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UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN THIS PRESENT AGE.

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*On the Occasion of His Inauguration as President of Union
Theological Seminary in Virginia, May 11, 1927.*

It has been a year now since I was called to become President of this Seminary. I wondered why you called one with such little acquaintance with theological education or the problems which confront a modern seminary. I had hoped to have the counsel and advice of Dr. Moore at least for a time, but within a little over a month after my election, and before I had an opportunity even to consult him once, he had passed from us. My study of the problems of theological education has been broken and fragmentary and I cannot hope to bring you much that is either fresh or original. Some things, however, have impressed themselves upon me with great force and I wish to share with you my thoughts on this subject: "Union Theological Seminary in this Present Age."

I. Development of Professional Schools.

We are fond of emphasizing the fact that the first college in America, Harvard, was founded for the purpose of educating ministers. The gates of Harvard carry the following quaint inscription:

"After God had carried us safe to New England, and wee had bilded our houses, provided necessaries for our livli-hood,

rear'd convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civil government; one of the next things we longed for, and looked after was to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches, when our present ministers shall lie in the dust."

These early colleges, however, did not confine themselves to a purely theological mission, and secular courses soon received the larger emphasis. Theology meanwhile remained an important branch, in many instances the most important. Soon new institutions were established, such as Zenia in the growing West, and New Brunswick, Andover and Princeton in the East, and our own Seminary in the South. It was the early custom to place the new theological institutions near a college. Witness Union's close association with Hampden-Sidney. Thus, we see that the oldest and most important and most difficult of the sciences, Theology, was the first to enter the field of specialized training in America. Other professions followed rapidly, and the nineteenth century, especially the last two decades, was marked by marvelous expansion of professional and technical education.

The Army.

We shall glance at this movement in the preparation of men for the profession of arms, for medicine, and engineering. As the teachers of the Church early discerned the importance of special training for her ministry, so the fathers of our country soon recognized the necessity of special training for the officers in her army. The officers of our Revolutionary forces had been trained in the bitter school of experience, their knowledge of military affairs having been gained by their association with higher officers in the field, just as before the erection of our Seminaries our young ministers were trained in contact with busy pastors. In 1776 when the need was so plainly manifest a military academy was proposed, and in 1802 Thomas Jefferson approved an act establishing such a military academy at West Point. Opening with ten cadets on July 4, 1802, in-

struction had become disorganized and desultory in 1811, and in 1812, a year marked in national affairs by the declaration of war with England, and in our Church by the birth of Union Theological Seminary, there was not a single instructor at West Point. The war which followed taught the nation its lesson.

Since that time our army has been officered largely by those who have been especially trained in the profession of arms.

The Navy.

Not, however, until 1845 was the Naval Academy established under the Secretary of the Navy, George Bancroft. Prior to that time men had learned seamanship in the Merchant Marine and sea fighting as they could. Today there are, perhaps, no finer schools for cadets and midshipmen on earth than those at West Point and Annapolis, but, our country not content with these, compels her officers to attend more highly specialized schools as long as they remain in the service.

Medicine.

The need of special education for the professions of medicine and law had early been discerned. Harvard Medical School dates from 1872, but "as late as 1880 medical education in the United States was in a deplorable condition". Not until 1859 did the Chicago Medical College lead the way in lengthening the session to six months and increasing the course from two to three years. Harvard established a three-year course in 1871. Nor had a liberal education before entering been strictly required. Real improvement in the education of our physicians began in the decade 1890 to 1900, at the very time when interest in theological education was declining. Today every medical college in the land requires a college degree or a splendid pre-med course before entering, four years of arduous study, and an internship afterwards.

Decrease in Theological Support.

