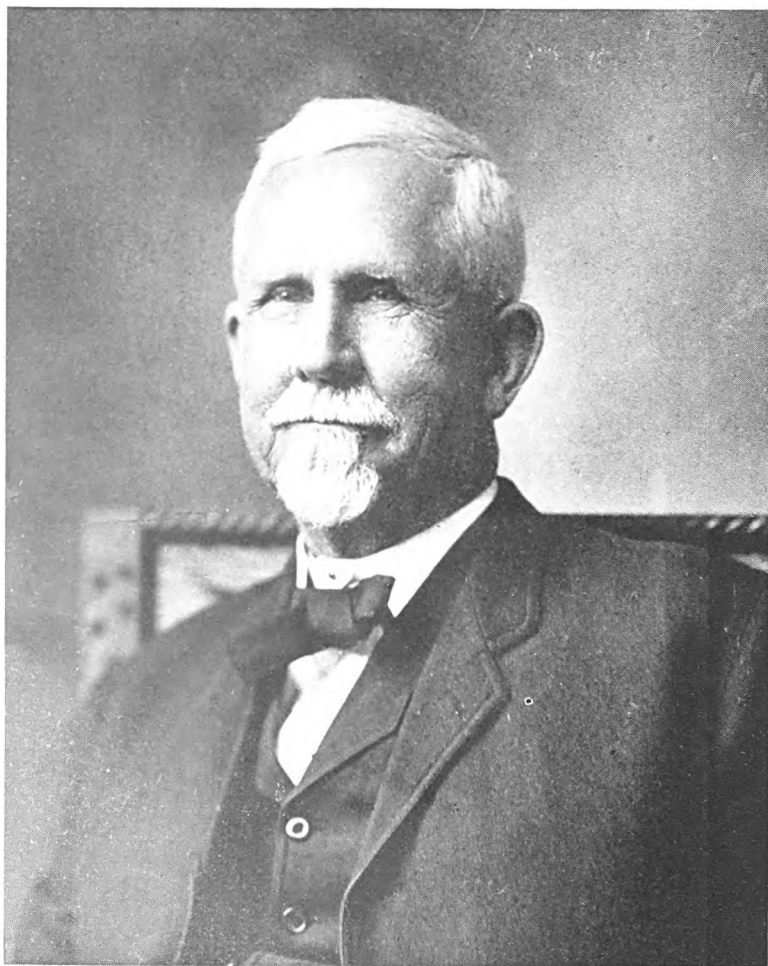




COLONEL JOHN Q. DICKINSON

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John Quincy Dickinson, by whose Christian liberality the John Q. Dickinson Professorship of Church History and Church Polity in Union Theological Seminary has recently been endowed, was born on November 20, 1831, in Bedford County, Va., where his forebears had settled in the first half of the eighteenth century and where they had lived for more than a hundred years before his birth. He was thus a native of the same county that gave to the Seminary its venerated founder, John Holt Rice. Whether he was specially familiar with the history of Dr. Rice's life and work or not we do not know, but he held exactly the same views as to the need of a great Southern Seminary and a home-trained ministry. He saw clearly that it was only in this way that we could ever have anything like an adequate number of ministers who, being themselves brought up and educated among the people of the South and therefore understanding them thoroughly, could best minister to their spiritual needs. Our branch of the Church has had and still has not a few open-minded, judicious and earnest men from other parts of the country who have been eminently successful in their ministry in the South; and such men have always been warmly welcomed by those who have shared the views of Dr. Rice and Colonel Dickinson; but at the same time our people have never blinked the fact that if we did not train the great body of our ministers in our own institutions the work for which we are specially responsible could not be

done and our Church would stand convicted of unfaithfulness to duty. If we would understand Colonel Dickinson's interest in the work of Union Seminary and his munificent provision for its endowment, we must bear in mind his conviction as to the necessity for at least one great, strong Seminary in the South, well equipped, well endowed and well manned.

Young Dickinson grew to manhood on his father's plantation, learning the thousand and one things of a practical sort that all boys on a farm become expert in and that few city-bred boys have opportunity to learn, whatever counterbalancing advantages they may enjoy—things that promote efficiency, resourcefulness, self-reliance and other qualities of leadership.—and he gradually shared with his father and older brother the responsibilities of the management, taking on a larger share of these responsibilities of course after the war began and his brother entered the army. Meantime, in that salubrious Piedmont climate and through that wholesome farm life with its varied outdoor activities, he was developing the splendid physique which was to carry him through a strenuous career to the ripe age of ninety-four.

