

THE WORK OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE SEMINARY AS AN ELEMENT IN BRINGING ABOUT THE PRESENT UNITY OF SOUTHERN BAPTISTS.

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The unity of the New Testament was spiritual. "The Kingdom of God is *within* you." (Luke 17:21.) It was first inward and loving; then fraternal and democratic. It grew entirely out of an experience of grace in Christ Jesus our Lord, as the object of faith, through the work of the Holy Spirit in the belief of the facts of the gospel. The first Christians were in possession of a joy which was immeasurably deep and they were drawn to one another by a charming and mysterious power. They lived in a sphere wholly different from that in which the unbelieving world lived. They were in Christ and Christ was in them. This unique heart power made them a unique people. They possessed a oneness not found on the earth before; but, the unifying power was invincible cement. The Kingdom of God was *within*, as sharply contrasted with the kingdom of the world, which made much of *external* manifestations. These Christians, surcharged with high-power spirituality, acted on others by contagion. The Holy Ghost worked in them and through them. The results were not only great but absolutely unprecedented. They tried to teach that invisible power is *the* power and that the invisible God is *the* God. They had the key to the treasure-house of the knowledge of the universe. We are, in our day, familiar with the fact that the invisible forces, of attraction, of gravity, of electricity, of the gases, of love, of confidence, move the world; but in knowledge of the energy of the invisible, the early followers of our Lord were ahead of us; and many leagues ahead of us. In our investigations our richest finds are

the rediscoveries of the truths they lost. Their fatal mistake was a backward movement. As the Christians were separated from pentecostal Jerusalem by time and space, they met with severe opposition which divided their attention and chilled their ardor. They had to face Judaism, the heathen Roman Empire, and the great world-spirit. They became confused. They were so far intimidated by their environment that they began to seek supplemental aid in visible and external elements. They began to crave the splendor of the Roman Empire. They sought to conciliate. They thought that to compromise was shrewd and wise policy. They, too, wanted something they could see. In process of time, they exchanged internal unity for external unity. They bartered spiritual democracy for gaudy grades in the ministry. Jesus had said to His disciples: "The kings of the gentiles have lordship over them: and they that have authority over them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve", (Luke 22:25). But under other leaders, they had other instruction. They laid aside the principle of conflict and adopted that of absorption. They did much to leaven the Empire, but the Empire absorbed them. The simplicity and sweetness of the New Testament were lost in the ages, except as they continued to exist in the reformers before the Reformation in the "old evangelical parties" and among "the friends of God". The Middle Ages came and went. The Protestant Revolution, of which Luther was a voice, was, at best, but a partial success in reversing this stream of tendency away from the apostolic teaching. Our Baptist people have always been interested in reversing this process of historical development in essential outlines and in restoring the entire New Testament elements to their legitimate place. In this work they have had success varying in times, places, and circumstances. But they have never feared or halted

either under showers of threats or physical pains. In these conflicts we have learned many things which are of unspeakable value to us.

Emerson well and prophetically says: "America is another word for opportunity". So our forefathers thought. Accordingly they planned. Wisely they acted. They laid deeply great foundation stones. From 1776 our people grew in numbers and unity at a great rate. This process has been going on till, all things being considered, the Baptists of the South are the most united body of Christians that ever existed, taking into account extent of territory, numbers, spirituality, intelligence, missionary work, education, benevolence, and the great opposition against which they have had to contend. It is unique; and, is one of the most significant facts in modern church history. Our growth and development are a cause of gratitude to us; a cause of wonder to Protestants; and, a cause of astonishment to Catholics. It is a practical reversal of historical development, the very possibility of the existence of which has often been vehemently denied by many of those connected with prelatical interests. We have rehabilitated not the New Testament "times" but the New Testament itself, both in teaching and practice, both in theory and in life, on an enormous scale. We have done the very thing which we have often been told we could not do. We have demonstrated that the New Testament is as practicable now as it was in Apostolic days. It is becoming known to our critics that we are not a rope of sand as they had vainly supposed but that invisible spiritual energy is the divinely appointed means used in human salvation. The test has been thorough, far-reaching, and in the great white light of world-wide observation and publicity. The Baptists of the South are a great people and have marvelous unity. They have a great mission. They have a great message which they purpose to deliver and they do not purpose to change it *into* something else, or exchange it *for* some