As the century came to its close and the new one opened there was a mighty movement in our land for the development of specially trained men in every field of service. It is a notable thing that at the same time interest in and support of theological education declined. At the very time when ministers of unusual training were needed to stand upon the level with specially trained men in other fields, our theological seminaries as a whole were neglected in this country. Dr. Robert Kelly in his book, "Theological Education in America", says: "Philanthropic interest in theology, which devoted larger contributions to this field than to the fields of law, medicine and higher education of women until 1800, has declined in ratio since that time, according to the United States Bureau of Education."

Those of you who know the history of Union Theological Seminary and the activities of Dr. Moore realize that the decline in the interests of theological education coincides with his effort to move the Seminary from Hampden-Sidney to Richmond. You can see what a task he set for himself. When the trend was against theological education and when men of means were turning their resources to law, medicine, women's colleges and technological schools, and when other professions were attracting men of unusual strength, Dr. Moore had the herculean task of finding funds to rebuild and re-endow this institution. That we have attained a position here, relatively as strong as it is, has been due to him and to his colleagues. Yet the thing which burdened Dr. Moore and burdens any one who studies the conditions of professional schools today is that theological education is steadily losing its relative place in the educational field.

While millions are being expended in medical and other graduate schools throughout the nation and the South, the Seminaries are being held back for lack of funds and equipment. It will not commend the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, if His people place a smaller valuation on the prepara-

tion for leadership in the religious sphere than they place upon preparation for other professions. Our strongest young men will not be attracted to a calling for the preparation of which the Church has provided inadequate facilities. Engineering, law, medicine, teaching and other professional schools receive large support from the state and from philanthropists. The training of the ministry, which is the foundational work of the Church can look for support only to the Church and to those who love the Church.

II. Critical Period for Theological Seminaries, Especially Union Theological Seminary.

a. Biblical Criticism.

It has been repeatedly said that the seat of authority in religion for the Roman Catholic is the Church, for the Protestant the Bible. If the Bible is our authority in religion, an attack upon it is vital to our life. The last century saw such an attack launched from within the Church itself. An account of the Genesis, Progression and Retrogression of this movement is beyond the scope of this address.

Its effect upon theological education and the Church at large is variously estimated and evaluated. We discover that one of the most popular books at one of our Presbyterian colleges, and one widely read by students of our Seminary is one which frankly bids us accept the modernist's idea of the Bible if we are to derive value from it in our age. Yet we should not be surprised, for there is scarcely a serious magazine, scarcely a weekly or monthly publication which does not glibly presuppose that the readers acquiesce in what the writer regards as the "accepted position of scholarship" regarding the composition of the books of the Old and New Testaments.

A large proportion of the modern commentaries, commentaries which men on the field and in the seminaries are buying and using because of their manifest value in other particulars, take for granted the acceptance of the higher critical view of the Old Testament. It is increasingly noticeable that among

the Scotch and English as well as American writers on religion there is a custom of throwing doubt upon the authenticity of one or more of the books of the New Testament. In some cases it seems to be done just to reveal one's scholarship and familiarity with the controversy.

In a recent address at the University of North Carolina on the McNair Foundation, the President of one of the larger Northern Seminaries exemplified the modern tendency by stating without proof and without reservation that Judges is the most ancient of the Old Testament books. Who has not seen the Fourth Gospel ushered out of its place in the Canon by the statement that it is so shot through with Neoplatonism that it is of no value as a Christian document? The tendency manifests itself in unnumbered ways. It is not merely a matter of inspiration, but the authenticity and historicity of the books of the Bible are questioned.

The men who come to our Seminary are in many cases, especially the more studious and thoughtful ones, already disturbed by these things. They are anxious themselves to discover the true basis for our faith in a book which reveals God and is inspired by God. They are going out to minister to congregations who are asking themselves disquieting questions. Our graduates of today will preach to more college graduates than their fathers did to high school graduates, and many to whom they minister can be reached and helped only by one who has frankly and fearlessly faced the questions raised by criticism and can give an answer for his faith.

b. Psychology and Philosophy.

