

The Founders Journal



Committed to historic Baptist principles

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**Celebrating the 150th Anniversary
of the Founding of
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary**

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The Founders Journal

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Editorial Introduction

Tom Nettles

This issue of the *Founders Journal* recognizes the 150th anniversary of the founding of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. It begins with a brief chronology of some of the notable events in the 150 year history. It contains material about and-or by each of the first four faculty members. The pertinence of each article should be self-evident.

A Brief History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

- 1856 — James P. Boyce delivered his address, “Three Changes in Theological Institutions” that proposed theological education for Baptists in the South that would provide an abundant pastoral ministry, a scholarly teaching ministry, all within a seriously focused confessional context.
- 1858 — All the documents needed for opening the Seminary had been secured, including the confessional statement *The Abstract of Principles*, but the Seminary failed to open because two of the originally elected faculty members refused the appointment, E. T. Winkler and John A. Broadus. Boyce completed raising the pledged endowment from South Carolina and led the charge in the other Southern states.
- 1859 — The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary opens in Greenville, South Carolina, on the first Monday in October with four professors: James Petigru Boyce, John A. Broadus, Basil Manly, Jr. and William Williams. Boyce served as chairman of the faculty. The twenty-four students included the future fifth professor, Crawford Howell Toy.
- May 28, 1860 — First Commencement held at the Baptist Church in Greenville.
- May 1862 — The Seminary dismissed classes prior to the Commencement. Boyce served as a chaplain, as a representative in the South Carolina legislature, and as an aide-de-camp. Broadus preached in the churches around Greenville and served for a while as an evangelist to the Army of Northern Virginia. Manly and Williams took their servants and moved to Abbeville District a hundred miles removed from Greenville where they rented plantations, produced crops, served churches as pastor, and sought to remain studious in their areas of instruction.
- Summer, 1865 — The faculty reassembled and surveyed the unpromising situation. Broadus described the poignancy of the meeting during which he said, “Suppose we quietly agree that the Seminary may die, but we’ll die first” (John A. Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* [New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1893], 200).

- 1869 — C. H. Toy elected as Professor of Old Testament Interpretation.
- 1870 — John A. Broadus published *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*.
- 1871 — The trustees decided that the Seminary must move locations if it is to survive. In August, Manly resigned to accept the presidency of Georgetown in Kentucky.
- 1872 — James P. Boyce was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention. W. H. Whitsitt was elected to the faculty as Professor of Biblical Introduction and Polemic Theology and Assistant Professor of New Testament Greek. Boyce relinquished his classroom duties to move to Louisville in preparation for the eventual move of the Seminary to that city.
- 1872–77 — An expected two-years time expanded to five. A major challenge to the Seminary's fitness as a representative Southern Baptist institution was launched in 1874 to which Boyce responded with five articles answering two objections to the seminary. On several occasions because of financial stringency, Boyce came very close to suspending the operations of the Seminary. William Williams died on February 20, 1877.
- 1877 — The Seminary finalized its move to Louisville.
- 1879 — Crawford Howell Toy resigned because his views of inspiration differed from those of his brethren and from the denomination at large. Basil Manly, Jr. is hired immediately as Professor of Old Testament.
- 1880 — Joseph Emerson Brown, governor of Georgia, gave a gift of \$50,000. Joshua Levering joined the board of trustees, served for fifty-five years, forty years (1895–1935) as president.
- 1885 — John R. Sampey elected to the faculty in Old Testament and Hebrew. He would eventually serve as the fifth president, thus maintaining the personal contact with the founding generation through the time of his resignation in 1942.
- 1886 — John D. Rockefeller plus several others in an around New York contribute \$60,000 for the construction of the major seminary building at Fifth and Broadway in downtown Louisville. The building was named New York Hall. This year John A. Broadus published his commentary on "Matthew" in the American Commentary series.
- 1888 — Boyce was elected as president in May. He left for his European trip in the summer. While on the trip he learned that funding for a projected library building had been secured as well as a viable location. He died in Pau in southern France on December 28. Archibald Thomas Robertson was elected to the faculty to teach in the areas of New Testament and Greek.
- 1889 – 1895 — In their May 1889 meeting, the trustees elected John A. Broadus as president of the Seminary. During his tenure, student enrollment

climbed from 164 to 267. The Memorial Library was completed in 1891 largely as a result of a gift from Mrs. J. Lawrence Smith. Norton Hall, a classroom and administration building was completed in 1893, the first doctor of theology candidates received degrees in 1894. Julius Brown Gay lectureship was established. Broadus died on 16 March 1895.

- 1895–1899 — William Heth Whitsitt was elected as the third president of Southern. In 1896 W. O Carver began his career of teaching, a career that lasted until his retirement in 1943. In 1896, the Whitsitt Controversy, over Baptist origins, began and lasted until his resignation from the seminary presidency in 1899.
- 1899 — Edgar Young Mullins became the fourth president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Mullins remained as president until his death in 1928.
- 1917 — *The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression*, a text that marked a clear transition to a mediating theology that placed religious experience as a major factor in the formulation of Christian doctrine.
- 1921–23 — Mullins served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention.
- 1925 — With Mullins as head of the committee, the Southern Baptist Convention adopted its first denominational confession of faith, the Baptist Faith and Message.
- 1926 — The seminary moved from its downtown location at Fifth and Broadway to the “Beeches” at 2825 Lexington Road.
- 1928 — President Mullins died.
- 1929 — John R. Sampey elected fifth president of the seminary. Jesse Weatherpoon joined the faculty as professor of preaching and Christian ethics.
- 1942 — John Sampey resigned as president. Dr. Ellis A. Fuller of Atlanta was elected as sixth president of the seminary..
- 1945 — Ellis Fuller hired Dale Moody as tutor in spite of warning about his aberrant views of the perseverance of the saints.
- 1951 — When Fuller experienced a fatal heart attack, Duke McCall was elected as seventh president.
- 1958 — Duke McCall dismissed thirteen professors after severe confrontations concerning the relative powers of the administration and faculty.
- 1960 — James P. Boyce Centennial Library was dedicated.
- 1961 — April 19, Martin Luther King addressed the seminary as the Julius Brown Gay Lecturer. This set up a series of protests across the Southern Baptist Convention.
- 1979 — The Conservative Resurgence began; McCall became active in resistance to the movement.

- 1982 — Roy Honeycutt elected as eighth president of the seminary.
- 1984 — Honeycutt, in a convocation address, called for a “Holy War” against the conservative movement. The Carver School of Church Social Work was established.
- 1990 — The Honeycutt Campus Center was dedicated.
- 1993 — R. Albert Mohler, Jr. elected as ninth president of the seminary. A reversal in theological direction involved massive changes in faculty and perception of the function of a theological seminary. Boyce’s vision, under revision for 100 years, was reclaimed.
- 2009 — Celebration of the Sesquicentennial.

News

Founders Study Center

The Founders Study Center will be offering three courses for the Fall 2009 semester. Our new course will be *Systematic Theology III* (with audio lectures by Dr. Roger Nicole). Topics included in this third semester of Systematic Theology include: the Person and Work of Christ, the Nature of the Atonement, the Doctrine of Salvation and the Doctrine of Election We will also offer *Preaching and Preachers* (with audio lectures by Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones) and *Baptist Identity* (with audio lectures by Dr. Tom Nettles). Visit our website and learn how you can audit the course on Baptist Identity for free this fall!

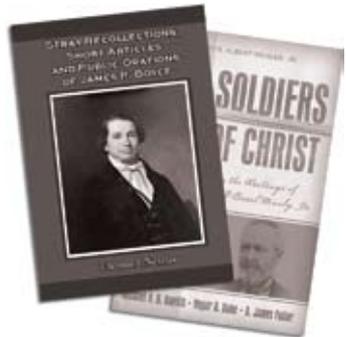
<http://study.founders.org/>

Two New Titles from Founders Press

Founders Press has just released two new titles in honor of the 150th anniversary of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. *Stray Recollections, Short Articles and Public Orations of James P. Boyce* by Tom Nettles includes a facsimile of “Three Changes for Theological Institutions.” *Soldiers of Christ: Selections from the Writings of Basil Manly, Sr. and Basil Manly, Jr.* is by Michael A. G. Haykin, Roger D. Duke and A. James Fuller.

Both of the these titles are included in our **sale for August 2009** celebrating the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

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“A Thorough Knowledge of the Word of God”

When the seminary failed to open in 1858, Boyce completed raising the endowment from South Carolina and went to help with that task in Virginia. This speech, made at the meeting of the General Association meeting, shows Boyce’s zeal for theological education, the importance he placed on each separate division of study, his concern for a full knowledge of the Bible and orthodoxy, and his understanding that Baptists had a right to confidence that their institution would instruct a ministry fit for Baptist churches.

Address of Rev. J. P. Boyce at Hampton

Religious Herald – July 1, 1858

Brother President and Brethren of the General Association of Virginia:

I have earnestly desired an opportunity of meeting with you in your General Association, and especially of conferring with you upon the subject of our contemplated theological Seminary. The first impulse in its origin was from you. On several occasions there had been made abortive attempts to secure something of this kind. But to Virginia belongs the credit, whatsoever that may be, of first starting the movement which has resulted in the establishment of the Southern Baptist Theological seminary. It was by the chairman of a delegation appointed by this Association, that the meeting of the friends of Theological Education was called at Montgomery in 1855. The result of that conference was the Convention at Augusta, Ga., in May 1856 by which the call was made for offers for location, to be tendered in a similar meeting at Louisville. At this meeting the offer of the South Carolina Convention, made the preceding July, was cordially accepted, with some modifications, and the Institution virtually established....

