteristics in the Light of Forty Years of Experimental History	28
The Effort to Provide for the Adequate Training of Larger Numbers	30
The Effort to Provide for the Most Advanced Schol- arly Training	37
The Effort to Provide for the Orthodoxy of Pro- fessors	43
The Effort to Provide a Common Seminary for the Whole South	45
The Effort to Place the Seminary Under Denomina- tional Control	46
Conclusion	48

THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY IN THE LIGHT OF
FORTY YEARS.

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is altogether a peculiar institution. It was founded upon what, at that time, were very novel ideas, both as to the aim and the method of theological education. Its great founder recognized the fact that it was to be an experiment. Time and again he refers to it as a tentative plan for meeting a felt want. He had, indeed, abundant confidence that it must succeed, because it was being projected and founded, as he believed, upon the rock of Holy Scripture, and in accordance with the genius and needs of a denomination which had for the corner-stone of its creed, “the *Bible*, and *the Bible only*, as the authoritative and infallible rule of faith and practice.” At the same time he knew that the plan which he suggested was something very new, and very strange, to nearly all, if not to all, of those who at that time were directing theological education. And his appeal to them was that they should abandon what was an unscriptural plan of trying to provide for an educated ministry, and dare to trust God, and adopt a plan which would be more in accordance with the word of God, and therefore better adapted to the wants and genius of Baptist churches. He did not hesitate to declare that the old method had proved a pitiable and lamentable failure in almost every important particular ; and he insisted that, in

the very nature of the case, it would continue to be a failure so long as it should be adhered to. This was a bold and startling position to be taken by a young man of only twenty-nine years of age. But he had the courage of his convictions always and everywhere, and, moreover, he was a born leader of men, a veritable Luther in his day. And when such men come forth to start a reformation somebody has to hear. Young Boyce was fortunate in having to urge his new ideas upon the peculiar cast of mind, and religious and denominational feeling, which may be considered as specially characteristic of Southern Baptists. The absolute need, too, of the Southern Baptists for some sort of theological institution no doubt made it easier for him to catch the ear of the people for his experiment. At any rate, the people listened. He found a following. His experiment was tried. The Seminary was established. And taking into consideration the time that was consumed in starting the enterprise, and the time that the institution has been in actual existence, we are approximately correct in saying that we may now view this experiment in the light of forty years. It has been for quite a while a sort of half-formed and cherished purpose in the mind of the speaker that, when his turn should come again for the annual opening address, he would take for his theme something similar to the one which he has announced this evening. He conceived that it would be profitable to pause, and ask how far the promises and hopes of those who wrought in founding the institution have been fulfilled and realized in the superstructure—how far the theory has been verified in practice—how far wisdom has been justified of her children.

When the thought of this theme first took shape, however, the Seminary's sky was clear and very bright, shining more and more as if unto the perfect day. The clouds that have gathered and the storm that has burst give, to what was anticipated as a great pleasure, the aspects of a somewhat delicate and difficult task. At the same time there is in the mind of the speaker a strong conviction that, if ever there was occasion for those who love our institution to take their bearings anew, that time is now. In the midst of so much discussion and din and confusion there is danger lest we forget whence we came, and what we are, and whither are we tending. It is earnestly hoped that an effort just now to bring our beloved Seminary clearly before us in its true character and relations, and these as viewed in the light of its forty years of experimental history, will not only not be out of place, but may contribute something towards clearer views in the present crisis, and especially that it may enable us better to appreciate, and value, and love, and be loyal to, this noble heritage from our fathers. In reaching this aim it will be necessary, I think, for us to place ourselves alongside of the projectors and founders of the institution. We must understand and appreciate the condition of things that led to its establishment. We must go with them step by step in the work of founding the Seminary. We must understand the ideas, and principles, and purposes, that prevailed in its founding. We must catch its very spirit, and genius, and plan. We shall then be prepared to view the institution in the light of its forty years of history, to see how far their ideas have succeeded, and wherein they may have failed, or proved themselves unsatisfactory.

I. THE CONDITIONS THAT LED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SEMINARY.

First, then, let us notice briefly the conditions that led to the establishment of the Seminary. Baptists endeavored at first to provide for the education of their ministers by the establishment of denominational colleges. Almost every one, if not, indeed, every one of the earlier colleges was established with this idea of the education of ministers as its fundamental idea. This was the appeal for these institutions that moved the people to rise up and build. But it was soon realized that there was a work for the colleges to do, even upon young ministers, before undertaking to give theological training. Accordingly the invariable tendency of the colleges was to put the strength of their work into academic, or liberal, education to the neglect of theological instruction. But this did not count any more for educating ministers than for educating lawyers, and doctors, and merchants, and farmers. To correct this failure of the colleges to provide special education for ministers the experiment was made of having a special theological chair, or a theological department, in connection with the various denominational colleges. This did something in the way of remedying the defect. But it was clear that such theological training must, in the nature of the case, be very partial, if not, indeed, comparatively superficial. For the patronage of any such theological department could not possibly be large enough to justify the outlay of sufficient money to provide a full theological faculty, and the library and general plant necessary to furnish a *real* theological education. Moreover, it was clear that the time

taken for theological studies during a college course must mean just so much time from the studies of the college proper, or it must mean a longer time in that particular college. And in either event it meant the neglect of college studies when college studies were most needed, and the pursuit of theological studies when the student was not at the best advantage for pursuing theological studies—that is, before he had secured his college training. There came, therefore, a growing conviction that just as a man should finish his college course before studying law, or medicine, and then give his attention to the study of his special profession, so a theological student should, if possible, first take his college course, and then give his time to the special study of theology. To enable students to do this, and to give them the advantage of a *thorough* and *full* course of theology, special theological seminaries have been provided.

At the time that the separation took place between Northern and Southern Baptists there were already several such seminaries in existence. These were all, however, far to the North. And almost as soon as the separation occurred it was evident that, for various reasons, Southern Baptists could not depend upon these for the satisfactory education of their ministers. They were thus thrown back upon the theological chairs connected with our various denominational colleges. These, however, had been tried, and had proved themselves unsatisfactory as furnishing a solution of the problem of ministerial education. The brethren of the South saw and felt that in all the Southland, from Maryland to Texas, and from Missouri to Florida, there was absolutely no college or seminary that could furnish a

young minister the opportunity for a thorough theological training. They saw that it was useless to hope that any of the State colleges would supply this lack. They felt that something had to be done to supply it. They believed that it could not be for the glory of God, or the good of religion, that their young ministers should not have a thorough training for their work.

II. THE FOUNDING OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

The discussion of the idea of establishing a seminary for Southern Baptists began in 1845, almost as soon as the division took place between Northern and Southern Baptists. The first suggestion of such an institution, says Doctor Broadus, came perhaps from Doctor W. B. Johnson, of South Carolina. Some claim that Doctor R. B. C. Howell, of Tennessee, is entitled to this credit. And still others assert that the honor belongs to Doctor J. B. Jeter, of Virginia. The discussion of the question, however, for several years was scarcely more than talk. "But by the time of the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, in May, 1849," says Doctor Manly, "considerable interest had been awakened." On account of a yellow fever scare this convention adjourned to Charleston, South Carolina. There the matter was discussed by the brethren in conference, but not in the convention as a convention.

