

MEMORIAL TABLET

IN HONOR OF

THE REV. JOHN H. RICE, D. D.

ADDRESSES

AT

THE UNVEILING AND DEDICATION,

DELIVERED IN

THE CHAPEL OF UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, VA.,

MAY 5, 1885,

BY

THE REV. B. M. SMITH, D. D.,

AND

THE REV. THEODORICK PRYOR, D. D.

PUBLISHED BY THE TRUSTEES.

RICHMOND, VA.:

WHITTET & SHEPPERSON, PRINTERS, 1001 MAIN STREET.

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INTRODUCTORY.

At a meeting of the Trustees of Union Theological Seminary, in Virginia, held 5th and 6th May, 1885, the following minute was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That the thanks of the Trustees are hereby tendered to the Committee to whom was entrusted the preparation of the Mural Tablet to the memory of the Rev. John Holt Rice, D. D., and for the becoming ceremonies connected with its formal dedication this day; to the Rev. Dr. B. M. Smith for his introductory address on the life of Dr. Rice, and to Rev. Dr. Pryor for his address on the character and work of Dr. Rice. And in order to preserve a permanent memorial of an occasion so memorable, the Trustees earnestly request the Rev. Drs. Smith and Pryor to furnish copies of their respective addresses for publication. Messrs. Lacy, C. White, and Watkins were appointed a committee to prepare a brief narrative of these ceremonies for publication in connection with the addresses."

Referring to the address of the Rev. Dr. Smith for the earlier history of the memorial to the Rev. Dr. Rice, as projected by those who revered his name and desired to honor his work, it seemed to the Trustees, at their meeting in May, 1884, that the time had come for the execution of this long-cherished and laudable purpose. A committee was appointed to select a design and inscription, and to make all becoming arrangements for its formal and public unveiling. To their taste and judgment is due the happy issue of the ceremonies incident to the occasion.

On Tuesday, 5th May, at 5 P. M., this interesting service was held in the Seminary Chapel. In the rear of the pulpit, underneath the oil-portrait of the Rev. Dr. Rice, which has so long

adorned this sacred hall, where there was once a window, a handsome panel is inserted, in the centre of which is placed a marble tablet, of suitable proportions and of chaste and striking device, on which is engraved the following becoming inscription:

IN MEMORY
OF
REV. JOHN HOLT RICE, D. D.,
BORN IN BEDFORD COUNTY, VA.,
NOVEMBER 28, 1777;
TUTOR IN HAMPDEN SIDNEY COLLEGE,
1797—1804;
PASTOR OF CUB CREEK CHURCH,
1804—1812;
PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH, RICHMOND,
1812—1823;
PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN
UNION SEMINARY,
1822 TO HIS DEATH, SEPTEMBER 3, 1831.

EMINENT AND EFFICIENT IN EVERY OFFICE, THIS SEMINARY, FOUNDED
BY HIS LABOURS, IS HIS LASTING
MONUMENT.

The day was auspicious, and at the appointed hour a large and deeply-interested audience had assembled to attend upon the exercises of the occasion. The Faculties and students of the two institutions of learning at Hampden Sidney, the Directors of Union Theological Seminary, visitors and guests, and the citizens of the community, constituted the auditory. The platform was occupied by the Rev. J. J. Bullock, D. D., of Washington City, the president of the corporation; the Rev. William Brown, D. D., now of Florida and late of Richmond, Va., the oldest director of the Seminary; the Rev. B. M. Smith, D. D., LL. D., the senior professor in the Seminary; and the Rev. Theodoric Pryor, D. D., of Nottoway county, Va., of the class of 1830, and a pupil of the distin-

guished founder of the seminary in whose memory and honor the service of the day was held.