Like all the plantation-bred ante-bellum boys of Virginia, he was an expert horseman. From childhood they were at home on horseback, and this of course was one of the reasons for the unsurpassed record they made as cavalymen, defeating as they did on so many occasions much larger forces of the enemy. The things thus learned in childhood remain with us throughout life; one of my vivid recollections of Colonel Dickinson is the sight of him riding briskly down Kanawha Street in Charleston from his residence to his bank, as straight as a ramrod, in his eighties. When the Constitution was repudiated and the South invaded, John Q. Dickinson, as soon as he could be spared at home, took a horse from his stable and rode away to join his brother, Captain Henry C. Dickinson, who was then in camp in Albemarle County, and enlisted in his company, Company A, Second Virginia Cavalry, Colonel Radford being in command of the regiment.

Some of our young people do not seem to understand why the people of the South have such a high regard for General

U. S. Grant as distinguished from their feelings towards incendiaries like Sherman and Hunter. If they will read the story of Grant and Lee at Appomattox they will understand it at once. "After four years of arduous service, marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude," as General Lee expressed it in his farewell address to his soldiers, "the Army of Northern Virginia had been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources." When the two commanders met in the McLean house at Appomattox to arrange the terms of surrender Grant bore himself throughout with courtesy and magnanimity, so much so that Lee himself said afterwards: "No man could have behaved better than General Grant did under the circumstances." Hearing that Lee's half-starved troops had for days had scarcely anything to eat but parched corn and buds plucked from the forest trees, he at once ordered the issuance from his own abundant supplies of rations for the twenty-five thousand Confederate heroes who had so long held at bay his own vast army. Not only so, but on being informed that the organization of the army of the Confederate States was different from that of the United States in that the horses of the Confederates belonged in most cases to the individual soldiers, having been brought with them into the army, instead of being furnished by the government, as was the case with the Federal army, he allowed the Confederates to take their horses back home with them for the spring plowing. That is why the Southern people respect the memory of General Grant. Moreover, he understood better what the South was fighting for than the bitter politicians who plunged the Southern States into the inferno of Reconstruction after the War.

As I have said in another place, the Southern States withdrew from the Union in order to save the Constitution and to solve in an honest and peaceable way the difficult economic problem which had been thrust upon them by the mother country. Their desire was to get rid of the institution of slavery by gradual emancipation, so as to avoid the frightful consequences which were sure to follow from sudden and violent emancipation, as two generations of our people have now seen with their own eyes. Desiring only to withdraw in peace,

the South was totally unprepared for war, without an army, without a navy, without munitions, and without the manufacturing establishments necessary to provide them, as it was a predominantly agricultural region. Yet when war was forced upon her she placed in the field an unsurpassed army which held at bay for years and defeated time after time forces vastly superior to themselves, in number, resources and equipment—and these enemies of theirs were good soldiers, too. One reason for this was that their commanders were admittedly superior to those of their opponents in military genius. This is no mere partisan opinion. President Roosevelt himself has said in his life of Thomas H. Benton that “the world has never seen better soldiers than those who followed Lee, and their leader will undoubtedly rank without any exception as the very greatest of all the great captains that the English-speaking peoples have brought forth.” Another reason for the extraordinary success of the comparatively small and ill-equipped Army of Northern Virginia was that it was made up so largely of the picked young men of the South. There were many men in the armies of the North who were just as good men in every way as any of those in the armies of the South. But their armies were differently made up. There were more different kinds of men in the armies of the North, more foreigners, for instance. The population of the South was more homogeneous.

Few misrepresentations have been more sedulously and successfully fostered than the libel that the South was fighting for the perpetuation of slavery. As to Virginia, the charge is little short of infamous in view of the record of the State in endeavoring to prevent the establishment of the slave trade, her efforts being defeated by other States, among them three of the New England States. Hear these words of General Lee written in December, 1856: “In this enlightened age there are few, I believe, but will acknowledge that as an institution slavery is a moral and political evil in any country. It is useless to expatiate on its disadvantages. I think it, however, a greater evil to the white than to the black race, and while my feelings are strongly enlisted in behalf of the latter, my sympathies are strongly for the former. While we say the course