The possibility of failure is not now to be thought of. So much has already been done, that it would be a waste of Christian energy to allow it to be for naught. So marked have been the providences by which it has been brought to its present position, that the work is seen to be of God, and he will not let it fail....

It is sometimes supposed that to teach a man theology is to give him the precise views of his teacher. There is a tendency in that direction, and hence we have guarded our institution by an abstract of principles, to prevent any one holding erroneous views from being among its instructors. There is certainly a molding influence, and hence the importance of an institution of our own, in which the

instructors shall be men who take similar views with ourselves of the teachings of the divine word. But among these teachings we find the obligation to search the Scriptures each man for himself. And he who is true to the principles for which our fathers have contended in the past, will ever see to it that those trusted to his care shall be taught to examine the word of God for themselves. The teacher will present the truth with the reasons for it, and will encourage the young men to study the word of God to see if this be not the truth. May God deliver us from any other kind of teachers and from scholars who will take any truth ever upon the mere opinion of a man. The scholar must be taught to study for himself, and diligently to enquire if this be so. And were it my opinion that any other course could ever be pursued in this institution, I would be the first man to lift the hand for its destruction.

Prior to any question as to the importance of such instruction appears the fact that many of our rising ministry will have it. In the absence of such schools among us as they have felt the need of, they have gone to Baptist Institutions at the North, and to Paedobaptist Institutions to the North and South.... Is it not our duty to provide for a want so generally felt by those who have received the best advantages of other kinds? And can Baptists depend on the charity of other denominations? Are they willing that their ministry shall either be left untaught in many important matters of truth, or that they shall listen, however incredulously to false views of the church and of its ordinances? Is it the part of wisdom with us to allow such education as this to be given to those of our ministry who enjoy the best educational advantages? Or, if they attend Baptist schools at the North, are we willing to accept charity from those from whose fellowship we are cut off, from whom in all matters we are separated, and whose opinions upon the subject of our internal institutions are such as, if imbibed by our young ministers, render them unfit to labor successfully in our midst?

But allow me to say something of the value of this education. What do we mean by giving theological education? Nothing more than giving to a student a thorough knowledge of the word of God—of the way to study it, and the best means of preaching it to others. This is the entire object in view. It is for this purpose that we teach the languages in which the Scriptures were originally written. This, however, is less frequently objected to. It is admitted at once that there is some advantage here. Well, then as to systematic theology. The instruction in this is simply placing before the pupil, as it were, a map of Christian truth. We thank God for it that it can be systematized—that it does not teach any two truths which are opposed to each other. But to how many does the word of God have this appearance? Let any one sit down and try to balance the statements of different doctrines. How long will it take him to complete it, and how frequently will he have to modify it! After the utmost that he can do, how frequently will some friend be able to point out passages in the word of God which render further modification necessary. And when we remember how long a process one must go through to arrange all the doctrines, the task is seen to be interminable. And were it not for the instructions derived from books in which theology is set

forth systematically how numerous would be the errors into which our ministry would fall. It takes a master mind to do alone what the best men of the churches were centuries in achieving—the arrangement of the whole truth without any admixture of error. And yet, such an approximation to this as is essential is easily attained with the help of some work or teacher of systematic theology. An illustration readily suggests itself upon this subject. Were you, Mr. President, to attempt to map off that county of Virginia with which you are most familiar, would there not be a thousand mistakes, unless you were to go about a systematic survey. Yet, if that county, already mapped out, were placed before you, you could, with little general knowledge, tell, at least in the general, if the map were accurate, and with much less than what is necessary to arrange it, could decide upon positive accuracy. If another hand has measured a line or taken an angle, you are satisfied with taking the same measurements once, if they coincide, and only when a difference occurs do you feel necessary a second measurement. Now, the study of systematic theology with a text book and instructor is precisely the same kind of work. The whole ground is mapped off, and all that has to be done is to examine it, to see if there be any mistake. The doctrine is presented as the piety and learning of the church have developed it; and it is accepted not because of that, but because it is seen to meet exactly all that the word of God says on the subject. With the helps now in use, every passage which bears upon a given doctrine may be gathered in a few hours. A few more will enable us to arrange them and to compare them with the statement made. The professor stands prepared to remove difficulties. The students come prepared to present any that may arise in their minds; and from such an examination it will be seldom found that the truth has not made its impression on the mind. There is no reason to fear that our students will too readily imbibe the opinions of their instructors. The Baptist mind is too well trained to independent thought, and realizes too strongly the obligation to present the reason of our belief. The Bible is the religion of our people, and the minister of the people must be a theologian of the Bible. Our present danger lies rather in the fact that in the absence of a thorough knowledge of the truth, the great doctrines of the Bible are never developed, their relation in the Christian life never made known, and the ministry itself, which should be apt to teach, thoroughly instructed in every good word and work, are found acknowledging their ignorance and excusing it upon the ground that these truths are not frequently to be proclaimed. Such certainly is not Bible instruction. Every truth has its place. Every truth is to be proclaimed. We are to give to each one precisely the importance given in the word of God, and systematic theology best enables us to do this.

The study of Church History also brings before us the mistakes of the past, and guards us against committing them. It tells us of errors, of the grounds on which they were based, and the manner in which they were refuted. And any curious theory which may have crept into our minds, is thus frequently shown off in its true colors. Ignorance of these errors leads to most frequent mistakes. No longer ago than yesterday did I meet with a book written by one of our best brethren—a man of great usefulness and whose praises are on the lips of many; yet in this book

I found a theory which was exploded fifteen hundred years ago. I had seen it referred to before, but had not read it. And the refutation of it is so simple that one can scarcely imagine how he could have failed to recognize it. To its presentation by a writer in review of it, he has made no reply at all, so far as I know. Now, these mistakes are natural. They arise in the minds of all not thoroughly instructed who try to think about God's truth. And the knowledge that they are not new, afforded by Church History, would put many in the way of finding out their mistakes.

The subject of church government is now awakening very general attention. How many of our brethren are able to meet its issues. And so with many other matters connected with this subject. The difficulty I always feel is in finding time to say all that I desire. I must not weary you; yet, my brethren, I could speak all night, and yet fail to say all that I desire.

Let me refer, however to one other point, and I am done. The question is frequently asked us, how will you secure to us a more practical ministry? The learned ministry of the past have frequently been without this character. They have not been sufficiently men of the people. It seems to me God has singularly put in our hands the means of securing this result. Our institution is located in the midst of an extensive rural population. The students will always have opportunity to preach as much as they can, profitably, during the term. And then, during the four months vacation they can labor as colporters, carrying books from house to house, and speaking to the people about their spiritual interests. When a resolution was introduced, a few nights since, into your Colporter Convention, to the effect that this kind of labor was singularly suited to educate the ministry, I was ready to respond to it, and would have done so but for the lateness of the hour. And I would have every influence brought to bear upon our young ministers, to lead them to engage in this work. Should this be done—with the educational advantages we can afford—with the spirit of independent thought which actuates our people—and with the earnest piety, which it is to be hoped, the churches will see to, is to be found in every student they recommend—we may well hope that a source of the richest blessings will be afforded to our churches.

Let me beg your hearty co-operation in this enterprise. I ask it for the sake of the church, from all parts of which comes the cry for more laborers for the harvest. I ask it for our most earnest young men, who desire it that they may learn more of Christ, whose hearts, burning to tell his love, and to feed his sheep, feel sadly the deficiencies of our present provision for them. Will you refuse? The interest taken in our enterprise to which I have before referred, assures me you will not. Brethren of Virginia, take your place in this great enterprise. And the Lord make it an abundant blessing to the church, and fulfill in it all our hopes, and answer in its prayers even more than we can ask or think. ☺

“If Elected, I Am Willing to Go”

John A. Broadus had been elected to the first faculty in 1858 and decided that he could not leave his church. Boyce continued to work for the successful establishment of the seminary, which included continuing to urge Broadus to accept the invitation. By April 1859 Broadus consented to be among those that dared to initiate this new, and somewhat controversial, venture for Southern Baptists. His friendship with Boyce was no small matter in this decision.

Written on April 21, 1859.

Dear Bro. Boyce:

With much difficulty, and much distress, I have at length reached a decision. I tremble at the responsibility of the thing either way, and hesitate to write words which must be irrevocable. But... if elected, I am willing to go. May God graciously direct and bless, and if I have erred in judgment, may he overrule, to the glory of his name.

Jacta est alea. Do not fear that I shall change my mind. And my dear Boyce, suffer me to say, that few personal considerations about the matter are so attractive to me, as the prospect of being associated in a great work with you. I rejoice in a warm mutual friendship now; and I trust we shall ere long learn to love each other as brothers. Pardon me for just saying what I feel.

Please keep all this private. I feel some natural delicacy about having it known that I am willing when it is not certain that the great Board of Trustees will elect me. Of course, your Provisional Committee must know. But those who may come to Richmond must keep dark about it for the sake of my people here, who need not be distressed till the thing is settled. Only four or five persons here know, and they can be trusted.

