

# THE UNION SEMINARY MAGAZINE

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## I. LITERARY.

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HENRY CARRINGTON ALEXANDER.

By RICHARD McILWAINE.

THE subject of this sketch was born at Princeton, N. J., of Virginia parents, on the 27th of September, 1835. His father was Rev. Dr. James Waddel Alexander, at one time the first pastor of "Village Church," Charlotte Court House, Va.; then pastor at Trenton, N. J.; then professor of Latin and the *Belles Lettres* in the College of New Jersey; then pastor of the Duane-Street Church in New York; afterwards professor of Church History and Polity in Princeton Seminary, and died as pastor of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian church, New York. His mother was a daughter of Dr. George Cabell, of Richmond, and a niece of judge (and governor) William Cabell, of the same city, and of Mr. Joseph C. Cabell, of Nelson, the friend of Thomas Jefferson and his colaborer in founding the University of Virginia. His grandfather was the Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander, the theological teacher and author; once President of Hampden-Sidney College in Virginia; afterwards a pastor in Philadelphia, and one of the two original professors at Princeton Theological Seminary, where he performed the great work of his life. His grandmother (Mrs. Dr. A. Alexander) was the daughter of Rev. James Waddel, of Hanover Presbytery, widely known as the blind preacher, whose eloquence is commemorated in "The British Spy" of William Wirt. His paternal grandparents were both of Scotch Irish extraction, their families having emigrated first to Pennsylvania and afterwards to Rockbridge county, Virginia.

Dr. Alexander's early instruction was received from his parents and his grandfather. After going to successive schools,

## THE COURSE OF STUDY UNDER THE STUART ROBINSON PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH BIBLE AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY.

According to the repeated representation of the editor of this magazine, many even of its most intelligent readers are in the fog as to the scope and purpose of the "fifth professorship," and are desirous of knowing what its work is and will be.

It should not be a matter of wonder that the people have not been told, hitherto, the amount and kind of work to be done under the guidance of this professor. It has been but a few months since he was intrusted with the creation of a plan of work for his chair. If he had imagined in the course of a few weeks that he knew exactly what his plan ought to be, he, at least, knows that that plan would have been hasty and superficial. It was incumbent on him to study to see the Seminary exactly as it is, or was, without the "fifth professor," to comprehend the work done by the other professors and to grasp the precise need of the Seminary, the supply of which would make it most efficient as a training school for young ministers, and, then, to strive to outline within the somewhat indefinite limits indicated by the title of his chair that sort of course of study which would make the best addition to the curriculum of the Seminary. To such an effort he has given the Summer. He has had to help him in this creation little more of suggestions from an official and responsible source than is contained in the name of the chair—that of "English Bible and Pastoral Theology." He, therefore, felt the responsibility and was working till almost the last moment before the beginning of the session to perfect this plan. And up to that time, an announcement of a plan, except in very general terms, would probably have occasioned the charge of inconsistency.

But the work of planning is necessarily brought into abeyance. The work of the session is upon us; and though our course may not be all that could be desired, for want of a better conception, it will have to answer. And, as it is inevitable that God's better servants throughout our church, should be desirous of knowing what the work of this chair is—a chair in which "*Pastoral Theology*," the "*vindemiatio*," as Dr. Dabney says, "of all theological knowledge for the purpose of its application to human lips," and "*English Bible*," without which the

great tracts of sacred scripture cannot be even approximately mastered in a three year's course of training—it is not improper that those who endowed the chair together with all the friends of the Seminary should be informed of the *present* plan of work.

However, before attempting to set it forth, we wish to make some preliminary statements. The remarks will enable us to be brief in presenting our outline of study.

1. The plan of the work which has been adopted for this term is *tentative*. It is almost certain that in some direction or other the course will be modified. One such change I knew of when I formed the plan. The feature which is certainly to be changed relates to the work of the present senior class. The Senior class of the present year pursues a briefer and less comprehensive course in Pastoral Theology than the Middle class. The Middle class when it becomes the Senior will not of course pursue the present Senior course. The course which the present Senior class pursues is necessarily brief, for they have a large work to do in the New Testament. But *other features* of the course will be changed, I doubt not, which I now look upon as probably permanent features of the work. In time to come phases of the chair's work will be emphasized which are now passed over as but of little value. Or the limits which the chair covers will assume new shape. The lines will be thrust out there and drawn in here. As yet, I have no intimations as to where the changes now referred to are to be made. If I had and saw the reasons for making them I might do so at once. But, in all probability I shall see satisfactory reasons before this session is over for some changes. The plan now pursued is simply the best at my command now. But it is *tentative*.

2. In forming the plan *considerate attention* has been given to *all* the varieties of opinion as to what the work of the chair should be. We made it our business to gather the opinions of preachers, teachers and people, through over-hauling the recent news-paper and periodical literature of our church, through correspondence for the express purpose with some of the most sagacious men of the church, and through conversations accidental and appointed as occasions offered. And for suggestions as to the best method of teaching the English Bible, we did not hesitate to go outside the limits of our own church. And from these outside sources, especially from Dr.

John A. Broadus, of Louisville, Ky., we received most valuable hints. Of course it was never our purpose or profession to receive these suggestions as a book-case does all the books, good, bad, and indifferent, put into it. Many of these suggestions could not be received. Occasionally their effect was in precisely the opposite direction from that which the suggesters hoped. When the suggestion was to do a work already better done, than I can do it, by a colleague, the hint was necessarily disregarded. When the suggestion was to do something clear outside the limits required by unity in the plan, it had to be set aside.