of the final abolishment of slavery is onward and we give it the aid of our prayers and all justifiable means in our power, we must leave the progress as well as the result in His hands Who sees the end and chooses to work by slow influences" (Life by Fitzhugh Lee, page 64). Mr. Lincoln himself, who was also a Southern man, born in Kentucky, said in 1852 in his eulogy on Henry Clay: "Cast into life when slavery was already widely spread and deeply seated, he did not perceive, as I think no wise man has perceived, how it could be at once eradicated without producing a greater evil even to the cause of human liberty itself. His feeling and his judgment therefore have led him to oppose both extremes of opinion on the subject. Those who would shatter into fragments the union of these States, tear to tatters its now venerated Constitution, and even burn the last copy of the Bible, rather than that slavery should continue a single hour, together with all their more halting sympathizers, have received and are receiving their just execration, and the name and opinion and influence of Mr. Clay are fully, and, as I trust, effectually and enduringly arrayed against them." (Abraham Lincoln, Speeches, Letters and State Papers, Volume 1, page 174.) That's what Mr. Lincoln thought of sudden emancipation then—ten years before the war. Mr. Lincoln, at his inauguration, proclaimed: "I have no purpose directly or indirectly to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so." President Davis declared (during the war): "We are not fighting for slavery; we are fighting for independence." Judge George L. Christian, of Richmond, who knew whereof he spoke, says emphatically: "No man ever saw a Virginia soldier who was fighting for slavery."

When the war closed at Appomattox our people accepted the decision of the sword with manly sincerity, without apology and without complaint. As brave and chivalrous men they had never dreamed of blaming their foes for acting upon their convictions of duty and fighting for what they believed to be right, and they supposed, of course, that their actions, too, would be viewed in the same way by those on the other side. It was therefore with a shock of indignant sur-

prise that they discovered that, while many of their former adversaries did take this just view of the South's devotion to her conscientious convictions, many others were determined to fasten upon her, if possible, the stigma of treason and to blacken the character of her heroic defenders, and that partisan misrepresentation and slander spread abroad by a portion of the teeming press of the victorious and wealthy North were the means by which they proposed to accomplish their purpose. Under the inexorable necessity of rehabilitating their ruined country and in the midst of their hard struggle for the barest necessities of life, the men of the South, decimated and impoverished as they were, leapt to the rescue of their honor thus assailed, and, thanks to the labors of various historical committees of the Grand Camps, aided by not a few of the just and honorable men of the North who had withstood them on the field, and by an increasing number of others in the South who could secure leisure from the absorbing struggle for bread, these foul aspersions were shown to be false, and the character of the Confederate soldier vindicated before the world. We can never sufficiently express our appreciation of the service rendered in this vindication by Northern writers of veracity and courage like Charles Francis Adams and Gamaliel Bradford of Boston. Nothing is farther from my purpose than to stir any bitter memories. North and South alike, we are now all for the Union. In referring to the struggle of the sixties and the stainless honor with which the men of the South maintained their cause, "we seek," as President Davis said, "but to revive a memory which should be dear to all of us, North and South, and which we should pass on to our children as a memory which teaches the highest lessons of manhood, of truth, and of adherence to duty." We count him the true hero of the present, "who puts the past in its truest light, does justice to all, and knows no foe but him who revives the hates of a bygone generation." As to the past, we ask nothing more than the truth. We shall be content with nothing less. Our purpose in having the whole truth brought out is really conciliatory, and to explain some things that may appear contradictory. "It enables both parties in that struggle to give full

credit to each other for patriotic motives, though under a mistaken view of what that patriotism may have required. It shows why no attempt was ventured to bring against the Southern chiefs attainder of treason, which could not afford to be ventilated before any civil court under the terms of the American Constitution. It explains how, through a noble forbearance on both sides (always excepting the infamies of the Reconstruction period), the wound has been healed in the complete reconciliation of a divided people. It explains how we of the South, convinced of the rightfulness of our cause, can accept defeat without the blush of shame mantling the cheek of a single Confederate of us all; and while accepting the issue of the war as the decree of destiny, openly appeal to the verdict of posterity for the final vindication of our career."

Starting with the statement that Mr. Dickinson took a horse from his own stable when he set out to become a soldier in his country's service, and referring to General Grant's recognition at Appomattox of this feature of the organization of the Confederate Cavalry forces, we have been led on to speak of Grant's magnanimity in general and of the respect and kindly feeling entertained for each other by the brave and true men on both sides as distinguished from the post-bellum bitterness of those who were "invisible in war and invincible in peace," and who have engaged in malicious misrepresentation, and we have thus written at some length of the real position of the South in the sixties and of the full recognition of it by honest Northern writers. All this may seem to some an unjustifiable digression in a brief sketch of the life of an individual Confederate veteran, especially as we have said the same things in this REVIEW just a year or two ago and are only repeating them now. But it is not an unjustifiable digression. When one observes how successful some bitter and dishonest partisan writers have been in misleading numbers of our own young people as to the character and motives of the men who fought to preserve the rights guaranteed to them in the Constitution as adopted at the beginning by all the States of the Union, one feels that it would be recreancy to duty not to include in a sketch of the life of one of these veterans, when his earthly

career ends sixty-one years after the great conflict, some vindication of his course as a patriotic citizen, a gallant soldier and a man of stainless honor.