To those who are specially interested in the Seminary the most notable thing in connection with this meeting in Charleston was the presence, for the first time, in their counsels of young James Pettigrew Boyce. He was there as a delegate to the Southern Baptist Convention. At that time,

however, he was only twenty-two years of age, and had not yet begun his own theological education. But coming events cast their shadows before them. He was present at this meeting with his brethren, and interested in the discussions concerning a seminary. But the movement dragged. There was as yet no leader to make it go. In June, 1854, the General Association of Virginia took what seems to have been the initial action, and called for a convention to meet in connection with the session of the Southern Baptist Convention at Montgomery, Alabama, in the following May. This convention met, and discussed the problem and appointed a committee, consisting of Basil Manly, Sr., J. B. Jeter, J. P. Boyce, and others, to report at a similar convention, to meet in connection with the session of the Southern Baptist Convention, the following May, at Augusta, Georgia. At the Augusta convention in May, 1856, the committee reported that the subject was so beset with difficulties that as yet they did not see their way clear to recommend any definite action towards forming a seminary. They recommended that another convention be held the following May in connection with the session of the Southern Baptist Convention, in the Walnut-street Baptist Church, at Louisville, Kentucky. As far as can be gathered the besetting and hindering difficulties referred to grew out of the various chairs of theology in the different State denominational colleges. The earnest advocates of these different institutions were very anxious and jealous for their particular charges. It is interesting to note how extremely careful those great leaders of the Seminary movement had to be in giving assurances of a determination to do nothing inimical or hurtful to these local inter-

ests. Verily it was a delicate picking of the path amidst many sensitive, and sometimes jealous, claimants. It almost looked at Augusta as if the difficulties were too great to be overcome.

At Augusta, however, a new leader comes to the front. Young Boyce had now finished his theological course at Princeton. He had been a Southern pastor for several years, and was at this time professor of theology in the theological department of Furman University, in South Carolina. Although engaged in teaching theology he had realized fully that the Baptists in the South did not have any institution in all their territory where a young minister might obtain a thorough theological training, and he frankly admitted the fact. Heartily he entered into the idea that something must be done. It is said that he himself wrote the report for the Augusta meeting, stating the situation, and calling for another meeting in Louisville the following May.* From this meeting in Augusta young Boyce went back to South Carolina to bring something to pass. In less than two months he delivered before the Board of Trustees of Furman University his famous lecture on "Three Changes in Theological Education," which "Doctor A. M. Poindexter, who heard it, declared was one of the most masterful addresses of the kind that he had ever listened to." Doctor John A. Broadus says of this address: "It was epoch-making." It formed the basis for the new plan of the new Seminary. A few days after this address, young Boyce was in the Baptist State Convention of South Carolina. That Convention, swayed no doubt by his ideas, and very likely by his liberal offer,

* Broadus' Memorial of James P. Boyce, p. 119.

made a definite proposition to the convention called at Louisville that it would give \$100,000 towards endowing a theological seminary for the whole South, if the rest of the South would raise another \$100,000, and if the said Seminary should be located in South Carolina; or *its proportion to a general Seminary wherever it might be located.** When the convention met in Louisville the following May, young Boyce was present with the proposition from South Carolina. All matters were referred to a large and representative committee, composed of such men as Jeremiah Bell Jeter, James P. Boyce, G. W. Samson and others.

It makes the blood fairly tingle to read of such men in solemn, prayerful, conclave at the birth of our great institution. This large committee, of which young Boyce was a member, guided, as they believed, by the Holy Spirit, presented a unanimous and enthusiastic report, recommending the acceptance virtually of the South Carolina \$100,000 proposition. And arrangements were made then and there for a special convention, to be held the following spring at Greenville, South Carolina, for the purpose of organizing and starting a Seminary. Committees were appointed at the meeting in Louisville for various purposes, in order that, as far as possible, all things might be ready for the convention against the time of its meeting in Greenville. A ringing Address was prepared and sent out to the denomination, urging active co operation in the effort proposed. In due time the Greenville convention met, and did what was needed to start the new institution. There was unexpected trouble, however, in

* Cf. First Seminary Catalogue, footnote on p. 10.

securing the consent of some who were greatly desired as members of the first faculty, and a delay of another year occurred before the institution was opened. It began its work October 1, 1859, in Greenville, South Carolina. The faculty consisted of James P. Boyce, John A. Broadus, Basil Manly, Jr., and William Williams. Who that ever sat under those four men, in that faculty at Greenville, can ever hear their names mentioned together without a faster beating of the heart, a fuller and warmer bounding of the blood! Surely never did any institution on the earth begin with a nobler or better faculty. Such a quartette has never been seen in our day. We shall never see their like again. For this purpose they came to the kingdom.

III. THE PECULIAR CHARACTER AND GENIUS OF THE SEMINARY.

Let us see now what kind of a Seminary it was that was thus launched. But for the existence and influence of young Boyce in projecting it, the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary would, in all probability, have been an old-fashioned *curriculum* institution. But he was not only a born leader of men, he was also a man of ideas, and of forecast. He felt that there was a mistake somewhere. He dared, as we have seen, to pronounce the current method of theological education a failure. He charged that this was largely due to the fact that prevailing plans were unscriptural, and not at all adapted to the genius and needs of Baptists. He claimed that Baptists were trying to educate their ministers upon what was at that time a Presbyterian and Episcopalian conception of the ministry, and not at all in accordance with the Baptist idea that God

calls and wants men in his ministry of all grades of ability, and culture, and scholarship. He insisted that for Baptists a new method was needed, very different from that which then prevailed. The main features of the changes proposed are to be found in the address already referred to, in which, although suggesting other things, he especially urged the need of

“THREE CHANGES IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION.”

It seems almost incredible that this address, so radical, so profound, so far-reaching, so novel, and so epoch-making, should have been delivered by a young man only twenty-nine years of age. It stamps him at the start as a master builder. Every one who wishes to catch the true spirit of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, every one who wishes to understand its genius and appreciate its work and possibilities ought to read this address. Well would it be if every professor and every trustee of the institution would read it as often as once in every year. Inasmuch as this address furnishes the basis of the plan of our seminary, and has wrought itself into all its history, special mention will be made of its leading points.

1. *The need to provide for more general theological education among our ministers.*

The first change which young Boyce urged as needed in theological education was *such a change as would enable us to secure a far larger number of adequately educated ministers.* He saw that the method then in vogue reached only a few—very few, of those who needed theological training. At the time when he delivered the address there were in all the theological departments in the South only about thirty

students. The trouble here was lack of concentration, and of *emphasis* upon theological education ; and along with this an inability to supply what was really needed. The theological seminaries in the North were almost equally a failure in the matter of numbers. The trouble with them was different from that in the South. In the North the seminaries had been founded upon the idea that only such men should enter the seminary as had been to college, or had an equivalent in the way of previous preparation. The course of study was that of a fixed curriculum, and no provision was made for, nor inducement offered to, the great mass of young Baptist ministers to enter these seminaries. Indeed they were as effectually shut out from these as if a Chinese wall had been erected between them and the doors of these institutions.

The position taken by young Boyce was that such a plan of theological education was a sin before God, and a blunder as well. He urged that, if God called a man to preach the Gospel, and if Christians pretended to be in the business of educating ministers, it could not be right to adopt a plan which must inevitably shut out by far the larger portion of those who needed training. He went farther and insisted that, if either class had to be neglected in the provision for theological training, it would be more just, and also wiser, to neglect the better prepared class. For said he: "A man who has had the advantages of a college may manage in some way, however unsatisfactorily, to pick up what he most needs in the way of theological study. But how can any one expect that a poor fellow, fresh from the plow, or the counter, or the workbench, with no adequate previous training, can guide him-

self into these things which are almost too much for the unaided efforts of even a well trained mind." He insisted that any seminary is a failure which does not make suitable arrangements for giving the best possible advantages to such ministers. And not only so, he held that it was the special business of a seminary to provide just such opportunities; and to go out boldly and try to induce great masses of such ministers to come in, wherever in the providence of God it was not in their power to secure the previous training. He claimed that this plan would give to the Baptists an ideal ministry. It would not be indeed a ministry made up of only *educated men*, but it would be an *educated* ministry, the kind of ministry that the Holy Spirit calls, and that Baptists believe in. He held, too, that in this way, and in this way only, can we hope to provide a supply which shall be equal to our demand. This idea was fully incorporated into the plan of the Seminary, and has been faithfully adhered to ever since. We shall presently examine its practical working in the light of these forty years.

