CHAPTER 3

THE INFLUENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Broadus entered the University of Virginia in 1846. At that time, there were a little over a hundred and fifty students attending the university.[1] Among those students who attended, a sense of pride and admiration for the school's heritage was evident. Thomas Jefferson had established the school in 1825 and by the time Broadus was a student it offered one of the most thorough educations in the country.[2] In fact, because of its famed educational standards, the student population doubled during Broadus's years and shortly thereafter reached over seven hundred.[3]

Much of Broadus's early adult life was spent within the context of the University of Virginia. After completing his MA degree in 1850, Broadus spent one year as a tutor for General J. H. Cooke in Fluvanna County some twenty-five miles from Charlottesville. However, by 1851 he had moved back to Charlottesville and accepted the call as the pastor of Charlottesville Baptist Church and became Assistant Instructor in Ancient Languages at the University of Virginia. For twelve years Broadus was closely connected with the University, including serving as its chaplain from 1855-1857. Estimating the vast influence the University of Virginia had on Broadus is difficult; however, it is not a stretch to assert that most of Broadus's

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[1] George B. Taylor, *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, Fourth Series (Lynchburg, VA: J. P. Bell Company, 1913), 234.

[2] Archibald T. Robertson, *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication, 1910), 55.

[3] Ibid.

philosophy of education was formed during his time at the University. After Broadus died, Francis Smith, a fellow student with Broadus who later became Professor of Natural Philosophy at the University of Virginia, wrote about the impact the school had on Broadus. He stated:

> He was trained here. He taught here. He spent the first years of his ministry here. He was penetrated with the spirit of all that was best in the system prevailing here, and never wavered in his loyalty to it. He was profoundly convinced that the conditions surrounding our Southern youth make the free, elective system the best, at least for them, in all departments of culture. Accordingly, when the time came, he, with Dr. Boyce, established the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary on those lines.[4]

Smith's comments raise two important questions related to the thesis of this dissertation. First, if the seminary was created on the same lines of the University of Virginia, what was the nature of the elective system Broadus experienced as a student and instructor? Second, beyond Broadus's experience at the University of Virginia, are there any variables that should be considered when assessing the full scope of his elective system? In order to answer these two questions, an analysis of Jefferson's philosophy of education is needed first with a detailed examination of the elective system used at the University of Virginia during the 1840s. Second, a brief explanation is needed of the competing elective system that arose at Harvard University during the late nineteenth century.

[4] "Dr. John A. Broadus, Death in Louisville of this Honored and Beloved Minister, Numerous Tributes to His Worth," *The Religious Herald* 68 (March 21, 1895), 2.

Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia

Jefferson was born at the Shadwell Plantation, in what would become Albemarle County, in Virginia on April 13, 1743. At the age of fourteen, Jefferson's father passed, leaving him master of the plantation. Thirteen years later, on a brisk February day, Jefferson traveled to nearby Charlottesville to conduct some business when word came to him that the Shadwell house had caught fire. Jefferson's first response when learning of the event sums up one of his greatest passions in life. He asked, "What about the books?"[5] After the fire, in a letter to a friend, Jefferson wrote:

> My late loss may perhaps have reached you by this time, I mean the loss of my mother's house by fire, and in it, of every paper I had in the world, and almost every book. On a reasonable estimate I calculate the cost of the books burned to have been £200. sterling. Would to god it had been money; then had it never cost me a sigh![6]

Jefferson's thirst for books and knowledge started early in life. He was afforded the best education of the times. He was tutored at home as a young child, while much of his adolescent and teenage years were spent away from Shadwell receiving education by local clergy and boarding schools.[7] By the time he entered William and Mary College in 1760, he was proficient in the classics and able to read

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[5] Kevin J. Hayes, *The Road to Monticello: The Life and Mind of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 9.

[6] Ibid., 10.

[7] Dumas Malone, *An Outline of the Life of Thomas Jefferson 1743–1826*, University of Virginia Record Extension Series 8, no. 7 (1924) (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, 1924), 5.

Greek and Latin authors in the original.[8] After graduating William and Mary College with high distinctions in 1762, Jefferson studied with the famous lawyer George Wythe. Jefferson was admitted to the bar in 1767 and established a large law practice in Albemarle County.[9] From 1767 until his death in 1826, Jefferson's life was quite remarkable. He served in Virginia's House of Burgesses, was a member of the Second Continental Congress, author of the "Summary View" and the Declaration of Independence, Governor of Virginia, delegate to Congress of Confederation, Minister to France, Secretary of State under George Washington, Vice-President of the United States, and two-terms as president of the United States.

Prior to becoming Secretary of State under Washington, Jefferson was sent to Europe in 1784 to secure favorable commercial treaties with the European nations. One year later, he became Minister of France where he served until 1789. While in France, Jefferson became a "citizen of the world" and solidified his democratic opinions.[10] More importantly, it was during his time in France that Jefferson visited Holland, Germany, southern France, and Italy where he was exposed to some of the greatest minds of the European enlightenment and finest educational institutions in the world.[11]

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[8] "About W&M: Jefferson's Life at School," *William and Mary*, https://www.wm.edu/about/history/tj/tjlife/index.php.

[9] Malone, *An Outline of the Life of Thomas Jefferson*, 6.

[10] Ibid., 8.

[11] James Allan Heath, "Thomas Jefferson: Architect of American Public Education" (EdD diss., Pepperdine University, 1998), 36.

Jefferson had been fighting for educational advances in America prior to his stint in France. In 1779, while serving on a committee for the Virginia Assembly and then as Governor of Virginia later that year, Jefferson proposed two educational bills that he felt would benefit the welfare of Virginia and promote a greater longevity for a democratic nation. At that time, there were no public schools in Virginia and only students who could afford a tutor or make arrangements for a boarding school were able to receive an education. Consequently, Jefferson wrote "A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," in which he argued that if all citizens were afforded the opportunity to be educated, there would be a smaller propensity to be overthrown by a tyrannical government. He explained:

> Whereas it appeareth that however certain forms of government are better calculated than others to protect individuals in the free exercise of their natural rights, and are at the same time themselves better guarded against degeneracy, yet experience hath shewn, that even under the best forms, those entrusted with power have, in time, and by slow operations, perverted it into tyranny; and it is believed that the most effectual means of preventing this would be, to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large, and more especially to give them knowledge of those facts, which history exhibiteth, that, possessed thereby of the experience of other ages and countries, they may be enabled to know ambition under all its shapes, and prompt to exert their natural powers to defeat its purposes.[12]

Within the first bill, Jefferson proposed three distinct grades of education. First, he advocated for elementary schools for all children, regardless of a child's economic

[12] "79. A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," 18 June 1779," *National Archives: Founders Online*, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-02-02-0132-0004-0079.

status.[13] The children in these schools would be taught reading, writing, and common arithmetic. Second, he recommended that the best students of the elementary schools would progress to an upper level grammar school that would be located in the child's district.[14] In these schools, young people would learn Latin, Greek, English grammar, geography, and higher levels of mathematics. Finally, there would be an opportunity for the brightest students of the district grammar schools to attend William and Mary College for three years on a full scholarship.[15]

Jefferson believed that in order for his educational plan to succeed an adjustment needed to be made at William and Mary College. Therefore, he wrote a second bill titled "A Bill for Amending the Constitution of the College of William and Mary, and Substituting More Certain Revenues for Its Support." In the bill, Jefferson proposed an amendment to the college that would modify the school's governmental structure and expand its curriculum. Jefferson's intent was to turn William and Mary College into a great secular university for the state of Virginia. In both cases each bill failed to gain traction in the Virginia Assembly. The first bill faltered, in part, because of the impact of the Revolutionary War, lack of vision by the Virginia Assembly, and

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[13] Thomas Jefferson, *Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson 1743-1790, together with a Summary of the Chief Events in Jefferson's Life* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1914), 75.

[14] Ibid.

[15] "79. A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge."

the potential cost involved.[16] The second bill failed because William and Mary College was an establishment of the Church of England and their Board of Visitors were required to be members of that church. Given the tensions between England and America at that time, Jefferson explained why the bill stalled. He wrote, "The religious jealousies therefore of all the dissenters took alarm lest this might give an ascendancy to the Anglican sect and refused acting on that bill."[17] Although the bill was declined, Jefferson was able to make several changes at William and Mary College because of his position as governor, but not to the extent he had hoped. The fulfillment of his vision for a state university would have to wait for another forty-five years.

It is important to understand that the early development of Jefferson's philosophy of education is clearly seen in both bills. His desire to include all students, rich or poor, in the educational process becomes a distinguishing characteristic of the University of Virginia, and, subsequently, an important part of Broadus's philosophy of education as well. Furthermore, in Jefferson's second bill, much of the educational plans for William and Mary College were implemented later at the University of Virginia. As Herbert B. Adams pointed out in *Thomas Jefferson and the University of*

[16] Rex Bowman and Carlos Santos, *Rot, Riot, and Rebellion: Mr. Jefferson's Struggle to Save the University That Changed America* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013), ProQuest Ebook Central, 15-16.

[17] Jefferson, *Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson*, 76.

Virginia, "Jefferson's first idea of a university for Virginia is inseparably connected with his proposed transformation of William and Mary College."[18]

Jefferson's original plans for a university for Virginia did not include a curriculum based on the elective system. During his time in Europe, as Minister to France, Jefferson was exposed to the ideas of a free elective approach to education. Adams explained:

> His original idea of a university for Virginia was to develop the curriculum of his *alma mater*, William and Mary College; but we hear nothing more of that idea after Jefferson's return from Paris. The idea of distinct schools of art and science, which is so prominent a characteristic of the University of Virginia to-day, is the enduring product of Jefferson's observation of the schools of Paris and of his association and correspondence with their representative men.[19]

Although much of Jefferson's theory of education was developed in Paris, the ideas of academic freedom and an elective approach to education originated with the German university system. According to James Allan Heath, by the time Jefferson arrived in France, the ideas of German education had made their way throughout the European intelligentsia with which Jefferson associated.[20] The extent of Jefferson's experience with the German university system while in Europe is unclear, but it is clear that the notion of academic freedom, which Jefferson strongly advocated, had its origin in Germany. Thus, to better understand the foundation of Jefferson's elective system, a

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[18] Herbert B. Adams, ed., *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1888), 15.

[19] Ibid., 27.

[20] Heath, "Thomas Jefferson: Architect of American Public Education."

brief explanation of the rise of academic freedom in Germany in the eighteenth century is needed.

After the Reformation and the Thirty Years War in Germany, the rise of the Enlightenment engulfed much of Europe. As a result, papal authority outside the walls of the church lost its supremacy and a new pursuit of knowledge, apart from and in addition to religious doctrine, began in the universities. Leading the way, Halle and Göttingen University completely reformed the German university system, setting a new standard for the rest of Europe.[21] At the forefront of the movement was the push for complete academic freedom in order to discover truth. In his book, *German Universities and University Study*, Freidrich Paulsen described the transformation in the following manner:

> The older university instruction was everywhere based upon the assumption that the truth had already been given, that the instruction had to do with its transmission only, and that it was the duty of the controlling authorities to see to it that no false doctrines were taught. The new university instruction began with the assumption that the truth must be discovered, and that it was the duty of the instruction to qualify and guide the student in this task. By assuming the attitude, the university was the first to accept the consequences of the conditions which the Reformation had created.[22]

In many ways, this modern philosophical movement in the German universities was the beginning of the end for the scholastic system of the Middles Ages. The ideas of a fixed formal education system for the preservation of religious dogma so prevalent

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[21] Freidrich Paulsen, *German Universities and University Study* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), 44-47.

[22] Ibid., 46-47.

throughout Europe would be challenged by the principles of independence of human reason and freedom of research and instruction.[23]

By the time Jefferson arrived in France, five innovated trends from the German universities had migrated in various forms through parts of Europe. They were: (1) the influence of the scientific method; (2) academic freedom in research and in the classroom; (3) how the lecture and seminar replaced the reliance on ancient text and presentation of canon of works that led to independent study; (4) that lectures were given in the vernacular language; and (5) the focus on the ancient classics shifted from literary production to a more humanistic focus in the spirit of the Enlightenment.[24] Out of these five trends, two became prominent features of the elective system at the University of Virginia and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the nineteenth century. They include the pursuit of academic freedom and the lecture method of teaching.

Germany's idea of "academic freedom" can be summarized with two words, *Lernfreiheit* and *Lehrfreiheit*. According to Walter Metzger:

> By *Lernfreiheit*, they meant the absence of administrative restraints in the learning situation: the freedom of the student to roam from place to place, sampling academic wares; to determine for himself the choice and sequence of courses; to be exempt from all tests save that of the final examination; to control his private life.[25]

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[23] Paulsen, *German Universities*, 49.

[24] William Boyd and Edmund J. King, *The History of Western Education*, 10th ed. (New York: Barnes & Nobles, 1973), 283-84.

[25] Walter P. Metzger, "The German Contribution to American Theory of Academic Freedom," *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors (1915-1955)* 41, no. 2 (Summer 1955), 217.

It is uncertain if Jefferson's ideas of academic freedom came directly from Germany or if they were learned from various schools in Paris. Regardless, the core principles found within *Lernfreiheit* are clearly seen, both in Jefferson's private letters and the University of Virginia's educational structure. As J. M. Garnett, Professor at the University of Virginia 1882-1896, stated, "Thus another principle of German university organization was introduced into this country at the inception of the University of Virginia, sixty years ago, that is, *Freiheit des Lernens* (freedom of learning)."[26]

For Jefferson, complete freedom for students and professors to pursue the truth was paramount to the success of his vision for the University of Virginia. He wrote four different letters to friends citing the importance of academic freedom that would be an integral part of the University of Virginia. In the first letter to Antoine Louis Claude Destutt de Tracy in 1820, Jefferson wrote, "This institution of my native state, the Hobby of my old age, will be based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind, to explore and to expose every subject susceptible of it's contemplation."[27] On that same day he wrote a second letter to Marc Auguste Pictet:

> The state in which I live is now engaged in the establishment of an University, in which all the sciences will be cultivated which the circumstances of our country would as yet render useful. This institution will employ the remaining

[26] Adams, *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia*, 193.

[27] "From Thomas Jefferson to Antoine Louis Claude Destutt de Tracy, 26 December 1820," *National Archives: Founders Online*, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-1704.

> days and faculties of my life, and will be based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind.[28]

The next day he wrote to William Roscoe, "This institution will be based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind. For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it."[29] Three years later, he wrote to George Ticknor, a professor at Harvard, describing the unlimited freedom that students would experience while attending the University of Virginia. He stated:

> I am not fully informed of the practices at Harvard, but there is one from which we shall certainly vary, altho' it has been copied I believe by nearly every college & academy in the US. That is, the holding the students all to one prescribed course of reading & disallows exclusive applicn to those branches only which are to qualify them for the particular vocations to which they are destined. We shall on the contrary allow them uncontrolled choice in the le[. . .] they shall chuse to attend, and require elementary qualificn only and sufficient age. Our institution will proceed on the principle of doing all the good it can without consulting it's own pride or ambition of letting every one come and listen to whatever he thinks may improve the core of his mind.[30]

In each of the letters, Jefferson highlighted the importance of individual freedom of inquiry—to expand one's knowledge of truth through research and discovery. As Garrett Sheldon, Professor of Political and Social Sciences at the University of

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[28] "From Thomas Jefferson to Marc Auguste Pictet, 26 December 1820," *Founders Online*, National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/ 98-01-02-1710.

[29] "From Thomas Jefferson to William Roscoe, 27 December 1820," *National Archives: Founders Online*, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-1712.

[30] "From Thomas Jefferson to George Ticknor, 16 July 1823," *National Archives: Founders Online*, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3639.

Virginia's College at Wise, stated, "Jefferson saw intellectual freedom and growth through reasoned discussion and discovery as the fulfillment of that highest human, rational nature, as well as the development of the most humane, prosperous, and happy society."[31] Sheldon also argued that Jefferson advocated for an open atmosphere for learning, discussion, and debate because it fostered a greater development of individual abilities, creativity, and happiness for students, as well as greater development in science, technologies, and other educational fields.[32] Thus, when the educational structure was established at the University of Virginia, it allowed students the freedom to focus on subjects that were of interest to them.

In Adam's *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia*, Garnett provided an extensive summary of the elective system at the University of Virginia. Within the summary, Garnett provided clarity on how the student's freedom of choice was actually conducted. He wrote:

> The entering student finds at least ten academic schools open for his selection, three of which he is required to enter, unless he is of age or has his parents' authority to enter a less number. . . . If the student is a candidate for a titled degree, he will find these schools grouped in accordance with the requirements for that degree, but the order in which he shall take up the specified schools is left entirely to his own selection. The schedule of hours is to some extent a limitation upon his selection, as, of course, students can not enter the same year schools of which the lecture hours conflict. If the student is not a candidate for a titled degree, he may select any three schools he pleases; there

[31] Garrett Ward Sheldon, "Thomas Jefferson's Conception of 'Academic Freedom' and Its Current Condition in American Higher Education," July 5, 2018, *The Edmund Burke Society (Australia)*, http://www.edmundburkesociety.gerardcharles wilson.com/ philosophy/thomas-jefferson-and-academic-freedom/#_edn1.

[32] Ibid.

> is absolutely no restriction upon his choice but that necessarily imposed by the schedule of lecture hours.[33]

Several important aspects of Garnett's description require further explanation. First, the only requirement needed to enter the University of Virginia was the student must be at least sixteen years of age.[34] However, according to Garnett, the average age of a first-year student was around nineteen, except in the professional schools (Medical and Law), which averaged twenty-one years of age.[35] Although not stated in the catalog, the assumption, based on the academic workload in each school, was that the student consulted with his parents and deemed his prior academic preparation and intellectual ability to be sufficient to enter the University.

Second, when the University of Virginia first opened in 1825, there were seven schools from which the students could choose to attend. They included Ancient Languages, Modern Languages, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Medicine, and Moral Philosophy.[36] The initial plans included eight schools, but the

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[33] Adams, *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia*, 192-93.

[34] *Catalogue of the University of Virginia, Session of 1849-'50* (Richmond, VA: H. K. Ellyson, 1850), Matriculation, digitized copy from Albert and Shirley Small Collections Library, University of Virginia, http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=2005_Q4_2/uvaBook/tei/z000000128.xml.

[35] Adams, *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia*, 192.

[36] *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the University of Virginia, First Session, March 7th 1825 – December 15th, 1825* (Charlottesville, VA: Chronicle Steam Book Printing House, 1880), Catalogue of Students, digitized copy from Albert and Shirley Small Collections Library, University of Virginia, http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=2005_Q4_2/uvaBook/tei/z000000102.xml;chunk.id=d8;toc.depth=100;toc.id=;brand=default.

Law school was not implemented until the following year.[37] By the time Broadus entered in 1846, the University had expanded to ten schools, adding Civil Engineering, plus Anatomy, Physiology, and Surgery grouped as the other school.[38] When Garnett wrote his summary on the elective system in 1885, the schools had expanded to nineteen. The expansion of the schools was a fulfillment of Jefferson's long-term vision for the University. As Kevin Hayes explained:

> He [Jefferson] suggested that the curriculum be as flexible and open-ended as possible. It should be able to change with the times. He was already foreseeing a university that would last for centuries: "What is now deemed useful will in some of its parts become useless in another century." The constitution and statutes of the ideal university should be written to let it keep pace with the progress of knowledge. It should not be like the tradition-bound European universities—Cambridge, Oxford, the Sorbonne—which, he asserted, "are now a century or two behind the science of the age."[39]

It would be incorrect to suggest that the distinct schools were simply different subject matters or what is known today as "academic majors" within an institution. In fact, it is better to assert that the more modern "Educational Departments" today are, in reality, an expansion or adaptation of what Jefferson proposed almost two centuries ago. The distinct schools, although overseen by the Board of Visitors (Trustees) and governed by the faculty, were fully independent from each of the other schools in the

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[37] Adams, *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia*, 119.

[38] *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the University of Virginia, Session of 1846-47* (Charlottesville, VA: J. Alexander, 1847), Schools, Catalogue of Students, digitized copy from Albert and Shirley Small Collections Library, University of Virginia, http://xtf.lib.virginia.edu/xtf/view?docId=2005_Q4_2/uvaBook/tei/z000000125.xml;chunk.id=d4;toc.depth=100;brand=default;query=Catalogue%20AND%20"University%20of%20Virginia"%20Catalogue%20AND%20"University%20of%20Virginia.

[39] Hayes, *The Road to Monticello*, 614.

University. Each professor was completely in charge of the content being taught within the confines of the subject matter and had equal authority among the other professors. One professor was appointed annually by the Board of Visitors to serve as the Chair of the Faculty.[40]

It is important to note that because of Jefferson's skepticism for central authority and love for democratic ideas, he excluded the position of president from the University when it was established. In fact, it was not until 1905 that the University of Virginia elected its first president. Interestingly, when The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary opened its doors in 1859 it also did not establish an Office of the President. Instead, Boyce was made Chairman of the Faculty. Broadus explained, "As originally organized, the Seminary had no president, but Professor Boyce was made Chairman of the Faculty. In May, 1888, the title [Chairman of the Faculty] was changed to that of President, but with the express provision that the government should remain in the hands of the Faculty."[41] For Broadus, having experienced the governmental structure as a student and instructor at the University of Virginia, the democratic nature of the Southern Baptist Convention, and the smaller number of faculty at the seminary, he understood the benefits of allowing ownership buy-in from the professors while, at the same time, avoiding the potential dangers of an autocratic ruling system.

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[40] Adams, *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia*, 191.

[41] John A. Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce, D.D., LL.D.: Late President of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY* (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1893), 164.

Jefferson derived his plans for independent schools from the universities in Paris in conjunction with Germany's idea of *Lehrfreiheit*.[42] According to Metzger, *Lehrfreiheit* meant two things in the German university system: "First of all, they meant that the university professor was free to examine bodies of evidence and to report his findings in lecture or published form – that he enjoyed freedom of teaching and freedom of inquiry."[43] Second, it meant the absence of a prescribed syllabus and the opportunity for professors to teach on any subject of their choosing.[44] Garnett elaborated on Jefferson's application of *Lehrfreiheit* at the University of Virginia. He wrote, "The professor himself is the sole judge of the special subjects which he shall include in his course, and of the manner in which he shall teach those subjects. Within the limits, then, of each particular chair there is the greatest freedom allowed in the selection of subjects and arrangement of the course."[45] As a result, professors were inspired to discover and develop new ways to teach their subject matter as opposed to following the more formal recitation method found in the prescribed curriculum.

At the same time, each professor understood that he was the expert in the subject matter of the particular school to which he was hired. Jefferson had strong convictions about the need for professors and professionals to focus solely on their field of expertise. In a letter written to Peter Wendover in 1815, Jefferson shared his

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[42] Adams, *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia*, 27, 190.

[43] Metzger, "The German Contribution to American Theory of Academic Freedom," 217.

[44] Ibid., 217-18.

[45] Adams, *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia*, 190.

thoughts about ministers preaching about politics. Jefferson felt it was more appropriate for pastors to give instruction in what they were trained in rather than using the pulpit for political purposes. Although the letter is not directly addressing the University of Virginia, Jefferson's views clearly show that he felt it advantageous to professors and professionals to have the opportunity to concentrate on one field of study. Conversely, he also felt it unhelpful and a disadvantage to the hearer, in the case of a pastor and congregation, if the expert would teach outside the subject of his field of study. He wrote:

> The mass of human concerns, moral and physical, is so vast, the field of knowledge requisite for man to conduct them to the best advantage is so extensive, that no human being can acquire the whole himself, and much less in that degree necessary for the instruction of others. It has of necessity, then, been distributed into different departments, each of which, singly, may give occupation enough to the whole time and attention of a single individual. Thus we have teachers of Languages, teachers of Mathematics, of Natural Philosophy, of Chemistry, of Medicine, of Law, of History, of Government, &c. Religion, too, is a separate department, and happens to be the only one deemed requisite for all men, however high or low. . . . But I suppose there is not an instance of a single congregation which has employed their preacher for the mixed purpose of lecturing them *from the pulpit*, in Chemistry, in Medicine, in Law, in the science and principles of Government, or in any thing but Religion exclusively.[46]

Even though Jefferson's letter to Wendover was written ten years prior to the University of Virginia's opening and addresses a topic not directly related to the school, one can detect Jefferson's preferences about individuals teaching on subjects that they were not equipped to address. More importantly, Jefferson believed that if

[46] Thomas Jefferson, *Memoirs, Correspondence, and Private Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Late President of the United States*, vol. 4, ed. Thomas Jefferson Randolph (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1829), 260.

any institution were to succeed, it must have the best instructors who were continually improving in their field of study and not distracted by other subject areas.

The creation of independent schools at the University of Virginia and giving the professors the freedom to develop their curriculum proved to be an asset for a variety of reasons. First, as mentioned earlier, it provided the ability to expand the number of schools based on the need to explore and address new subject areas, especially as technology progressed. The University of Virginia's catalogs demonstrate that leadership took full advantage of adding new schools when the need arose.

Second, it allowed for easier adjustments to support the overall health of the institution. If one school's growth required an assistant instructor, it could make adjustments without impacting the other schools, such as the hiring of Broadus in the School of Ancient Languages in 1851. The reverse is true as well. If the school was declining, the University could address the situation without interrupting the progress of the other schools. As will be shown in the fifth chapter of this dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has benefited numerous times by having a similar structure throughout its history.

Third, allowing professors the freedom to develop their curriculum and giving them authority over their school fostered ownership, creativity, and a greater passion to help students learn. In part of his memorial address for Gessner Harrison, former Professor of Ancient Languages at the University, Broadus explained how Gessner took advantage of the academic freedom afforded him as a young teacher. Broadus wrote, "Dr. Harrison promptly turned away from the existing English methods of

classical instruction—viz., teaching the mere facts of Latin or Greek usage as facts, and strove after the rational explanation and philosophical systematization of these facts."[47] As a result, Harrison's new pedagogical techniques produced great results among his students.

Fourth, having independent schools allowed students to choose what they would like to study. As stated earlier, each student was required to enroll in at least three schools per session. Each session lasted nine months from October through June. When Broadus entered in 1846, ten schools were available for students to choose from at the University. This writer will give more information later about the degree programs, but students did not have to pursue a full degree. If they so chose, students could enter only the schools that supported their interests or advanced their professional goals. Students, if needed, could sit out a session or reenter a particular school if they failed to pass the examinations or wanted to strengthen their prior knowledge. As this writer will show in the fifth chapter, the benefits of having independent schools became a major selling point of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Fifth, within the context of the titled degree programs, not every school was required. Thus, less time and energy was spent focusing on subjects that were not connected with the degree. Unlike the prescribed curriculum, where every course was mandatory, the elective system provided options for students. In particular, within the four titled degree programs offered at the University of Virginia when Broadus

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[47] John A. Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 7th ed. (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1886), 321.

attended, each degree did not require completion of all ten schools. For example, to merit the degree of Doctor of Medicine (a Professional Degree) a student must pass three of the ten schools offered; namely, Chemistry, Medicine, and the School of Anatomy, Physiology, and Surgery.[48] At the same time, a medical student could also enroll in the other schools in addition to what was required for the medical degree if he was interested in other subjects. If he passed the other school (outside of the medical degree), he was awarded a diploma for that school that stated, for example, "a graduate of the University of Virginia in Latin."[49] Long-term, the variety of academic options for the students proved to be a great success for the University of Virginia.

Part of the genius of the elective system was the integration of the separate schools to form the necessary body of knowledge that would constitute awarding a specific titled degree. In other words, even though the schools were independent they were also interdependent in terms of helping students achieve the highest academic credentials possible. For example, Broadus graduated from the University of Virginia in 1850 with a Master of Arts degree, which was the highest academic honor at that time. In order to complete the degree, he had to pass six of the ten schools. The schools included Ancient Languages, Modern Languages, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, and Moral Philosophy.[50] Other degree options were available as well. A Bachelor of Arts required completion of a total of four academic schools

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[48] *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the University of Virginia, Session of 1846-47*, Degrees.

[49] Adams, *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia*, 194.

[50] *Catalogue of the University of Virginia, Session of 1849-50*, Degrees.

along with distinctions in junior level courses in two of the other academic schools. Also, as mentioned earlier, there were two professional degrees, the Doctor of Medicine and Bachelor of Law, both requiring a combination of different schools to graduate.

The course of instruction and examinations also played an important role in the success of the elective system at the University. As will be demonstrated in the fifth chapter of this dissertation, because of his experience at the University of Virginia, Broadus understood that for the elective system to be effective at the seminary, professors must have a strong and innovative pedagogical method and require thorough examinations for students. When Broadus attended the University of Virginia, the course of instruction required three types of examination. First, a daily examination was required for each lecture and readings in the textbook. Each professor gave three lectures per week along with daily assigned readings. In the daily exams, students were questioned on the preceding lectures and the assigned reading of the textbook. Each student was given a number value from 0-5 rating the success of his exam. A five signified very well prepared. A four meant well prepared. Three meant tolerably prepared. A two signified badly prepared. A one rating meant very badly prepared, and zero meant entirely unprepared.[51]

The second type of testing, known as a public examination, was given at the halfway point and at the end of the session. Students were given a series of questions by the professor and were given an allotted time to answer them, normally six to eight

[51] *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the University of Virginia, Session of 1846-47*, Examinations.

hours.[52] The professor assigned a number value to each question depending on the difficulty. Once the test was graded (by a total of three professors) the student was given a number value for each questioned answered based on the quality of the answer. If the student's total number value was up to three-fourths or higher than the original professor's total number value, the student passed the examination.

In order to become a graduate of a particular school, the student had to also pass an examination for graduation. The exam included oral and written testing conducted by the professor of the school in the presence of two other professors. "Here the student is subjected to searching interrogations upon the details and niceties as well as the leading principles of the subject, and he is expected to be accurately versed in all the topics treated of in the lectures and the correlative texts."[53] If the student passed the exam, he would become a graduate of that school.

A final examination was also required for those students earning a titled degree. According to the school's catalog, "He must moreover give proof of *an accurate and comprehensive acquaintance with his entire course of studies,* by an examination on all these subjects, in the presence of the whole Faculty, at the close of his academical career."[54] Last, "he must prepare and submit *an essay or an oration*" demonstrating proficient literary ability and he may be asked to present it before the

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[52] Adams, *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia*, 197.

[53] *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the University of Virginia, Session of 1846-47*, Examinations, 26.

[54] *Catalogue of the University of Virginia, Session of 1849-50*, Degrees, 30.

entire school.[55] Interestingly, when Broadus graduated in June of 1850, he was asked to deliver his graduating address titled, "Human Society in its Relation to Natural Theology." Professor Harrison noted that day the University had never turned out a better scholar. The following year, Broadus's address was published in the "Jefferson Monument Magazine."[56]

Twenty-three years after Broadus's graduation, he gave the memorial address for Professor Harrison before the Society of Alumni at the University of Virginia. In his speech, Broadus wrote of the powerful influence Harrison and the other faculty members had on so many students. The plan developed many years earlier by Jefferson and carried out by capable men like Harrison left an indelible mark on Broadus's life. In his closing remarks, Broadus commented on the storied history of the University of Virginia. He wrote:

> Two years more and it will be fifty years since the University of Virginia was opened. In this checkered half-century it has achieved results which, considering all the difficulties of the situation, form a just occasion for wonder and rejoicing. A truly great institution of learning cannot be created in a short time. It must grow; must gradually form its atmosphere, gather its associations, hand down its honored names and inspiring traditions.[57]

Much more can be said about the atmosphere, individuals, and inspiring traditions that contributed to the development of Broadus's life while at the University of Virginia. Among those contributions is the elective approach to education. Broadus knew Jefferson created a special and unique institution at the University of Virginia.

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[55] *Catalogue of the University of Virginia, Session of 1849-50*, Degrees, 30.

[56] Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 74.

[57] Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 346-47.

Consequently, when he was called upon to develop the plan of instruction to fulfill Boyce's vision for a new seminary, he did not hesitate to develop it after what he had experienced at his alma mater.

Variations of the Elective System

Two variables must be considered when assessing the full scope of the elective system that Broadus implemented at the seminary and experienced at the University of Virginia. First, a general inquiry on the elective system will produce a variety of responses, much of which are tied to Harvard University, not the University of Virginia. Second, not all elective systems are the same. The name "elective system" became universal in academia, but its application was unique to each institution. Thus, what occurred at the University of Virginia and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is not the same as what was implemented at Harvard and elsewhere.

When researching the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, much confusion can arise because of Harvard's role in the popularization of the elective approach to college education in the late nineteenth century. Charles W. Eliot, former president of Harvard from 1869-1909, gained national recognition for the implementation of the elective system at Harvard during his tenure.[58] However, the seeds of the elective system at Harvard were planted forty-five years earlier by his uncle, George Ticknor.

[58] Thomas J. Denham, "The Elective System or Prescribed Curriculum: The Controversy in American Higher Education (PhD paper, Nova Southeastern University, 2002), https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED471740.pdf, 5.

Ticknor became friends with Jefferson after visiting his home in 1815. Ticknor, a graduate from Dartmouth College and a lawyer, decided to further his education in Europe. Before leaving, he visited Jefferson to gain insight on traveling in Europe. While in Europe, Ticknor spent twenty months at the University of Göttingen in Germany. As mentioned earlier, known for its academic freedom, Göttingen exposed Ticknor to some of the greatest teachers and scholars in Germany. Writing to his father about the genius of his Greek tutor while in Germany, Ticknor stated, "what a mortifying distance there is between a European and an American scholar! We do not yet know what a Greek scholar is; we do not even know the process by which a man is to be made one. I am sure, if there is any faith to be given to the signs of the times, two or three generations at least must pass away before we make the discovery and succeed in the experiment."[59]

In 1816, while still in Germany, Ticknor was offered the Smith Professorship of French and Spanish Languages and Literature at Harvard. Ticknor accepted the position and began his new role in 1819. Jefferson also continued to update Ticknor on the status of the plans for the University of Virginia hoping to hire him away from Harvard. In October of 1820, five years before the University of Virginia would open, Jefferson offered Ticknor the professorship in French and Spanish languages and belles-lettres, doubling his salary.[60] Ticknor ultimately declined, but continued in

[59] Anna Ticknor, *Life, Letters, and Journals of George Ticknor*, vol. 1 (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1876), 73.

[60] Adams, *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia*, 123.

frequent correspondence with Jefferson. Eventually, Ticknor did visit the campus in December 1824 and wrote about Jefferson's elective system. He wrote, "Of the details of the system I shall discourse much when I see you. It is more practical than I feared, but not so practical that I feel satisfied of its success. It is, however, an experiment worth trying, to which I earnestly desire the happiest results."[61] Ticknor was not completely ignorant of the elective approach to education before his visit to the University of Virginia in 1824. Earlier correspondence with Jefferson, his time in Germany, and his attempt to reform Harvard from 1821-1826 indicate some familiarity with the nature of academic freedom. In fact, Ticknor convinced Harvard to make significant reforms in 1825, but, in large part, was reversed the following year because the faculty refused to embrace his ideas.[62] Ticknor continued to mold his own department into a more elective approach, but eventually resigned in 1835. After reflecting back on his time at Harvard and the reforms he made in his own department, he wrote, "If, therefore, the department of the modern languages is right, the rest of the college is wrong; and if the rest of the college is right we ought to adopt its system, which I believe no person whatsoever has thought desirable for the last three or four years."[63]

Ticknor's importance to this dissertation is significant in two ways. First, any research about the elective system is incomplete without Ticknor. For Harvard

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[61] Adams, *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia*, 124.

[62] Ticknor, *Life, Letters, and Journals of George Ticknor*, 365.

[63] Adams, *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia*, 126.

University, Ticknor is an extremely important figure. He taught men like Henry David Thoreau, James Russell Lowell, and Charles Eliot Norton.[64] When he resigned, Ticknor was replaced by his good friend Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. More specifically, Ticknor is Harvard's pioneer for collegiate reform. Although his reformation was short-lived, his ideas were, at least in part, picked back up thirty-four years later by his nephew, Eliot, when he became the president of Harvard.[65]

Second, because Ticknor implemented his reforms around the same time as the opening of the University of Virginia, scholars disagree concerning which institution should be credited as the first university to have an elective system. Interestingly, in *Harvard Magazine*, Warner Berthoff, Cabot Professor of English and American Literature Emeritus at Harvard, only credited Ticknor's experience in Germany as the catalyst for the academic changes he wished to implement at Harvard.[66] Berthoff mentioned Jefferson earlier in the article, but not in relation to the elective system. Berthoff may have felt it unimportant to note Jefferson's influence on Ticknor's life, the trip he took to the University of Virginia in 1824, and that the University of Virginia had a fully operational elective system the same year Harvard implemented its new policies for academic reform. Certainly, Berthoff's article is limited in scope

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[64] Henry Grattan Doyle, "George Ticknor," *The Modern Language Journal* 22, no. 1 (1937): 14.

[65] Robert Wayne Elliott and Valerie Osland Paton, "An Effective Leader in Higher Education: Charles William Eliot," *Journal of International Education and Leadership* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2014): 1, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1135894.pdf.

[66] Warner Berthoff, "George Ticknor: Brief Life of a Scholarly Pioneer: 1791-1871," *Harvard Magazine*, January-February 2005, https://harvardmagazine.com/2005/01/george-ticknor.html.

and space and his intention was to give only a brief account of Ticknor's life. Nevertheless, it is interesting that Berthoff never mentioned the University of Virginia's influence on Ticknor. On the other hand, Herbert Adams, in *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia,* dedicated almost an entire chapter on Ticknor to prove that Jefferson is the original architect behind the elective system in America.[67]

When researching the elective system, it becomes evident there has been a subtle academic rivalry between Harvard and the University of Virginia. In the Lippincott's Educational Series, E. L. Kemp wrote a volume on the *History of Education* where he credited Harvard for the beginning of the elective system in 1824.[68] In responses to his work, A. T. Robertson wrote a strong corrective letting Kemp know he was mistaken. In his closing comments, Robertson wrote:

> It is needless to say more, though much more of the same sort can be told. This proof is absolute and beyond controversy. One cannot think that Principal Kemp would willfully crown Harvard with the laurel wreath that belongs to Jefferson and the University of Virginia. In 1820 and 1825 it did not damn an idea in New England that it came from the South. The most original contribution to the American educational system came from the South. It was men of Virginia also (led by the Baptists).[69]

Even Broadus felt it necessary at times to point out the origin of the elective system when ignorance prevailed. In 1883, Broadus published an article in *The Standard*

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[67] Adams, *Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia*, 122-30.

[68] E. L. Kemp, *History of Education,* Lippincott Educational Series, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1903), 353.

[69] A. T. Robertson, "The Origin of the Elective System of Study," *Review & Expositor* 4, no. 3 (1907): 370.

newspaper titled "Elective Education." By that time, elective education had gained significant notoriety through Eliot and Harvard University, and on occasions debates would rise among scholars between the advantages of a prescribed curriculum or the elective system. Evidently neither The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary nor the University of Virginia were getting any recognition for their contributions, so Broadus wrote, in part, to set the record straight. He stated:

> Two or three years ago there appeared in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* of Andover, Mass., still generally recognized as the foremost theological quarterly of our country, a series of able articles upon theological education. Toward the close the anonymous writer urged that whatever may be true of colleges and universities, the course in a theological seminary ought always to be elective. He stated that the experiment of elective education has of late years been partially tried in some universities, but never tried in any theological school of our country. I thought it worth while to send the author, through a friend in the Andover Faculty, a couple of catalogues. One was the catalogue of a university, in which the elective system, not partial, but complete and consistent, has been pursued since 1825, and which before the war had as many students as Harvard or Yale. The other was the catalogue of a theological seminary which had a similar completely elective system since 1859, and which has more students than Andover is believed to have ever had in her palmiest days.[70]

Broadus closed the article suggesting he may give a further account of the elective system at the University of Virginia and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in a future article. Unfortunately, it was never published.

Adams, Broadus, and Robertson felt it was important that proper credit should be given to Jefferson and the University of Virginia. Even today, in comparison to Harvard, very little is written on the elective system of the University of Virginia and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The majority of academic research on the

[70] John A. Broadus, "Elective Education," *The Standard* 30, no. 52 (September 27, 1883).

elective approach to education focuses on Eliot and Harvard University. Consequently, confusion can occur for those interested in what Broadus experienced at the University of Virginia and implemented at the seminary because Harvard's system is significantly different.

Under Eliot, Harvard's system required freshmen to take certain prescribed courses while also allowing several elective options. After freshman year, the student could take no less than four courses offered in the catalog each year for the next three years in order to earn a BA degree.[71] According to Earl Royer, "the Harvard student in 1886 had a choice of some 180 courses, of which only freshman English and one modern language were prescribed, and he could obtain the A. B. degree by passing eighteen of them."[72] At the same time, if a student chose to study in one of the professional schools, such as engineering, forestry, or medicine, the elective system did not apply to him. His courses were prescribed in order to be adequately trained in that field.[73]

Like Jefferson, Ticknor, and Broadus, Eliot felt the elective system fostered greater potential for scholarship, but his system had greater leniency on the choice of courses.[74] For example, Harvard offered a variety of courses but with fewer

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[71] George H. Palmer, *The New Education: Three Papers* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1887), 17.

[72] Earl Royer, "The Educational Views and Ideals of George William Eliot" (Master's thesis, The University of Southern California, 1941), 24.

[73] Ibid., 26.

[74] Charles W. Eliot, *Educational Reform, Essays and Addresses* (New York: The Century Company, 1901), 14.

restrictions on the nature of the courses required to earn a BA degree. In other words, more emphasis was placed on quantity of courses and quality of the work from the student than the subjects being taken by the student.[75] Both the University of Virginia and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary were also interested in quantity and quality, but required the completion of certain schools in order to graduate with a full degree. The different application of the elective system between Harvard, University of Virginia, and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has often caused confusion. In fact, in 1890, E. H. Johnson, professor at Crozer Theological Seminary, argued in "Terminology of Theological Education" that The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary would have been better off to identify their educational strategy as a curriculum because it required the completion of certain theological subjects (schools), much like the prescribed curriculum.[76]

After Johnson's article, Henry C. Vedder, in a brief editorial note, expressed his opposition to Johnson's views. He wrote:

> It would be preposterous to assert that a system which permits any student to elect what studies he pleases and as many as he pleases, may not properly be called "elective." Such an elective system very properly consists with certain rigid requirements for full graduation, and this all the more in a theological seminary than in a college.[77]

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[75] Palmer, *The New Education*, 17-18.

[76] E. H. Johnson, "Terminology of Theological Education," *The Baptist Quarterly Review* 12 (October 1890), ed. Henry C. Vedder (New York: The Baptist Review Association, 1890), 481.

[77] Ibid., 484.

Vedder would go on to further clarify the distinction between the elective system in colleges and what was occurring at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary when he wrote, "The 'elective' courses of the college, are not like the 'elective' seminary system that we have advocated, because parity is impossible from the nature of the case. The college has a curriculum of elective courses; the seminary that we described has elective courses, but no curriculum."[78]

Vedder's words demonstrate the need to clarify how each institution implemented the elective system. By the late nineteenth century, numerous colleges and universities had implemented various forms of the elective system. From those institutions, the ideas of academic concentrations and majors came to fruition evolving into the more modern system experienced today in most universities.[79] Consequently, the complexity of the history and nature of the elective system, and that Broadus was the first to implement it in a theological institution, makes it difficult to fully appreciate his system without examining similar academic institutions of his day.

Summary Statement

The educational influence the University of Virginia had on Broadus is paramount to the creation of the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Jefferson's plan for a unique university would become a hallmark within Broadus's philosophy of education. As a result, the seminary Broadus helped established can trace its structural roots back to Virginia. Thus, this chapter has sought

[78] Johnson, "Terminology of Theological Education," 485.

[79] Denham, "The Elective System or Prescribed Curriculum."

to provide insight into Jefferson's educational philosophy and the origin of the elective system. This chapter has also explained key aspects of the elective system of the University of Virginia that were integral to Broadus's work at the seminary, such as expansion of schools, easier adjustment for overall health of institution, freedom to choose schools, and focused concentration on titled degrees. Finally, this chapter identified two important variables that should be considered when trying to fully understand what Broadus accomplished at the seminary regarding the elective system: (1) research on elective system produces various responses, mostly tied to Harvard University; and (2) the elective system is applied differently in each school.

Closing Remarks

Even though Broadus's background at the University of Virginia is extremely important to this work, it is not enough to adequately defend the thesis of this dissertation. In order to provide a full comprehensive view of Broadus's elective system and its historical significance, a brief chapter on the prescribed curriculum used in other seminaries in the nineteenth century is necessary. As will be shown in the following chapter, Broadus, along with many others, was not satisfied with the results produced by the prescribed curriculum and felt a change must take place.

Furthermore, in combination with the deficiencies of the prescribed curriculum, the state of affairs within the Southern Baptist Convention regarding the training of ministers was such that Boyce's vision for the seminary and Broadus's structural plan culminated into a marvelous institution that met the needs of hundreds of Southern Baptist pastors and churches. With that in mind, the following chapter will argue that the weaknesses of the prescribed curriculum and the nature of theological

training in Southern Baptist life in the nineteenth century created perfect conditions to introduce the elective system into theological education. Furthermore, when combing those conditions with Broadus's experience with the Albemarle Female Institute and the influence of Francis Wayland, it is easy to understand why Broadus was such a passionate advocate for the elective system.