After his enlistment Colonel Dickinson served continuously in the field for nearly two years, taking part in many important engagements, until he was captured near Green Court House, Va., and was then confined at Fort Delaware and Washington, suffering the usual hardships of Federal prisons till the close of the war. On his release he went to Baltimore and for a few months engaged in the commission business in that city, but in the same year, 1865, he moved to what is now Malden, W. Va., then known as Kanawha Salines, a few miles east of Charleston, and began the manufacture of salt, establishing the works which have continued in operation from that day to this—the only ones now remaining of some forty that were in existence at that time. For a short while he was not very successful on account of the opposition of these rival concerns. They formed a trust—said to have been the first trust organized in the United States—the main object of which was to put Colonel Dickinson out of business. But he was not the kind of man to be put out. Instead of their putting him out he seems to have put them out. Not long ago, in answer to the questions of a newspaper man, he himself described that episode in this way: “They said when I built my furnace, ‘That old Virginian doesn’t know anything about the salt business; he will soon be broke.’ They were right on one point; I didn’t know anything about the salt industry—but to day I am the only manufacturer of salt in the valley.”

In 1867, in company with his father, Colonel William Dickinson, his brother, Henry Clay Dickinson, and Levi J. Woodward, he established at Charleston the institution with which his name has been most intimately associated in business circles, the Kanawha Valley Bank. In 1884 he became its president and continued in that office for the remaining forty-one years of his life. Under his presidency it became the largest and financially strongest of Charleston’s banking institutions. In later years, however, he has given his attention largely to other business enterprises, leaving to his son, John L. Dickin-

son, vice-president of the institution, the more active direction of the bank.

About the time the bank was established Colonel Dickinson began the development of a farm fifteen miles east of Charleston. This he brought to a high state of productivity, and there and in Malden he lived till 1893, when he moved to Charleston.

He was a man of remarkable business foresight and initiative. He early recognized the value of coal lands in the Kanawha Valley and adjacent territory and acquired extensive holdings of coal, gas and oil properties in Boone, Kanawha, Fayette, and Raleigh counties. Some of these he developed, but in later years, as in the case of the bank, he turned over the active management of these interests mainly to his sons, John L. and Charles C. Dickinson.

He was not only the outstanding figure in the business activities of his own community and the man who did more than any other for the industrial development of the Kanawha Valley, but he was directly interested in commercial enterprises in twenty-eight States of the Union as well as in Cuba—truly a man of vision and versatility.

Some of his favorite maxims, couched in homely and forceful terms, indicate clearly his views as to the essentials of success in business—"Establish confidence in yourself," "Make people believe in you," "Stay on the job and work," "Pay your debts," "Make no contracts you cannot meet." While he had the optimism of the pioneer and became the foremost constructive business factor in all the Kanawha region, his methods were never spectacular and risky, but always dictated by sound judgment and strict integrity.

Seeing his well-ordered life, free from excesses of every kind, and recognizing the sterling character that lay behind it, along with his straightforward, frank and friendly bearing, making him easily approachable, hundreds of people sought his counsel and advice "almost as a matter of habit," to use the expression of one of his fellow-townsmen in Charleston, and none ever sought it in vain or found their confidence in him misplaced.

The simple and wholesome habits of his boyhood remained with him throughout the years; for instance, his life-long habit of early rising. Throughout the most active period of his career he appeared at his desk before many business men had arisen.