2. *Provision for higher and more scholarly training.* Another change which the young teacher boldly advocated was that a plan should be adopted which would give to our denomination a sufficient number of the very best trained and most scholarly men that it was possible for any theological institution to furnish. He charged that the unscriptural plan then in vogue failed in the very thing which it aimed to accomplish, that is, in turning out the highest type of scholarly preachers. He deplored the fact that our young ministers, if they wished the best opportunities for high scholarship, felt bound to go to rationalistic

German universities to find them, and this after graduating at the very best theological seminaries in our land. He deplored the harvest that would ere long be reaped from thus having to send our brightest and best young men to imbibe the rationalistic and unspiritual, if not actually atheistic, notions of that land of skeptics. It was sowing to the wind, the whirlwind of rationalism and infidelity would be the harvest. One has only to look abroad now at the tide of Higher Criticism and other forms of rationalism and infidelity to see how truly he prophesied.

Here, too, he outlined a plan by which, as he thought, the very highest and most scholarly training might be offered alongside of, and in connection with, this *practical* training which he proposed for the masses of our young ministers. He undertook to prophesy, and to prove, not only that this was possible, but also that it could be done to the *mutual advantage* both of the men of finest scholarly instincts and of the mass of partly, and even poorly, educated men who would be thus thrown together in one school. His plan was to make all studies in the institution *elective*, and *purely voluntary*, and to provide a course *so wide and full* that only the stronger and better trained men would try to take it all. In addition to this he would arrange such a course of *post-graduate* studies, and get together such a *library* as would enable the most scholarly men to carry their theological studies to as high a point as it would be possible for them to do at any German university, or anywhere else in the world. These advanced studies, he argued, should be carried on under the supervision of professors of Anglo-Saxon mind and spirit, professors whose piety and orthodoxy were vouched for by the standards of

our own denomination ; and not under professors of the German type, who as a rule were more apt to be unsound than sound in religious doctrine. This idea of the bold young theologian was also fully incorporated into the constitution of our seminary. And professors and pupils have been working towards it ever since. We shall presently view its practical working in the light of these forty years.

3. *The Proper Guarding of Orthodoxy.* Another change which the young theologian proposed was that some plan should be adopted by which the denomination might be able better to guard the orthodoxy of the teaching in the proposed institution. Young Boyce was no free lance in theology. He knew no higher mission for a theologian than to think God's thoughts ; no higher mission for a theological teacher than to teach God's teaching. To him the Scriptures were God's word, altogether and everywhere inspired—the only and all-sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice. He thought, too, that it was the duty of those who professed to accept the Scriptures to state clearly what they understood the Scriptures to teach, wherever there was any possibility of a misunderstanding. To him the hackneyed expression, "the Bible is our creed," meant for the most part utter ignorance of what one was talking about, or an unwillingness to have one's heresies chased down by clear and unambiguous and specific statement. He knew well enough that the most heretical persons on earth all claimed "the Bible as their creed." Hence he believed that, wherever there could be any difference of opinion as to what the Bible teaches, it was the duty of honest men to state clearly to the world in special creeds their interpretation or understanding of Bible doctrines.

He argues in this address most forcefully the importance of creeds, and shows that Baptists have always had their creeds. He then goes on to show that even more important than creeds for church members in general is a proper creed for a minister of the Gospel, who is a teacher of the people, and for that reason, if not sound in doctrine, far more dangerous than an ordinary church member. Then he goes on to argue that for a stronger reason the theological professor should be the more carefully guarded by his denomination. He has his place and his influence close to the very head of the fountain. Heresy in the theological seminary is simply ruinous. On this point I quote briefly from the address, page 36 :

“ But of him who is to teach the ministry, who is to be the medium through which the fountain of Scripture truth is to flow to them—whose opinions more than those of any living men are to mould their conceptions of the doctrines of the Bible, it is manifest that much more is requisite. No difference, however slight, no peculiar sentiment, however speculative, is here allowable. His agreement with the standard should be exact. His declaration of it should be based upon no mental reservation, upon no private understanding with those who immediately invest him with office; but the articles to be taught having been fully and distinctly laid down, he should be able to say from his knowledge of the word of God that he knows these articles to be an exact summary of the truth therein contained. If the summary of truth established be incorrect, it is the duty of the Board to change it, if such changes be within their power; if not, let an appeal be made to those who have the power. And if there be none such, then far bet-

ter is it that the whole endowment be thrown aside than that the principle be adopted that the professor sign any abstract of doctrine with which he does not agree, and in accordance with which he does not intend to teach. No professor should be allowed to enter upon such duties as are there undertaken, with the understanding that he is at liberty to modify the truth which he has been placed there to inculcate."

Here, too, he suggested a plan which to his mind gave the best promise for securing the desired result. He proposed that every professor in the theological seminary should be required to subscribe to such a declaration of doctrine as would be the best possible guarantee of his orthodoxy. He did not claim that there could be infallibility in the formulation of such a declaration of doctrine. He shows, indeed, a recognition of the fact that such a declaration might need supplementing with changing conditions. Speaking of a certain rule which had prevailed in his own college, he says: "The rule of the Board was probably at the time of its establishment ample for all purposes. The denomination was then fully agreed in its doctrinal sentiments, and the instruction given seems to have been confined almost entirely to text-books." Then he adds: "Changes, however, have now occurred. Unanimity of sentiment does not so extensively prevail. The studies of the course must, in part at least, be pursued through lectures. And hence arises the necessity of establishing some test by which the Board may be assured that the instruction of the Department is conducted in agreement with the sentiment of its founders." He then suggests a certain Confession of Faith, and says: "For all

the purposes aimed at, no other test can be equally effective with that confession of faith." He adds: "Let that then be adopted, and let subscription to it on the part of each theological professor be required as an assurance of his entire agreement with its views of doctrine, and of his determination to teach fully the truth which it expresses, and nothing contrary to its declarations." He urges upon his Board of Trustees the adoption of such a test of orthodoxy in the following strong language, p. 38: "It seems to me, gentlemen, that you owe this to yourselves, to your professors, and to the denomination at large; to yourselves, because your position as trustees makes you responsible for the doctrinal opinions of your professors, and the whole history of creeds has proved the difficulty without them of convicting errorists of perversions of the word of God; to your professors, that their doctrinal sentiments may be known and approved by all, that no charges of heresy may be brought against them; that none shall whisper of peculiar notions which they hold, but that in refutation of all charges they may point to this formulary as one which they hold *ex animo*, and teach in its true import; and to the denomination at large, that they may know in what truths the rising ministry are instructed, may exercise full sympathy with the necessities of the Institution, and look with confidence and affection to the pastors who come forth from it."*

* In another paragraph on the same point, p. 44, he argues: "It is, therefore, gentlemen, in perfect consistency with the position of Baptists, as well as of Bible Christians, that the test of doctrine I have suggested to you should be adopted. It is based upon principles and practices sanctioned by the authority of the

This suggestion also of the bold young theologian was incorporated into the plan of the Seminary. It was made a part of the fundamental articles. We shall have occasion presently to examine this also in the light of our forty years of experimental history.

