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I.—LITERARY.

A MODEL MISSIONARY—THE APOSTLE PAUL.

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[Address before the Society of Missionary Inquiry Union Theological Seminary.]

It is with no little trepidation that I, a layman, venture to speak to theological students upon a subject intimately associated with their daily toil. And in the Seminary Chapel, too! A place, the very atmosphere of which reeks with the forensic tortures of many a trial sermon. I remember distinctly some years ago I posed by request as critic of a seminarian who was striving manfully to marry a text to a sermon, when the two seemed to the critic's eye to be divorced forever by nature and by grace. I remember, too, how sedulously I avoided him for days afterwards in the vain hope that I should escape the disagreeable duty of giving him an unwelcome opinion of his heroic effort. The conditions are reversed to-night, but the speaker on this occasion craves indulgence rather than criticism, and would appeal to the heart rather than to the head.

The Bible is an amazing book. It is like a jewel with many facets polished with all the exquisite skill of the lapidary. A child can take up this jewel, turn one of its angles towards the Sun of Righteousness and reveal new spiritual beauties to the Sage. A savant of the schools can take this same jewel, place himself between it and the same Sun, or hold it up before the day-light of his intellect, and we see only him and his intellectual subtlety. I would approach my theme to-night in the attitude of a self-forgetful little child. I would hold up before you an old truth ably handled by many a great

## THE SEMINARY COURSE OF STUDY—ITS RANGE, STANDARD, EXAMINATIONS AND TESTS.

I.—THE PURPOSE OF THE SEMINARY.—In order to an accurate statement of such a course of study as is proper to our theological seminaries, the purpose of the seminary must be kept in mind. If we keep this purpose in view, it will be relatively easy to answer the following and similar questions, viz: What should be included in the course? What should be kept out of it? Should there be a curriculum? Or, what sort of a curriculum should there be? Should the students be grouped into classes? Or, should the seminary be organized on the plan of independent schools? What degree of emphasis should be given to the different departments of study severally? Should there be, in addition to the ordinary curriculum studies, extraordinary courses offered to such students as are able to take them? With what degree of importance should these extraordinary courses be recommended to the student? What standard of attainment should be required in the curriculum course? What standard in the elective course? What should be the character of the examinations and what that of the testing system generally?

If we forget the *purpose* of the seminary, we may suffer ourselves to be persuaded almost anything about its course of study; we may come to believe that the course should be very meagre; or that it should be occupied in the effort to discover new truth on the assumption that the great body of Divinity is already in possession of the student. Nothing is of more importance in discussing this subject than to get a clear view of the real purpose of the seminary before the mind and to keep it there.

Now the great purpose of the seminary is to help the church as a whole to become the most efficient servant of the Lord Jesus in the ingathering and edification of the body of Christ. More *particularly*, it is to do all that can be done consistently with a righteous economy in the distribution of the church's resources, toward bringing to the highest efficiency the official teaching and pastoral oversight of the church. It is to prepare men to become able ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ

and workmen that need not to be ashamed—to prepare them for the most efficient work in all departments of ministerial labor. Each seminary, therefore, is to do all it can do, consistently with a righteous economy in the use of the church's resources, to make so many men scholars as shall be needed for professors' chairs and other positions demanding unusual learning in the church's service. And each seminary is to do all it can do, with a similar righteous regard to economy, to fit some men to be foreign missionaries and others to be evangelist in the home field. But the chief purpose of the seminary is to do all it can do with a proper regard to economy in the expenditure of the church's resources—whether of men, money, or time—toward making a suitable body of pastors. We need a *hundred* pastors in the church to *one* professor. Even missionaries and evangelists constitute a small class as compared with that of the pastors. The most of our theological students now are to be pastors. Perhaps this will long remain true. This fact therefore must be a dominating one in determining what *the* course of study proper to the seminary should be.

Sometimes this last purpose of the seminary is spoken of as the sole object of the seminary. It is not the sole object, but it is the chief one.

But it is not enough to describe the purpose of the seminary as that of *preparing men to become able ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ and workmen that need not to be ashamed*. Something should be added about the character and cultivation of the men to be thus prepared and the special topics on which they should be prepared.