After prayer by the Rev. Dr. Bullock, and a hymn of praise, the Rev. Dr. Smith withdrew the curtain that veiled the mural tablet, and exposed to the view of the expectant audience the chaste memorial to Rev. Dr. Rice. Professor Smith then gave a sketch of the life of Dr. Rice—specially of his earlier years and of his connection with the Seminary. The Rev. Dr. Pryor followed with an address on the character and work of Rev. Dr. Rice, spoken with fervor and loving remembrance. The reader is referred to the addresses themselves as the best exposition of their exceeding appropriateness to the occasion, and the valuable historical testimonies therein contained. It may be proper to add, however, that both addresses were spoken without manuscript, and were recalled and written at the urgent request of the Trustees, and hence lack in some degree the freshness and feeling and power that characterized their spoken utterance.

To perform the memorial services herein recorded, perhaps no two men could have been more appropriately selected, or two who were more eminently qualified for the execution of the task, than Drs. Smith and Pryor. To Dr. Smith is wholly due the credit of the beautiful conception of thus honoring the illustrious dead, and his interest and zeal in the execution of the design should be appreciated by the friends of the Seminary and by the whole Church. His address on "the life of Dr. Rice" was concise, clear and satisfactory.

The address of the Rev. Dr. Pryor on "the character and work" of Dr. Rice was rich in precious memories, and it was delivered with such fervor and unction that it seemed like the breaking of a vase of precious ointment, whose perfume will linger in the thoughts of all who witnessed that touching scene of these two venerable fathers paying fresh tribute to the name and services of the sainted dead. Both knew Dr. Rice personally, and had been members of his household, and knew whereof they spoke,

and testified what they had seen. "The memory of the just is blessed." "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

After prayer by the Rev. Dr. Brown, the memorable services were closed with the benediction, pronounced by the Rev. Dr. Bullock, and the audience slowly dispersed. The recollections of the early years of the Seminary, of her struggles and trials, thus brought vividly to view, and of her great usefulness and honorable service, and the contemplation of its present equipment and hopeful outlook, filled all hearts with gratitude to the Giver of all good, to whose smiles and favor the Seminary is indebted for the measure of its prosperity. In prayers and manifold sacrifices were the foundations of this noble institution laid, and those to whose toil and devotion its success, under God, is due, should be held in affectionate and enduring remembrance. First and foremost of all these is the honored name of JOHN HOLT RICE.

ADDRESS
OF
THE REV. B. M. SMITH, D. D.

REVEREND FATHERS AND BRETHREN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
AND FACULTY, THE STUDENTS OF THE SEMINARY, AND CHRIS-
TIAN FRIENDS.

THE REV. JOHN H. RICE, D. D., First Professor of Theology in this Seminary, died September 3, 1831. He was nearly fifty-four years of age. Nearly the same number of years has elapsed since his death. Except a tombstone, erected by his beloved wife at the time of his burial, and removed to the Seminary cemetery with his remains when brought and re-interred by order of the Board of Trustees, no palpable monument to his memory has heretofore existed. In 1859, a member of the Electoral Board, assembled here to elect a Professor, Mr. J. B. G. Logan, of Salem, in view of the absence of any monument to Dr. Rice's memory on the premises, interested himself in securing funds, by subscription from sundry persons, for the purpose of supplying what he and others regarded a manifest want. The amount of money thus collected proving inadequate to the purpose proposed, was handed over to the Treasurer of the Seminary to await farther contributions. Before such could be had, the money, along with other funds of the Seminary similarly invested, was lost by the disasters of war. A member of the Faculty, not aware of this loss, with the concurrence of his colleagues, presented to the Board, at the meeting in May, 1884, a suggestion, that it would be not inconsistent with the noble purpose proposed by Mr. Logan, in view of the failure to secure adequate funds, to modify his proposed plan of a monument, and erect a *mural* tablet in the south side of this chapel; removing the window and filling the space with a brick wall. The Board unanimously approved

and adopted the suggestion, and appointed a committee, consisting of Rev. Charles White, D. D., and the Faculty of the Seminary, to execute the order passed in accordance with that action. Many delays, due to weather and the difficulty of securing a skilful workman, hindered the completion of the work till last Thursday. The tablet of Italian marble, with a brief and suitable inscription, was then set in the wall, and is now formally unveiled (the speaker then drawing up the curtain) to the public.