4. *One Seminary for all the South.* These three special changes, or provisions, constituted the burden of the address of Professor Boyce in his appeal for better opportunities for theological education. All these suggestions as we have seen were wrought into the constitution of the Seminary—one of them into the fundamental and unchangeable articles. Another suggestion was made in the address, which though not so prominent, and not really *essential* to his ideas, was nevertheless a very important feature of the

Scripture and by the usage of our people. In so doing you will be acting simply in accordance with propriety and righteousness. You will infringe the rights of no man, and you will secure the rights of those who have established here an instrumentality for the production of a sound ministry. It is no hardship to those who teach here, to be called upon to sign the declaration of their principles, for there are fields of usefulness open elsewhere to every man, and none need accept your call who cannot conscientiously sign your formulary. And while all this is true, you will receive by this an assurance that the trust committed to you by the founders is fulfilled in accordance with their wishes, that the ministry that go forth have here learned to distinguish truth from error, and to embrace the former, and that the same blessed truths of the Bible which were so dear to the hearts of its founders, and which I trust are equally dear to yours, will be propagated in our churches, giving to them vigor and strength, and causing them to flourish by the godly sentiments and emotions they will awaken within them. May God impress you deeply with the responsibility under which you must act in reference to it!"

address, and had a very important bearing upon the case. It was the suggestion that all the Baptists of the South should combine on *one institution*, and so, by the strength of union, found a Seminary which would be an honor to them, and which would meet for years to come the demands of the denomination for theological education, in a way that divided energies and rival institutions could not possibly do. Professor Boyce, as already intimated, did not put this forth as a finality for Southern Baptists. He only argued that this was all that was needed, and that there was more of promise in this kind of effort than in any effort to build up several institutions. On this point he says, page 47 :

“ Various prejudices are arising in our denomination among the various classes of the ministry. This would be my scheme to remove them.” (That is, the scheme of one common seminary founded upon the ideas set forth in his address.) Then he adds : “ The young men would be so mingled together as to cause each class to recognize the value of the others, and thus truly to break down entirely any classification. Those who take the plain English course will see the value of learning in the increased facilities for study it affords to their more favored companions. Those who have this learning will see that many of the other class are their superiors in piety, in devotion to God, in readiness to sacrifice for his cause, in willingness to be counted as nothing, so that Christ may be preached. The recognition of such facts will be mutually beneficial. The less educated ministers will feel that they have the confidence and affection of all their brethren ; the better educated will know the esteem with which they are regarded, and the bonds of mutual love will yearly grow stronger,

until we shall see a ministry of different gifts, possessed of extensive attainments, thrown into entirely different positions in the field, yet laboring conjointly, and mutually aiding and supporting one another in advancing the kingdom of Christ, in preaching His glorious gospel, in calling forth laborers into His field, and in fostering those influences which shall tend to the education of a sound and practical and able ministry.

“On the other hand let these institutions be separated, and the fate of our theological education is sealed. Jealousies and suspicions will be constantly awakened. The inadequacy of the one, and the learning and the fancied arrogance of the other, will be made the subject of mutual crimination. In some of our churches prejudices will be excited against our largest, and on that account our most useful class of ministers. In others, the value of learning will be despised. It will be thought that the mere knowledge of the English Scriptures is alone necessary. Ideas contrary to education of any kind, will begin to be awakened, and unless the excitement of mutual jealousies, motives most unworthy, should sustain them, the instruction given in either kind of institution will have to be abandoned.”

This idea of a single institution for the whole South was the idea which prevailed in the founding of our Seminary. We shall see presently in the light of forty years how it has worked.

5. *Denominational Control.* It is remarkable how very little addition there was to these ideas of the young professor when the Seminary came to be established. He proposed his plan. And almost every idea that he suggested was

incorporated into the Seminary when it was founded, and very little besides. One important feature was added to which he made no allusion, although he clearly took it for granted. That feature was an effort to secure the proper denominational control of the common institution. It was felt that an institution doing business in the name of a denomination and for a denomination should in some very real sense be under the control of that denomination. Hence the great spirits who founded the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary undertook to give to the Baptist brotherhood of the South the power to exercise some sort of real control over the Seminary which bore their name. But they were confronted here by a very difficult problem. They were wise enough to see that it would not do to place the Seminary with all its endowment and varied and sensitive interests in the power of Baptist mass-meetings, which could be swayed by passion or excitement into taking sudden, and possibly rash, action. They did not think that it would be wise even to put it under the *direct and immediate* control of so representative a body as the Southern Baptist Convention. The Southern Baptist Convention, they well knew, might not always, in every meeting, represent the exact sentiments of the mass of Southern Baptists. At one session there might well be a preponderance of the sentiment of one locality, and at another session a preponderance of the very different sentiment of another locality. Moreover, even the Southern Baptist Convention could possibly sometime be mightily moved and suddenly swayed by the eloquence and power of some specially able and commanding leader; and it might—even the *Southern Baptist Convention* might—

sometime act from excitement, and in haste, to repent at leisure, when perhaps it would be too late. Accordingly these wise founders of the Seminary said: "We will try to put the Seminary under the *ultimate* control of the denomination rather than under the immediate control of its annual meetings." They had no hope of keeping the Seminary ultimately any purer or more sound in doctrine than is the denomination in the South. And so they gave the denomination the power to control it ultimately. But they tried to guard it against the sudden disturbance of popular excitement and clamor—even the excitement and clamor of Christian people. This seems to have been the principle that governed in the establishment of the relation between the Seminary and the Southern Baptist Convention. They gave the Convention the right to nominate *all trustees*, and gave the trustees, when elected, the right to control the Seminary. We shall presently view the practical working of this, also, in the light of these forty years of experimental history.*

* Since writing the above my attention has been called to an article on this very point, written by Dr. Boyce, in the *Baptist*, of Tennessee, April 18, 1874. Dr. Boyce there quotes from a correspondence concerning the Seminary the following paragraph: "There are, however, two things connected with this school which must of necessity greatly injure it. 1. It is a close corporation managed by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees, and neither owned nor controlled by the denomination. There are thousands of honest Baptists who will never build up an institution of this kind, and I think not without just reason. 2. There are doctrines taught in the Seminary against which some four or five State Conventions have earnestly protested."

The files of the paper which discuss the second point are unfor-

IV. ALL THIS IN THE LIGHT OF FORTY YEARS.

I have now tried to bring before you as clearly as possible the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary as founded

tunately lost. But the first point is the one which we now have in hand, and on that Dr. Boyce is very explicit. I can give here only a few extracts. Dr. Boyce says: "That it [the Seminary] is not owned by the denomination nor controlled by them is to me a strange notion. To whom then does it belong?" He then in glowing eloquence repudiates the idea advanced by some that it belonged to him or to the faculty, and goes on to say: "To whom then does the Seminary belong? I answer to the denomination at large in every sense in which any one of our public institutions does. By whom is it controlled? By a denomination through a Board of Trustees, as others. For the Board of Trustees holds the property and interests of the Seminary, not as the property and interests of its individual members, but as that of the denomination. The members of that Board are legally liable for the proper enforcement of their trusts in every respect. They are responsible also to the public sentiment of the denomination." Dr. Boyce then goes on in the balance of this article, and in a long article in the paper of the following week, to prove the correctness of this position. He shows how the one great aim of the founders of the Seminary was to give the denomination *the wisest* and *surest* control over the institution that it was possible to give, in order to make it really their institution for all time to come. One has only to read these two articles by Dr. Boyce to see how completely out of touch with the projectors and founders of the Seminary and out of harmony with the spirit of the institution must any one be who could think for a moment that the Seminary is not really the property of the denomination in the South, and the proper subject of denominational control. The only questions that could be legitimately raised on this point would be questions as to the *method* of this denominational control, and the satisfactoriness or unsatisfactoriness of such method.

by our fathers: In trying to do this intelligently I have shown the conditions out of which it grew, and briefly stated the history of its establishment. I have shown what it was the founders tried to build, and how they undertook to provide for its future safety and prosperity and efficiency. It would of course be foolish to claim that they had built with infallible prevision or precision. It is easy now to see, in the light of the forty years that have intervened, some things which were overlooked, and which might possibly have been thought of. For example, it does not seem ever to have occurred to those wise men that any of the States then existing, and entitled to representation in the Board, might ever be divided. Accordingly no provision seems to have been made by which any newly-formed Southern State might secure representation in the Board, no matter what might be its contributions in the future, or what equity the new State might have in past contributions. Again, the possibility of removal of the Seminary from one State to another seems never to have occurred, and so no thought seems to have been taken as to the question of property and of representation in case of removal. So, too, it can not be pretended that these founders of the Seminary undertook to make special provision for meeting all the contingencies and emergencies that might arise in the practical running of an institution like this. These wise founders were not *omniscient*, neither did they try to be *omnipotent* over the generations to follow. They built as well as they knew for the time in which they lived, and for the future as they could see it. They provided in special terms for what they thought needed to be provided for in special terms. They placed limitations where they

felt limitations were needed. And then in faith they left some things to those who should come after them, to be worked out, under God, as the emergencies might arise. The question for us now is, How wisely did they build? How far has their wisdom been justified by the results? Have their hopes been realized? What is the testimony of these forty years to the wisdom of these master-builders?

1. *Their idea of providing adequate theological education for the mass of our ministers.* At the time the Seminary was founded there were, as we have seen, in the whole South, in all the theological departments, only about thirty students of theology.* In the very first session of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary there were twenty-six students. And steadily has the number increased year by year, until during the session before the last there were matriculated 317 students. There can be no doubt also that this large number of students was made possible only by the peculiar plan of the Seminary, which provides for the matriculation and the instruction of men of all grades of culture. A certain part of the course has been arranged so that any man of fair English education can take it to great advantage. The branches taught in this part of the course are the very most practical branches in all the range of theological study, such, for example, as Biblical Introduction, the Old and New Testaments in English, Homiletics, Systematic Theology, Pastoral Duties, Church

* Broadus' Memoir of James P. Boyce, p. 116. Quoted from an address by Basil Manly, Jr. Rev. T. T. Eaton declares this to be a mistake. He asserts that there were then thirty students of theology in Murfreesboro, Tenn., alone.

Government, and Church History. The teaching in these departments is required to be in the plainest of plain English, so that any student of fair mind can understand it. As a result these classes are most of them very large, ranging from seventy-five to a hundred and fifty each. They have in them many of the best trained college men, and alongside of them, oftentimes at the same desks, men who have never been to college, and who in the providence of God could never have gone to college. They are men from the farm and the counter, from the printing office and the workshop. Many of them were converted and called to the ministry too late in life for them to hope to acquire a scholastic training, some of them with families to support. And yet many of them are men of grit and grace and great ability, who even in their studies in the Seminary put to the blush some of the college graduates. And from this same class of men, all innocent of Greek and Hebrew and Latin, come, as in all the years of Baptist history, some of the ablest preachers and wisest leaders that God ever gave to his people.

Just here there will arise in the minds of some who have had no experience in this kind of work several queries which I shall be glad to answer :

(1) Is there not a tendency, in this provision for the *un-trained*, to draw men to the Seminary for a *short cut* to the ministry when they ought the rather to go to some college and get better previous preparation ? This is a very practical question, and has disturbed many a friend of our colleges. I will answer as briefly and as much to the point as possible.

a. If the professors in the Seminary are fit for their

places they may be depended upon to try to counteract such a tendency so far as this may be in their power. Every professor in the Seminary is a college-trained man. They all know what college training means. It would be criminal in them to urge, or to encourage, any young man to fail to get a college training, if in their judgment the young man ought to go to college before coming to the Seminary. Time and time again, when they have found a young man trying to use the Seminary thus for a short cut into the ministry, or even making an honest mistake as to his course, have they persuaded him to leave the Seminary and to go to some good college. Of course, they are not infallible, and may sometimes be mistaken in thinking that it may be the duty of a man to stay in the Seminary instead of being at some college. But, then, the college professor may also possibly be mistaken sometimes in thinking that a student ought to be at the college rather than at the Seminary. There is no guarantee in this world for infallibility of judgment. And after all, the young men themselves and the churches are going oftentimes to decide questions of this kind, no matter what the Seminary and the college professor may think or advise.

b. The danger at this point is, however, not nearly so great as many very intelligent persons are disposed to think. A practical illustration will tend to verify the statement. A few years ago the honored and beloved president of Georgetown College, Dr. R. M. Dudley, became deeply impressed with the idea that the easy entrance into the Seminary was luring many young men from the colleges who otherwise would avail themselves of college training. It wrought upon his mind. It disturbed his peace.

Brave, fearless man that he was, he declared it in public as well as in private. He was told that he was laboring under a mistake. But he insisted that he was not. At length so moved and troubled was he by the thought that he came to the Seminary and asked that he might test the matter as to Kentucky students. He was given the fullest opportunity to make any test that he desired, and he found scarcely a man who he himself thought ought to be in college instead of in the Seminary. He went away fully convinced that he had been mistaken. And brave, frank, honest spirit that he was, he went from the Seminary to the General Association of Kentucky, at Williamsburg, and declared before the Association that he had been mistaken as to the location of the trouble. "The real trouble," said he, "I find back of the Seminary. It is in a failure on the part of parents to appreciate a college education while their sons are within the college age." Again the following year, before the Association at Covington, he made the same acknowledgment, thus fully exonerating the Seminary from the charge that he had previously made against it. To any one else who is troubled on this score we would respectfully say: Come and see.

(2) Another query in the minds of many honest educators in connection with our mingling of trained and untrained men in certain classes is this: "*How is it possible to make a course really profitable to men of such different culture and talents?*" It is somewhat difficult to answer this to the satisfaction of those who have not seen its practical working. Dr. Broadus was several times heard to remark that he was amazed at the slowness of some very prominent and able men in the North to believe the testimony

which he bore to them even as to his own experience in this respect. He said they seemed to have an idea that the thing *must be* impossible, and therefore that it *was* impossible. And they seemed hardly able to give a patient hearing to the claim that it is not only possible, but in our Seminary is a reality. It has been this inability to believe in the possibility of the thing, no doubt, that has caused some of our Northern seminaries to go back to the Presbyterian and Episcopalian idea of "a seminary for college graduates only" now when the Presbyterians are themselves showing a disposition to abandon this untenable position: and caused still others, while trying to make *some provision* for the *untrained* men, to keep them in classes to themselves, and treat them, as Dr. Broadus used to say, very much like children at a side-table.