No merely nominal church member is to be put through this course, much less are men of evil report. The men whom the seminaries are to handle are to be presumably truly pious and *called of God* to the work of the Gospel ministry. Their purpose is not to conduct aspiring young worldlings into a field where literary ambitions may be gratified but to give that body of instruction which the pious and duly called candidate needs in order to becoming as efficient as possible in teaching and ruling in the church.

Again, the purpose of our seminaries is not to instruct the utterly illiterate no matter how pious soever they may be. Whatever might have been true under other circumstances, such has not been regarded as a proper function of the seminary either in our own country or among the Reformed churches

generally abroad. The seminaries have generally expected the majority of their students to be possessors of the Arts diplomas from some creditable literary institution. They have looked for large attainments in academical studies among their men who had no diplomas. And they have theoretically expected of those without the ordinary literary requirements attainments compensatory, such as might be gotten from the study and practice of law, or medicine, or in teaching. This is in accord with the inferential teaching of the standards, and with the historic position of the church as expressed in the records of the General Assemblies.

All the seminaries of our church have been organized on the same essential plan as was Princeton. The General Assembly of 1811 adopted a constitution for Princeton Seminary. In Article VI, Sec. 1, of that Constitution, it is said: "Every student applying for admission to the Theological Seminary, shall produce satisfactory testimonials that he possesses good natural talents, and is of a prudent and discreet deportment; that he is in full communion with some regular church; that he has passed through a regular course of academical study; or wanting this, he shall submit himself to an examination in regard to the branches of literature taught in such a course."\* So much for the character and cultivation of the men whom the seminaries are to educate.

The Assembly of 1811, in the Constitution of Princeton Seminary declared, also, as to the topics to be taught, Article IV, Sec. 1: "Every student, at the close of his course, must have made the following attainments, viz: He must be well skilled in the original languages of the Holy Scriptures. He must be able to explain the principal difficulties which arise in the perusal of the Scriptures, either from erroneous translations, apparent inconsistencies, real obscurities, or objections arising from history, reason, or argument. He must be versed in Jewish and Christian Antiquities, which serve to explain and illustrate Scripture. He must have an acquaintance with ancient geography, and with Oriental customs, which throw light on the sacred records. Thus he will have laid the foundation for becoming a sound biblical critic.

"He must have read and digested the principal arguments and writings relative to what has been called the deistical controversy. Thus he will be qualified to become a defender of the Christian faith.

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\*Baird's Digest, p. 437.

"He must be able to support the doctrines of the Confession of Faith and Catechisms, by a ready, pertinent, and abundant quotation of Scripture texts for that purpose. He must have studied, carefully and correctly, Natural, Didactic, Polemic, and Casuistic Theology. He must have a considerable acquaintance with General History and Chronology, and a particular acquaintance with the History of the Christian Church. Thus he will be preparing to become an able and sound divine and casuist.

"He must have read a considerable number of the best practical writers on the subject of religion. He must have learned to compose with correctness and readiness in his own language, and to deliver what he has composed to others in a natural and acceptable manner. He must be well acquainted with the several parts, and the proper structure of popular lectures and sermons. He must have composed at least two lectures and four popular sermons that shall have been approved by the Professors.. He must have carefully studied the duties of the pastoral care. Thus, he will be prepared to become a useful preacher and a faithful pastor.

He must have studied attentively the form of Church Government, authorized by the Scriptures, and the administration of it as it has taken place in Protestant churches. Thus, he will be qualified to exercise discipline, and to take part in the government of the church in all its judicatories."\*

In the statement of this list of subjects to be taught the student in the seminary, we see a statement also of the original purpose of the seminary; and are confirmed in our own view of that purpose. Seminaries are to prepare men of a given character and with specified natural parts and acquired learning to become able ministers of the Lord Jesus. They are to *prepare these men to become* able exegetes and "sound biblical critics," "able and sound divines and casuists," "useful preachers and faithful pastors," competent members of the several courts of the church. And they are to give this preparation by instruction in certain départements, viz.: Exegetics of the Old and New Testaments, and Sacred Archaeology and Geography, Natural, Didactic, Polemic and Casuistic Theology, Ecclesiastical History, Pastoral Theology, Homiletics and Church Government and Discipline.

