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THE SEMINARY'S FUTURE IN THE LIGHT OF ITS PAST*

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Dr. Mullins' request that I speak on this subject came to me between two teachings of a Sunday school lesson, to the Teachers' Meeting on Tuesday night and to a Bible class on Sunday morning. The subject of the lesson was Israel's triumph over the Philistines and Samuel's erection of the "Ebenezer."

And in that lesson I find this thought of a past and a future. For every Ebenezer stone has two faces—one towards the side whence we approach it, and one towards the side upon which we leave it—for Ebenezers are erected only by those who are moving forward. Upon the one side is "*Hitherto*"; on the other, "*Henceforth*."

On this Founders' Day let us have something of an Ebenezer experience. And first, the Seminary's PAST.

Upon this I touch but lightly. Many thoughts clamor for expression; but only a few can find it. And these I group.

I. THE SEMINARY WAS PLANTED IN PRAYER.

It did not spring into existence in a day but came into being through long, earnest thought and prayer by men who knew how to pray. No one can read the story of the struggles of the men who shaped it and guided it without feeling how

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large a part prayer had in every decision made, in every step taken. And it was the kind of prayer that ascends from the hearts of men who see a great need and feel called of God to supply it. Paul saw a heathen world awaiting life; believed himself the messenger of life—and how he prayed! So of these men.

II. THE SEMINARY WAS NOURISHED WITH SACRIFICE.

None of you younger men will ever know—it matters not how much you hear or how much you read—the frightful desolation of the land in the years of the Seminary's slow and painful growth in Greenville, S. C. Nor can you dream of the sacrifices made for it.

Sacrifices by the people who supported it. I cannot tell you of these—may I just illustrate? I knew a woman reared in luxury of Carolina sea-coast plantation—later the wife of a prosperous business man—who, in a day by the fortunes of war lost all. In the years that followed she plied the needle for bread for herself and hers. Yet, in all those years there never was an appeal for the Seminary which did not elicit a part of the hard-earned money. And she was only one of many whose sacrificial gifts fed the “boys” and provided the scant salaries of the professors.

And sacrifice on the part of those who taught. You have all heard stories of these things. They are among the traditions of the Seminary; sacred traditions they are. May I give you another? Years ago I was thrown much with Dr. W. C. Lindsay, of Columbia, S. C., who told me of his early Seminary experiences. Coming out of the army, defeated, sore, he was angry with man and God, and full of infidelity. But God laid hold on him in a meeting conducted by Dr. Wm. E. Hatcher, and he was converted. At once he felt called to preach and everybody told him to go to the Seminary. And of course he was told great things of Dr. Broadus. In a few weeks after his conversion he arrived in Greenville and went to see Dr. Broadus. To his amazement he found a man dressed literally in “home-spun”, and that sadly worn and somewhat frayed. He thought: If this is the way Dr. Broadus has to live, what

hope is there in the ministry for poor me? The next morning by appointment he was to meet Dr. Broadus at the old building on a side street, where were the recitation rooms. Going early and while waiting, a country man drove up on a load of wood, and they engaged in conversation; when to his further amazement he learned that this was Dr. Manly. Did you ever hear of men who laid their bodies as living sacrifices on the altar of service?

Do you see the picture? These were princes; princes, with princely stipends awaiting their word of acceptance, and princely honors. "They humbled themselves, and took upon them the form of servants"; wherefore God hath highly exalted them and given them names above the names of their fellows.

Time would fail me to tell you of the sacrifices made by the men who went to the Seminary to be taught. Seminary men were not as much sought after then as now. In some parts they were looked upon with suspicion, and in some, were almost compelled to fight their way to recognition and position.

But they won, for, planted in prayer, nourished in sacrifice, the Seminary *fructed in men*. It fruited early and has fruited all along through the years in men!

They are men who have, in no small degree, changed the current of Baptist thought and Baptist life in our Southland. And they have done it by transferring the emphasis in Baptist thought and Baptist life from the things that are non-essential to the things that are essential. Mark you, I say the *emphasis* of Baptist thought and life. May I illustrate? When I went to the Seminary in 1874, and for some years after, there was one unfailing subject of discussion among the students. And battles royal they had over it—often lasting into the "wee sma' hours" of the night. It was this: Ought Baptist preachers to invite Pedit-baptists into their pulpits? And all the depths of theological lore were searched for arguments pro and con upon this question of all importance. I noticed that when the boys left, their minds were on other and higher things.

Men who have gone forth to lead the people to a larger life and a larger endeavor. What I mean may be best set forth in an example. For years I have attended a certain association

in Georgia. I have observed with great pleasure its development year by year. This development in no little measure centered around a man—a graduate of the Seminary. At the meeting this fall a plain man, from a country church, was glorying in the progress made, and said: "But how can we help it with such a leader as Bro. Galphin?"