thing else. This remarkable unity pertains directly to experience, to doctrine, to practice, to church life, to missions, to education, and to the sole authority of the New Testament. In the last fifty years miracles have been wrought. At the present rate of progress of growth it will not be long before every day will be a pentecost, witnessing the conversion of more than three thousand souls. We now have hundreds of churches more powerful than any church mentioned in the New Testament except the Jerusalem church; and thousands of our churches have pentecostal seasons every year, and some of them have such seasons all the time. Converging and unifying lines moving from different directions for years have come together to a point in our day in spiritual unity such as the Prophets foretold. We are too near this Divine event to understand its full meaning. A man standing close to the base of the Washington monument and looking up could not correctly estimate its height—he must see it at a distance to do that. So we are too close to this movement to interpret it fully. Only those who come after us can do that. All that we know and all that we care to know now is that the Father is working through the Spirit for the enthronement of the Son.

“We are living, we are dwelling,
In a grand and awful time;
In an age on ages telling,
To be living is sublime.”

One of the elements leading to this unity among Southern Baptists was the work of the founders of this Seminary.

1. They took the old Baptist motto that the New Testament and it alone is the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice and lifted it out of cant, pretense, misuse, littleness, and triviality, and made it mean something. They gave it a dignity and a position which commanded respect. They rescued it from abuse. They put it on a

high pedestal where it could be seen to advantage. The first half of the nineteenth century was a time of great religious disturbance. In New England there was the battle with Unitarianism. In New York there were Spiritualism, Mormonism, great vagaries concerning the Millennium, and a craze about Masonry which threatened to destroy our churches there. It was a time of great unrest. In the absence of trained and competent leaders, demagogues easily came to the front. The sheep were fleeced. The masses were duped. In the South we had controversies without end about pulpit affiliation, alien immersion, church discipline, temperance tests, slavery, and other things. Alexander Campbell started a blaze in Virginia, which going west, developed into a great conflagration. Incidental matters came to the front, while weightier matters were relegated to the rear. Trivialities were given the main track, while great issues were put on the side-track. Fads were fashionable. Local interpretations were made matters of fellowship. Ministerial jealousies were not uncommon. Many associations were not in the state conventions. Many churches were not in the associations. Many churches took the anti-mission side. Some held that Sunday schools were an abomination. Many opposed ministerial education. Many sheer human fabrications freely claimed Bible authority. The Book was pressed into the support of the hallucinations of every vagrant upstart. It was a time of need. Little men were trying to draw the Bible down to the level of their own littleness.

The Seminary was founded in the most favorable time. Students coming to it learned that the New Testament sends forth a great stream of clear, sweet, refreshing water from which they could drink; and, when they drank of *it* under intelligent leadership, they did not care to slake their thirst from mud-puddles of sheer human inventions. These students went in every direction carrying the water of life with them. The foun-

ders of the Seminary gave the New Testament its proper setting relatively, intrinsically, historically and spiritually so as to open new worlds to their students. These students in their turn carried it to the people. What they saw, they made others see; what they learned, they preached. From different parts of the country, many young men came full of conceit, possessed with local interpretations, and thinking more highly of themselves than they ought to think; but, they soon had the barnacles scraped off of them. Then they were worth something. There is a tradition that now here in the Seminary is a professor who knows something about this barnacle business. Well, let the good work go on. Little and belittling things being swept out of their minds, they were prepared to unite in great thoughts along larger lines. Having seen the foolishness of dividing on mere straws, they were wisely led to unite on great enterprises. These founders reached out in every direction through their students who became pastors, teachers, editors, writers, college presidents, and missionaries. These men having worked together in the Seminary, did not find it a hardship to work together away from it. They were taught to love, revere, read, teach, and preach the Word. It was a great point of contact skillfully used in the hands of great masters. These founders had a fine sense of proportion. They made it plain that some things are great—unspeakably great; and, that some things are small—unspeakably small. One of them was accustomed to say “the greatest *intellectual* vice is lack of discrimination”. Somehow both directly and indirectly the impression was left that little thoughts make little men and that great thoughts make great men. In time, these things bore fruit. No man wanted to be little. Here we can easily trace the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

2. The founders of the Seminary were men of great tact. They were studiously conciliatory in their dealings with men. They did not go out of their way to hunt up

unprofitable controversies. Tact has been defined as the ability to extract the sting from a bee without getting stung; or, the happy faculty of calling attention, when visiting a neighbor, to the beautiful rose, without seeing the yard fence rotting down. These founders were men of sense; men of judgment; men of affairs. They knew how to deal with men and things. In transacting business with a man, they themselves could keep in good humor; and, also, at the same time, keep the man, with whom they were dealing, in good humor. Not everybody can do this. They were refined, hightoned, Christian gentlemen. They were the embodiment of rare culture. They were fine specimens of what Christ can make men to attain. They combined strength with gentleness; learning with humility; and profound consideration for men with genuine service to God. They were known for their moderation to all men. They faced problems of great difficulty and solved them rightly, in the face of great opposition, with absolute fearlessness. Many young men, rude, rough, uncouth, polemical, coming in contact with them, learned that gentleness is power and that sweetness of spirit is strength. Because of them, our ministry is more affable, more conciliatory, and better fitted to meet the world situation of today. If a young man was timid, they knew how to speak the word which would make him courageous. If one was too bold, they could easily reduce his self-importance. If one needed to be encouraged in his studies, they had the incentive ready. If another was disposed to undertake too much, they could easily put on wise restraints. If one was faint-hearted, they could make him as brave as a lion. On account of their varied experience and great attainments, they were at home in any sphere. They were sought by the learned; they were loved by the unlearned. They were honored by the rich and no less esteemed by the poor. They put their lives into others that they might live in others in the ages to come. They were sure that the im-

planted word would not return unto the Lord void. Because of their wise approach to men, everywhere they went, they were a benediction. A sweet spiritual perfume went forth from them showing that they had been under the great awning. So they had power with men.

Some years ago there was coming before the Convention a great question to be decided. It had been in the air for years. It had been in the religious papers for months. Feeling ran high. The situation was not free from bitterness. Many men interested on the one side, or the other, came up to that session loaded. The big guns were ready. The battle was just about to begin. The hour had arrived. The question was ready for debate. Many spectators full of curiosity were present to see what would happen. Just at this moment, one of the founders of the Seminary came forward and requested, that, in view of the fact that many had come there to see a fight, the vote be taken without discussion. The request was granted. A prolonged battle would not materially have changed the result as to votes, but it would have engendered bitter feelings lasting for years as a source of division and discord. It was a daring act, but one of profound tact and wisdom. It is possible that no other man in the Convention could have done it. This incident stands as a unique event in the history of the Convention. It never occurred before and may never occur again in that body. There was a man at the helm.

Again, at another time, there was circulated somewhat broadly a report that the Seminary was trying to place its graduates in the most prominent vacant pulpits. This was supposed to be a sort of monopoly working against the possibilities of settlement of many able men who had been trained outside of any theological school. It was creating no little prejudice. It had in it the elements of disintegration. It was not founded on fact; but, it was at work all the same. A noted preacher, writer, and editor was giving the report considerable publicity,

doubtless doing so under misapprehension. The matter demanded attention. Something had to be done. One of the founders of the Seminary wrote this editor a letter giving the facts as to actual practice and asking substantially this question: "If a vacant church writes to me about one of the students who may be available as pastor, am I justifiable in telling that church what I know about that student?" The editor replied: "Yes." That settled the question and forever shut off complaint from that source. This was superb tact. It showed rare knowledge of how to deal with men in a delicate situation. The desired end was accomplished and nobody was humiliated.

3. They used, from the start, the most rigidly scientific method. They might have been men of the Book and men of great tact; but, if they had not faithfully persisted in the use of this method their work would have been very different from what it was. From Aristotle down, the question of method has been vital. The middle ages emphasized deduction. Their scholars revelled in the forms of thought. The great material world as an object of thought and investigation did not specially interest them. When Roger Bacon began to work inductively on material objects he met with opposition. Some two hundred years later Francis Bacon showed that dealing in mere mental objects as forms of thought could not bear "fruit". He contended that the material world needed to be investigated and that mere deduction was insufficient. But his method is not the full method of modern science. In the first half of the nineteenth century and just before the founding of the Seminary there was in England a long and full discussion of the scientific method. Logic was deeply investigated. Herschel, Whewell, Whately, Mill and others were deeply interested in it. They were hunting for the philosopher's stone. They were seeking the fountain of youth from which, if a man should drink, he would know everything.