The Board deemed the occasion one which called for "appropriate memorial solemnities." Accordingly, some brief sketches of Dr. Rice's life, will now be presented, to be followed by an estimate of his character and work, by Rev. Dr. Pryor, the oldest living alumnus who had sat under Dr. Rice's instruction, and whose valuable aid could be obtained. The prayer of dedication will then be offered by Rev. Dr. William Brown, also an alumnus and the senior member of the Board of Trustees.

The long delay in paying to the memory of Dr. Rice some monumental tribute, has not been due to lack of appreciation of his eminent services to the Church, in his relation to this institution. Indeed, this delay may have been overruled, in God's providence, in order that the *acts* of this occasion may now be, more than ever heretofore, illustrated in the benefits which have come to the Church. His praise, by this monument, has, for sixty years, been annually spoken by the growing numbers of living ministers who have gone from the walls of this institution to preach to thousands, in our own and other lands, the "unsearchable riches of the gospel." This tablet, which declares this Seminary "his lasting monument," may thus be called the concrete expression of what the history of the Seminary teaches. There have gone out over seven hundred alumni; many have "fallen asleep," but over five hundred remain to testify by their value to the Church at home and abroad, that though long passed to his rest in heaven, his "works still follow him."

Dr. Rice was born in Bedford county, Va., November 28, 1777. From infancy his bodily health was feeble. His home was one of poverty. An uncle, Rev. John Holt, a minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church, for whom he was named, not only aided in ministering to the comfort of his body during his sickly childhood, but also imparted to him the knowledge of letters, so that,

at four years of age, he read fluently, and by aptness of mind, also committed to memory portions of Scripture and Watt's Psalms and Hymns. He introduced him to the study of the Latin language when about eight or nine years of age, and such was his diligence, that he read his Latin lessons in Horace by the light of pine torches which he had gathered during the day, and when they failed, by ordinary fire-light, lying flat on his breast before the fireplace, and supporting his head on his hands. His uncle's health having failed, he found instruction from Rev. James Mitchell. At twelve years of age, the loss of his mother proved an unusually severe bereavement, not only by the deprivation of her tender care, but also by the change of his domestic life. He had become the subject of religious impressions under her faithful teachings, and proved the sincerity of his religious emotions by "showing piety at home," and found his best comfort in the ministrations of duty to his older sister, who had the cares and responsibilities of the household of their father; whose second marriage, however, rendered the home of his childhood no longer a place of happiness. The good of "bearing the yoke in his youth" was illustrated by the quickening of his religious emotions, so that, at the age of fifteen, he was received into the communion of the Church. His father by great efforts managed to send him to Liberty Hall, in Lexington, for a year and a half, and he there had the privilege of enjoying the instruction of Rev. Wm. Graham, the Rector of the Academy. Just when his father could no longer aid in his instruction, he was invited by Rev. George A. Baxter to enjoy the advantages of further literary instruction at New London Academy. About this time he was introduced to the celebrated Patrick Henry, who, laying his hand on his head, said, "My son, do not be discouraged. Remember the best men always make themselves." In his eighteenth year he obtained the position of a family teacher in the household of a gentleman of wealth and cultivation, at Malvern Hill, below Richmond. He set off for the scene of his labors with the small outfit of \$1.75 in his pocket, and his scanty wardrobe packed in his handkerchief. The advantages he enjoyed in strengthening his literary attainments by teaching and increasing his general culture of mind and manners, in a circle of highly cultivated society, was sadly offset by the influence of the gay and fashionable associations by which