Now do not understand me to say that Seminary men alone have done all this work. But I do say that this is the Seminary spirit, and the men imbued with it, in association with many of like spirit who have not been in the Seminary, have fought the battle for progress; for enlargement of vision; for organization of forces, *until it is won*. The last opposition is gradually dying out in Texas and Arkansas and small portions of other states. Have you noticed how the venom of its spirit has been poured out on the Seminary? Why? Because that spirit recognized the fact that the Seminary was, and is, the exponent of the larger life.

Coming back to our Ebenezer and standing about it today, let us for a few moments withdraw our thoughts from the past, and before we try to consider the future—the "Henceforth" of the Seminary—consider a present condition. A condition which, like the Kingdom, has come "without observation". I had almost said: Without special design, and, I am tempted to believe—in part at least—without special effort to bring it into existence. Yet it is a condition which, to my mind, is very remarkable and very significant—*and of God*. It is this:

There has come to be a grouping around the Seminary of a number of the *great constructive forces of the denomination*. This is unique in the history of seminaries—so far as my observation and information go. Let me enumerate these forces:

The Foreign Mission Board has long been the ally of the Seminary; and has depended on it as its chief source of supply of men for the fields abroad. This alliance and dependence have been recognized and responded to by the Seminary in the monthly "Missionary Day", and in the place given to the study of missions in the curriculum.

Of late, the Home Mission Board as never before, has been turning its eyes hitherward for men to supply its rapidly-

developing fields in the West—where the conflict deepens and where the best men must go as leaders of the Lord's hosts. Yes, and for its evangelists—sane evangelists—safe evangelists—evangelists who know both the language and the laws of Zion. Hence this new course of lectures on Evangelism.

Even the State Boards are sending their secretaries here to select men for their mission fields. Not for their great city churches alone—nor their towns—but for the *mission* fields where foundations are being laid, and wise master-builders are needed.

And the Sunday School Board—that marvel of Southern Baptist enterprise and of far-sighted wisdom—instead of establishing its lecture courses or training schools at Nashville, has incorporated its “plant” in the Seminary. This by lecture course and School of Pedagogy—whence will come the trained Sunday School leaders in pew and pulpit.

Last, but not least, the Woman's Missionary Union has come into closest alliance by its Training School for Women—a monument to the holy sagacity of E. Y. Simmons; the wise direction of E. Y. Mullins, and the supreme consecration of some Kentucky women.

Did you note that I said “*The Constructive Forces*” of the denomination? These are they which have been engaged in building up our denomination; in organizing our forces, until we Southern Baptists have ceased to be the “guerrilla bands” facetiously described by that South Carolina wit, John G. Williams, as the herd of Texas ponies, going every one as he would, yet all moving in the same way, so vividly described by Dr. Broadus in his memorable address at Memphis; or the “gang”, as we have been designated by Dr. Gambrell. We have become an army—organized, aggressive, growing every day more terrible to our enemies and our God's enemies.

Do you realize what this grouping of these forces here means?

Brethren of the faculty, it means that you are going to be kept so closely in touch with the activities of the denomination that you can never become scholarly recluses. You will have to walk down here on the earth among your fellows. If you

can keep your feet on the earth, there is not much danger of your heads being lost in the fogs of speculation.

And for the students it means that they go forth well-rounded men, equipped for work as well as for preaching; fitted to be the leaders of their people in every line of Christian endeavor and service.

And now let us turn our eyes for a little season to the future—"Henceforth."

What may we confidently expect for the Seminary, under the blessing and the leadership of God? I say blessing—such we have had. And leadership—such we all crave.

With its past and its present, the Seminary must continue to be, as it has been, THE SOUTHERN Baptist Theological Seminary. This, by virtue of its history; which has interlinked it with everything Southern Baptists hold dear, in principle and practice. By virtue of its traditions, which make its name and its teachers—past and present—household words all over our land. By virtue of the men it has sent forth, who look ever to it as their Alma Mater, dear to them by a thousand associations. By virtue of its place in the confidence and affections of the common people—a place won in the times and in the ways that try men's souls.

Other institutions may and will spring up and do splendid work. But they will not be *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, in the sense that this must be, so long as there is a Southern Baptist Convention; and a Southern Baptist sentiment; and a Southern Baptist view of truth and practice.

It will continue, and increasingly so, to be the exponent of Southern Baptist thought and life. The eyes of the world will turn to it to learn how this mighty spiritual force, known as Southern Baptists, are thinking and feeling and purposing and preparing to execute.

And this will be, not alone through the men—and women, too—who go from its walls, imbued with its spirit, but through the books which are issuing and will issue from the brains and hearts of its professors. Do you know that today E. Y. Mullins is being looked upon as the greatest exponent of Baptist belief in this country? And that leaders of religious thought,

other than Baptists, are putting his "Why is Christianity True?" in the hands of their college and theological students? The books of Professor Robertson also are attracting attention, and he is preparing a Greek grammar which we believe will fill a large place. We also look forward to Dr. Sampey's commentary and hope it will not be much longer delayed.

