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The Rochester Theological Seminary In the Old United States Hotel

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Beginnings

September 28, 1851. "Obtained from the church a license to preach and a recommend to study theology at Newton or Rochester. . . ." October 5, Rochester, N. Y. "Once more I have bid farewell to my own sweet home. Once more I am in a land of strangers. . . . Had a pleasant journey. While Erie's waves threatened, there was a presiding spirit that calms the storm and commands the winds be still. . . . Sitting alone on deck musing upon my future what a wide circuit did my musings take! . . ." Thus confided Edward F. Gurney to his diary as he left his Ohio farm home for the new and struggling Rochester Theological Seminary. Young Gurney's life in Rochester was one of lofty thoughts, deep soul-searching, hard study, and financial anxiety. The Rochester climate was hard upon him, and such entries as "Supplying the church here [South Livonia] for a few weeks—arrived late last evening—caught a bad cold . . ." and "Rush. Preached for Brother Van Alstin—suffered a severe cold . . ." occur again and again.

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In like vein, Ezekiel Gilman Robinson, professor of theology and homiletics and later president of the seminary, speaks of a "distressing cough" resulting from a succession of colds which afflicted him throughout one winter of the late eighteen-fifties. Because his lecture room was only fifteen feet square, "To spend two hours at a time with fifteen to eighteen men in so small a room required an open window just at my shoulder, to keep us from partial suffocation." Ten days among his old friends in Norfolk "with abundant oysters and Southern atmosphere speedily put me on my feet again. Within two weeks I was back and at work as well as ever, but in a more spacious lecture room." Thus the country student and the brilliant professor reported their impression of the new seminary in Rochester.

An old, four-story building on Buffalo Street (West Main Street), formerly the United States Hotel, which had served for a time as a railroad station, was purchased for $9,000. Additions and repairs brought the total cost to $10,500. The university rented to the seminary four recitation rooms, originally the public rooms of the hotel, and living accommodations for its students. This was done according to an arrangement made with the New York Baptist Union for Ministerial Education, which agreed to pay one-third of the rent and the janitor's wages.

The two schools opened on November 4, 1850, the university with sixty-six students and the seminary with twenty-five. Alvah Strong, treasurer of the seminary's first board of trustees and father of Augustus Hopkins Strong, its future president, described the seminary on its opening day. "Without a foot of land or shelter of its own; without endowment of a professor's chair; without the preliminary books even for four professors; without credit and without a dollar in our treasury! The outlook was discouraging. Some said it was absurd!"

The Reverend John Howard Raymond, an enthusiastic member of the university faculty and, from 1852 to 1854, professor

of sacred rhetoric at the seminary, painted a brighter picture. On November fifth, he could write triumphantly, "Well, the thing is done; that is, the beginning is made. The University of Rochester is no longer a thing of hope, a possibility and a promise, but a reality, substantial, visible, and alive. We open under cheering auspices, with a larger number of students than we had reason to expect. Our building is really comfortable and nice, the recitation rooms all carpeted ('think of that, Master Brooke!'*) and very comfortably and tastefully furnished. There is not a college in the country so fitted up—and how much better to lay out the expense on comforts and conveniences inside than on cold piles of carved stone, columns, cornices, turrets and spires without. My room is on the first floor. It is spacious, high, well-proportioned, well-lighted, and beautifully carpeted and curtained, and I shall occupy it also for a study."

Ways and Means

In spite of this modest luxury, rigid economy, of necessity, was the order of the day. "All our employees submitted to low salaries with a spirit of self-sacrifice," wrote Alvah Strong years later. "You wonder today, how those noble, large-hearted teachers Doctors Maginnis and Conant, with large families, could live on $1200 per annum! Our Corresponding Secretary received only $1,000 and our Traveling Agent, Mr. Olcott, $800! In our poverty, too, the Seminary was without the tools to do its legitimate work, until November 11, 1850, when, under a great strain, the Executive Board voted an appropriation of $500 as the nucleus of a library."

The students attended lectures, prayers, and church, prepared sermons, and studied in an atmosphere of plain living and high thinking. The first report of the trustees stated that board could be obtained from the janitor at $1.50 per week, or young men wanting to economize could board themselves for sixty-three to eighty cents per week. If they would cooperate in clubs, their

*Shakespeare, William, *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* III, 5, 124.

board could be prepared in families at a cost each from $1.00 to $1.12 per week. Finally, several brethren in the city offered to take students into their homes and board them without expense. "My father," wrote Dr. Strong, "was one of these." In addition, in order that no worthy but needy aspirant to the ministry should be denied theological training, the Union for Ministerial Education provided ten to twelve scholarships of $70 per annum. Nevertheless, painful financial straits made life a struggle for many seminarians. Edward Gurney, a graduate of Granville College (now Denison University), copied in his diary as the entry for January 18, 1852, an excerpt from a mournful letter to Brother H.O.G. "If however you are troubled as Midas was by the large quantity of gold on hand and constantly sticking to your fingers, I will take this opportunity to state that there is a poor theological student with whom I am intimately acquainted that would willingly relieve you and be very grateful for the priviledge.* The young man gets $70 [a year] from the Union for Ministerial Education—The remainder of his support has to come from a source he hardly knows where. . . . A Father, who has done very much, still opens his fathers heart. One of three other brothers with a large family looking to him for support proposes to bear a third of the expense provided the other two supply the deficiency. . . .

He hopes for a letter with some of the 'needful' in it that he may buy some wood—weeks pass on and 'hope defered maketh the heart sick.' He seeks a warm retreat in a fellow student's room or perhaps borrows a stick here and there hoping that the next mail will bring the welcome news from some kind hand he scarcely knows who."

A few of the rules governing the dormitory, although drawn up some years later in 1869, indicate the frugality of those early days. "No lamps or candles of any description, and no cooking of any kind whatever shall be allowed in the students' rooms.

*Gurney's diary is an unedited manuscript.

Gas shall be turned off in the halls at 10 o'clock in the evening, and any student consuming gas in his room after 11 o'clock in the evening, shall be required to keep an account of the time of such consumption, for which a pro rata charge shall be made. The rooms are rent-free, a pro rata charge being made for heating, lighting, and care of the building."

Summer vacations afforded opportunities to build up depleted resources. Gurney noted in July of 1852 that he had been working on the farm most of the week. "staying with Brother Wilson this week . . . last with Brother MacDonald—very kindly treated."

Abner Kingman Nott, the brilliant and charming son of a New England pastor, used his extraordinary gift for public speaking and the national passion of the day for lecture-going to defray his seminary expenses. The Lyceum committees of Dover and Great Falls in New Hampshire and of Calais in Maine invited him to lecture during the Christmas holidays of 1855, his first year in the seminary. His college senior prize essay on the theme "The Ancient and Modern Idea of a State" (for which he had won second prize) again served him in good stead, and he returned to Rochester with a "fair pecuniary equivalent for his pains."

The German Department

The Reverend Zenas Freeman, first corresponding secretary of the Union for Ministerial Education, traveled constantly about the eastern states in the interests of the fledgling seminary. He became keenly aware of the plight of a group of newcomers —the German Baptists. The revolutions of 1848 had brought to the United States a wave of immigrants, courageous, progressive in their thinking, and eager to live in the democratic New World. Protestant in faith, they had made their great venture unaccompanied by their spiritual leaders, since the pastors of the German state churches were government appointees. Their consequent spiritual destitution was the force behind several

vigorous missionary efforts. In 1850 there were only eight German Baptist churches in the United States, with a combined membership of five hundred souls. Yet from these churches many young missionary pastors journeyed forth as circuit riders to serve their widely scattered communities.

Impressed by the work of the men who longed to enter the ministry if only they could find the proper education and training, Mr. Freeman consulted with Dr. Conant and Deacon Oren Sage, a seminary trustee. Upon their recommendation, in 1851, the Union for Ministerial Education decided to organize a department in the seminary, the purpose of which would be to teach Biblical literature and theology to German students.

The department's course of study differed from that of the English side in order to meet different needs. The plan was for four years instead of two and included collegiate, preparatory subjects as well as theological—in short, a "common school, academy, college, and seminary all in one," in which it was found necessary to teach some subjects in German. It seemed desirable to secure a man as head of the department who would be able to act as an administrator and also, as Secretary Freeman put it, "instruct in all things necessary to fit young men for service as preachers among the Germans."