Now I beg that you will come to Richmond, unless some matter of life or death keeps you away. We can do something there, privately if not publicly. I learned, in confidence, last week, that a scheme was on foot for keeping Manly in Richmond. Come, that we may counteract it. Then I shall need to consult you about a variety of points, as to the Seminary and as to the establishment of my family in Greenville. I must continue in my pastorate till 1st August, both for sake of the church, and to get as much as possible of the year's salary.

Will there be any money for the library? I lack many books which will be almost indispensable in the beginning. I cannot buy them all myself. Will the Furman University let us have the theological part of their library? And if so, can you bring with you to Richmond a catalogue of its contents?

I shall be sadly disappointed if you cannot come. I expect to leave for Richmond on May 2nd. If you cannot write in time to reach me here before that day, direct to care of Dr. Jeter, Richmond.

Begging to be kindly remembered to Mrs. Boyce, I am
Affectionately yours,

John A. Broadus

I shall now write to Winkler and urge.

Perspicuity in the Preaching and Pietistic Thought of Basil Manly, Jr.¹

Roger D. Duke

In the spirit of full disclosure let me state quite plainly at the outset that I have become somewhat of a “Rhetorical Snob.” Rhetoric has fallen on hard times. Most in this culture do not possess a working knowledge or even a rudimentary understanding of its classical tradition or usage. The rich texture and craftsmanship of the orator has escaped the notice of the contemporary masses, even though they are persuaded every day by the Madison Avenue types to part with their hard earned money for some trivial bobbles, beads, or trinkets. One rhetorical critic writes:

Rhetoric is commonly used to mean empty, bombastic language that has no substance. Political candidates and government officials often call for “action not rhetoric,” from their opponents or the leaders of other nations. In other instances, *rhetoric* is used to mean flowery, ornamental speech that contains [an] abundance of metaphors and other figures of speech.... Rhetoric is communication; it is simply an old term for what is now commonly called *communication*.²

Rhetoric is, at best, misunderstood on the one hand; and, at worst misused, misapplied, and misappropriated on the other. This essay is one humble attempt to save rhetoric from an untimely demise by demonstrating its varied usage by Basil Manly, Jr in his preaching and pietistic thought.

One of the chief aims, if not the only aim of all communication is *clarity*. If what is said and heard is not understood, then what good is the particular communication’s event? Whether in personal conversation, small group gathering, TV commercial, or sermon; there must be clarity of thought and expression if the rhetor is to put the point across to the hearer. In rhetoric this clarity is called *perspicuity*.

Perspicuity: A Definition

*Ad fontes*³ should not be the cry of the Protestant Reformation alone. This expression can also be applied to rhetorical inquiry. It is almost universally held that Aristotle is the “font” of rhetorical thought and praxis. Aristotle discussed perspicuity under the heading of *style*. He declared: “We may, then, start from the observations there made, including the *definitions of style*. Style to be good must be *clear*, as it proved by the fact that speech which fails to convey a plain meaning will fail to do just what speech has to do” (italics added).⁴

Clarity of style was packaged for the sermonic use of rhetoric in the term *perspicuity*. A major figure in the 18th and early 19th centuries that influenced sacred rhetoric was the Rev. Dr. Hugh Blair. In his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, Blair offered a definition of perspicuity that gave deference to Aristotle and became a basis for homiletics of the 19th century. It sounds new to the ear of the 21st-century student but was common fare for homiletics study of former days. He wrote:

With respect to style, that which the pulpit requires, must certainly, in the first place, be very *perspicuous*. As discourses spoken there, are calculated for the instruction of all sorts of hearers, plainness and simplicity should reign in them. All unusual, swoln,⁵ or high sounding words should be avoided; especially all words that are merely poetical, or merely philosophical (italics added).⁶

So then, “Perspicuity requires attention first to single words and phrases, and then to the construction of sentences. When considered with respect to words and phrases, syntax and grammar, it requires these three qualities, *purity, propriety and precision*.”⁷

Blair continued his understanding of how perspicuity should be applied to an address, sermon, or manuscript by the novice:

Young preachers are apt to be caught with the glare of these; and in young composers [of manuscripts] the error may be excusable; but they may be assured that it is an error, and proceeds from their not having yet acquired a correct taste. Dignity of expression, indeed, the pulpit requires in a high degree, nothing that is mean or groveling, no low or vulgar phrases, ought on any account to be admitted. But this dignity is perfectly consistent with simplicity. The words employed may be all plain words, easily understood, and in common use; and yet the style may be abundantly dignified, and at the same time very lively and animated.⁸

Here, Blair laid out four elemental principles of clarity the young minister should endeavor to learn and incorporate into his pulpit manner. These are: 1) plainness and simplicity, 2) limited use of high sounding words, 3) decorum or dignity in the pulpit and 4) plain words that are easily understood.

Perspicuity in the Preaching of Basil Manly, Jr.: A Case Study

Let us consider how Blair's definition can be applied to a sermon of Basil Manly, Jr.: "Halting on this side of Jordan, or, shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?"⁹

Manly, Jr. started by giving an extended introduction in his address by rehearsing an obscure section of Scripture from the Old Testament—Numbers 32:5–6. This is the instance where the tribes of Reuben and Gad desired to settle the land on one side of the Jordan River because it was goodly land for pasture. They wanted to "halt on this side of Jordan." Their intent seems laziness at best and selfishness at worst. They asked: "Why should we go on and fight, help our kinsmen, when there is land enough here for us?" Moses considered this suggestion to be out of "insolence, avarice, or cowardice," according to Manly. This is the only place where he employed such a high sounding verbiage that the general masses of folk may not have understood. Generally throughout the sermon he maintained an economy of such lofty sounding words.

Moses pressed the Reubenites and Danites with a sharp rebuke: "Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?" Manly couples this general upbraiding with one much stronger that most Baptists have heard preached and resides in our "collective psyche"—"be sure your sin will find you out!"¹⁰

These select Israelites protested that they did not intend to commit the sin of which Moses had accused them. They had no desire to leave the fight and the rest of Israel alone to the ensuing war with all its battles yet un-fought. They only wanted to settle their families and livestock and leave a garrison to protect them. The bulk would go along and fight. Then, "The proposition in this form is accepted by Moses and their wish is gratified."

Here in the sermon Manly gave the two tribes the benefit of the doubt. Their motive remained unknown in his thinking. However, he used this as metaphor as well as double entendre to make a point and transition. This address was given circa 1861–1865. As any student of history knows, this was a terrible time for the South. Evidently many Southerners had chosen to be "*keepers at home*." These had, according to Manly;

avail[ed] themselves of the flimsiest pretext for exemption and to slink behind the feigned diseases, or trades and professions long abandoned, to shield them from an honorable discharge of their duty to the country. It is not my intention, nor is it necessary, that I address a word to this class. They are not in the army—where this tract [or sermon] will find its circulation.

What Manly did here seems quite plain and simple, but it was homiletically ingenious. He took a portion of Scripture that was probably known to all; whether educated or not, farmer or shop keeper, urban or rural, high society or low, and made an appeal across all social and economic strata of the day asking: "shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?" He then made a quick jab at those who found some personal issue of "exemption" in order to stay home and

assuage their “guilty conscience,” not wanting to fulfill their military obligation. Here he launched into his transition. Manly made a loud but clear connection between the biblical passages with his hearers who had “halted” in that present day. This extended exposition and application makes up the remaining portion of his address.

Manly declared very distinctly that there is, “a deadlier foe than the Yankees—a war which demands and deserves the concentration of every man’s powers, and which must be prosecuted with unanimous zeal, and with patient endurance to the—not bitter, but—glorious end.” What is this war? It is “spiritual warfare.” “[T]o halt on this side of Jordan, to leave to others the toils and the honors of these celestial victories, to sit still while the brethren go to war. I am afraid there are some of these in the [Christian] army,” he exhorted. This “spiritual warfare” schema was fleshed out in the balance of his address in four distinct ways:

1. There are some who “discourage the heart....”
2. There are some who attend to their own conveniences and personal comfort first....
3. There are those who stop short in Christian progress, as if all the work were accomplished....
4. There are some who are always leaving their work to be done by others....

Let each be considered in turn.

“1. There are some who ‘discourage the heart.’”

First Manly took up the idea of morale. He stated distinctly what every general knows quite well:

Everything, in war, depends on keeping up the spirit of the army. Defeat by overwhelming forces is nothing. Good soldiers can rally and try it again. But, if the spirit is broken, whether by *treacheries*, by *hardships* and *abuse*, by *multiplied desertions*, by *discouraging speeches* from generals or comrades, failure is almost inevitable (italics added).

His use of this plain metaphor was quite appropriate on the heels of the cited biblical passage. Manly added to the morale image with an appeal to the ear: “[T]here are, among those who profess to be Christians, some *croakers*, who never sing except to a mournful tune, some icebergs that radiate nothing except chilliness.” Surely these predominately rural folk would have made the connection to the “croakers.” In 21st-century parlance we might say something like—these “always rain on other’s parades.”

Manly then painted a clear verbal picture of a railway station where the troop trains are passing through to the front lines to fight. Many would stand around “always expecting to be taken care of and comforted” personally, “but never dreaming that they might help or take care of any body else” for the Southern cause.

These are hangers-on. They are no good to anyone—not even themselves. With poignancy and distinctiveness he inquired: “Are you one of these?”

“2. There are some who attend to their own conveniences and personal comfort first.”