he was surrounded, which led to a decay of spiritual life. Having determined to return to his home, he travelled in an open boat most of the way up James River. The exposure and fatigue brought on a severe spell of fever; but in this affliction of body he experienced the healing of his soul, and by God's gracious providence, with returning health, experienced also the renewed quickening of religious affections. An advertisement for a tutor in Hampden Sidney College having arrested his attention, he at once set out on foot on the journey of seventy miles, to offer his services. He found the place had already been offered to Rev. John Logan, of Fincastle, who had the matter under consideration. The authorities of the college, however, assured him that, should Mr. Logan decline, he could obtain the position. He immediately started on the journey of sixty or seventy miles to see Mr. Logan, though with but *twelve and a half cents* with which to defray his expenses. He saw Mr. Logan, who gave him a letter to Hampden Sidney, declining the position. At nineteen years of age he entered on his new duties. The college was in low condition, both as to funds and students. He was in debt, and laboring under the double disadvantages of ill-health and poverty. Maj. James Morton advanced him the means to pay his debts. His threadbare clothes were replaced, by the same generous friend, with a becoming suit; and Mrs. Morton, by pious counsel and motherly care, ministered comfort to his soul and cheered him in his work. Despite his ungainly, slim appearance and his sallow face, he soon proved to be so valuable a gain to the college, that with its increasing prospects of prosperity, the Trustees invited Rev. A. Alexander to the presidency, and associated Rev. Conrad Speece with Mr. Rice in the instruction of the pupils. He soon found in these ministers congenial and profitable companions. In Mr. Alexander's estimate of him, he was remarkable for, (1), Independence and a moral courage of his convictions; (2), Insatiable thirst for knowledge, united with a rare discrimination in the adoption of what was useful; (3), A predilection and growing facility for writing out his views; and (4), For an indisposition to indulge in discussions of a merely speculative or a metaphysical tenor, not because he did not understand them, but that he depreciated their value. His aim was more in the line of practical attainments, and of a minute and thorough acquaintance with the

languages and sciences; and he proved himself "apt to teach" in both these departments.

Having determined on prosecuting the study of medicine, he gave up his position in college, and became a tutor in Maj. Morton's family for a while, and then accepted an invitation of Mrs. Morton's brother, Mr. Josiah Smith, of Montrose, in Powhatan county, to make his home with him, while reading medicine under the direction of Dr. Samuel Wilson of that vicinity, then one of the most distinguished physicians of the State.

After preparing to attend a medical school in Philadelphia, just as he was ready to go to that city, he received a pressing invitation to resume the duties of tutor in Hampden Sidney. He was then twenty-three years of age. He accepted the offer, doubtless somewhat influenced by the prospect of renewing his intercourse with Messrs. Alexander and Speece. Under their influence and Christian association he was led to change his plan of life, and entered on the study of Theology under Mr. Alexander's instruction; rather, it may be said, under Mr. Alexander's direction, for he has left his testimony, in addition to what has been already given, that Mr. Rice required but little *instruction*; and it may be said here that his character, as depicted by Mr. Alexander, continued to be illustrated by his subsequent career. He was licensed by Hanover Presbytery, September 12, 1803. After preaching a year on probation, in a missionary field, extending into parts of Prince Edward, Campbell and Charlotte counties, he was ordained by the Presbytery, and installed pastor of Cub Creek Church, the bounds of which congregation covered all of Charlotte county except a small portion occupied by a part of Briery and Buffalo churches. He taught school to aid in supporting his family, and also to encourage young men in prosecuting a course of liberal education, and made their training in Christian knowledge and life a prominent part of his work. Already his mind was turned to the subject of theological education, in view of the lamentable paucity of ministers. He rendered active and efficient service in procuring funds for the support of the Professor of Theology, and books for a suitable library for the use of students. And when, in 1812, Dr. Moses Hoge, President of Hampden Sidney College, was appointed the Synod's Professor of Theology, he gave him a cordial support. He had, at that time, accepted the invitation of