From the problems which the modern scientific and philosophical movements present to the modern seminaries I have singled out that of Psychology to emphasize the critical period which this is for a seminary, especially for ours. It is remarkable the great varieties of theories which have arisen in this field of study and research. Dr. D. Maurice Allan, a recent Doctor of Philosophy in the field of Psychology and Philosophy of Harvard, in an article in the April issue of the

Seminary Review, draws our attention to the unsettled state of Psychology today, declaring: "Of Psychology the most startling true assertion that can be made today is that there is literally no such thing." It is a relief to those who have in recent years dabbled in Psychology to hear a student in this field who has seen the conflict between Behaviorism, Determinism, Pragmatism, Freudianism, Psycho-physical Parallelism and others, say such a thing. However, our young college graduates and the men and women reading our magazines and books are not able to discriminate. They are finding many of the most bizarre theories attractive and on all sides we find them clouded in their thinking. We are catching the backwash of it in our Seminary classes. Many of those who have studied Psychology and Philosophy in our state and independent colleges and universities, and some of those who come to us from Christian colleges, have a psychological bias which makes heavy-going for them before their course at Union is completed. Hugh A. Moran, a fellow student of mine at Oxford University, now a college pastor at Cornell University, writes:

"The seriousness of the situation to those who hold the religion of Jesus Christ as the most precious possession of the human race is not so much the present numerical strength of the opposition as the fact that they comprise such a large part of the teachers of our teachers. With our educational system already so completely secularized, the effect upon the faith and moral life of the next and succeeding generations may be calamitous."

Mr. Moran is at one of the centers of our modern educational systems. After reviewing the Behavioristic school and pointing out its danger, he says:

"But as has already been shown in the brief review in this paper, these schools of psychology and philosophy which oppose the behavioristic are equally deadly in their effect upon religion as is behaviorism itself. Among these I should include the various forms of humanism, pragmatic instrumentalism, determinism and mechanism. They are particularly strong

in certain of the graduate schools and schools of education. With our common school system already almost completely secularized, I look for a widespread blight upon religious thought throughout our normal and high schools as a result of the influences now at work in our graduate schools."

The danger is not only to those who are themselves studying, but to the infiltration of their ideas into the minds of our less mature students of high schools and colleges. Our problem is not only to meet the issue raised in the minds of the students who are attending our classes, but to equip them to minister to those who have become impregnated with such ideas.

Naturalism vs. Supernaturalism.

Our problem is made more complicated by the fact that theological training in America today can be broadly divided into two groups, those who teach naturalism and those who hold to supernaturalism. It has come to pass that the conflict today is not on doctrines which one evangelical church holds as against another, but on the great doctrines which are common to all. The Seminaries of past days devoted much time to the doctrines which were peculiar to their particular denomination—effusion as over against immersion in baptism—and the various points in which Calvinism differed from Arminianism, and indeed in which one branch of Calvinism differed from another. Today, however, we are not fighting at the outposts but at the citadel itself, and if we wage war around an outpost today, we must do so and show that we are doing so, because its loss would more easily permit the taking of the central fort. Our lines have been drawn close, and the present conflict in theological life is between those who hold to a personal God, to a Saviour pre-existent, Virgin-born, possessed of miraculous powers over men and nature, offering Himself for the sins of the world, risen from an empty tomb, ascended, and interceding for His Church, and who shall one day return, as against those who deny many if not all of these doctrines.

In the face of such conditions, what is a theological seminary's task? Our students can go out to a disquieted people and do one of three things. They can dodge or they can dogmatize or they can say, "Come now and let us reason together". They can take these disquieted men or women, boys or girls, and lead them along paths which they themselves have trod, past the opposition of science falsely so-called, past the scare-heads of "accepted scholarship" to the assurance of those things verily believed. It means arduous work for them; it means that we must give them here facilities to equip themselves to meet these issues.

c. Changes and Demands Made on Theological Seminaries.