Next, Manly turned his attention to selfishness. Like these select Israelites, there were those among them who were selfish for their own issues with little regard for others. The preacher demonstrated well how the “last shall be first and the first shall be last”¹¹ by demonstrating the ultimate ends of Reuben and Gad:

First located indeed, they were but first displaced afterwards, first relapsing into idolatry, first carried away into captivity, first passing into extinction. Severed gradually in interest and in sympathies, from those on the other side of the river, attempting miserable neutrality, when enemies assailed the common cause and buying inglorious and fatal peace instead of daring and winning in honorable warfare, their history remains a warning of what awaits those who hang back when common duty demands general sacrifices.

He well enumerated rhetorically, ethically, and morally that those whose concern is selfish at the first may very well have the harder lot at the last.

“3. There are those who stop short in Christian progress, as if all the work were accomplished.”

Many, Manly observed, “have been just converted, perhaps, and conclude that now the important work is done.” “There are [also older] Christians who have ‘lost the warmth of their first love...’”¹² for the Savior. Again he used the war metaphor with a brilliant simplicity as he exhorts those in the Lord’s army on to faithfulness

Incessant vigilance is the price of human warfare. It is even more so in the spiritual, as our enemies are more watchful, eager, and powerful. There must be constant aggression on the army of Satan. Every birth adds one to the ranks of evil: the hosts of God are losing by every death, and can only be replenished by conversion, by winning over our opponents.

There are those faithful, however, in the army of God who “are warring with all their might against the sins that still annoy” while these “are sitting still, while their foundations are crumbling beneath them.”

“4. There are some who are always leaving their work to be done by others.”

At the last Manly described those who would be “drop outs” or possessed with laziness concerning the Kingdom’s increase. Many knew for sure that, “There is... a great deal to be done in the Redeemer’s cause, very important to be done, in fact

indispensable, and a very firm conviction that somebody ought to do it, without the idea once occurring to them that they have a share in the responsibility.” He described those who seemingly came to Christ but are “at ease in Zion”¹³ after their initial conversion experience.¹⁴ Though he did not deal with the possible fact those of whom he says made declaration of their faith, may well have confessed a spurious faith. He did offer this jarring comment: “This necessary labor is to be done by certain nameless persons, of whom all they know is, that they are not of the number.” Accurately has James said of such, “Faith without works is dead!”¹⁵

Manly’s address was concluded with some tried and true, plain but sure methods. He did this in order to call for changed hearts and directions by his hearers. His appeal employed a typical preacher’s closing: an exhortation, an application, and an invitation.

Perspicuity in the Piety of Basil Manly, Jr.: A Case Study

Consider Manly’s article in *The Christian Index*, “A Call to the Ministry.” In it he posed the question: “What are the qualifications requisite for a minister of the gospel?”¹⁶ He gave a terse and penetrating answer, again using as a standard for nineteenth-century style, Blair’s constructs of perspicuity: *purity*, *propriety* and *precision*.¹⁷ Manly declared:

It need be said that *piety* is essential. No amount of talent, no extent of education, no apparent brilliancy of fervor, should ever be allowed to gain admission into the ministry for one whose piety there is a reason to doubt, or who has not a more than ordinary active and consistent holiness. A Christless minister is as horribly out of place as a ghastly skeleton in the pulpit bearing a torch in his hand.

Piety, “purity of heart,” and “consecrated men” all descriptors of personal holiness, which is the most important thing for the one who would possess the “qualifications” for ministry.

From these three heart issues flowed others that should augment the minister’s call. These were: “*Good intellect... [and] facility in acquiring knowledge... [with] some capacity to speak;*” “*common sense;*” “*energy of character*” and “*an ardent and self-denying desire to labor for the good of souls.*” His description of those who were called was poignant yet straightforward, clear but compelling. It also possessed simplicity of character that would compel all who heard or read the address to be sure to pause, ponder, and consider the question Manly posed.

Later as Manly drew the address to a close, he set up a distinct contrast with the former section. He then made appeal for “numbers in the ministry.” He urged:

Now we need numbers in the ministry.... But we need purity more than numbers.... Above all we need *consecrated* men,—men who have stood beneath the cross, till their very souls are dyed with Jesus’ blood, and love like his for perishing millions has been kindled within them. We long for

such men, but for such only, as are willing to “endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ” (*italics added*).

His description of the consecrated was a distinctive way of observing that numbers were needed in the ministry. Numbers were not needed only for their sake, however. Numbers were not to be substituted for those with truly pietistic and consecrated hearts who “are dyed with Jesus’ blood” after having “stood beneath the cross.”

With the clarion call of an Old Testament shofar, Manly puts forth a series of “Do you...?” rhetorical and actual questions for the would-be young minister’s consideration:

- Do you habitually entertain and cherish conviction that you are not your own; but, as dead with Christ, are bound to live unto yourself, but unto him who died for you, and rose again?
- Do you feel willing to serve him in whatsoever employment you can most glorify his name?
- Do you watch for opportunities of doing good . . . in the Sunday school, in the prayer meeting, and by the wayside?
- Do you sincerely desire to make it the business of your life to labor for souls?
- Do you find that other employment seem comparatively uninviting, and this delightful, apart from any considerations of worldly ease or emolument?
- Does your impression of duty with regard to the ministry grow stronger, at those times when you are most favored with nearness to God, and when you most distinctly realize eternal things?

Blair’s ideas described as purity, propriety, and precision of speech were obviously woven into the fabric of Manly’s homiletical character. These he demonstrated in sermon and address as these two case studies well demonstrate.

Lastly, in his “qualifictions” inquiry, Manly showed an expert oratorical ability that appealed to his auditor’s apparent piety. Manly pressed them with an exhortation containing all the dynamics of classical rhetoric—ethos, pathos, and logos. He sensed in them some deep level of concern for the Savior’s cause. He understood their desire to enlist and fight “in the Lord’s army.” So he called them forth to action in a manner so plain, yet so moving, that any with whom the Holy Spirit was working could be borne along with his simple words of persuasion. He did not make appeal for an altar call experience. It was not in a formal invitation at the end of the service to which he called them to respond. His appeal was his entire sermon, with an open invitation to the work of ministry. It was woven throughout the warp and woof of the address. Even when read, one joins with the ancient king who was “almost persuaded”¹⁸ to hear the call of the gospel minister. Listen! Can you hear or read Manly’s words and not be moved even today?

Is your willingness to engage in such service connected with the clear and cordial renunciation of self seeking, and a simple reliance on him whose grace is promised to be sufficient?

It is joined with the humble estimate of your own powers, and with a willingness to use all necessary and suitable means for the improvement of those powers?

It is a desire for this work, not as a temporary resort, as a refuge for indolence, or an avenue to fame, but as a lifetime labor, in prosperity or adversity, in evil report and in good report that God may be honored and sinners saved?

If you answer, “Yes,” then welcome, brother! We give you the right hand of fellowship to go forth and labor for Jesus.

Concluding Observation

There is an unseen and lost historical irony here of sorts. John A. Broadus was known as the “preacher extraordinary.”¹⁹ Arguably this tenant of perspicuity in sacred rhetoric came down to the Southern Baptist Convention’s own “prince of preachers.”²⁰ And he dealt with the topic quite extensively in his monumental work, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*. In it he exhorted:

The most important property of style is *perspicuity*. Style is excellent when, like the atmosphere, it shows the thought, but itself is not seen.... [G]ood style is like stereoscopic glasses, which, transparent themselves, give form and body and distinct outline to that which they exhibit.²¹

But surely, as Manly preached and wrote, his own “style of *perspicuity*... like the atmosphere... shows the thought, but itself [was] not seen.”²² His preaching, no doubt, possibly came up to the level of Broadus the master orator himself. Could it be that perhaps Manly was just as much the pulpit orator as Broadus? If clearness of thought and application for all who heard was the standard—then truly he may have been.☺

Notes:

¹ A sincere thank you goes to my pastor, Dr. Phil Newton, South Woods Baptist Church, Memphis, TN and my longtime mentor and friend Rev. Calston “Red” Berry, retired pastor, Oklahoma, City, OK for their editing work and feedback on this article.

² Sonja K. Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice* (Project Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1989), 3–4. Also: See my previous discussion of “rhetoric” in “Compel Them to Come In: Posture and Persuasion in the Preaching of Charles Haddon Spurgeon,” *Founders Journal* 74, (Fall 2008): 2–11.

³ *Ad Fontes*, A Latin expression that means “back to the font” or “back to the sources.” See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ad_fontes article.

⁴ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts (New York: The Random House, 1954), 167; See also: Lane Cooper, *The Rhetoric of Aristotle: An Expanded Translation with Supplementary Examples for Students of Composition and Public Speaking*, (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1932), 185.

⁵ This is a contraction for “swollen.”

⁶ Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, Vol. II, (Boston, MA: Printed by I. Thomas & E. T. Andrews, 1802), 56.

⁷ Hugh Blair, *An Abridgement of Lectures on Rhetoric* (Northampton, MA: Published by Simon Butler, 1818) 53.

⁸ Hugh Blair, *Lectures*, 56.

⁹ Basil Manly, Jr., “Halting on This Side of Jordan, or Shall Your Brethren Go to War, and Shall Ye Sit Here?” [Raleigh, NC.: s. n., between 1861 and 1865]. Accessed from, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/manlyb/menu.html>, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill digitization project, *Documenting the American South*. Accessed 24 June 2008. Note: in the digitized version, “No. 67.” and “BY REV. B. MANLY, JR., D. D., GREENVILLE, S. C.” are both in the superscription of the manuscript. This seems to indicate that the sermon or address manuscript was delivered or printed on more than one occasion. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent quotations in this section are from this source.