In this historic purpose of our seminaries bounds are set to

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\*Baird's Digest, pp. 436, 437.

what the seminary course may contain and what it must not contain. The nature of the course is, at least, in a general way, determined. There is still room for much earnest thought on the part of the Boards of each seminary and its professors that its course may be better planned. There is not only room for thought and effort in this direction, there is a demand for it. But in their further planning they should always keep the great purpose of the seminary in view.

With this purpose in mind let us consider more narrowly, now, the course of study proper to our seminaries, looking at the matter first negatively, and then positively.

## II.—THE SEMINARY SHOULD BEWARE OF INTRODUCING A “PREP” DEPARTMENT.

The danger that our seminaries will soon all have preparatory departments is imminent. The Presbyteries send many men insufficiently prepared to undertake the seminary course as it actually exists. Other men not under the care of the Presbytery, and with insufficient preliminary training apply at the doors of the seminary. The Professor of Greek Exegesis is tempted at once to sigh for a tutor to teach these extraordinary applicants Greek. If they get on very slowly in Hebrew the professor in that department wishes for a tutor into whose hands he can drop them. As they know nothing of Mental and Moral Philosophy the Professors of Theology and Church History feel obliged to institute classes in rudimental psychology and ethics.

Our professors are led to hunt up tutors and to institute special preparatory courses for the following and similar reasons, viz.: 1st. The men are present seeking instruction. In order to successful work along the regular lines they must have made some preliminary attainments. To allow them to attempt the course without the extra help is to introduce them into a path leading directly to the Slough of Despond. Compassion moves the professors to provide preparatory teaching. 2nd. Every teacher likes as full classes as his colleagues. He may be moved even unconsciously to strain a point to carry the low grade applicant, for this personal reason. 3rd. Each seminary faculty wishes full members in its own institution. Some of our pastors and evangelists are accused of counting noses. And, while it is not a comfortable thought, something very like petty rivalry may be lowering our demands of entering students beyond the proper bounds.

Now, it is a fact that the fewest number of these insufficiently trained students can carry these preliminary studies and do the regular work of the seminary well. It is against experience that they have shown themselves equal to the increased burden; and it is against *reason* that they should prove equal to it. For the regular courses are so planned as to give the students of average ability and normal training all the work they can properly accomplish. If this is not true of every seminary it speaks badly for that institution. The result is that these students do not get the training which the seminary was historically designed to give. And we, professors, who help set up this preparatory department, unless we do it under protest and *pro tempore* only, help to defeat the *purpose of the seminary*, as the church has specifically and wisely stated it.

If we accommodate ourselves to the conditions, for the time, we ought to do it under a united protest. We ought to remind the church and especially the presbyteries of the specific *purpose* of the church in having seminaries; and we ought to call upon our denominational colleges to remodel their courses so as to give a larger place to Mental and Moral Philosophy. These studies will always be of far more value to the student who has the ministry in view than a knowledge of material nature. Man cannot be learnt by the study of matter. He who is to deal with men must study man—man's mind and man's heart. And he who will know God must study himself—must study man next after God's revelation of himself in his word. And after all, too, these are the studies next to Theology, which the world has judged most worthy of attention. After God, mankind has generally been esteemed the worthiest study of man. There were two outbursts of the study of physical nature in the history of Greece. But that which gives its peculiar glory to the intellectual history of Greece is the philosophy of man rather than the philosophy of matter. And in the history of the later European peoples, in spite of all the recent progress in physical sciences, and the splendid advancement in material civilization consequent thereon, the most significant feature and the thing most pregnant with future events is their view of life, of man. More attention must be paid to grounding our candidates in a correct mental and moral philosophy and our denominational colleges must be called upon to do it. We are tempted to take the