The third condition which makes this a critical period for theological seminaries, especially ours, is the change in the conception of what the content of a theological education should be. Once a seminary was thought of as a Retreat where a few pious youths under venerable and holy professors sought to learn Hebrew roots and Greek verbs while acquiring an attitude of mind far removed from that of the busy man of affairs. A friend in Baltimore sent Dr. and Mrs. J. Ross Stevenson of Princeton Theological Seminary an old Virginia ham. The ham failed to appear at the Theological Seminary in Princeton and a tracer was sent after it. It was finally located at Princeton University, and when the address was read, one could well understand how it went astray. The address had evidently been given over the telephone, for on the tag in plain letters was written "Zoological Cemetery". This might be a burial place for fossils. I think it speaks well for Princeton Seminary that the ham was not delivered there. Yet there have been those who have regarded many seminaries as burying places for some strange species of the animal kingdom. I doubt if any seminaries were ever such. I am sure this one was not. Nevertheless, a change has come in the conception of theological training and we must be prepared to get the best of the new while retaining all that is worth while in the old.

1. *Vocation.*

The central, indeed almost the exclusive, aim of theological seminaries in the past has been vocational training. Their object is to train men who can be the religious guides and teachers in their communities. In this respect they are like our schools of medicine and law, which are also largely vocational, bent upon supplying physicians and attorneys, and leaving research to a few university centers and laboratories. The vocation of a minister is in the process of specialization just as is the case of that of doctors. We must realize that men should not be expected or allowed to specialize too soon, that the basic course of Theology, as in Medicine, should be mastered before specialization is begun. Still there is an urgent demand for a choice of courses in the cases of men preparing for special fields of service.

To our Seminary comes a man under appointment to the Foreign Field, to head up all the educational agencies of our Church on an entire continent. Another has heard the call to enter evangelistic work abroad. Still another feels the call to teach the Bible in a school or college or seminary (such a clear call Dr. Turnbull heard when a student here with me). Another desires to be a Religious Work director in a large church or the leader of young people's work in a Presbytery or Synod. The vast majority still are hearing the call to become pastors of country and city churches.

So, while our education is and will remain largely vocational, we have to realize that all of our students cannot be put through the same hopper and be ground between the same stones. Yet that is just what our seminaries have been doing. Dr. Moore and his fellow professors had for some years been working out a system which would allow some flexibility, and the change to a semi-elective course at Union was one of the last acts of Dr. Moore's life.

What has been begun will require most thoughtful and painstaking study in order to secure the desired good. One can readily see how the introduction of elective courses even in a modified degree places a heavy additional task upon our pro-

fessors and makes necessary broader and more perfect library facilities. We should never forget that our institution is a graduate school, having within the student body some of the most brilliant men from our Southern colleges, and we should maintain graduate school standards.

2. *Research.*

It is the growing conviction of many that a first class seminary should be doing research work. There has been an increasing demand that our Southern Church with its conservative points of view produce books which would equal or surpass in scholarship those which come from more liberal centers. Men are looking to the Seminaries to take the lead in this important work. When we calmly consider it, we have to admit that for many a decade our beloved Church has produced few books of real learning and scholarship which have affected the currents of religious thought outside of our own communion. One reason is patent to all. Our Faculty has been too greatly burdened in training men for their vocation either to turn aside themselves to write or to give the time necessary to develop young men who can do original study and produce great books.

The entire field of Religious Education is being explored and developed by a group of eager and earnest men and women in our Seminaries, Training Schools and Universities. The vast majority of this work, which of necessity is research in its nature, is being done at centers of learning and by scholars unsympathetic or hostile to Inspiration and Supernaturalism. Are we to leave this whole area untouched by our men? They are eager to do such work, and if it cannot be done here, then they will go where it can be done. A similar need is urgent in the fields of criticism, exegesis, apologetics and others.