¹⁰ Numbers 32:23.

¹¹ Matthew 20:1–16.

¹² Revelation 2:1–7.

¹³ Amos 6:1.

¹⁴ This section of “halting,” could be considered “prophetic” in tone if not prophetic of office or gifting. Manly dealt with many of the very same issues Baptist pastors still consider troubling in a 21st-century church setting.

¹⁵ James 2:20.

¹⁶ Basil Manly, Jr., “A Call to the Ministry,” *The Christian Index* [Georgia State Baptist Paper], 15 November, 1866; also published by the American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia, 520 Arch Street, n.d. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent quotations in this section are from this source.

¹⁷ See Note 8 above.

¹⁸ Acts 26:28.

¹⁹ Vernon Latrelle Stanfield, *Favorite Sermons of John A. Broadus* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1959), 1.

²⁰ “Prince of Preachers” was a common term referring to Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the great 19th-century English Baptist orator and minister.

²¹ John A. Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, (Philadelphia, PA: Smith, English, & Co., 1871; reprint, Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan–University Library, n.d.), 339 (page citations are to the reprint edition). It should be noted that in Part III of Broadus’s *Preparation* he gives an entire chapter, Chapter II, to the discussion of *perspicuity*. Broadus states in a footnote: “On perspicuity, consult Campbell, and Herbert Spencer’s *Essay on Style*” (p. 339). These are both teachers of rhetoric that any who studied the Classics in the 19th century would recognize to be leaders in the field.

²² *Ibid.*

The Forgotten Founder—William Williams

Tom J. Nettles

What seems to have been true from the beginning, still is true today. In 1911, Charles H. Ryland wrote, “The least known of the members of the faculty at the outset was Dr. William Williams.”¹ In 1909, George Boardman Eager, fifty years after the Seminary’s founding, could still assume the relative anonymity of Williams in saying, “I desire to speak today of this least known of the founders.”²

The Least Known

This incognito status, something of a historical disaster, may be explained by three factors. One, Williams was added as the fourth man to the original faculty only after the position was refused twice by E. T. Winkler. Winkler, though only thirty-six, had attended Newton Theological Seminary, had served as editor of two Baptist newspapers, had been corresponding secretary for the Southern Baptist Publication Society, had served as pastor of several churches, and presently held the pulpit at First Baptist Church, Charleston. Boyce badly wanted Winkler, but Winkler’s attachment to his church overwhelmed the pull into Southern Baptists’ virgin voyage into theological education.

Two, Williams ecclesiology became a bit troublesome among many churches in the South. No doubt can be harbored that Williams affirmed the historic Baptist view of the composition of a church—only believers immersed in the triune name were church members.³ In special cases, however, Williams believed that members could be received into a Baptist church whose immersion, as a believer, had been given in a non-Baptist setting. This set off inflammatory remarks and attitudes in some segments of church life and put the seminary in a defensive posture on the issue, even though Williams was the only one that held this position.

Three, the remembrance of Williams was crushed beneath several historical factors that played strongly into the historical discussions of the seminary. Williams died of a bronchial disorder before the move to Louisville. This reality gives an almost pre-historic atmosphere to any discussion of Williams. From his original assignment as professor of church history and polity, he was assigned the task of teaching systematic theology in 1872, his true love. Boyce’s move to Louisville, however, put a double load on Williams as he resumed also many of the duties of his former field of teaching. That Boyce was the original professor of systematic theology and that he taught that subject for ten years after the death of Williams has given cryptic character to what could have been Williams’ greatest contribution to the young school. The coming of C. H. Toy in 1869 and W. H. Whitsitt in 1872, and the subsequent notoriety that has surrounded their seminary careers made discussion of Williams a dispensable historic item.

Four, Williams' heavy schedule of teaching allowed him to publish only two items. One was the *Apostolical Church Polity* and the other was a short history of the Southern Baptist Convention. The polity book shows the skill of an author that had command of language, syntax, logic, and compelling style. He moved freely and pertinently between scriptural data and historical data. He used a wide variety of authorities and witnesses to the topic from both historical and contemporary sources. The book is worthy and valuable but small and on a subject that would give him a limited readership. The historical survey, an insightful look at the dynamics between northern and southern Baptists in the years preceding the division, appeared as an appendix to the 1871 minutes of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Though all these factors and the mysteries of providence have conspired to envelop Williams in anonymity, his intrinsic talent and fervent stewardship of the gospel are worthy of recognition and genuine gratitude. When Charles Ryland spoke of Williams' relatively subdued beginning he went on to say, "But if least known to the great Baptist public at the time of his installation, he soon became, I had almost said, the best loved of them all. He was a great preacher and an exceedingly clear and discriminating lecturer. A student said of him: 'He is a beautiful illustration of the words, *If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light.*'"⁴

Preparation of a Full-orbed Gospel Minister

Williams was reared in a Georgia home of genuine piety where regular family worship took place and where he, after being converted in early years, often led in the exercises. His parents were refined people, of high social standing, and of deep commitment to divine truth. Williams' father attained a notable success in the cotton business and provided liberally for his family. Williams entered Franklin College (soon to be the University of Georgia) in 1828 when he was seventeen and graduated when he was nineteen. He and his brother came to work in the cotton mill business with their father and attained reputations for their business aptitude. In 1845, Williams married and decided to pursue the law as his vocation. He attended Harvard Law School, graduated in three years with distinction, had an opportunity for a career in Boston, but because of his wife's health and on the advice of a doctor, he moved south. Soon he set up practice in Montgomery, Alabama, won a dramatic case in his first trial and for five years ascended in the estimation of the entire legal profession for his adroitness and clarity of legal understanding and argument.

During these years, however, Williams felt an increasingly heavy burden on his conscience for gospel ministry. As early as 1850, he had preached at First Baptist Church in Montgomery on John 7:46, "Never man spake like this man." He refused a call to that church on the grounds of inexperience and lack of study in theology. This study he undertook, however, with the same commitment to which he formerly had given himself to law; he also began to preach in country churches. His reputation as a preacher and theologian spread and in 1856, Williams received

an invitation to succeed John L. Dagg in the chair of theology at Mercer University. His co-teacher, Joseph E. Willet, recalled the impression made by Williams.

He entered upon the work of theological teaching with great ardor. The Theological Department of Mercer had a fair endowment, two able professors, and had sent forth theological graduate for nine years. It promised great success and began to be looked to as the leading school in theology in the South. It opened a broad field of labor, and Dr. Williams began his work with great earnestness and zeal. His fine acquisitive powers was [sic] soon seen in his master of the studies under his charge. His classes found him ever equal to the demands of the subject before him. His clear, logical mind gave him a ready grasp of the great truths which his facility of expression imparted clearly to his pupils.⁵

Williams taught there for three years. He attended the educational conventions that led to the founding of Southern Seminary and served on the committee whose duty it was to nominate professors. Had he not served on that committee, Broadus conjectured that he likely would have been nominated in the first ground; in light of Boyce's strong desire for Winkler's acceptance, however, that speculative point seems unlikely. Nevertheless, he readily accepted the position when asked.

Though his first field of teaching was church history and church government and pastoral duties, Williams taught systematic theology in the years that began in 1861, 1866, and 1872–75. At times he also taught Latin theology and advanced Greek grammar. When he taught for Boyce during Boyce's absence in the year 1861–62, Boyce wrote Broadus a letter to be shared with the entire faculty. He thanked them their kindness to him during his absence and especially to William Williams for teaching Boyce's class. "I shall have the comfort of knowing," Boyce reflected, "that at least one class ought to understand theology." He commented on Williams' extraordinary teaching gifts by saying, "What would I not give for his wonderful power to put things clearly before those he addresses."⁶

The Gifted Teacher

J. William Jones, in the first class at the seminary and author of the enormously helpful book, *Christ in the Camp*, commented on Williams' performance in the classroom.

He was one of the best teachers I ever saw. Clear as a sunbeam in his statements, he would make everything at first so plain that it would be a rare instance in which he was not understood; but if he saw a shadow of doubt on the countenance of one of the students, he would quietly ask: "Do you see that, brethren? Well! It is so." And then he would use some striking illustration, or hold up what he wanted to enforce in some clearer light, so that he was a dull student, indeed, who could not see it.⁷

Other testimony of the clarity and power of his teaching riddles the pages of memories that his students preserved about him. George B. Eager, who entered the seminary in 1872, preserved many of these testimonies including statements from C. C. Brown, John A. Broadus, T. P. Bell, J. C. Hiden, and W. R. L. Smith. Smith's testimony of Williams' own style of greatness vibrates with an enthusiastic love for the man and his salubrious effect on all those around him.