He was cast in a large mould physically as well as mentally. He had inherited from his parents a splendid body and he brought to the strenuous life of his manhood the frame of a gladiator, tall, powerfully-knit, graceful and commanding. Born in 1831 and leading an active and temperate life, controlled by Christian principles, he lived happily and usefully far beyond the ordinary Scriptural limit of threescore years and ten. He was one of the few men of our time who had lived through four of the wars of the United States, infrequent and widely separated in time as they have been—the War with Mexico; the War Between the States, in which, as we have seen, he took an active part; the War with Spain; and the World War. Or, to put it in a still more striking way, he had lived under twenty-three of the twenty-nine presidents of the United States—all of them, in fact, but Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, Monroe, Madison and John Quincy Adams, for the last of whom he was named. A glance at the engraving accompanying this sketch will indicate better perhaps than pages of description the robust physique, the masterful mind, the strong character, the dauntless courage, and the kindly disposition that went to the making of his extraordinary personality. Let the reader note also the humorous twinkle in the fine gray eyes and the half smile playing about the firm lips, for these indicate another attractive feature of his many-sided character. He was a genial and even jovial man. It has fallen to my lot frequently, under the instructions of the Board of Trustees of the Seminary, to endeavor to raise funds to meet the various emergencies created by the rapid growth of the institution, especially in the last thirty years, and no community within the bounds of the controlling Synods has responded more promptly, more heartily and more generously to these appeals than the city of Charleston. The Seminary has many friends there, and the grace of God has been bestowed upon

them in no less liberal measure than it was upon the churches of Macedonia, whose example the Apostle Paul so glorified in the eighth chapter of his second Epistle to the Corinthians. Recognizing the fact so often and so emphatically stated by the controlling Synods that the Seminary is "the most important agency of the whole church," "the foundation of all our work," "the main source of our supply of ministers and missionaries," having furnished about half of the two thousand one hundred and forty-nine living ministers of our church, including two-thirds of all our pastors in West Virginia—the people of Charleston have invariably helped us with a free hand. The "elect ladies" of our church societies there have for years sent us annually of their own accord contributions to supplement our insufficient scholarship funds. But, in addition to these regular and spontaneous contributions, it has been necessary at times, as already stated, to make special appeals for special emergencies; and, however generous a people may be, every one who has had much of this kind of work to do knows that it is the work which ministers as a rule are most reluctant to undertake. Ordinarily, they dread it and shrink from it. They do it of course when it is laid on their consciences and when the Lord's work requires it, but they do not do it as a rule with pleasure, and in some cases they have very depressing experiences. I shall never forget the heart-lifting personal help that Colonel Dickinson gave Rev. W. S. Lacy, the Field Secretary of the institution, and myself fifteen years ago, when it had become necessary to raise a large addition to the endowment of the Seminary to enable it to go on with its work. There had been an increase of fifty per cent in the attendance of students since the removal of the institution to Richmond. That meant of course a great increase in running expenses, yet there had been no corresponding increase in the support fund. In some of the communities we had already visited we had had some success, but had also had some very trying discouragements. About the second day of our canvass of Charleston and immediately after we had suffered one rather severe disappointment, we walked into Colonel Dickinson's office. He greeted us heartily, listened alertly to the brief statement we

made, asked one or two intelligent and pointed questions, handed us his subscription for a liberal sum, asked what our plan was for the next half hour, and to our astonishment and delight proposed to go with us to see the next two or three persons on our list. Putting an arm around the shoulder of each of us and chatting gaily, he walked with us across the crowded street, stepped into the store of the next gentleman we were to see, introduced us, stated to him in his brief and breezy way what we were there for, said it was a good cause and worthy of the help we were seeking, and in less I think, than five minutes handed us the gentleman's subscription. Then straightway we were off to the next place, where a similar course was followed with similar results. In our various financial campaigns for the Seminary we have had the assistance of a number of our friends who have gone with us, sometimes at our request and sometimes of their own motion, to introduce us to persons whose aid we wished to seek; but that was the only time that the leading capitalist of a hustling city, every minute of whose time was precious, immersed in business, thronged with large affairs, ever offered absolutely of his own motion to leave his office at the busiest hour of the day and accompany us in a canvass for our cause.

The impression both of his personal friendship and of his belief in the work of the Seminary which this incident left on my mind may easily be imagined. Therefore, when seven years later it became necessary to secure a separate and full endowment for the professorship of Church History and Church Polity, I broached that subject to him with far less trepidation and far more hope than I should have done but for his really beaming interest and hearty cooperation in 1910. Moreover, my friend, Rev. Charles F. Myers, D. D., formerly pastor of the Bream Memorial Church at Charleston, and now of the First Presbyterian Church of Greensboro, N. C., who was intimate with Colonel Dickinson and who often talked with him about theological and ecclesiastical matters—for instance, about the sermons of my late colleague, Dr. Strickler, a volume that he read and reread with peculiar relish and appreciation—**informed** me in so many words that the Colonel was “intensely