The nucleus of such workmen will henceforth be at hand here in our Fellows. There will be five after this year, the Hoge, Larus, Johnson, Moore and Salem. They will provoke one another to arduous study. It is hoped and expected that from such groups in the coming years will emerge men whose

scholarship and diction will make an impress upon the whole Christian world. Side by side with these Fellows spending an extra year in highly specialized work, there is another group doing similar work in our courses leading to the degree of Master of Theology and Doctor of Divinity. This course could be developed five-fold within a year were our faculty sufficiently enlarged to be enabled to devote themselves more to this important work. Along with an increased Faculty a more perfect library is a *sine qua non* for such work.

3. *Extension Work.*

Not only does a seminary of this present day have to add research to its vocational work, but it can and should render to its own denomination and to the Church at large a broad ministry outside the boundaries of the Seminary. We are all acquainted with the way in which certain universities, notably the University of North Carolina in the South, have by their extension work affected whole states. Education, good roads and many other movements of outstanding value owe much of their strength, especially in the earlier stages, to such institutions.

In Dr. Moore's last conversation with me, held at Clifton Springs, he spoke earnestly and wistfully of his dreams for Union in this broader ministry. He knew how well her professors had already served in writing for Church papers, in her own Review, in Bible Conferences and Teacher Training Schools, and how her students and fellows had stimulated recruiting for the ministry by their delegations to various colleges, but he envisioned a far larger field of service. He well knew that our professors turned down five invitations for this extensive ministry for each one that they accepted. Without an addition to our force he saw no way to increase this great sphere of influence and of service, but he longed for the time when the Seminary would be more closely in touch with the actual field work of her constituency, when her faculty and library could be at times actually upon the fring line; when the Seminary would be giving strength to the Church and gaining strength from such contacts.

III. Recapitulation.

We stand then at a time when professional and specialized education in all fields is forging ahead and when men in every profession have an opportunity for careful and scholarly preparation for their life work. The minister not only is not one of the few well trained men in his locality, as he was in the past, but in many instances professionally and technically trained men are questioning the soundness of the preacher's scholarship. Other graduate schools are being extended and perfected at immense cost. At the same time theological education is receiving less attention the country over and is sharing less in the prosperity of our land. The trend of psychological and philosophical thought in many centers tends to stifle our religious life, while the attack on the Bible has weakened the hold of our Scriptures upon the human mind. These conditions demand unusual preparation on the part of our students for the ministry.

Meanwhile we have seen that the demand upon the seminaries for more perfect vocational training in the varied spheres which ministers must occupy today, for research work which will furnish our own Church and the Church at large with an effective Apologetic, and for the rendering of a broader ministry by extension work, requires that two conditions must be met. I feel that I cannot emphasize these too much. First, we must increase our Faculty. Already over-burdened, they see countless opportunities. Princeton Theological Seminary, with 222 students, has thirteen full-time professors and two special lecturers, as against eight in our own Seminary. Nanking Seminary in China, with 129 students, had before it was closed, ten Americans in active teaching and one emeritus, and four Chinese, fourteen active professors for 129 students as against eight in Union for 148 students.

Secondly, we must have a library and a librarian. Enter any undergraduate college for men or women and compare their library with ours. Visit any graduate school and note the contrast. One of our sister seminaries with only fifty per

cent more students than we have, not only has nearly three times the number of volumes which we have, but they have a full-time librarian, a male assistant, and two lady assistants. Their circulating library, which provides books for ministers in the field as well as for students in the Seminary, is open ten hours a day, while their reference library is open eleven hours. They have been spending upon their library approximately seven times as much money per year as we have upon ours. How can we keep abreast of modern professional and graduate study, how can we prepare our men to meet the needs of the day, how develop a group of research students, and how shall we extend our greatest help to our hard pressed but eager pastors without a librarian, and library facilities such as our colleges and graduate school have?