Out of the fields of memory his great kindly beaming face shines upon me yet in unspent radiance. You and I and all the boys loved him—yes, genuinely and truly loved him. Our cordial admiration of the luminous teacher, pronounced as it was, hardly kept pace with the true affection that we gave to this winsome, noble man. In the class room we saw the clear shining of his lustrous intellect on all problems, exegetical, speculative and practical. Loyalty to truth, keen insight, brevity and power of statement, with absolute fairness and kindness, these were the qualities of his sweet, undogmatic spirit. How lovely and unconstrained was his abounding courtesy, and how humbly he did decline the office of omniscience. With what patience he waited on the slow apprehension of the student, and how genially but effectively he could dispose of the stupid or impertinent questioner. . . . His presence was summer-time to our hearts, and in our hearts he held an undisputed throne. I fear sometimes he never knew how unreservedly and tenderly we loved him. I never saw a fault in him. I never heard a student smite him with an ungentle word.⁸

The Gospel Preacher

Williams also was generally acknowledged as one of the most effective and popular preachers among Southern Baptists. Students at Greenville found one of their most entertaining sports to be arguments about who was superior, Broadus or Williams. C. H. Ryland recounted an amusing incident that put this intriguing contest in an engaging light.

Broadus and Williams were easily the greatest preachers of the faculty. Many and impassioned were the discussions held by the students in the vain effort to decide the supremacy. I can best explain our dilemma by relating an incident. Soon after the Seminary session opened, Dr. Richard Furman, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Greenville, had a protracted illness, and Professors Broadus and Williams were secured to fill the pulpit alternately morning and night. Witt, of Virginia, my roommate and a devoted admirer of both men, was greatly puzzled to decide which he liked the better. One Sunday night, after hearing Broadus in the morning and Williams at night, he came bursting into our room, and cried, "Oh, Ryland they beat each other every time."⁹

Others contribute similar observations about Williams. Jones recalled, "As a preacher, I have rarely heard his equal, and the students felt fortunate, indeed,

when they had the privilege of hearing him in the pulpit.”¹⁰ Joseph Willet, his colleague at Mercer, said, “However successful as a teacher, Dr. Williams was pre-eminent as a preacher of the Gospel.” He served as pastor of the Penfield church during his time at Mercer. His sermons rarely surpassed a half-hour in length but because of the clarity of his diction, the plainness, simplicity, and unostentatious nature of his language combined with the earnestness of his delivery he needed no longer to make a profound impression on his hearers. He also preached briefly at Crawfordsville where the noted orator A. H. Stephens attended church. Stephens remarked that he “knew no preacher in the State of such commanding power.”¹¹ Broadus wrote that he had “extraordinary power in the clear and terse statement of truth, and when kindled in preaching or lecturing he spoke with such intensity as is rarely equaled.”¹²

George Eager told of the experience of hearing Williams preach on the text “Marvel not that I say unto you, Ye must be born again.” Both the voice and the composed manner of the preacher fixed Eager’s attention fast, who “followed him with growing impression of his lucidity, earnestness, self-possession and power as a preacher unto the climactic, unexpected, but most effective close.” Williams “eliminated all unnecessary and irrelevant questions about the *mystery*, and shut us up to the consideration of the nature and necessity of the new birth.” J. C. Hiden, C. C. Brown, E. J. Forrester all commented on the lucidity, simplicity and earnestness of his preaching and how thoroughly natural, conversational, and limpid the delivery was. “Every sentence was a rifle ball,” so Forrester recalled, “that went right to the mark.” Among many other remarks, E. C. Dargan commented on Williams’ “consuming earnestness that glowed in all his speech, and shone with splendor in the intense light of his wonderful eyes and the strong lines of his rugged but intellectual face.” After noting some characteristics of his voice, Dargan pointed to his main characteristic as “the depth and fervor of his convictions and the remarkable clarity of his thinking and reasoning. This notable combination gave him an eloquence that was the delight of his audiences.” Dargan believed that Williams came closer than any preacher he had heard to the definition of eloquence as “logic on fire.”¹³

Eager also recalled the powerful culmination of application provided in the last sermon that he heard Dr. Williams preach. The text was “Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.” Before daylight the next morning, Williams’ house was in flames; efforts to save it failed and the house and all its contents were lost. Eager stood beside him as they looked on the great loss, and remarked, “Well Doctor, I reckon you little thought you would be called so soon to illustrate your sermon in this way.” Williams replied cheerily, “It’s all right. Though he slay me, yet *will* I trust him.”¹⁴

The Systematic Theologian

As a teacher of systematic theology, Williams fit precisely Boyce’s vision of a theological education that set forth clearly the doctrines of grace. Williams loved

these powerful biblical truths and used all his native and acquired argumentative skills in showing his students their beauty and spiritual usefulness. The manner of recitation and testing demanded that students take very accurate notes. A. J. Holt, a student from Texas, studied under Williams in the academic year 1874–75. His notebook is in the archives of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary library. The following observations are made on the basis of that notebook.

Williams began with the reality of divine revelation, including a discussion of the relation between reason and revelation, proceeded into proofs of the existence of God, the Attributes of God, the Trinity, the Person of Christ, the Person of the Holy Spirit, the decrees of God, man in state of innocence, the fall and its manifestations in present human nature, the divine scheme of redemption, and issues in eschatology. Ecclesiology is not in the discussion because that subject constituted one of the four academic departments of the seminary, also taught by Williams. Williams always stated the doctrine, the biblical background of the doctrine the differing viewpoints concerning the doctrine, a presentation of that which he believed biblical, refutations of erroneous views, and answers to objections to the true presentation.

After defending the protestant view of the authority of the Bible in doctrinal formulation Williams issued a caution.

Students must guard against studying the Bible professionally. Study it with devotion so that its truths may not only be comprehended by our intellect but be felt by our hearts. Let us begin with our minds divested of all prejudice and be earnest in our desires for truth. Let us also exercise the proper humility. It is too frequent that a man may be led to reject one doctrine because he can not reconcile it with another. It is not our place to reconcile.

On the subject of evidence for revelation, Williams argued for a structure of evidence that included the claim to revelation, the nature of the teaching, the character of the teacher, and supernatural verification that a supernatural message had been presented [miracles]. At the close of that discussion he included this interesting argument.

Let it be remembered if you overthrow miracles you overthrow Christ and his doctrine because he avowed that he wrought them by the power of God. In view of the wonderful character of Christ, the rejection of his testimony and the disbelief in his miracles is more wonderful than to accept his testimony and receive his miracles. The proposition here depends upon the character of the witness. These are some obvious things [Jesus lived etc. perfect character] Now Christ either possessed this character or the evangelists have performed the most wonderful feat the world has ever seen and it is wonderful that infidels do not exalt these men. It has been justly said that to delineate character truthfully and to sustain it under all the changing scenes of the narrative is one of the rarest gifts of genius. What writer of fiction ever tried to sustain a perfect character...

Where did these men get the conception of this character which is even now in this age above our comprehension. A mind can never originate an idea above its conception, and they could never have invented such a character.

On the question of divine omniscience, Williams rejected the Socinian view that future free volitions are impossible to know; he refuted also the view of middle knowledge set forth by Luis de Molina. He argued biblically for an exhaustive omniscient foreknowledge built on the eternal decrees of God, that this poses no insuperable difficulty for the ideas of sovereignty and human free agency, and that this view alone meets all the criteria set forth by Scripture. He made four proposals concerning the knowledge of God.

- 1st God's knowledge is intuitive, not discursive, i.e. it is not acquired by observation, experience, deduction, inference, or any process of reason.
- 2nd It is simultaneous & not successive, i.e. it does not come to him by portions at different times. It is one simple indivisible intuition beholding all things in their essences and relations as ever present & hence it must be eternal & independent.
- 3rd It is universal, i.e. all comprehending. It embraces all things & all events whatsoever in all their connections & relations & hence must be immutable.
- 4th It is infallible. It is perfectly and absolutely free from all errors and mistakes.

In his discussion of the attributes of God, Williams sought to anticipate other theological issues that would arise. For example in his discussion of Justice as a divine attribute, he anticipated the discussion of penal substitution.

Answer is that it is the vindication of law. That being so, the punishment of sin results from the holiness of God. Shown in this way. From the infinite holiness of God — he must infinitely hate sin just as from his infinite love to that which is holy. So he must hate and infinitely hate sin because directly opposed to his nature. If he did not love holiness he would cease to love himself and if he did not hate sin he would hate his own image for sin defaces his image. But from the necessary hatred to sin and its perfect opposition of his nature necessarily follows the punishment of it. God's infinite holiness must necessarily hate sin and from the hatred of sin necessarily follows its punishment. Men will admit it all but will reply, "But God is a being with infinite power and therefore he can, if he choose, not punish sin." Answer. Not to punish sin is not an object of power but it is a moral act. That belongs to God.... In Jesus Christ Justice and mercy meet and the divine law is satisfied.

Williams gave many pages of notes on the person of Christ, clearly affirming the orthodox conclusion of a single person incorporating two perfect natures,

the human and the divine, this one person deriving his personhood from the fact that the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God, assumed our nature into that personhood so that two complete natures subsisted in that one person. This doctrine held immense consequences in Williams' theology, not only for proper worship, but for soteriology. Holt recorded Williams' concern about this in some candid remarks made before lecture one day. "I am extremely anxious," Williams urged, "that you should have clear conception of this subject. i.e. of the person of our Savior. Ergo, question as much as you like, and let us understand it if it takes a week. Too many think that these are metaphysical facts and it is not worth while to bother about them."