a few Presbyterians in Richmond to preach among them. The Masons' Hall was secured as a place for services. But he soon, by God's blessing on his work, secured the organization of the First Presbyterian Church in Richmond, October 17, 1812, and for eight or ten years was a most successful preacher and pastor. Many who formed no connection with the Church became his edified auditors and liberal supporters. His one great work, in behalf of theological education in the South, was prosecuted while in both his pastoral charges. Many of the most valuable and rare works in the department of theology were then collected, which now form a valuable part of the library of this Institution. In 1822 the Synod, having failed to secure a successor to Dr. Hoge as its Professor of Theology in Hampden Sidney, handed over the whole arrangements for teaching theology to Hanover Presbytery. This body, under his lead, determined to organize a separate Institution as the "Theological Seminary" of the Presbytery. He was unanimously elected Professor, and accepted the office. About the same time he was also unanimously elected President of Nassau Hall (Princeton College). He received the intelligence when on a sick bed, with very slender prospects of recovery. But he preferred poverty and hard labor in establishing this Seminary, with scant funds and no buildings, to the position of comparative ease and an ample salary, as President of the college. As he expressed himself, however great the inducements to go to Princeton, with the pleasing prospects of a life-long association with his beloved and revered teacher, (now) Dr. Alexander, his "Virginia heart would not allow him to leave his native State and his beloved Virginia Church." He opened this "school of the prophets" in the kitchen of the President (Cushing) of Hampden Sidney. That excellent man encouraged him with all his power, and facilitated his securing a site for the Seminary. With three students, he was formally inaugurated Professor, January 1, 1824. By speeches in Presbytery and Synod, and by his writings in the *Christian Monitor*, 1815-1816, and in the *Literary and Evangelical Magazine*, 1818-1824, and then to 1828, he educated the Church in Virginia to favor the enterprise. Dr. Hoge's work from 1812 to 1820, materially promoted his purpose, by evincing the superior advantages of a regular course of study for the ministry to that formerly pursued by private study with

any pastor, whom a student might find convenient. But his work was at first discouraged for various reasons by many of his ministerial brethren outside of Hanover Presbytery. But nothing daunted, he went forward till, in 1829-'30, there were nearly fifty students in the Seminary.

Two professor's houses had been erected, and accommodations for sixty or seventy students were nearly completed; and in the fall in which he died, 1831, the entire Seminary building, as it now stands, a library of three thousand volumes and another professor's house—that in which he died,—had been fully prepared. He had secured the co-operation of the Synods of Virginia and North Carolina, and Hanover Presbytery, in 1827, had surrendered to those Synods the joint control of the institution, on the plan which still exists.

In view of what has been said,—

1. Let us not “despise the day of small things.” This sketch is a strong encouragement to labor for the prosperity of every enterprise of the Church, assured of success; for it is not “by might nor by power” of man, but “by my Spirit, saith the Lord,” that success will crown our work.

2. Let young men, especially when straitened for means, imitate this noble example. No class of people so excited Dr. Rice's sympathies and good will as did young men, especially those seeking an education. If you will pardon a personal remark, I wish to say here, that to his encouragement by word and deed I owe under God what little success I have found in a long life. He was to me more than a father, and no act of my life has filled my heart with higher, purer emotion than the privilege I enjoy this day of here testifying to the worth and honor of him whose “lasting monument,” as this tablet declares, “is this Seminary, founded by his labors and toils.”

3. May this tablet ever remain an instructive and impressive lesson to successive generations of students, who may repair to these walls to secure preparation to preach the gospel of the blessed God. Amen.

NOTE—This publication is made from full notes of the address which was spoken. In order to leave more time for Dr. Pryor, I omitted, in speaking, some paragraphs of what is here presented.

B. M. S.

ADDRESS
OF
THE REV. THEO. PRYOR, D. D.