time of seminary discipline for doing this work; but it is a mistake. The rudimental work should be done before the student enters the seminary. We ought to exhort our college faculties to revert to the old curriculum to a certain extent; to make a course more suited to the needs of our candidates. They ought to give a Bachelor of Arts course, in which special emphasis is laid upon Greek, English, and Latin or both French and German; upon Mental and Moral Philosophy; upon history, and a less emphasis on mathematics and the physical sciences. If the ministerial student wishes to take the courses on science let him take them provided he does the prescribed curriculum well first. Our contention is, simply, that he ought to come to the seminary *prepared for the work there*. Our Presbyteries, too, must be stirred up to a proper direction of the study of our candidates while in college.

Such, it seems to me, is the way, in part, at least, in which the seminary is to meet the pressure which is practically exerted upon it, to make it develop a preparatory department.

We ought to resist this pressure. We cannot do our own work and the work of colleges, too. So far as we attempt it, so far will the seminary fail of the great purpose for which the church established it.

### III.—THE SEMINARY SHOULD BEWARE OF COMING TO REGARD ITSELF AS A MOODY INSTITUTE ON THE ONE HAND OR A THEOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY ON THE OTHER.

Mr. Moody must be regarded by us all as one of the great men of the age. His greatness may be peculiar in its genius, but great he is. He is a great preacher of a considerable portion of the Gospel. And he has founded and supported four great scholastic institutions, among them the Moody Institute of Chicago. This institute sends forth a multitude of workers who take part in the great battle waged by the Salvation Army against wickedness amongst the submerged masses. If the churches will not do this work then we must rejoice that the Salvation Army and other workers attempt it even in their way. The people trained in the Moody Institute are said to do useful work of this sort especially.

But Mr. Moody's great personality has drawn many pastors and young men looking toward the pastorate to his institute. Some of these have been so impressed with the training there received as to come back advocates of the view that our sem-



inaries should be turned into Moody Institutes or at least have a department added to them like the Chicago Institute.

The broad general features of the training in that institute seem to be as follows, viz.: The mornings are devoted to study and the afternoons to practical work. The course of study is the English Bible and Pastoral Theology, including music. There is an effort made to put the student in possession of the chief features of the books of the Bible and the facts about them of first importance. Much time is spent in showing how a multitude of particular texts more or less extended may be interpreted and made the source of useful talks. Every man among the students is expected to talk in some chapel or tent on Sunday. He may be called upon the following day, in the institute, to repeat his talk and must submit to criticisms of his matter, method and manner. Individual experiences in dealing with men about their soul's salvation may also be called for and the matter criticised as before.

Much time is spent in teaching music, at least how to sing the Gospel Hymns, how to conduct worship and so on. It is claimed as a great merit of the plan that, according to it, men actually learn by experience to do the kind of work which they propose to do after leaving the institute; that they enjoy there the use of a sort of spiritual or ecclesiastical clinic.

But this is not the work which our seminaries were planned to do. Our fathers and the church generally to this day have believed that in order to the acquisition of useful experience rapidly, a man should be possessed of principles and facts. The world is full to a man who has these. But it is relatively empty to a man who has them not. Our fathers have believed also that if the student's time is thus cut up in his months of special preparation he will in all probability fail of ever getting the principles and facts which would make experience worth something. They have claimed, too, that in our long vacations of four months between the several sessions there is opportunity abundant for such practical work as the student is competent to. And they have maintained that it is better to educate the student, to equip him with a knowledge of the truth, and to develop his powers, so as to *enable him to become* a good minister than to spend so much time in teaching him as he is with poor equipment and ill developed powers how to go through with the functions of the religious teacher. The question between our fathers and the advocates of the Moody

Institute is, Shall most regard be paid to immediate efficiency after the student leaves the walls of his school or to the efficiency of the man regarded as potential with life and growth through a number of years—through ten years, twenty years, thirty years, forty years or more?

The statement of this question is tantamount to a refutation of the advocates of developing our seminaries into Moody Institutes. The church needs in her ministers men who cannot be developed in such institutes. She needs men more ably and fully equipped—men of more furnishing and carrying power—men who will last, who can serve the church year in and year out.

Nor do we believe that any considerable systematic effort ought to be made during term time to have the students employed in a spiritual clinic. Valuable as such work is, that particular period in the student's life should be given to a mastery of the various departments of theological study. His powers are limited. He cannot make this mastery if his time be taken up with practical work. Let him lay the foundations of solid ministerial knowledge and ability, first, skill in the performance of functions will be acquired more easily, with greater success, and in a way compatible with a nobler growth and efficiency, during the vacations and after graduation from the seminary.

To put the truth for which we plead otherwise, regard to economy in the use of his opportunities should dictate to the young man, to take his practical training *not at the expense* of his theological while in the seminary. Though the candidate be desirous of profit by kindly and discriminating criticism of his methods of work, he will in nearly every case be able to find among neighboring ministers or ruling elders the kind of critic needed.

No doubt some profitable suggestions should be gotten by the professors in our seminaries from the Moody Institute. The practical way in which the English Bible is taught there, and Pastoral Theology, ought to stir up our professors in those departments, and indeed in all departments, to catching all that is good in the methods. But of this more when we come to treat of the seminary course positively.

While withstanding the effort to introduce this conception of the seminary on the one hand, on the other we should oppose the effort to regard seminary instruction as properly that

of a department of a higher university, in matter, aim, and method. The seminary must not assume that the student knows the standard works on divinity, on the History of the Church or on Pastoral Theology. It must not give itself chiefly to "doing new work" about the fringes of the truth in order to lead the student into new fields and to "doing new work." Nor must it allow the student at his option to take merely certain parts of the course. It must not consider the different parts of discipline as so many schools, one or all of which the student may take or not at his pleasure. When the Presbyteries send to the seminary men with instructions to study in certain departments only, it may have to accommodate itself to these instructions; but it should remember the purpose for which it was founded and protest against any assumption on the part of Presbyteries.

The purpose of the seminary as stated by the church is to give a well-defined body of instruction. It is to prepare the candidates to become good ministers by communicating this body of knowledge. It must give the substance of theology without regard to its being old; and so of the other courses of discipline. It must give all parts of discipline to the candidates. Exceptions of course are permitted, but this is the rule.

The seminary must not *aim*, therefore, at opening up the methods of discovery in new fields. Or if it is to have such an aim; at all, it is to be a comparatively unimportant one, and to have but a relatively small portion of time and effort given to its realization. The seminary must aim to give the body of truth—recognized truth for the most part—in a field long and well worked. Its aim is to so train men in the great essentials of Theological discipline as to enable them to become able ministers of the Lord Jesus. To a few indeed the church should furnish opportunity for the most exhaustive and thorough-going study. But we shall see in the sequel that in a church so small as ours, with so many seminaries, not every seminary can rightfully be so equipped as to afford all the special opportunities desirable for these few. We have in mind here the average seminary. And we maintain that it must aim to take men who are presumably unacquainted with scientific exegesis, theology, church history and so forth, and make them thoroughly acquainted with the marrow of them.

As the matter of seminary instruction is not to be like that

of the university, and as the aims of the institution should be unlike those of the university, so the method should be unlike.

Dr. James Fair Latimer used to say that the bare lecture system even in a university was a relic of mediaeval barbarism; that it supposes that our universities are still mediaeval institutions; that they have not yet learned that the art of printing has been discovered; that it ineptly supposes that the best way to acquire is to hear and to take notes. This theory continues to obtain in spite of the fact—notorious fact—that in many of the continental universities of Europe the students really attend few of the lectures preferring to work up the subject from the printed works of the lecturer, or in some cases to take the chances of working up the subject by the use of authors with whom the lecturer is supposed to be in nearest harmony. The professor spends the time in his class-room reading his lectures. There is no opportunity for that sort of interlocutory discussion in which the teacher can at once come to know his men and how they may be *educated*.