On issues of the will, depravity, election, reprobation, atonement, perseverance, and providence Williams consistently set forth the Calvinist view as opposed to the Arminian view in the most thorough and urgent manner. For example, he believed that Arminian objections did not address the scriptural evidence brought forth by the Calvinist in defense of these doctrines. Their objections, as he said on several occasions, "are not to evidence but to the doctrine." They dispute the doctrine, not on the basis of evidence, so Williams believed, but because the doctrine is too hard: "The doctrine that is hardest for us to admit after all is that we are clay in the Potter's hands and that God is absolutely sovereign." In his statement of the doctrine of election, Williams intended to defend five component elements.

Statement of doctrine — God's eternal and unchangeable choice of certain persons to salvation of his sovereign will. Points are 1. eternal choice. 2. unchangeable choice, 3. choice of persons, 4. choice to salvation, 5. choice grounded on his sovereign will.

In his extended disclosure and defense of these five elements, Williams compared Arminian and Calvinist views and introduced his students to the ever-expanding theological connections of the doctrine of election.

Calvinists say that election is founded upon God's good pleasure and Arminians believe that this election is founded upon man's foreseen repentance, faith, and perseverance. With regard to founding it upon the foreseen repentance etc, it subverts God's sovereignty, by placing the actions of men out of his control and making him dependent on the actions of men. We haven't exhausted the evidence in favor of Calvinism. The evidence for Calvinism does not rest merely upon specific passages of Sacred Scripture in its favor some of which I have cited... It is involved in and bound up with what the Sacred Scriptures teach in reference to God's absolute sovereignty and dominion, with what they teach in reference to God's universal and all embracing providence extending even to the minute events of the falling of a sparrow, and with what the Sacred Scriptures teach in reference to man's total depravity, with what they teach in reference to the nature and extent of Christ's atonement and with what they teach in reference to regeneration.

Other aspects of Williams' lectures would continue to show the thoroughly clear and systematic method that he used in class. They would also demonstrate how every aspect of his thought on biblical doctrine found its integrating point on God's demonstration of His glorious wisdom in the sovereign and invincible manner in which He saves justly condemned sinners. Had Williams lived to publish a systematic theology textbook as Boyce was able to do in 1887, one year before his death, he would not be the forgotten founder.

The Death of William Williams

In January, 1877, John A. Broadus wrote George Boardman Taylor, a Southern Baptist Missionary to Italy. Among other items of mutual interest he reported on the state of health of William Williams. "Doctor Williams went down last spring with incipient consumption. At Asheville, N. C., he got better during the summer, and he is wintering at Aiken." Broadus knew that his getting better was only temporary and feared that "he will never teach again." He described Williams as "a noble man, of great abilities, and is the finest lecturer I have ever known. His lectures on Systematic Theology, the last two or three years, were something wonderful for clearness, terseness, power." Broadus simply acknowledged what Boyce had said in 1862, "What would I not give for his wonderful power to put things clearly before those he addresses."¹⁶

The overload that Williams had taught since 1872 combined with regular preaching in country churches, little exercise, a less than vigorous constitution, and intense mental strain "wore him out more seriously" than any of his colleagues were aware. Probably in late fall or early winter of 1875, he slept in a small room that had a window minus one pane of glass. He caught cold and progressively became worse but would not stop his work.

In January, Boyce and Broadus began including reports on Williams in their correspondence. "Dr. Trescot told me today that Dr. Williams is seriously sick—feverish, night-sweats, cough—for some time," Broadus reported. The doctor did not think it advisable that Williams be expected to teach. Broadus made several suggestions as to how the classes could be handled. Boyce was upset. "I fear Dr. Trescot is right. I have been uneasy about Williams for some time." He saw little merit in most of Broadus' suggestions and proposed that Williams' course be handled by assigning text book reading for private study with an examination at year's end. "I do not think any of you should burden yourselves to take these subjects and especially to lecture upon them." Soon, Broadus responded with an arrangement for teaching that avoided Boyce's objections for the most part and included pertinent information about efforts to help Williams.

We have a pretty good arrangement about Williams' classes. Whitsitt did study Church History and takes that. Toy will hear recitations in Dick. They will send for Pond's Patristic Theology. Dargan and Ebeltoft will read Augustine's Confessions without a teacher. Trescot begged Williams to go for 6 weeks to Florida. Williams finally told him no money. Werne

offered to furnish it, \$125, but Williams hesitated to receive. Through Toy I have this afternoon arranged, that Seminary pays Williams' expenses, \$125, and Werne, of his own accord, will refund the money to Seminary. I have sent Williams check for that amount, and hope he'll go. Trescot thinks he can return (from Madison, Fla.) by 1st April, able to lecture that month. Lungs slight affected, and change of climate will probably stop it.¹⁷

Williams went to Florida but found that he was deeper in sickness than he knew. He wrote Broadus on March 23 that he should remain longer and should not attempt to teach or hold examinations. He also needed fifty dollars. By April he reported that he was considerably better and would be home by the twenty-second. On April 26, Broadus reported to Boyce that Williams was not better but worse, he never expected him to lecture again, and believed he might live a year. Special financial arrangements, as well as whiskey, were provided from month to month. In July, Williams reported to Boyce that he was getting stronger and hoped yet to do service. By August, Williams had practically abandoned hope of recovery. Broadus commented, "This shows that he cannot last long, and also that he is like to be very sad, till so near his end as to rest exclusively in religious hopes." In addition to making many special arrangements for money Broadus noted, "We must do something, for our dear friend is evidently in very trying circumstances."¹⁸ Broadus saw him again in September and observed that his appearance was "wonderfully improved. I never saw him look better." Well, who would not with such a radically changed life style—He "quit tobacco and nearly quit coffee, quit work, rode morning and afternoon, also walked, played croquet a great deal (very fond of it), and slept all night." Both his appetite and digestion proved excellent, his weight had increased, and his doctor said his lungs were better. Though Williams was confident of recovery Broadus wrote, "*Between you and me* it is a melancholy delusion. He coughs now every minute, slightly. I don't for a moment believe he will ever be able to work again." Broadus made complicated financial arrangements to help Williams and his family settle to Aiken on the doctor's orders. Boyce was glad to hear of the improvement, but, like Broadus, feared the cough.¹⁹

By January, Williams clearly had no chance of teaching again or of recovery to health. Boyce was grieved to have his "fears confirmed" and sought merciful arrangements for him. He favored the trustees "making him Emeritus Professor, and paying salary, for life, or for one year." He wanted this to be a policy for others—"It is what other institutions do." His only doubt was whether they would give full salary, but he was firm that they "put Williams beyond reach of dependence upon others."²⁰

Four days after John Broadus' lectures at Rochester Seminary closed, William Williams died. William A. Mueller summarized, "Though the trustees granted him a leave of absence in 1876, the ravages of tuberculosis laid him low at last, and on 20 February 1877, Professor William Williams died at Aiken, South Carolina, at less than fifty-six years of age."²¹ Broadus, who observed, "Whoever knew a

man more completely genuine, more thoroughly sincere, more conscientious in all his doings," called the fatal illness "the fell ravages of consumption."²² Boyce came from Louisville to Greenville, where the funeral was held, to take part and Broadus preached from a text pre-arranged by Williams, "My Times are in His hands," Psalm 31:15. Broadus made two points: 1. The text was preeminently true of our brother, in which he included a summary of the life of Williams; 2. This text is also true of those who remain to mourn his loss. J. S. Dill, who saw William Williams only in his casket recalled vividly the funeral and especially Broadus' conclusion to the sermon.

The conclusion was one of tenderest pathos. The preacher told the story of father's carriage horses. For years they had pulled in harness together. One died and was hauled away to a nearby woodland. The next morning the other horse was missed from the lot. Search was made and he was found lying beside his old mate and grieving with a broken heart. Tears flowed freely as Dr. Broadus told of the eighteen years in which he had pulled in harness with this servant of the Lord.²³

On 23 February the faculty wrote an expression of appreciation, placed it in the minutes, and had it printed in newspapers and denominational journal of the South. It is a fitting summary of the usefulness of this great man.

The Faculty of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary desire to place on record an expression of their sentiments in regard to the death of their friend and colleague, the Reverend William Williams, which took place on Tuesday, the 20th inst. at Aiken, S. C.

He was of the number that were present at the foundation of the Institution, and was chosen almost at the start as a member of the corps of instructors. After nearly eighteen years of unremitting toil he has fallen just at the period when his powers and usefulness had attained their completest development. During all these years so full of vicissitudes for our Seminary, we have enjoyed abundant opportunities of learning his worth.

The sweetness and openness of his temper, his abundance and genuineness of his sympathy, and the transparency and solidness of his character rendered him always a charming and most desirable friend.

It is extremely gratifying to our feeling to be able to record the fact that during eighteen years of almost daily intercourse in which we were called on to discuss and decide innumerable questions, frequently of great importance and difficulty, the cordiality of our relations was never for a moment disturbed.

He possessed great fitness for and achieved great usefulness in the position he occupied as Theological instructor. The breadth and clear-

ness of his views, the terseness of his expression, his probity, his force, the depth and fervour of his piety were acknowledged and valued by all his pupils. Few men could have been more successful in acquiring their admiration and affection, and in impressing them for good.

As a preacher, though he was seldom equal to himself on distinguished occasions, and always shrank from them, those who enjoyed his ordinary pulpit ministrations cannot lose the impression of his massive power and engaging clearness and simplicity.²⁴☺

Notes:

¹ Charles H. Ryland, "Recollections of the First Year, 1859-1860 delivered at the Seminary on January 11, 1911, 4.

² George Boardman Eager, *William Williams* (Louisville, KY: Baptist World Publishing Co., 1909), 2.