The one supreme task of the Church of Christ is to supply preachers and leaders. Did not Christ give much of His attention to the training of the Twelve? Was any other part of His work, so important in His eyes as this? Without a supply of ministers, missionaries, evangelists, teachers, why build your new churches, your modern Sunday-school buildings, your missionary schools and stations at home or abroad?

I hold here in my hand a card with the picture of the Main Building, Sanatorium, Clifton Springs, N. Y. It is addressed and written in a handwriting which itself reveals character and inspires confidence. It is next to the last communication I ever received from the writer, and it says: "John Wesley said more good was to be done to others by his going to Oxford; the schools of the prophets were there: 'was it not a more extensive benefit to sweeten the fountain than to purify a particular stream'. I hope you will see it so. W. W. M." Is the fountain to become stagnant or muddy or dried up? Surely if it does there will be barrenness and a spiritual famine.

Many have said that Union Theological Seminary is the most important institution in our Church. Undoubtedly it is. What is its part in the Kingdom? The answer would require a longer address than this. Read the roll of her sons and see how they have served at home and in the foreign field in places

of honor and obscurity, in seminary, college, pastorate, secretaryship, missionary station. The Church has caught its pitch from the note struck here. What will be the note of the future?

Thursday evening the Senior Class had their banquet and I was their guest. It is one of the largest classes ever to graduate at our Seminary. I was deeply moved as I looked into the faces of the men and heard them speak of their love for the Seminary and of their aspirations for service. At the other end of the table sat a genial son of the Orient who goes back to his own people to perform a particular and helpful service. On the right was a member of a martyr family of Persia, prepared and equipped to serve his people in their distress if a way is opened for him. Then here are two of great Wesley's disciples, who for three years have sat at the feet of Calvin. They must wait many years to become bishops, while their Presbyterian classmates will soon be so ordained. The Disciple graduate was absent, but his Baptist brother well represented those who follow the deeper path. The most were Presbyterians, forty of them, from all parts of America and from foreign fields. Among them one born under Northern skies, and another flag, who gave his sight for our land and her cause, who, when the light became darkness, desired to make bright with an inner light the life of others. As they told whence they came and whither they are going, it came upon me with something of a start that not one mentioned a foreign field, save those who had been born there. I thought of my own class and the five eager hearts who went abroad. I knew that in the heart of some of these men of 1927 there had been and is still a desire to do likewise, but the interest of the Church at large has not been sufficiently centered on the world-wide lost to furnish the funds to send them out. Then I thought, "The missionary endeavor among the Southern Presbyterians was born of John Holt Rice and nurtured of Union Theological Seminary". As the Church was once aroused to the task of world missions by this Seminary and her sons, so she must be

again. What we put into the hearts of these men will soon be in the heart of the Church at large.

There, as I looked at them, so eager and hopeful to reach their fields, a great joy came over me that I was to have a part in training men for the greatest task ever committed to men—that of going out to those in the grip and power of sin to free them in the name of the Son of God. After all arises the same task, though the age is different, which Christ assigned to the Twelve in Galilee, “Make disciples of all men; lo, I am with you alway”.

YOUTH AND THE CHURCH.

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Youth is our yesterday, the child's tomorrow, the fair morning of life after the dawn when the dew is still on the roses and the grass is invitingly fresh; when the stream of life runs swiftly, if not perilously full. Because of the complexity of life today and the evident dangers of this period we have asked ourselves again and again the question, “Is the youth of today better or worse than the youth of yesterday?” I gave this question to a hundred and fifty of my students about a year ago. Most of them were in this period; many of them had had rich contacts with boys and girls of this age through High School teaching, work at Boys' and Girls' Camps, and with Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops. They were well qualified, therefore, to answer the question. From one class I received fifty-two answers. Only four of them said that they felt that youth today was worse, and one of the four remarked, “Please don't put too much reliance upon my statement, as I am hopelessly pessimistic about everything”. Several stated that they thought that youth was “not so much worse”, as there