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I. THE FOUNDING OF THE SEMINARY.

The Synod of Virginia on October 24th, 1812, "unanimously resolved on the establishment of a theological seminary and unanimously concurred in the appointing of Dr. Hoge as their professor." This we take as the formal beginning of Union Theological Seminary, although Dr. Hoge had already been teaching theology at Hampden-Sydney for five years in connection with his duty as President of the College. He had written in 1810, "It was chiefly from a regard to a theological seminary lately established at this place that I was induced to accept the Presidency at Hampden-Sydney." Next year there will be celebrated the 150th anniversary of the organization of our General Assembly. When it was constituted in 1788 there were but two synods in the South, that of Virginia and of North and South Carolina. The former consisted of the Presbyteries of Hanover, Lexington and Redstone and in 1789 they inaugurated plans for the training of theological students at Liberty Hall in Lexington, Va., under the Rev. William Graham. In 1791 the Synod officially recognized a School of the Prophets, under John McMillan at Canonsburg in Western Pennsylvania, and another one under William Graham at Lexington, as the two centers for the training of their future ministers. Under

MOSES HOGE: FIRST PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

Address Delivered before the Synod of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, Wednesday, September 8th, 1937.

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William Hoge, the grandfather of Moses Hoge, left Scotland for America on account of the religious persecutions under the Stuarts. His son, James Hoge, was a farmer in moderate circumstances in the lower part of the Valley of Virginia. He was a man of robust intellect, a self-taught theologian who held theology as his chief recreation.

I. YEARS OF PREPARATION.

Moses Hoge, the subject of this sketch, was born in Frederick County, Virginia, February 15, 1752, and grew up as a country boy on his father's farm. When he was a boy he attended a school in the neighborhood of his father's home for a period of seven weeks, and that was all the schooling he received till after he was twenty-five years of age. Just why he received no more formal education we do not know. It may be that there were no schools in the neighborhood. It may be because his father was too poor to pay for the privileges of education.

During this brief school experience there occurred an incident which determined the whole subsequent tenor of his life. Rev. Samuel Stanhope Smith, President of Hampden-Sydney College, came in one day to address the students. In the course of his talk he said: "Sanctified learning is the great blessing; unsanctified learning is the greatest curse." These words sank deep into Moses Hoge's heart, and became the guiding principle of his life. Since he could not get this learning from the schools, he determined to get it for himself.

When he left the classical school, and went back to the work of the farm, he fastened a book to the plough, at the end of each furrow ran his eyes over the printed page and then fixed the contents in his mind while he followed the team across the field.

Every leisure moment was devoted to his books. In the manuscript account of his life, written by his son, John Blair Hoge, and a prized volume in our Spence Library,* we read: "His thirst for knowledge was intense. Of his books he was never weary. When fatigued with other employments he repaired for relaxation to them. In the interval of labor, without assistance, he made considerable progress in some branches of mathematical science. Afterwards he attempted to acquire a knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages. Without assistance and almost without elementary books, by the incessant repetition of his efforts, he made attainments which although in themselves inconsiderable, were under those circumstances thought extraordinary."

He seems to have been unusually pious as well as unusually studious. "When in a particular instance he relinquished his amusement at the close of the evening of Saturday, he detected in his mind a feeling of sorrow that he should not be able to resume it until the Sabbath should be over. Aware of the ascendancy which although innocent in itself it was beginning to acquire over him, and apprehensive of the temptation that might ensue, he at once resolved and invariably supported his resolution never to engage in it again."

When he was twenty years old Moses Hoge joined the church and soon after decided to enter the Presbyterian ministry. His own studies needed to be supplemented, but the way did not open till he was twenty-five years old. At that time he went to a grammar school in Culpeper County for about a year. "His habits were grave, retiring, studious. Every movement not appropriated to indispensable relaxation he seemed to hoard up as a miser does his wealth. Every hour and every method of improvement he regarded as so much opportunity benignantly yielded him . . ."

The next year (1778) he went to Liberty Hall Academy (the

*Unless otherwise indicated quotations are from this manuscript Life by his son.



Moses Hoge

REV. PROF. MOSES HOGE

forerunner of Washington and Lee University). He was then twenty-six years old, much older than the other students in the Academy, and was subject therefore to considerable ridicule, but he persevered and completed the course of study in 1780.