³ See his *Apostolical Church Polity*. Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society, 1874, contained in Mark Dever, ed. *Polity* (Center for Church Reform, 2001), 528-550.

⁴ Ryland, 4.

⁵ Joseph E. Willett, "Rev. Williams Williams, D.D. *The Seminary Magazine*, April 1892, (volume 5. no. 7) 363.

⁶ Boyce to Broadus, 16 March 1862; L&F, 39f.

⁷ J. William Jones, "Reminiscences of the First Session of Our Seminary," *The Seminary Magazine* (vol 3, n. 2), 43f.

⁸ Eager, 20f.

⁹ Ryland, 4.

¹⁰ Jones, 44.

¹¹ Willet, 363.

¹² John A. Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1893), 169.

¹³ Eager, 11-15.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 12

¹⁵ A. T. Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 303.

¹⁶ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 192. Robertson cites a letter from Boyce to Broadus, 16 March 1862.

¹⁷ Broadus to Boyce, 16 February 1876; L & F, 222.

¹⁸ Broadus to Boyce, 5 August 1876; L & F, 248.

¹⁹ Broadus to Boyce, 27 September 1876; L & F, 253f; Boyce to Broadus, 5 October 1876; L & F, 255.

²⁰ Boyce to Broadus, 29 January 1877; L & F, 273.

²¹ William A. Mueller, *A History of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1959), 106.

²² Broadus, *Memoir*, 247.

²³ J. S. Dill, "Our Seminary, the transition from Greenville to Louisville," *The Review and Expositor* (April, 1931, vol. 28, no. 2), 143.

²⁴ Mueller, 110. Mueller cites *Faculty Minutes*, book 1, 57-59. See also, "Rev. William Williams," *Western Recorder* (1 March 1877), 5.

Book Reviews

by Tom Nettles

Greg Wills, *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary – 1859–2009*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. 566 pages.

This long-anticipated history of Southern Baptists' oldest Seminary will not disappoint those who have savored its coming with heightened interest. Greg Wills has given the kind of historical investigation and narrative that this storied institution deserves. The writing style is tight, clear, smooth and fluid. The depth and sophistication of the content will keep everyone involved. The style of presentation will exclude no one. Wills synthesizes material with a facility that readily deceives the reader. Such a charmingly told, easily read, and tantalizingly interesting story must just flow from the mind as easily as an uncle Remus story did from my grandfather.

Not quite. Wills has mined the archives of several colleges, seminaries, historical societies, city libraries, and public and private collections, has conducted multiplied hours of interviews, looked at thousands of pages of digitally photographed and criminally boring letters, books, and financial records, and rolled through miles of microfilm collections to gather the raw material for telling this story. Then he has selected the most pertinent of the piles of usable quotes (some of the most amazingly apt from infinitely obscure sources), synthesized them sentence after sentence into coherent ideas that flow easily one after the other, and produced—imagine, imagine the irony—a history book that is a nail-biter and page turner. From Boyce to Mullins to McCall to Mohler with the other presidents and their respective theological dramas, Wills rolls out a pleasing narrative from highly complex and maddeningly varied material.

Beyond that, however, the story is of convicting importance. The great distress of early disinterest and opposition, the stories of sacrificial heroism, the pride, the intense drama of interpersonal relationships, the stories of theological deceit and decline, and the startlingly frank political aspects of the story give one a sober picture of both the humanness of the institution and its potential for destructive influence alongside the reality and hope for its positive spiritual contribution.

Each reader will find an episode in the story that he considers most pivotal and compelling and there is no scarcity of options. Some will find their deepest satisfaction in the true grit demonstrated by Boyce, and Broadus and others in that early time that Wills calls “the heroic age” [chapter 4], or Will's short but intense description of the Calvinism of Southern Baptists in the nineteenth century, a task he undertakes at least twice, and touches upon a third time. Some will look to Wills' account of the Toy controversy as definitive. Indeed, it introduces the dynamics that produced increasing stress for a full century following. Others will be intrigued by struggles of the Whitsitt controversy and its implications of the tension between legitimate denominational interests and academic freedom.

Whitsitt's personal traits exacerbated the controversy over history, according to Wills, with his "sneering" attitude toward Southern Baptists, his belief that his opponents "were misled by ignorance or prejudice rather than guided by reason," and his sense of superiority even toward his faculty colleagues. Wills' hard-hitting evaluation of Whitsitt comes partially from his judgment that under Whitsitt's leadership arose the progressive attitude [190] that made the seminary less and less reflective of Southern Baptist concerns through more than nine decades of the twentieth century. This theme, along with the theme of academic freedom, appears more than once. He also used a phrase in analyzing Whitsitt's apparent obliviousness to his context, i.e. "The justness of popular authority in denominational concerns," [197] that could be provocative of many useful discussions.

Some will find the years of Mullins (two chapters) the most pivotal in discussing his early encouragement of progressivism including a major section on W. O. Carver, and a second chapter on Mullins' conservative comeback, at least in convincing appearance. Wills discusses Mullins' part in the Southern Baptists repudiation of ecumenical alliances, the theory of evolution, and in the adoption of a creed, the *Baptist Faith and Message*, to discipline Southern Baptist agencies. Perhaps more significant than any of Mullins' conservative or progressive stances was the introduction of the patient "realist" approach to denominational change as opposed to the conscientious "idealist" approach taken by Whitsitt. An example comes in the shadowy events of 1911, prompted by books from Carver and Robertson, to restrain the faculty's publication of ideas that encouraged liberal thought [278-80]. Patience was needed, and an aggressive, unvarnished promulgation of undiluted scholarly/theological idealism was sure to bring down the wrath of the denomination on the institution.

The growing pressure from many faculty members toward neo-orthodoxy during the Sampey/Fuller years of the thirty's and forty's will be eye-opening to many readers. Wills tells the story forcefully but carefully and fairly. Among the most poignant episodes is the virtual rupture of friendship between Sampey and Carver over Carver's apparently duplicitous stance toward a disturbingly liberal graduate student named Daf Kelley Barnett. The McCall era is one of high drama and the personalities come alive through the multiplicity of interviews, letters, and official records that Wills weaves into a fascinating story. Much of McCall's energy was spent trying to nurture the realist policy of slow, virtually imperceptible change while negotiating rapprochement between the denomination and a faculty that "promoted an ideal of theological education as a community of scholarly pursuit free from the restraints of the popular traditions and superstitions current in the churches." [359] The reader will be keenly interested in Wills' description of the growing tension between McCall and a group of thirteen young and radical dissidents, nicknamed the "dirty dozen," who proposed a distinctly different vision of the immediate purpose of theological education from McCall's view. The continued emphasis Wills gives to the "realist" [e.g. 274, 325, 336, 338, 345, 359, 389 et al.] diplomacy necessary for denominational relations goes a long way toward explaining the accumulating layers of distance between seminary theol-

ogy and denominational viewpoints. The dismissal of the thirteen by no means solved the theological difficulties of Southern; according to Wills, it merely gave a false impression that the president had taken a stand for conservatism as opposed to encroaching liberalism. Plenty of opportunity to remove that brief impression would follow.

The Honeycutt years proved to be filled with tension from beginning to end due to the dynamics of the conservative resurgence. Wills' documentation and synthesis of a highly complex era, which includes the story of Dale Moody's eventual dismissal, gives the reader some substantial mental food to chew.

The chapter on R. Albert Mohler, Jr., plows deep furrows into the theological and denominational dynamics behind the radical reversal of trajectory at Southern Seminary both in theology and in its perception of its relation to the denomination. Wills goes into depth in his discussion of the dismissal of Molly T. Marshall and in the events leading to the closing of the school of social work. Mohler's commitment to the *Abstract of Principles*, a Calvinistic orientation to theology, to evangelicalism in general, and the Southern Baptist Convention in particular are handled with a deft and intriguing brevity and understatement and with a clarity that every reader will appreciate. Wills' last sentence is "Under Mohler's leadership, Southern Seminary was once again Boyce's seminary."

This book will provide a laboratory for discussion of the relationship between theological education and denominational expectation for many years to come. Wills has been neither too harsh nor too accommodating with his subjects. Conservatives have no unassailable veneer placed around them and progressives are allowed to say their piece and explain their *raison d'être*. No one will be bored, and no one will fail to find much instruction. This is must read for this year.

James Slatton. *W. H. Whitsitt: The Man and the Controversy*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 2009. 348 pages including index.

Every person interested in southern history, Southern Baptist history, Baptist history, religious controversy, and the mysteries of human relationships should read and contemplate this book. William Heth Whitsitt served as a professor at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1872 until his election as president in 1895. After an extended controversy over his views of Baptist origins, he resigned in 1899. Several remarkable traits of this book commend its importance: 1) It uses a sixteen-volume diary of Whitsitt that has not been available, except in small portions, to historians for 100 years. Its contents document one of the clearest and most startling revelations of private character and thought ever made public. Slatton makes extensive use of these volumes as well as many letters Whitsitt wrote to Florence, who was to become his wife in 1881 when Whitsitt was 41 years old. 2) The criticisms and judgmental evaluations that Whitsitt makes of his colleagues are simply breathtaking. One must read it to believe that such surgically precise destructive analysis in the service of personal vanity can come from a supposedly mature Christian leader. 3) This book will prompt much discussion on the issue of intellectual liberty within the Christian community. ☺

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