If the middle ages were one-sided in underrating induc-

tion, Francis Bacon was one-sided in underrating deduction. We now know the two parts supplement each other and form one complete system. One is as important as the other. Both are needed. No progress can be made until *both* are used. How prone men are to be one-sided! A great change in the method of investigation and research brought about great changes in the material sphere; and, the founders of this school believed that the necessary changes of method in religious work would in that sphere bring about changes proportionately as great. The proper method properly used means much. The deductive method said the sun moves around the earth; the inductive method went to work and by examination of the facts found out that the earth moves around the sun. The deductive method alone is full of theory, while induction is never satisfied until it enriches life with vitalizing facts and the utilities which flow from them. Deduction deals with the *relations* of things, while induction deals with the *things* themselves. Deduction *uses* general principles, while induction *discovers* them. Deduction alone moves in a circle and tends to stagnation and dogmatism; induction moves along the line of progress and is always alive to the existence of facts and their meaning. Deduction emphasizes general notions and concepts and deals with classes; induction emphasizes particulars and deals with individuals. Deduction ruled the middle ages; induction is the ruling spirit of modern times. Deduction is abstract, subjective, idealistic; induction is concrete, objective, and investigates objective individual things. Deduction alone develops mere reasoners; induction develops careful observers and men of science. Deduction is the method of scholasticism, of monarchy, of Catholicism; induction is the method of modern science, of Protestantism, and of democracy. Deduction is the method of proof; induction is the method of teaching young and immature minds. Deduction deals with the *forms* of thought; induction puts great stress on the ob-

jects of thoughts. The shell is good in its place but it ought to have the kernel also. Both of these so-called methods belong to the machinery of thought; both are of equal importance; the one naturally supplements and corrects the other; each is dangerous and destructive without the other because allowed to have undue sway.

So our founders saw the subject; and so, from the beginning, they put into operation the fullest and soundest method of modern times; and it has been in operation here ever since. Mill studied logic deeply, not that he might instruct workers in physical science in their own special department, but that he might find out the most complete method in order that he might apply it to sociology in which he was greatly interested; our founders studied it profoundly also; but, *they* wanted to apply it to theology and especially to the interpretation of the New Testament. Their program has borne rich fruit. In the application of the best scientific method, the work done by this school has the confidence of the denomination and of the entire religious world. The published works of our professors have the highest commendation of the greatest scholars everywhere. Vagaries have been eliminated. Sound learning has been enthroned. Confidence has been established. Work has been projected on a fixed basis. Hasty inductions have never found a congenial home here: and they never will. Uncertainty has been moved out of the way. We have a great program. We have a great purpose and we are carrying it out. We know what we are trying to do and what we are actually accomplishing.

Our founders did not live in vain; they did not work in vain; they did not plan in vain. They sowed and we are reaping. They laid the foundations and we are building thereon. They were master builders. They were great contributors to our present-day unity; and, the unity of Southern Baptists is bringing about the unity of Baptists everywhere on the globe. These foun-

ders of the Seminary believed in the work; they were led by the Holy Spirit; and they lived the truth. "By their *fruits* ye shall know *them*." Ruskin well says: "A man may hide *himself* from you, or *misrepresent* himself to you, every *other* way; but he cannot in his *work*: *there*, be sure, you will have him to the *inmost*. All that he *likes*, all that he *sees*,—all that he can *do*,—his imagination, his affections, his perseverance, his impatience, his clumsiness, cleverness, *everything* is *there*. If the work is a *cobweb*, you know it was made by a *spider*; if *honeycomb*, by a bee; a worm-cast is thrown up by a worm and a nest wreathed by a bird; and a house built by a *man*, *worthily*, if *he* is worthy, and ignobly, if *he* is ignoble." Let this test be applied. For more than fifty years this Seminary has been in operation. It has sent forth many hundreds of students. They have gone into the different parts of the earth. They have filled every kind of noble office. They have carried the spirit and the method of this school everywhere. The sun never sets on all of our old students at the same time. No matter where one of our men is, you can depend upon him. Between five and six hundred students are here now and they are of the salt of the earth. The present faculty is notably able and enterprising. In their hands the work is improving all the time in every direction. The professors have written many books of the highest quality. As authors they have become famous the world over. Why? Largely because of the work done by their predecessors. In view of the fact that, without addition or diminution, the New Testament in the hands of the Spirit is capable of infinite workableness, how appropriate the words of Milton:

"How charming is divine philosophy!
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns"