

THE  
EARLY ANNALS  
OF  
UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
IN THE  
CITY OF NEW-YORK.

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BY REV. EDWIN F. HATFIELD, D.D.

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THE following Historical Discourse was prepared at the request of the Faculty of Union Theological Seminary, in the city of New-York, and delivered, at the Anniversary of the Seminary, in the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, on the evening of Monday, the 8th of May, 1876. It is now published at the request of the Board of Directors.

## EARLY ANNALS.

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“THESE forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.” To recall the past, and mark the hand of God in our varied experience, is both pleasant and profitable. The gracious dealings of the Father Almighty with us and ours, as seen in the review of life, should stimulate us to renewed zeal and effort, in our endeavors to promote and extend the kingdom of the Divine Redeemer. He, who, through all their weary pilgrimage of forty years in the Arabian desert, had fed and clothed, guarded and guided his people Israel, would surely be their shield and buckler in the dreaded conflict with the Amorite, and, in due season, put them in secure possession of Canaan, the land of promise. So reasoned Moses, on the borders of Edom.

We celebrate to-day the Fortieth Anniversary\* of Union Theological Seminary in the city of New-York. Forty years of instruction in the science of God and the Gospel of Christ are now brought to a close. It is a fitting occasion for at least a brief review of the history of this favored institution. As in the case of Israel on their way to the promised land, that history has been marked by signal and repeated interpositions of Divine Providence, and is singularly illustrative of the special guardianship of the great Head of the Church. Having, by the good hand of God upon us, attained to a position of influence among the agencies for raising up and sending forth a godly and able ministry, second to none in the land, it will be both entertaining and instructive, to recall the way in which the Lord has led us hitherto, that so we may thank God as we ought, and take courage in the continued prosecution of the work that is given us to do.

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\* The first public anniversary was celebrated at the end of the second year of instruction.

To determine the paternity of a great benevolence—whose thought it was that gave it being, or that moulded it into form—is not always practicable. The grand cathedrals of the Old World took shape, mostly, in the brains of their respective architects, before a single stone was laid or plan expressed on paper. Most of the great charities that so happily characterize and adorn the present age, grew out of a perception, on the part of some devout and zealous mind, of a special want, and its appropriate relief. A comparison of views, it may be, in respect to some providential emergency, leads to something like a simultaneous thought, on the part of several persons, as to the requisite agency for the occasion. Such is ordinarily the case with our noble institutions of learning and benevolence.

The movement that issued in the founding of Union Seminary first took shape in the autumn of the year 1835. One of the most active originators of the enterprise, a venerable divine, now in the seventy-eighth year of his age,\* says that a friend† called on him, one day, to advise with him as to the disposal of some funds, which a bookseller‡ of this city desired to appropriate to some good object. "Let him give the sum towards the founding of a Theological Seminary in New-York," was the reply. His friend remonstrated; raised objections to the project, and said, "It is no place for a Seminary." The matter was then argued at considerable length. It was affirmed that a large city was just the place for such an institution, furnishing, as it does, special means of support to the indigent in the way of teaching, singing, and playing the organ in churches, and other remunerative employment; also of greater usefulness to the young men while pursuing their studies, by withdrawing them from cloistered life, and introducing them, at an early stage of their course, to missionary work among the poor and degraded of a great city, and among the children and youth of its many Sunday-schools and Bible-classes; thus testing, in the outset, their piety and fidelity, as well as their general fitness for the work of the ministry, and training them for it.

This conference resulted in a consultation, first with the bookseller, and then with a few prominent merchants, whose generous

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\* Rev. WILLIAM PATTON, D.D., of New-Haven, Ct.

† Rev. ABSALOM PETERS, D.D.

‡ Mr. OLIVER HALSTED, of the firm of HALSTED & VOORHIS, law-booksellers. The funds were never obtained.



benefactions had already given them prominence in the walks of benevolence. The project was received with favor. A meeting of a few ministers and laymen of kindred sympathies was informally called. It was held at the house of Mr. WILLIAM M. HALSTED, No. 60 Walker street. The more the matter was talked of and thought of, the more it seemed to be of God's ordering. At length a formal meeting was held, Saturday, October 10th, at the house of Mr. KNOWLES TAYLOR, No. 8 Bond street. In addition to Mr. TAYLOR, eight other persons were present: Messrs. WILLIAM M. HALSTED, RICHARD T. HAINES, ABJAH FISHER, and MARCUS WILBUR; Rev. ABSALOM PETERS, D.D., Rev. HENRY WHITE, Rev. WILLIAM PATTON, and Rev. ERSKINE MASON. After a full interchange of views, it was then and there voted unanimously "That it is expedient, depending on the blessing of God, to attempt to establish a Theological Seminary in this city."

Other meetings followed weekly, at the same place, with a continual enlargement of the circle.\* Inquiries were made as to the probable cost of the undertaking, and the means of providing for it. Recent developments had raised considerable opposition to permanent endowments. It was thought that the establishment of the Seminary would involve "an expense of sixty-five thousand dollars, or thirteen thousand dollars *per annum* for five years; supporting, during that period, all the Professors, and, at its expiration, leaving a building and a library free from debt." Thenceforward it was hoped that the annual expenditures would be met by voluntary contributions. At their meeting of November 9th, a subscription was called for, payable in five annual installments: the first on the first day of June, 1836, provided that not less than sixty thousand dollars had been subscribed. The sum of thirty-one thousand dollars was then assumed by those present; an additional subscription of ten thousand dollars was reported at the next meeting; and every encouragement was given that the whole sum would shortly be secured.

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\* Prominent among the additional attendants were the Rev. Drs. THOMAS MCAULEY and THOMAS H. SKINNER; the Rev. Messrs. JOHN C. BRIGHAM, ICHABOD S. SPENCER, WILLIAM ADAMS, ASA D. SMITH, ELIJAH P. BARROWS, HENRY A. ROWLAND, CHARLES HALL, and HENRY G. LUDLOW; and Messrs. FISHER HOWE, JOHN NITCHIE, LOWELL HOLBROOK, JAMES C. BLISS, M.D., CORNELIUS BAKER, ANSON G. PHELPS, RUFUS L. NEVINS, CHARLES BUTLER, CHARLES STARR, JOHN L. MASON, NORMAN WHITE, OLIVER WILCOX, and ALEXIS BAKER.