UNLIKE the reply of Æneas to Dido, I have to say the task assigned me on the present interesting occasion is pleasing and gratifying. No theme could be more congenial to my feelings and convictions than the "Character and Services" of Dr. John H. Rice, whom I cheerfully recognize as one of the wisest and best men I ever knew. *My* estimate of the character and services of Dr. Rice may be worth but little; but I am persuaded that in what I propose to say in reference to him, I shall but utter the views and sentiments of all who knew him as well as I did. My opportunities for becoming well acquainted with Dr. Rice were exceptional. During the whole period of my college course he resided in the immediate vicinity of the college, attending to his professional duties. As such, it was my privilege to hear him often. I heard his inaugural address, delivered January 1st, 1824, in which he gave solemn utterance to his views of the duties and responsibilities of the office to which he had been appointed, and of what, in his judgment, constituted proper qualification for the ministry in the Presbyterian Church. Though I was not at that time a professor of religion, that address made impressions upon my mind and heart which the lapse of sixty years has failed to obliterate.

Dr. Rice sought to render himself acceptable to the young men in college, in which he was happily successful. He was always polite and respectful in his deportment towards them. He was a member of the same literary society to which I belonged. In that body I think I heard some of his finest efforts. I well remember his speech in a debate on the influence of the crusades. Also his speech in a debate on the value and impor-

tance of a knowledge of the ancient languages, technically termed the dead languages; but dead in the sense of perishing and passing away they are not, and never can be. For in one (the Hebrew) is incorporated the only sound theology; in another (the Greek) we find the most brilliant achievements in mental science; in the third (the Latin) are the grandest monuments of military genius and civil jurisprudence. As such, the world will not willingly let them die, sciolists and superficialists to the contrary notwithstanding. Indeed, they were inscribed upon the cross itself, thereby consecrated and perpetuated to the end of time. The argument of the speech referred to, in my judgment, has never been refuted.

But my best opportunity for becoming thoroughly acquainted with Dr. Rice was enjoyed when, as a student of the Seminary, I became a member of his family. His table talk and familiar conversations were full of instruction. Though sick and largely confined to his chamber, he still carried on the instructions of his classes. His sofa was literally covered with books. I remember finding him on one occasion sitting on that sofa reading Calvin's Institutes in the original. He remarked, "Calvin wrote as pure Latin as Cicero."

I am asked to give my estimate of the character and services of Dr. Rice. His *moral* character was without blemish or imputation; his heart was one of large and tender benevolence. He was free from jealousy and envy. I cannot recall a single remark in disparagement of any of his brethren. The text of the sermon he preached as Moderator of the Assembly,—“Speaking the truth in love,”—is a just index of his character. He was ever firm in maintenance of the truth, but he spoke it in love.

In my opinion, a characteristic feature of his mental constitution was the faculty of intense and persistent application, and a power of concentration of thought almost to the burning point. Dr. Rice deemed any matter worthy of attention, worthy of his *whole* attention; therefore, in conversation or debate, there was a steadfastness of gaze, as though he would look the man through and through. He shrunk from no difficulty of investigation. I heard him remark that no man would ever accomplish much who was not willing to grapple with the most difficult problem for the sake of the pleasure arising from its solution.