interested in our Seminary" and advised me strongly to approach him in regard to the endowment of a professorship. Further, I knew that he was not only a stalwart Presbyterian in general, but one who believed heart and soul in the principles of which our own branch of the church had been for more than half a century the outstanding exponent, especially the spirituality and non-political character of the church. He knew that the church courts had no right to decide political questions and that the action of a fanatical majority of the General Assembly of 1861 at Philadelphia in adopting the notorious "Spring Resolutions," which declared that the allegiance of all Presbyterians was due to one of two contending governments then existing in this country, had split the church of our fathers asunder. He knew that the protest made at the time against this action by the eminent theologian, Dr. Charles Hodge of Princeton, and signed by himself and fifty-seven members of the Assembly, was an unanswerable statement of the Scriptural theory of Presbyterianism: "We make this protest not because we do not acknowledge loyalty to our country to be a moral and religious duty, according to the word of God which requires us to be subject to the powers that be, nor because we deny the right of the Assembly to enjoin that and all other like duties on the ministers and churches under its care, but because we deny the right of the General Assembly to decide the political question to what government the allegiance of Presbyterians, as citizens, is due, and its right to make that decision a condition of membership in our church." He knew that, whatever might be true of other theological schools, Union Seminary, while maintaining the most friendly and fraternal relations with our brethren of the Northern church, and while every year bringing gifted men from that body to her halls as special lecturers on various subjects, had at the same time not failed to teach her students this history of 1861 and these principles thus ably set forth by Dr. Hodge and his associates as well as by our own Southern Assembly. And so, when it was proposed to him to endow in perpetuity the chair whose special business it would be to teach to our prospective young ministers throughout the future the true

history of our church and the true theory of our spiritual freedom under Christ as the sole Head of His church, he agreed promptly and heartily. Thus it was that the John Q. Dickinson Professorship of Church History and Church Polity was established—the greatest of all his benefactions and the one by which his name will be forever associated with our Seminary and the world-wide work of the Church. By the way, the only condition he imposed when agreeing to endow the chair was that his name should not be given out in connection with it at that time. This was his rule in making his gifts to all manner of good causes, churches, Sunday School buildings in home mission fields, boys whom he was helping through college, six of them at one time as was afterwards discovered—he did not give “to be seen of men.” Of course the Seminary observed his wishes in the matter of the endowment and kept his name from the public for several years. It was only because of certain developments in the West Virginia Synod’s general campaign for Christian education at a later time that it became necessary to get his consent to the giving out of his name as the founder of the chair at the Seminary.

One of the happy features of the arrangement as worked out and one which nobody foresaw or thought of when Colonel Dickinson created the foundation is that the first regular incumbent of the professorship as endowed is the Rev. Ernest Trice Thompson, a native of Kanawha, and son of the Rev. Ernest Thompson, D. D., pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Charleston, who is a specially dear and intimate friend of Colonel and Mrs. Dickinson. Professor Thompson was elected to the Chair by the Directors of the Seminary solely on the ground of his brilliant record as a student and his broad and thorough scholarship.

Colonel Dickinson was peculiarly blessed in his domestic life, though it was not without its bereavements and sorrows. While still a young soldier in the Confederate Army he married Miss Mary D. Lewis, of Kanawha County, a daughter of Mr. John D. Lewis, and a sister of Mr. Charles C. Lewis, who was also a warm friend of our Seminary and for eleven years a member of its Board of Directors. Colonel and Mrs. Dick-

inson had six children. One son and a daughter died in childhood. Another son, Moseley S., died in 1895, shortly after his graduation from the Virginia Military Institute. William, the oldest son, who also had been educated at the Virginia Military Institute, and who married Miss Janet Alexander Preston, daughter of the Rev. Thomas L. Preston, D. D., of Lexington, died in 1907. Two of Colonel Dickinson's sons survive him, Mr. John L. Dickinson, of Charleston, and Mr. Charles C. Dickinson, of Malden, both leaders in business and both active in religious work.

On November 20, 1923, Colonel Dickinson, still hale and hearty, active in business and retaining all his faculties, celebrated the ninety-second anniversary of his birth. The occasion was made one of congratulation by his old friends, neighbors and business associates, culminating in a family gathering at his home. But at last "the strong staff was broken and the beautiful rod"—the powerful constitution which had carried him through an eventful and strenuous life of ninety-four years yielded to the infirmities of age. Confined to his bed at his home, growing weaker as the days passed, comforted by the tender ministrations of his beloved wife who never left him day or night, suffering little or no pain, he passed peacefully out to the Land of Light on November 26, 1925.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. . . . With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation."