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I.—LITERARY.

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HISTORICAL SKETCH OF UNION THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY.

BY PROF. W. W. MOORE.

I. THE BEGINNING, 1812-1823.

The Presbyterian Church in America was composed originally of emigrants from Great Britain and Ireland, and for a number of years the ministers of their various congregations were drawn from beyond the seas. As the church grew, however, and the population of the country increased, the supply thus obtained proved to be inadequate, and the necessity for a native ministry became more and more apparent. Academies and colleges were accordingly established from time to time during the eighteenth century at various places, such as Princeton, Lexington and Hampden-Sidney; and the candidates educated in these institutions received their theological training from the president of the college, when he chanced to be a minister (as was commonly the case), or from other approved divines here and there throughout the country. But not until 1812, the year of our second war with England, did the church establish an institution to be devoted exclusively to theological education. In that year Princeton Seminary was founded, with the Rev. Archibald Alexander (formerly President of Hampden-Sidney College) as its organizer and first professor. In the same memorable year the Synod of Virginia adopted the plan of a Seminary to be located within her bounds, inaugurated measures to raise funds for its sup-

## GEORGE ADDISON BAXTER, D. D.

BY HENRY ALEXANDER WHITE, M. A., PH. D., D. D.

George A. Baxter was born in Rockingham County, Virginia, July 22, 1771. He sprang from that Shropshire family which gave to England, in the 17th century, the godly Richard Baxter. In 1789 he entered upon his classical studies at Liberty Hall Academy in the Valley of Virginia. The rector of Liberty Hall, Rev. William Graham, was then conducting a regular class in the study of theology. From Graham's seminary there went forth prior to 1796 three princes in Israel, Moses Hoge, Archibald Alexander and George A. Baxter. Baxter was licensed to preach the gospel as a minister of the Presbyterian Church, at Monmouth, near Lexington, April 21, 1797. During the six months that followed his licensure, he performed the work of travelling evangelist and then took charge of the New London Academy. On January 17, 1798, he espoused in marriage a daughter of Col. William Fleming of Botetourt County, Virginia.

In 1799 Baxter assumed the mantle that had fallen from the shoulders of William Graham and became the rector of the Washington Academy (the name given to Liberty Hall as a recognition of President Washington's generous donation.) At the same time, Baxter entered upon the duties of chief pastor over the congregations at Monmouth and Lexington. When the title of the school was changed in 1813 from Washington Academy to Washington College, Baxter was continued in office as President. With great ability and zeal he discharged the duties belonging to the Head Mastership, until the year 1829. In 1831 he was called to the chair of Theology in the Union Theological Seminary at Hampden-Sidney. He was formally inaugurated April 11, 1832, and continued to discharge the duties of his high office with distinguished ability until his death in April, 1841.

Dr. Baxter's portrait reveals a face stamped with the tokens of great intellectual strength. The lips are firmly closed; the eyes glow with kindness; a pair of spectacles are tilted above the massive brow and over the entire countenance there is shed the light of a great love.

Dr. William H. Ruffner speaks as follows, concerning his youthful impressions of Dr. Baxter: "Remembering him as I do, I can understand the feeling of the child who stood before Dr. Plummer and asked him solemnly, 'are you God'? My mother's counsels as to reverencing Dr. Baxter were not needed. By his ponderous frame, his massive head, his dignity, his rich tender voice, the majestic march of his pulpit discourse, his swelling emotions, his unconscious tears,—he impressed my boyish mind as the very embodiment of all that was great and good and loving."

Dr. Baxter was a skillful and successful teacher. His exposition of problems in philosophy is described as lucid. While president of Washington College, his own magnetic personality was the touchstone of education to such men as John Hendren, D. D.; Richard E. Parker, Judge and Senator, Virginia; Samuel B. Wilson, D. D., of the Union Theological Seminary; James Kerr Burch, of Centre College, Kentucky; John J. Crittenden, Governor and Senator, Kentucky; John McElhenny, D. D.; Col. J. S. Watkins, Virginia; Powhatan Ellis, Judge and Senator, Miss.; Gen. Edward C. Carrington, Virginia; William C. Preston, LL. D., Senator from S. C.; Robert Strange, Judge and Senator, N. C.; Samuel L. Graham, D. D., Union Theological Seminary; Henry Ruffner, D. D., LL. D., President of Washington College; John James Allen, President of Virginia Court of Appeals; James McDowell, LL. D., Governor of Virginia; James H. Piper, President East Tennessee University; Henry S. Foote, Governor and Senator, Miss.; Drury Lacy, D. D., President of Davidson College; A. G. McNutt, Governor of Miss.; William S. Plummer, D. D., LL. D., of the Alleghany and Columbia Seminaries and Socrates Maupin, LL. D., Chairman of Faculty, University of Virginia. These are epistles, known and read of all men, that reveal Dr. Baxter's wide influence upon the schools and laws and churches of the people of the southern and southwestern commonwealths.

Dr. Baxter's highest efficiency as a teacher was attained, however, during the ten years spent in the chair of Theology at Hampden-Sidney. His power of lucid reasoning shone resplendent in the exposition of the tenets of the Calvinistic Theology.

In the pulpit he was still the teacher and his text-book was the Bible. The fire and the love of the ancient Hebrew proph-

ets seemed to live commingled on his inspired lips. His appeals were moving. The dread realities of the doom that awaits the impenitent sinner, he would often delineate and at the same time would manifest his own tenderness with trembling and with tears.

Dr. Stuart Robinson, one of his pupils at the Seminary, has written as follows concerning Dr. Baxter: "He never seemed to be taken unawares. In the confusion of desultory debate, he stood armed at all points, and the weapons of argument, or ridicule, or humor were ever at hand. In the whole course of my pupilage under him, I never knew him to postpone an answer to an objection. The most skilful cavils that could be collected from our own minds or from books, never seemed to possess anything of novelty for him, but were met and explored as old antagonists, the secret of whose weakness was well understood. The whole vast stores of his mind, all that he had read or thought, seemed completely at command. He required no time to parade his arguments or burnish his weapons"

"Another distinguishing feature of his character was his imperturbable good humor. The vexations of a lecture-room, arising in part from the dullness or indolence of pupils and in part from a self confident dogmatical spirit that often distinguishes the learner, are well known. But even these could not destroy the serenity of his temper." Dr. Robinson further states that as a preacher Dr. Baxter "had too little ornament and too much thought to be very attractive to the mass of hearers if they were strangers. For though he wielded the club of Hercules, it had not a single wreath to adorn it. It often required a cultivated as well as attentive mind to follow the rapid flow of his thoughts; but to such minds his sermons were both an intellectual and spiritual feast."

Dr. B. M. Smith has left the testimony that Dr. Baxter's knowledge was "varied, profound and extensive. As a pulpit orator he had few equals, and was surpassed by none. As a preacher he was esteemed a model. His eloquence was of the most commanding, dignified and impressive order. He was in style, taste, power, gesture and argument, the finished and consummate orator."

Dr. William Brown has left a description of one of Dr. Baxter's discourses delivered in the year 1822. On a certain Sunday in September, Dr. Baxter rode about ten miles from

Lexington to preach to a great throng seated among the trees at the foot of the mountain near the Goshen Pass. The youthful William S. Plummer sat among a group of students on the edge of the speaker's platform. "The wicked are like the troubled sea," formed the basis of Dr. Baxter's theme. His voice was like the sound of a deep-toned trumpet as he described the continual trouble that follows the wicked. When he appealed to the impenitent to become reconciled to God, "his benignant face was bathed with tears." He then turned the attention of his audience towards death and the day of judgment, "when such a sense of avenging justice shall seize upon you as will completely reverse the very instincts of nature itself." "Suppose as you are seated here this moment," he said, "you should see the heavens above suddenly gathering blackness, and feel the earth, under some mysterious power, trembling beneath your feet; and you who are seated upon the mountain should feel it shaking to its foundation, and looking up to its top we should see it nodding to its fall. What would nature dictate? We should all flee in horror from the fated spot. But how completely will all this feeling be reversed to the impenitent at the last day! Oh, you will then say to the mountains and to the rocks, 'Fall on us! and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath (Dr. Baxter said wroth) has come, and who shall be able to stand?'"

The scene that followed the utterance of these words was indescribable. The assembly was moved as if swayed by the wind. Dr. Brown says that many who were seated on the mountain-side at once rose up and turned "to see if the mountain was not really about to fall." The service was concluded with the hymn, "That awful day will surely come."

The words of this hymn left in the heart and mind of one youthful auditor "an awful view of the last judgment." Forty-five years afterwards (1867) Dr. Plummer referred to Dr. Baxter's sermon and its immediate effect as solemn "even to the inspiration of awe."