Since our chair has a two-fold purpose it may be considered non-sense to speak of the course's having unity. But each stem of the work may have a unity, and must be regarded as having it. I cannot think it would be for the good either of the chair itself or of the Seminary that the work of this department should be made up of the odds and ends of work in all departments. A hash of bits of beef and potatoes and bread crumbs, may be good enough for a subsidiary meal; but it is not suitable for the principal meal—certainly not for the principal meal day after day. If I had taken all the advice given, such would have been the feeding in this room.

Every suggestion which I could entertain with any sense of propriety I pondered and aimed to use for all it was worth. And from almost every source we have received help. In some cases the help was of the nature of an illumination of the needs or as to the means of supply. In some cases it simply enforced on us a deeper sense of responsibility and stimulated us to more strenuous endeavor. In other cases while we could not accept the raw suggestion, it set trains of thought agoing which resulted in good to our plan of work. Let all the friends of the chair remember how various are the opinions touching it and they will not expect to see it with just the form they would individually, and without consultation give it—and let all believe that their wishes have been studied.

In passing I should make particular mention of the aid which the Senior members of our faculty have given me. They have been disposed apparently to leave the positive determination of the course to me. But they have bestowed, on occasion, a capital, if negative, sort of aid. They have acted as a sort of conscience, as Socrates said the daemon in him acted, saying now and again, "Dont." They are very consid-

erate in the use of expression. They understand the soothing effect of euphemisms; but once or twice their language interpreted into plain every day terms, amounted to: "Don't bite off more than you can chew." "Don't set your coultter too deep."

While referring to these gentlemen let me say, too, that if the new chair is not a success it will not be on account of coldness toward it or lack of cordiality for it on their part. They give it of their time. In every way they treat it as if they hoped much from it.

3. *Further suggestions by letter* will be *gladly* welcomed. The course for the term may appear to more than one reader capable of improvement by himself. Any thoughtful suggestions will be gladly received. And even a few lines by letter might prove of material advantage to the advancement of the chair. And its greater efficiency means great things for the kingdom of Christ.

With these remarks in mind the reader will kindly judge of the outline which is now given.

I. The work of this chair, so far as it is upon the English Bible will be to teach the history of Biblical doctrine. The Junior class will be occupied with selections from the Pentateuch; the Middle class on the historical books from and including Joshua on, and with selected prophets taken up when we come to their eras in the study of the historical books. The Senior class will, after a brief study of the Interbiblical period, *i. e.* the period between the close of the Old Testament canon and the opening of the New testament, be engaged upon the Gospels, Acts, the Epistles of Peter, and selected Epistles of Paul.

Were it possible we would try to study for the sake of history—each class in due proportion—the whole Bible. But, that is utterly impossible. Selections, therefore, made in such a way as to set forth the historic continuity of doctrinal development, must serve. The selections, however, will be as wide as the limits of the time will possibly allow.

It may be well to throw in a *caveat* here. We do not mean to intimate that we can find a succession of formal creeds in the Bible, and that we are going to account for their rise one after another and show their inner connection. The Bible is full of creeds of a sort, or rather of one expanding creed, getting ever fuller and more glorious. But these creeds

or this one creed as you choose is not formal. It is interwoven with the secular and religious history of the whole race, of a chosen family, of a whole nation. We do not regard it as possible to get the history of Bible doctrine without studying the whole factual history of the Bible.

As a preliminary, therefore, to the mastery of the Biblical doctrine it shall be our constant effort to master the whole factual contents of the selected portions of scripture. This mastery must be *memoriter*. It is a shame that men should study the facts of secular history, e g, that of the U. S., or of England in a way to carry the facts permanently, and never think of studying the Bible the same way. As a preliminary, therefore, to the study of the development of Scripture doctrine we learn day by day the contents of say half a dozen assigned chapters, and then while the whole contents of the section are fresh in our minds trace the phases of the great cardinal doctrines of theology revealed therein. And we compare the results obtained from the study of any one section of the book with those obtained from the preceding sections; and on occasion of completing a book, compare the teaching of the whole book with that of preceding books and thus try to mark the growth of God's revelation, to catch the increments of light which he was giving from time to time through prophets and seers.

The student will be encouraged, and so far as possible, aided to make the mastery of the contents in the light of the historical situation of the personal subjects of our study. E g. The chief object of the study of the Interbiblical period is that the student may see clearly the environment out of which New Testament Scripture came, so far as it is human. Such a preliminary mastery will of itself be a most desirable acquisition.

As for tracing the developing doctrine after the mastery of the factual contents, the reader readily sees that it requires an exegesis of the most comprehensive and advanced kind, while its benefits to the student of scripture are simply incalculable.

The only real text-book to be used in this work is the English Bible.

II. It seems to be the universal impression that the phrase "Pastoral Theology" is used in the name of our chair in the wider sense, inclusive of Homiletics as well as Pastoral Theology proper. Accordingly Homiletics which had been attached to the chair of Systematic Theology was turned over to the

new chair.

So far as the work of this chair is one of Pastoral Theology, it is to teach to the Junior class Homiletics—the theory and practice of the preparation and delivery of sermons—and to practice them in brief-making, sermon making, and in the reading of Scriptures and hymns, and in pulpit manners in general; to teach the Middle class a correct notion of the pastoral office, of the ideal pastor as a man, in his relations to society in his relations to the public worship, in his care of souls, and in his relation to the church, and to see that they each commit to memory those passages of scripture which every christian worker should have at his command, and without which in many exigencies which are incident to pastoral life the pastor would be worse than impotent.

The Senior course in Pastoral Theology is much like the Middle, though briefer, and for reasons already stated.

The best available text-books are used in this department.

Very respectfully,

T. C. JOHNSON.

Hampden-Sidney, 12th Sept., 1891.

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\*This committing scripture may look like Sunday School work. But, if the candidate has not done it before he comes here he should do it here.