As it seems to me, this Seminary must become—and is becoming—the Theological University of the Baptists of the South, and of the border states as well; a school so manned and equipped that from other schools will come men to complete their theological studies, to pursue original investigations in theological science, to secure that broadest culture which the age demands, in at least some of the leaders of denominational thought. *Yea.*

And, at the same time to secure such equipment for the service of the day, in practical ministry in Sunday School and mission work, as will put our denomination where it ought to be—in the lead of all the Christian denominations. The day has passed when Baptists can afford to take the initiative in great religious enterprises, and then, for want of trained men, lag behind, while others press forward and take their glory and their blessing.

After I had put in my notes some brief outline of what I have here said about a Southern Baptist Theological University, I was reading "The Life and Letters of John A. Broadus", and found there this statement: "So, as Mr. Jefferson had drawn a new American university, Mr. Broadus drew a new American seminary, which had in it adaptability and expansion, the possibility of becoming a theological university". What young John A. Broadus planned, and his young companions, Boyce and Manly, were wise enough to adopt, has developed along the lines marked out, and is today rapidly coming to realize the dreams that thrilled their hearts—to which realization they devoted their lives and their all.

If these dreams are ever fully realized there are several things which it will be necessary for the Seminary to have.

1. I was about to say "Libraries"—in the plural. And I will say it—libraries, a number of them; libraries within the one

great library. Books beyond which men will not have to search, unless they desire to let their eyes rest on the original sources. Alas that we have not a Baptist Carnegie, afraid of the disgrace of dying rich, and with a library mania—especially a theological seminary library mania

2. *Buildings.* What—more buildings? Yes. As necessary are they for a growing institution as are larger clothes for growing John or Mary. There ought to be no question as to plenty of room for all comers. My heart has been going out in loving sympathy with the men all over our Southland who, deprived of Seminary advantages—even of college advantages—are feeling the need of these and longing for even a few months here, that they may be the better fitted to meet the larger demands being made upon them by the increasing intelligence of the people, by the acquaintance of the people, as never before, with the various sociological and theological and missionary questions and problems with which newspapers and magazines and books are filled. And they would come here, but for their families—small, yet families. When will some large-hearted men and women, looking upon the apartment houses of our great cities, erect somewhere near here a great house of small apartments in which such men can live with their families free of rent?

3. And *Endowment.* This is needed for many things. I must mention only one: that the Seminary may have *men*; more men to teach. That these men, who for so long have been trying each to do two men's work, may have some respite from perpetual toil and grind, may live longer and write more books!

And men not only to teach here those who come for teaching; but those over yonder who cannot come, but who might be reached by what we have come to know as "university extension" work. There is work for almost another faculty to teach in person in institutes and other gatherings and by correspondence. For there are—and ever will be—hundreds upon hundreds of young men entering the Baptist ministry, with very limited education, who must be educated *after they are in the work!*

May I pause here to say another thing? We have entered

upon an era of the peculiar activity of laymen—activity in preaching, in conducting missions, in manning our educational institutions, in giving direction to our missionary and benevolent agencies.

It is of supreme importance that these men—some of the leaders at least—shall be trained in the true interpretation of God's Word; in the great doctrines of the Book, and in clear comprehension of our peculiar doctrines and practices. And this lest they be carried away with one-sided views of truth, or be swept into a merely sentimental fellowship with error—a fellowship that has no sound basis of truth. When the preachers were almost the only leaders, we could stop with the training of these. Now that the women are moving forward as workers—we provide for their special training. Shall we fail to do the same for these newly-awakened men, whose eyes are just getting open to their great obligations, many of whom as yet can only see men as trees, walking?

I hail with joy the recent action of Newton Seminary in establishing in connection with itself a training school for non-ministerial workers.

And—mark it—we need more men to keep up, in unimpaired excellence, that splendid dual work which this institution has always done; a work for the college graduate and *pari passu*—a work for the man who never had more than a high school training—if even that; the plain man, who comes to secure the inestimable blessings of a Seminary course in his mother tongue.

I want to lay peculiar emphasis on this point. Our Seminary—no matter what the cost in labor and in men—must never lose its interest in, nor loose its hold upon, the plain, unschooled man in the ministry. Then would it indeed cease to be "Our Seminary" to the mass of Southern Baptists. Ever and always it must have enough men in the faculty to carry on the double work; and to carry it on, not by two faculties, but by one, teaching to the scholars the Greek and the Hebrew, and English to the men who are not.

I emphasize this point in fulfillment of a promise made to Dr. Broadus the last time I saw him alive. As we sat in his

study, he turned to me and said: "Bro. Bell, you are a man of growing influence in the denomination; and I want you to make me a promise." I assured him I would promise anything within my power to do. He said in substance: I am the last of the original professors and I must soon join the others. Promise me to use all the influence you may have in holding the Seminary to the plans laid in its foundation. Do not let the Seminary become the Seminary of college men exclusively. I promised, and have ever fulfilled the promise—for these plans are wise and good and well suited to our people.

May the God of our fathers—and our God—ever guide those who direct the affairs of this institution unto the glory of His name, in the training of true ministers of Jesus Christ—workmen that need not to be ashamed. Amen!