To one, however, who has grown familiar with the idea, and the reasons for it, and its practical working, the answer to the query is exceedingly easy.

a. *It is natural in theory.* It is, indeed, readily conceded that it is more difficult to a *professor* to take a large class of men of all grades and shades of culture, and make his ideas equally plain and reasonably profitable to them all. And yet this is only what every successful preacher has to try to do in every sermon that he preaches. What differences in mental culture and ability are found in every ordinary congregation to which a minister has to preach! And if he is a successful preacher, he must prepare and preach sermons that will reach, and be profitable to, all these different classes of minds. Is this a possible task for an every Sunday *preacher*, who has only a short time in which to prepare a sermon before preaching it, and then

passes from it *presumably* forever, and is not a similar task possible to a *professor* who can study on each day his success or failure, and then come year after year with his same lecture, or teaching, revised to meet the observed necessities of the case? Really it is not nearly so much a question whether a good professor can teach successfully all grades of minds in certain branches, as a question whether a professor who cannot do this is fit to teach any grade of mind, in any branch, for the business of preaching the gospel. Hence we say that *in theory even* the possibility of teaching all grades of minds of all grades of culture in certain special classes can be made clear.

b. *It is demonstrated in practice.* But whatever may be thought of the theory, there can be no question in the mind of any one who is familiar with the practical working of this idea in our Seminary. Every professor who has taught such classes can testify that when he comes to grade his examination papers it is no unusual thing to find that of the highest marks in the class one will have been earned by a thoroughly trained college man, and the other by a man who has never been in college, with the chances for the non-college man to be in the lead about as good as are those of the college man. Dr. Broadus often testified that it had been so in his experience. Each of the present professors can bear this same testimony. And not only so. But let any college-trained man who has ever sat in these classes alongside of these untrained men bear his testimony as to whether he found it profitable for him to take these classes or not. Not one, so far as I have ever heard, has ever called into question the value-lessness of this special part of our course. More than a

thousand men will stand up to bear their testimony that in their judgment this part of the course, where college men and non-college men studied all together, has been the richest, the juiciest, the most practically helpful, of any part of the entire course.*

In the light of these forty years of history we declare that the dream of young Boyce has been more than realized in his effort to furnish, in one seminary, adequate instruction for all classes and grades of our Baptist ministers. This dream has been realized not only in the multiplication of the numbers of those who have sought for theological instruction, but also in the great mutual advantages that have been realized by having men of different degrees of culture thus thrown together in common classes. The professors have been helped. The teaching has been improved. The students have been helped, as we shall see. College men have been stimulated, as well as those who have never been to college. And better than all, the barriers

*The speaker desires to put on record his own special testimony in this respect. After graduating at college and at a law school, he took New Testament English under Dr. Broadus in 1868-9, and passed his examination. In the providence of God he was compelled to finish his course at another excellent seminary. He then studied a year in a German university, and after that was in the pastorate for about thirteen years. Having become disabled for pastoral work by a physical injury, he came to Louisville for special studies in the Seminary. So impressed had he been with the great richness of the course in New Testament English that, along with the special studies, he took this course over again. And never in all his studies did he have a more enjoyable or profitable study than this same New Testament English taken the second time in a class with college and non-college men.

between cultured and uncultured men have been broken down; they have met and mingled in the Seminary as brethren, just as they must meet and mingle in after years in churches and associations. No one can question these statements who is at all acquainted with the work. We challenge contradiction.

2. *The Proposed Provision for Higher and More Scholarly Training.* So much for the proposal to provide adequate theological training for a larger number. How now as to the proposition to provide a higher and more scholarly training for those who could receive it? Perhaps one of the greatest drawbacks to the successful work, or at least to the acknowledged standing, of our Seminary, has been the unwillingness or the inability in certain literary quarters to believe that, alongside of these arrangements for furnishing more general theological training, it was possible for us to furnish also the highest and most scholarly training.

Every now and then we are made to feel sorry for some of our brethren in other institutions that they seem unable to get hold of the idea that we are prepared to do really scholarly work in the line of theological training. Only a few years before the death of Dr. Broadus a letter came to him from an honored, but younger and far less experienced, theological professor, kindly suggesting to him that, if he had any students who wished to pursue their studies in Text Criticism, it would give the said younger professor pleasure if Dr. Broadus would send them on to him. Now it so happened that Doctor Broadus had been a pioneer among our Seminary professors in studying and teaching Text Criticism. It was his speciality.

He could go to England and be at home with Hort or any of the world's greatest textual scholars. And there was a good round laugh at the Doctor's expense, when in his modest manner, he read to the faculty that letter from his theological friend. Every now and then we inquired of him, as far as we dared to, if he had any students in "Text Criticism," to send on for "a higher course."

Again, once in a while a letter comes to us, with all good intention in the world, from another institution telling us that such and such a brother has been advised to go to us. And the impression is made that he was advised to come to us because he was not prepared to take with advantage the course in the seminary from which he was sent. We take him and smile. But we feel: Alas! that it should be so! And we can but ask if Mr. Moody's Institute, half full of Baptists, and Dr. A. J. Gordon's so-called "short cut" school are not the logical answer to this failure to provide properly for any except college-bred men. We are driven to ask also: Why are not our brethren elsewhere as much bound to provide for these noble, consecrated, young men as are we? We are driven to ask furthermore if our dear brethren can never come to the knowledge of the truth that our Seminary was never meant to be, and is in no sense, an institution for *those only* who cannot appreciate the course which other institutions offer. It is our glory, indeed, that we do take men of almost any grade of culture, just as our Lord is pleased to have among his ministers men of all grades of culture; just as our denomination is pleased to have, and glories in having, ministers of every grade of culture. But we do insist that our brethren ought, if need be, to take the pains to learn that a very

foundation and corner-stone in our institution is the idea of doing the very highest and most scholarly work *in every line of theological training*. This idea, as we have seen, was one of the three changes in theological education which our great founder proposed in his famous address. He insisted that the scheme which he proposed made this possible, as it was not possible in any curriculum institution. And we insist that in the practical working of the institution his prophecy, or dream, has been realized, possibly even beyond his own anticipation. The very fact that the course is *entirely elective* makes it possible for the less trained men to drop out when they think they have gone as far as they can go to advantage. This leaves a class of *select men* to pursue the higher studies. And in the very nature of the case a professor finds it possible to assign to these well advanced men very different lessons, and to carry them very much higher in their course, than he could possibly do if he had a *curriculum* course, which, *no matter what the theory of it may be, must* undertake to carry men of widely different ability along *all together*. In any curriculum class the teaching has to be pitched to the level of the medium student. This is as true in a curriculum of a seminary, as it is true in a curriculum of a public school. On the other hand, where a professor has a class which represents a sort of "survival of the fittest" in point of scholarship, he is able to lay on them tasks which he could not think of imposing on the general average of students. Thus it is that we have been able to establish a course for full graduation in our Seminary which we do not think is equalled in range or rigidity of requirement by any one of our curriculum institutions. We make this claim with

more of real modesty than we shall perhaps have credit for. But we make it, because we believe justice is not always done to the high grade of our work. And we wish to challenge comparison both as to the range of studies and as to the severity of our examinations. Let any one who is minded to do so make the comparison.

But we are not yet at the end of our claim for scholarly work. The special plan by which Professor Boyce proposed to supply the lack for the highest scholarly work was to provide a library which no state or merely local institution could possibly do, and then to have a system of *post graduate studies*, under competent professors, so that any scholarly and ambitious student might carry on any line of study as far as he could possibly carry it in any other institution. It would, of course, be folly to claim that this idea has been realized in all its features any thing like as fully as any of us could wish. At the same time this idea has been kept steadily before professors and students in all these years, and we have been working towards it all the time more and more as the years have passed.

