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JAMES PETIGRU BOYCE.

AN ADDRESS ON FOUNDERS' DAY AT THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, JAN. 11TH, 1907.

BY REV. LANSING BURROWS, D.D., NASHVILLE, TENN.

More than half a century ago, a lad of tender years was given a message to bear to a notable visitor in the city of Richmond. It was an invitation to fill the pulpit of the First Baptist Church upon the day succeeding. With no knowledge of the etiquette required, the lad stood in the porch of a hospitable home while the servant transmitted the desire of a waiting youth to see the visitor. So there came to the door at the bidding of a child the young Professor Boyce to hear how he was to be drafted into service for the Sabbath. The lad, grown to manhood, and having stepped over the threshold of declining days, is speaking to you with a vivid remembrance of the impression of the singular form and features and peculiar voice of the man out of whose life-blood this institution has arisen.

No one coming in contact with Prof. Boyce could be insensible of an unusual impression of his personality. His frame indicated a strong virility and his features a spiritual power that was as strong. The imaginative and speculative have associated with spirituality a feminine, mellow, dreamy cast of countenance to which they have given the descriptive word "spirituelle." That is not my conception. Some men have seen angels and they have

shivered in fear or fallen down as dead, so magnificent were they and even dazzling in repose. Holy purpose and devotedness to noble endeavor do not need the sad, sighing, far-away gaze indifferent to earthly affairs, with which the poets and painters have described them. My conception is different; for I would put a sword in the hand of an angel or else the shrill clarion. The youth stood abashed before this young man and felt the power of his personality, and when he made reply to my message, he laid his hand upon my head and addressed me as "my boy." That hour was the beginning of a loving loyalty unshaken by any circumstance and the lad turned grey and bathing in the sunset glow of a chequered life harks back to that simple word and loves to think that he is still his boy.

In the performance of this present task, the thought, with but one exception, will revolve upon the genius and mastery of James P. Boyce in the domain of theological education.

THE IDEAL OF A YOUNG MAN.

Few men in their maturity realize the ideals of their earlier days. Warren Hastings, lying on the grassy slopes overlooking the ancestral manor of Daylesford, determined that one day it should be his own, and so it was. Daniel Webster, the child of the New England school-house, awakened the derision of his playmates by his declaration that he would sit in the councils of the nation, and so he did. These were exceptional men. They possessed the characteristics which enabled them to forecast their ambitions. We should be impressed that the greatest tribute we can pay to the mental powers of Boyce is that the ideal of his youth was realized in his life purpose. It is not given to many to comprehend the purpose and possibilities of their character. The most of us are dreamers in our early manhood. We are poets then, if ever; perhaps gentle idealists besaddened at the contemplation of ills that should be remedied or burdens

that might be transmuted into blessings. Our youthful ideals are vague, not lacking purpose perhaps, but lacking in practicality, magnificent in ambitious proportions yet centering about ourselves so that if we bring them not to pass they may never materialize so far as we care. Our ideals may be noble and ignoble at the same time. Noble in conception but ignoble because so wrapped about by selfishness that their execution is made dependent upon our own exertions. We taint them with our personal ambitions to make a name in the world. Those are the masters who with brain to clearly perceive have strong heart nobly to achieve. The many are like those of whom Thoreau has written, who in their youth get together the materials for a bridge to the moon and in their manhood use them wherewith to build a woodshed.

We may admit that the conception of a theological education based upon the methods which were peculiar to this Seminary and which have contributed to its immeasurable influence for good was not original in the mind of Dr. Boyce. They who have written of him and also of Dr. Francis Wayland announce this to be the fact. But it is not necessary that our ideals should be self-originated. What is so is apt to be tinctured with the germ of selfishness; like the ideals of Hastings and Webster, the former mounting the steeps of his ambition through cruelty, chicanery, and his contemporaries claim through dishonesty. It is nothing that an ideal should be suggested. It is that the forming brain shall be able to recognize its potency and perceive how it may be wrought into practical utility. Wayland never put into shape his conception of the education of the common preacher, although he had abundant opportunity. It would seem that it was cast aside by him as impracticable as it might well have been in the precise and frosty atmosphere of the New England intellect. Boyce made it his own by evolving the methods by which it could be put into execution and he must bear the palm for he has merited it.

We have never seen the like of a youth entering upon the third decade of life writing a thesis in behalf of the ordinary man who with limited opportunities, or none at all, desired to make full proof of his ministry; and especially a youth growing up not amid the privations from which so many of our noblest preachers of that day emerged, but amid the luxuries of a patrician home. No matter in what aspect we view this young man, the contemplation of these early years provokes astonishment. It was not a day when the patrician homes of the South sent forth men to stand in the pulpits of the common people. When gentle spirits did thus come from what we regarded as our aristocracy of birth, commingled with the aristocracy of wealth, they came with robes and liturgies and became bishops. Nor were there many of them. It is not meant to intimate that our nineteenth century preachers were of ungentle extraction, for that was not true. They came from a strong and sturdy stock but from the democratic fields, the circumscribed horizon of the farms or at most from the simple village life to which the wild excesses of the madding crowd had not penetrated. The group of my own boyhood city life produced but two ministers and they were the sons of ministers. The young man of material advantage sought the forum of the law or the practice of the healing art, and perhaps the most successful attained greatness through matrimonial alliance which involved far reaching acres. From a home of opulence, remarked for its culture and gentleness of refinement, maintained in its leading influence in a community in which mushroom and sham were quickly slain by the frost of scorn, came a youth with all the instincts of high breeding and endowed as richly as wealth and training could accomplish in any man, to bring to pass the ideal of an instructed ministry where there could not be the hope of a highly educated ministry.

THE CONDITIONS OF THE EARLY MINISTRY.

Consider the general type of the ministry of the South in the times of the youth of Boyce. It was moulded principally upon the severest ideals of the religious life. The exactions of the churches were severe. The least suspicion of frivolity or carelessness of demeanor or apparel was unfortunate to ministerial usefulness. Many of our best men were grave to the point of dreariness. Some of them were notable for stilted expressions and phrases which had come down to them with the sacredness of established use. As a child I was wont to be depressed when some of these excellent men came to the hospitality of my father's house. Not so marked, perhaps, in the pastors of city churches, but very noticeable in those of the rural sections, was the great reserve when they came in contact with their kind. At the general meetings I have seen them come walking in long lines, bearing their glazed carpet-bags and wearing long linen dusters, and patiently awaiting their assignment to homes of hospitable entertainment because otherwise their attendance had been impossible. But they were intense men, these who came up from the plantations and the hamlets. They had few great ideas and these they had absorbed from the leaders of prominence who had set the standard of orthodoxy. They had no libraries; or what books they had were likely to be Nelson on Infidelity, Baxter's Saints' Rest, and later on Theodosia Earnest or Pendleton's Three Reasons. When they did have theological writings, these were the discourses of Timothy Dwight, or Dick or Andrew Fuller. It required much effort to master them and not many did for the want of preparatory courses in elementary education. They were men of power, nevertheless. They carried the weighty influence of sterling character and blamelessness of life. They had a fervid address, for those were the days of the exhortation and not much learning was needed for that. Given a heart burning with zeal and suffused with love for the

souls of men and the exhortation would come like a torrent sweeping away the objections and hard-heartedness of the listener. The only defect in the admirable courses of training of the ministry of the present day that I can think of is the possible loss of the power of the exhortation which formed the principal portion of the sermons of the fathers. There was not much exposition of the Scriptures but rather practical remarks growing out of the text followed by strenuous appeal to men to be reconciled with God. It was that kind of a ministry that swept the rural sections. The Baptist strength was demonstrated in the country churches and the fruitage gathered in the annual "meeting of days" was abundant. The towns and cities were in the main neglected. There were not enough of erudite and polished men, of the stamp of the elder Brantly and the elder Manly and Richard Fuller, to supply the need. These were the exceptional preachers. But of whatever class, there was not one who would have appealed to the risibilities of his congregation by amusing anecdotes, nor was there one of them who knew how to manage a magic-lantern or to conduct a cantata wherewith to insure an evening congregation.

Behind them stood a solid, grave, earnest people with strict conceptions of the serious duties of religious living. They ran in a groove. The younger preachers were enjoined to follow closely the precedents set by the elders. They were to affect similar intonations of voice, methods in pulpit management as in the lining out of hymns, and even personal appearance. I can remember a time when it would be fatal to a minister's influence to wear a moustache or to part the hair in the middle and extremely perilous to wear a high silk hat.

The standard of piety was extremely high. The worldly amusements of the present were not so much as to be mentioned even in large cities. In my own day a young man who attended upon theatres was practically disgraced if he was the child of pious parentage, and if he was not,

was esteemed of but little value. One might as well have expected an infectious disease to be deliberately introduced into the home as hospitable reception given to a public entertainer. The evening revels were sedate and ended long before the midnight hour. No young woman would think of permitting the contact of the modern dance. Cards were for gamblers and the degraded. I fell into a reminiscent mood on the reception of a prized letter from a venerable friend of Boyce and sought to extract his meaning when he wrote that his recollection was that "Boyce and Allen Tupper were considered two of the wildest boys in Charleston before they were converted." I know what wildness meant when applied to the youth of that period. It was more the absence of a grave, steady, almost mirthless life. The mercurial temperament, restless in its desire for entertainment, pageantries, excitements, preferring the stirring romances of Sylvanus Cobb to the dreary Moral Tales of Maria Edgeworth; who as the down sifted gently on the upper lip felt desire to abandon the pew of father for that of the father of another and who at times preferred to stroll in gentler company than immediate return to the Sunday dinner, was in danger of being esteemed a scapegrace. The lad whose demeanor was not shaped upon the pattern of a typical deacon was apt to be considered wild, and grave shaking of the head prognosticated the coming of dire evil. I think I know wherein Boyce's reputation for wildness consisted, especially in the light of the simple remark of one of those sweet, gentle sisters in his home, at the time of his conversion, that he had not been as bad as the rest of the children.

The increasing culture of the town and city life demanded a different type of minister; not a better, for there could be no better, but more adapted to the increased general intelligence. The age of literary activity was setting in. A broader scope was given to the thought of the average man. New questions were propounded in their circles. Insidious heresies were beginning to show

themselves, grieving the saints and calling for abler defenders of the accepted dogmas. There was a revival of collegiate learning and more men sat in the pews who were able to think logically. The strangest thing that happened was that the young man in the wealthy home in Charleston should have grasped the solution of the problem. Wealth breeds exclusivism. It affects an air of indifference to what it terms the common herd. The crudeness of ignorance grates upon it. The want of polish bars the door against entrance. It perceives no attractiveness in mediocre ability and limited powers of graceful interchange. If ever God raised up a man to meet the conditions of an altering age, he raised up James P. Boyce. It was as notable a call as that given to Saul of Tarsus. It was not strange that there should have been pious, earnest, devoted men to see the difficulties and sigh for some solution of the problem, measuring the situation in the light of their own restricted opportunities. But that a youth, with all the world before him where to choose, the darling of an ambitious father who longed to see his son grace the bench or mould public opinion in statecraft, for which he was singularly fitted; with all the temptations that his surroundings presented to fix his name in the annals of his country, for troublous times were impending; that such a youth should devote his talents and wealth to the uplifting of his struggling brethren in the ministry is to be interpreted only as we interpret the Providence of God in the call of Moses and Saul.

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus was followed by a great consecration and a deathless zeal. I can trace a similarity in the conversion of James P. Boyce. Let that remarkable correspondence of his, immediately following his entrance into the Christian life testify. On his return journey to college tarrying over the Sabbath and observing the Lord's Supper in a strange church, describing his meditations upon the death of his Redeemer; joining a religious society in his college at once; entering into the promotion of a revival among his fellow students;

taking a class in the Sunday school; reading with appreciation the *Foreign Mission Journal*; convincing a semi-skeptical classmate of the divinity of Christ and leading him to a saving hope; and then his final determination to prepare himself for the ministry, "the only subject," he declares, "in which I could have any interest."

THE SEMINARY AND ITS RENAISSANCE.

The need of a theological seminary for the great stretch of our Southern country was recognized by the fathers before the day of Boyce. Efforts to supply the need were made through departments or chairs in many of our literary institutions. Here, in connection with studies in the liberal arts, young ministers were afforded a partial course in Systematic Theology; but for a thorough curriculum covering all the phases of theological enquiry there could be no provision. Our colleges had arisen from the desire to afford a better mental equipment for the ministry and the creation of a religious atmosphere in the prosecution of general learning. The only seminaries were in the North and they were not numerous. Comparatively few in the South availed themselves of their advantages. The institution at Princeton was perhaps the more largely patronized. As early as the date of the founding of our Convention the constitution of a seminary was discussed, but after the plans and methods then prevailing, furnishing a thorough theological education to men who had first pursued a full collegiate course elsewhere. The plans of Dr. W. B. Johnson contemplated the concentration of the seven instructors in theology then working in as many literary institutions at some central point. When the plans crystallized into something practical the young man Boyce startled the friends of theological education with an entirely new proposition. It was contained in his inaugural as professor of theology in the Furman University, which paper was entitled "Three Changes in Theological Institu-

tions," and which opened the way for men having only a common English education to obtain such theological information as they were prepared to receive.

All this is common history and is ready to hand for any enquirer. It is not necessary to dwell upon them, nor the encouraging reception of the new seminary, nor the sad years when the war swept away its endowment and left it stranded. The Seminary received its second birth amid the pangs of a fearful heart-travail. The noble soul of Boyce declared that the history of those days had not been and should not be written. Not in his day, perhaps, but it ought to be written, nevertheless, if only to be hidden away until the historian of the twenty-first century comes to treat of the stirring events of the rehabilitation of the Southern Baptists. In the glow of that golden day, when men shall be willing to accept the truth, enfranchised from prejudice and unaffected by inchoate and superficial acquaintance with learning, the history of those days should be written, as Motley revealed to an enchanted world the uplift of the Dutch people through tears and blood.

The eloquent Tichenor once exclaimed in an animated address that no great cause throbbed into virile life until it had been first crucified and arisen again under the mighty hand of God. When men saw new light in the domain of art and literature and better ideals emerged from the buried fragments of a careless age, they spoke of it as a Renaissance. We may apply that term to the Seminary. It had been exposed to crucifixion by the mad passions of men as they contended upon gory fields of battle. And in its nakedness, there were not wanting men to wag their heads and poison the air with mockeries; and there were some who would have rolled a great stone before its sepulchre and sealed it with the stamp of their disapproval. When in despite of obstacles the Seminary in all the radiance of its resurrection came forth, there were invented tales to be put in the mouths of adversaries that were as complimentary to their judg-

ment as the tale which the Roman guard was bidden to relate.

NOBILITY IN THE PRESENCE OF OPPOSITION.

We look back upon those days with calmness, gentle and considerate of human infirmity, in view of attained results. But we ought to remember that while opposers argued, criticised, complained, Boyce and his coadjutors wept and prayed. The strengthening angel is always found in a man's Gethsemane. The praying man wins. In human history there is to be found in every great crisis a Nehemiah to defeat his Sanballat by a great cry into the waiting ear of God.

The opposition to the Seminary was serious enough. It would interfere with favorite projects and the suggestions of selfishness are very potent. The largeness of its financial demands appalled men who had been accustomed to give unto the Lord that which had cost them nothing. The newness of the scheme did not appeal to some who claimed that a strict following in the steps of the fathers was of divine ordination. We boast of our denominational independence. Baptists have always been chary of their freedom. But it is a perilous thing to possess an unsanctified liberty. It would be useless, even if it was desirable, to infringe upon our denominational rights. But it would be better if we understood more clearly the Epistles to the Corinthians. When independence is conjoined with prejudice good men suffer and noble spirits are forced into the dust of the arena. We do not find it easy at all times to distinguish between the Lord's cause and our interpretation of it. We talk grandly about God being on our side when we might be more concerned to know if we are on God's. Nothing was ever heard of the men who, fearful and afraid, returned to Mount Ephraim. Meroz is but a name unknown apart from the fact that it came not up to the help of the Lord. It was manly in Boyce to say that the history of the renaissance should not all be written. Yet it was

that very history that sublimated the man's character, developing his heroic determination and that crowned him with the laurels of a Christian victory, embalming his memory in the future years when those who opposed shall be as Sanballat and Meroz—nothing but names.