There were no theological seminaries at that time, so he pursued his theological studies under his former preceptor, Dr. Graham, and for a while under Dr. Waddell. He was licensed by Hanover Presbytery in 1781 and ordained in 1782.

II. IN THE PASTORATE.

For the next five years he served as a home missionary in Hampshire County, now West Virginia. During this pastorate he reviewed his former literary studies and increased the sum of his acquisitions. A part of his time was devoted to the study of the Hebrew language, which the rapidity of his academic course had excluded from the number of his attainments. In this language he made respectable proficiency.

Compelled to move from Hampshire County by ill health, he went to Shepherdstown, in Jefferson County, now West Virginia, and for the next twenty years served as pastor of the large congregation which he gathered in this place. During the course of this exacting pastorate he continued his studies, we can be sure. He also found time to write a couple of books, the first, "A Criticism of the Fourfold Foundation of Calvinism Examined and Shaken, by Jeremiah Walker," and, second, "The Sophist Unmasked," part of a larger work which he edited and called "The Christian Panoply—a Reply to Thos. Paine."

He still seems to have been somewhat of an ascetic. Thus on March 24, 1791, he wrote: "At a wedding I was . . . much impressed with the folly and ensnaring value of those amusements which the world, and many lukewarm professors of religion too, are disposed to call innocent. I took the liberty of addressing the youth present on that occasion . . . I afterwards introduced the singing of hymns (as substitutes for psalms) which will I suppose be considered an improper innovation. May these sacred compositions banish from the social circle those vain, idle songs which are so

pernicious to good morals, and so unbecoming to the Christian character." The introduction of hymns did arouse dissension in some of the Virginia churches. The future Professor of Theology in the Synod of Virginia may have been a little too ascetic, but at least he was not bound to senseless tradition, and that was a good trait in one who was to train the future ministry of the church.

III. PRESIDENT OF HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE.

In 1807 Moses Hoge was elected President of Hampden-Sydney College. The College was then handicapped for lack of funds, as it has been all through its history. Dr. Hoge in addition to the administrative work properly falling to his office had to take over a large part of the burden of instruction. He was then fifty-five years old. It is interesting to read that "not satisfied with his own literary attainments Dr. Hoge devoted himself to intense study, not only to subjects which he himself taught, but of all subjects included in the college curriculum." In other words, he remained a student all of his life. His success came in large measure from the fact that he never ceased to grow—intellectually as well as spiritually.

We might note in passing that Dr. Hoge's efforts brought about a great improvement in the standing of the College. A man of learning wrote after he had been there a few years: "I am both pleased and surprised to learn, as I very frequently do, how much the public opinion was changed in relation to that institution. Its reputation is daily growing."

We are more concerned, however, with Dr. Hoge's relations to what is now Union Theological Seminary.

IV. PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE SEMINARY.

In the year 1805 some of the ministers of the Presbytery of Hanover anxious to extend their acquaintance with Theological Science had proposed to establish at Hampden-Sydney College a library which should be composed of such rare and valuable books as they had no hope of being enabled as individuals to possess.

Some small contributions to this object being received, a number of books were ordered as a foundation for the library.

The facilities which this establishment would yield in the instruction of candidates for the ministry quickly arose in their minds. As a result, in 1806—

“The Presbytery of Hanover taking into consideration the deplorable state of our country in regard to religious instruction, the very small number of ministers possessing the qualifications required by the Scriptures and the prevalence of ignorance and error, on motion, resolved:

“1. That an attempt be made to establish at Hampden-Sydney College a complete theological library for the benefit of students in divinity.

“2. That an attempt be also made to establish a fund for the educating of poor and pious youth for the ministry of the Gospel.”*

By the spring of 1807 the committee appointed for this purpose had succeeded in raising for this double object the sum of \$2,500.

This same year the Board of Trustees of Hampden-Sydney College elected Dr. Moses Hoge as their new President. He was elected to this position for two reasons: First, because he was thought to be the best man to administer the College; second, because he was thought to be the best man to develop the Seminary.

Thus the Rev. Drury Lacy wrote him after his election: “You know we have been making some efforts towards establishing a theological school at the College. I trust this consideration will have some weight in turning the scale in our favor, and inducing you to come among us. We shall need your assistance and influence both in establishing and conducting it.”

John Blair Hoge, writing the biography of his father a few years after his death, says: “The prospect of usefulness which seemed to be extended before him by the projected establishment of a theological seminary at Hampden-Sidney was, as he repeatedly informed his friends, the reason why he decided to remove thither.”

*Minutes of Hanover Presbytery.

He began immediately (1808) to give instruction in theology to a group of ministerial candidates. Three years later (1810) he wrote: "It was chiefly from a regard to a theological Seminary lately established at this place that I was induced to accept the Presidency of Hampden-Sidney College. Of that Seminary you have probably seen some account in the public prints. It has already been useful, and will, there is reason to expect, continue to be so for ages to come." In August, 1812, he wrote: "We have now nine or ten who intend to preach the Gospel, and about the same number of my alumni are now preaching."

The importance of a Seminary had come to be appreciated meanwhile in other portions of the church. A committee was appointed by the General Assembly in 1809 to take that subject under consideration. They reported three different plans which were sent down to the Presbyteries for their election. Between the first of these plans, which proposed the establishment of one institution only, and the third, which assigned one to every Synod, the Presbyteries were almost evenly divided. The Assembly, however, judging that the weight of sentiment was on the side of a central theological seminary for the entire church, resolved in 1810 on the first measures necessary for the erection of such an institution. This Seminary was established at Princeton in 1812.

The Presbyteries which composed the Synod of Virginia had reported their inclination to favor the establishment of synodical schools. Any transfer of the small fund collected by the Presbytery of Hanover was thought to be inconsistent with the pledge given to the public. The Synod therefore, in 1812, the same year in which Princeton was established, unanimously resolved on the establishment of their own theological institution and concurred unanimously in the appointment of Dr. Hoge as their professor.

Some object that this was not a true theological seminary because Dr. Hoge still remained President of Hampden-Sydney College and because there were no distinct seminary buildings. Dr. Hoge had been elected President of Hampden-Sydney College, however, by the Board of Trustees of that institution, who were independent of any synodical control. He was elected Professor of Theology by the Synod of Virginia, his salary in that capacity

was paid by the Synod and the affairs of the theological school were governed ostensibly at any rate by a Board of Trustees appointed by the Synod and amenable to its authority.

V. DR. HOGE'S IDEAL FOR THE SEMINARY.

study of divinity in the Theological Seminary written by a committee of which Dr. Hoge was the chairman and adopted by the Synod in 1816. The plan in part reads as follows :

. . . "To a student of divinity just ideas of the ministerial office must be of obvious importance. For the best information in this respect, he must be referred to the holy Scriptures; and at the same time, some of the best treatises upon the subject ought to be put into his hands. . . .

"Were it in our power to ascertain what in religion the light of nature has discovered, natural religion as it is called, might probably be a study of great importance. But this is impossible. . . .

"A preacher of the Gospel ought certainly to be well acquainted with the evidences upon which the Gospel rests, that he may be always ready to give answer to every man that asketh a reason of the Christian hope. . . . It will . . . be advisable for a theological student to obtain as extensive and accurate knowledge as his circumstances will admit, both of the objections of infidel writers to the truth of our holy religion, and the most appropriate replies to these objections. . . .

"Students of divinity must be taught to consider the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments not only as true, but also as inspired by the Holy Ghost. And it is of much importance that they should form correct ideas of a subject respecting which very different sentiments have obtained in the church. All scripture is given by inspiration of God. In a controversy with unbelievers, however, it is not necessary to insist upon a plenary inspiration as essential to their credibility. That there was the smallest error in the original manuscript of any of our holy books is indeed a point that must by no means be conceded. Were it, however, admitted that there might possibly have been some mistakes in matters of unessential importance, it would not invalidate their

authority, considered as the standard of our faith, and the rule of our practice. . . .

"It seems hardly necessary to observe that a preacher of the Gospel ought to be well acquainted with his Bible. . . . It is not from human creeds or confessions that he is to derive the articles of his religious belief, but from the oracles of God. . . . With this view, he ought to pay particular attention to the antiquities of the Jews. Nor should the antiquities of other ancient nations, whose history is intimately connected with that of the Jews, be entirely neglected. Nay it is sometimes the case that the customs and manners of the present descendants of those eastern nations will throw much light upon some passages in the Sacred writings. . . . But he ought to pay a still more particular attention to the languages in which the Scripture were originally written. For it is rather by having recourse to the originals and comparing Scripture with Scripture, in dependence upon divine assistance, than by a reference to the best commentators, that he is to expect to arrive at the knowledge of their real meaning.