Our library has grown steadily year by year through a not large, but regular, appropriation for the purchase of books. And then in one year it had the magnificent addition of the private library of Dr. Boyce, which, all through his life, he gathered with special reference to its presentation to the Seminary. In the same year, through the liberality of a large-hearted and generous lady* this library found a fifty-thousand dollar home for itself, and today in this splendid building, "a thing of beauty and a joy forever," we have over 30,000 volumes. Along with this growth

*Mrs. J. Lawrence Smith, of Louisville, Ky.

of our library, post-graduate study after post-graduate study has been added until at the present time there can be found a larger number of post-graduate studies than of studies in the regular course. The regular course, as we have seen, has been made more full than it would be possible to have it for a three years' course under a curriculum system; and in addition to this the student in our Seminary finds open to him the following studies in the post-graduate departments: Arabic, Aramaic, Assyrian, Syriac, Hebrew Exegesis, Text Criticism of the O. T., Coptic, Patristic Greek, Modern Greek, Greek Exegesis, Text Criticism of the N. T., Septuagint, Graduate Theology, History of Doctrines, Special Course in History, Theological German, Graduate Homiletics, Foreign Hymnology, Sociology, and History of Modern Missions.*

*The aim of Professor Boyce, in what he proposed in this line, was first of all to render our students independent of rationalistic and infidel German universities. Our first clear testimony to the realization of this hope came to us in a striking manner shortly after his death. McMaster University of Canada elected a young man, Rev. J. H. Farmer, as Professor of New Testament Interpretation, and gave him two years in which to make special preparation for his work. He came to us for *one* of these years, drawn, no doubt, by the great reputation of Dr. Broadus as a teacher in the department for which he was trying to prepare. After spending one year with us, he went, as the custom was, over to Germany, and entered the university at Leipsic for his finishing year. He remained in Leipsic, however, for a short time only. He came to the conclusion that he could get what he needed for his work better in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary than he could even in this famous German university. And so he came back to America and took his second and last year with us also. Special mention is made of this case, not only because it is a strong testi-

One other point only in connection with this idea of furnishing by our plan the highest scholarly training. It has sometimes been urged that where so many men of comparatively poor attainments are congregated, there cannot be that scholarly atmosphere which is necessary for the development of scholarly instincts such as would be afforded in seminaries where only fair scholars are allowed to enter. This objection also vanishes into thin air before the actual facts. As a matter of fact the actual number of college graduates and scholarly men to be found in such a large student body as we have is certainly as large, if not larger, than in any other seminary. These men are brought together and associated with each other in the more advanced part of the course. They associate with each other according to their own instincts and tastes in the daily life of the Seminary. They form such clubs or societies for special literary exercises, as they please. And if any man does not find all the stimulus and development for his scholarly instincts that can be desired, it assuredly is his own fault, and not the fault of his surroundings. We have yet to hear the first complaint on this score by any one who has had any actual experience in the matter. There is perhaps one kind of scholarly instinct which finds little for its support in the atmosphere of our institution. It is that sort of scholarly feeling which cannot come into contact with, and does not

mony from one who was able to judge, but also because it is a testimony for our work which is directly in the line of the fond hope cherished by the great projector and founder of our institution. Like Moses he saw the promised land from afar just as his people were about to enter in.

know how to get along with, the ordinary and everyday run of minds. Any course of study which cannot furnish a scholarly training that can come into daily contact with what is less scholarly, without damage to the so-called scholarly instinct, is not a kind of scholarship that Baptists have much use for. It may do for some other denominations. It will not do for us. The glory of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was that, with all his knowledge, the common people heard him gladly. In the light of these forty years of experimental history we claim that we have scarcely any stronger commendation of our plan than the fact that we are able to furnish the best advantages for scholarly training in such a way as to keep the best educated ministers and the less educated ministers in daily touch and sympathy with each other. In this respect also young Boyce's dream has become a glorious reality.

3. *The Plan for Guarding the Orthodoxy of the Seminary.* We have seen that one of the three changes urged by the projector of the Seminary was a plan for guarding the orthodoxy of the institution. Unfortunately, in the present excited state of our denomination, this is rather an unfavorable time for a very satisfactory discussion of this point. Moreover, in view of the contest now going on, some claiming that ample safeguards of every kind have been provided, and some claiming that the so-called safeguards are not at all sufficient, it cannot be fairly asserted that our forty years of experimental history have demonstrated the entire satisfactoriness of this feature of our plan. This feature of the Seminary plan has been again put upon trial. We shall have to wait still longer to see whether the test provided is a sufficient guarantee for the

orthodoxy of our school; and if not, whether any test can be provided which would in any way improve the situation. It would be manifestly improper for the speaker to enter at the present time into any discussion of this question. Thus much, however, he will venture to say :

(1) It was certainly the aim of the founders of the Seminary to provide for the satisfactory orthodoxy of the institution.

(2) They did provide for this to an extent which has not, we think, been equalled in any other theological seminary in our denomination. If our institution cannot be held to orthodoxy by the test which they provided, then assuredly there is no other Baptist seminary which can be held even so well by any provisions which now exist.

(3) In the nature of the case the test provided has to be one upon which the denomination is practically agreed, and not one for any particular wing or faction of our people. And so it must necessarily leave room for some differences of belief. It cannot be as specific as some would wish it to be.

(4) If the Creed adopted is not satisfactory, it is the privilege of the constituency of the Southern Baptist Convention to guard it better, if they are wise enough to do this. Objection may be urged against this or that proposed test, or to this or that method of trying to effect changes. But no objection can be urged, or will be urged, I take it, to the propositions that the constituency of the Southern Baptist Convention has a right to be interested in the orthodoxy of the Seminary, and to make direct effort to maintain that orthodoxy, and if present tests are not sufficient, has the right to secure yet others.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the addition and enforcement of new tests is a very delicate, if not dangerous, thing—especially in times of excitement. Professor Boyce spoke truly when he said, in his famous address, that “creeds should be made when the judgment is perfectly cool, when there are no outward circumstances to warp it, and when the word of God can be patiently examined to know if these things be true. ‘The time of trial is not the time for legislation.’” Weighty words are these. And they are as true of seminary articles of faith as of any local church creed.

4. *The Idea of One Seminary for the Entire South.* Until very recently there could hardly have been found any real believer in theological education who would question for a moment that wisdom had been justified of her children in the establishment of *one* theological seminary for the whole South. It is safe to say that Southern Baptists were better satisfied with this arrangement for the education of their rising ministry than with almost any other of their denominational enterprises. Alas! however, for the absolute stability of any thing that rests upon popular favor! It has to be confessed that many who, a short time ago, were ready to say, All hail! if not Hosanna! are now ready to say Crucify! Crucify! And the idea of one grand and thoroughly equipped seminary for the whole South is, at the close of this forty years of experimental history, again upon trial.

But those who *are wise* will think long and well before they can be brought to pronounce this magnificent scheme of our fathers a failure.

Popular judgment, too, especially the popular judgment

of Christians, is apt to come right when it has taken time to settle. This idea that has worked so gloriously for the thirty-nine years of its history will hardly be abandoned by wise men, because in the fortieth there is an unfortunate hitch. Wise men do not turn on their heritage and lifetime accumulations and go to destroying all because of some unforeseen trouble in managing their possession. They rather address themselves to fortifying against dangers, and to making themselves the surer of what they have, and to moving forward to better achievements. The need of the hour at such times is judgment, and management, not abandonment or demolition. It is hard to believe, hard even to contemplate the possibility, that this deliberate judgment of our fathers is going to be cast aside as unpractical at the first severe strain put upon it.