There were days when it was almost pitiful, when strong men bowed themselves to hide their welling tears, feeling their inadequacy to meet the demands of a mighty cause. Oh! those pleadings for the Seminary—shall we of the older class ever forget them?—the voice broken with sobs,—the gaunt features struggling to chase away the cold, creeping shadows of despair—the awful stillness that settled upon the councillors and the solemn dispersing beneath the dripping clouds of disappointment. Yet the man Boyce stood courageous. I can recall but one occasion when he seemed to falter. It was in the Convention at Nashville in 1878. His voice broke in an intense appeal, for he had come with a heart wrung at the intellectual defection of a beloved colleague for whose restoration to correct views he declared that he would sacrifice his right arm. The day was dark and the Seminary was floundering in the tempestuous seas. New occasion of criticism had been given to the opposers by the event which had pierced his soul. The burden bowed him down, but it was but for a passing moment for presently his voice rang out clear in his picturing of this day of achievement. The prophet eye had caught the gleam of the coming day. They that were melted by the tears of Broadus were reinspired by the courage of Boyce, and the Seminary was materially aided.

Dr. Boyce had maintained a position in his relations to the Convention that while regarded as singular, must be claimed as logically correct. As a statesman he would have been classed among those strict constructionists who have made the history of Southern statecraft luminous and honorable. The Seminary was in no sense an offshoot or creation of the Convention. The constitution of that day could not be construed as

either favoring or opposing the question of Christian education. It was drafted to meet emergencies which had arisen in the complications of our missionary enterprise. The Convention was set to the evangelization of the nations and while other enterprises might well appeal to the judgment of its constituents as desirable and praiseworthy, there was no place provided for their parliamentary consideration. In agitating the establishment of the Seminary the meetings for consultation were held during the sessions of the Convention for sake of convenience, but never as part of that body. That was the opinion of the great leader, Wm. B. Johnson, and Dr. Boyce was an apt disciple of the school founded by his predecessor in the chair of the Convention. So that not until after the War and the dreadful days that followed do we find Boyce and Broadus pleading for sympathy and material help. Dr. Boyce excused this as an irregularity born out of impending peril. Yet true to his conviction you shall find the man in the Savannah Convention of 1861 opposing measures expressive of sympathy with the cause to which the best and noblest were devoting their life's blood and material means. Dr. Boyce on several occasions found himself confronted by serious opposition in his claim that as a body the Convention had no constitutional right to take notice of extraneous matters no matter how worthy they might be of praise and commendation.

So it was that in the last year of his life he rose to a sublime height in the maintenance of his conviction that the Southern Baptist Convention had a specific work and call that if worthily heeded would demand all its attention and occupy its time. The opposite view had been gaining from time to time. Men with peculiar views sought to have them aired before the body. All manner of devices and propositions were entertained through a mistaken conception of courtesy. Sometimes influenced by eloquence or favorable endorsement of respected brethren the Convention had registered opinions

upon matters not germane to its constitution. No body was more favorably disposed to the great temperance reform; yet it seemed to some that a great body like that could not afford to lose an opportunity to go on record. Animated discussions upon a subject upon which all were agreed consumed much time. The questions for the consideration of which the brethren had traveled long distances and at much expense were relegated to brief spaces of time because of discussions upon a theme in which no one held a dissenting opinion. Three years before, in the Convention of 1885, much time had been consumed at the most valuable point in considering the question of divorce, in which the Convention at its afternoon session rescinded all it had agreed upon in the morning session. The parliamentary view of Dr. Mell, so long the model of courtly efficiency in the presiding chair, was as expressed by himself to me, to ascertain what the brethren wished and to help them to attain it. Dr. Boyce was cast in a different mould. He would have expressed his opinion of parliamentary duty as requiring the brethren to confine themselves to the business in hand and to fulfil the trust that had been committed to them and accomplish the object of their coming together, and he would hold them firmly, yet courteously, to that work. While there seemed to be no especial reason for the formulation of any new opinion favorable to the spread of temperance, since in Mell's time the record was ample, the Richmond Convention was called upon for a special purpose to express itself with an unusual emphasis. The resolutions were declared by Dr. Boyce to be out of order since the constitution did not provide for the discussion of the subject. Then arose a contention that was exceedingly painful to the friends and lovers of the old hero, who with his face drawn by the tortures of the disease that within the year was to lay him low, with his characteristic courtesy and courage maintained himself against a veritable onslaught. It was again the man with

the rapier contending with the man with the bludgeon. There were men who claimed to have within their veins the blood of the cavaliers who stung with an assumed courteousness and poisoned with a pseudo-gentle demeanor. With their boasted powers of elegant Addisonian English they aspersed the sincerity of their president. The lapse of twenty years has not effaced my recollection of that strong, sad, wan face, immovable in determination, but plainly smitten with an unutterable grief at the animadversions of wild and intemperate men. The Convention sustained the chair in the point of order but so implacable were some that they were led to question the accuracy of the count, one of them on the ground that everybody within the building should be considered as vitally interested.

THE HEIGHTS ATTAINED.

The lesson of the life of Boyce ought to be easily mastered. The keynote of his noble life was courage. They who build the great triumphal arches must first go down into the dark, damp earth. They that shine with the martyr's lustre must keep step with the suffering, for in the fiercest forge they must furbish their swords, coming tear-bathed unto the serene heights.

“Heart-strings sweetest music make
When swept by suffering's fiery fingers,
And through soul-shadows starriest break
The glories on God's brave light-bringers.”

He rose through suffering unto the heights. If ever seed cast with careless hand upon the barren highway finds scant lodgment where it may burst in blushing crimson upon the edge of foot-pressed dust, much more the flower of noble purpose flashes in the grandeur of the prepared garden. Drawing nigh the half-century of this institution, profoundly moved by its vast possibilities

and the immeasurable blessings which it has already distributed, we who know the chequered history of the past may be indulged the loving, grateful thought of the hero in the desperate struggle. Men rise by the mastery of that which is under foot—by the deposition of pride, the throttling of passion, the vanquishing of fear.

“Only in dreams is a ladder thrown

From the weary earth to the sapphire walls;

But the dreams depart and the vision falls

And the sleeper awakes on his pillow of stone.”

The prophetic utterances have been fulfilled. In the glow of the morning that chased away the departing shadows of the long and weary night, he laid him down in exile amid the breezes of balm and the purple haze of Southern mountains, stepping from the golden paradise of earth up to the glories of the heights beyond. May I quote from the notes of an address which I was permitted to make while the precious body was borne upon the heaving billows of the sea to its quiet sepulture?

“The question has been frequently raised, Who shall take his place? The answer has come from the very shadow of the great buildings on Broadway in Louisville, pertinently and truthfully, No one. He leaves no place to be filled. If ever man died triumphant in the thought that he had finished the work that had been given him to do, that man is he whose last slumbers are rocked upon the bosom of the sea today. The Seminary is no longer an experiment. There is no threatening of an uncertain future. With the influential pulpits of the South graced by men who shall be the flower of its quiet toil, the opposition born of ignorance and prejudice will die in obscurity. Out of the ranks of its accomplished alumni many a brilliant mind will be drafted to teach within its forum. It will no longer need the voice that grew tremulous in pleading for it nor the frame that failed from incessant toils in its establishment. The work is done

and will stand through enduring time the monument to a noble man's heroic faithfulness."

And so has it come to pass.

Young men, "morituri salutamus." From the life of this man learn to

"Have hope! Though clouds environ round
And gladness hides her face in scorn,
Put thou the shadow from thy brow:
No night but hath its morn.

"Have Faith! Where'er thy bark is driven—
The calm's disport, the tempest's mirth—
Know this: God rules the hosts of heaven,
The inhabitants of earth.

"Have Love! Not love alone for one,
But man, as man, thy brother call,
And scatter like the circling sun
Thy charities on all.' "