We would not be understood to deny an important place to lectures in the seminary course; but we claim that one-third or one-half the time should be given to the discovery of the student's knowledge of the subject under discussion, discerning especially its limitations and defects, and adapting further instruction according to the need evidenced. A large use must be made of text-books where suitable ones are at all obtainable. With good text-books and lectures adapted to the actual purpose of educating the student as fully as possible more than double the work can be done that can be done by the old method of bare lectures. In this case, one day the teacher will devote to giving the best possible outline treatment of the subject dealt with in the part of the text-book assigned; another he may spend in the fuller and more exhaustive treatment of some point of cardinal importance insufficiently handled in the text-book. Or he may devote these two days to such other work as shall best supplement the text-book and giving together with the text-book an adequate treatment of the subject. But the *third* day he will spend in ascertaining how thoroughly the students have mastered the text-book and the lectures and the subject and in rectifying or confirming their conclusions. The importance of this latter work, if properly conducted, cannot be overrated.

According to this method, too, the student, by having read a text-book, is prepared to take in appreciatively what his professor gives him. He is prepared for unconfused, intelligent and successful note-taking. Hence that work is no longer a burden, and the student may employ his strength after the lecture is over in further research.

This plan may not prove the most fruitful in eloquent and flowing lectures on the part of the professor, many of which the student should, in the presence of abler printed treatments, never give up the time to hear read ; but it will ground the men thoroughly in the course which seminaries were purposely set up to teach.

We do not believe that there is any real justification to be given for many of the bare lecture courses in universities. Much less is there justification in our seminaries where text-books for the regular course, at least usable, are generally to be had. As far as possible our teachers should publish improved text-books ; but meanwhile let them give the students the benefit of such as do exist. Let them modify the old university method as it ought to be modified in view of the invention of printing. Their work is too great for them to use so poor a method, a method which gives in the allotted time only a superficial training.

Again, the university method of organization into different schools, the student being allowed to take the schools in his own preferred order, instead of organization into different classes after the fashion of the old curriculum colleges is, we believe, out of harmony with the historic purpose of the seminary.

We are embarrassed to have to take this position. We know that the plan of organization into different schools has been approved by numbers of our brethren including some of the ablest and most conscientious men in the church. Among them is one who has exercised a beneficent influence on our own life greater than that exercised by any other than our parents, we believe.

Dr. Robert L. Dabney, in his famous Memorial on Theological Education, addressed to the Assembly's Committee on Seminaries, Mobile, 1869, advocates organization on the university plan, and gives the following reasons in favor of that plan: 1. "It abolishes the irrational measure of time for different men's capacities." 2. "It communicates intense energy to

the efforts of the instructors, by opening a way for an honorable emulation among themselves. The efficient no longer feels that he has to carry the inefficient on his shoulders." 3. "This organization will soon lead to a vastly improved standard of examinations and tests." 4. "The present injudicious plan of our seminaries forbids a liberal-minded professor much to enrich or enlarge his own course.\*

Usually when Dr. Dabney argues we feel obliged to follow him, and remembering his large experience and his extraordinary and far-reaching sagacity in practical matters it always requires an effort to summon the courage to oppose a view of his, but we can not feel the force in either of the points made above or of their expansion by him. Our limits forbid any detailed discussion of his points. We simply observe that a well constructed curriculum does not make time a measure of different men's capacity. The curriculum course should be planned for the man of average capacity and the normal training. It is recognized that each man will get good out of the course according to his abilities and efforts. Two boatmen each, in his several craft, will move up a stream in different ways. One will creep along the bank, avoiding all unnecessary opposition of the current, because conscious that he must do so in order to succeed in reaching his landing. The other will confidently pull out into the current. He will point his prow for the central channel through the rapid. He will explore either shore. He will make the river his. So two students work up the same curriculum course. There is no need for a University organization of the Seminary in order to an honorable emulation among the professors. Our experience is not confirmatory of Dr. Dabney's point at all. Nor does the point appear to be supported by reason. That member of a Faculty in a curriculum institution whose work is approved by the students soon finds it out. And he who is disapproved soon feels that too. He knows too that students talk, and talk mercilessly, to every body including the Board who employs him, about all that they disapprove, while they talk enthusiastically about that which they approve. That the university plan will lead to an improved standard of examinations and tests we do not believe. There are plenty of universities of low standard just as there are plenty of colleges of low standard. Every thing is determined by the teaching

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\*Discussions, Vol. 2, p. 58.

body and their governing boards. And a few strong men in a university can do no more to raise the standard than a proportionate number of strong men in a faculty. When inefficient men clog the wheels of a seminary, the Board ought to remove them and put in men who will not clog them. Finally we do not believe that "a liberal-minded professor should be allowed to enrich and enlarge his course" without regard to the time he consumes. We do not believe at all that the Directors should say to each professor: "You are sole judge of the amount of labor needed for proficiency in your department. Exact as much as you judge necessary. Should you occupy the whole year of a student in your sole course, we shall not complain. The harder you make it to acquire the honors of your department, the better for our young ministers." Such a plan would practically defeat the purpose of the Seminary, viz.: To give the student in the course of time allotted such a grounding in the several departments of Theological study as will enable him not only to become a good critic of the Old Testament, a good critic of the New Testament, a good Church Historian, a good member of the Church Courts, a good pastor, but a good Theologian as well. Of course, every worthy professor will be constantly exercising himself to enrich his course, to broaden and deepen his course; but he should be bound to regard the element of the student's time. Moreover, vastly too much liberty is claimed by Dr. Dabney for the individual professor, in this matter of determining his course, unless the church can be certified that none but men of great balance and judgment as well as liberal learning and enthusiasm, will ever be put into professors' chairs.

To our minds the reasoning of Dr. Benj. B. Warfield, in the *Presbyterian Quarterly*, October, 1896, is much stronger. He argues in favor of the plan of a set curriculum of study.

We are thus brought to our fourth head.

#### IV. THE SEMINARY SHOULD HAVE A SET CURRICULUM.

Let us hear Dr. Warfield on this subject: He says: "For one thing it (the university plan), would require a far more numerous force of teachers than is at present at the command of any of our seminaries. When the students are at all numerous, the number and variety of combinations of studies they can manage to desire to put together in the course of three or four years is really appalling; and in proportion as

those possible combinations are abridged, in that proportion we drop back again into what is practically a fixed curriculum, curtailed of some of the most obvious advantages of instruction in a curriculum. For another thing, for its effective control there would be required a far larger measure of influence over the students and over the churches on the part of the seminary authorities than they possess, or possibly than would be altogether good for them to possess. The temptation to undue and hurtful specialization within the institution is so fostered by the very *genius loci* of a school so organized that it becomes almost uncontrollable; and on the other hand, the temptation of churches to secure the pastoral services of young men who have sojourned for some years at the Seminary and received its advantages to obviously brilliant effect in this direction and that, while they have not conformed to its terms of graduation and therefore have not received the symmetrical training indispensable for their development, is too great to be overcome. For still another thing, the training value of the very same courses, under the very same instruction, is very different when taken in different sequences and in different combinations, so that it really is impracticable for a school to fulfill its functions as a training school by merely requiring that certain specified courses of study shall, at all events, be at some time or other taken. One might as well expect to produce equally good gastronomic effects by eating his dinner backwards—beginning with the sweets and ending with the soup—as to produce the best educative effects by any and every jumble in the order of the topics studied. A certain oversight of the blending of the topics seems needful if the full effect of their training value is to be reaped.

“On the whole, therefore, attractive as this scheme is, it would seem best to fall back on the old-fashioned fixed curriculum as the method of instruction best fitted to secure the ends of a training school for the Presbyterian ministry. A good deal of scorn has been heaped on this method it is true, as an attempt to squeeze the most diverse figures into the same shaped and sized garments. But, as a matter of fact, it no more requires the same fixed course of study from all the pupils than the apparently more liberal method just discussed. The only effective objection to it over against that method, proceeds on the supposition that, with the fixed curriculum, nothing but the curriculum is placed within the reach of the