Let brethren think, too, of what it will mean to give up this great idea. It will mean only to go back to plans which had already been tried, and proved, for the purposes in view, a failure; or else to take a new plan of several seminaries, which, as Doctor Boyce pointed out, is fraught with far greater dangers and evils than that of one common seminary for all our students. Moreover, it will mean to those who may let go a clear loss of their share in an institution which is worth \$800,000, and which holds within itself all the life work of these master-builders and teachers. Are such institutions so easy to build, or secure, that they can be thrown away without a well-directed and persistent effort to hold what has already been gained?

5. *The Denominational Control of the Seminary.* As has been said, it was clearly the purpose of the founders of the Seminary that the denomination in the South should have

some sort of very real authority and control over it. Here also, it has to be confessed, there has arisen some disappointment at the work of the fathers. Whether the fault was with the fathers, or with those who find the fault, is now the question. Time will ere long decide this also. The question of denominational control is now undergoing its first real test. As we have seen, it was deemed best, when the Seminary was founded, that the denomination should have an indirect and ultimate control, rather than a direct and immediate control. All sorts of constructions have been put upon the reality and the measure of this intended control. Before the time of testing came, we have been wont, in our speeches and writings concerning the Seminary, to assert that it belonged to the denomination, as did no other Seminary in the land. And in our enthusiastic appeals for denominational support we have perhaps been responsible for cultivating too strong a feeling of direct authority and control. On the other hand, since the test came, and the actual legal status has had to be determined, there have been all sorts of assertions that the denomination is utterly powerless to reach, or in any way control, the institution upon which it has depended for the training of its ministers. Surely brethren who make this statement have not paused to consider duly the real status.

Nothing is surer than that the Southern Baptist Convention can ultimately control the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, if the Convention can control itself, and act continuously along one line for a short period of years. In the first place, its public sentiment, *when that sentiment really forms and unmistakably declares itself*, will be absolutely

irresistable. There is almost as little danger that the Seminary will ever run long, if at all, in the face of a clearly developed public setiment in the Convention as there is that our Foreign Mission, or Home Mission, or Sunday-school, Boards will try to do such a thing. The very life of the Seminary is in the support of the Convention. And, moreover, the Convention has certain legal rights for ultimate control, notwithstanding all the assertions to the contrary. It is idle to say that a body which has the legal right to nominate every trustee has no legal rights in the control of an institution.*

It may be a *question* whether the right of control by the Convention is *direct enough and immediate enough* to meet the wishes of the brotherhood in the emergencies that may arise. If not, the task for wise leaders is to find some remedy and apply it—not abandonment, or destruction, or injurious assault. But, meantime, let us remember that the great cause which we love was as dear to the hearts of our fathers as it is to ours, and that they were neither deceivers nor ignoramuses when they claimed that they had given the denomination a real control, and, in their judgment, the best sort of *practical control* over the Seminary. Up to the present emergency no question was raised as to their wisdom in this matter. It will take the testing of a little more time to decide whether they built as wisely as they thought ; or whether there is yet something for their followers to add to this part of their work. Our forty years of experimental history cannot be said to have really settled this point.

A word or two now in closing this already too extended address. There can be no possible question in the mind

* See extract from Dr. Boyce's article at foot of p. 27, this address.

of any well-informed person that the founders of our Seminary built wisely and well on the main and fundamental lines of their scheme. They did furnish an institution strictly in accordance with the Bible idea of the Christian ministry, and strictly in accordance with Baptist ideas of the ministry, and of ministerial education. It was thoroughly adapted to the genius and spirit and wants of our people. It made provision for the adequate education of the great mass of our ministers, and, at the same time, it made provision for the most advanced and scholarly training of any who could receive such training. Its almost forty years of actual history bear abundant testimony to this. Its pathway has been a pathway of glory in this respect. Their wisdom has been abundantly vindicated. After using the Seminary for these purposes as long as they lived, making it year by year stronger and stronger, and better and better, working themselves more and more deeply into all the warp and woof of its being, and piling up building after building in which to work, and thousands on thousands of dollars for endowment, they fell on sleep, and left it all to us, as noble a heritage as ever sires left to sons. They tried as well as they could, with the light which they had, and the laws at their command, to guard it for the generations to come, and to guarantee that it should serve the ends for which it was created. At times, as they labored in building, there were not wanting those who found fault. But, ere they died, almost every voice that opposed, or even questioned, their wisdom had been hushed or changed to assent. They passed away amid the glorious acknowledgements and the most unqualified thanks and praises of a grateful constituency.

We have entered upon our heritage. What shall we do with that which we have received? Can we take care of our estate? Can we make secure that which they wrought out? Can we build on from the point at which they stopped? They could not work out all the problems of an institution like this. There were problems that could not arise till they were gone. These are upon us now. Can we meet them. Are we the men they hoped we should be? Are we equal to our trust?

Brother Professors, the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary stands for certain ideas, or principles, in theological education. It stands out for these in all the world unique. Most of us have come in contact with those peerless men, Boyce and Broadus and Manly. Some of us touched William Williams also—or rather he touched us. We caught the idea and the genius of our school from these men. Can we hold it to that idea of adequate theological education for any and every Baptist minister who comes to us, no matter what his previous preparation? and no matter if other institutions do have their doors closed against him? It will be our shame if we ever depart from this idea, and try to make our institution a place for scholars only. And yet, again, we have a burden laid upon us to furnish to those who can take it the very best of scholarly training. Can we furnish it? Will we do it? There is a mighty pressure sometimes to lower the standard, and to relax in this matter of thorough scholarship. The men from whom we got the Seminary had no mind to do this. Shall we do it? And that other idea of old-fashioned orthodox teaching, shall we swerve from that? We got the Seminary from these men a very synonym for orthodoxy.

By the help of God, and the brethren, and our own fidelity to our vows, we will keep it so.

Seminary Students, you, too, have a responsibility in helping the Seminary to fulfill its high mission. Learn well the principles that lie at its foundation, and try to be true to *them* at all times and under all circumstances. Fidelity to these will be the truest loyalty to the Seminary.

Brethren Trustees, you more than any others have received the Seminary as a sacred trust. The institution is in your hands to an extent that it is not in the hands of any others. You can make it or mar it more quickly and more surely than any other class of all our people. Can you hold it to the ideas of its founders and builders?—*a seminary in trust for the Southern Baptist Convention, a seminary for the whole South, a seminary for the mass of our Baptist ministers, a seminary for the highest scholarly training, a seminary of unquestionable, if not of unquestioned, orthodoxy?* Failure in any one of these particulars will be failure in the trust which you have received. May God bless our trustees and give them wisdom. Let this be our prayer. They stand in the breach for all sides on every question. God help them.

Brethren, *Constituency of the Southern Baptist Convention*, back of all, and under all, and *above all*, the Seminary is your Seminary. It is yours to save alive; I was going to say it is even “yours to kill,” if you like. If you, as a denomination, lose interest in the Seminary Ichabod is written upon this work of our fathers. For assuredly it was built for you, and meant for you, and in the highest and truest sense *it is yours*. You, too, have received it as a trust and as a great opportunity. What will you do with

it? How will you use it? Right gloriously did you treat it and use it in the years ago, and nobly has it wrought for you. Will you turn upon it and rend it, and in rending *it*, rend *yourselves* also? Or, will you rather with all patience and diligence make its calling and election sure, until the once marvelous dream of its bold projector and founder shall be realized, fully realized, in a thoroughly united people, with five hundred or more enthusiastic students at their school of the prophets? Brethren, that which required forty years for its building, and the lives of such men as Boyce and Broadus and Manly and Williams, and the treasures of many of our rich and of thousands of our poor brethren, is worth a few years of patient struggle and waiting, if this be necessary, to assure you of your inheritance, and to secure you in its blessing. May God help you to stand by your Seminary. You will not soon build another like it.