In a brief editorial notice of the movement, the *New-York Observer*, of November 14th, said: "The gentlemen connected with this undertaking, we believe, have the confidence of the great mass of the Presbyterian community." How came it to pass, it may well be asked, that these "wealthy citizens connected with the Presbyterian Church," as they were said to be, were induced to identify themselves with this enterprise, to give so freely of their substance for its establishment and support, and, without fee or earthly reward, to devote so much of their time, their influence, and their energies to its advancement? Not less than six other Theological Seminaries had been more or less permanently established within the bounds of the Presbyterian Church: at Princeton, N. J.; at Auburn, N. Y.; at Allegheny, Pa.; at Cincinnati, O.; at Columbia, S. C.; and at Hampden Sidney, Va. Only eight years before, a New-York professorship of twenty thousand dollars had been subscribed for Union Seminary in Virginia, chiefly by these very men. Princeton Seminary, established and sustained by the General Assembly, some fifty miles only from New-York, was sadly in need of funds. For twenty-three years "its whole existence had been a constant course of struggle with poverty." At that very date, a special agent, in accordance with the recommendations of the Assembly of 1835, was preparing to canvass the churches for the means to place it on a substantial and adequate basis. Why did these men deem it desirable to attempt a seventh enterprise? Was there not a noble institution of the kind in full operation at Andover, Mass.? And one nearer at hand, connected with the venerable college at New-Haven, Ct.? What need was there of a Seminary in the commercial metropolis?

On the occasion of the visit of the Rev. JOHN H. RICE, D.D., of Virginia, to obtain the funds just alluded to for the Hampden Sidney Seminary, this most excellent and able divine found himself subjected to a considerable scrutiny, both as to his doctrinal and ecclesiastical sympathies. Under date of June 5th, 1827, writing to Mrs. RICE, he says: "While all the brethren appear to regard me with great personal affection, neither of the parties are entirely cordial to me. The Princeton people apprehend that I am approximating to Auburn notions; and the zealous partisans of New-England divinity think me a thorough-going Princetonian. So it is! And, while there is much less of that unseemly bitterness and asperity which brought reproach on the Church in past times, I can see that the

spirit of party has struck deeper than I had ever supposed. And I do fully expect that there will be either a strong effort to bring Princeton under different management, or to build up a new Seminary in the vicinity of New-York, to counteract the influence of Princeton. One or the other of these things will assuredly be done before long, unless the Lord interpose and turn the hearts of the ministers."

Ten days later (15th) he writes again, and says: "The people here are only waiting for me to get out of the way, to bring forward other enterprises. I should not be surprised if, next year, we should hear of a Seminary for the vicinity of New-York. I can not tell you all that I have learned here in a letter, but you shall know when I see you."

As early, therefore, as 1827, possibly earlier, it was in contemplation, and seriously talked of, to undertake the establishment of a Theological Seminary, to be located in the immediate vicinity of New-York, and to be sustained by a portion of the consecrated wealth of the great metropolis. Growing dissatisfaction with existing institutions of the kind, according to the reliable testimony of the judicious Dr. RICE, prompted the incipient thought. Questions theological, ecclesiastical, and partisan had already wrought contentions and divisions among the ministers and in the churches of the city. The leaven, that wrought so disastrously some ten years later, was even then at work.

From an early period of the century, and notably from the commencement of the War of 1812, a tide of desirable immigration had been pouring into the city of New-York from every part of New-England and the adjacent towns of New-Jersey. Full of enterprise, many of these new-comers speedily established themselves in lucrative trade and commerce. Many of them were the children of godly parents, had been early indoctrinated in the current theology of the times, and had become intelligent and active Christians. Of course they identified themselves at once with the church and its work in their new home. Congregationalism in the city took form not earlier than 1819, and was of the Unitarian type. Consequently the new-comers attached themselves mostly to Presbyterian churches. So large a portion of the members of the old Cedar-street Church (Dr. ROMEYN'S) were of this character, as to occasion its being called "The Federal Church"—the prevailing political type of the Eastern States. Most naturally, diversities of views in



doctrine and polity, and consequent jealousies, were early developed, of which the series of essays known as "The Triangle," by the elder WHELPLEY, on the one hand, and "The Contrast," by EZRA STILES ELY, on the other, were the most obvious fruits. The friends of missions and of ministerial education were divided ere long into rival factions. The patrons of ecclesiastical boards were arrayed against the advocates of voluntary societies and co-operative benevolence. Such was the immediate occasion of that party spirit the exhibition of which had so sensibly affected Dr. RICE, and led to the talk about a new Seminary for New-York.

These diversities of views and operations were further promoted by the controversy relative to revival measures, culminating in the New-Lebanon Convention of July, 1827; by the fierce and bitter agitation of the Anti-slavery and Colonization questions; by the numerous pamphlets, reviews, and essays, in newspapers, magazines, and other publications, that presently flooded the Church, in and out of New-England, pertaining to the controversy about the so-called "New-Haven Theology;" by the prosecution for heresy, persistently urged, of such useful and godly ministers as GEORGE DUFFIELD, ALBERT BARNES, and LYMAN BEECHER; by the division of churches, presbyteries, and synods into rival and zealous partisans; and by the unseemly struggles of the Old and New School parties, year by year, for the control of the General Assembly.

It is perfectly natural, and by no means surprising, that, after years of contention and strife, so absorbing and so embittered, measures should have been devised, and means sought, to obtain deliverance from these unhappy agitations, and a peaceful retreat from such unholy disturbances. The founding of a new Seminary, on an independent basis, not subject to the control of accidental majorities in ecclesiastical bodies, not committed to any of the parties in the various conflicts by which the churches of the day were distracted and likely to be convulsed, occupying ground on which good and faithful men, of all classes and parties in the Presbyterian Church, could meet and act together for the spread of the gospel and the glory of the Divine Redeemer, ruled by no ecclesiastical clique, and pledged to no faction, met, therefore, with peculiar favor.