"As theology constitutes the most harmonious and perfect system with which we have any acquaintance, it may be most advantageously taught in a systematic way." Students cannot expect to get a full knowledge of this subject in two years, the report continues, but they should get the essentials, such as "the doctrine of the holy trinity, original sin, God manifested in the flesh, justification through the imputed righteousness of Christ; the nature and necessity of regeneration, repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; the necessity of supernatural grace for the conversion of a sinner, etc."

"Nor is it enough for a preacher . . . to understand these doctrines himself, and to be able to teach them to others; he ought as far as his talents and opportunities will admit, to qualify himself for defending them against every assailant. . . ."

"Every theological student ought to be well instructed in the various duties of practical religion." (i. e., the duties of Christian morality). . . .

"Those who are destined to be rulers in the church of Christ ought certainly to be well acquainted with its nature and consti-

tution, as well as with those forms of government and that discipline which are best calculated to promote the interests of genuine religion . . .”

“Church history will also merit particular attention of the theological student. . . .”

“Our theological students should be well instructed in casuistical divinity. They should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary . . . to distinguish genuine piety from superstition on the one hand and enthusiasm on the other. They should be taught how to conduct themselves in the house of God and before the world. . .

“As our theological seminary is not intended exclusively for the advantage of any denomination, it seems hardly necessary to observe that party zeal, instead of being fostered and promoted, is to be proscribed and banished from all its offices; that the students are to be taught to distinguish between the essentials of the Christian religion, respecting which the protestant churches are so generally agreed, and the circumstantials, about which there have been so many worse than fruitless debates, and that instead of kindling wherever they go, the wide wasting flames of religious controversy, it should be earnestly recommended to them to keep, and that with all denominations, as far as a proper regard for the faith once delivered to the saints will permit, ‘the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.’ ”

VI. AN ARDENT PATRIOT.

It is probable, however, that Dr. Hoge’s personality was more important than his plan. He was, as we have already noted, extraordinarily diligent as a student and somewhat ascetic in his conduct. His zeal for the service of God, however, did not prevent him from being an ardent patriot in time of war, and also in time of peace.

As a young man he interrupted his studies for the gospel ministry to serve for a short time in the armies of the Revolution. After the war he played a prominent part in the successful fight that Hanover Presbytery waged for the separation of Church and

State in Virginia, though he was one of the youngest members of the Presbytery.

In 1794 the Synod of Virginia, which then included Presbyteries in Virginia, Pennsylvania and Kentucky, met in Harrisonburg, Va. The town was filled with soldiers who had come to put down the Whisky Rebellion which centered in that section. Many of the rebels were members of the Presbyterian church, and considerable interest was centered in the action of the Synod. Dr. Hoge proposed that the Synod prepare an address to the people under their care, inculcating upon them the duty of obedience to the laws of their country. Dr. Graham, President of Liberty Hall Academy, opposed this motion as prejudging in an ecclesiastical court the case of a people who felt themselves aggrieved politically. Dr. Hoge's motion was lost by a small majority. The military forces were greatly excited, and threatened members of the Synod with dire punishment. Officers of high grade demanded a new vote by yeas and nays, and an explanation of the previous vote. Both were refused by the Synod. The wrath of the people was aroused, tar and feathers were prepared. It was Moses Hoge who under these circumstances quieted the people and restrained the soldiers—preaching a great sermon on "Render unto Caesar the things which belong unto Caesar, and unto God the things which belong unto God."

In 1814, during our second war with England, the British landed a force of troops and burned the Capitol at Washington. It was reported that the same soldiers were marching toward Richmond. This news came to Dr. Hoge one Sunday afternoon, just as he was beginning his usual religious service. He stood up at once and spoke to his audience upon the duty of defending home and country, urging the men present to take their rifles and go and meet the enemy. The next day at noon a company of horsemen was ready, and Dr. Hoge again addressed them, urging each soldier to fight even unto death.

VII. OPPONENT OF SLAVERY.

Though Dr. Hoge held the common view of his day regarding war, he was more sensitive than most of his fellow ministers re-

garding slavery. He carried his opposition so far that he thought it was very possible that he would be compelled to leave the country. In 1808 he wrote a letter to a member of his family in which he said: "My objections to the slavery of this country have always been very strong, and are becoming more so. I wish therefore our landed interest so managed as to furnish a retreat when age or any reverse shall render a removal necessary."

Another extant letter written in 1819 is concerned with his efforts to unite a husband and wife belonging to different masters. The letter goes on to deplore the condition of the slaves subject to such separations and to predict the judgment of heaven upon the land if such injustice continues.

Dr. Hoge's sentiments regarding slavery were transmitted to his family. Two of his three sons moved to Ohio that they might live in a territory where slavery did not exist. "If you continue in Ohio," he wrote to one son, "I wish your brothers to settle there also; and in that case should my life be prolonged I wish to spend my last days in that country."

VIII. AN EFFECTIVE PREACHER.

As a preacher Dr. Hoge was very effective. Historians tell us that when he came to Hampden-Sydney scepticism and infidelity was still common in Virginia. Even where there was not open infidelity, there remained among many of the intelligent and the wealthy and the influential, if not an aversion at least an apathy to Christian worship and Christian duty. The ministry of Dr. Hoge appears to have been instrumental in no inconsiderable degree in correcting this unhappy state of affairs. Under its attractions a number who had been accustomed to keep aloof from the temple of God became its regular visitants and of these not a few by a profession of religion were enrolled among the members of the Christian church.

Dr. Hoge's effectiveness, however, did not depend on his delivery. In his young days a friend tried to make some improvement in his exterior manner, to impart more grace to his movements, by example and instruction. He finally gave up in despair,

saying: "I do not believe that all the dancing masters in the world would make any alteration in your manners; we must let you go out as you are, and make your way through the world in your own way." He never acquired any grace in the pulpit. His son acknowledges that he lacked the gifts of an orator. A friend said: "His arms seemed always too long and their movements were awkward."

What was the secret of his power? William Shields Reid says: "He possessed a mind of uncommon vigor, capable at once of accurate discrimination and profound research, and withal richly stored with the treasures of scientific knowledge. As a preacher his manner was ungraceful, even uncouth, but there was so much depth and originality of thought, such richness and force of illustration, and such clear and cogent reasoning, that the awkwardness of his manner was very soon quite overlooked or forgotten." Peyton H. Hoge in his life of Moses Drury Hoge takes us even farther back: "His piety was that old-fashioned Brainerd type that wept in secret over imperfections that no one else discovered and agonized in prayer over the souls committed to his charge; from devotions like these he went into his pulpit and men trembled and prayed and believed at his word."

IX. ABIDING INFLUENCE.

I would like to write of the early history of the Seminary—but there is no space now for that. We might note that in the eight years of his service as Professor in the Theological Seminary Dr. Hoge sent more than thirty young men from his classes into the ministry. One of these was Daniel Baker, perhaps the greatest evangelist that our church has ever produced. And his influence continues to abide. No less an authority than Robert L. Dabney said: "It was Moses Hoge who impressed upon the Virginia ministry that moderate type of evangelical Calvinism that has ever since distinguished it."

In his day Dr. Hoge received little assistance. The Synod did little or nothing to aid him in a practical way, and Dr. Hoge was forced to bear the burden of the Seminary almost alone down to

the day of his death. At the same time he was subject to considerable criticism because he did not follow in every respect the wishes of his brethren. Among other things, he was accused of indolence. Commenting on this strange charge in his diary he says: "It would have been more plausible to have charged me with suicide." He adds: "That I have done irreparable injuries to my constitution by what appears to me extraordinary exertions for the ecclesiastic as well as secular youth under my care I have no doubt." The restraint under which he speaks is better appreciated by one who reads the portion of his diary which has come down to us. For he was a humble man, one who constantly underrated his accomplishments and was never satisfied with his efforts. As a matter of fact Dr. Hoge did hasten his death by his extraordinary exertions for Hampden-Sydney College and for the Theological Seminary in Virginia. He poured out his life because of the firm conviction planted in him as a youth by Samuel Stanhope Smith—that sanctified learning is the world's greatest blessing; unsanctified learning is the world's greatest curse.

That phrase might be taken as the ideal for Union Theological Seminary in the present day. The institution is open to truth from whatever source it may come. But it must be sanctified, consecrated to the Master's use. The present faculty is as ready as Moses Hoge to pledge their lives and their energies to that end.