students, while on the other method, the required curriculum constitutes but a small part of the opportunities for acquisition offered to him. This is obviously, however, an entire misapprehension. The only difference between the two methods concerns the question of whether the order and combination, in which the studies included in the fixed curriculum common to both are taken by the student, shall also be under the control of the directors of his education, or whether these matters are judged of comparatively so little importance that they may be safely left to the student's own caprice. There is no reason why, with the fixed curriculum, the student may not enjoy the advantages of just as large a body of additional studies, succeed in just as profoundly deepening his knowledge of special departments, or in just as widely broadening his knowledge of the several departments, as under the other method of instruction. The point is not that his course shall be narrowed; the point is simply that it shall be more efficiently directed to the attainment, more surely and completely of its primary end. Let there be along with the fixed curriculum any number of elective courses offered, and let their advantages be fully reaped by the student. But let it be definitely understood that they are subsidiary to the curriculum itself, and are intended not to modify, but to supplement it. In all cases let it be understood that it is the curriculum on which the educative stress is laid, and on which the educative hopes are hung, and that the additional, elective studies, however valuable they may be in themselves severally, and in their adaptation to perfect and deepen and widen the course, cannot safely be allowed to supplant or to take the place of any part of it. Elective studies considered as supplements to the regular and well compacted course of training in a training school are of the utmost value; elective studies considered as substitutes for the well chosen course of such a school or for any part of it, can only operate to confuse the mind of the student and to endanger the attainment of the primary purpose of the school. A fixed curriculum, supplemented by electives, has, at least, the great advantage over every other method of ordering the work of such a school, that it emphasizes the solid educative core, raises it to its proper importance in the minds of both teachers and taught, and tends to increase the certainty and perfection with which it produces its educative effect." *Sic* Dr. Warfield.

To repeat Dr. Warfield's points. He says the university plan of organization requires too many teachers, too much influence over the students and over the churches; that it presents a temptation to too great specialization within the seminary; and a temptation to the churches to call young men who have completed certain of the courses without paying any attention to others; and that it ignores the difference between the training value of the several courses when taken in different orders. He also shows that the objections to the curriculum are not well founded.

We may add that even if we had a sufficiency of teachers it would be unwise to subdivide the seminary course very greatly. It would be impossible for any one teacher then to have the student long enough to make a deep and lasting impression upon him. If in one or two of our seminaries there should be a large number of teachers, and in the sequel we shall take the ground that there should be, the main part of the teaching of the great body of undergraduate students should yet be done by four or five men. We have no hesitation in saying that four or five really good teachers will affect the body of undergraduate students more helpfully than a dozen equally good teachers. The four or five will impress their teaching and character more thoroughly and will do more to elevate the student body than the dozen necessarily less thoroughly known and understood. Each of the four or five will have the adequate time. With four or five men only to do the teaching, every professor, too, will have much of importance to teach. But with eight or ten or a dozen teachers, some are practically certain to have relatively unimportant fields and yet they will magnify them. The student will leave them with less sense of proportion and have less balance of judgment with which to begin his work.

When men talk, therefore, about the advantages which the University-plan of organization affords for specialization, for investigating work on the part of the professor, we should remember that there are grave objections to the plan.

It may be proper to remark here that very intelligent students from our church who have gone to a well known seminary north have called our attention to the fact which we have been trying to set forth, viz.: that it is possible to have too many teachers in a seminary for the real good of the student. They have complained that there were too many teachers there

for the best effect. Too many doctors were at work on them. "Too many cooks spoil the broth."

We have talked, too, to some of our students about the relative advantages of a fixed curriculum and the privilege of choosing the order of their studies. Among all the students we have known two or three whose balance of judgment no one of our professors here would commend excepted, we know of none who at the end of their course have not been glad that it had been fixed for them. This is the reasonable position. It is more likely that the church, through her rulers, can fix upon a good course of study than that the inexperienced young man can choose it for himself. They may indeed think that our curriculum should be modified; but they believe in a curriculum, so far as my knowledge goes.

Finally, that the curriculum institution has an organization, so far better than the other for accomplishing the purpose for which the seminary was founded, can not be safely questioned.

In a subsequent paper we shall have something more to say upon our same general subject.

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