It is further to be borne in mind that, during the previous eight or ten years, particularly in 1831, a large number of young men had connected themselves with the Presbyterian churches of New-York



and Brooklyn, many of whom were desirous of entering the ministry, but were destitute of the requisite pecuniary means. A New-York Seminary was just what they needed. It would tend, moreover, to arrest the tendency, growing, in part, out of the agitations in the Presbyterian Church, towards the New-England Seminaries, and save these enterprising youth for the service of our own churches at home and abroad.

Furthermore, it was believed that an institution of this kind, planted in the city of New-York, would "enlist many young men of talent, piety, and missionary zeal, from these two flourishing cities, in the work of the ministry, who" would thus "have the opportunity of adding to solid learning enlightened experience, by means of the constant pastoral influence under which they" would "act, and the performance of the important duties of church members, in Sabbath-schools, Bible-classes, and prayer-meetings, in the several churches with which they" might "be connected, and through their acquaintance with the benevolent efforts of this location."

It was with such designs, moved thereto, doubtless, by the Spirit of God, that good men and true, in humble dependence on the great Head of the Church, laid the foundations of "the New-York Theological Seminary," as they proposed to call it. The guiding hand of Him who led Israel through the sea and the desert was seen also in timing the enterprise. The financial pressure of 1834 had passed away. The flush of 1835-6 had set in, and new enterprises were springing up on every hand. Speculation was rife. The new lands of the West were coming into the market. Fortunes were easily made in the purchase and sale of town lots in the newly-projected villages and cities everywhere attracting attention. The friends of the new Seminary were full of hope. They subscribed largely—four of them five thousand dollars each—and met with good encouragement from others. Five sixths of the sum required had been subscribed, when, on the memorable night of the sixteenth of December, 1835, a conflagration was kindled, in the providence of God, that, within twenty-four hours, laid the wealthiest section of the city in ashes, consuming more than five hundred buildings and seventeen millions of property. It was a day of consternation—a day of bankruptcy to hundreds, and of sore privations to thousands, many of whom were in affluence the day before. It was the beginning of darker days to come. Well was it that the enterprise

had been undertaken so early in the autumn. Three months later, it would have been out of the question.

At a meeting of the subscribers, January 11th, 1836, less than a month after the great catastrophe, it was announced that a subscription of sixty-one thousand dollars had been obtained, and that the conditional clause had thus been fulfilled. A constitution, previously and carefully prepared, was adopted, a large and highly responsible Board of Directors was chosen, and order taken to procure, from the Legislature of the State, an act of incorporation. The Board met, for the first time, on the evening of Monday, January 18th, 1836, at the house of the American Tract Society, in Nassau street, proceeded to the choice of officers for the year, and so the organization of "the NEW-YORK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY" was completed.

Measures were taken at once to procure a location, and to erect a suitable edifice for the Seminary. A plot of ground, two hundred feet square, between Sixth and Eighth streets, extending from Greene to Wooster streets, four full lots on each street, was selected. It formed a part of the property of "the Sailors' Snug Harbor," which shortly before had been located in the old Randall mansion, on Broadway, above Ninth street. It was subject to an annual ground rent of eight hundred dollars. The lease was purchased for eight thousand dollars. The locality was well up town—quite on the outskirts of the city. Population had been spreading from what was then familiarly known as "Greenwich Village," along the Hudson River, northward; and, in like manner, along the Third avenue, on the eastern side of the city. A few improvements had been made along the Bloomingdale Road from its junction with the Bowery Road, at Seventeenth street, to the House of Refuge, which stood at the starting-point of the old Boston Road, on the westerly side of the present Madison Square, extending to the present Broadway, and covering the site of the Worth Monument. Union Place, now "Union Square," had just been opened, at the forks of Broadway and the Bowery, but was still unimproved. Eighth street and a few of the parallel streets above, opened but a few years before, were beginning to exhibit some evidences of substantial improvement. With these exceptions, vacant lots, unpaved streets, primitive roads and lanes, open fields and country-seats, many of them highly cultivated and of considerable extent, covered the island to the north, as far as the ancient Dutch village of Harlem. The New-York of that

day scarcely extended above Tenth street, the original terminus of Broadway. Beyond was the open country.

The General Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church, some ten years before, had been erected far out of the city, and near it, on Twentieth street, an Episcopal chapel (St. Peter's), of small capacity, had been erected in 1832. Old "St. Mark's" occupied its present site on Tenth street, near the Second avenue. Two or three mission stations, in advance of the population, were struggling for a foothold in the outlying districts. Excepting these, not a church edifice of any description was to be found on the island, below the villages of Bloomingdale and Harlem, above Tenth street. A new Presbyterian church had just been erected in Mercer street, near Eighth street, which, for many subsequent years, was the "Up-town Church" of the denomination. The stately structure erected for the University of the City of New-York, on the block below the new purchase, had just been occupied in part, but was not fully completed. Wooster street had just been extended to Fourteenth street, and the part above the University widened and called "Jackson avenue"—a name shortly after exchanged for "University Place." The location was deemed quite eligible, near enough to the business portion of the city, and sufficiently remote for a quiet literary retreat.

A permanent corps of Instructors was now to be secured. The first choice of the Directors for the Chair of Theology was the Rev. JUSTIN EDWARDS, D.D., of Andover, Mass.; and for the Chair of Biblical Literature, Prof. JOSEPH ADDISON ALEXANDER, of Princeton, N. J.—a happy commingling of the prevalent theological tendencies of the age. Both appointments were declined. Professors Extraordinary\* were appointed from among the ministerial members of the Board. On the last day of September, the Rev. HENRY WHITE, the pastor of the Allen-street Presbyterian Church of this city, was appointed to, and soon after accepted, the Chair of Theology. The Rev. THOMAS MCAULEY, D.D., the pastor of the Murray-street Presbyterian Church, and the first President of the Board, was chosen Professor of Pastoral Theology and Church Government, with the position of President of the institution. The Rev. Prof. GEORGE HOWE, of Columbia, S. C., was also chosen to

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\* Rev. Drs. THOMAS MCAULEY and THOMAS H. SKINNER, and Rev. Messrs. ICHABOD A. SPENCER, ERSKINE MASON, and HENRY WHITE.



the Chair of Biblical Literature. Dr. McAULEY accepted, but Prof. HOWE declined. The services of two regular Professors, and of several Professors Extraordinary, having thus been secured, the Recorder was authorized, November 24th, 1836, to announce, in the public prints, that the Seminary would be opened on the first Monday of December following.

Promptly, therefore, on the 5th day of December thirteen young men presented themselves at the house of the President, No. 112 Leonard street, and were duly enrolled as theological students. A fortnight later, Prof. EDWARD ROBINSON, D.D., late of Andover, Mass., was chosen to the Chair of Biblical Literature. At the end of a month he accepted, and entered upon his work. Ten additional students were enrolled during the first year.

The new Seminary had thus far acquired no "local habitation." The plans for the building had not yet been completed. The necessities of the case made the institution somewhat "peripatetic." Now the young gentlemen are seen wending their way to the house of the President in Leonard street; the day following they have gathered at the residence of Prof. WHITE, No. 80 Eldridge street; the third day finds them at the rooms of the Presbyterian Education Society, No. 116 Nassau street, drinking in the erudition of Prof. ROBINSON; or, in the absence of the latter, profiting by the genial instructions of the scholarly GEORGE BUSH, at his study, No. 115 Nassau street; and again they are to be found gathered about the polished and enthusiastic SKINNER, in his quiet retreat in the chapel of the Mercer-street Church. No dormitories having yet been provided, the students came from every quarter of the city, as far away as the Deaf and Dumb Institution on Fiftieth street, and some from the other side of the river.

The plans having at length been completed and approved, contracts were made for the erection of a seminary building on University Place, and of four Professors' houses in the rear, on Greene street. Early in March, 1837, the work was fairly begun, but with utterly inadequate resources. The original subscription had reached nearly seventy thousand dollars; but the first installment, payable June 1st, 1836, had yielded scarcely more than ten thousand dollars, four fifths of which had been required for the purchase of the lease; the ground rent and assessments absorbed nearly three fourths of the small remainder, leaving almost no provision for the payment of the salaries of the three Professors, the purchase of books, and other



current expenses. The great fire had crippled quite a number of the patrons of the Seminary, and the prospects for the second installment, in June, 1837, were anything but promising. Whence were the funds for building purposes to be derived? Only from loans. Further subscriptions, to any considerable extent, were out of the question.

The times were now adverse, in the extreme, for new enterprises. Mr. VAN BUREN had just succeeded to the Presidency. The exciting era of land speculations had come to an end. The commonwealth of trade and commerce had lost confidence in the policy of the general government. Credit was destroyed. Trade was prostrate. The great manufactories were suspended. The demand for labor ceased. An era of bankruptcy set in. Merchants and bankers, after a while, yielded to the storm. House after house went down into hopeless ruin. A tremendous panic ensued. The land was convulsed. Every bank in the city of New-York on the 10th of May, and immediately after every bank in the land, suspended specie payment. It was no time to borrow—no time to build. It is not strange, therefore, that the Directors of the Seminary resolved, April 26th, 1837, “to suspend the erection of the buildings until they shall possess the means which will encourage them to resume the task.”

As if to add to the distractions of the times and the embarrassments of the Board, the Presbyterian General Assembly, at its meeting, in May, at Philadelphia, was led into heated and angry discussions, and convulsed with party strife. The excision of a portion of its constituency scattered the brands of discord all over the land, kindling the flames of contention throughout the denomination. The Church was rent in twain, and thenceforth became two bands, with small hope of reconciliation. The friends and founders of the Seminary, greatly to their grief, found themselves unwittingly on opposite sides of the dividing line, yet unwilling to identify themselves, or the enterprise in which they were embarked, with either of the opposing parties. It was a year of deep discouragement, and passed away with but little relief. The second installment of the subscription had produced less than eight thousand dollars, and the prospects for the following year were even less hopeful. From two of the warm friends of the Seminary, however, at the close of the year, loans amounting to twenty-seven thousand dollars, secured by mortgage on the grounds and prospective buildings, were obtained, and the work of construction resumed. The second year of in-

struction had commenced, and thirty new students had been enrolled.

Thus far very little had been, or could have been, done in the way of securing that indispensable acquisition, a Theological Library. An empty treasury, and heavy indebtedness for stone and mortar, gave small promise for the desired attainment. A kind Providence, long years before, however, had anticipated this very want. One result of the bloody conflicts that desolated the fairest portions of Europe, at the beginning of the present century, and particularly of the Peace of Luneville, February 9th, 1801, was the secularization of the territories of the prelates, and the sequestration of the property of religious houses, in Germany, taking effect early in 1803. Among the sufferers by this spoliation was the Benedictine Monastery of St. Mary, at Paderborn. Anticipating this event, the fraternity appropriated, individually, so much of the common property as could be divided among them. The monastic library had been the growth of centuries. At the time of the Reformation, a collection had been made of the controversial literature of the period, mostly in the original editions. Some six hundred works of this description, large and small, had thus found their way into a small apartment, the door of which was marked with the words "*Libri Prohibiti*," of which the key was kept by a monk whose family name was LEANDER VAN ESS. This collection, with other volumes, fell to the share of this trusted brother, then about thirty years of age. Not long afterwards he became the Roman Catholic Professor of Divinity in the ancient University of Marburg. An ardent thirst for learning had characterized him from boyhood. To the study of the original Scriptures he gave himself with intense interest. He was thereby led, through divine grace, into the liberty of the children of God. He became a devout and devoted follower of the Lamb of God. Full of his new-found joy, he longed to impart of his spiritual wealth to his countrymen. He set himself, therefore, to make a careful and accurate version of the Bible, particularly of the New Testament, into the vernacular. He gathered Bibles, polyglots, lexicons, concordances, commentaries, the Latin and Greek Fathers, the decrees of councils and popes, church histories, and other similar literary treasures, including a large collection of *Incunabula*, the rare issues of the earliest period of the art of printing,—in all, with what he had saved from the wreck at Paderborn (more than 13,000 volumes), about 6000 separate works. He translated the New Testament into German, published it in 1810,

and, by the aid of the British and Foreign Bible Society, put into circulation, principally among the Roman Catholics of Germany, with the happiest spiritual results, 523,000 copies of the New Testament and more than 10,000 Bibles. Grown old and infirm, he retired at length from the University of Marburg to the quiet little town of Alzey, in Hesse-Darmstadt, west of the Rhine, about equidistant from Mayence and Worms, and offered his great library for sale, for 11,000 florins.

