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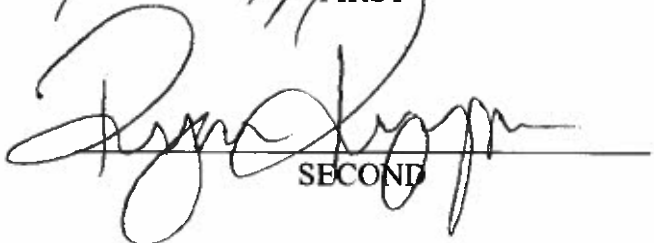
JOHN BARTLEY WOOTEN

CONSISTING OF

FIRST: DR. ROBERT J MATZ

SECOND: DR. RYAN L RIPPEE


FIRST


SECOND

MIDWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

JOHN A. BROADUS: THE ELECTIVE SYSTEM OF THE
SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF MIDWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN APPLIED THEOLOGY

OFFICE OF DOCTORAL STUDIES

BY

JOHN BARTLEY WOOTEN

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

MAY 2021

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is difficult to adequately express the gratefulness I feel toward those who have been such an encouragement to me over the course of this dissertation. My dissertation committee members, Dr. Robert J. Matz and Dr. Ryan L. Rippee, have been extremely generous in their guidance and assistance as I worked through each chapter of this dissertation. Both men possess a godliness and scholarship that is a rare commodity worthy of emulation. I am grateful they served as my committee.

Carolyn Wright's professionalism in helping me make necessary corrections to the dissertation and addressing formatting issues has been invaluable and she deserves the highest praise and recommendation.

Dr. Adam Winters, Archivist of the Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has gone over and above his responsibilities as the archivist to help me. Without him, this dissertation would not be complete.

Hayden Cork has freely volunteered his time reading over each chapter before it was sent to the committee members. His friendship and generosity will not soon be forgotten.

The members of Beulaville Baptist Church in Beulaville, North Carolina, have been a source of encouragement during this entire process. They have been gracious to me, their pastor, allowing the time needed to successfully complete the entire process. I will always be grateful for each of them.

Dr. Walter Johnson, Dean of the College of Christian Studies, Professor of Philosophy and Christian Studies at North Greenville University in Tigerville, South

Carolina, planted the seed in me over twenty years ago that writing well could be developed. Ever since that day in his office, I keep striving to make his counsel a reality in my life.

A special thanks must go to my family. My parents, Bill and Judy Wooten, have poured out their lives that I might enjoy the opportunities to develop and grow as a Christian. Words cannot adequately express how much I love them. Tragically, my father, like Broadus's father, will not see me graduate. He is with our heavenly Father, but I know he was proud of me. Dr. Bill and Kay Mackey have prayed for their son-in-law during this entire process. Their words of encouragement and tangible support have made it possible for me to complete this dissertation. They have been a sterling example of Christlike character and a true blessing in my life.

My wife, Beth Wooten, is a wonderful example of godliness, patience, and love. She has supported me through multiple years of education and deserves, outside of Jesus, the greatest honor of all involved. I love her dearly and this accomplishment is a reflection, at least in part, of her desire to see me fulfill a lifelong dream. My children, Lilly, Mack, and Nate Wooten, have been a source of inspiration for me. When the temptation came to take a break from my work, it was their words of affirmation and a desire to make them proud that kept me moving forward to finish the task. I love you!

Finally, I want to thank the Lord Jesus Christ. His sustaining hand has held me up since I first encountered Him as a young child. Throughout the years, and especially during the writing of this dissertation, my heart has overflowed with

thanksgiving for His goodness in my life. I am undeserving, but I am grateful even the dogs get crumbs that fall from the Master's table.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate that John A. Broadus's elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is far more thoughtful and comprehensive than present literature indicates and is significantly more important to theological education than history reveals. Broadus's elective system was implemented in 1859 and was the first of its kind for theological education in America. Based on the model found at the University of Virginia, Broadus's elective system helped fulfill the vision of James P. Boyce to establish an institution that could provide the needed theological training for pastors of the Southern Baptist Convention.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

John A. Broadus is one of the most influential figures in Southern Baptist history. He represents a breed of scholars whose fame extended years beyond his life, and his influence is still being felt today. Those who spend time studying Broadus will acknowledge his extensive contribution to the task of preaching. His book, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, published in 1870, remains in print today and has impacted generations of preachers.¹ Indeed, much of the intellectual contributions on Broadus focus on his influence in the field of Homiletics. However, his influence on preaching is but one part of Broadus's story. Volumes could be written on the numerous contributions he gave to the work of the gospel. Yet, the scope of this work is more limited. Specifically, this dissertation will examine one of Broadus's most important contributions to theological education; namely, the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

On Founder's Day at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1907, William Whitsitt, dear friend and colleague of Broadus, was invited to address students and faculty concerning the life of the late Broadus. In the closing remarks of his speech, Whitsitt shared that Broadus's life was best expressed in his life and deeds and that the founding of the seminary was his foremost achievement, and it would

¹ David S. Dockery and Roger D. Duke, eds., *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy* (Nashville: B&H, 2008), 5.

keep his memory green for ages to come.² Within that context (the founding of the seminary), this work will examine and evaluate the elective system developed by Broadus when the seminary was first established. As a result, greater clarity will be brought to the sparsely known educational structure that Broadus created and will demonstrate its incredible value for theological institutions, both in Broadus's day and in modern times as well. Toward that end, what follows in this chapter is a brief introduction of Broadus's life, which leads to critical research questions concerning the nature and importance of the elective system. Following the research questions, a concise thesis statement for this dissertation is given along with the methodology used to support it.

The Life of Broadus

Broadus was born on January 24, 1827, in Culpeper County, Virginia. Raised on a three-hundred-acre farm, Broadus spent his childhood days farming, playing with other children, and going to school.³ His father, Major Edmund Broadus, was known throughout the region as a godly Christian politician who served in the Virginia legislature for twenty years.⁴ Broadus's mother loved books and music, and showed a great appreciation for the simple things of life. Although Broadus's family was not

² W. H. Whitsitt, "John Albert Broadus," *Review and Expositor* 4, no. 3 (July 1907): 350.

³ Archibald T. Robertson, *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication, 1910), 21.

⁴ Robert N. Barrett, "Dr. John A. Broadus: A Sketch of His Life, *The Seminary Magazine* 8, no. 7 (April 1895): 339.

financially wealthy, the variety of life Broadus experienced in his youth was rich in culture, love, and piety.⁵

Broadus's educational experience began with the teaching of his famous uncle, Albert G. Simms. Known for his incredible teaching, Simms owned a boarding school six miles from Broadus's house. During the week, Broadus would live at school and on Friday evenings, after class, he would walk home for the weekend. One day, at the age of sixteen, Broadus returned home from school with all his belongings. Confused, Major Broadus asked Broadus what was wrong. Broadus responded, "My uncle says he has no further use for me." Unable to get any more information from Broadus, Major Broadus went to see Simms. Laughing at the confusion, Simms assured Major Broadus that there was nothing wrong, but that Broadus had learned all he could teach him.⁶

During his time as a student, Broadus attended a revival meeting at nearby Mt. Poney Baptist Church. During the service, he professed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Shortly thereafter, he was baptized and joined the church.⁷ Sometime later, Broadus moved his membership to the New Salem Church where his family were members. From the time of his conversion, Broadus grew in the grace and knowledge of his Lord.⁸

⁵ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 18.

⁶ Ibid., 33.

⁷ Dockery and Duke, *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy*, 3.

⁸ Ibid., 16.

After his educational training with Simms, Broadus was still unsure of his life's work. He desired a higher education but could not afford it. So, to raise financial support for the university, he began teaching at Rose Hill School in Clarke County in 1844. Initially, Broadus was very discouraged about his progress as a schoolteacher. He made several mistakes as a beginning teacher. For example, one morning, two of his students were missing from school. Concerned for the students, he visited them at home and was startled by their reason for being absent. The mother of the students frankly told Broadus she did not believe her girls could learn very well when there was no order in the classroom and, furthermore, that she would not allow her daughters to be the students of such a young, inexperienced teacher.⁹ Broadus grew from his experiences in teaching at Rose Hill and ultimately took another teaching position at Woodley School, also in Clarke County, in January of 1845.¹⁰ After teaching almost two years at Woodley, Broadus's father made arrangements for Broadus to study at the University of Virginia. However, before Broadus left for the university, he attended two associational meetings under the preaching of Dr. A. M. Poindexter. On the second day of the meetings, Poindexter preached on the "Parable of the Talents" and at intermission Broadus went to his pastor and said that he must try to preach.¹¹

⁹ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 41-43.

¹⁰ Ibid., 44.

¹¹ George B. Taylor, *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, Fourth Series (Lynchburg, VA: J. P. Bell Company, 1913), <http://www.ancestraltrackers.net/va/resources/virginia-baptist-ministers-v4.pdf>, 233.

Excited about his new calling, Broadus moved to the University of Virginia and prepared for his newly discovered life's work.

When Broadus arrived at the University of Virginia, he was twenty years of age. Eager to begin his studies at the new school, Broadus, according to a classmate, “was full of hunger for knowledge or as he [Broadus] once phrased it, ‘a rage for knowing,’ plunged fresh from the country side.”¹² At that time, the University of Virginia, highly recognized for its academic standards, provided one of the hardest and best academic trainings in the country. One of Broadus's professors, Gessner Harrison, was instrumental in the continued development of the University of Virginia. He was one of the first graduates of the University of Virginia and was subsequently hired there to teach ancient languages. By the time Broadus arrived on campus in 1846, Harrison had established himself as an excellent professor, requiring the highest standards from his students. Indeed, Broadus tells of a student who came out of the professor's office with a smile on his face. Curious about his grade, Broadus asked if he had passed. Responding with a “no,” he continued and said, “but old Gess said that I came nigher to it than any other fellow that didn't pass.”¹³ Initially, the academic demands at the University revealed a deficiency in Broadus's earlier preparation for college.¹⁴ However, because Broadus had cultivated the ability and discipline to work hard, his achievements soon surpassed many of his classmates. In

¹² Francis H. Smith, “Dr. John A. Broadus: As a University Student,” *The Seminary Magazine* 8, no. 7 (April 1895): 344.

¹³ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 62.

¹⁴ Dockery and Duke, *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy*, 53.

fact, Francis H. Smith, a former classmate of Broadus's, remarked, "His disciplined faculties were so under the control of his will that the result, while natural, was surprising."¹⁵ A professor once wrote of Broadus, "If genius is the ability and willingness to do hard work, he was a genius."¹⁶

A highlight in Broadus's university experience was his involvement in the Jefferson Society.¹⁷ Two major aspects of the Jefferson Society included debates and the composing and delivering of speeches. Mr. Henry, a recognized debater, claimed that Broadus was the best debater in the Jefferson Society, topping the later-to-be General Roger A. Pryor, the Hon. Wm. Wirt Henry, and F. W. M. Holliday.¹⁸ Broadus was also awarded the distinguished honor of giving the valedictory address for the Society. Later that year, his speech was published and considered to have been "National Literature."¹⁹ By the time Broadus graduated, he had left an indelible impression on his peers and faculty. Later in life, Broadus would often speak with great affection for his alma mater. He was grateful for his experience at the University of Virginia. Smith appropriately summed up Broadus's special relationship with the University of Virginia and its leadership in an article in the *Seminary Magazine*. He wrote:

¹⁵ Smith, "As a University Student," 345.

¹⁶ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 65.

¹⁷ Dockery and Duke, *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy*, 54.

¹⁸ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 64, 66.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Doubtless she was next in his affection to the great seminary on the Ohio, to which the labor of his best years was devoted. The University of Virginia bends in grief over the grave of her greatest alumnus. Had she done nothing more in all these years than give to the world John A. Broadus, there are many who think that her great founder and her faithful professors had not labored in vain.²⁰

While Broadus was still a student at the University of Virginia, he was asked to preach his first sermon on June 4, 1849. William McGuffey, one of Broadus's professors, had charge of the Mount Eagle Presbyterian Church in Albemarle County, but was sick. McGuffey had greatly influenced Broadus in a number of areas, but specifically in public speaking. McGuffey was "a great believer in the extempore method; that is, in free speaking without a manuscript after a thorough mastery of the subject."²¹ Evidently, Broadus had learned well from his professor, because when he preached that morning for the first time, the congregation was absolutely delighted with the results. Mrs. L. L. Hamilton, sitting in the congregation, wrote about Broadus's sermon, "I well remember the impression made upon me by its charming simplicity. He had made comprehensible, even to the mind of a child, great Bible truths."²² Broadus's first sermon marked the beginning of a pulpit ministry that would rank him among the greatest of his "age and country."²³ In his book, *Royalty of the Pulpit*, Edgar Jones wrote the following about the influence of Broadus and his

²⁰ Smith, "As a University Student," 346.

²¹ Taylor, *Virginia Baptist Ministers*, 235.

²² Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 71.

²³ Edwin C. Dargan "John Albert Broadus—Scholar and Preacher," *Crozer Quarterly* 2 (April 1925): 171.

preaching: “No king on his throne had more loyal and willing subjects than did this professor-preacher.”²⁴ Archibald T. Robertson, former student and colleague of Broadus, also expressed his admiration for Broadus’s preaching. He wrote, “It has been my fortune to hear Beecher and Phillips Brooks, Maclaren, Joseph Parker, and Spurgeon, Broadus, Hall and Moody, Broadus Clifford and David Lloyd George. At best and in a congenial atmosphere Broadus was equal of any man I have ever heard.”²⁵ Throughout Broadus’s life, especially in the area of public speaking, he continued to be an advocate of the lessons learned in college while under the tutelage of McGuffey.

Following Broadus’s graduation from the University of Virginia in 1850, he spent one year as a tutor in Fluvanna County, Virginia. During that same year, he married Maria C. Harrison, Gessner Harrison’s daughter. By February of 1851, Georgetown College in Kentucky offered Broadus a professorship in ancient languages. Broadus struggled in his decision regarding teaching at the college, but ultimately declined. In September of that same year, Broadus accepted the invitation to pastor Charlottesville Baptist Church in Virginia and became an assistant instructor of ancient languages at the University of Virginia.

Broadus’s time at Charlottesville Baptist Church was filled with a variety of experiences that continued to shape his life. While pastoring, he led the church to

²⁴ Edgar DeWitt Jones, *The Royalty of the Pulpit: A Survey and Appreciation of the Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching Founded at Yale Divinity School, 1871, and Given Annually (with Four Exceptions) since 1872* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1951), 51.

²⁵ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 175.

build more facilities and helped established the Albemarle Female Institute, which will be addressed later in this work. He further developed his preaching abilities and was afforded numerous opportunities to expand his influence. He continued to teach at the University of Virginia, but eventually the growth of the church required Broadus to resign from his teaching post and focus his full attention on the church. For a brief time, Broadus laid aside his pastoral responsibilities at the church to become the chaplain at the University of Virginia. His time as chaplain was productive, but he would eventually return to Charlottesville Baptist Church approximately two years later.

While they were in Charlottesville, Broadus's wife, Maria, gave birth to three girls. They were Eliza Somerville, Annie Harrison, and Maria Louisa.²⁶ Tragically, Broadus's wife became ill and died three weeks after Broadus resumed his pastoral responsibilities back at Charlottesville Baptist Church in October of 1857. She was only twenty-five years old. A little more than two years later, Broadus married Charlotte Eleanor Sinclair on January 4, 1859.²⁷ She proved to be a wonderful blessing in Broadus's life.

Broadus concluded his ministry at Charlottesville Baptist Church in the late summer of 1859. Although he struggled leaving his church, he felt a strong call from God to help establish a new seminary for Southern Baptists in Greenville, South Carolina. Broadus's initial involvement in the seminary occurred prior to 1859. Two

²⁶ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 147.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 155.

years earlier at the Educational Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, James P. Boyce, Broadus, Basil Manly Jr., E. T. Winkler, and William Williams were elected to serve on a committee to develop the plan of instruction for the new seminary.²⁸ Less than one year prior to their appointment, Boyce gave his inaugural address as Professor of Theology at Furman University titled, *Three Changes in Theological Institutions*.²⁹ In his address, he explained three important changes that were needed in a new seminary. The first change involved a curriculum where every minister, regardless of education level, could benefit and grow as a student.³⁰ This meant admission to the seminary would not require a college education to attend, but was encouraged if possible. In his book, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary [Microform] The First Thirty Years, 1859-1889*, John R. Sampey articulated the first change in this manner: “The first change he proposed was therefore that a theological institution should welcome to its instruction men who had only an ordinary English education, if they found it impracticable, or could not be induced to take a previous college course.”³¹ The second change included a curriculum that enabled the most advanced students to be

²⁸ John A. Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce, D.D., LL.D.: Late President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY* (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1927), 179-80.

²⁹ John R. Sampey, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary: The First Thirty Years, 1859-1889* (Baltimore, MD: Wharton, Barron & Co., 1890), 6.

³⁰ Gregory A. Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 1859-2009* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 18.

³¹ John R. Sampey, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary [Microform] The First Thirty Years* (Baltimore, MD: Wharton, Barron & Co., 1890), reprinted under the Scholar Select Series, 2019, 6.

thoroughly trained, reaching their fullest potential through a wide range of scholarly study.³² The final change urged that the seminary be governed by a “declaration of doctrine” that every professor would sign stating he would teach in accordance with and not contrary to the doctrinal statement.³³

In many ways it was Boyce’s vision as expressed in *Three Changes of Theological Institutions* that reignited the desire for a new central seminary in the South. Numerous other men had been involved earlier in moving the idea forward, but Boyce played no small part in seeing the idea become a reality. Once Boyce, Broadus, Manly, Winkler, and Williams were elected to serve as the Committee on the Plan of Organization, it was not long before others realized Broadus also needed to be one of the first faculty of the seminary. Broadus was offered the professorship, but initially declined.³⁴ However, Boyce, who would become the first president of the seminary and one of Broadus’s closest friends, pleaded with him to reconsider. He wrote:

If you cannot full consent to a lifetime of work, try it for a while in order to inaugurate the matter. Your simple name will be a tower of strength to us; and, when we are once started, if you find it not congenial, you can return to the pastorate. But, will it not be congenial to preach Christ daily to most attentive hearers, knowing that you are starting influences to reach every quarter of the globe and the hearts of every class of men?³⁵

³² Sampey, *The First Thirty Years*, 6.

³³ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁴ Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 1859-2009*, 43.

³⁵ Sean Michael Lucas and Jason Christopher Fowler, eds., “*Our Life Work*”: *The Correspondence of James P. Boyce and John A. Broadus, Founders of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 1857-1888*, Part One, Correspondence, 1857-1861, *The Beginning of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 2004, Archives

On April 21, 1859, Broadus wrote back to Boyce with these words:

With much difficulty, and much distress, I have at length reached a decision. I tremble at the responsibility of the things either way, and hesitate to write words which must be irrevocable. But . . . if elected, I am willing to go. May God graciously direct and bless, and if I have erred in judgment, may he overrule, to the glory of his name.³⁶

In May of 1859, the Board of Trustees of the seminary elected Broadus as Professor of Interpretation of New Testament and Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, and Broadus accepted.³⁷

Broadus was among the first faculty of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, which opened in Greenville, South Carolina, in October 1859.³⁸ For the next thirty-six years, Broadus would serve as Professor of New Testament Interpretation and Homiletics. The seminary's progress stopped in 1861 when the Civil War forced the seminary to close. Four years later, the seminary reopened, only this time to face tremendous hardship. With few students and no endowment, the well-being of the seminary faced dark times. Displaying his character and commitment to

and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, 7-8. Also found in Robertson's *Life and Letters*, 158.

³⁶ Lucas and Fowler, "*Our Life Work*."

³⁷ "History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Greenville, South-Carolina; To Which Is Appended *The First Annual Catalogue, 1859-1860*" (Greenville, SC: G. E. Elford, printer, 1860), Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, 31.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

the seminary, Broadus stated, “Perhaps the Seminary may die, but let us resolve to die first.”³⁹

In 1877, the seminary moved to Louisville, Kentucky. With better conditions, Broadus and Boyce devoted the remainder of their lives to establishing a firm theological and financial foundation for the school. In 1889, Boyce died. For the next six years, Broadus would reside as the seminary’s second president until his death in 1895. At Broadus’s funeral, W.H. Whitsitt, the third President of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, remarked, “He was always first wherever he chose to stand at all. He was first among the Baptists of the South, of our entire country, of the world. In the elevation of his character, the splendor of his genius, and the extent of his attainments, he towered above us all, almost above our conceptions.”⁴⁰

Broadus’s life, in many ways, was an exemplary model of Christian character, biblical scholarship, and gifted preaching, but he was not without fault. Like many others who grew up in the South prior to the Civil War, Broadus affirmed the institution of slavery. Along with the other three founders of the seminary, Broadus participated in the ownership of slaves and assisted in Confederate causes during the Civil War.⁴¹ Broadus and the other founders of the seminary were not alone.

³⁹ John A. Broadus, *Favorite Sermons of John A. Broadus*, ed. Vernon Latrelle Stanfield (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 4.

⁴⁰ W. H. Whitsitt, “Remarks Made at the Funeral,” *Seminary Magazine* 8 (April 1895): 411.

⁴¹ *Report on Slavery and Racism in the History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (Louisville, KY: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,

Numerous Christian leaders, beyond the seminary's faculty, made attempts to justify the institution of slavery.⁴² However, as truth prevailed, and time passed, perspectives began to change. According to the *Report on Slavery and Racism in the History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, in 1882 Broadus repudiated American slavery and the greed that caused it.⁴³

Critical Research Questions

Broadus's initial discussion of the elective system for The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary occurred shortly after the Educational Convention in Louisville. Following the convention, Broadus met with Boyce and Manly in Richmond, Virginia, to formulate the plans for the new seminary in August of 1857.⁴⁴ Williams and Winkler were unable to attend. In his book, *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus*, Robertson described their meeting in the following manner:

Mr. Boyce brought an outline of the "legal and practical arrangement," Mr. Manly had drawn the "abstract of doctrines and principles" for the professors to sign, and Mr. Broadus presented the plan of instruction, modeled after the University of Virginia's elective system. The other two members of the committee were absent. Boyce and Manly were both familiar with the curriculum system at Brown, Newton, and Princeton. But Broadus was so enthusiastic in his advocacy of the elective system that he completely won them over. He urged strongly that the success of a new seminary depended more upon wisdom in the plan of instruction than anything else. So, as Mr. Jefferson had drawn a new American university, Mr. Broadus drew a new

2018), 9, 22, <https://sbts-wordpress-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/sbts/uploads/2018/12/Racism-and-the-Legacy-of-Slavery-Report-v4.pdf>.

⁴² *Report on Slavery and Racism*, 33-38.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁴ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 144.

American seminary, which had in it adaptability and expansion, the possibility of becoming a theological university.⁴⁵

Robertson's description of this meeting serves as the catalyst for this dissertation.

When Broadus met with Boyce and Manly, he presented a plan of instruction modeled after the elective system of the University of Virginia.

As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, very little is written about the elective system of the seminary. More importantly, no one has attempted to demonstrate why Broadus was such an enthusiastic advocate for the elective system by connecting his experiences at the University of Virginia, which was grounded in the educational philosophy of Thomas Jefferson, the creation of the Albemarle Female Institute, the state of theological education in his day, and the seminary's ability to meet the needs of the Southern Baptist Convention and its churches in the nineteenth century. In short, present literature on Broadus does not include the pulling together of necessary materials to express the richness and the fullness of Broadus's elective system. The gap in current literature leaves readers asking critical research questions such as:

- (1) "Is there something deeper behind Broadus's elective system other than it met the needs of Boyce's vision for a new seminary?"
- (2) "What are the philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings of Broadus's system?"
- (3) "How did it compare to other theological institutions in Broadus's day?"
- (4) "In what way is it still being used at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary?"

⁴⁵ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 144.

(5) “Is the elective system relevant for other theological institutions today?”

These questions have not been answered sufficiently and demand a response.

Thesis

Current scholarship on Broadus has, in large part, skipped over one of the most fascinating stories behind Broadus’s contribution to theological education. A story that brought Broadus under the influence of Jefferson’s philosophy of education at the University of Virginia coupled with Boyce’s vision for a new seminary and the need for a new educational system that would meet the needs for training ministers in the Southern Baptist Convention. Therefore, given the lack of attention concerning Broadus’s elective system, this dissertation will demonstrate that Broadus’s elective system is far more thoughtful and comprehensive than present literature indicates and is significantly more important to theological education than history reveals.

Methodology

In order to demonstrate the full scope of Broadus’s elective system, five areas of concern must be addressed. They include: (1) a treatment on the current state of research on the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, (2) the influence of the University of Virginia and Thomas Jefferson’s philosophy of education on Broadus, (3) the nature of theological education in Broadus’s day, (4) a detailed analysis of the nature and structure of Broadus’s elective system, and (5) the influence of Broadus’s elective system after his death and its usage beyond The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Chapter Summaries

Following this chapter, a history of research on the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is provided. Until recent years, very little has been written on the life of Broadus. As Timothy George stated, “Sadly, an entire century of several generations that ‘knew not John’ has come and gone.”⁴⁶ Even with the current material on Broadus, an in-depth treatment of the elective system has not been written. As this chapter will demonstrate, only a handful of sources address the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Even within those sources, the intent of the authors was to provide a cursory treatment on the subject. For example, out of the dissertations that have been published on Broadus, most focus on his preaching or some aspect of it. James Roland Barron’s dissertation, “The Contributions of John A. Broadus to Southern Baptists” published in 1972, is considered, by this writer, the most helpful for providing insight into the elective system.⁴⁷ Indeed, Barron’s work is often cited in other sources and proven helpful for this work. However, even in his section on the elective system, much more is needed to appreciate the full scope of Broadus’s contribution. Overall, the variety of materials that address the elective system is insufficient. Nevertheless, a review of each of these materials is given, expressing a gratefulness for the work written on the elective system thus far, while at the same time demonstrating the need for a more extensive treatment.

⁴⁶ Dockery and Duke, *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy*, 1.

⁴⁷ James Roland Barron, “The Contributions of John A. Broadus to Southern Baptist” (ThD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1972).

The third chapter will serve as a key element in the defense of this dissertation. This chapter will argue that in order to better understand Broadus's elective system, one must first understand what he experienced at the University of Virginia. As stated earlier, Broadus was a student, instructor, and a chaplain at the University of Virginia; thus, it is difficult to overstate the extent that Broadus was influenced by his experience in that setting. Robertson articulated a similar sentiment when he wrote, "The University of Virginia exerted such an overmastering power on John A. Broadus's whole nature through all the years that an adequate idea of this noble institution is necessary in order to understand his mental habits."⁴⁸ Robertson also acknowledged that Broadus's understanding of the elective system originated from his time at the university. He wrote:

Twelve years of Doctor Broadus's life was spent in close connection with the University, and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, to which the rest of his life was given, was patterned after it. But for the impress of the University system upon him, the elective method of study could never have been implanted in the Seminary.⁴⁹

Given the fact that Broadus was impacted so heavily by the University of Virginia, this chapter will explore the foundation of his elective system tracing its origin back to the University of Virginia's founder, Thomas Jefferson. Within this chapter a brief treatment on the historical development of Jefferson's desire for a different type of university, including his philosophical and pedagogical theories of education, will be provided. Furthermore, a detailed explanation of the elective system that Broadus

⁴⁸ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 56.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

experienced at the University of Virginia will be given along with the key aspects of that system that were integral to Broadus's work at the seminary. Finally, this chapter will identify two important variables related to the development of the elective system in the United States that should be considered when attempting to fully understand Broadus's elective system.

Chapter 4 will demonstrate that Broadus's enthusiasm for the elective system beyond the University of Virginia was derived from four sources. They include the creation of the Albemarle Female Institute, the influence of Francis Wayland, the deficiencies in the prescribed curriculum used in theological institutions in Broadus's day, and the ability to meet the needs of the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention. Broadus helped create the Albemarle Female Institute while pastoring at Charlottesville Baptist Church in Virginia. Albemarle Female Institute was the first female college in the nation to use the elective system as a part of its educational structure. Because of its success, Broadus was more confident that the elective system could be implemented at the seminary as well.

When Broadus was a student at University of Virginia, he encountered Wayland, the president of Brown University. Wayland was looking to reform Brown University and went to the University of Virginia to evaluate the elective system. Broadus was able to observe the conversation Wayland had with the professors at the University of Virginia and it solidified his convictions regarding the merits of the elective system.

This chapter will also examine the educational philosophies of the most prominent theological institutions of Broadus's day. Broadus felt that the prescribed

curriculum used to train ministers by those seminaries were woefully inadequate. This chapter will seek to explain why Broadus felt that way and how the elective system was a better approach for theological education.

This chapter will also explore how theological education was conducted in the South in the years leading up to the creation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate the excitement Broadus had for the elective system because he knew it could help meet the needs of the churches in the Southern Baptist Convention. The elective system allowed pastors who could not spend years away from home to get some theological training in a brief time span with the option to return later. The elective system provided the framework to fulfill the first two aspects of Boyce's vision for a new theological institution. Men who were not formally educated at a college could now receive a thorough education for ministry, and those who excelled in academics had the opportunity to reach their fullest potential as students.

Chapter 5 will provide a detailed analysis of the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, beginning with an overview of two key values that were integral to the success of the elective system. After the overview, an extensive treatment of the features of the elective system is given. Also, the strengths of the elective system are compared to various aspects of the prescribed curriculum, demonstrating the superiority of the elective system. In the end, this chapter will demonstrate that the elective system was an effective educational structure that fulfilled Boyce's vision and proved to be a highly successful system for educating students at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The final chapter will demonstrate that Broadus's elective system is far more significant to theological education than history reveals. The chapter begins by demonstrating the adaptability of the elective system by showing how the presidents of the seminary after Broadus used and modified the system to meet the needs they encountered. This chapter will also provide evidence for Broadus's influence beyond the seminary by addressing how different aspects of the elective system were used in other institutions of higher learning. Finally, this chapter will demonstrate the significance of the elective system by answering two questions regarding the elective system that are relevant for seminaries today.

CHAPTER 2

STATE OF RESEARCH

When Broadus died on March 16, 1895, *The Religious Herald*, Virginia's Baptist paper, published a full-page tribute to honor his life and legacy. In one of the tributes, H. A. Tupper wrote:

Not once in a generation appears a man like John A. Broadus. He was a personality most extraordinary, under God, for controlling action, moulding character, determining destiny. His grandest deeds are recorded in immortal lives. Volumes may be truthfully written on his excellence of mind and heart and conduct; on the imitable lectures he delivered, sermons he preached and books he wrote.”¹

In many ways, Tupper's words were prophetic. Since Broadus's death thousands of pages have been written on his life and accomplishments. Historians, theologians, pastors, students, and others have taken the opportunity to express their admiration for Broadus and his life's work. Yet, within the present literature on Broadus, very little has been written on his contribution to the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

As will be demonstrated in this chapter, there are many excellent works on Broadus, but only a handful of sources address the elective system with any degree of significance. Even in those sources, the overall intent of work was not to provide a thorough examination of the elective system, but to give the reader an overview of the structure of the system or provide insight into Broadus's philosophy of education.

¹ “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.

With that in mind, this chapter will demonstrate there is a gap in current research that does not provide a comprehensive understanding of Broadus's elective system.

Evidence for this gap is provided through the review and evaluation of the most important and relevant literature on Broadus's elective system. Although there is a multitude of works on Broadus, this review will only focus on those sources that address the elective system with more than a cursory treatment of the subject. This writer will review each source in chronological order as published and he will address only aspects of the literature that demonstrate its importance and relevance to this dissertation.

Second, this chapter will address four methodological factors that should be considered when researching current literature on Broadus's elective system. As stated earlier, no one source provides a comprehensive examination of Broadus's elective system. In many cases, within the current literature on Broadus, scope and sequence limitations hinder a fuller treatment on the elective system. As a result, these four methodological factors need to be addressed. They include: (1) the limited number of works on Broadus's elective system, (2) the vast majority of works on Broadus's elective system are summaries, (3) the current literature on Broadus's elective system does not provide sufficient data to demonstrate the full value of the elective system, and (4) the continued development of the elective system for almost two centuries has produced significant variations making it difficult to easily understand the type of elective system Broadus used at the seminary.

Finally, a brief summary will demonstrate the need to further explore the subject in greater detail. Broadus's contribution to theological education through the

elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary deserves more attention. As will be shown, current literature on the elective system is inadequate because it does not fully demonstrate Broadus's genius and creativity to help build the first seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Literature Review

When including personal letters, articles, and books written by or about Broadus, there are over a thousand items, most of which are articles and letters. Beyond the myriad of personal letters and articles, Broadus also published numerous books and small treatises that, although are not related to the elective system, are considered theologically and historically important.² However, for the purpose of this chapter, only those sources that address aspects of Broadus's philosophy of education or the elective system are discussed.

"The Theological Seminary"

The importance of education and institutions of higher learning were an integral part of Broadus's life. Even before he helped found The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, he was actively involved in promoting education throughout Virginia. As a pastor and chaplain, his concern for theological education became even more prominent as discussions grew in Southern Baptist life of a centralized

² Books by Broadus include, *Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, *Lectures on the History of Preaching*, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, *Jesus of Nazareth*, *A Harmony of the Gospels*, *Small Treatise on Living Topics*, *Three Questions as to the Bible*, "Paramount and Permanent Authority of the Bible," *The Duty of Baptists to Teach Their Distinctive Views*, *Immersion Essential to Christian Baptism*, *A Catechism of Bible Teaching*, and *Should Women to Speak in Mixed Public Assemblies*.

theological institution to train ministers. Less than one year after James Petigru Boyce's *Three Changes in Theological Institutions*, but before the Educational Convention in Louisville, Broadus wrote "The Theological Seminary" published in *The Religious Herald* on April 9, 1857. In his article, Broadus expressed his thoughts concerning the character and design of a potential new seminary for Southern Baptists. Specifically, he was concerned with the potential plan of instruction and how the doctrinal parameters for the seminary, as suggested by Boyce, would be determined. What makes this article relevant to this dissertation is that Broadus clearly stated his dissatisfaction and concerns with the educational methods of several prominent seminaries of his day. He wrote, "Even the Old School Presbyterians, who have been the acknowledged leaders in theological instruction, are in many cases greatly dissatisfied with the results of their methods."³ The fourth chapter of this dissertation will examine in greater detail Broadus's concerns of the nature of theological education in the nineteenth century. However, it is important to note this article is Broadus's public acknowledgment that the classical education structure of theological institutions of his day were not meeting and could not meet the demands of the churches, in terms of equipping pastors, in the Southern Baptist Convention as it was presently arranged. Thus, in this article, Broadus was suggesting some form of an elective system for the new seminary even before he was officially elected to serve on the committee for the Plan of Organization Committee in Louisville.

³ Broadus, "The Theological Seminary," *The Religious Herald* 26 (April 9, 1857).

“The Theological Seminary: Substance of Address
by J. A. Broadus, at Hampton”

In July of 1858, Broadus published a second article in *The Religious Herald* also titled, “The Theological Seminary” that was taken, in part, from his address at the Baptist General Association of Virginia. In many ways, this article serves as a corrective for the earlier article published the previous year. After being nominated to serve on the Plan of Organization Committee in Louisville and meeting with Boyce and Basil Manly Jr. in Richmond, his concerns over aspects of the seminary were eased and he felt strongly to promote the seminary when possible. Throughout the article, Broadus provided numerous responses to potential objections for not attending the seminary. Broadus’s responses are pertinent to this dissertation because each response revolves around the nature and benefit of the elective system. Many of these responses are addressed in the fifth chapter of this dissertation.

“Southern Baptist Theological Seminary”

Three months after Broadus was elected as one of the founding professors of the seminary, he published “Southern Baptist Theological Seminary” in *The Religious Herald* on August 18, 1859. In that same issue, an advertisement was placed for the seminary to promote its grand opening in October of that year. Broadus wrote his article to expand upon several points in the advertisement, thus providing the reader a more accurate picture of the seminary. The relevance of Broadus’s article to this dissertation includes several important aspects of the elective system. This writer will provide a thorough treatment of these aspects in the fifth chapter of this dissertation; however, it should be noted that in this article Broadus perceived the elective system

within a theological institution as a natural fit for the Baptist identity. He wrote, “This is emphatically a Baptist Institution, constituted upon Baptist ideas, and designed to meet the wants of Baptist ministry.”⁴ He would go on to express that churches were not obligated to send men to the seminary, but if the men were looking for further education, the seminary would provide a variety of options that could meet their needs. Broadus is appealing to the democratic ways of Baptist life. Unlike other denominations in Broadus’s day, Baptist churches were self-governing, and they valued their form of church polity. They did not appreciate feeling forced to make decisions based on a hierarchical structure in church life, but took pride in their autonomy. Furthermore, several non-Baptist denominations during the nineteenth century required specific educational training for their preachers with no other options available. Broadus understood those things and attempted to show that, through the elective system, the seminary was built to support and enhance Baptist identity and ministry.

“Elective Education”

By the time Broadus published “Elective Education” in *The Standard* in 1883, the elective system had become a controversial topic within various universities. Harvard had taken aspects of the model at the University of Virginia and expanded it beyond Thomas Jefferson’s original intentions calling into question its value. Universities were debating the merits of requiring students to take Greek and Latin, and the rise of technical colleges were forcing universities to rethink their educational

⁴ John A. Broadus, “Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,” *The Religious Herald* 32, no. 33 (August 18, 1859), 131.

structures. In the article, Broadus addressed these issues by proposing that the elective approach to education, when rightly implemented, could help resolve a number of their problems. Although the article is not an extensive treatment on the elective system, it does provide key insights into at least one important aspect of the elective system; namely, independent schools within one university setting. As will be seen in the fifth chapter, the catalogs at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary placed a prominent emphasis on having eight independent schools when it opened in 1859. Interestingly, after Broadus died, the seminary has continued to have independent schools, but the emphasis in the catalogs has become less of a priority. Broadus's "Elective Education" gives several reasons why he felt it was important for an institution of higher learning to have independent schools. These reasons, along with others, will be examined more thoroughly in the fifth chapter of this dissertation.

"Reforms in Theological Education—A Symposium"

In 1885, the *Baptist Quarterly Review* published a thirty-five-page article where four scholars—Alvah Hovey, Augustus H. Strong, William N. Clarke, and Broadus—participated in a written symposium addressing the merits and deficiencies of the elective system for theological institutions.⁵ By 1885, a variety of elective approaches were implemented in numerous theological institutions. Given the variety of approaches, Strong affirmed only a specific type of elective system, but opposed, in large part, the elective system used at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

⁵ John A. Broadus, "Reforms in Theological Education – A Symposium," *The Baptist Quarterly Review* 7 (October 1885): 407-42, ed. Robert S. MacArthur and Henry C. Vedder (New York: The Baptist Review Association, 1885).

Broadus provided a counter argument to Strong by identifying numerous strengths of the elective system. The symposium serves as an important source for this dissertation because it provides critical viewpoints on the elective system from four different perspectives.

Sermons and Addresses

Broadus published *Sermons and Addresses* in 1886. The book is a compilation of twenty-one sermons and addresses Broadus gave over the course of his adult life. Broadus noted in the initial pages of the publication that the book was intended as a token of friendship for the Hon. J. L. M. Curry, the United States Minister to Spain at that time. In the preface, Broadus remarked that many of the sermons and addresses were previously printed in periodicals or used for private distribution, but the intent was for the discourses to be of some good to those who read them.⁶ Indeed, all of Broadus's discourses in *Sermons and Addresses* are edifying and helpful, but only four are applicable to the research of this dissertation. They are: (1) "Ministerial Education," (2) "American Baptist Ministry in A. D. 1774," (3) "College Education for Men of Business," and (4) "Education in Athens." Although none of these four discourses address the elective system specifically, they do provide insight into Broadus's philosophy of education and his perspective on training ministers. Therefore, this writer will discuss key elements of these discourses in future chapters of this dissertation, but first a brief summary of each discourse and reasons for their importance is needed at this time.

⁶ John A. Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 7th ed. (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1886), preface, v.

“Ministerial Education”

Broadus preached “Ministerial Education” at the Baptist Society of Ministerial Education in Missouri in 1881.⁷ Preaching from 2 Timothy 2:14, Broadus provided a brief explanation of the verse underscoring the need for the various qualifications that are required of a minister of the gospel. These qualifications, such as the ability to rightly handle God’s Word, can be enhanced when theological education is provided. Thus, Broadus proposed three considerations that are important when dealing with ministerial education. They are: (1) ministerial education must go hand in hand with general education; (2) ministerial education must not be—cannot be—the same for all; and (3) institutions for ministerial education, or, more generally, institutions of higher education, must be greatly improved without delay.⁸

In his first consideration, Broadus proposed that theological education should keep ahead of general education, but not far ahead.⁹ He argued that because Baptist churches have free choice to select their pastors, it is oftentimes ineffective when a well-educated minister goes to serve in a poorly educated congregation. At least two dangers occur when ministerial education and general education do not rise together. First, the educated minister may find that the ignorance and prejudices of the uneducated congregation will not engender the appropriate affections for the message or the minister. Primarily, this is because the congregation is unable or unwilling to

⁷ Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 198.

⁸ Ibid., 203-10.

⁹ Ibid., 203.

appreciate the depth of theological content being taught. Second, when ministers are educated, they can sometimes forget how to talk with ordinary people and oftentimes lack the imagination to communicate great scriptural truths in a way that even the most ignorant can gain insight. Broadus explained:

But it is true of some men of very respectable ability that, struggling themselves after what they call “education,” they get away from all sympathy with the common mind. They don’t know how to talk to the people. . . . And then I suppose it must be admitted that sometimes a man who is educated away from the people thereby shows his essential lack of sense.¹⁰

Thus, for Broadus, theological education and general education must go hand in hand. If the church is going to gain the greatest benefit from a more educated pastor, the congregation must also seek to improve the general education in its area. Similarly, for those interested in theological education for ministers, they must also be equally interested in the education of people, specifically, helping the high schools better prepare men to enter college with a stronger knowledge of the elements of education.¹¹

In his second consideration, Broadus argued that ministerial education cannot and should not be the same for all men. This writer will give more detail about this point in the fifth chapter because it connects Broadus’s philosophy of education with the elective system. However, two insights concerning Broadus’s thoughts should be noted at this time. First, Broadus is critical of any approach that treats education like a mechanical process. He wrote, “People talk as if educating a man was just taking him through a certain fixed machine, all men through the same machine, and coming out at

¹⁰ Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 205.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 208.

the same point with the same training. That is false to all the prodigious variety in the faculties and tendencies of mankind.”¹² Broadus is adamant that any method of education that does not consider the dynamics of individual intellectual ability and personal circumstance can greatly hinder the growth process of its students. Second, Broadus believed that the primary purpose for early education was not to impart knowledge but rather to discipline the mind. For Broadus, learning how to acquire knowledge and developing the discipline to study at an early age was far superior than simply imparting information. He explained, “I know, because in the training of the mind that which we use in the training becomes tools and materials for the work of the future, and we have in this to combine the acquisition of materials with the discipline of our faculties and the acquirement of skill.”¹³ Broadus was not advocating that the acquisition of knowledge was unimportant, he simply felt that learning how to train the mind to work hard was more important at an early age. As this writer will demonstrate in a later chapter, Broadus believed that intellectual power was closely connected to a student’s ability to work hard mentally and that an important tenet of the elective system.

The third consideration Broadus proposed is that institutions for ministerial education or higher education need to be improved without delay. In this section, Broadus implored those listening to partner with institutions of higher learning to hire more instructors, advocate for higher pay for professors, and raise endowments so the

¹² Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 209.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 210.

poor have access to education. Interestingly, Broadus approached this subject not as a professor or administrator, but as a minister. In other words, his concern for improving all three areas in higher learning were not for personal or institutional gain, but for the greater education of students and the resulting good that would follow in society.

“American Baptist Ministry in A.D. 1774”

Broadus preached “American Baptist Ministry in A.D. 1774” on September 1, 1874, in the opening session of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Greenville, South Carolina.¹⁴ The discourse was written as a historical treatment of Baptist life in America up to 1774. Most of the address centered around Baptist pastors and their ministries in early colonial life. Broadus’s lecture does not address the elective system, but it does provide important historical information on the nature of Baptist education prior to the establishment of the seminary. As a part of the defense of this dissertation, the fourth chapter will address the nature of theological education and Baptist life in the nineteenth century. Although “American Baptist Ministry in A.D. 1774” addressed the eighteenth century and earlier, it does serve as an important resource providing the backdrop of early Baptist life before the establishment of the Southern Baptist Convention.

“A College Education for Men of Business”

According to Archibald T. Robertson, Broadus wrote “A College Education for Men of Business” as a tract at the request of the faculty at Richmond College in

¹⁴ Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 216.

1875.¹⁵ The tract received wide attention when Richmond College published one hundred thousand copies and Wake Forest College reprinted it to help their school as well.¹⁶ At its core, the tract sought to encourage parents to help their children pursue a college education, even if their life's work did not require it. In Broadus's day, most young men only went to college if they were to enter a professional occupation (doctor, lawyer, statesman, ministry, professor), while most businessmen (merchant, agriculturist, manufacturer) sought on-the-job training. In the tract, Broadus sought to show the benefits of a college education even for those going into business. After some introductory comments, Broadus provided a four-part description of what it meant to be an educated man. A brief summary of the description is provided at this time, but this writer will give a more thorough investigation in the fifth chapter of this dissertation when examining Broadus's philosophy of education and the elective system.

Part one of Broadus's description defined an educated man as one whose mind can see all sides of a subject or argument. He wrote, "An educated man is one whose mind is *widened out*, so that he can take broad views, instead of being narrow-minded; so that he can see the different sides of a question, or at least can know that all questions have different sides."¹⁷ The second part of his definition involved the ability to focus the mind. Broadus explained, "An educated man is one who has the power of

¹⁵ Archibald T. Robertson, *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication, 1910), 298.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 252.

patient *thinking*; who can fasten his mind on a subject, and hold it there while he pleases; who can keep looking at a subject till he sees into it and sees through it.”¹⁸

The third part of Broadus’s definition involved the capacity to think correctly. He wrote, “Again, an educated man is one who has sound *judgment*, who knows how to *reason* to right conclusions, and so to *argue* as to convince others that he is right.”¹⁹

The final part of Broadus’s definition involves the ability to communicate. Broadus stated, “And finally—not to speak now of imagination and taste, important as they are—an educated man is one who can *express* his thoughts clearly and forcibly.”²⁰

Interestingly, there is very little emphasis placed on the accumulation of knowledge in Broadus’s definition. For Broadus, education, at least at the college level and earlier, is first about training the mind. Broadus believed college could help expedite the training of the mind that would otherwise take years of experience working in business. He wrote:

And precisely this is the main object of all wise educational processes. The *knowledge* gained may or may not be directly useful in subsequent life: the main thing is to *educate*, to give the young man, in a few years, much of that development and strengthening and discipline of his principal faculties, that *use of himself*, which, otherwise, he would have only when almost an old man.²¹

¹⁸ Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 252.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 252-53.

²¹ Ibid., 254.

Broadus further argued his position when he asserted that the method of education was more important than the material.²² He wrote, “But, in very important respects, the mind may be better enlarged, invigorated, disciplined by subjects of study which have little to do with practical life; and I repeat that the effect on the mind itself is the principal matter.”²³ Broadus is not dismissing the importance of particular subject matters, but is suggesting that if the main goal of education is to train the mind, certain courses of study are a greater help.

Broadus concluded the tract by responding to several objections to young men of business attending college. Although his answers are not directly tied to the elective system, it is remarkable how the influence of his experience at the University of Virginia shaped his responses. The significance of this work and his responses are vital to this dissertation. When Broadus developed the elective system for the seminary, it was more than just a practical approach to accomplishing Boyce’s vision; it was a part of his whole understanding of education and the deeply valued lessons he experienced at the University of Virginia. Describing the elective system at the seminary as a simple structure is an insult to the genius of Broadus and discounts the wealth of knowledge needed to make it successful.

²² Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 255.

²³ Ibid.

“Education in Athens”

Broadus gave his “Education in Athens” address before the Society of Alumni of the University of Virginia in 1856.²⁴ After his opening comments, Broadus spoke on the theme of higher education in Athens between 450 and 350 BC. According to Broadus, “The Greeks, and especially the Athenians of this age, have left monuments of mental power which the world can never cease to admire.”²⁵ With that in mind, Broadus provided a summary of the prominent philosophers and teachers in Athens during that time. After the historical summary, Broadus provided several points of application that were pertinent to his philosophy of education. One of his points is addressed at this time, while the other two will be addressed later in the fifth chapter of this dissertation.

Before introducing this point, it should be noted that Broadus gave this speech approximately twenty years before he wrote “A College Education for Men of Business.” In both discourses, Broadus maintained that the primary purpose of education was first to train the mind. For example, in “Education in Athens” he wrote:

In endeavoring to give a valuable course of instruction in any department of knowledge, the instructor must always keep in view three objects; and where the subject is unprofessional, and he is confined within such narrow limits as the present spirit and customs of our people impose, they ought to be held, if I correctly judge, in the following order of relative importance: first, to secure mental training; second, to awaken a love for the subject, which may lead the student to prosecute it hereafter; last and least, to furnish information.²⁶

²⁴ Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 268.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 269.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 296.

In this excerpt, Broadus placed utmost priority on training the mind followed by awaking a love for the subject and, last, to provide information. Broadus would further explain his arguments by comparing his approach with helping someone learn the value of art. He proposed it is better to invest in the study and observation of only a few important paintings, thus helping the student think deeply about factors that make great art (training the mind), rather than studying numerous pictures (only providing information) but never getting beyond a cursory understanding of the subject at hand. Broadus was advocating that educational methods should cultivate experiences that (1) force the mind to think, (2) create a passion for the subject, and (3) impart knowledge. In like manner, twenty years later, when he wrote “A College Education for Men of Business” he was advocating basically the same principles. Moreover, these same principles were woven into the fabric of the elective system at the seminary, which helped produce one of the largest seminaries in the world.

Memoir of James Petigru Boyce

Broadus published *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* in 1893. Although this book is a biography of Boyce, a significant amount of content was shared that described experiences between the two men. The book consists of eighteen chapters with most of the material focusing on Boyce’s life at the seminary. Chapters 1-3 address Boyce’s family background, childhood, adolescence, and growing up in Charleston. Chapters 4-8 cover Boyce’s educational training, Christian conversion, marriage, pastoral work in Columbia, South Carolina, and professorship at Furman University. The final ten chapters are centered around Boyce’s work at the seminary and his contribution to Southern Baptist life.

Broadus's biography of Boyce is important to the research of this dissertation for three primary reasons. First, any substantial work written on Broadus gives reference to his biography on Boyce, especially as it relates to the seminary. As W. H. Whitsitt so aptly wrote:

Success in the work of founding the Seminary would have been impossible without the agency of Boyce; but it would have been equally impossible without the agency of Broadus. They were the twins of our Southern Baptist world. The twins of the ancient classic world were set as stars in the skies, to serve as a guide to mariners who might sail over wide and dangerous seas.²⁷

One can understand the unique challenge Broadus must have experienced writing a biography about his dear friend while trying not to include aspects of his own life, knowing so much of their lives were intertwined. Nevertheless, Broadus provided the reader with an excellent treatment on Boyce while giving minimal coverage of his own involvement in the seminary. Individuals researching Broadus appreciate his intentions behind Boyce's biography, but are also grateful that much of Broadus's life can be deduced by reading "between the lines" of Boyce's memoir. Because of this, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* is often cited in works on Broadus and should be considered a primary source for anyone doing major research on Broadus, as well as Boyce.²⁸

²⁷ W. H. Whitsitt, "John Albert Broadus," *Review and Expositor* 4, no. 3 (July 1907): 345.

²⁸ See David S. Dockery and Roger D. Duke, eds., *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy* (Nashville: B&H, 2008), 2, and Gregory A. Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 1859-2009* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 26-27.

A second reason Broadus's biography of Boyce is important to this dissertation is because it provides key materials in tracing the time line and the amount of involvement Boyce had in developing the elective system for the seminary. Implied in the thesis of this dissertation is that Broadus was the primary individual responsible for bringing the elective system to the seminary. Present literature is clear that the threefold vision of seminary originated with Boyce.²⁹ However, what is not clear is how much Boyce knew about the elective system prior to his meeting with Broadus and Manly in Richmond, Virginia, in August of 1857. In a letter sent to Broadus on June 1, 1857, Boyce wrote:

I send by this mail a catalogue of the plan of the theological department I arranged at the time of my accession here upon the supposition that we would have at least two, but never more than three, professors. A great many things need to be added for the ordinary instruction as well as for a course of higher and lower study. But I think you can gather enough of my ideas here to judge as to our substantial agreement.³⁰

Boyce's letter raises questions to the extent of his knowledge of the elective system. For example, what is the nature of the catalog Boyce sent to Broadus and the substantial agreement Boyce referenced? Unfortunately, both the former and latter are unknown. Sean Lucas and Jason Fowler, former archivists at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, commented that Boyce may have been referring to his *Three*

²⁹ Boyce's vision is clearly stated in his inaugural address at Furman University in 1856 titled, *Three Changes in Theological Institutions*, and is summarized in the first chapter of this dissertation. Broadus also covered the three changes in his *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), 121.

³⁰ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 142.

Changes in Theological Institutions.³¹ Gregory A. Wills stated that it was “a plan of the theological curriculum he [Boyce] had sketched out two years earlier.”³² Wills did not elaborate on the nature of the “theological curriculum,” but did express that Broadus developed his vision for accomplishing Boyce’s aims into an innovative elective system.³³ This writer believes Boyce was referring to the different departments or areas of study, such as New Testament, Old Testament, or Church History, that were needed in the seminary.³⁴ Boyce’s vision would also include the potential for having lower and higher levels of a particular class, depending on the need.

Although the subjects of theological study taught at the seminary are a part of the elective system, this writer does not believe Boyce had an extensive understanding of the elective system used at the University of Virginia until he began corresponding with Broadus. Evidence for this assertion can be supported in four ways. First, Robertson made it clear in *Life and Letters* that Boyce and Manly were familiar with the curriculum at Brown, Newton, and Princeton, but Broadus enthusiastically won

³¹ Sean Michael Lucas and Jason Christopher Fowler, eds., “*Our Life Work*”: *The Correspondence of James P. Boyce and John A. Broadus, Founders of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1857-1888* (Louisville, KY: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004), James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. Also found in Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 142.

³² Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 1859-2009*, 26-27.

³³ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁴ Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* (1893), 152.

them over to the elective system.³⁵ It is true that Manly and Boyce offered emendations to the elective system, but there is no indication that Boyce or Manly had extensive knowledge of the elective system prior to the meeting in Richmond.³⁶

Second, the timing of Boyce's education at Brown was prior to Francis Wayland's visit to the University of Virginia and Wayland's subsequent request to move Brown into a more elective-based approach to education.³⁷ Certainly, Wayland had a significant influence on Boyce concerning the nature and purpose of theological education, but there is no evidence suggesting Boyce was informed about the elective system by Wayland.³⁸

Third, when Broadus described the Educational Convention in Greenville in 1858, he suggested that some had doubts about the elective system being proposed for the seminary. He then stated, "But Boyce had heartily accepted a plan which promised to make it easy for students of every grade of preparation to study together in the same institution, and for the most part in the same classes; and many others cheerfully accepted the scheme."³⁹ Within that context, Broadus implied that the plan for the elective system was recommended to Boyce, but did not originate with him.

³⁵ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 144.

³⁶ Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* (1893), 129, 150-51.

³⁷ The last section of the next chapter will address Wayland's trip to the University of Virginia and God's kindness in connecting Boyce, Broadus, and Wayland together, resulting in a better seminary for Southern Baptists.

³⁸ Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* (1893), 142.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 152.

Fourth, in the tenth chapter of *Memoirs of Boyce*, Broadus provided a brief but important description of the elective system. The material provided (along with other sources) in the tenth chapter leads this writer to believe that Boyce was not the primary architect behind the elective system. In the previous chapter, Broadus had described in detail Boyce's three changes in theological institutions. Then, beginning in chapter 10, Broadus explained that thoughtful men (including Boyce) were asking how they could implement Boyce's vision for the seminary.⁴⁰ Broadus responded to the question by writing, "The attempt was made to solve all these real difficulties by a thoroughly elective system, patterned after that which had for thirty years been in highly successful operation at the University of Virginia."⁴¹ Interestingly, Broadus did not take credit for bringing the idea of the elective system to the seminary, but neither did he identify Boyce as the originator of the idea. Toward the end of the chapter, Broadus wrote, "The free choice of studies provided for by James P. Boyce and his associates has shown itself thoroughly adequate to furnish theological education for students of very diverse grades as to preparation, all in the same institution and for the most part the same classes."⁴² Broadus was displaying great humility by giving credit to Boyce for incorporating the elective system into the seminary. First, because Broadus was a dear friend of Boyce and was seeking to honor him in writing his biography, Broadus understood that it would be the height of arrogance to write a

⁴⁰ Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* (1893), 156.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 161.

biography about Boyce and in that same biography take credit for one of the most important contributions to the seminary.

Second, Broadus was careful at navigating such an important part of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's beginnings by giving credit to Boyce, but also by providing hints that his hand was also involved. For example, he referenced the success of the elective system at the University of Virginia as being the educational structure the seminary used when it opened. At the time of the publishing of Broadus's book, Broadus was the only graduate of the four founders who attended the University of Virginia and that he had extensive experience dealing with the elective system, both as a student and instructor.

Also, although Broadus did credit Boyce for the free choice of studies, he included "and his associates," which was a way Broadus could highlight Boyce, but maintain integrity knowing the outworking of the elective system flowed mainly from his experience and knowledge. These points are simply raised to substantiate the thesis of this dissertation. Both Broadus and Boyce sought to encourage and support each other throughout their ministry. Thus, these comments are not intended to project a division between the two men, but rather to demonstrate that Boyce was not the primary architect of the elective system at the seminary.

A final reason Broadus's *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* is important to the work of this dissertation is it provides the most detailed explanation of the elective system used at the seminary. In fact, the vast majority of other works that address aspects of the elective system use Broadus's treatment on Boyce as its primary source. Apart from the seminary's catalogs, Broadus's chapter on the elective system in

Boyce's biography is paramount in the defense of this dissertation. Therefore, in the fifth chapter of this dissertation, this writer will analyze Broadus's description of the elective system found in Boyce's biography, along with other resources, to provide a comprehensive treatment on the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

*Southern Baptist Theological Seminary:
The First Thirty Years 1859-1889*

John R. Sampey published *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary: The First Thirty years 1859-1889* in 1890. The book provides a brief historical sketch of the seminary, short biographies of the professors, and a list of the trustees and students.⁴³ Based on the layout of the book, it is evident that Sampey's primary intention was to provide a historical record of the students that attended the seminary. Out of 217 pages in the book, 117 were dedicated to listing out the students who attended the seminary in the first thirty years. Altogether, 1,050 students had attended the seminary from 1859-1889.

Sampey's work is important to this dissertation for two reasons. First, within his historical sketch of the seminary he addressed the elective system briefly.⁴⁴ For example, he wrote:

The idea had been suggested that Professor Boyce's views, as set forth in his "Three Changes," could be carried into effect by dividing the usual range of study into a number of distinct "Schools," after the manner of the University of

⁴³ John R. Sampey, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary: The First Thirty Years, 1859-1889* (Baltimore, MD: Wharton, Barron & Co., 1890), 3.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 8-10.

Virginia, which had become the most widely known and influential institution of learning in the Southern States, and had caused many to think favorably of the elective method, incorporated into that institution from the beginning by Mr. Jefferson.⁴⁵

Within this quote, two insights should be noted. First, Sampey attributed the idea of the elective system to someone other than Boyce. Although he did not give Broadus's name, Sampey expressed that someone other than Boyce gave the idea of having distinct schools modeled after the University of Virginia. Interestingly, later in his work, Sampey described the struggles the seminary was having after the Civil War to remain open. He provided a quote that is well known to be attributed to Broadus, but Sampey does not give his name. He wrote, "Some one said, 'The Seminary may die, but suppose it be understood that we'll die first.'"⁴⁶ Broadus was the President of the seminary at the time Sampey published the history of the seminary. One can speculate that Broadus, seeking to draw less attention to himself, requested Sampey to omit his name on such key contributions. Regardless of why Sampey did not attribute Broadus to these contributions, his statement concerning the elective system is still important. Seven years later, F. H. Kerfoot, Professor of Systematic Theology and Pastoral Duties, would give the Opening Session address at the seminary where he contradicted Sampey by attributing the idea of the elective system to Boyce.⁴⁷ As will be

⁴⁵ Sampey, *The First Thirty Years, 1859-1889*, 8-9.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴⁷ F. H. Kerfoot, *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the Light of Forty Years: The Regular Address at the Opening of the Session, October 1, 1897* (Louisville, KY: Chas. T. Dearing, 1897), <http://baptiststudiesonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Kerfoot-J-H-40-years-SBTS.pdf>, 18.

demonstrated later, Kerfoot is incorrect, but given the context and focus of his speech, he took historical liberties that were not completely unjustifiable, but perhaps would have been slightly adjusted had Broadus still been alive.

A second reason Sampey's work is important is because he described, at least in part, the purpose for having independent "Schools" within the seminary. This writer will give a thorough examination of the purpose and function of these schools in the fifth chapter of this dissertation. However, it should be noted at this time that there are numerous advantages to having independent schools within the same institution, but very little is written on it. Broadus discussed it briefly in his writings. Secondary sources on Jefferson and the University of Virginia do not provide extensive amounts of information about it. Even in Sampey's work, he only provided one sentence concerning the independent schools. However, within that one sentence, he connected the establishment of the independent schools with the fulfillment of Boyce's vision. Sampey's insight is important because the majority of sources addressing or referencing the elective system do not answer the "why" of independent schools. In other words, it is assumed that the reader knows why Broadus would recommend eight independent schools as opposed to one school with eight major fields of study. In reality, most of the work on the seminary's elective system is written just to provide an overview of the system. Consequently, readers miss the creative and educational details behind Broadus's plan that fulfilled Boyce's vision and accomplished much more. Sampey helped close this gap by tying the idea of independent schools to Boyce's *Three Changes*; thus, opening the door for further discovery of Broadus's unique plan.

*The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
in the Light of Forty Years*

Kerfoot gave *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the Light of Forty Years* address during the opening session at the seminary in October of 1897.

Although the address is historical in nature, the primary focus is on Boyce's contribution to the founding of the seminary. For example, when referring to the establishment of the seminary, Kerfoot wrote, "It was founded upon what, at that time, were very novel ideas, both as to the aim and the method of theological education. Its great founder recognized the fact that it was to be an experiment. Time and again he refers to it as a tentative plan for meeting a felt want."⁴⁸

Throughout the remaining of the discourse, Kerfoot kept Boyce at the forefront of every major accomplishment of the seminary in its early years. In some ways, Kerfoot did a disservice to the other founders of the seminary. At the time Kerfoot gave his speech, everyone listening would have known about the contributions of the other founders; however, today's readers, if they are unfamiliar with the seminary, may assume, based on Kerfoot's address, that Boyce was the only founder, or at least the other founders were insignificant. Granted, Kerfoot may have been given the specific task of focusing only on Boyce for the address; or perhaps, since Kerfoot followed Boyce as the Chair of the School of Systematic Theology, he had great affection for Boyce and wished to communicate it through his speech.

Whatever the reason Kerfoot chose to focus solely on Boyce, it diminished the role Broadus played in providing the idea for the elective system. In fact, Kerfoot gave

⁴⁸ Kerfoot, *In the Light of Forty Years*, 5.

no recognition to Broadus when he wrote, “But for the existence and influence of young Boyce in projecting it, the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary would, in all probability, have been an old-fashioned *curriculum* institution.”⁴⁹ The context of Kerfoot’s quote is within his initial discussion of Boyce’s *Three Changes*. Within that context, Kerfoot made it clear that Boyce was not satisfied with the current theological training of his day. Kerfoot went on to attribute the elective system to Boyce when he wrote, “His [Boyce] plan was to make all studies in the institution elective, and purely voluntary, and to provide a course so wide and full that only the stronger and better trained men would try to take it all.”⁵⁰ Again, one can appreciate Kerfoot’s desire to bestow on Boyce the numerous accolades of which he was deserving. Even Broadus acknowledged that Boyce’s address was epoch-making in the history of theological education.⁵¹ However, for Kerfoot not to give Broadus any credit for the making of the seminary is a disservice to the facts of history and Broadus’s legacy. Much like Boyce, it is clear that Broadus was also dissatisfied with the fixed curriculum used at other prominent seminaries. Indeed, this writer believes Broadus would have never become a founding professor had Boyce and Manly refused his suggestion to model the seminary after the University of Virginia’s elective system.

Furthermore, Kerfoot was incorrect in stating that it was Boyce’s plan to make all the courses elective and purely voluntary. Kerfoot left no room to include Broadus

⁴⁹ Kerfoot, *In the Light of Forty Years*, 14.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 18.

⁵¹ Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* (1893), 142.

in the discussion. Boyce possibly had a greater understanding of the elective system than present literature indicates, but even Sampey, who wrote about the history of the seminary seven years earlier, did not credit Boyce with the idea of the elective system.⁵²

When reading Kerfoot, it is best to understand his address was designed to focus primarily on Boyce in such a way to inspire students at the beginning of an opening session. At worst, he is inaccurate on the finer points of the early stages of the seminary. There are several places where Kerfoot quoted or referenced Broadus's *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* in his writing; thus, it is possible he took his information from the chapter where Broadus credited Boyce for the elective system, which has been addressed earlier.⁵³

Although Kerfoot does warrant some criticism for not crediting Broadus for the elective system, his address is extremely significant and helpful in the defense of this dissertation, primarily because Kerfoot articulated the close connection between Boyce's vision for the seminary and the structure used to make it successful. It is important to understand that the elective system is an educational structure, but it also contains a particular philosophical approach to learning. Boyce's *Three Changes* was a novel approach to educating ministers because it required a departure from prominent philosophies of theological education in the nineteenth century and needed a new structure to implement it. Although Kerfoot did not give credit to Broadus for

⁵² Sampey, *The First Thirty Years, 1859-1889*, 8-9

⁵³ See the discussion on *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* earlier in this chapter for an explanation of why Broadus credited Boyce for the elective system.

the change in structure, he rightly affirmed Boyce for the philosophical change in theological education. Therefore, when addressing the elective system of the seminary, there is a sense in which both Boyce and Broadus are to be credited. However, as will be demonstrated in the fifth chapter of this dissertation, the elective system is much more than the structural elements needed to fulfill Boyce's vision. Broadus, in consultation with the other founders, incorporated numerous other elements within the elective system that contributed to a greater opportunity for pastors to learn and grow.

Life and Letters of John Albert Broadus

According to Robertson, once Broadus died, the world had lost "one of the foremost products of American manhood, one of the ripest fruits of modern Christianity."⁵⁴ The vacuum Broadus left at the seminary after his death would not be easily replaced, but Robertson assured that Broadus's legacy would live on by writing *Life and Letters of John Albert Broadus* published in 1902. The book is a biography of Broadus's life using hundreds of correspondences between Broadus and other individuals, personal stories from friends and family, and firsthand accounts from Robertson and Broadus's daughter. In the preface, Robertson stated that the biography was not intended to be an exhaustive treatment of Broadus's life. Many of the twenty-five thousand correspondences written or received by Broadus were not used, but only those that brought light to Broadus himself.⁵⁵ The book has eighteen chapters, with one chapter written by Broadus's daughter. Chapters 1-4 address his childhood

⁵⁴ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, x.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, ix.

through late teenage years. Chapters 5-8 address his student years at the University of Virginia through his decision to teach at the seminary. The remaining chapters focus primarily on his work at the seminary and his contribution to theological education.

In many regards, Robertson's work on Broadus is the preeminent source that all others cite when investigating Broadus's life. Broadus has left extensive amounts of primary source materials, but much of it is only accessible in the archives of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, thus making it difficult to attain. Thankfully, Robertson has pulled together much of those materials making his book the first source researchers utilize when addressing Broadus's legacy.

This writer cannot overstate the significance of Robertson's *Life and Letters of John Albert Broadus* in defending the thesis of this dissertation. Over twenty years ago, this writer stumbled upon Broadus's biography and was intrigued by one paragraph that produced the "seed thought" for this dissertation. Taken from the eighth chapter of Broadus's biography and cited in the first chapter of this dissertation, Robertson wrote the story of how Broadus convinced the other founders of the seminary to model the plan of instruction after the University of Virginia. The plan of instruction, known as the elective system, created by Jefferson and modified by Broadus, became the linchpin to accomplish Boyce's vision. The content of Broadus's meeting with the founders and the subsequent actions to develop and implement the elective system deserves further research, and Robertson's work inspired this endeavor.

Robertson's book also provides a time line between Broadus's experience at the University of Virginia through the founding of the seminary. As will be demonstrated in later chapters, important factors came together at the right time and

right place in the formulation of the elective system that, looking back, can only be attributed to God's providential care in Broadus's life. Without Robertson's book, it would be extremely difficult to make those connections and gain a deeper appreciation for Broadus's work.

Another important aspect of Robertson's work is the information about Broadus that is not found in any other resource before the book was written. In other words, most of the scholarly work on Broadus is post *Life and Letters*. Without Robertson's work, there would be a greater gap in research on Broadus, especially on the elective system.

Another key aspect of Robertson's work is that he provided the background materials needed to trace the development of Broadus's understanding of the elective system. In the fifth chapter, Robertson described Broadus's life at the University of Virginia. He opened the chapter with a brief treatment on Thomas Jefferson and the early development of the University of Virginia. Although Robertson's intention was not to give a full explanation of the development of the university, he did provide critical information demonstrating that one must first look to Jefferson's philosophy of education and the educational model at the University of Virginia in order to better understand Broadus's elective system.

Robertson also provided references to key source materials that describe the elective system at the University of Virginia that otherwise would be difficult to discover. For example, when Robertson described the process Jefferson went through to establish the university in Charlottesville, he stated, by way of secondary importance, that the Governor of Massachusetts, Edward Everett, reviewed Jefferson's

whole educational structure for the University of Virginia in the *North American Review*, January edition of 1820.⁵⁶ In the scheme of Robertson's chapter, the reference to Everett was not the focal point. However, for this dissertation, Everett's article serves as an important source for this dissertation.⁵⁷

Beyond references to key source materials, Robertson introduced two prominent figures in the field of education who are connected through the influence of Jefferson's elective system. They are George Ticknor of Harvard and Wayland of Brown University. Along with Broadus, these men were instrumental in the implementation and influence of the elective system in higher education throughout the nineteenth century. Any discussion of the elective system would be incomplete without addressing their contributions. More importantly, it is through their writings that a better understanding of the elective system can be gained. As Robertson pointed out, and will be shown in the next chapter, the elective system, although practical in structure, is grounded in a particular philosophical approach to education that was not native to America, but had originated in Europe.⁵⁸ Thus, by examining their writings (Jefferson, Ticknor, Wayland, and Broadus) one can gain a better understanding of the philosophical underpinning that was taken from Germany and France to develop the elective system.

⁵⁶ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 59.

⁵⁷ Edward Everett, "Proceeding and Reports of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia, presented 8th of December, 1818," *North American Review and Miscellaneous Journal*, Vol. 10, New Series, Vol. 1 (Boston: Cummings and Hilliard, 1820), 115-37, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=chi.56783221&view=1up&seq=7>.

⁵⁸ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 57.

“The Contribution of The Southern Baptist Theological
Seminary to Theological Education”

E. Y. Mullins published “The Contribution of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to Theological Education” in 1910. The purpose of the article was to show the distinctives in The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary as compared with other schools.⁵⁹ He identified three primary contributions the seminary gave to theological education. They were (1) curriculum, (2) influences that were exhibited in its work and spirit, and (3) leading aims and idea to train ministers.⁶⁰ Out of the three contributions, Mullins’s treatment on the curriculum provides important insight into the elective system. Many of these insights will be addressed in the fifth chapter of this dissertation, but one insight needs to be addressed at this juncture. However, before the insight is addressed it should be stated that Mullins was not attempting to give a full treatment on the elective system in his article. Like most of the research on Broadus’s elective system, it is incomplete. Still, Mullins did provide enough information in the article that it should be considered a necessary resource for anyone trying to better understand the elective system. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that Mullins experienced the elective system as a student (1881-1885) and as the president of the seminary (1899-1928).

One of Mullins’s important insights revolves around the seminary being the first theological institution to implement the elective system. He wrote, “This [elective

⁵⁹ E. Y. Mullins, “The Contribution of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to Theological Education,” *Review & Expositor* 70 no. 1 (1910): 162.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 162-63.

system] was indeed a new departure in theological education. By elective principle in this institution we do not mean precisely what is meant by that term in the modern university. There certain electives are offered in addition to certain required studies in order to certain degrees. In this institution all the studies are electives.”⁶¹ When the seminary opened in 1859, no other institution of higher education was using the elective system except the University of Virginia and the Albemarle Female Institute, which Broadus helped establish in 1856. Fifty-one years later, when Mullins wrote his article, the landscape of higher education had changed. Numerous universities have taken aspects of the elective system and implemented it in their curriculum. As will be shown in the next chapter, Harvard had expanded its curriculum to an elective approach that went beyond anything Broadus experienced at the University of Virginia. Consequently, by 1910, there were a variety of elective systems throughout higher education; thus, Mullins felt the need to clarify that the seminary’s elective system was different than what many colleges were using at that time.

Mullins was not the first to qualify the difference in the seminary’s elective system. In Boyce’s biography, Broadus referenced the importance of distinguishing the difference when he wrote, “One who really cares to understand the plan upon which this institution was organized, and upon which it has ever since been consistently carried on, must lay aside all other conceptions of elective studies, and look a moment at the elective method here in question.”⁶² Like Broadus, Mullins also

⁶¹ Mullins, “Contribution of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,” 165.

⁶² Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* (1893), 156.

believed it was important to recognize the difference in the seminary's plan of instruction and what other universities were doing at that time. Unlike Mullins, most of the current literature on Broadus and the seminary's elective system does not address in length the different approaches to the elective system used by other universities after the seminary was established. The lack of information about the different approaches forces readers to speculate on what model was being used at the seminary. In some ways, it seems sources on Broadus's elective system assume the reader has prior knowledge of the different educational structures being used throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Consequently, it is difficult to appreciate the full scope of Broadus's work if one is unfamiliar with the exact structure and model he used. Therefore, at the end of the next chapter there is a brief treatment that compares the elective system at the University of Virginia (the model Broadus used) with subsequent models that were implemented at other universities.

A History of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

William A. Mueller wrote *A History of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* in 1959 celebrating the centennial anniversary of the seminary. At the time the book was published, Mueller served as Professor of Philosophy of Religion under the leadership of the seminary's president, Duke McCall. Because Mueller was originally from Germany, McCall felt he could give an objective evaluation of the seminary's past.⁶³ The book contains nine chapters focusing on the early struggles of the seminary

⁶³ William A. Mueller, *A History of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959), viii.

through the leadership of McCall. Until Wills published *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 1859-2009* in 2009, Mueller's text served as a significant resource on the history of the seminary. Although Wills' work is a more extensive and an updated history of the seminary, Mueller's work is still considered an important resource for those researching the topic.

In his fifth chapter, Mueller addressed the "curriculum" that was established at the founding of the seminary. His primary resources for his summary of the curriculum (elective system) were Broadus's *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* and Robertson's *Life and Letters of John Albert Broadus*. Mueller was the first scholar to present a summary of the original elective system who did not personally experience it under the leadership of Broadus. By 1959, numerous elements of the elective system had changed; thus, Mueller's summary, for the most part, is a restating of the chapter on the elective system in Broadus's biography on Boyce. One should note that there is approximately a fifty-year gap between Mullins's article in 1910 and Mueller's book in 1959 where very little, if anything, was written about the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Thus, Mueller's work, outside of the seminary's catalogs, provides an important historical reminder of an important contribution that had been forgotten for almost five decades.

“The Contributions of John A. Broadus
to Southern Baptists”

Presently, fourteen dissertations and one master’s thesis either address the contributions of Broadus or reference a significant aspect of his life.⁶⁴ Out of these

⁶⁰ Milton Robert Allen, “A History of the Young Men’s Christian Association at the University of Virginia” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1946); (2) Charles A. McGlon, “Speech Education in Baptist Theological Seminaries in the United States, 1819-1943” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1951); (3) Paul Huber, “A Study of the Rhetorical Theories of John A. Broadus” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1955); (4) Jerry Paxton Ashby, “John Albert Broadus: The Theory and Practice of His Preaching” (ThD diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1968); (5) James Roland Barron, “The Contributions of John A. Broadus to Southern Baptists” (ThD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1972); (6) Robert Allan Vogel, “Richard Whately’s Theory of Argument and Its Influence on the Homiletic Theory and Practice of John Albert Broadus” (Master’s thesis, Portland State University, 1986); (7) David Alan Smith, “Introductory Preaching Courses in Selected Southern Baptist Seminaries in Light of John A. Broadus’s Homiletical Theory” (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1995); (8) Harold Kallemeyn, “Le mouvement narratif de la predication chretienne. recherche d’un paradigme pour l’enseignement de l’homiletique” [“The Movement of Christian Preaching. Research for a Paradigm for Teaching Homiletics”] (PhD diss., University of Montreal (Canada), 1997); (9) William Earl Brown, “Pastoral Evangelism: A Model for Effective Evangelism as Demonstrated by the Ministries of John Albert Broadus, Alfred Elijah Dickinson, and John William Jones in the Revival of the Army of Northern Virginia in 1863” (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1999); (10) Marty Bryan Light, “The Evangelistic Contributions of John Albert Broadus” (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005); (11) Mark Manly Overstreet, “The 1889 Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching and the Recovery of the Late Homiletic of John Albert Broadus (1827-1895)” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005); (12) Shane B. Arnold, “Southern Baptists and Culture: An Examination of the Theological Responses to Culture as Seen in the Writings of James P. Boyce, John A. Broadus, Edgar Young Mullins, and R. Albert Mohler, Jr.” (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007); (13) Hyun Shin Park, “Toward a Life-changing Application Paradigm in Expository Preaching” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012); (14) Robert L. Compere III, “A Study of the Revisions of John A. Broadus’s Classic Work, A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons” (PhD diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013); (15) Howard Jared Bumpers, “A Man ‘Mighty in the Scriptures’: The Hermeneutic of John A. Broadus and Its Impact on His Preaching” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018).

works, only four include information concerning the elective system. They are, Charles A. McGlon, “Speech Education in Baptist Theological Seminaries in the United States, 1819-1943”; James Roland Barron’s “The Contributions of John A. Broadus to Southern Baptists,” Marty Bryan Light’s “The Evangelistic Contributions of John Albert Broadus,” and Howard Jared Bumpers’ “A Man ‘Mighty in the Scriptures’: The Hermeneutic of John A. Broadus and Its Impact on His Preaching.” In each of the four dissertations, the overall focus is not the elective system. Only Barron addressed the elective system with any significance. McGlon addressed the elective system and its usefulness in providing greater access to speech education in seminaries. Light provided two pages of a summary of the elective system in his dissertation and Bumpers referenced it in one paragraph. Beyond these four, no other dissertation involving Broadus addresses the elective system. There are, however, other works that address Jefferson’s philosophy of education and the elective system at the University of Virginia. Although these works are not abundant, they are critical in providing a greater understanding of Broadus’s philosophy of education and the seminary’s elective system. Thus, this writer will address them in the next chapter.

Barron wrote “The Contributions of John A. Broadus to Southern Baptists” in 1972. Out of all the dissertations on Broadus, Barron’s work provides the greatest overview of Broadus’s life and contributions. Barron divided Broadus’s contributions into five major sections. They are (1) early career, (2) establishing the seminary, (3) New Testament studies, (4) homiletics, and (5) Southern Baptist agencies and attitudes. Within the second section, Barron gave a brief account of how the seminary was established and Broadus’s involvement in the plan of instruction. Beyond

Broadus's early articles in *The Religious Herald* and his *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, and Mueller's *A History of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, Barron provided the most extensive treatment on the elective system. In fact, Barron was the first individual to address the elective system with any degree of significance within a dissertation format.

Three important areas need to be addressed concerning Barron's work. First, although Barron provided relevant information about the elective system in his dissertation, his research is more of a summary than a detailed analysis. Like Broadus's biography on Boyce, Barron was limited by the scope and purpose of his work. Consequently, he only gave structural insights on the elective system while highlighting the type of academic degrees awarded and the use of the English Bible in the curriculum. Second, his use of the seminary's catalogs to demonstrate the results of the elective system are also helpful. The early catalogs at the seminary provide extensive information about the structure of the school, courses offered, and the names of the graduates and degrees they received. Using the catalogs, Barron explained how the seminary progressed under the elective system and awarded its first doctorate degree in 1894.⁶⁵ Third, much like Robertson's *Life and Letters*, Barron provided materials about Broadus that are not easily accessible apart from the archives at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Thus, later writers on Broadus often use Barron as a key source material to establish their argument. Consequently, Barron's

⁶⁵ James R. Barron, "The Contributions of John A. Broadus to Southern Baptists" (ThD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1972), 56-57.

section on the elective system, although incomplete, is a very important secondary source.

John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy

John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy was published in 2008 as a part of the “Studies in Baptist Life and Thought Series.” The book was edited by David S. Dockery and Roger D. Duke and consists of ten chapters, each written by a different author. Beyond Robertson’s *Life and Letters of John Albert Broadus*, this book, along with Barron’s dissertation on Broadus, serve as two of the most important secondary sources that provide an overall perspective on Broadus’s life and accomplishments. In the preface, Dockery remarked that the book approaches the study of Broadus from the perspective of a preacher, scholar, institutional builder, and denominational statesman.⁶⁶ Each chapter could be read independently from the others with numerous chapters focusing on some aspect of Broadus’s preaching legacy. Two chapters provide important insights into the elective system. In the sixth chapter, Craig C. Christina addressed the establishment of the seminary and spent several pages giving a brief overview of the elective system. In the last chapter, James Patterson addressed the legacy Broadus left as a theological educator. Within Patterson’s chapter, there are three key factors that influenced Broadus as he organized the curriculum for the seminary. They include (1) the lack of education by most Southern Baptist preachers and their suspicion concerning theological education or even general education during

⁶⁶ Dockery and Duke, *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy*, xi.

Broadus's day, (2) the influence of the University of Virginia's elective system on Broadus, and (3) the need to couple theological instruction with the English Bible.⁶⁷

Even though Christina and Patterson's chapters are limited in scope and space, they provide valuable information about the elective system. Although much of their information is taken from resources previously addressed in this chapter, their work still provides valuable insight that affirms the significance of Broadus's contribution and inspires the reader to do further study.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1859-2009

Wills' *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1859-2009* was published by Oxford University Press in 2009 in recognition of the seminary's 150th anniversary. The book is more than a historical treatment of the seminary; it shows how Southern Baptists navigated issues between specific values of modernity and the commitment to Christian orthodoxy.⁶⁸ This book also addresses the unfolding process of theological change that took place in the seminary after the founders died and the corrective transformation that occurred in more recent years. In terms of its historical significance, Wills' work is the most complete history of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to date. The value of his research and the wealth of information about the seminary is unmatched by any other single source. The book consists of sixteen chapters addressing subjects such as the founding of the seminary, various controversies, theological concerns, and presidential leadership up through 2009.

⁶⁷ Dockery and Duke, *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy*, 252-53.

⁶⁸ Wills, *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, vi.

In terms of the elective system, Wills provided a brief section about the curriculum at the seminary in the first chapter of the book. Like other historical accounts of the seminary, Wills provided an overview of the founding of the seminary that includes a summary of the main structure of the elective system. Even though his treatment on the elective system is brief, Wills rightly acknowledged its significance by including it in what has become the most extensive research on the history of the seminary. More importantly, Wills provided important background information that demonstrates the need for a new educational structure in theological education. As stated earlier, the fourth chapter of this dissertation describes the nature of theological education in Broadus's day and provides the backdrop of Southern Baptist life prior to the establishment of the seminary. Perhaps, better than any other source, Wills articulated the factors that fostered the need for the seminary and the process leading up to its opening.⁶⁹

Methodological Factors

When evaluating current literature and its methodological framework for addressing the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, four factors should be considered. First, a limited number of works are available on the elective system implemented by Broadus. Out of the hundreds of articles and books on Broadus, only seventeen provide more than a cursory treatment on the elective system of the seminary. The literature review above does not include the catalogs at the seminary because this writer will discuss them in length in the fifth chapter of this

⁶⁹ Wills, *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 3-26.

dissertation. Given the limitations on relevant materials, this writer believes the best methodological approach to address the significance of Broadus's elective system is through the process laid out in this dissertation. By examining Broadus's work on the elective system from different perspectives, a fuller picture and a deeper appreciation of his accomplishments can be gained.

Second, outside of Broadus's work, all other sources either summarize the structural aspects of the elective system or they address certain benefits that are derived from it. Even Broadus's work, to some degree, is more of a summary than an in-depth explanation of the elective system. His chapter in Boyce's biography on the elective system is not an exhaustive account of the subject and his articles are limited by space constraints forcing him to highlight only minimal aspects of the system.⁷⁰ Given the lack of a comprehensive treatment on the elective system, much of the conclusions argued for in this dissertation stem from piecing multiple sources together. For example, a major section of this dissertation includes an extensive treatment of the elective system used at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Because there is no one individual source that addresses the full complexity and importance of Broadus's elective system, multiple works—such as the seminary's catalogs, Broadus's writings, and numerous secondary sources—are needed. At the same time, it is also important to acknowledge that out of the sources identified earlier in this chapter, none have as their objective to provide a complete overview of the elective system. In other words, the methods by which the authors chose to address the

⁷⁰ Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* (1893), ch. 10.

elective system were not intended to provide an all-inclusive treatment of the subject. Thus, any negative critique concerning the brevity of their work would be out of harmony with their original intention.

Third, the current literature on Broadus's elective system does not provide sufficient data concerning the factors that demonstrate the full value of the elective system. Specifically, when referring to the educational structures of theological institutions in the nineteenth century, terms like "curriculum," "prescribed curriculum," or "ancient scholastic curriculum" are used to identify the educational methods of seminaries.⁷¹ Yet, minimal information is given about the nature of the curriculum approach. As a result, it is difficult to appreciate the full significance of the elective system when little is known about its competing educational structures. One must go beyond what is offered in the current literature on the elective system to get an accurate picture of the "prescribed curriculum" method. As a result, those investigating only the current literature on Broadus's elective system will miss the full ramification of a deficient "prescribed curriculum" method that, ultimately, makes Broadus's system more important.

Fourth, the continued development of the elective system for almost two centuries has produced significant variations, making it difficult to easily understand the type of elective system Broadus used. Once Harvard and other universities began implementing variations of the elective system in the late nineteenth century, it became difficult to define the elective system without looking at each institution. In

⁷¹ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 56, 144, 176, 389.

other words, there is a whole body of literature about the elective system that, for the most part, has no bearing upon Broadus's work. Although Broadus was one the first to implement the elective system at an educational institution, much of the scholastic discussion about the elective system revolves around Harvard's approach. Having clarity between the different elective systems is important because only a few sources on Broadus's elective system makes the distinction between the different types. Even then, their comments are not extensive and demonstrate a greater need for further research. Consequently, there is a vagueness that naturally arises when researching the elective system in general that can only be cleared by examining each institution.

Summary

Broadus's legacy is preserved in literally thousands of documents. His influence on Baptist life and theological education in America during the nineteenth century is rivaled by few. Tucked away in his numerous accomplishments is his contribution to theological education that has escaped the attention of so many who have studied Broadus. The elective system designed by Broadus was a hallmark in the founding of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Yet, as has been shown, very little has been written about the subject. Furthermore, there have been no attempts in current literature to provide an in-depth understanding of Broadus's elective system; consequently, there is a gap in academic research on this aspect of Broadus's life that deserves to be addressed. With this in mind, the next chapter will show how the foundation of the elective system was established in Broadus's life when he attended the University of Virginia.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 qualifcn 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

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.gerardcharleswilson.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

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

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%20University%20of%20Virginia"%20Catalogue%20AND%20"University%20of%20Virginia](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%20University%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.

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

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

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

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 question 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

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.

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

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

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*

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

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

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 combining 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.

CHAPTER 4

FACTORS FOR BROADUS'S ADVOCACY FOR THE ELECTIVE SYSTEM

When Broadus presented his plan of instruction for the new seminary to James P. Boyce and Basil Manly Jr. in August of 1857, A. T. Robertson stated that Boyce and Manly were familiar with the curriculum at Brown, Newton, and Princeton, but it was Broadus's enthusiasm about the elective system that completely won them over.¹

Robertson's statement raises an important question concerning Broadus: namely, why was he so enthusiastic about the elective system? The answer to that question includes at least five factors: first, his personal experience as a student and instructor at the University of Virginia, which was addressed in the previous chapter; second, the implementation of the elective system at the Albemarle Female Institute in 1856; third, an encounter with Francis Wayland as a student at the University of Virginia and his subsequent influence on Broadus's life; fourth, the deficiencies found in the prescribed curriculum that was utilized in every major seminary in Broadus's day; and, fifth, the existing conditions of theological education within the Southern Baptist Convention prior to 1859. Thus, what follows is a brief treatment of each of the remaining four factors.

¹ Archibald T. Robertson, *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication, 1910), 144.