I am asked to speak of his services to the Church. My excellent brother, Dr. Smith, in his remarks failed to notice the work of Dr. Rice in the city of Richmond. I regard Dr. Rice as in fact the founder of Presbyterianism in that city. It is, indeed, true that he was preceded by the Rev. Mr. Blair, but my impression is that, whilst a good man, Mr. Blair's success in establishing Presbyterianism was very small. I therefore hold Dr. Rice the actual founder of the first Presbyterian church in the city of Richmond. Located in the capital of the State, that church exerted a wider influence probably than any other. There he formed the acquaintance of leading men in every department of society. Take a single instance. I know he was intimate with, and exerted an influence over, the Hon. Benjamin Watkins Leigh, one of the most distinguished members, of the bar, and a member of the United States Senate, when to belong to that body of *patres conscripti*—of conscript Fathers—was an honor worthy the ambition of any man. His intimacy with William Wirt, Attorney-General of the United States, is familiar to all who have read his life. I mention these facts to show the wide extent and value of Dr. Rice's influence. Indeed, it may be safely affirmed that it pervaded all ranks and classes; for whilst he mingled in society of the highest grade and culture, he did not hesitate to minister to the lowly and the humble. He would kneel in prayer with the poor negro, bowed with the weight of sin and sorrow. The establishment of that church in Richmond was one of the grandest achievements of Dr. Rice's life. Then look at this Seminary. Daniel Webster, in passing a eulogy upon the State of Massachusetts, said, "There she stands; look at her!" So may this Seminary justly challenge the admiring gaze of all men. It was founded under circumstances of peculiar difficulty. In reading the life of Dr. Rice, it makes one sad; how his noble heart was from time to time weighed down and almost broken by the difficult enterprise. But for the generous aid which he received from the North, it may safely be asserted this institution could hardly have been established. To my certain knowledge Dr. Rice found warm hearted and generous friends at the North. He met with most cordial reception at Andover Seminary itself.

The house at present occupied by the Rev. Dr. Peck, in which Dr. Rice himself lived and died, was for a long time called "the

Boston house," because built by funds obtained in that city. I yield to no man in devotion to the South, especially to Virginia, out of which, except the time I was at Princeton Seminary, I have never spent but one year of my life. If there is any stauncher Southerner than I am, I should like to see him. And yet it always grieves me to hear sweeping denunciations of the North. In my judgment, there are as sound and true Christians in that section of our country as can be found on the face of the earth. I say, look at Union Theological Seminary as the work of Dr. Rice. She is the peer of any similar institution in the land. On one occasion it fell to my lot to stand up in her defence on the floor of the Assembly. I asked, why should Southern men pass Union Theological Seminary in search of theological training? It was my privilege to be at Princeton in her palmy days, when she enjoyed the instruction of Archibald Alexander, Samuel Miller, Charles Hodge, and others. It is my firm conviction that as sound, thorough, and in every respect desirable theological education can be obtained at the Union Seminary as anywhere else. Except that I am myself one of them, I would exultingly point to her alumni, to be found in almost every quarter of the globe. They rise up and call her blessed. Yea, from my heart I love my dear *alma mater*. I regard myself as blessed in that it was my privilege to sit under the instruction of Archibald Alexander, John H. Rice, and George A. Baxter—three sound Presbyterians, and, I take pleasure in adding, sound Virginians, for when I left Princeton, in the fall of 1831, in taking leave of Dr. Alexander, he remarked, "I feel as if I had been twenty years from home." These men were sound, fixed, and settled in their theological opinions. They were not carried about by every wind of doctrine, but stood firm as "the mountains round about Jerusalem." Lord Bacon says: "Certainly there be that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief, affecting free will in thinking, as well as in acting." Such men dislike the trammels of truth itself, and this is the real source of the senseless outcry against dogma and creeds. If my opinions seem to be fixed and immovable, it is due to the fact that I sat under the teaching of such men. More than fifty-three years ago I passed from the walls of this Seminary to enter upon the work of the Christian ministry, and notwithstanding all its cares, burdens, sorrows and responsibilities

—and I have had my share of them—I stand here to-day and testify that the Christian ministry is the happiest work in which mortal man can be engaged. This is the honest testimony of an old man, standing upon the verge of eternity, to the many young gentlemen of this assembly.

In drawing these remarks to a close, I hold up to the view of all in the ministry, and others looking forward to it, the example of that eminent servant of God to whose memory this beautiful tablet has been erected. His life was indeed one of toil, self-denial, and arduous devotion to the service of the Master. David says: “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.” Such was true of Dr. Rice. His last words were: “Mercy is triumphant,” and his majestic spirit passed to that mansion which Jesus had gone to prepare for him in his Father’s house.