Prof. CALVIN E. STOWE, just returned from Europe, was advised of the fact. In a letter from Lane Seminary to Dr. ROBINSON, April 3d, 1837, he advised the purchase of this unique collection by the New-York Seminary. Terrible as were the times, Dr. ROBINSON, on his departure for Europe and the Holy Land, in July, was instructed to obtain the refusal of the Collection. After a careful examination of the books by Mr. PHILIPP WOLFF, of Erlangen University (a brother of Mrs. GORDON BUCK, of this city), the purchase was effected in April, 1838, for 10,000 florins. It had cost Dr. VAN ESS 50,000 florins. Its whole cost to the Seminary, when it arrived in October, all charges paid, was \$5070.08. It was received just in time to find its way into the alcoves of the library room of the new building. It has served as an invaluable nucleus around which to cluster the needful volumes of the more modern press. It is a treasure, rare and peculiar, whose riches have as yet been but partially explored. If lost, it could not possibly be replaced.

The second year of instruction had closed with an enrollment of fifty-six students. The first senior class, six in number, had graduated July 11th, 1838, with appropriate exercises in the Allen-street church. The third year had opened with a large accession. The Catalogue, now for the first time printed, presented a total of ninety-two students, thirty-two of them juniors. The new Seminary building was dedicated, with appropriate ceremonies, December 12th, 1838. Three years had now elapsed since the incipient movement. A "local habitation" had been secured; a large and rare library had been provided; a full and able Faculty inducted; and a position attained among the first three Seminaries of the land—Andover and Princeton alone ranking it, and the latter by six only in the regular classes. The enterprise had proved a marked success. It was no longer an experiment.

An Act of Incorporation \* was obtained, March 27th, 1839, from

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\* Appendix A.



the Legislature of the State, the name "Union" having been given it at Albany, to distinguish it, probably, from the Episcopal Seminary on Twentieth street—a name not desired, much less chosen, by the Board, but prophetic of the position that the Institution has ever since maintained.

It now became evident to the Board that the original projectors of the Seminary had counted without their host. Not more than fifty thousand dollars of the original subscription had proved available; and more than this amount had already been expended at the end of the third year of instruction. To obtain the greater part of this sum, the buildings, and even "the Van Ess Library," had been mortgaged. The last installment of the subscription would scarcely avail to meet the current expenses. No provision had been made for the years beyond.

What was to be done? The thought of failure was not to be entertained for a moment. The promise of good was too pronounced to be at all problematical. The experiment had shown that New-York was just the place for a Theological Seminary. Young men of piety, talents, and culture had resorted hither for a ministerial education, not only from New-York and Brooklyn, but from every part of the United States. Personal expenses, it had been found, were no greater than elsewhere; while the means of self-support and usefulness were much superior. To place the enterprise on a firm foundation was worthy of an arduous effort and great sacrifices. It was determined to make an appeal to the churches. A Financial Agent\* was appointed. Fifty-five new students had entered at the beginning of the fourth year, the most of whom could find no accommodations in the new building, fully occupied as it was by the two previous classes. Lodgings, at the expense of the Board, had to be provided elsewhere. The Catalogue for the new year showed a total of 129 students in attendance. Greatly encouraged, the Directors called together such of the pastors of the city and vicinity as sympathized with the movement. Invited thus to share the responsibility, these pastors resolved to open their pulpits to the Financial Agent, and to afford him all the aid in their power in his solicitations for funds.

In the course of the winter an attempt was made to raise the

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\* Rev. GIDEON N. JUDD D.D., of Bloomfield, N. J., and subsequently of Catskill, N. Y.



sum of \$50,000, but nothing came of it. In February, 1840, the Treasurer had advanced, over and above the loans, more than \$16,000, although one of the four houses had been sold for \$8500. Every expedient had been exhausted, and no provision had been made, or apparently could be made, for the payment of the Professors' salaries and other current expenses. The prospects were exceedingly dark. To carry forward the enterprise, in circumstances so adverse, was indeed a "work of faith and labor of love," demanding great "patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." It was determined to make still more strenuous efforts; and, at the close of the year, May, 1840, the work of solicitation having been more vigorously pressed, it was found that a sufficient sum had been raised by subscription to justify the Board "in continuing the Seminary in operation for the ensuing year." None but the Board knew how precarious an existence was at that date accorded to the Seminary, overflowing though it was with students. The salaries of the Professors for two years had been mostly unpaid, and the incumbents subjected to severe trials. One of them at least, the Professor of Theology, was compelled to borrow nearly a year's salary, then to convert his home into a boarding-house, to become the stated supply of a pulpit, and, at length, to enter upon a voluntary agency for the solicitation of means to pay his very moderate salary. All honor to the men that endured such tribulations to perpetuate the work so auspiciously begun, in the founding of Union Seminary! Late in the year a strenuous effort was made to retrieve the original error. A Permanent Fund was imperatively demanded. A large floating debt had been incurred. To meet these demands, a subscription, payable on the attainment of pledges to the amount of \$140,000, was opened. One subscription of \$25,000, two of \$12,500 each, eleven of \$1000 each, and others amounting in all to \$90,000, were obtained, but nothing more could be had, and the whole was lost.