The Albemarle Female Institute

The Albemarle Female Institute began its first session on September 22, 1856, in the basement of Charlottesville Baptist Church in Virginia.² Three months earlier, individuals who were involved in the scheme of the school met in the church and elected the Board of Trustees.³ Broadus, who was pastor of the church and involved in the plans for the institute from the beginning, was elected chairman of the Board of Trustees. The desire of all involved was to establish a female educational institution located within the region of the Albemarle Baptist Association under the control of Baptists.⁴ According to an earlier catalog, the primary object of this school was “to create and supply a demand for a grade of education for girls, altogether superior to that which has been and is common.”⁵

The school began with thirty ladies in attendance and quickly rose to sixty-one before the end of the session.⁶ By the end of the second session, enrollment had increased to ninety-one.⁷ Perhaps the most well-known graduate of the school was

² *Catalogue of the Albemarle Female Institute Located at Charlottesville, Virginia Session 1857- '8* (Richmond, VA: Ellyson's Steam Presses, 1858), 10.

³ F. W. Wills, “Baptist Female Institute,” *The Religious Herald* 25 (June 26, 1856), 2.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ *Catalogue of the Albemarle Female Institute Located at Charlottesville, Virginia Session 1858- '9* (Richmond, VA: Ellyson's Steam Presses, 1859), 10.

⁶ John Hart, *Report to the Board of Trustees of the Albemarle Female Institute: Setting Forth the History, Organization, and Prospects of the School* (Charlottesville, VA: JAS Alexander, 1858), 3.

⁷ Ibid., 4.

Lottie Moon who completed her Master of Arts degree in 1861. In her biography on Moon, Una Roberts Lawrence commented on Moon's graduating class. She wrote, "five girls realized that they had pioneered in education for women, for in solemn ceremony there was conferred upon them the first Master of Arts degrees ever given to women in the South, a degree equal in value to that given by the University of Virginia. Of these Lottie Moon was the particular bright star."⁸ When Moon graduated, Broadus said she was the most educated woman in the South.

The Albemarle Female Institute was the first women collegiate school to use an elective approach to education. According to John Hart, the first principal of the school, the mode of instruction was left to the president of the Board (Broadus) and himself.⁹ Both Broadus and Hart had experienced the elective system at the University of Virginia, but were initially unsure how it would work in an educational structure designed for ladies. Hart explained:

Without experience in the management of a Female School, neither of us could determine how far the system of the University of Virginia could be applied in such a School. Consequently, for the first three months of the first session, there was not that precision and harmony of arrangements which has been since attained. But the experience of these three months satisfied us that the University system could be, and ought to be, applied fully.¹⁰

Accordingly, Broadus and Hart divided the Institute into seven independent schools. They included (1) The School of Ancient Languages, (2) The School of Modern

⁸ Una Roberts Lawrence, *Lottie Moon* (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1927), 48.

⁹ Hart, *Report to the Board of Trustees of the Albemarle Female Institute*, 4.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Languages, (3) The School of Mathematics, (4) The School of Natural Sciences, (5) The School of Modern Philosophy, (6) The School of History and Literature, and (7) The School of English Language and Composition.¹¹ Like the University of Virginia, emphasis was placed on the advantages of having the distinct separate schools. For example, the school's catalog gives a brief statement describing the importance of the independent schools as follows:

Each school is independent of the others, so that students who desire to study only special subjects can do so with the same advantage as if nothing else were taught in the institution. This arrangement has the further great advantage of enabling those who intend to go through the whole course to give their attention to a limited number of subjects at a time, and so to save them from the fatal consequences of too great a variety of studies. In short, and to say all that may be needful on this matter, the arrangement of subjects and classes, and the mode of instruction, is just the same as at the University of Virginia.¹²

At the same time, a concentrated effort was also made to comprise a body of knowledge through the seven schools that would produce a thorough "cultivation of the mind" and provide a large mass of practical, useful information.¹³ For example, in the final English Language and Composition exam students had to answer problems and questions like the following:

Give a sketch of the changes through which the English Language has passed since the Norman Conquest, so far as they consist in the birth of new words or their adoption from other tongues.

Give a sketch of the grammatical history of English, passing over the Semi-Saxon Period, to state and compare the principal etymological characteristics

¹¹ *Catalogue of the Albemarle Female Institute Located at Charlottesville, Virginia Session 1857-'8*, 16.

¹² *Ibid.*, 13.

¹³ Hart, *Report to the Board of Trustees of the Albemarle Female Institute*, 4.

of the others, and noticing the last traces of an accident different from our own.

Translate into modern English, Chaucer, Clerke's Tale, p. 231, verse commencing, "Quoth now," &c. What is the measure of the verses in this stanza? Are all the verses regular?¹⁴

In Modern Philosophy students had to explain (1) man as a being, (2) pantheism, (3) skepticism, and (4) The Beautiful on their final exam.¹⁵ When combining all seven final exams, one can see the enormity of the body of knowledge required to earn the school's highest degree. Like the University of Virginia, the separate schools were independent, but were also dependent upon one another for providing the best overall education possible.

Another feature of the elective system is its flexibility. Just like he did at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, as will be demonstrated in the fifth chapter, Broadus modified the elective system of the University of Virginia to better fit the goals of the Albemarle Female Institute. For instance, at the Albemarle Female Institute completion of all seven schools was required to graduate with a Master of Arts degree. At the University of Virginia, only completion of certain schools was necessary, depending upon the student's degree selection.

Another modification included an extra course within the Ancient Language school. At the Albemarle Female Institute, ladies were offered junior, intermediate,

¹⁴ *Catalogue of the Albemarle Female Institute Located at Charlottesville, Virginia Session 1858- '9*, 20.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

and senior level courses in Greek and Latin. At the University of Virginia, only junior level and senior level classes were offered.

A final adaptation worth mentioning is the addition of the School of English Language and Composition. According to James Roland Barron, “H. H. Harris, a professor at Richmond College, claimed that the Institute was the first school to put the English language on a footing of parity with the ancient classics and the cultured tongues of modern Europe.”¹⁶ When Broadus reflected back on his contribution at the Albemarle Female Institute, he concluded that it was the first college in America that had a separate department for English studies.¹⁷ Interestingly, three years after the Albemarle Female Institute was established Broadus would include an emphasis on the English Bible as a part of fulfilling Boyce’s vision at the seminary.

After Broadus moved to Greenville to help start the seminary, the Albemarle Female Institute eventually became the Rawlings Institute in 1897. The Episcopal Church later bought it in 1910. Today, the school is known as St. Anne’s-Belfield School, which serves Pre-K through 12th grade levels with resident housing for high schoolers.¹⁸ This school is presently ranked among the top twenty private high schools in Virginia.¹⁹

¹⁶ James Roland Barron, “The Contributions of John A. Broadus to Southern Baptists” (ThD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1972), 31.

¹⁷ John A. Broadus, “On the Study of English,” *The Central Baptist* 18 (December 20, 1883), 1.

¹⁸ “History,” *St. Anne’s-Belfield School*, <https://www.stab.org/explore/history>.

¹⁹ “2021 Best Private High Schools in Virginia,” September 18, 2020, *Niche*, <https://www.niche.com/k12/search/best-private-high-schools/s/virginia/>.

Broadus's experience with the Albemarle Female Institute serves as an important factor in his passion for the elective system. The first reason is because Broadus cared deeply for the young people in his community. One friend wrote about Broadus, "There was a magical influence in his sympathy with the young people of the community. They remembered and repeated his sayings, and they sought his advice with a love and confidence little short of adoration."²⁰ In an article in *The Religious Herald*, Broadus explained that his involvement with the Institute stemmed from his position on the board and as the students' pastor.²¹ At a time when the prescribed curriculum was the standard in most colleges, Broadus felt the elective approach was a superior model and believed it gave the students he influenced the greatest advantage to succeed.

A second reason the Albemarle Female Institute serves as an important factor for Broadus's enthusiasm for the elective system is because it was a ready-made system that could be easily modified to meet the demands of the school. When examining early catalogs of the school, the major structural points are basically the same as the University of Virginia. The design and purpose of independent schools, the similar length of a session, the recommendation to take no more than three schools during a single session, the nature of examinations, and similar subject matters are in

²⁰ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 122.

²¹ John A. Broadus, "Albemarle Female Institute," *The Religious Herald* 32 (August 11, 1859), 126.

line with Broadus's alma mater.²² At the same time, the Albemarle Female Institute modified the system by adding a preparatory school, the School of English Language and Composition, and a special department for music and drawing that included training in vocal and instrumental music, along with instruction in drawing and various kinds of painting and embroidery.²³ Broadus experienced the flexibility of the elective system firsthand, which he subsequently utilized at the seminary.

A third reason the Albemarle Female Institute enforced Broadus's passion for the elective system is because it provided experience and confidence that the elective system could work outside the University of Virginia. When Broadus met with Boyce and Manly in 1857, he came to the meeting not just as an advocate for the elective system because he had experienced it as a student and instructor; he also came because he had helped implement the system in a unique setting to equip young ladies. Consequently, his confidence that the elective system could be utilized in a theological institution overtook the discussion with Boyce and Manly.

A final reason the Albemarle Female Institute played a significant role in Broadus's enthusiasm for the elective system is because it gave him a unique voice in the academic arena. As will be shown later in this chapter, Broadus was concerned about theological education, and education in general, in Virginia prior to his invitation to serve on the Plan of Organization Committee at the Educational Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1857. His article, "The Theological

²² *Catalogue of the Albemarle Female Institute Located at Charlottesville, Virginia Session 1858- '9*, 9-19.

²³ *Ibid.*, 17.

Seminary,” written prior to the convention in Louisville, clearly demonstrated his concern with the prescribed curriculum. Combined with the fact that he served as an instructor at the University of Virginia, was the pastor of a growing influential church, served as a board member of the Hollins Institute, and helped establish the Albemarle Female Institute, all gave Broadus creditability and respectability among those concerned with education. More specifically, Broadus became an authority source in educational matters that many people trusted because of the success of the Albemarle Female Institute.

The Influence of Francis Wayland

Beyond his personal experience at the University of Virginia, and years before the Albemarle Female Institute was ever established, Broadus’s convictions concerning the merits of the elective system were strengthened after an encounter with Dr. Francis Wayland.²⁴ Broadus recalled the event in his *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*:

The writer remembers the feeling of denominational pride with which, as a student of the University of Virginia, he was introduced to the famous president and author, and gazed upon his commanding form and noble face while he sat in a lecture-room. Dr. Gessner Harrison and Dr. McGuffey explained to Dr. Wayland, in extended conversations, sought by him, the nature and working of Mr. Jefferson’s plans of elective education.²⁵

²⁴ Broadus’s encounter with Wayland occurred prior to the creation of the Albemarle Female Institute; however, the importance of the event is placed after the Albemarle Female Institute because it provides a better segue into the deficiencies of the prescribed curriculum, which Wayland opposed.

²⁵ 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), 144, footnote 1.

Wayland was president of Brown University from 1827–1855. Before Wayland visited the University of Virginia in 1850 (where Broadus was present), he had long been an advocate of collegiate reform. In 1842, he wrote *Thoughts on the Present College System in the United States*, which would eventually serve as a prelude to his *Report to the Corporation of Brown University on Changes in the System of College Education*. In the former, Wayland argued that a general willingness prevailed among the public and private individuals to supply the resources to improve college education.²⁶ He also asserted that the system of college education prevalent in his day did not meet the needs of the public and that the problem with the college system was not because of the poverty of the people or the indifference of the subject matter.²⁷ Instead, he suggested the problem with the college system was, in part, deficiencies within the prescribed curriculum.²⁸ Wayland recommended certain modifications to the prescribed curriculum that he felt would further advance the effectiveness and expansion of college education. His recommendations, along with the deficiencies he cited, are addressed later in this chapter. However, it is important to note that his critiques are applicable to the prescribed curriculum found within theological seminaries as well. Apart from the different subject matter, the seminaries followed the same educational lines as the colleges.

²⁶ Francis Wayland, *Thoughts on the Present College System in the United States* (Boston: Gould, Kendall, & Lincoln, 1842), 16-17.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 76-112.

One of Wayland's most significant works for college reform, *Report to the Corporation of Brown University on Changes in the System of College Education*, was published in 1850. Wayland had attempted to make adjustments to Brown University prior to 1850 but found it extremely difficult. In frustration, Wayland resigned as president. In reaction, the leadership of Brown University promised Wayland he could implement his plan if he remained as president. As a result, the *Report to the Corporation of Brown University on Changes in the System of College Education* was written, which laid out Wayland's proposed changes. One author wrote about Wayland's pamphlet "it is not, probably, too much to say, that its eminent ability was recognized by those who approved and by those who opposed its conclusions, and that its appearance constituted an era in the history of collegiate education in America."²⁹ After the report was written, Wayland traveled to the University of Virginia where he spoke with Harrison and McGuffey concerning the elective system. Broadus watched as the three men discussed the details. According to Wayland's son, Wayland left that meeting with a favorable opinion of the system. He wrote, "The result of his observation, so far as it related to the practicability and efficacy of the system, was highly favorable. He was particularly impressed with the earnestness and enthusiasm of the officers of instruction."³⁰ Wayland implemented his plan at Brown University shortly after visiting the University of Virginia. He spent the next five years until his

²⁹ Francis Wayland and Herman L. Wayland, *A Memoir of the Life and Labors of Francis Wayland, D.D., LL.D.: Late President of Brown University* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1867), 82.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 92.

retirement laboring to implement and improve his new system. Even today, Brown University still acknowledges Wayland's contribution. On their website is posted, "At Brown, our students have the freedom to choose their academic journeys."³¹ Brown's motto and the legacy that present students enjoy can be traced directly back to Wayland's hard work and vision for the school.

Wayland's influence on Broadus should not be undervalued. Although Broadus's direct contact with Wayland was brief, he was not unfamiliar with his work. In his *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, Broadus referenced a key address given by Wayland in 1853 at the University of Rochester on behalf of the New York Baptist Union Ministerial Education titled "The Apostolic Ministry."³² In the discourse, Wayland argued that a divine call to ministry should have relevance for the methods of ministerial education. For example, Wayland stated:

If, then, we would labor to give to the ministry the means of improvement, we must provide those means for them all. A system of ministerial education adapted to the condition of but one in twenty of our candidates, commences with the avowed intention of doing but one-twentieth part of its work, and of helping those only who have the least need of its assistance. We should therefore provide, for all our brethren whom God has called to this service, the best instruction in our power; adapted, as far as possible, not to any theoretical view, but to the actual condition of the mass of our candidates, leaving each individual, in the exercise of a sound and pious discretion, to determine the extent to which he is able to avail himself of our services.³³

³¹ Brown University's homepage, <https://www.brown.edu>.

³² Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, 142-46.

³³ Francis Wayland, *The Apostolic Ministry: A Discourse* (Rochester, NY: Sage & Brother, 1853), 65-66.

It is evident Wayland was concerned with the current state of theological training throughout America. Broadus suggested that Wayland's discourse had some positive effects on the Baptist theological schools in making them more willing to accept students for a partial course. However, he acknowledged that Wayland faced an uphill battle. Broadus explained:

[O]ur Baptist Colleges and Theological Seminaries in America had followed very closely the Congregational and Presbyterian pattern, built upon ideas brought from England and Scotland; and any departure from the curriculum, and introduction of men imperfectly prepared, to pursue an irregular course, was generally regarded with disfavor on the part of presidents and professors.³⁴

Most seminaries generally rejected Wayland's ideas. The seminaries that tried to implement aspects of Wayland's ideas found it difficult because they were restricted by the prescribed curriculum.³⁵ Interestingly, Boyce, who had been a student under Wayland at Brown University before the school implemented its new elective educational structure, had come to appreciate Wayland's desire to see change in collegiate and theological studies. Boyce received his theological training at Princeton Theological Seminary under the old curriculum system, much like what he experienced at Brown. Seeing the weaknesses in the prescribed curriculum system in colleges and seminaries, he often acknowledged that his ideas for change in theological education were partly derived from Wayland's influence.³⁶

³⁴ Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, 143.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 145.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 142.

Wayland is important to the development of the elective system because he was one of the first and most prominent, at least in Baptist life, to point out the weaknesses in the prescribed curriculum. It is difficult to know at what stage Broadus fully grasped the deficiencies of the prescribed curriculum that Wayland addressed. Perhaps he was influenced by Wayland's *Thoughts on the Present College System in the United States* as a college student. Maybe he had received a copy of Wayland's report to Brown University before Wayland's arrival on campus. Regardless, Broadus knew the significance of Wayland when he came to the University of Virginia in 1850. More importantly, it is evident he had great admiration for Wayland and counted it a privilege to sit in on the conversation about the elective system. As a result, Broadus's encounter with Wayland naturally elevated his appreciation for the elective system and the unique role it played at the University of Virginia.

Prescribed Curriculum

The prescribed curriculum in theological seminaries in the United States can trace its roots back to European universities, in particular, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.³⁷ Originally established as ecclesiastical and monastic institutions, Oxford and Cambridge were designed for the education of priests, who were the only educated class in the middle ages.³⁸ By the time of the modern era, Oxford and Cambridge were still prominent institutions where clergy were trained. In fact, during

³⁷ Wayland, *Thoughts on the Present College System*, 20.

³⁸ Francis Wayland, *Report to the Corporation of Brown University on Changes in the System of College Education* (Providence, RI: George H. Whitney, 1850) 6.

much of the colonial period many ministers in America were still traveling back to Europe for education or sought mentorships from local clergy who had been trained in those institutions.³⁹ When schools like Harvard, William & Mary, and Yale were established, they followed the same curriculum approach as Oxford and Cambridge.

Wayland explained how both systems were similar:

Both involved the same points in every thing material. Both adopt the principles of established classes, to each of which a whole year of study is allotted; of a fixed course of study for every pupil; of considering every pupil a candidate for a degree; of residence within the college premises; and, of course of responsibility in the officers for the moral conduct of the pupil, and connected with this a provision for the students' board.⁴⁰

The early colleges in America did not initially provide professional degrees for ministers. The schools' curricula were designed to provide what they thought was a broad comprehensive approach to undergraduate education. For example, Harvard's prescribed curriculum consisted of subjects like Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Logic, and Ethics.⁴¹ According to Harvard:

Students were expected to arrive at Harvard well-versed in Latin grammar and, once enrolled, followed a prescribed course of studies in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, the examination of classical languages through histories and drama providing the base for scholarly pursuits. Other disciplines included Rhetoric and Logic, Ethics and Politics, Arithmetic and Geometry, and later, Algebra,

³⁹ Natalie A. Naylor, "The Theological Seminary in the Configuration of American Higher Education: The Ante-Bellum Years," *History of Education Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (1977): 18.

⁴⁰ Wayland, *Thoughts on the Present College System*, 20.

⁴¹ *New England's First Fruits* (London: R. O. and G. D. for Henry Overton, 1643), *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/details/NewEnglandsFirstFruitsInRespectFirstOfTheCounversionOfSome/mode/2up>.

Astronomy, Physics, Metaphysics and Theology, although Harvard College never functioned strictly as a divinity school.⁴²

For those students going into the ministry, most remained near the college after graduation and were tutored by professors of divinity and local clergy. According to Natalie A. Naylor, Professor Emerita at Hofstra University, “The period of study ranged from a few months to several years, but was usually two or three years on a part-time basis while the prospective minister supported himself by tutoring or teaching school.”⁴³ However, this pattern for training ministers began to change in the North with the establishment of one of the first theological seminaries in the United States, Andover Theological Seminary.

By the early nineteenth century, Harvard began to develop a strong connection with the Unitarian movement. After the death, in 1804, of Joseph Willard, the twelfth president of Harvard, a considerable change occurred at Harvard. Liberal-minded Unitarians took over and appointed Henry Ware to the Hollis Professorship of Divinity (the oldest endowed chair at Harvard) and Samuel Webber to the presidency.⁴⁴ Both men were strong supporters of the Unitarian movement. Disappointed in the direction of the school, the interim president, Eliphalet Pearson, who was also a teacher, resigned as professor and returned to the town of Andover

⁴² “Early Curriculum at Harvard: Historical Sources,” *Harvard University Research Guides*, <https://guides.library.harvard.edu/hua/earlycurriculum>.

⁴³ Naylor, “The Theological Seminary in the Configuration of American Higher Education,” 18.

⁴⁴ “Harvard at a Glance: History of the Presidency: Samuel Webber,” *Harvard University*, <https://www.harvard.edu/about-harvard/harvard-glance/history-presidency/samuel-webber>.

where he had been the first principal of Phillips Academy years earlier. After discussions with several key leaders, and as an alternative to Harvard's Unitarianism, Phillips Academy created this first theological institution in the United States in 1807 known as Andover Theological Seminary.

When Andover Theological Seminary opened, it implemented a prescribed curriculum approach similar to Harvard's curriculum, but was designed as a three-year graduate school specifically to train ministers. In other words, the educational structure was based off a set curriculum, like the undergraduate colleges, but with different subjects and different requirements to enter. The success of Andover Theological Seminary spurred others to create similar institutions. Harvard, in response to Andover, established its first graduate program for ministers in 1811 and its Divinity School in 1816.⁴⁵ The College of New Jersey (later renamed Princeton University) established Princeton Theological Seminary in 1812. The Episcopal Church created the General Theological Seminary in 1817, and Baptists established Newton Theological Seminary in 1825. Each of these institutions modeled their curriculum after Andover Theological Seminary.

The Andover Theological Seminary catalog of 1857, the same year Broadus met with Boyce and Manly to discuss the elective system, provides an overview of the prescribed curriculum system used by most seminaries at that time. The catalog consists of eight major sections. They include Board of Trustees, Board of Visitors, Faculty, Resident Licentiates, Students (Senior, Middle, Junior classes), Summary,

⁴⁵ "History and Mission," *Harvard Divinity School*, <https://hds.harvard.edu/about/history-and-mission>.

Abbreviation, and Appendix. Within the Appendix section, important subcategories include Conditions of Membership, Terms and Vacations, Course of Instruction, General Exercises, Libraries, Public Worship, Expenses and Beneficiary Aid, Arrangement for Physical Exercise, and General Remarks.⁴⁶

Based on the catalog, every student applying to the seminary must “present to the Faculty satisfactory testimonials respecting his Christian character, his regular membership of a Church of Christ, his possession of good natural talents, and his having received a complete collegiate education, or its equivalent so far as concerns preparation for theological studies.”⁴⁷ Furthermore, students would be examined “with reference to their personal piety, their object in pursuing theological studies, and their knowledge of the classic languages.”⁴⁸ If the student had not completed a college degree they would also be “examined in Mathematics, Logic, Rhetoric, Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, and Intellectual Philosophy.”⁴⁹ If they were unable to demonstrate proficiencies in those areas, they were not admitted to the seminary. Condition for admissions to the seminary also required that a student make an expressed commitment “to complete three full years of theological study, unless

⁴⁶ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Theological Seminary, Andover, Mass., 1857* (Andover, MA: Warren F. Draper, 1857), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015068473423&view=1up&seq=1>, 11-16.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

prevented by some unforeseen” circumstances.⁵⁰ Each year of study required nine full months of theological training beginning in September.⁵¹

The course of instruction was designed each year to be completed in succession. For example, the catalog stated that “the first year of the Course is given mainly to the study of the Scriptures; the second, to that of Systematic Theology; and the third is necessarily divided between the departments of Ecclesiastical History and Sacred Rhetoric. Exegetical Studies, however, are continued through the entire Course.”⁵² The following was the schedule for the biblical and theological subjects covered in the three-year program at Andover Theological Seminary in 1857.

JUNIOR YEAR.

First Term.

Professor Stowe. Lectures. General Principles of Interpretation, and Science of Hermeneutics: Text of the Old and New Testament—its History, Existing Manuscripts, Collation of Manuscripts, and Identity of the Present with the Ancient Text: Language and Sentiment of the New Testament, compared with the language and sentiment of the Apostolic Fathers and the Apocryphal New Testament: Language of the Septuagint and the Apocryphal Old Testament, considered in its influence on the language and Scriptural quotations of the New Testament: Exegesis of the Gospels in Harmony, and of the Acts in select portions.

Professor Barrows. Hebrew Grammar and Exercises; Recitations of select portions of the Pentateuch in Hebrew, with Lectures on the history of the Creation, Fall, and Deluge; Recitation of portions of the Psalms in Hebrew, including the principal Messianic Psalms; Discussions respecting the principles of Messianic Prophecy, the nature of Prophetic Imprecation, the doctrine of

⁵⁰ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Theological Seminary, Andover, Mass., 1857*, 11.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵² *Ibid.*

Divine Retribution as developed in the Old Testament, and other topics connected with the Interpretation of the Psalms.

Second Term.

Professor Stowe. Lectures. The New Testament View of the Old Testament Types and Prophecies; General Principles of Typical and Prophetic Interpretation; Select Prophecies of Christ, Paul, and the Apocalypse, compared with Isaiah, Daniel, and Zechariah; Exegesis of one or more of the Pauline and Catholic Epistles.

Professor Barrows. Lectures. Principles and Constitution of the Hebrew Commonwealth: its Relations to the Christian Dispensation.

Recitations. Selections from the Prophetical Books.

MIDDLE YEAR.

First Term.

Professor Park. Lectures. The Existence and Attributes of God; the Immortality of the Soul; Divine Authority and Inspiration of the Bible; the Trinity; Purposes of God,—Election; Natural and Moral Government of God; the Will; Nature of Holiness and Sin; the Permission of Sin; Total Depravity; Natural State of Man; the Apostasy.

Second Term.

Professor Park. Lectures. The Atonement; Regeneration; Sanctification,—the Christian Virtues, Various Theories of Christian Perfection, Perseverance of the Saints; Eschatology,—the Resurrection, Judgment, Future Punishment; Positive Institutions,—the Church, the Ministry; Sacraments,—Baptism,—the Lord's Supper.

The Lectures are delivered at eleven o'clock, A.M. on six days of the week. They are interspersed with evening discussions on questions of Mental Philosophy and Theology, and with frequent examinations of the Class on the subjects of the Lectures.

SENIOR YEAR.

First Term.

Professor Phelps. Lectures. General Rhetoric,—the Sources of Rhetorical Science; Study of Models; Criticism of Rhetorical Treatises. Homiletics,—Structure and Composition of a Sermon; Themes of Sermons; General Qualifications of a Preacher; Criticism of American and Foreign Preachers.

Exercises in Criticism. Sermons and Plans of Sermons, by the Class, criticised publicly and in private.

Professor Shedd. Lectures. Introduction to Church History,—the Doctrine of Development limited and applied; Literature of the Department; Methodology. General Internal History of the Church,—Influence of Philosophical Systems; History of Apologies; Special History of Doctrines; History of Symbols.

Recitations. Guericke 's Manual, with supplementary reference to Neander's General History, and Hagenbach's History of Doctrines.

Second Term.

Professor Phelps. Lectures. Modes of Preaching Doctrinal Theology. Theory of Style; History of English Style. Select examples of Secular Eloquence.

Professor Shedd. Lectures. General Internal History of the Church continued,—History of Polity; of Worship; of Morals; Sketches of Historic Individuals. Pastoral Theology,— Religious, Intellectual, and Social Character of the Clergyman; Pastoral Visiting; Catechizing.

Recitations, and Exercises in Criticism, continued, as in the first term.⁵³

During the same year, Princeton Theological Seminary's course of study required for the first-year student, "Hebrew; Introduction to the Scriptures; Biblical and Ecclesiastical History; Sacred Geography and Antiquities; Exegetical Theology; Homiletics." The second year the student took "Hebrew; Biblical Criticism and Interpretation; Didactic Theology; Pastoral Theology; Biblical and Ecclesiastical History." The final year students were required to take "Hebrew; Biblical Criticism and Interpretation; Didactic and Polemic Theology; Church Government; Biblical and

⁵³ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Theological Seminary, Andover, Mass., 1857, 12-14.*

Ecclesiastical History.”⁵⁴ The curriculum varied very little from seminary to seminary and from year to year. When Boyce entered Princeton in 1849, several subjects in the course of study were named differently than the 1857 catalog, but overall, the subject matter was similar. The earlier catalog did contain a missionary emphasis for the second-year student, but was taken out in the later catalog.⁵⁵ Even at Newton Theological Institution in 1849, several of the topics were the same as Princeton, but with more emphasis placed on sermon planning and preaching.⁵⁶ It was not until the 1865-66 session that Princeton extended its curriculum to a fourth year.⁵⁷ Similarly, through a generous momentary gift, Andover Theological Seminary also established a fourth year (Advanced Studies) for its students in 1882.⁵⁸ Chief concerns about the prescribed curriculum were related to its structure and its limitations on who could

⁵⁴ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, Princeton, New-Jersey, 1857-1858* (New-Brunswick, NJ: J. Terhune, 1858). https://ia601600.us.archive.org/13/items/catalogue1857prin_0/catalogue1857prin_0.pdf, 16.

⁵⁵ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, 1849-1850* (Princeton, NJ: John T. Robinson, 1849), https://archive.org/stream/catalogue1849prin_0#page/n17/mode/2up, xiv.

⁵⁶ *Catalogue of the Newton Theological Institution, 1849-1850*, <https://online.exhibits.library.yale.edu/s/history-of-andover-newton/media/8273>, 14.

⁵⁷ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, Princeton, New Jersey, 1865-6* (Princeton, NJ: Blanchard, 1866), https://archive.org/stream/catalogue1865prin_0#page/18/mode/2up, 18.

⁵⁸ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Theological Seminary, Andover, Mass., 1882-83* (Andover, MA: Warren F. Draper, 1883), 24, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015068473183&view=1up&seq=3>.

enter the seminary. Very little is mentioned by way of critique regarding the subject matter taught in the seminaries.

Deficiencies in the Prescribed Curriculum

Perhaps the most prominent issue revolving around the prescribed curriculum is that it did not allow men to enter the seminary without a college education or an equivalent. At an initial glance, this policy seems justifiable. In the prescribed curriculum students would enter together as first year students and progress through the three-year course as one body of students, much like a cohort in numerous upper-level theological programs today. Because course studies were built to be taught in succession and to be completed within a three-year time frame, it was important that the men were the same level academically. Thus, the professors needed the men to be on the same page intellectually in order to accomplish the task of getting them through the curriculum at the same time. For men like Wayland, Boyce, and Broadus, this approach had at least two major flaws. First, it challenged the nature of what it meant to be called by God into ministry. Before going forward, one should note that all three men believed men should receive training for ministry if at all possible. Indeed, all three spent the majority of their adult lives in education. Wayland once argued, “To every one whom Christ has thus called let us give every intellectual advantage, which the circumstances of his individual case render suitable. Having done this, we have done all in our power for the improvement of the ministry, and we may reasonably expect on our labors the blessing of God.”⁵⁹ However, they felt the requirements that

⁵⁹ Wayland, *The Apostolic Ministry*, 81.

the prescribed curriculum demanded and that the seminaries upheld gave an unbiblical impression on what was necessary to be a minister of the gospel. Wayland wrote:

We have Colleges and Theological Schools in abundance, where he may enjoy every advantage for study. These seminaries present opportunities for improvement and cultivation, of which, if he do not avail himself, he must have a reason which will justify himself at the bar of God. But let him remember that these cannot make him a minister of Jesus Christ. They confer none of the qualifications which Christ has required. They are merely accessories which may give increased efficiency to the essential qualifications. But if he change the accessory into the principal, he may be a good lecturer, an eloquent orator, or a neat essayist, yet he will not be a good minister of Jesus Christ.⁶⁰

For Wayland, Boyce, and Broadus, a call to ministry was not based on the completion of a college education or even a full course of theological training. Many denominations at that time required their ministers to have at least completed a college degree before they could officially become a candidate to serve in a church or enter further studies. The implication of that approach meant men were not qualified to minister unless they had been, at minimum, classically educated. Boyce explained, “The idea which is prominent as the basis of this action is that the work of the Ministry should be entrusted only to those who have been classically educated,—an assumption which, singularly enough, is made for no other profession.”⁶¹ He continued, “The Scriptural qualifications for the Ministry do, indeed, involve the idea of knowledge, but that knowledge is not of the sciences, nor of philosophy, nor of the

⁶⁰ Francis Wayland, *Notes on the Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches* (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., 1857), 75-76.

⁶¹ James P. Boyce, *Three Changes in Theological Institutions: An Inaugural Address Delivered before the Board of Trustees of the Furman University* (Greenville, SC: C. J. Elford’s Book and Job Press, 1856), 12.

languages, but of God and of His plan of salvation.”⁶² Broadus affirmed Boyce’s statement when he wrote:

I believe, for my part, that the theory of the Baptist churches as to the ministry of the gospel is a right theory, substantially. That theory has always been that the ministry of the gospel ought not to be restricted to men who have been over a certain fixed course of mental training in order to it, but that every one should be encouraged to preach who feels moved to preach, and whom the churches are willing to hear.⁶³

In the context of Broadus’s comments, his concerns over a fixed course requirement for ministry implies any form of formal mental training, including colligate or theological education. At the same time, he is not denouncing the pursuit of education, especially theological education. In fact, his words are part of an address he gave to the Missouri Baptist Educational Society exhorting the propagation of ministerial education among Baptists. However, his concerns, like Wayland and Boyce, were that theological schools like Andover, Princeton, Harvard Divinity, and Newton fostered (intentionally or unintentionally) the unbiblical view that men must be formally educated with a college education in order to be useful for the ministry.

A second flaw related to the prohibition of non-college men entering the seminary was that it hindered men going into ministry. During the nineteenth century, the influx of immigrants coming to America was significant. At the same time, the expansion of territory such as the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and the continued effects of the Second Great Awakening produced a great need for more churches and

⁶² Boyce, *Three Changes*, 1013.

⁶³ John A. Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 7th ed. (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1886), 201.

pastors. Unfortunately, the prescribed curriculum of the seminaries could not meet the demands, and, in many ways, hindered the process. Boyce powerfully articulated the dilemma in his *Three Changes in Theological Instructions*. He wrote:

The world seems ready, lying at the very door of the Christian Church, yet calling for laborious efforts to gather it in. Oh! were there ever a time when we would expect that God would answer the prayers of his Churches, and overflow the land and the world with a Ministry adequate to uphold his cause in every locality, . . . now, when the workings of God himself indicate his readiness to beget a nation in a day; now, when the multiplication a thousand fold of the laborers will still leave an abundant work for each; but now, alas! now, when our Churches at home are not adequately supplied; when dark and destitute places are found in the most favored portions of our own land; when the Heathen are at our very doors, and the cry is help, help, and there is no help, because there are not laborers enough to meet the wants immediately around us.⁶⁴

Boyce's words describe a troubling picture in the life of the church at that time. Later in his address he identified at least one aspect that caused the shortage of pastors. He wrote:

The practical operation of this theory [requiring a college education for seminary] has tended in two ways to diminish the ranks of our valuable Ministry. It has restrained many from entering upon the work, and has prevented the arrangement of such a course of study as would have enabled those who have entered upon it to fit themselves in a short time for valuable service.⁶⁵

Boyce understood fewer men were entering the ministry and the seminaries were part to blame.

⁶⁴ Boyce, *Three Changes*, 10-11.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

Boyce's thoughts were not unfamiliar to the greater population of ministers in America. In Wayland's *Notes on the Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches*, he summarized the dilemma this way:

I may, perhaps, be permitted to say a word respecting our Theological Seminaries. They are all fashioned after the same model, the Seminary at Andover. This is an excellent institution, but it is no heresy to say, that it is not probably perfect, or if perfect for Congregationalists, that it is not of necessity perfect for Baptists. Our views of the ministry, and the conditions of our denomination, are not those of Congregationalists. Would it not be worth while for some one to take up this whole subject and examine it anew, and show what is needed in order to render these institutions far more effective, by adapting them to our own wants, and our own peculiar exigencies? At present, the number of young men whom they educate, in comparison with our needs, is but a drop in the bucket, while the expense to the denomination, of each graduate, is very great. Could they not be popularized? Could they not so arrange their instruction as to render it serviceable to men of different degrees of preparation? instead of educating eight, ten, or twelve, annually, could they not educate fifty or a hundred?⁶⁶

Wayland referenced the need to arrange the instruction to render service to men of different degrees of preparation. Places like Andover, Newton, and Princeton were the dominant evangelical seminaries in early and middle nineteenth century. For many years these seminaries were considered the best places to be trained in America. However, because of their curriculum, it was extremely difficult to train men of different academic preparation. The Newton Theological Institution attempted to make arrangements for non-college men, but ended up having to separate the men in completely different classes.⁶⁷ The prescribed curriculum was the primary reason why many of the seminaries were only producing a handful of graduates each year.

⁶⁶ Wayland, *Notes on the Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches*, 76.

⁶⁷ Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, 145.

Wayland, Boyce, and Broadus had profound respect for the motives of those individuals who established and taught at those early seminaries. However, they all recognized a great need for change. Wayland once remarked, “In our own denomination, it is said that we have 4,000 churches destitute of preachers of the gospel. What is to be done to meet this deficiency?”⁶⁸ Broadus expressed his thoughts concerning the dilemma when he wrote, “I have profound respect for the ministry of the Presbyterian and Episcopal brethren, for instance, but I wonder sometimes what in the world would have become of the masses of the people in America if all the religious persuasions had done as they have done with reference to the ministry.”⁶⁹ Broadus was referring to the requirements mandated by those denominations; namely, requiring a college education before entering the seminary. He continued, “But if it hadn’t been for the great Methodist and great Baptist bodies, and some others like them, who have encouraged men to preach that were destitute of this artificial course of training, what in the world would have become of the masses of the people?”⁷⁰ Broadus, Wayland, and Boyce were not the only individuals concerned about the lack of ministers trained to help reach the masses. As will be shown later in this chapter, the entire Southern Baptist Convention was looking for the right solution.

The next deficiency revolving around the prescribed curriculum was that many individuals felt it was ineffective. For instance, some believed it did not place enough

⁶⁸ Wayland, *The Apostolic Ministry*, 79.

⁶⁹ Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 201.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 202.

attention in the area of preaching. Henry C. Vedder, former editor of the *Baptist Quarter Review* and church history professor at Crozer Theological Seminary (1894-1926), expressed his disappointment with the prescribed curriculum when he wrote, “The truth is, our seminaries are conducted on a false principle; they are needed to make preachers and pastors, but their *curricula* are arranged to make scholars. They in great part fail to make either—in the one case from attempting too little, in the other from attempting too much.”⁷¹ Vedder believed the chief end of every theological institution was to make graduates an acceptable preacher and wise pastor.⁷² With the prescribed curriculum many seminaries were not teaching homiletics until the final year of studies.⁷³ When Vedder published his article “Reforms in Theological Education” in 1885, he stated, “In a few seminaries this course is just beginning to be adopted—the students doing preaching during term-time, and pastoral or missionary work during vacations, under the direct supervision of the faculty and subject to their guidance and criticism.”⁷⁴ Vedder was not opposed to the other courses taught at the seminary, but felt not enough attention was placed on cultivating effective pastors in the pulpit.

⁷¹ Henry C. Vedder, “Reforms in Theological Education,” *The Baptist Quarterly Review* 7 (July 1885), ed. Robert S. MacArthur and Henry C. Vedder (New York: The Baptist Review Association, 1885), 328.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, 1849-1850*, xiv. See also, Andover Theological Seminary 1857 Catalog.

⁷⁴ Vedder, “Reforms in Theological Education,” 328-29.

Part of the problem related to Vedder's complaint was that the curriculum was overloaded with too much material for a three-year course. Thus, it was difficult to include further training in homiletics. For example, at Andover Theological Seminary the catalog expressed serious concern for any student wishing to participate in any extracurricular activity (like preaching) while in school. The catalog stated:

It is, furthermore, earnestly recommended that students should, if possible, so arrange their plans that the *whole* of every term shall be devoted exclusively to their duties in the Seminary. Experience has proved that the labor of *teaching*, and of other similar avocations, during term-time, is an evil. Students are advised to avoid it, unless compelled to endure it by absolute necessity. Even the vacations should not be unnecessarily spent in exhausting pursuits.⁷⁵

As mentioned earlier, seminaries like Princeton did try to make adjustments by adding a fourth year with more emphasis placed on exercises in composition, reading, and delivery of sermons, but not within the context of a local church.⁷⁶ On the other hand, when The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary opened in 1859 two of the eight schools were designed specifically to instruct students in preaching and pastoral ministry lasting a full eight months, which could be taken more than once if the student desired. Furthermore, weekly opportunities to preach in local churches and to teach in Sunday schools were encouraged and provided for the students.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Theological Seminary, Andover, Mass., 1857* (Andover, MA: Warren F. Draper, 1857), 12, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015068473423&view=1up&seq=12>.

⁷⁶ *Catalogue of the Officers & Students of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, 1865-6*, 18.

⁷⁷ "History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Greenville, South Carolina; To Which Is Appended *The First Annual Catalogue, 1859-1860*"

Another ineffective area of the prescribed curriculum was its inability to meet the academic needs of the individual student. In other words, because the curriculum was set, no modification of the courses or choice of class was possible. As a result, greater scholarship was diminished. Vedder explained:

The effect of the present system is not to promote good scholarship, but to make good scholarship impossible. The man who has a natural taste for Hebrew is handicapped by his fellow-student who groaningly plods his way along, and at the end of his course cannot for the life of him distinguish between vocal and silent *Sheva*. The dullard learns nothing of value to him, and the bright man fails to become the scholar that he might be made. On the other hand, the man who throws away so much time and labor on Hebrew which he cannot learn, is very likely a good theologian, but can make no real progress in that study because of the hours he must spend in vainly wrestling with the Hebrew verb. A good Hebraist and a good theologian have been spoiled in order to give one man a smattering of Hebrew, which he forgets as soon as he can after he graduates. Will any sane man say that the gain is any compensation for the loss?⁷⁸

Vedder's remarks pointed out a common obstacle found within the prescribed curriculum; namely, the nature of the curriculum forced students on a set track without consideration of their intellectual aptitude. Vedder colorfully elaborated this problem when he wrote, "He must lie upon this bed of Procrustes, and if he is too long or too short he must be made to fit, though his intellectual members are torn joint from joint in the process."⁷⁹ In this case, Vedder's complaint was not with the subject matter being taught at the seminary, although he did feel more instruction and opportunity in

(Greenville, SC: G. E. Elford, printer, 1860), Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, 53.

⁷⁸ Vedder, "Reforms in Theological Education," 330.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 329.

homiletics should be available. His major concern was that the curriculum provided no mechanism to allow students to make individual course adjustments based on their strengths or weaknesses. Consequently, students could never excel in a particular area beyond what the curriculum provided. Even if a student chose to reenter the program a second time, he could not single out one specific course, but would have to retake the entire course of study. As time passed, some of the seminaries began adding special courses or private classes; however, these courses were limited and normally required an additional fee.

A third deficiency of the prescribed curriculum is related to the course load of the seminary. Because the curriculum was overloaded with classes, the three-year time frame made it difficult not only to add supplemental material (like more preaching), but also made it difficult to master the material that was already given in the regular course of study. In his *Thoughts on the Present College System in the United States*, Wayland addressed the danger of mandating a set time frame for completion of studies. One should note that Wayland's work was focused on the prescribed curriculum in colleges, but the principles were applicable to the seminaries, which is made evident by the fact that The Southern Baptist Theological intentionally did not mandate a time frame to complete their full course of studies. Wayland wrote, "The object of education is to communicate knowledge and to confer discipline. But time enters as an element into both of these results. A man cannot acquire knowledge by cursory reading, or by rapid unreflecting mental action."⁸⁰ Wayland argued that a set

⁸⁰ Wayland, *Thoughts on the Present College System*, 81-82.

time for completion of work naturally limited the ability of the students. In other words, regardless of the student's intellectual prowess, once the time frame was up there was no longer a window of learning in that context. More importantly, when the amount of material was too great for a set length of time, even the most gifted students would, out of necessity, limit their scope of learning. Consequently, according to

Wayland:

Radical and original thought becomes more and more impossible. The student acquires the habit of going rapidly over the text book with less and less thought, and a tendency is created to the cultivation of the passive power of reception instead of the active power of originality; he thus knows a little of every thing, but knows nothing well.⁸¹

Wayland's critique is specially aimed at the time limit set for the completion of the overall college degree, which was four years. He was certainly concerned about the everyday schedules as well, especially if it hindered the development of original thought from the professor or the student.⁸² However, his greater concern was with the overall restriction of four years.

The restriction on time to complete the degree had other negative effects as well. If the governing body of the school felt it was necessary to include other areas of study, it must be made to fit within the four-year parameter. Even with the addition of more professors, when more classes were added, the original courses at the school had to reduce the amount of material being taught or speed up the teaching process in order to include the new courses. Either way, the student was negatively impacted.

⁸¹ Wayland, *Thoughts on the Present College System*, 83.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 86.

The same issue is true with the prescribed curriculum in the seminary as well, but, instead of four years, the length of study was three years. Broadus eliminated the problem by creating an educational structure that did not require a definitive time limit to complete the full degree and established independent schools so new subject matters could be implemented without impacting what was being taught in the other schools.

More can be said about the deficiencies within the prescribed curriculum. Indeed, several other areas will be addressed in the following chapter when highlighting the benefits of the elective system. However, what has been argued thus far is that the prescribed curriculum in the early and middle nineteenth century had considerable flaws. As a result, seminaries could not meet the demands of the churches and left an untold number of non-college men without the opportunity to be formally trained. Those who were able to attend seminary often found their experience rushed and lacking in the areas of preaching and pastoral care. Men like Wayland, Boyce, and Broadus understood the deficiencies of the prescribed curriculum and became strong advocates of educational reform. Eventually, Southern Baptists took steps to provide an alternative to the prescribed curriculum with the creation of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. When Dr. J. B. Jeter delivered his address to Southern Baptists in 1858 in support of the new seminary, his excitement for a new era of theological education was clearly expressed. He stated:

Being free from the shackles imposed by the old systems and established precedents, and having all the lights of experience and observation to guide us, we propose to found an institution suited to the genius, wants, and circumstances of our denomination; in which shall be taught with special

attention the true principles of expounding the Scriptures and the art of preaching efficiently the Gospel of Christ.⁸³

As previously mentioned, Broadus's excitement for the elective system stems from a variety of factors. The factors include his experience at the University of Virginia as a student and instructor, the creation of the Albemarle Female Institute, the influence of Francis Wayland, and the deficiencies within the prescribed curriculum. However, one more factor must be addressed in order to gain a fuller appreciation of Broadus's contribution to the seminary and explain his passion for the elective system. The last factor is the existing conditions of theological education within the Southern Baptist Convention prior to 1859.

Theological Education in the Southern Baptist Convention Prior to 1859

The Southern Baptist Convention was formed on May 8, 1845, in Augusta, Georgia. Prior to 1845, Baptists from the North and South cooperated in ministry through a variety of mission boards, state conventions, associations, agencies, societies, and the National Triennial Convention. However, over time, the issue over slavery proved to be the decisive factor causing the split between Northern and Southern Baptists. Before the Southern Baptist Convention was established, Baptists in the South did not have a central theological seminary for pastors. In fact, according to Benjamin Franklin Riley (president of Howard College, 1888-1898), Baptist ministry, especially in the South, was comprised of mostly illiterate but earnest,

⁸³ "History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary," 17-18.

devout men.⁸⁴ When the great revivals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century ended, Baptist churches in the South were filled with uneducated people, and were most often led by uneducated pastors.⁸⁵ When attempts to bring religious education to the pastors occurred, it was often met with great skepticism or contempt. Riley explained:

Some among the illiterate ministers seemed to regard such a suggestion as a reflection upon their ability to preach; others considered it as an impious hint that the divine call to the ministry was not complete without the patchwork of men; while others still looked upon such a proposal as a disposition to pander to individual and public pride.⁸⁶

Many pastors had seen the rapid growth of the gospel without the aid of formal theological education and felt God would continue to provide when called to preach. In addition, seminaries in the North were not helping matters. When Broadus wrote “The Theological Seminary” in *The Religious Herald* in 1858, he addressed potential issues that often arose from those who attended seminary. He wrote, “It is often objected that the Seminary-bred men are apt to be too *bookish*; that they do not love to mingle freely with the people.”⁸⁷ In response, Broadus proposed at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary “to erect no dormitories for the students in which they might lead too recluse and monkish life, but leave them to board in the families of the

⁸⁴ Benjamin Franklin Riley, *A History of the Baptists in Southern States East of the Mississippi* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1898), 131.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 131-32.

⁸⁷ John A. Broadus, “The Theological Seminary: Substance of Address by J. A. Broadus, at Hampton,” *The Religious Herald* 31 (July 29, 1858): 1.

town.”⁸⁸ He also mentioned that the seminary men tended to be stiff and formal in their preaching. They were often concerned with preaching according to rule, conforming to conventional standards of academia rather than preaching to the heart.⁸⁹ Broadus promised that The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary’s preaching practice would be different. He stated, “young men will doubtless be taught and trained in every proper way to be effective speakers; but they will not preach except when it can be *bona fide* preaching to do good.”⁹⁰ In other words, Broadus felt preaching in a classroom setting made it extremely difficult to preach with natural, genuine feelings, and, if left unchecked, would become a crippling pattern once in the pulpit. As an alternative, Broadus proposed his students would only preach in the context of a gathered worship meeting.

Broadus’s article was an attempt to convince pastors and churches, especially in the South, that the new seminary had real solutions to the concerns often manifested by the old seminary system. He also knew that if he could get uneducated ministers to attend at least one session in the new seminary, their ministry could be radically enhanced and perhaps they would be induced to remain for further sessions. Broadus was certain the elective system could meet the demands of the churches and the needs of the pastors; thus, he sought to advance it whenever possible.

⁸⁸ Broadus, “The Theological Seminary: Substance of Address,” 1.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Another concern over theological education prominent in Broadus's mind was the need to reassure pastors that their young men would have options in what courses they took at the seminary. Although the idea of being trained for ministry at a theological institution had become a common pattern in the North, many pastors in the South were still mentoring their young men who felt called to ministry,⁹¹ in part because of lack of accessibility to an educational institution and also because of concerns of what was being taught at the seminaries. As pastors would invest in the young men, they wanted to make sure their pupils were not being influenced or taught in a manner contrary to the way they had instructed them. Broadus understood the relational dynamics between a pastor and his protégé and sought to provide a sense of security for those pastors who may consider sending their young men to the seminary. He wrote:

Where a pastor is prejudiced against certain parts of a theological course—as some few brethren object to systematic theology, and others to homiletics—he can yet advise his young brother to go and study other subjects. And certainly the study of Hebrew and Greek, of Biblical Antiquities and Geography, of the Interpretation of Scripture and Church History, cannot be reckoned by any one as even in the smallest degree injurious.⁹²

For Broadus, the elective system was more than a “mechanical” structure for theological education; it provided solutions for serious concerns that were prevalent in his day. If a pastor was concerned about particular courses at the seminary, he could recommend his young apprentice not to take those classes. At the same time, the

⁹¹ William A. Mueller, *A History of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959), 3.

⁹² Broadus, “The Theological Seminary: Substance of Address,” 1.

young man could still gain valuable knowledge and insight from the other courses that were available to him. The benefit of having this option was unique and new; thus, Broadus was excited to promote it.

A final consideration that produced excitement for Broadus and his elective system was the need for a central seminary in the South. According to Gregory Wills, “By 1830 Baptists and Methodists were the most popular American denominations. They did not require formal education for ordination. Their preachers were farmers and mechanics rather than college or seminary graduates.”⁹³ Even though many of the Baptist pastors were uneducated, the idea of establishing a theological institution in the South was not new. Men like Oliver Hart and Richard Furman worked tirelessly in South Carolina to establish educational facilities for young ministers in the middle of eighteenth through the early nineteenth century.⁹⁴ Furman University was established in 1826 in Edgefield, South Carolina, and eventually moved to Greenville, South Carolina, in 1851. Mercer University was founded in 1833 in Georgia to train ministers, but had no theology professor until 1839.⁹⁵ In fact, several of the early colleges in the South were created to train ministers by establishing theological departments within the schools. However, because the theology courses were outside

⁹³ Gregory A. Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1859-2009* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 5.

⁹⁴ W. J. McGlothlin, *Baptist Beginnings in Education: A History of Furman University* (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1926), 25-50.

⁹⁵ Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 6.

the prescribed curriculum, very few students showed interest nor were there enough professors to teach a full theological curriculum.⁹⁶

Once the Southern Baptist Convention was established, a strong sentiment prevailed among many pastors to establish a central seminary that would serve as unifying institution for the southern states.⁹⁷ As early as 1845, talks of a new seminary had begun. Ultimately, through the works of men like A. M. Poindexter, Basil Manly Sr., J. B. Jeter, and J. P. Boyce, resolutions for a new seminary were made in 1855 in Montgomery, Alabama.⁹⁸ Broadus was not ignorant of the desire for a central seminary in the southern states. In 1854, a committee of the Baptist Education Society of Virginia appointed a committee to reopen the proposal of a central seminary. One year later, the committee reported back to the Baptist General Association of Virginia explaining the actions that had occurred in Montgomery.⁹⁹ After Boyce had given his *Three Changes in Theological Institutions* inaugural address in 1856, Broadus responded with great interest about the possibility of having a new seminary when he wrote “The Theological Seminary” in 1857.¹⁰⁰ The article is evidence that Broadus had spent much time wrestling with the potential options available to the Southern

⁹⁶ Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 5-6.

⁹⁷ Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists* (Valley Forge: PA: Judson Press, 1963), 318.

⁹⁸ “History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,” 4.

⁹⁹ Mueller, *A History of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 12-13.

¹⁰⁰ John A. Broadus, “The Theological Seminary,” *The Religious Herald* (April 9, 1857).

Baptist Convention for a central seminary. As a result, when Broadus was asked to serve on the Committee on the Plan of Organization for the seminary, he understood all the dynamics and hard work that had taken place by other men to get the process to that point. Thus, his excitement for what the new seminary could be was expressed by his presentation of the elective system, a subject that is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

THE ELECTIVE SYSTEM OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The elective system established at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1859 was more than a simple plan for choosing a particular course of study. The system involved an entire educational structure that sought to meet the needs of the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention and give students the best opportunity to succeed in ministry based on their intellectual aptitude, willingness to work, and amount of time they could invest at the seminary. In order to gain a clearer perspective of the elective system at the seminary, an explanation of two key educational values is provided first, followed by a detailed analysis of the structure of the elective system.

Two Integral Values Related to the Elective System

Much of the current material on the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary provides a basic structural overview of the system. However, woven into the structural system are at least two key educational values that are integral to the success of the elective system.¹ The first key educational value is freedom of learning and the second is discipline of hard work.

¹ Numerous other values are a part of the seminary's story. Values such as biblical fidelity, Baptist doctrine, and missions are extremely important in the life of the seminary. However, the two values addressed in this chapter are specifically related to the function and success of the elective system and are noted in Broadus's writings on the elective system.

Freedom of Learning

The first key educational value is the concept of freedom of learning.

Broadus's experience at the University of Virginia, along with his work at the Albemarle Female Institute, solidified in his mind that students should have some measure of free choice in their course of study. When Broadus published "The Theological Seminary" in 1858 highlighting some of the advantages of the new seminary, he wrote, "The perfect liberty of choice as to which subjects shall be studied by each student, and as to the order in which they shall be taken up, will tend to promote the *spirit of freedom*."² The idea of "spirit of freedom" was certainly a prominent part of American landscape. After the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, the ideas of independence and freedom were at a high mark in American history. By the middle of the nineteenth century, democratic freedom was a cherished principle permeating American culture. As the idea of freedom and population grew in the country, many academic institutions remained stuck in the old deficient educational model. In particular, the restrictions found within the prescribed curriculum stifled the much-needed progress in theological education. Thus, when Broadus began to promote the seminary, he believed the elective system would be more advantageous and appealing to young men in America going into ministry. For example, Broadus wrote, "Such a system is more likely to be *attractive*. Young men can go, with such preparation as they may have, to study what they may prefer, can stay as few or as many sessions as they choose, and can get credit, from time to time,

² John A. Broadus, "The Theological Seminary: Substance of Address by J. A. Broadus, at Hampton," *The Religious Herald* 31 (July 29, 1858): 1.

for just so much as they have done.”³ More importantly, Broadus felt the idea of freedom of choice within theological education was more in line with Scripture and provided greater benefits to students. He stated, “Here [at the seminary], as in the New Testament form of Church Government, the benefits of freedom far outweigh its inconveniencies. The free choice of studies, provided for by James P. Boyce and his associates, has shown itself thoroughly adequate to furnish theological education for students.”⁴

The idea of free choice of studies is often taken for granted in most seminaries today. Modern day students expect some level of choice in the selection process for their course of study. However, it should be noted that the freedom to choose one’s courses was completely foreign to theological institutions in America before the establishment of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In other words, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was the first institution to implement an elective approach to theological education in the history of the United States. As a result, those who considered attending the seminary recognized the uniqueness of its structure and understood that freedom of learning was an essential part of the educational philosophy of the seminary.

However, Broadus’s advocacy for free choice of studies was not without opposition. According to Henry C. Vedder, some scholars believed that the free choice

³ Broadus, “The Theological Seminary: Substance of Address,” 1.

⁴ 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), 161.

of studies would lead to laziness among the students.⁵ In essence, the opposition argued that freedom of choice naturally leads to taking the path of least resistance. Many argued students would take the easiest courses and forgo the discipline required to complete the more difficult classes. Vedder, an admirer of Broadus, refuted the antagonists, claiming, “It is absurd, as well as contrary to all experience, to argue that men will labor harder at distasteful tasks than at congenial occupations, that the sense of duty is a stronger motive than love.”⁶ Broadus and Vedder believed that a greater passion to work harder in school was stimulated more through an interest in a subject, than a compulsory mandate. In the prescribed curriculum students were required to take every course, regardless of interest or aptitude, often resulting in minimal retention of the subject. Through the elective process at the seminary students chose their studies based on interests, needs, and their long-term goals, often resulting in greater achievement and more efficient time management. In contrast, Vedder argued that under the prescribed curriculum many students became frustrated because they felt they were wasting time. He wrote, “Under a compulsory system the conscientious student does his best to do the work required of him, but his mind is not elastic, and his spirit is chafed by the consciousness that he is throwing away precious time.”⁷ Broadus, on the other hand, believed the elective approach was more equitable. He

⁵ Henry C. Vedder, “Reforms in Theological Education,” *The Baptist Quarterly Review* 7 (July 1885), ed. Robert S. MacArthur and Henry C. Vedder (New York: The Baptist Review Association, 1885), 330.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 331.

⁷ *Ibid.*

wrote, “Men do that for which they have preparation, turn of mind, and time or patience; and get credit for exactly what they do.”⁸ Thus, minimal time was wasted and students were often motivated to pursue greater scholarship when possible.

The practical outworking of a student’s freedom of choice will be covered later in this chapter when examining the independent schools in the seminary. However, one other area needs to be addressed regarding the merits of the “freedom of learning” before looking at the second key value. Prior to the opening of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, one of the objections of the prescribed curriculum was that it compelled graduates to uphold particular theological positions without the freedom to disagree, even on contentious doctrines. Broadus explained, “Seminary students come out too much *of one way of thinking*—that they so generally adopt their teacher’s views of doctrine, as to have a uniformity of opinion which is inconsistent with mental independence and individuality.”⁹ An example of this issue given by Broadus was that the Presbyterian seminaries required their students to accept an extended and minute confession of faith before they could preach in one of their churches. Broadus also shared a specific example of a Presbyterian brother unable to enter the ministry because he had concerns over certain aspects of a particular doctrine. Broadus wrote, “An instance was alluded to, in which a young man of the finest talents was compelled

⁸ Broadus, “The Theological Seminary: Substance of Address,” 1.

⁹ Ibid.

to abandon the idea of becoming a preacher, because he had come to entertain serious doubts about certain points of Calvinism.”¹⁰ Broadus continued:

The inevitable effect of this must be, that the student goes to work, not to find out what the Scriptures teach, but to satisfy himself that they teach certain doctrines, which, in all their details, are laid down beforehand. This is the reverse of the natural process of inquiry, and must of necessity fetter the mind and restrict independence of thought.¹¹

Broadus was not opposed to teaching doctrine. Indeed, in the same article he affirmed the doctrinal statement all professors must sign at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in order to protect the school from heresy. However, he was opposed to suppressing genuine inquiry from students as they sought to discover the truth of Scripture. Interestingly, Broadus summed up his thoughts by connecting the students’ liberty to learn with the independent nature of Baptist polity. He wrote that “the students will be perfectly at liberty, and constantly encouraged, to think for themselves. Add the sturdy and indomitable independence which is fostered by all our Baptist ideas and institutions, and there does not seem to be much danger from this source.”¹² In other words, Broadus argued there is no danger in The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary forcing students to adhere to a particular doctrinal stance. On the other hand, through the guidance and teaching of the faculty, students would be encouraged to arrive at their own conclusion through the careful study of God’s Word, which was in harmony with the Baptist way of life.

¹⁰ Broadus, “The Theological Seminary: Substance of Address,” 1.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

When E. Y. Mullins published “The Contribution of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to Theological Education” in 1910, he eloquently summarized the seminary’s position on allowing students to choose their own course of study. He wrote:

The idea of allowing a theological student himself some discretion in the matter of choosing his studies was a startling innovation fifty years ago, but it was one in entire accord with what Baptists have ever regarded as a fundamental New Testament conception, soul freedom and opportunity for the free development of the individual. Of course this did not commit the school to scholastic chaos or a mere drifting at the mercy of capricious student options. The influence and advice of professors and the ideals and traditions of the school itself have been and are today potent influences in shaping the courses of the various men. It was simply a recognition of the democratic principle which made it possible for the personality of the student to become a factor, under most favorable conditions, in determining his theological course.¹³

When considering students could come to seminary and, under wise counsel from the faculty, choose the course of study that best fit their needs, it is easy to understand why the seminary became one of the largest and most influential seminaries in the United States.

Discipline of Hard Work

A second key educational value related to the success of the elective system was the discipline of hard work. When Broadus and the other faculty established the seminary there were certain expectations for students. One of the expectations was that the successful completion of the courses at the seminary would require discipline and hard work. Broadus was not unfamiliar with hard work. As referenced in the first

¹³ E. Y. Mullins, “The Contribution of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to Theological Education,” *Review & Expositor* 7, no. 1 (1910): 168-69.

chapter of this dissertation, Broadus was known to have a tremendous work ethic.¹⁴

Outside of his family, perhaps, the greatest influence in his life regarding the discipline of work was Gessner Harrison and the University of Virginia. When reflecting upon the impact of Harrison's life at an alumni event at the University of Virginia, Broadus concluded with these words:

But Gessner Harrison is only one of many noble men who have spent their strength in advancing its usefulness and building up its reputation. The noblest legacy they have left us is this—that the very genius of the place is *work*. No professor nor student of susceptible soul can establish himself here without feeling that there breathes through all the air this spirit of work—a noble rage for knowing and for teaching. This is the glory and the power of the institution which boasts so many illustrious names among its Visitors, its Faculty and its Alumni. And let it be the last word spoken to-day concerning Gessner Harrison, spoken, as it were, in his name to the professors and the students of the University he loved so well—Sirs, brothers, FEAR GOD AND WORK.¹⁵

Broadus determined the same virtue of hard work he learned growing up and at the University of Virginia would become a key value of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. A. T. Robertson wrote of a classroom experience as a student that adequately expresses Broadus's expectation for his students regarding work. He wrote, "He was never unkind to the ignorant and less gifted, although utterly impatient with the shiftless and negligent. The student who failed to prepare his lessons, supposing that the professor would not call on him this time, met with scorching treatment under

¹⁴ Archibald T. Robertson, *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication, 1910), 65.

¹⁵ John A. Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 7th ed. (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1886), 347.

Dr. Broadus.”¹⁶ Robertson continued, “He would brook no quibbling about irrelevant or unimportant matters. . . . Sometimes students dreaded to recite to Dr. Broadus. Many a poor fellow forgot his lesson and almost his name when asked a question in his class room. But those were glorious times, especially when the other fellow caught it.”¹⁷ Robertson’s words seem to portray in a harsh light Broadus’s approach to developing a work ethic. However, when given the total context of Robertson’s article, Broadus’s expectation for preparation and discipline came from a place of care and affection for his students, and they loved him for it.

The measure of a student’s work was expressed in how well he did on the exams. The examinations are considered an important feature of the elective system and are described here because they forced students to work hard if they wished to pass the course. Broadus stated that the elective system demanded graduation to be made difficult.¹⁸ The tendency for students was to take too many schools during one session. However, after experiencing the workload of each school and the nature of the exams, students learned quickly there were no easy courses at the seminary. Each school required two examinations—one exam at the middle of the session and the other at the end of the session. Each exam lasted nine to ten hours, with a brief oral exam in certain schools.¹⁹ Broadus noted that if a student spent three or four years at

¹⁶ A. T. Robertson, “As a Teacher,” *The Seminary Magazine* 8, no. 7 (April 1895), 360.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 360-61.

¹⁸ Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, 161.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

the seminary and completed the Full Graduate degree, it meant he had passed more than twenty of the all-day exams.²⁰ An intriguing fact is the seminary reduced the exam in the middle of the session to five and a half hours in 1899, four years after Broadus died. Curious inquirers could speculate if the exams would have remained longer if Broadus were still living at that time.

The two key values that were integral to the success of the elective system have been addressed. They served, in part, as the foundation upon which the total structure of the elective system was built. Without these two values, the total system would be incomplete and function poorly. With that in mind, an analysis of the structure of the elective system is given in the remainder of the chapter.

The Structure of the Elective System

When Broadus was asked to serve on the Plan of Organization Committee for the seminary, his first assignment was to develop the plan of instruction for the new school. Within that context, Broadus's initial objective was to accomplish Boyce's vision as expressed in *Three Changes in Theological Institutions*.²¹ More specifically, Broadus was to develop a plan that would give theological instruction to young ministers in every grade of general education while at the same time provide a thorough theological course for college graduates that would be comparable to other

²⁰ Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, 12.

²¹ James P. Boyce, *Three Changes in Theological Institutions: An Inaugural Address Delivered before the Board of Trustees of the Furman University* (Greenville, SC: C. J. Elford's Book and Job Press, 1856).

seminaries in that day.²² When the catalog of the seminary was first published, which described Broadus's plan, it began by highlighting Boyce's vision for the seminary:

It is the design of this Institution to meet in every respect the requirements for Theological Education in the Baptist Ministry. The theory of our churches has never been to confine the Ministry to those who can attain superior advantages of culture. The larger class of Baptist preachers may ever be of those who have not been educated in colleges. At the same time, the importance of a good education has been felt, and the attainment of it has been urged upon all who have the opportunity. To meet adequately the wants of our Ministry, therefore, a Theological Seminary must provide the highest degree of culture for those who may be able to take advantage of it, and at the same time afford its instruction to all capable of deriving benefit from them, shutting out none from studies which do not necessarily involve the learned languages, because they may not have had the advantages of collegiate education.²³

When evaluating the design of the seminary, numerous questions arise. First, how are non-college men integrated into the educational structure with college graduates?

Second, what are the concerns of combining two different levels of education together? Third, how is greater scholarship fostered when education levels are mixed?

Finally, how does the free choice of studies play a role in the whole process? The answer to these four questions can be found by examining the prominent features of the elective system. Thus, what follows is a detailed analysis of each of the features of the elective system and the subsequent response to each question.

²² Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, 155.

²³ "History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Greenville, South Carolina; To Which Is Appended *The First Annual Catalogue, 1859-1860*" (Greenville, SC: G. E. Elford, printer, 1860), Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, 39-40.

English Bible Classes

When examining the initial catalog of the seminary, one of the earlier sections described the purpose of the seminary. Within that description a brief explanation of one of the prominent features of the seminary is identified; namely, the implementation of the English Bible in the Old and New Testaments courses, as well as an English course in systematic theology. The catalog stated:

With the exception of the schools of Exegesis, all studies here to be pursued in English are so pursued in all Theological Seminaries. In the Schools thus excepted, there is still the same course in Greek and Hebrew that is usually taught, and these courses are intended to be as complete and thorough as in Theological Institutions of the highest grade. The English Exegetical courses are additions which, while they furnish opportunity to those who know not Greek and Hebrew, to learn the laws of interpretation and the method of their application, give to those acquainted with these languages, a further course, in which they are enabled to study God's word, and to attain a wider and more familiar knowledge of its contents than would otherwise be possible.²⁴

It is noteworthy to mention that before The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was opened in 1859, no other seminary offered an English course in the Bible as a part of its main curriculum. Both Old Testament and New Testament exegesis courses were taught in Hebrew and Greek in the old prescribed system. As a result, students needed a thorough knowledge of the original languages of the Bible before they entered the seminary in order to successfully progress through the curriculum. However, in the case of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, men could enter the institution with little or no background in ancient languages and still receive a high-quality theological education. Although the process was simple, it was revolutionary at that time in theological education. When students would enroll in the

²⁴ "History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary," 41.

seminary, they could choose between eight different schools to attend (the independent schools will be addressed later in this chapter). Out of the eight schools, three required knowledge of another language beyond English to complete the entire course at that school. Old Testament Interpretations required Hebrew, Interpretations of the New Testament required Greek, and Systematic Theology required Latin. At the same time, the three schools that required proficiency in another language also offered an English course in those subjects, which did not require knowledge in Hebrew, Greek, or Latin. More will be discussed later about the degree program, but key to the success of the English classes was that a college student or a person with equivalent educational background who had knowledge of the languages could not receive the full degree of the seminary unless he took all the English courses along with all the upper level Old Testament Hebrew, New Testament Greek, and the Latin Systematic Theology courses. Thus, as the seminary grew, the English classes were almost always full of both non-college men and college graduates. Furthermore, because the other five schools at the seminary were also taught in English, every student gained valuable insight regardless of their educational level. Consequently, every school had both college graduates and non-college men attending. Therefore, it was through the implementation of the English Bible courses and the English Systematic Theology course into the elective system that men of various educational levels could be trained together.

When F. H. Kerfoot, former student and professor at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, gave the regular address at the opening session of the seminary in 1897, he reflected on the early decision to include classes in English at the seminary

roughly forty years earlier. Acknowledging the seminary's growth since its inception, he wrote:

A certain part of the course has been arranged so that any man of fair English education can take it to great advantage. . . . As a result these classes are most of them very large, ranging from seventy-five to a hundred and fifty each. They have in them many of the best trained college men, and alongside of them, oftentimes at the same desks, men who have never been to college, and who in the providence of God could never have gone to college. . . . And yet many of them are men of grit and grace and great ability, who even in their studies in the Seminary put to the blush some of the college graduates. And from this same class of men, all innocent of Greek and Hebrew and Latin, come, as in all the years of Baptist history, some of the ablest preachers and wisest leaders that God ever gave to his people.²⁵

Kerfoot's words speak to the success of the seminary's plan, but in the early days of the seminary many skeptics questioned if such a model could actually work. Even Broadus stated in the beginning that the plan was a question of mere theory.²⁶

When word spread that The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was intermingling both college graduates and non-college students in the same class, numerous concerns arose from those outside the seminary. Scholars doubted the validity of such a model. They assumed such a model would, by its very nature, lower the standard of theological learning. They would argue that the less educated men would require the faculty to lower the grade of scholarship, thus impeding the progress of the more academically advanced men. Mullins refuted the argument when he wrote:

²⁵ F. H. Kerfoot, *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the Light of Forty Years: The Regular Address at the Opening of the Session, October 1, 1897* (Louisville, KY: Chas. T. Dearing, 1897), <http://baptiststudiesonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Kerfoot-J-H-40-years-SBTS.pdf>, 30-31.

²⁶ John A. Broadus, "Reforms in Theological Education – A Symposium," *The Baptist Quarterly Review* 7 (October 1885), ed. Robert S. MacArthur and Henry C. Vedder (New York: The Baptist Review Association, 1885), 434.

For one thing, the non-college man is not usually a crude youngster, pulled green and shipped to us for seminary consumption. This kind of man we invariably urge to go to college before coming to us, and if he insists upon coming anyway, usually about two weeks of tussle with our courses of study convince him that he misread the providential indications which brought him here.²⁷

Mullins continued, “No, the non-college man in our student body is usually the mature pastor who entered the ministry late and who has already learned to use his mind, and he very frequently gives the college man a good race in class grades and general proficiency.”²⁸ Regardless of the age or the maturity of the non-college man, the standards in any of the classes were not lowered for the less advanced men.

Part of the advantage of the elective system was that it provided a way out for the student if the class was too difficult. Mullins explained, “A safety valve is provided in cases where the less prepared man finds the usual ticket of studies too difficult for him, in the elective principle. It is open to him at any time to drop a class and concentrate upon fewer studies to make up for inability to carry the larger number of classes with his better trained classmate.”²⁹ Mullins’s remarks affirm what Broadus wrote twenty-five years earlier concerning students who were struggling to do well in a course. Broadus wrote, “Moreover, those who are relieved from the discouragement of attempting studies in which they miserably failed, will often apply themselves with

²⁷ Mullins, “The Contribution of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,” 168.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

new relish and restored self-respect to matters which they recognize as necessary to their pulpit work.”³⁰

Broadus also felt that many of the critics, because they had not experienced an educational model like the seminary’s, unreasonably assumed men of different academic qualifications could not participate in the same class. Broadus responded by writing, “The real difficulties are found to be very slight, compared with the great advantages of throwing all the students together in these various departments. The less erudite men soon find that work will tell, and that they can often share very comfortably in a recitation with some college graduate.”³¹ Furthermore, Broadus went on to explain there was a common result that came from keeping the men together in the same class. He wrote, “At the same time, they [non-college men] have occasion to observe the advantage possessed by fellow-students, or the professor, from an acquaintance with the learned languages.”³² As a result, men who were naturally gifted in the languages, but not college educated, would, according to Broadus, “quit after one session, and go off to college for a thorough course, or who go to work, by private instruction or resolute unaided study, to master Greek, some of them with real success.”³³

³⁰ Broadus, “Reforms in Theological Education—A Symposium,” 437.

³¹ Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, 160.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

Perhaps the strongest support for combining non-college men with college graduates came from Kerfoot. After discussing the similarity between preaching to a congregation and instructing students of different academic preparation, he ended with this conclusion:

But whatever may be thought of the theory, there can be no question in the mind of any one who is familiar with the practical working of this idea in our Seminary. Every professor who has taught such classes can testify that when he comes to grade his examination papers it is no unusual thing to find that of the highest marks in the class one will have been earned by a thoroughly trained college man, and the other by a man who has never been in college, with the chances for the non-college man to be in the lead about as good as are those of the college man. Dr. Broadus often testified that it had been so in his experience. Each of the present professors can bear this same testimony. And not only so. But let any college-trained man who has ever sat in these classes alongside of these untrained men bear his testimony as to whether he found it profitable for him to take these classes or not. Not one, so far as I have ever heard, has ever called into question the valuableness of this special part of our course. More than a thousand men will stand up to bear their testimony that in their judgment this part of the course, where college men and non-college men studied all together, has been the richest, the juiciest, the most practically helpful, of any part of the entire course.³⁴

Another concern with allowing non-college men to enter the seminary with college graduates is that it would entice the non-college men to shortcut the educational process by skipping college. Boyce and Broadus were both aware of the potential problems this issue could bring to the seminary. As will be shown later in this chapter, Broadus clearly expressed his desire for young men to go to college before seminary if possible.³⁵ Boyce understood the political ramifications of the issue. Years earlier he observed the concern of Baptist college presidents over

³⁴ Kerfoot, *In the Light of Forty Years*, 35-36.

³⁵ John A. Broadus, "Southern Baptist Theological Seminary," *The Religious Herald* 32, no. 33 (August 18, 1859): 130.

potentially losing their students when a proposal for a central seminary was made within the Southern Baptist Convention.³⁶ Kerfoot provided an important response to the concerns made by those who questioned the seminary's plan. First, he noted that all the faculty of the seminary were college graduates. Then he stated, "They all know what college training means. It would be criminal in them to urge, or to encourage, any young man to fail to get a college training, if in their judgment the young man ought to go to college before coming to the Seminary."³⁷ Second, after years of observation at the seminary, the wisdom and actions of the faculty demonstrated that the concern was unfounded.³⁸ Men who entered seminary but needed to be at college were persuaded to go back and pursue an undergraduate degree. However, men who could not attend college for various circumstances were encouraged to maximize their time at the seminary.

As demonstrated, the most prevalent concerns about combining various levels of education in the same course were unsubstantiated. After years of experience, what started as a mere theory proved to be an integral part of the seminary's success. Indeed, including the English courses and mixing the non-college and college men together became the linchpin for equipping thousands of men for the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

³⁶ Gregory A. Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 1859-2009* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 13.

³⁷ Kerfoot, *In the Light of Forty Years*, 32.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

The final two questions related to how greater scholarship is fostered when education levels are mixed and how the free choice of studies plays a role in the whole process are answered by examining five other features of the elective system. They include: (1) independent schools, (2) requirements for graduation, (3) flexibility in student's choice of courses, (4) special studies, and (5) Doctor in Theology. An analysis of these features is provided below, followed by a summary of how the five features work together to provide the greatest opportunity for scholarship based on the student's intellectual aptitude, willingness to work, and amount of time invested at the seminary.

Independent Schools

Most of the current research on the elective system references the independent schools at the seminary, primarily because the schools serve as the hub or centerpiece of the entire elective system. Much like the University of Virginia and the Albemarle Female Institute, these schools were completely independent from each other in at least four ways. First, the faculty of each school was completely responsible for the material taught within the course. However, the subject material had to be taught in accordance with and not contrary to the Abstract of Principles.³⁹ Broadus explained the provision in this manner: "The Professor must accept a brief abstract of principles, as one safeguard against their teaching heresy; but they are supposed to be men who have already formed their leading opinions, who will undertake the professorship only

³⁹ "Abstract of Principles," *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, <https://www.sbts.edu/about/abstract/>.

if they can concur in these principles, and will therefore not be materially restricted in their inquiries.”⁴⁰ Beyond the Abstract of Principles, the professors were at liberty to shape their courses as they felt would provide the best training possible for the subject matter. At same time, their independence did not mean isolation. Each of the professors was in constant communication with each other through faculty meetings, friendships, and discussions beyond seminary life. Accountability also came through the Board of Trustees of the seminary and the Southern Baptist Convention.⁴¹

Second, the schools were independent in that no school required input from another school to complete its course. In other words, each school’s course was self-contained and, thus, did not demand a student to take another school before enrolling in the school of his choice. Unlike the prescribed curriculum, the elective system was not designed for the schools to be taken in succession. However, an exception was considered in the Bible classes within the same school. The men who were familiar with the biblical languages were advised, or at least recommended, to take the English Bible course before or at the same time of taking the Hebrew or Greek course. In Boyce’s memoir, Broadus described the advantages of the English classes in the Bible. Following his comments, he explained why it is better to take the English course first. He stated, “As the students in the Hebrew and Greek classes in this way have gained, or are at the same time gaining, so much general knowledge of the Bible in English,

⁴⁰ Broadus, “The Theological Seminary: Substance of Address,” 1.

⁴¹ See example from Joshua W. Powell, “‘We Cannot Sit in Judgment’: William Whitsitt and the Future of the Seminary,” *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 13, no. 1 (Spring 2009), https://sbts-wordpress-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/equip/uploads/2015/10/SBJT_131_SPR09-Powell.pdf.

they can afford to bestow more attention upon the Hebrew and Greek languages themselves, than if they must hurry on to exegesis.”⁴² Also, after several years into the life of the seminary, the faculty felt it best to divide the Hebrew and Greek courses into junior level and senior level classes. A student was free to take the senior course first, but it was the general practice and recommendation to take the junior level course prior to the senior course.⁴³ However, it should be noted that both the former and latter recommendations were within the context of an individual school and did not require the assistance of any other school.

Third, the schools were independent in that a student’s academic performance in a particular school resulted in the passing or failing of only that school. When Mullins highlighted some of the key aspects of the elective system in “The Contribution of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to Theological Education,” he cited this feature. He wrote:

The courses of study are arranged into independent departments or schools, each of which is complete in itself. Originally there were eight of these. If a man took any one of these courses and passed successfully the required examinations and had a class grade which warranted it, a certificate of proficiency in this department was issued to him, even in cases where the student had failed in every department but this one, or in the rare cases where for special reasons only one had been taken, as in the case of a local pastor or others, the certificate of proficiency is granted for acceptable work in a single department.⁴⁴

⁴² Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, 158.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁴⁴ Mullins, “The Contribution of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,” 165.

At first glance, this feature seems insignificant. However, Broadus pointed out the merits of such a plan when compared to the prescribed curriculum. He wrote, “The tendency in employing a [prescribed] curriculum is to let many men graduate who do not really deserve it, simply because they belong to the graduating class; and to overlook a man’s serious deficiencies in one subject because he has stood well in another.”⁴⁵ In other words, in the prescribed curriculum one of the objectives was to get all the men through each year’s course requirements. At times, some men would struggle with a particular subject within the curriculum for that year. However, because of the nature of the prescribed curriculum, men were allowed to progress to the next year because their overall performance exceeded the deficiencies in the one subject. Broadus believed the elective method better represented the preparation and quality of each man’s work because he had to graduate in every subject independently.⁴⁶ Moreover, if the student wanted to graduate with the full degree, he had to pass all eight schools.

One other factor to consider when evaluating the merits of allowing each school to assign its own grades and award its own diploma involves the nature of Baptist ministry at that time. Many Southern Baptist pastors could not afford to leave their church ministry and family for extended periods of time to go to the seminary. Because of the elective system, they were able to come to the seminary for at least one session and receive credit for the schools they successfully completed. Certainly, the

⁴⁵ Broadus, “Reforms in Theological Education—A Symposium,” 438.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

faculty desired that all men complete the full course offered at the seminary, but practically, that was not a possibility for numerous students. Thus, it was no small accomplishment to graduate from each individual school and to do so carried a degree of honor and privilege. Indeed, it is the belief of this writer that Broadus never minimized any attempt, regardless of how small, of any pastor seeking to improve, through theological studies, his usefulness for the gospel ministry. Thus, the independent nature of the schools provided the mechanism for faculty to celebrate the student's accomplishments for each school he completed.

A fourth explanation of how the schools were independent involved the student's ability to freely elect what school he wished to attend. A student could choose to complete as little or as many schools as he desired. Although there were no restrictions, many of the men found that an ambitious appetite for taking too many schools in one session proved to be hazardous. Mullins commented on the eagerness of the young non-college men coming to the seminary and their subsequent change of course when they realized how much work was required in each school. He wrote, "As one of our students expressed it in the revival phrase, he is very soon found on the 'mourner's bench, profoundly convicted of his ignorance, and ready to fall down in the dust of repentance and go back home and climb the college hill first.'"⁴⁷ A more thorough description of how the elective process worked will be given later in this chapter, but two practical insights are given at this time.

⁴⁷ Mullins, "The Contribution of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary," 168.

First, the ability to choose an individual school allowed students to strengthen specific areas of ministry without unnecessary stress from numerous other courses. As the seminary grew, Broadus's fame became more widely known throughout the United States. In the area of preaching, Broadus was measured among the greatest preachers of his day.⁴⁸ Students wishing to strengthen their preaching could spend eight months with Broadus studying homiletics with minimal distraction by attending only that particular school.

Second, the ability to choose an individual school allowed the student to retake a school numerous times, if necessary. Periodically, students would not pass the examinations for a particular school. Unlike the prescribed curriculum, the student was not forced to retake all other courses even though he only failed the one school. He had the option to retake the school over the following session while still retaining the credit for the work he had done in the previous schools.

At times, there were special occasions where men were privileged enough to retake a school because they simply desired to relearn or strengthen their knowledge of a particular subject. They were not obligated to take other courses, but could choose what school suited their preference. For example, when Kerfoot had returned to the seminary years after his initial experience as a regular student, he wrote of the fruitfulness of retaking a course in New Testament English. The context of the quote was in support of the English class in New Testament, but his sentiments demonstrated the blessing of retaking a course, if desired. He wrote:

⁴⁸ Edwin Charles Dargan, "John Albert Broadus—Scholar and Preacher," *Crozer Quarterly* 2 (April 1925): 171.

The speaker desires to put on record his own special testimony in this respect. After graduating at college and at a law school, he took New Testament English under Dr. Broadus in 1868-9, and passed his examination. In the providence of God he was compelled to finish his course at another excellent seminary. He then studied a year in a German university, and after that was in the pastorate for about thirteen years. Having become disabled for pastoral work by a physical injury, he came to Louisville for special studies in the Seminary. So impressed had he been with the great richness of the course in New Testament English that, along with the special studies, he took this course over again. And never in all his studies did he have a more enjoyable or profitable study than this same New Testament English taken the second time in a class with college and non-college men.⁴⁹

Benefits of the Independent Schools

When the seminary was opened, it offered a total of eight schools. They included: (1) Biblical Introduction; (2) Interpretation of the Old Testament; (3) Interpretation of the New Testament; (4) Systematic Theology; (5) Polemic Theology and Apologetics; (6) Homiletics, or Preparation and Delivery of Sermons; (7) Church History; and (8) Church Government and Pastoral Duties.⁵⁰ As stated earlier, each school was independent of the other schools. In previous chapters, this writer has discussed in greater detail many of the benefits of having independent schools when he examined the University of Virginia and the Albemarle Female Institute. Nevertheless, a brief description of the benefits is given at this time. The benefits include: (1) the ability to expand or reduce the number of schools, depending on the needs of the seminary; (2) easier adjustments to support the overall health of the institution, such as hiring staff; (3) greater ownership from the professor, resulting in

⁴⁹ Kerfoot, *In the Light of Forty Years*, 36.

⁵⁰ “History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,” 42-50.

more effective teaching; (4) students having the ability to choose the classes they want to study; (5) students' ability to better manage time and effort in their overall schedule; and (6) greater ability to learn a subject more thoroughly by limiting the number of courses taken in a session.⁵¹

The independent nature of the schools is only one aspect of the elective system. When all eight schools were combined, they constituted a body of knowledge that was equal to or superior than any other seminary in the nation at that time. In other words, when a pastor was looking to be equipped for the gospel ministry, he could evaluate various seminary catalogs to determine course content, caliber of faculty, and procedures for course instruction. Within the course content, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary offered subject material comparable to the most prominent seminaries of the nineteenth century. For instance, at Andover Theological Seminary in 1868 a student would be taught the following material in the New Testament (the student was required to have prior knowledge of New Testament Greek before entering the seminary):

Exegetical Theology: its several departments, together with books relating to the same. Language of the New Testament: its Origin; its Relations; its Characteristics. [Collection of the Sacred Books, i.e. the Canon of the New Testament]. The Gospels: their Nature; their Relations to each other; Theories of their Origin. Preservation of the New Testament: the Written Text; Textual Criticism; the Printed Text. Interpretation of the New Testament:—comprising general Remarks upon Hermeneutics; the study of Greek from the Gospels, with the use of Robinson's Harmony; and exegetical Essays by the class. The

⁵¹ See “Thomas Jefferson and the University of Virginia” in chapter 3, and “The Albemarle Female Institute” in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Dissemination of the New Testament, i.e. some account of Translations. Greek from the Epistles. Essays by the class.⁵²

During the same year, a student at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the school of New Testament Interpretations was taught the following:

English Department—The course begins with an introductory account of Jewish History since the close of the Old Testament. The Harmony of the Gospels is studied, so as to gain a connect view of the Life of our Lord, with much historical and geographical illustration, and the explanation of difficult passages and subjects. Each of the Gospels is then read as a whole, with attention to its connection and peculiarities. Next, the Acts and Epistles are taken up, the latter being read as they occur in the course of history, with reference to their general contents, as indicated by analyses. The Epistle to the Romans is studied somewhat in detail, so as to afford careful interpretation; and Lectures are given on the Book of Revelation.

In the *Greek Department* there are two classes: [students must have prior knowledge of the New Testament] (1.) The Junior Class reviews the forms of Greek Language, and reads largely in the New Testament and the Septuagint. The doctrines of Greek Syntax are discussed at length, and the peculiarities of the New Testament Idiom examined in detail. There are weekly written translations of Greek into English, or English into Greek. (2.) The Senior Class begins with portions of the Septuagint, compared with Josephus, to show the difference of idiom and style. It then studies carefully the sources and rules for determining the true Text of the New Testament, with practical application to the most interesting passages. In reading parts of the New Testament, attention is paid to the style of the several authors, as well as to the idiom of the New Testament in general, and especially to the terms which denote peculiar Christian ideas and institutions. Certain books of the New Testament are next studied, with the aid of approved grammatical Commentaries; and these are followed by exegetical Lectures on select words and passages. There are weekly written exercises, being translations of English into Greek, or critical and exegetical discussions. . . . The Professor meets privately such Students as desire to read portions of the Greek Fathers.⁵³

⁵² *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Theological Seminary, Andover, Mass., 1867-68* (Andover, MA: Warren F. Draper, 1868), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015068473407&view=1up&seq=17>, 17-18.

⁵³ *Catalogue of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Greenville South Carolina, Tenth Session, 1868-9* (Greenville, SC: The Southern Baptist Theological

When comparing the two approaches of New Testament studies, one can assess the similarities and differences between both seminaries. However, in the Andover model the students' entire course was completed in nine months broken into two separate terms.⁵⁴ At The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, it was recommended, based on the 1868 catalog, that the full New Testament school be taken in at least two consecutive sessions beginning with the English course and Junior Greek together followed by the Senior Greek class.⁵⁵ Taking the classes in that order would take sixteen months (or two sessions) for a student to complete the entire school. However, because of the elective system, a well-prepared student in the New Testament Greek could take all three courses at once, completing the entire school in eight months, if needed. The latter approach was not highly recommended by the faculty. However, regardless of a student's approach, one of the primary distinctions between the two seminaries was that the student did not have to rush to complete the entire New Testament course at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Moreover, when combining the New Testament school with the school of Biblical Introduction—which included studies in evidences of Divine authority of Christianity as a system, biblical criticism, canon of Scripture, the Doctrine of Inspiration, biblical antiquities, and the relationship between the Bible and modern

Seminary, 1869), 14-15, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

⁵⁴ *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Theological Seminary, Andover, Mass., 1867-1868*, 16.

⁵⁵ *Catalogue of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Tenth Session, 1868-9*, 13.

science—The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary provided a far more comprehensive study of the New Testament than Andover Theological Seminary.⁵⁶ Over time, the differences between the two seminaries, especially in the areas of subject material taught and educational structure, proved that Boyce's vision and Broadus's elective system was a stronger model. In 1899, even after Andover Theological Seminary had adapted their curriculum to include aspects of Harvard's model of the elective system, they registered a total of thirty-nine students that year.⁵⁷ The same year, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary registered 262 students for its total enrollment, a marked difference considering the prominence Andover Theological Seminary once carried.⁵⁸

The combination of the eight independent schools, excellent faculty, and the various features of the elective system attracted men from all over the country to the seminary. Many of the men were college educated. In fact, by 1910, 85 to 90 percent of the total enrollment included men with college degrees.⁵⁹ According to Mullins, it was not due to any desire on the part of the seminary to keep the non-college men

⁵⁶ *Catalogue of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Tenth Session, 1868-9*, 13.

⁵⁷ *Catalogue of the Theological Seminary, Andover, Massachusetts, Ninety-first Year, 1898-1899* (Andover, MA: The Andover Press, 1899), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015068473340&view=1up&seq=33>, 29.

⁵⁸ *Catalogue of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, Fortieth Session, 1898-99* (Louisville, KY: Chas. T. Dearing, 1899), 13.

⁵⁹ Mullins, "The Contribution of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary," 168.

away.⁶⁰ Rather it was the result “of better standards of education and culture among the people, and as a consequence in the ministry.”⁶¹

Requirements for Graduation

When the college graduates and non-college men arrived at the seminary, several options regarding the types of degrees were available to them. In the earlier years, three degrees were offered, and each degree was considered an integral part of the elective system. First, when a student entered one of the three schools that offered the English course and the more difficult language course (Old Testament, New Testament, and Systematic Theology), and he successfully completed the English course, he would receive a Certificate of Proficiency with the title and degree of Graduate in the English Department of that school at the end of the session.⁶² Second, if the student successfully finished both the English course and the language course from the Old Testament, New Testament, or Systematic Theology schools, or any of the remaining five schools, he would receive a degree of Graduate from each school completed.⁶³ Finally, if a student successfully graduated from all eight schools, he would receive a diploma declaring him Graduate in full of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Mullins, “The Contribution of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,” 168.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² “History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,” 51.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Each of the degrees was significant in the eyes of the faculty. Certainly, the full degree was the highest credentialed degree offered at the seminary. In order to obtain the full degree, a student must have the intellectual aptitude, the discipline to work hard academically, and enough available time to complete all eight schools. Earning the full degree was an exceptional accomplishment that placed the graduates on the same level, if not higher, than any graduate from another seminary in the nation.

The Graduate degree also required intellectual aptitude and hard work, but was often reserved for men who did not have the available time to stay three or four years to complete the full degree. Many of the men had families or ministry obligations that only allowed their absence for a brief time. Thus, completing only a handful of the schools was their only option. Interestingly, by 1931, the seminary had formally divided the full eight-month session into four quarters of eight weeks each. According to the catalog, “the arrangement of quarters makes it possible for pastors who are unable to attend throughout a session to get credit for work done during periods of two or four months leave, and in this way through several sessions complete a number or courses.”⁶⁵ Others entered ministry late in life and circumstances would not allow a full course of studies, Broadus explained, “Many enter the ministry somewhat late in life, and are so embarrassed by their domestic relations that, for an extended course,

⁶⁵ *Annual Catalogue of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, “The Beeches,” Louisville, Kentucky, Seventy-second Session, 1930-1931, with Announcements for 1931-1932* (Louisville, KY: Press of the Western Recorder, 1931), 38, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

they are without the necessary means. Then there are differences in men's natural mental structure which make it unwise that you should carry them all through the same process of education."⁶⁶ Whatever the reason, Broadus and the other founders of the seminary knew there were men who did not have the ability to complete the full course. Thus, they provided a degree option that would still recognize their accomplishments.

For those completing the degree "Graduate in the English Department," it also required intellectual aptitude and hard work. However, many of the men taking these courses were not privileged to receive a college education. Most of them grew up poor and only received a general English education with no access, support, or funds to pursue a college degree. Thus, the seminary considered it fundamental to their mission to provide a place of education for such men. In an advertisement in the *The Religious Herald*, the seminary clearly expressed its desire for such men to attend the seminary. They wrote:

This arrangement of the Seminary into Schools has been made with special reference to the wants of those who have not enjoyed the advantages of Colligate study. Taken in connection with the special Courses which have been added in the Departments of Exegesis, Homiletics and Theology, opportunity is thus afforded to those who have been limited merely to a good English education, to obtain facilities heretofore never afforded for preparation for the Gospel Ministry.⁶⁷

It also seems apparent that Broadus had a special concern for these men as well. On several occasions he presented the importance of helping young men, especially those

⁶⁶ Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 208-9.

⁶⁷ Broadus, "Southern Baptist Theological Seminary" (1859), 131.

with little financial means, to increase their education. In his address called “College Education for Men of Business,” Broadus pleaded with the audience that every attempt must be made to help men go to college even when the cost seemed insurmountable. He wrote:

Some English noblemen are remembered in history only by the fact that, when students at Oxford, they got their boots blacked by a charity student, named George Whitefield. Ho, for the poor young men! Look them out; call them forth where they have brains, and are cherishing vague, wild longings after an education which seems far on the other side of an impassable gulf; help them if you can, show them how to help themselves, and stir in them by encouragement that high resolution, which in the young and gifted laughs at impossibilities, and conquers the world.⁶⁸

Even with the opening of the seminary, Broadus still encouraged young men to receive a college education if possible. However, for those who could not go to college, he welcomed them to the seminary. He wrote:

We should be sorry to see any young brother cut short a College or University course, in order to come to Greenville. The present writer has strongly and successfully dissuaded from this, in more than one instance. But there are numerous brethren, often of fine abilities, beginning to preach, who cannot now pursue a course of general education. Does the strong language of the advertisement at all exaggerate the importance for these of the advantages offered to them! How much such a one might learn in eight months, that will bear directly upon his efforts to preach, gaining, at the same time, a great deal of mental discipline.⁶⁹

It would be incorrect to minimize the importance of each degree offered at the seminary, especially in the early years of the seminary and immediately following the Civil War. Times were difficult in the South following the “War Between the States.” It was said of one president at Richmond College that he “peddled milk from his cow

⁶⁸ Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 263.

⁶⁹ Broadus, “Southern Baptist Theological Seminary” (1859), 130.

to provide his family with the necessities of life.”⁷⁰ The hardships following the war made it challenging for men to obtain a college degree. Therefore, it was no small contribution on behalf of the seminary to provide a theological education for non-college men. Furthermore, given the academic demands required at the seminary, it was a significant accomplishment to be awarded any of the degrees offered by the school.

As time passed, access to college education became more accessible in the nation and more college graduates began attending the seminary.⁷¹ Throughout the years, the seminary made additions to the degrees offered and changed the names of others to better align with the common language of academia.⁷² In 1876, the seminary added another general diploma, similar to the Graduate in Full degree, titled English Graduate, for all students who successfully completed all the schools except the upper level Old Testament Hebrew, New Testament Greek, and Latin Theology.⁷³ In 1890, the seminary instituted the degree of Eclectic Graduate to those who completed the junior classes of Hebrew and Greek, the English course in systematic theology, church

⁷⁰ Garnett Ryland, *The Old Richmond College: An Address Delivered at Commencement, June 9, 1914*, <http://centuries.richmond.edu/files/original/ebdbed62c2621e6572865ab1a7888f85.pdf>, 9.

⁷¹ Mullins, “The Contribution of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,” 168.

⁷² Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, 164.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 162.

history, homiletics, and in any four of the remaining schools.⁷⁴ Interestingly, the Eclectic degree had similar requirements of the Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Virginia in that it only required completion of certain schools to earn the degree. In 1892, the Board of Trustees at the seminary established a new system of titles for the degrees. The English Graduate degree became the ThG, or Graduate in Theology; the Eclectic degree became the ThB, or Bachelor in Theology; and the Full Graduate degree became the ThM, or Master in Theology.⁷⁵ The ThD, or Doctor of Theology, was also implemented in 1892, which will be discussed later in this chapter. The seminary retained the Certificate of Proficiency but modified it. Any student who successfully completed either the English course or the language course in Old Testament, New Testament, and Systematic Theology courses was eligible to receive the certificate. The seminary also continued the title of Graduate for each school successfully completed. For those students only completing the English course in either Old Testament, New Testament, or Systematic Theology, the title of English Graduate was given.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ William A. Mueller, *A History of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959), 117.

⁷⁵ Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, 164.

⁷⁶ *Catalogue of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, Thirty-sixth Session 1894-95* (Louisville, KY: Chas. T. Dearing, 1895), 48.

Flexibility in Students' Course Choices, Special Studies, and Doctor in Theology

Broadus's second objective for accomplishing Boyce's vision as expressed in *Three Changes in Theological Institutions* involved creating an educational structure that would provide a thorough theological course for college graduates that would meet the needs of the Southern Baptist Convention and provide provision for attainment in the highest level of scholarship.⁷⁷ Through the elective system Broadus was able to accomplish Boyce's vision by giving students flexibility in their choice of courses, creating special courses, and eventually establishing the Doctor in Theology degree. What follows is a summary of the practical outworking of the system, highlighting each of the three final features.

Flexibility in Students' Choice of Courses

When a student enrolled at the seminary, there were several questions he had to answer when thinking through his academic goals. First, how long could he stay? If he could stay three or four years, more options for greater scholarship were available to him. If he could only stay one year, his choices were limited. Second, how proficient was he in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin? If he was a college graduate it was more likely that he would have some working knowledge of the languages. At times, some non-college men had been trained privately in some of the languages as well. Also, on occasion, men who were not privileged to go to college, but were naturally gifted in the languages, could find tutors among college graduates at the seminary to

⁷⁷ Boyce, *Three Changes*, 26-27.

help them acquire a greater grasp of the languages. Third, what were his objectives for his time at the seminary? Did he only want courses that helped him in preaching and pastoral duties? Did he want more biblical knowledge in the New Testament or Old Testament? Did he want to achieve the highest academic honors the seminary offered? Once these questions were answered, the student could progress accordingly.

The beauty of the elective system was it provided an avenue for each student to achieve his highest goals because of the flexibility to choose courses based on personal interest, circumstances, and intellectual aptitude. For example, if a student wished to become well-versed in Old Testament Hebrew, there were several reasons the elective system was more effective than the prescribed curriculum. First, as Vedder stated, “It is possible to get far better work out of a class of five men in Hebrew or church history, who choose those departments because they have a liking for them and do their work heartily, than out of a class of twelve of whom seven are in it only because the rules of the seminary compel them to be there.”⁷⁸ In other words, as referenced earlier in this chapter, personal interest in a subject tends to be a greater motivator to work harder in academics than a required obligation.

Second, when a student finds he is not motivated or ill-prepared to study the languages, he can drop out of the class, which allows the remaining men to pursue higher studies. On the other hand, the prescribed curriculum, according to Broadus, “must strike only a little above the average. The inferior students must be a drag upon the class, and the highest men have to do their most useful work apart from the

⁷⁸ Vedder, “Reforms in Theological Education,” 331.

class.”⁷⁹ When only the most eager and advanced men are taking the class, the professor can assign different lessons that carry them to much higher attainment scholastically.⁸⁰ Furthermore, when the seminary divided the Hebrew and Greek classes into junior and senior levels, it provided still another option to have the most eager and talented men pursuing the highest degree of studies in those courses. Broadus explained, “Consequently, these Senior classes can be carried over a much wider and more thorough range of learned study than would be possible if the class comprised also a number of men who were members of it only as a thing necessary to obtaining a diploma.”⁸¹

Third, the students could slow or speed up the progress of their goals as needed. If a student was determined to pursue the highest academic achievements and earn the Master of Theology degree, but realized he needed more time or to take less schools, he could adjust his schedule each session as needed. A well-prepared college graduate could earn the Full Graduate degree in three years.⁸² Ideally, he would take four schools each session for two sessions. However, most students would slow the process down and complete the Full Graduate degree in three years. If a student needed more than three years, he could take fewer schools each session, thus, providing greater focus and potentially attaining a higher level of study.

⁷⁹ Broadus, “Reforms in Theological Education—A Symposium,” 436.

⁸⁰ Kerfoot, *In the Light of Forty Years*, 39.

⁸¹ Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, 159.

⁸² *Catalogue of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Thirty-sixth Session, 1894-95*, 28.

Special Studies

The need for special courses, independent from the eight schools, became a reality over time at the seminary. In the 1868 catalog, Broadus offered private lessons reading the Greek Fathers as a part of the New Testament Interpretations School.⁸³ Eventually, the private lessons evolved into a separate department of graduate and post-graduate studies. By 1895 the seminary offered Arabic, Aramaic, Assyrian, Coptic Language, Textual Criticism of the New Testament, Patristic Greek, Modern Greek, Patristic and Scholastic Latin, Foreign Hymnology, History of Doctrines, The Historical Seminarian, Theological German, Hebrew Exegetical Seminarian, Greek Exegetical Seminarian, Graduate Theology, and Graduate Homiletics in their special studies department.⁸⁴ Students could take certain classes in the regular course of studies and other courses were for resident students who had graduated the seminary.⁸⁵ Two examples of the classes are provided at this time to demonstrate the level of scholarship that could be attained at the seminary. In the Arabic course, a student would study “special work on the Life of Mahomet, the Composition of the Koran and the History of Islam is done by different members of the class. Special Attention is given to the relation between Hebrew and Arabic. About thirty-five suras of the Koran

⁸³ *Catalogue of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Tenth Session, 1868-9*, 15.

⁸⁴ *Catalogue of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Thirty-sixth Session, 1894-95*, 41-45.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.

have been studied critically during the present session.”⁸⁶ In Textual Criticism of the New Testament, a student would:

in addition to the work done in the Senior Greek Class, make a thorough study of Westcott and Hort’s system, with many examples discussed by them, and examine ten or more chapters of Tischendor’s Greek Testament (eighth greater addition), writing out and discussing the evidence as to all noteworthy variations.⁸⁷

Each of these courses provided greater opportunity for students to achieve the highest levels of scholarship.

Doctor in Theology

The final feature that helped foster greater scholarship at the seminary was the implementation of the Doctor in Theology (ThD) in 1892. If a student earned the Master in Theology degree at the seminary and afterwards spent at least one full session successfully completing no less than five of the special graduate courses (approved by a professor) and presented a thesis demonstrating original research, he would receive a diploma titled, ThD, Doctor of Theology.⁸⁸ When James Roland Barron wrote his dissertation on Broadus in 1972, he concluded that The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was among the first institutions in the United States to

⁸⁶ *Catalogue of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Thirty-sixth Session, 1894-95*, 41.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁸⁸ *Catalogue of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fortieth Session, 1898-99*, 50.

award the Doctor in Theology degree.⁸⁹ When combining the Doctor in Theology degree with the special studies course, and the flexibility for students to choose their courses, Broadus, along with the other faculty, established an educational system that produced some of the highest caliber theological scholars in the nation at that time.

Concluding Thoughts

The various features of the elective system comprised one of the most successful theological institutions in the history of the United States. Through the combination of Boyce's vision and Broadus's educational plan thousands of individuals have been trained for the gospel ministry. Pastors have been equipped, missionaries sent, and scholars made through the unique plan established many years ago. What started as a mere theory became a story of great success. When Broadus reflected on the merits of the elective system in 1885, he wrote:

But after twenty-five years of experience, with about eight hundred students, I beg leave to express the profound conviction which I am persuaded my colleagues fully share, that the elective method does admirably adapt itself to the theological training of our young Baptist ministers. I long to see the experiment tried in various institutions by wiser men, with means to secure adequate division of labor.⁹⁰

Broadus's statement raises important questions concerning further research on the elective system. For example, did other institutions follow Broadus's lead and incorporate the elective system into their schools? If so, to what degree did they implement the system? Has The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary kept using

⁸⁹ James Roland Barron, "The Contributions of John A. Broadus to Southern Baptists" (ThD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1972), 57.

⁹⁰ Broadus, "Reforms in Theological Education—A Symposium," 435.

this same plan developed by Broadus? Finally, how could seminaries today benefit from Broadus's approach to theological education? The final chapter will provide a response to the above questions, thus showing how Broadus's elective system is profoundly more important to theological education than history reveals.

CHAPTER 6

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ELECTIVE SYSTEM

The previous chapters have sought to demonstrate that Broadus's elective system is far more thoughtful and comprehensive than present literature indicates. After a brief introduction of Broadus's life and a review of the relevant literature on the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, chapters 3 through 5 served as the basis for validating that Broadus's elective system was a special, unique, and comprehensive educational plan designed to fulfill Boyce's vision and meet the needs of the Southern Baptist Convention. In this final chapter, this writer will argue that Broadus's elective system is significantly more important to theological education than history reveals by first demonstrating how the adaptable nature of the elective system allowed The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to continue to meet the needs of Southern Baptist churches for over a hundred and fifty years. Second, this chapter will demonstrate that the elective system is important to theological education because of its influence beyond the seminary, in particular, through the English Bible courses and the innovation of elective courses in theological education. Finally, this chapter will show the significance of the elective system by answering two relevant questions for seminaries today in light of the elective system.

The Adaptability of the Elective System

Like many theological institutions, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary required adjustments, among other things, in its educational structure to meet the needs of the denomination it served. From the beginning, Broadus knew the success of

the seminary depended largely on the wisdom of the plan of instruction.¹ Looking back over one hundred and fifty years of the life of the seminary, it is apparent that Broadus was correct on his assessment of the importance of the plan of instruction. As stated in the previous chapter, before Broadus died, the seminary was already making adjustments to the elective system to better communicate its degree programs. As time passed, future presidents of the seminary also took advantage of the flexibility of the elective system and made revisions to better meet the needs of the churches and denomination. Below are several examples that demonstrate the adaptability of the elective system.

After Broadus died in 1895, William H. Whitsitt became president of the seminary until 1899. Under his leadership, the design of the elective system remained similar to that of Broadus. However, he did feel another school was necessary and added the School of Ecclesiology under his tenure.² Whitsitt resigned as president over a dispute regarding Landmarkism, and Edgar Y. Mullins became the fourth president of the seminary from 1899 to 1928.

Under Mullins, an early adjustment took place when the school of Polemic Theology, which Whitsitt taught, was changed to Comparative Religion and

¹ Archibald T. Robertson, *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication, 1910), 144.

² *Catalogue of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, Fortieth Session, 1898-99* (Louisville, KY: Chas. T. Dearing, 1899), 38, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

Missions.³ The seminary initially continued with nine independent schools; however, by 1928 Mullins had made several changes to the elective system. First, the annual school session was officially broken into four quarters, each lasting eight weeks with exams at the end of each quarter. The catalog placed more emphasis on the option for pastors to come for only one quarter each year if needed, thus completing a full session over four years.⁴ Second, the exams were given at the end of each quarter, lasting two hours, instead of a mid-term and final exam lasting between five and ten hours each.⁵ Both of these changes were reflective of Mullins's thoughts to further clarify for pastors the variety of options available to them to receive a theological education. Third, out of the nine schools Mullins started with, Ecclesiology and Pastoral Theology were dropped, and Christian Sociology, Church Efficiency, Religious Education, Public Speaking, and Music were added, making a total of twelve schools. Mullins, along with the other faculty, felt the additional schools were necessary to better prepare its pastors to meet the needs of the church. Fourth, as the seminary grew and accessibility to colleges became greater in the South, requirements for specific degrees began to change at the seminary. By the end of Mullins's

³ *Catalogue of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, Forty-fourth Session 1902-1903* (Louisville, KY: Chas. T. Dearing, 1903), 30, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

⁴ *Annual Catalogue of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, "The Beeches," Louisville, KY, Sixty-Ninth Session, 1927-1928* (Louisville, KY: Press of the Western Recorder, 1928), 29-30, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

presidency, no information was provided in the catalog for a certificate of proficiency for finishing one of the two courses in Old Testament, New Testament, or Systematic Theology. Furthermore, the Graduate diploma awarded for completing one of the twelve schools was not listed. Other requirements to earn the English course degree (ThG—Graduate in Theology) and the Eclectic degree (ThB—Bachelor's in Theology) were modified as well. Shortly after Mullins began his presidency, the number of college graduates enrolling at the seminary was increasing. In 1906, out of 253 male students at the seminary, 227 were college graduates.⁶ By 1928, the requirement for the full degree (Masters in Theology) required a Bachelor of Arts or equivalent from a recognized college or university.⁷ Evidently, emphasis for non-college men became less prevalent because more men were completing their college education before coming to the seminary.

When Mullins died in 1928, John R. Sampey became the fifth president of the seminary where he served until 1942. Under Sampey's leadership, significant revisions were made in the catalog. First, under the main heading "Design," the word was changed to "Purpose." Underneath the heading "Purpose," the description of the mission of the seminary was also modified. In older catalogs, the statement read, "The theory of our churches has always been, and will continue to be, that the ministry must

⁶ *Catalogue of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, Forty-seventh Session, 1905-1906* (Louisville, KY: The Seminary Press, 1906), 15, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

⁷ *Annual Catalogue of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1927-1928*, 33.

not be confined to men who have enjoyed superior advantages of mental culture. . . . Our ministry thus consists of men of every grade of culture.”⁸ The catalog also emphasized the importance of high standards of scholarship while also providing a place for those who only had a good English education. Under the new heading, the catalog stated:

The purpose of a theological seminary is the training of an intelligent spiritual leadership for the interpretation and extension of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Primarily such a leadership expresses itself in the pastoral ministration and direction of local churches. . . .

. . . With the extension of general knowledge and the elevation of scholastic standards the Seminary, while adhering to the principle of free admission, has advanced its standards and tests for those who are to be accredited by its diplomas; and has also extended its provisions for the training of scholarly leadership.⁹

Sampey felt the need to place more of an emphasis on scholarship. Even under the “Admissions” heading, a statement was added urging all students to pursue a high school and college education before attending the seminary. The catalog stated, “With a definite conviction that a call to ministry involves also a call to the largest preparation possible, the Seminary urges that in every possible case men will take complete high school and college courses before undertaking Seminary work.”¹⁰ Interestingly, earlier in Sampey’s presidency the independent schools were broken into two major categories. The regular schools, which Sampey identified as departments,

⁸ *Catalogue of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1902-1903*, 20.

⁹ *Annual Catalogue of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, “The Beeches” Louisville, Kentucky, Seventy-second Session, 1930-1931, with Announcements for 1931-1932* (Louisville, KY: Press of the Western Recorder, 1931), 26-27, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29-30.

are grouped as the Under-Graduate School, and the special studies courses are identified as part of the Graduate School.¹¹ Also, in the Graduate School the ThD degree is relabeled as a PhD degree.

By the time Sampey retired in 1942, the elective system had expanded to include several new elements. First, the seminary had transitioned from four eight-week quarters to three eleven-week terms. Second, each of the independent schools (named Departments) was divided into three primary courses correlating with each of the three terms of the session with extra elective courses within each school. Third, each course was given a number value related to the number of session hours. In other words, one term equaled three session hours, much like what students experience today in higher education. Based on the degree program, students had certain electives they could take in order to meet the required number of hours. Fourth, the degree program also changed. The Bachelor of Theology (the old Eclectic degree) now required completion of a junior college or two years of a senior college. A new degree of Bachelor of Divinity was offered that required the prerequisite of a Bachelor of Arts or an equivalent from a recognized standard college and satisfactory completion of forty-eight session hours, all of which were elective except the courses in the English Bible.¹² The ThM (Master in Theology) also changed; it required the prerequisite of a

¹¹ *Annual Catalogue of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1930-1931*, 42, 70.

¹² *Annual Catalogue of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, "The Beeches," Louisville, Kentucky, Eighty-second Year 1940-1941, with Announcements for 1941-1942* (Louisville, KY: Press of the Western Recorder, 1941), 48, Archives

Bachelor of Arts degree and fifty session hours, including three years of New Testament Greek, two years of Hebrew Old Testament, both courses in the English Bible, Biblical Introduction, Systematic Theology, Church History, Homiletics, Religious Education, Church Efficiency, Missions, Public Speaking, Music, and eight session hours of electives.¹³ Fifth, the PhD degree was changed back to a ThD degree. Sixth, the seminary began recommending the order in which the courses were to be taken for each degree.

Under Sampey, the elective system began expanding beyond Broadus's original plan. Indeed, the elective system under Sampey's leadership was the first steps in starting a model of the elective system that many seminaries experience today. After Sampey retired, Ellis A. Fuller became the next president and modified the elective system extensively.

Fuller served as the sixth president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1942 until 1950. Fuller made at least four important changes to the elective system as president. First, he moved the Master of Theology degree into the graduate school, which also included the Doctor of Theology degree. Second, he added a new Bachelor of Divinity in Religious Education. Third, the designation of independent schools or departments was grouped into three major categories: Biblical Studies, Church History and Thought, and Practical Studies. Fourth, he converted

and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

¹³ *Annual Catalogue of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1940-1941*, 49.

session hours into units and began requiring a fixed number of units out of the Biblical Studies, Church History and Thought, and Practical Studies categories to be taken, depending on which degree the student wished to pursue.¹⁴

After Fuller passed in 1950, Duke K. McCall became the seventh president of the seminary from 1951 through 1982. By the end of McCall's presidency, the seminary elective system had continued to change. Following Fuller's model, course options in all departments continued to grow and the Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree was developed whereby a student could choose a specific emphasis within the degree program. Included in those changes also came three distinct schools by which a student would be placed based on their degree option. The schools were the School of Theology, School of Church Music, and School of Religious Education.¹⁵ Each school served as an independent department in which the various areas of ministry were trained. Among other changes were the addition of the Master of Church Music, Master of Religious Education, Doctor of Ministry, Doctor of Musical Arts, and Doctor of Education.¹⁶ The Boyce Bible School was established to train adults who were unable to complete a college degree or a seminary degree program.¹⁷

¹⁴ *The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Catalogue* (Louisville, KY: 1950), 59, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

¹⁵ *Catalog 1980-1982, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (Louisville, KY, 1980), 38, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 29.

Following McCall's retirement, Roy L. Honeycutt became the eighth president of the seminary in 1982. Under his leadership, the seminary added the School of Social Work.¹⁸ Honeycutt continued in a similar direction as McCall in terms of the education structure, adding more courses and more options for students to pursue. After his retirement in 1993, R. Albert Mohler Jr. was elected as the ninth president of the seminary.

Under the leadership of Mohler, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has grown to become one of the largest seminaries in the world.¹⁹ Over the course of his presidency, the seminary has made adjustments to the educational structure to presently include three schools: the School of Theology; the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Ministry; and Boyce College. Within the three schools the seminary offers associate, bachelors, masters, and doctorate degree programs. In terms of curriculum, the seminary is similar to the previous administration in that each degree program requires certain courses along with available elective courses. With the addition of the accredited Boyce College and the Diploma Program, the seminary is providing theological education for men of various educational levels much like it did in 1859. Interestingly, in his book *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus*, A. T. Robertson recalled Broadus's desire for the future of the new seminary. Robertson

¹⁸ *Catalog 1985-87, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (Louisville, KY, 1985), 10, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

¹⁹ *Academic Catalog, 2020-2021, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (Louisville, KY: Office of Academic Strategy, 2020), <https://sbts-wordpress-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/sbts/uploads/sites/3/2020/09/AA-203-2019-SBTS-Academic-Catalog-20-21-Editon-most-recent.pdf>, 20.

wrote, “So, as Mr. Jefferson had drawn a new American university, Mr. Broadus drew a new American seminary, which had in it adaptability and expansion, the possibility of becoming a theological university.”²⁰ A lot has changed with Broadus’s original plan for the seminary; however, because of its adaptability and the foresight of its leaders, Broadus’s dream has become a reality.

More could be addressed about the development of the seminary since its inception. The intent, however, of this brief review of the elective system under each president has been to demonstrate the adaptability of Broadus’s work. Further research is recommended as to the reasons for each president’s approach to the educational structure of the seminary. The significant variations of the elective system, beginning with Sampey, raise questions of why the changes were necessary. Regardless of the answers, the adaptable nature of the elective system allowed each president of the seminary to mold and modify the course of instruction as he felt best met the needs of the Southern Baptist Convention and the churches the seminary served.

The Influence of the Elective System beyond the Seminary

Before addressing the influence of the elective system beyond the seminary, it is important to note that the impact of the elective system could have been far greater had the seminary included the admission of African American students in those early years. Broadus developed the elective system, at least in part, with the idea that any man called into ministry, even with a general education, should have the opportunity

²⁰ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 144.

to pursue some level of theological education. Sadly, this idea did not include men of color, at least not in regular classes at the seminary. On occasion, Broadus tutored black pastors in his office and even affirmed theological education for black students, as long as it was racially segregated.²¹ Also, starting in 1879, the faculty at the seminary taught courses at Simmons University for black students in Louisville.²² However, it was not until 1951 that the seminary allowed black students to attend integrated classes with white students.²³ Consequently, almost a century passed before African American pastors could experience the full benefit of the elective system. Thus, as the influence of the elective system beyond the seminary is considered below, one can imagine how much greater the impact could have been if African American pastors were included when the seminary first opened in 1859.

The influence of Broadus's elective system went beyond the seminary. For example, one of the founders of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was Basil Manly Jr. He received his college education from the University of Alabama and his theological education from Newton Theological Institution and Princeton Theological Seminary. Along with his father, Manly was actively involved in denominational life of the Southern Baptist Convention. Manly was appointed to serve as one of the first professors of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where he led the schools of

²¹ *Report on Slavery and Racism in the History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (Louisville, KY: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018), <https://sbts-wordpress-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/sbts/uploads/2018/12/Racism-and-the-Legacy-of-Slavery-Report-v4.pdf>, 48.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 62.

Biblical Introduction and Interpretations of the Old Testament.²⁴ After spending numerous years on the faculty at the seminary, he was elected as the ninth president of Georgetown College in Kentucky in 1871. When Manly arrived at Georgetown College, he began to make changes to the institution. Manly's educational training had been in the context of the prescribed curriculum, but as a teacher spent numerous years actively involved in the elective system as part of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. As a result, after Manly's arrival at Georgetown College, he began to make changes to its educational structure. For example, the year of Manly's arrival at Georgetown College, the catalog under the heading of "Course of Study" stated, "Besides the Classical Course usual in Colleges, and the completion of which entitles the student to the degree of B.A., there is a Scientific Course, embracing all of the former except the Greek language—the Latin being optional."²⁵ The Classical Course required freshman to study Latin, Greek, and Mathematics; sophomore year, students were required to take Latin, Greek, Mathematics, and Chemistry; junior year required students to take Latin, Greek, and Belles Letters; and seniors took Political economy, Constitution of the United States, Astronomy, Moral Philosophy, Mineralogy, Geology, Intellectual Philosophy, Evidence of Christianity, and Analogy of Religion

²⁴ "History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Greenville, South Carolina; To Which Is Appended *The First Annual Catalogue, 1859-1860*" (Greenville, SC: G. E. Elford, printer, 1860), Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, 36.

²⁵ *Catalogue of Georgetown College, Kentucky 1870-71* (Cincinnati: Strobridge & Co., 1871), 16.

and Nature.²⁶ Like most colleges during that time, Georgetown followed the prescribed curriculum method.

However, in the 1872-73 catalog, one year after Manly became president, a change had occurred at the college. The “Course of Study” had been renamed to “The Course of Study Remodeled.”²⁷ Under the new heading, the catalog stated:

In endeavoring to provide the most complete and varied advantages for instruction, and to use all the improvements of modern times for the advantage of the student, the Trustees in 1872 decided to remodel the course of study, by adopting the elective or University plan, in accordance with the recommendations of the Faculty. It was resolved:

“1. That the various studies of the College be distributed into Departments, the arrangement of the course in each Department to be fixed and agreed upon by the Faculty.

“2. That students may select, among these Departments, those which they desire to pursue, limited by the conditions, that each must have enough to occupy his time, yet not more than he can satisfactorily accomplish, and the hours assigned can be conveniently arranged so as not to conflict.

“3. That any student successfully completing the course assigned in one of these Departments shall receive a certificate to that effect; that those who complete such Departments as shall be designated (substantially equivalent to the present Scientific and Classical Courses respectively), shall be entitled to the degree of Bachelor of Sciences, or Bachelor of Arts; and that any one completing the whole plan of study, and passing a final examination on the whole course, shall be entitled to the degree of Master of Arts.”²⁸

Under the leadership of Manly, the college changed its entire educational structure from a prescribed curriculum to the elective system modeled after The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and the University of Virginia. The obvious

²⁶ *Catalogue of Officers and Students of Georgetown College, Kentucky for 1851-52* (Georgetown, KY: Henry R. French, 1852), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiuo.ark:/13960/t33217c7t&view=1up&seq=19>, 12.

²⁷ *Catalogue of the Georgetown College and The Western Baptist Theological Institute, Georgetown, KY, 1872-73* (Cincinnati: George F. Stevens & Co., 1873), 9.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

question is why would Manly make the change to the elective system at the college? His earlier college and theological training were under the prescribed curriculum. Furthermore, Georgetown College had utilized the prescribed curriculum for decades. The simple answer to the question is because of his experience teaching at seminary and the influence of Broadus. Although not recorded in print, this writer imagines a myriad of conversations between Broadus and Manly discussing the details of the elective system for the colligate experience. It is certainly possible that Manly researched the University of Virginia, but after eight years of personal experience at the seminary, Manly understood the elective system and was convinced the change was necessary at Georgetown College.

Another example of the influence of Broadus's elective system beyond the seminary was the reestablishment of Richmond College in Virginia in 1866. After the Civil War the college chose to rebuild. Numerous men were actively involved in the process. A. M. Poindexter gave numerous speeches among Virginia Baptists to raise awareness about the school's reopening. Broadus, an advocate for the school, recalled Poindexter's words, and responded:

There is nothing nobler in American history than the spirit with which our Southern people stood up amid the wreck of their fortunes, and declared that their institutions of higher education should not perish. Men with nothing left of former wealth but poor land and plenty of debts, numerous ministers and others who were living by the hardest upon some inadequate and sadly uncertain income, gave not grudgingly, but with high enthusiasm, for pure love of education, love of country, and love of Christ.²⁹

²⁹ Garnett Ryland, *The Old Richmond College: An Address Delivered at Commencement June 9, 1914*, <http://centuries.richmond.edu/files/original/ebdbed62c2621e6572865ab1a7888f85.pdf>, 11.

In July of 1866, the trustees of Richmond College adopted a new plan of organization. In the historical sketch in one of the school's catalogs, the following statement was provided:

The Committee on Organization sought the aid of Drs. John A. Broadus, William D. Thomas and C. C. Bitting, all of whom resided in Greenville, S.C., and the plan drawn up by those gentlemen, with some modification of detail, was approved by the Trustees and by the Faculty when elected.³⁰

The plan of organization for the college in terms of the structure was a close replica of what Broadus experienced at the University of Virginia and created at the Albemarle Female Institute and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.³¹

Perhaps one of the greatest critiques of the elective system in terms of its influence beyond the seminary is that it required a close working knowledge of the system to understand how it worked. The prescribed system was a much simpler model, and even though numerous seminaries observed the success of the elective system as used at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, it was difficult to implement, especially if the seminary was already established. In most cases, other seminaries only took aspects of the system and applied it to their curriculum.

One of the major contributions to other seminaries that came from Boyce and Broadus was the incorporation of the English Bible courses. B. H. Carroll was the founder and first president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1908. He

³⁰ *Catalogue of Richmond College, Session 1884-'85 with a Historical Sketch and Roll of Alumni 1832-1884* (Richmond, VA: Wm. Ellis Jones, Steam Book and Job Printer, 1885), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiuo.ark:/13960/t6f20v52q&view=1up&seq=5>, 37.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 15-23.

was also on the Board of Trustees at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the late nineteenth century. Carroll was a great admirer of Broadus and valued his input. When Carroll developed the curriculum at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, it included classes in the Old and New Testament in the English Bible.³² David S. Dockery, speaking about the uniqueness of the English Bible course at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, stated, “It was a creative proposal that was fifty years ahead of other advances in theological education in North America.”³³ In 1887, William R. Harper, Professor of Semitic Languages at Yale, wrote Broadus to commend him for the use of the English Bible. He wrote, “I have often thought of the pioneer work which you in your Seminary have done in this direction. I have never been able to explain to myself why other seminaries have not followed in your train.”³⁴ In his dissertation on Broadus, James Roland Barron stated that Broadus worked hard to spread the elective system and the study of the English Bible to other seminaries, and that Harvard adopted the system.³⁵ Barron is not completely accurate concerning the elective system, but numerous seminaries incorporated the English Bible into their curriculum, including Harvard.

³² *Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Annual Catalogue 1908-1909*, (A. Webb Roberts Library, Archives, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary), 20.

³³ David S. Dockery and Roger D. Duke, eds., *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy* (Nashville: B&H, 2008), 130.

³⁴ Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 362.

³⁵ James Roland Barron, “The Contributions of John A. Broadus to Southern Baptists” (ThD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1972), 60.

Another major contribution to other seminaries was the elective choice of courses in theological education. Not all seminaries followed Broadus's exact model at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, but almost all seminaries went to some form of an elective approach in theological education. Tragically, history rarely acknowledges that it was Broadus who originated the idea. In a prominent article on theological education in America, Clarence C. Goen stated that Harvard Divinity School inaugurated the elective system in 1883.³⁶ By 1883, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary had been utilizing the elective system for over twenty years. It is true that Harvard may have implemented the elective system at their school at that time, but history is clear that Broadus was the first to introduce the elective system into theological education. Also, given the difficulty of tracing the influence of the elective system in theological education, it certainly is possible that Harvard Divinity School's adjustment could have been influenced by the success of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. By 1910, Harvard Divinity School's catalog had similar features as the elective system found under Broadus. Moreover, Crawford H. Toy, who had been a professor at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, was then the Hancock Professor of Hebrew and Other Oriental Languages, Emeritus, at Harvard Divinity School.³⁷ One should not ignore the connection between the two schools and the elective system.

³⁶ Clarence C. Goen, "Changing Conceptions of Protestant Theological Education in America," *Foundations* 6 (October 1963): 305.

³⁷ *Announcement of the Divinity School of Harvard University, 1910-11* (Cambridge, MA: Published by the University, 1910), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044073569808&view=1up&seq=9>, 3.

In final analysis, it is undeniable that the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary had significant influence beyond the walls of the seminary. The difficulty in uncovering the definitive impact of Broadus's elective system in theological education leaves room for future study. Presently, very little has been written on the history of the elective system in theological education. Even worse, what is written overwhelmingly skips over the legacy found at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Relevant Questions for Seminaries Today

Evaluating the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary raises important questions that are relevant for seminaries today. One of those questions is, "What role do theological institutions play in the life of a minister?" This question is foundational to the educational philosophy of any theological seminary. When the leaders of seminaries think through why they exist, they must first determine their primary objectives as an institution. During the nineteenth century, men like Francis Wayland, Boyce, and Broadus were challenging the role of many theological institutions at that time. As demonstrated in the fourth chapter of this dissertation, many of the seminaries became the gatekeepers by which men could enter the ministry. Several denominations required men to be seminary trained before they could pastor in their churches. Furthermore, men without a college education or equivalent could not enroll in the seminary, in part, because of the nature of the prescribed curriculum. As a result, theological institutions within many denominations became the deciding factor by which men were evaluated if they could enter the ministry.

When Wayland wrote *The Apostolic Ministry* in 1853, his objective was to communicate the nature of both the gospel and gospel ministry. Toward the end of his discourse, he stated:

He [Jesus] has commanded us to pray the Lord of the harvest to bestow these gifts upon men, and thus send forth laborers into the harvest. These gifts, in whatsoever manner bestowed, we are to receive and cherish and improve. By no rules of our own are we to restrict their number, or diminish their usefulness.³⁸

In this statement, Wayland made three important points. First, the church should pray that God would send out more individuals to preach the gospel, specifically more pastors. Second, the gifts God has given to individuals, specifically for gospel ministry, should be improved. Third, men should establish no rules beyond what Scripture commands to limit the number of pastors being called to the ministry or restrict their education. Wayland's third point is a critique of the seminaries and denominations of his time because they required formal theological education before a man could enter the ministry. Wayland was not opposed to the advancement of theological education. He fully supported theological education and the creation of colleges and seminaries. His issue, however, was how the theological institutions of his day usurped God's authority by determining through their admission requirements who was qualified to enter the ministry. Like Boyce and Broadus, Wayland believed theological institutions were to serve as an aid to help ministers improve their gifts and abilities in order to become greater pastors and preachers, not determine if they were called to the ministry. Indeed, all three men felt that the vast majority of seminaries of

³⁸ Francis Wayland, *The Apostolic Ministry: A Discourse* (Rochester, NY: Sage & Brother, 1853), 80.

their day were misguided, at least in part, in the role the seminary played in the life of a minister.

Leaders of seminaries today could benefit from examining the lives of Wayland, Boyce, Broadus. For years, these men had recognized the deficiencies within theological education and the problems with the prescribed curriculum. Wayland had fought hard to make changes at Brown University and wrote *The Apostolic Ministry*. Broadus was actively involved in educational endeavors with Virginia Baptists, he helped establish the Albemarle Female Institute, and he wrote numerous articles in support of the new seminary. Boyce was on the faculty at Furman University in South Carolina and helped push the need for a central seminary in the Southern Baptist Convention. He also wrote, *Three Changes in Theological Institutions*. Each of these men had been wrestling with the role of a theological institution in the gospel ministry for some time. Thus, when the opportunity arose, specifically for Boyce and Broadus, to help establish a new seminary for the Southern Baptist Convention, they were firmly established in their convictions regarding the mission of the seminary. The historical introduction of the first catalog of the seminary articulated the mission of the seminary in this manner: “The chief object of this Seminary is to prepare its Students for the most effective service as Preachers of the Gospel, and Pastors of the Churches; and while due attention shall be given by the Faculty to securing thorough scholarship, their efforts shall ever be mainly direct to

that object.”³⁹ Following the mission statement, a brief clarifying statement was given as well:

It is generally agreed that the instruction in the Seminary ought to embrace all that would be adapted to the best qualified students; while, on the other hand, provision must be made for selecting certain subjects, or pursuing them only to a certain extent, in the case of those whose time, preparation, tastes, etc., might not admit of their doing more.⁴⁰

There are two important objectives within the mission statement. First, they wanted to prepare students to be effective preachers and pastors, regardless of their education level. Second, they desired to provide the best theological education possible, elevating the level of scholarship in the Southern Baptist Convention. Based on the mission statement, everything about the seminary was developed to accomplish those two objectives, including the elective system. The lessons that can be learned from Boyce and Broadus are invaluable for seminaries today. Below are two insights that are derived from their experience.

First, the seminary was created based on how to best meet the needs of the Southern Baptist Convention, not the traditions of theological education. Mullins expressed this insight when he wrote:

The plan of study of this school was an adaptation of theological education to the conditions, and not an effort to adapt conditions to an ideal or theoretical plan. It was a break with tradition which exhibited strong originality of thought and courage. It was a striking out boldly into a new world of theological non-conformity.⁴¹

³⁹ “History of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,” 27.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ E. Y. Mullins, “The Contribution of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to Theological Education,” *Review & Expositor* 7 no. 1 (1910), 169.

The founders of the seminary were aware of the needs in the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention. They knew America was experiencing significant population growth and the country needed more churches. They knew the existing churches needed more pastors and those pastors needed to be better equipped. They knew most of the pastors in the Southern Baptist Convention were not college-educated men. They knew the current model of theological education was insufficient to meet the religious needs in the country at that time. With all those needs in consideration and within biblical parameters, they designed the objectives of the seminary based on meeting those needs, not on the traditions of previous seminaries.

The danger for seminaries today is to establish an educational structure before solidifying the mission of the seminary. In other words, the educational structure is put into place or accepted before extensive research is conducted regarding the needs of its constituents and the mission is clearly articulated. At minimum, this process could impede the mission or at worst derail it altogether. Even existing seminaries may be blind to the effectiveness of their educational structure. Andover Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Harvard Divinity School took years before they were willing to significantly change their educational structure in the nineteenth century. Their unwillingness to modify, or at least evaluate, the effectiveness of their educational system hindered men from entering the ministry.

Seminaries today must ask difficult questions regarding their effectiveness in accomplishing their mission. Is there anything keeping them from achieving their primary objectives? Are current academic models, degree programs, or accreditation standards requiring an educational structure within a seminary that may be

counterproductive to accomplishing the mission? Do inadequate resources keep the school from moving forward? Interestingly, one of the greatest issues hindering schools from accomplishing their mission beyond the educational structure in the nineteenth century was the lack of a sufficient library. Today, it may be the lack of, or refusal to use, online resources. Regardless of the issue, seminaries must consistently evaluate and ask, “What is dictating the actions of the school?” Is it the mission or something else? For Boyce and Broadus, the mission drove the strategy of the seminary, not the other way around.

A second insight related to the role of theological institutions involves clearly defining the seminary’s responsibility in equipping pastors for ministry. If a seminary exists to train pastors, does it mandate what classes must be taken to certify that the pastor has been adequately trained for the ministry? If so, how many classes and what classes are necessary for effective ministry? Questions like these were being asked by those who opposed the elective system and by the proponents of the system during the nineteenth century. In a symposium in 1885 produced by *The Baptist Quarterly*, four scholars argued for and against the use of the elective system. August H. Strong provided a defense against the use of the elective system as defined by not requiring any prescribed courses in the curriculum. In some ways, it was an attack on the method used by The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Strong began his argument by asserting that the theological seminary was a professional school.⁴² By professional school, Strong meant it was designed for a specific purpose in equipping men for the profession of ministry. At that time, most collegiate programs were still focused on providing a general liberal arts education. If a student wanted to be a lawyer, doctor, or minister, he would attend a professional school designed specifically for that vocation. Often, these schools were located on the college campus or closely connected with the college. Although it does not seem that Strong was seeking to define the nature of ministry by using the term “professional,” other seminaries in that day viewed ministry as a learned profession, minimizing the idea of God’s calling on a pastor’s life. Nevertheless, Strong went on to describe that purpose of a theological seminary as preparing the minister to preach the gospel by the intelligent exposition of the Bible to intelligent people, not just illiterate people.⁴³ Strong chose his words carefully because he went on to define what intelligent exposition of Scripture required. He wrote, “But if the preacher is to be an expositor of the Word of God, it is of prime importance that he should know the Word of God which he is to expound. He should know it, not at second hand, through translations and commentaries, but first hand from careful study of the original Scriptures.”⁴⁴ Furthermore, Strong argued that beyond courses in New Testament and Old Testament

⁴² Henry C. Vedder, “Reforms in Theological Education,” *The Baptist Quarterly Review* 7 (July 1885), ed. Robert S. MacArthur and Henry C. Vedder (New York: The Baptist Review Association, 1885), 415.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 416.

in the original languages, the curriculum must include studies in church history, systematic theology, and homiletics, and pastoral theology.⁴⁵ He summarized his argument with these words:

We only claim that, as an institution set to prepare intelligent preachers to intelligent people, the theological seminary should not set its full seal of approval upon any course of studies which comes short of fitting those who pursue it to interpret the original Scriptures in light of the history of the church, with an understanding of the relations of Christian Doctrine, and with due observance of the natural laws of the mind in developing and unfolding their meaning to others.⁴⁶

The core of Strong's argument revolves around the extent to which a seminary mandates certain courses in order to approve that the student has been equipped for ministry (at least ministry for intelligent people). Strong's argument demanded a response from the advocates of the elective system. In the same symposium, Broadus expressed his thoughts on the elective system, which helped counter Strong's argument.

Broadus began his treatment of the elective system by first affirming that the aim of every minister should be to continue to improve in his calling. However, Broadus was adamant that ministry was not a learned "profession." He wrote:

The ministry is not properly a learned profession; in fact, to think of it as a profession at all is a conception almost necessarily erroneous and very apt to mislead. Out of the four distinguishable departments of work, only one seems absolutely to require learning, even that with much difference of kind and degree.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Vedder, "Reforms in Theological Education," 416.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 417.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 432.

Broadus goes on to discuss the four departments of ministerial work. They are discipleship, instruction in private and public settings, pastoral care, and administration. Out of the four departments, Broadus believed instruction in private and public settings required a man to be learned in the Scriptures, but not necessarily trained in a theological seminary. He pointed to the life of Charles H. Spurgeon as an example of a preacher who did not experience formal theological training but was still a marvelous teacher of the Bible. He also referenced Dwight L. Moody and James Needham as men who were effective in ministry but lacked formal theological education. Broadus went on to assert that the Baptist denomination owed its prosperity in no small measure to the fact that it had not treated the ministry as a learned profession.⁴⁸ At the same time, Broadus argued that Baptists have never questioned the significance of a thorough early education and the discipline of lifelong study habits, but it was uncharacteristic of Baptist identity to require a fixed course of study to be qualified for ministry.

In some ways, Broadus's answer does not directly address Strong's argument. Broadus was arguing that formal theological education is not necessarily required to be effective in ministry. On the other hand, Strong was stating that if a theological seminary proclaims that it has trained a pastor for effective ministry by awarding him a specific degree, it should require certain courses. Strong had concerns that the elective system unfairly elevated a man's status because he could claim to be trained for ministry, even though he may have taken only one session at the seminary and not the

⁴⁸ Vedder, "Reforms in Theological Education," 433.

full course. For example, Strong wrote, “Where there is no fixed and obligatory course, there is a constant tendency to take a single year, or a single study, for the mere sake of *prestige*. The persons who do this go out from our seminaries practically clothed with all the immunities of graduation.”⁴⁹ Later in his article, Strong also offered another critique of awarding a degree that does not adequately represent what the degree meant in the past. He wrote:

The title of Bachelor of Divinity, or the name of having been graduated from a theological seminary, has in the past meant something definite and valuable. We should not play false names. As, in the colleges, we would not give the B.A. to those who have no classical training, however, much of other work they may have done, and would not do this, simply because it would be perverting an old term from its established use; so in our theological seminaries we would make graduation to mean nothing less than it has meant in the past.⁵⁰

For Broadus, Strong’s concerns about the potential of lowering standards of academic degrees or a pastor’s impure motives for taking only one session pales in comparison to the problems generated by the fixed course of study. Broadus believed the requirements of a fixed course were not only impracticable, but were also divisive. He felt that dividing men who were called into ministry into two different classes of educated and non-educated men produced a lack of sympathy for the uneducated men and jealousy or envy toward the college graduates. Moreover, when attempts by those who held to a fixed course sought to provide something outside the fixed course for uneducated men, it often resulted in radical disharmony and significant disadvantage

⁴⁹ Vedder, “Reforms in Theological Education,” 419.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 423.

to the non-college men.⁵¹ On the other hand, according to Broadus, the elective system provided the best for both parties. The college-educated men were uninhibited to reach the highest levels of theological education, while non-college men could go as far as their abilities and time allowed.

The question remains, “Does the elective system hinder or unfairly represent the academic preparation of pastors by not requiring fixed courses?” This writer believes Broadus would respond to that question in three ways. First, he would argue the seminary’s primary responsibility is to train students to be effective preachers and pastors, not to award academic degrees. For Broadus, academic degrees were an integral part of the elective system, but the mission of the seminary dictated its approach to training pastors, not the academic degree. In other words, the starting point for building the seminary was not to choose an established academic degree and make the educational structure conform to it; rather, Broadus took the vision of Boyce and developed the strategy, including the degree options, to achieve Boyce’s goals.

Second, Broadus would challenge the belief that becoming a pastor is a learned profession. As stated earlier, Broadus fully advocated for the improvement of pastors and even affirmed the awarding of academic degrees in his own seminary. However, Broadus understood that earning a degree did not necessarily mean a man would be an effective preacher or pastor. Moreover, Broadus knew that formal theological training was only a supplement to God’s calling and gifting in a man’s life. As a result, Broadus affirmed any advancement in theological education in a pastor’s life,

⁵¹ Vedder, “Reforms in Theological Education,” 433-34.

regardless of how small. At the same time, he would not minimize a pastor's calling if he could not attend a seminary. Consequently, Broadus felt at liberty to invite all men to the seminary, no matter if they were staying for one session or completing the full degree.

Third, Broadus would agree with Strong that courses in the original languages of the Bible, systematic theology, church history, homiletics, and pastoral theology should be part of the highest degree in a theological institution. In fact, Broadus would add to the list a course in biblical introduction and polemic theology, combined with apologetics, as requirements in order to receive the Master in Theology degree. Thus, in some way, Broadus's elective system had prescribed requirements for men wishing to achieve the highest level of scholarship. However, the seminary also offered more than just one track for its students. Non-college men could benefit as well. The elective system fostered a win-win scenario for any pastor wishing to improve himself for the gospel ministry. On the other hand, the prescribed curriculum forced a win-lose situation by helping college graduates while neglecting the less educated men. Furthermore, the titled degrees at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary were reflective of the work accomplished. Anyone aware of the degrees at the seminary knew the Master in Theology (Full Graduate degree) was the highest honor any student could be given and was cherished by those who received it. At the same time, the other degrees were not minimized, but it was clear to all students that the lesser degrees were not equivalent to the full degree.

The seminary's responsibility in equipping pastors for ministry, especially as it relates to specific required courses, has continued to be a point of discussion within

theological education since the establishment of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Tracing the development of the elective method in theological education, combined with the use of fixed courses, is challenging. By the early twentieth century, numerous seminaries had incorporated elective courses in their curriculum, but still required fixed courses, such as Hebrew and Greek in their curriculum. Newton Theological Institution made clear its perspective regarding the use of Hebrew and Greek in their 1906 catalog. They wrote:

This Institution stands alone among Baptist Theological Schools in requiring all its students to become familiar with the Old and New Testament Scriptures in the original languages in which they were written, in order to receive its certificate, diploma, or degrees.

All its work of Biblical interpretation is on the basis of the original text of Scripture.

We do not feel called upon to lower the educational standards indispensable for the many men who have gained a collegiate training, for the sake of the few college or non-college men who are unwilling to make the effort to learn the original languages in which the Holy Scriptures were written.

We believe that the cases are extremely rare where men cannot acquire these languages, if they wish to do it.

We are convinced that a thoroughly trained ministry is none too good for our Baptist churches.

Newton, therefore, insists on the highest standards of educational equipment for the ministry.⁵²

Newton still had a prescribed three-year curriculum that required Greek and Hebrew to graduate, but within the program also allowed certain elective courses. Their system seemed to stem more from a Harvard model of elective education than from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Certainly, their statement is an indictment on

⁵² *The Newton Theological Institution, Annual Catalogue for the Eighty-first Year, 1905-1906* (Newton Centre, MA, 1906), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112114017327&view=1up&seq=7>, 30.

Broadus's system. Interestingly, Newton Theological Institution had a total of 61 students enrolled that year.⁵³ The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary had 301 students enrolled the same year.⁵⁴ The results of enrollment are not exclusively tied to the educational structure of each seminary; however, the enrollment does reflect how each seminary approached training ministers. At that time, the ability to provide theological education for non-college men was a significant factor in the life of many pastors, especially in the South. Requiring Greek and Hebrew excluded certain students from attending seminaries like Newton Theological Institution.

As time passed, greater accessibility to a college education meant more students attending The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary were prepared to take Greek and Hebrew. However, the discussion around fixed courses in theological education is still relevant today. For example, should students be required to take Hebrew and Greek in seminary? Most seminaries today have answered that question by offering a variety of degree options within their program, including degrees with or without Greek or Hebrew. The decision to require fixed courses in a seminary degree will always involve a difference of opinion. Even today, new theological institutions or established seminaries still evaluate what courses are essential and should be required. However, what is important for the purpose of this dissertation is to note that it was Boyce's vision and Broadus's elective system that officially began the change in the history of American theological education. Thus, the creation of The Southern

⁵³ *The Newton Theological Institution, Annual Catalogue for the Eighty-first Year, 1905-1906*, 28.

⁵⁴ *Catalogue of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1905-1906*, 14-17.

Baptist Theological Seminary forced the discussion of whether Old Testament Hebrew, New Testament Greek, and Latin should be required courses in theological education. More importantly, it was through the genius of the elective system that, regardless of where a person stood on the matter, the seminary could accommodate his needs.

A second question that is relevant for seminaries today is, “Could Broadus’s original elective system be useful or implemented in today’s theological institutions?” Earlier in this chapter, the review of the development of the elective system demonstrated that the elective system was adaptable. As time passed at the seminary, much of what Broadus developed was phased out. Nevertheless, important elements of the old system remained. Even today, students still have elective options, such as choosing what type of degree they wish to pursue. They also have the option to choose elective courses within each degree program that are in addition to the required courses. Although not mentioned earlier, the seminary maintained the grouping of the different subject matters offered at the seminary. Broadus called the groupings “schools,” which later became departments and today the different departments fall under each of the three major schools at the seminary. Also, students can still enter the seminary at the beginning of either semester. Many students take for granted the ability to enter the seminary at the beginning of either semester; however, before Broadus and the elective system that was not an option. Last, men of various educational levels can still be trained. Although many of them are not in the same class, the seminary has developed a pathway that allows students to progress to the highest levels of theological education if desired. Interestingly, under the leadership of

Mohler, the seminary has, in this writer's opinion, moved closer to the Broadus model in terms of becoming more singularly focused in training ministers and scholars.

Part of the thesis of this dissertation has been to argue that Broadus's elective system is significantly more important to theological education than history reveals. After extensive research on his elective system, this writer believes Broadus's system is not only historically significant, but also could be effective in today's ministry environment, especially in rural areas where many pastors work bi-vocationally and are unable to attend seminary full-time. Broadus demonstrated that men with a general education and men with a college degree could study together and both profit from the endeavor. At minimum, seminaries would benefit from examining Broadus's plan. They could take aspects of the elective system and offer one of the independent schools at an extension center in a rural areas where bi-vocational pastors come one night a week for an extended period of time and ultimately receive a diploma in that school that could eventually lead to an associate's degree once a number of the schools have been completed over the course of several years. Like in Broadus's day, over the course of time, passion and excitement is built up in the student's life after receiving the diplomas from each school. The cumulative effect of earning the diplomas and not just passing a course will foster a greater desire for further education, providing greater benefit to the pastor, the church, the seminary, and, most importantly, the gospel.

Concluding Thoughts

Over the course of this dissertation, this writer has attempted to argue that the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary created by Broadus was more thoughtful and comprehensive than present literature indicates. Additionally, this writer has attempted to demonstrate that the elective system is significantly more important to theological education than history reveals. The approach taken to defend the thesis of this dissertation has been to introduce the life of Broadus to the reader and provide the historical backdrop of why the elective system was created. Next, a treatment of the relevant literature on Broadus's elective system was given demonstrating the need for this subject matter to be addressed. Third, a treatment on the University of Virginia revealed how the foundation of the elective system was established in Broadus's life. Also, the chapter provided the historical context of the development of elective system in American higher education, clarifying potential confusion when attempting to identify the model used by Broadus at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Fourth, approximately four factors were addressed that solidified in Broadus's heart that the elective system was the correct solution for the needs that faced the Southern Baptist Convention in the nineteenth century. Fifth, a detailed analysis was given of the elective system created by Broadus when the seminary was opened in 1859. Finally, various reasons were addressed substantiating that Broadus's elective system is significantly more important to theological education than history reveals.

When Broadus died in 1895, he left behind a legacy that has been matched by very few Southern Baptists. Multitudes of people have expressed their admiration for

his accomplishments and service to Jesus Christ. Scholars have gladly written on the numerous contributions Broadus made to the gospel ministry. From his preaching to his scholarship, men have counted it a privilege to testify of Broadus's Christlike character, tremendous work ethic, and natural giftedness that God used for His kingdom. In the same manner, this writer has counted it a privilege to bring to greater light one of the unique gifts Broadus gave to theological education; namely, the elective system of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

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