Still they pressed on—those men of faith and prayer. Collections were made in an increasing number of churches annually. Agents were sent through the country, soliciting funds, in gifts of one dollar and upwards, from the people at their homes, in their warehouses and workshops, on their farms and in their factories, to meet current expenses. Thus the struggle for life was kept up during the next two or three years. The project of sustaining the Seminary by annual contributions was effectually tried, and found to be utterly unreliable. It now became evident that the enterprise must be aban-

done, unless some permanent provision was made for the support of the Professors. Their services were sought elsewhere, and they seriously thought of resigning their positions. One of them resigned conditionally. A public meeting was called in September, 1843, and an appeal was made for the sum of \$25,000, to endow the Professorship of Theology. The appeal was sustained, and the first Permanent Fund subscribed. To secure the payment of these subscriptions, to pay off a floating debt of nearly \$20,000, and to meet current expenses, required diligent and laborious exertions for the next three years. Dr. McAULEY had retired from the Faculty in 1840, and the Rev. JOEL PARKER, D.D., had succeeded him as President, and served as Financial Agent, retiring in 1842. The Rev. ABSALOM PETERS, D.D., had in 1842 been elected Professor of Pastoral Theology, and, without entering on the duties of the professorship, had served as Financial Agent about one year, when he, too, retired, leaving only Professors WHITE and ROBINSON in the Faculty. Partial provision, through the beneficence of a personal friend,\* had been made for the support of the Professor of Biblical Literature. A generous proposal, on the part of several residents of Brooklyn, to contribute ample grounds; and to build thereon a seminary edifice and three dwelling-houses for the Professors, made early in the year 1844, had, after mature consideration, been gratefully declined. Such was the condition of affairs at the close of the first ten years of instruction.

A special providence, at the beginning of the next ten years, contributing materially to the relief of the Seminary, should not be overlooked. A grandson of an eminent citizen,† connected with one of our Presbyterian churches, had been carefully trained for the priesthood of the Episcopal Church, and duly ordained. Having served in the ministry, first at Harlem, N. Y., and then at Hagerstown, Md., he became so thorough a Ritualist that nothing would content him but the Papacy, which presently he espoused. After a brief novitiate at St. Sulpice, in Paris, he was ordained, in 1842, to the Roman Catholic priesthood by the late Archbishop HUGHES, whose secretary he became in 1846. Shortly after this latter date his venerable grandfather died, and it was found that, in consequence of this change of faith, the inheritance, valued at about \$30,000, originally

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\* Mr. JAMES BOORMAN, of New-York City.

† Mr. JAMES ROOSEVELT.

designed for the grandson, had been devised to "Union Theological Seminary, in the city of New-York." This bequest was contested, successfully at first; but the provisions of the will were finally sustained by the Court of Appeals. The contestant is now the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore,\* and his forfeited patrimony has done excellent service in sustaining this Protestant Seminary.

The day had now fairly dawned. A gracious Providence had kindly interposed, and rescued the enterprise from impending bankruptcy. Early in 1848 the Rev. THOMAS H. SKINNER, D.D., of precious memory, a devoted friend and patron of the Seminary from the beginning, was chosen to the newly-created Professorship of Sacred Rhetoric, Pastoral Theology, and Church Government,—a position for which he was pre-eminently fitted,—and permanent provision was made, by a few personal friends, for his support.

The Professorship of Theology was made vacant in August, 1850, by the decease of Professor HENRY WHITE, in the full maturity of his powers—greatly to the grief of the Board and Faculty. The Rev. HENRY B. SMITH, a Professor in Amherst College, Mass., entered, in December, 1850, upon the duties of the Professorship of Ecclesiastical History, to which he had been elected in July. To the Chair of Theology the Rev. JAMES P. WILSON, D.D., of Philadelphia, succeeded in May of the following year.

The time had now come for enlargement. The annual expenses of the institution were about \$12,000. Its annual income, from the legacy of Mr. ROOSEVELT, from individual subscriptions, and from all other sources, was only about \$5000. An annual deficiency of \$7000 had to be supplied by voluntary contributions. In February, 1852, it was determined to attempt the obtaining of an additional investment of \$150,000, subscriptions to be binding on the first of May, 1853, if at that time \$100,000 should have been pledged. A few members of the Board, at a meeting in March, 1852, pledged themselves for \$42,367 of the sum, the services of the Rev. JOSEPH S. GALLAGHER, of Bloomfield, N. J., were happily obtained for the agency, and the requisite \$100,000 secured within the specified period. The further prosecution of the endowment effort was providentially postponed to a more favorable season.

From the first it had been evident that the accommodations for students were entirely inadequate. A fourth story and an attic story,

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\* Most Rev. JAMES R. BAYLEY, D.D.



therefore, were added to the original building, in the summer of 1852, at an expense of \$12,524, for the payment of which, in part, the building was mortgaged for \$10,500. Provision was thus made for forty-eight additional students, the new rooms having been gratuitously furnished, at an expense of \$2000, by that genuine servant of Christ and most devoted friend of the Seminary, the late lamented ANSON G. PHELPS, Jr.

The Chair of Theology was again made vacant by the resignation, in October, 1853, of Prof. JAMES P. WILSON. Prof. SMITH was transferred to the vacant Professorship, in March, 1854. The funds were further enlarged, in 1854, by a legacy, received from the estate of MARY FASSITT, deceased, of Philadelphia, amounting eventually to about \$20,000; and by a subscription, in 1855, of \$25,000, by a lady of this city,\* to found the Professorship of Ecclesiastical History. The Rev. ROSWELL D. HITCHCOCK, a Professor in Bowdoin College, was chosen to the vacant chair in July, 1855, and entered upon its duties at the commencement of the next term. The second period of ten years closed under the happiest auspices. The days of doubt and perplexity had passed. The question of a permanent existence had been solved. Progress had been made, with good promise for the future, towards a complete endowment of the Professorships. The Seminary had secured a full and able Faculty, and now occupied a position of influence, second to no similar institution of the kind in the whole land. Great as had been the effort, the struggle, and the sacrifices of the founders, they were amply repaid. Much remained to be accomplished, a far greater amount of funds was still needed; but the past success fully warranted the assurance of better days to come.

The early story has now been told. A brief glance at the salient points of the later story must suffice. The subscription begun in 1852, and suspended the following year because of financial pressure resulting in the wide-spread bankruptcy of 1857, was, in 1859, resumed, and increased to \$200,000. Hitherto the pecuniary affairs of the institution had necessarily been administered on principles of the most rigid economy, almost approximating to parsimony. The burden of heavy indebtedness, incurred by the erection of buildings, and the meagre provision for current expenses, had kept the corps of

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\* MRS. JACOB BELL. The chair was named for her deceased brother, the Rev. SAMUEL WASHBURN, of Baltimore, Md.



instruction and the salaries of the Professors inadequately small, with but little prospect of advancement. And now the Civil War of 1861-5 still further aggravated the difficulty. Specie was withdrawn from circulation. The land was flooded with irredeemable paper money. Prices of all commodities were greatly enhanced. The purchasing power of a fixed salary was reduced from fifty to a hundred per cent. The Professorships, originally rated at \$25,000, had never yielded enough to pay the salaries of the incumbents. As prices advanced, the income proved but little more than enough to pay the rent of a respectable dwelling-house.

It became necessary, therefore, to make another appeal, for \$150,000, for endowment and scholarships. The Rev. EDWIN F. HATFIELD, D.D., was appointed Financial Agent. The churches generously responded to the appeal, and the sum was secured in 1865. The inadequacy of the original accommodations for the Seminary, and the need of a fire-proof building for the Library, had long been apparent. A whole generation had passed, and a new city, vastly more substantial and elegant, had grown up above Tenth street. The churches had mostly migrated with the advancing population. The old city was fast becoming simply a mart of trade and commerce. It was judged expedient to secure a more eligible site for the Seminary, and to erect thereon more commodious and suitable buildings. The old feuds of the Presbyterian Church had died out, and the dissevered parts were soon to be reunited. The times were favorable—never more so. Early in 1870 an appeal was, therefore, made, through the same agency, for a subscription of \$300,000. The appeal was, in the course of the following year, sustained. Ground was secured, but, owing to the changed aspect of the times, has not yet been occupied.

The Chair of Biblical Literature, by the lamented decease, in 1863, of that eminent scholar, of world-wide fame, Prof. EDWARD ROBINSON, D.D., LL.D., was made vacant. Prof. WILLIAM G. T. SHEDD, D.D., then the pastor of the Brick Church of this city, was induced to accept the position. Prof. PHILIP SCHIAFF, D.D., was added to the Faculty in 1870, and the revered and greatly-beloved THOMAS H. SKINNER, D.D., LL.D., taken to his rest and reward early in 1871. Subsequently, in 1873, the Rev. WILLIAM ADAMS, D.D.,\* and Rev. GEORGE L. PRENTISS, D.D., were added to the

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\* The office of President of the Institution, without an incumbent for thirty years, was now filled by the appointment of the Rev. Dr. ADAMS to the responsible post.

corps of Professors. The following year, by reason of the prolonged illness of Prof. SMITH, Dr. SHEDD was transferred to the Chair of Theology; and Dr. SCHAFF to the Chair of Sacred Literature. The Rev. CHARLES A. BRIGGS was made Provisional Professor of Hebrew and the Cognate Languages. The original corps of instruction was thus extended from three to seven Professors; and, to crown the whole, the most ample provision was made for their support by the princely gift, on the part of Mr. JAMES BROWN, of this city, of *three hundred thousand dollars*,—the endowment of each of the six regular Professorships being thus extended from \$25,000 to \$80,000. To furnish proper accommodations for the overflow of students, two of the four houses originally owned by the Seminary, and sold, have been repurchased, together with a third house on the corner of Clinton Place. The latter building has been connected with one of the former by an additional edifice, erected last summer. The Seminary building, at the same time, was rendered much more commodious and attractive by a large addition on its northern side, and by a refurnishing of the chapel and students' rooms; providing thus much larger space, also, for the Library, which has grown to more than 33,000 volumes. The new building and the repairs of the Seminary have involved an expenditure of about \$45,000, seven ninths of which sum have been furnished for the purpose by the munificence of a noble friend\* of the Institution.

The last Catalogue shows a total of students, for the year now ending, of 142, the largest number reported for any one year, save in 1859-60, when, owing to the great revival of the previous year, the number reached 146. In this respect Union Seminary now ranks every other in the land. By the grace of God, it has, through much and severe tribulation, attained to a position of influence excelled by none other. During the forty years of its operations, it has sent forth 1778 students, of whom 1070 have graduated here. Of the whole number, about 267 have finished their course, and entered the rest prepared for the people of God. With few exceptions, the remaining 1511 are doing yeoman service in the Master's vineyard. They are found in every section, in nearly every State, of the Union. They are occupying influential pulpits in our largest towns and cities. In all the newer States, and in the outlying hamlets of the older States, they are laboring, with apostolic zeal, to "build the

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\* Mr. FREDERICK MARQUAND, of the city of New-York.

old waste places" and "raise up the foundations of many generations." They are found in our academies, colleges, and seminaries, forming the minds and cultivating the hearts of the rising generation. On every continent and ocean group of islands they are toiling to raise the heathen from their degradation and corruption, and train them for God and glory. Union Seminary is a mighty power in the world—a grand instrumentality for building up the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ among men.

It was not in vain that its founders toiled and prayed, and gave, in many instances most liberally, of their substance, to build up an institution that should "commend itself to all men of moderate views and feelings, who desire to live free from party strife, and to stand aloof from all extremes of doctrine or of practice," in the attempt to raise up a learned and godly ministry for the Church. All honor to such men as RICHARD T. HAINES, for nearly thirty years the efficient and generous President of the Board, and WILLIAM M. HALSTED and ANTHONY P. HALSEY, the two deceased Treasurers. They are to be held in lasting remembrance for their untiring and unswerving devotion to the work of building up this dearly-cherished institution. Among those who have served as members of the Board of Directors, and who have finished their course on earth, grateful mention should be made, also, of MESSRS. CALEB O. HALSTED, ABIJAH FISHER, FISHER HOWE, ANSON G. PHELPS (father and son), JAMES BOORMAN, DAVID HOADLEY, and that princely giver, JOHN C. BALDWIN. Their record is on high, and we, to-day, are reaping the fruits of their labors.

The friends and patrons of Union Seminary have been found in the most of the Presbyterian churches of the city; but it is due to historic justice to recall the fact, that it is owing to the large-hearted sympathies and noble benefactions, chiefly, of the late "Mercer-street Church," and its offspring, the "Church of the Covenant," together with the "Madison-square Church," that this beloved Seminary has been sustained these forty years, and elevated to its present commanding position among the agencies of the Church.\* To their honor, and to the glory of the Master, be it said, they have never faltered in their love and devotion to this work. Neither they nor their beloved pastors ever failed to respond promptly, heartily, and nobly to the numerous appeals of the Board for help in

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\* Appendix B.



time of need. But for them, the enterprise must long since have been abandoned. They may well rejoice, to-day, in what their own hands have wrought.

In conclusion, before all and above all, we render most hearty and devout thanks to the God of Israel, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, through all these forty years of peril and perplexity, of sowing and reaping, of sadness and joy, has been with us, and made the work of our hands to prosper. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."



# APPENDIX.

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## A.

### ACT OF INCORPORATION.

*An Act to incorporate the Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York.*  
—Passed March 27th, 1839.

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly,  
do enact as follows :

§ 1. Thomas McAuley, Henry White, Samuel H. Cox, Thomas H. Skinner, William Patton, Erskine Mason, Ichabod S. Spencer, Absalom Peters, William Adams, Nathanael E. Johnson, Henry A. Rowland, David Magie, Ansel D. Eddy, Selah B. Treat, Zechariah Lewis, Micah Baldwin, Charles Butler, Leonard Corning, Abijah Fisher, William M. Halsted, Caleb O. Halsted, Fisher Howe, Richard T. Haines, Joseph Otis, Anson G. Phelps, Pelatiah Perit, Cornelius Baker, and Knowles Taylor, and their associates, who are the present Directors, and their successors, are hereby constituted a body corporate by the name of "The Union Theological Seminary in the City of New-York ;" and by that name shall have succession, and be capable in law of taking and holding by gift, grant and devise, or otherwise, and of purchasing and holding and conveying, both in law and equity, any estate, real or personal; provided that the clear annual value or income of their real estate should not exceed the sum of fifteen thousand dollars; and their personal estate shall not exceed the sum of fifty thousand dollars,\* exclusive of such Professorships as may be from time to time endowed.

§ 2. The government of the Seminary shall at all times be vested in a Board of Directors, which shall consist of twenty-eight members; † one half of whom shall be clergymen, and the other half laymen.

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\* By act of the Legislature, May 11, 1874, increased to "five hundred thousand dollars, exclusive of the Library, and of such Professorships, Scholarships, and Lectureships, or other offices connected with the Educational Department of the Seminary as are now or may hereafter be, from time to time, endowed."

† By Act of the Legislature, April 1, 1870, this was altered, so as to read—"not less than twenty-eight members."

§ 3. The Board of Directors already chosen shall be divided into four classes, to be numbered one, two, three and four; the term of the first class shall expire in one, the second in two, the third in three, and the fourth in four years from the eighteenth of January last. The following persons shall be Directors of the first class: Thomas H. Skinner, William Adams, Samuel H. Cox, Selah B. Treat, Abijah Fisher, Joseph Otis, Caleb O. Halsted, and Leonard Corning. Of the second class: William Patton, Ichabod S. Spencer, Henry White, David Magie, Pelatiah Perit, Charles Butler, and Mical Baldwin. Of the third class: Henry A. Rowland, Absalom Peters, Nathanael E. Johnson, Fisher Howe, Richard T. Haines, William M. Halsted, and Anson G. Phelps. Of the fourth class: Thomas McAuley, Ansel D. Eddy, Erskine Mason, Zechariah Lewis, Knowles Taylor, and Cornelius Baker. Each class of Directors shall hereafter be chosen for, and hold their offices during, four years, and until a new election to supply the places of such class.

§ 4. The members of any class of Directors may be eligible to a re-election; and each election shall take place at least one week previous to the expiration of the term of office of the class to be supplied. And the said Directors shall have power to fill all vacancies in their own Board, which may happen from year to year; and the appointment to fill such vacancy shall be valid for the unexpired term of the Director whose office shall be vacant.

§ 5. Equal privileges of admission and instruction, with all the advantages of the Institution, shall be allowed to students of every denomination of Christians.

§ 6. The Legislature may at any time alter or repeal this act.

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## B.

It appears from these Annals, that this Seminary was "founded before the disruption of the Presbyterian Church," that it "belonged exclusively to neither of its branches," and was "administered upon its own independent charter." On the occasion of the union of the two branches of the Church, the Board of Directors memorialized the General Assembly of 1870 "to the following effect—namely: That the General Assembly may be pleased to adopt it as a rule and plan, in the exercise of the proprietorship and control over the several Theological Seminaries, that, so far as the election of Professors is concerned, the Assembly will commit the same to their respective Boards of Directors, on the following terms and conditions:

"*First*, That the Board of Directors of each Theological Seminary shall be authorized to appoint all Professors for the same.

"*Second*, That all such appointments shall be reported to the General Assembly, and no such appointment of Professor shall be considered as a complete election, if disapproved by a majority vote of the Assembly."

The Directors further declared, "if the said plan shall be adopted by the General Assembly, that they will agree to conform to the same, the Union Seminary in New-York being, in this respect, on the same ground with other Theological Seminaries of the Presbyterian Church."

The plan was adopted by the Assembly June 1, 1870, and Union Seminary was thus brought into ecclesiastical connection with the Presbyterian Church, on the same footing as that of the other Seminaries of the Church.

The utmost care, however, had been taken, from the first, to provide for such instruction, and such only, in the Seminary, as would command the approbation and confidence of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. It was made an irrevocable part of the Constitution, that

"Every Director, on entering upon his office and also after each re-election, shall make the following declaration in the presence of the Board, namely:

"Approving of the plan and Constitution of the Union Theological Seminary in the City of New-York, and of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Presbyterian Form of Church Government, I do solemnly promise to maintain the same, so long as I shall continue to be a member of the Board of Directors.'"

The following rules were, also, in like manner, adopted in reference to the Professors:

"Every member of the Faculty shall, on entering upon his office, and triennially thereafter, or when required by the Board, so long as he remains in office, make and subscribe the following declaration in the presence of the Board—namely:

"I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice; and I do now, in the presence of God and the Directors of this Seminary, solemnly and sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures. I do also, in like manner, approve of the Presbyterian Form of Government; and I do solemnly promise, that I will not teach or inculcate any thing which shall appear to me to be subversive of the said system of doctrine, or of the principles of said Form of Government, so long as I shall continue to be a Professor in the Seminary.'

"If any Professor shall refuse, at the stated time, or when required by the Board, to repeat the above declaration, he shall forthwith cease to be a Professor in the Institution."

No amendments can be made to the Constitution that are "inconsistent with the doctrinal basis contained in" these declarations.