Accordingly, in 1858 the Union for Ministerial Education appointed the first full-time instructor for the German Department. Professor Augustus Rauschenbusch, indeed, filled Zenas Freeman's requirements by teaching English, German, Latin, Greek, geology, botany, astronomy, natural history, grammar and rhetoric, homiletics and theology, Old and New Testament, history of the world and history of the church, by criticizing sermons, lecturing on manners and morals, and by setting out on expeditions to raise money—and all for $600 per annum. He was a graduate of the University of Berlin where the great church historian Neander, of all his teachers, had made the deepest impression upon him. He had become a missionary and

traveled widely in the United States and in Canada working among the German settlers. Later he edited a well-known German newspaper *Der Amerikanische Botschfter*. Writing in 1912, Augustus Hopkins Strong characterized Professor Rauschenbusch as the father of the German Baptist interest in the United States and concluded that the growth in the number of the churches from eight in 1852 to 243 in 1900 was largely the pastors whom Rauschenbusch had trained at the Rochester Theological Seminary. His famous son, Walter Rauschenbusch, described him as a born teacher—he mastered his learning, his learning never mastered him.

Although Ezekiel Gilman Robinson, as senior professor, was already harried by the search for endowment funds, he now willingly added to his burden the task of finding some financial resources to fund Professor Rauschenbusch's salary. "I recall no service with more satisfaction," he wrote in his autobiography, "than that of securing from the devout and large-hearted J. B. Hoyt of Stamford, Connecticut, the sum of $20,000 as the basis of an endowment for Professor Rauschenbusch's chair." He went on in a spirit of generous admiration, "The thirty years of Professor Rauschenbusch in Rochester furnishes part of one of the most interesting chapters in the history of American Baptists."

Classroom and Faculty

Whether they came from prosperous urban homes or from humble farms, life for the seminarians was quiet and serious, and the everyday experiences of pulpit and lecture-room seemed to afford them plenty of interest and excitement. Augustus Strong, one of the sixteen members of the class entering in 1857, regarded his instructors and their teaching methods objectively and, in some cases, with an amused tolerance, yet he compared them most favorably with the teachers he had endured at Yale, where there was "almost no instruction" and where he had

learned from a textbook and recited to a tutor or a professor. "I do not recall that a single question was asked by any student of an instructor during the whole four years of my college course." The classrooms of the seminary seemed to present a much greater intellectual challenge in that the students were encouraged to express themselves freely. This they did—sometimes a little too freely in the exuberance of youthful high spirits. Augustus chose to enroll in the Rochester Theological Seminary because of the presence on its faculty of Ezekiel Gilman Robinson, a teacher of "acute and lightening insight" who could expose the weaknesses of the sermon plans submitted by each member of the class until the anonymous author fairly writhed in exquisite embarrassment.

Velona Roundy Hotchkiss, professor of ecclesiastical history, 1852-1857, and of Biblical literature and exegesis, 1857-1865, Augustus considered a learned man but ultra-conservative. "He was greatly scandalized when I read an essay in which I took Hugh Miller's* view that the days of the first chapter of Genesis were periods of indefinite duration. But the climax came when Nathan Sheppard read his essay on the deluge. It was a mock attempt to show how all the animal kingdom could have been stowed away in the ark, and how the different species could have been collected for that purpose. The kangaroo, for example, came over on an isthmus from Australia, and the polar bear was floated down from Greenland on chunks of ice. As Sheppard gravely proceeded, the twitching of the Doctor's face was pitiful to behold; we should have exploded with laughter if Dr. Hotchkiss had not been fearfully angry. But Sheppard made a lame apology and amity was restored."

*Hugh Miller (1802-1856), Scottish geologist and man of letters. Author of *Footprints of the Creater,* 1847, and *Testimony of the Rocks,* 1857, both of which dealt with the borderland between science and religion. In his books, Miller took the six days of creation as synonymous with six periods and translated them into representative visions of the progress of creation.

Student Life

The stern piety and moral earnestness characteristic of the colleges and universities of the day had perhaps been intensified in Rochester by the revivals of the 1830's and 1840's. The universtiy students were godly young men, most of whom planned to enter the ministry. According to Richard M. Nott, Kingman's brother and biographer, there was an unusual spirit of order and emulation. High scholarship was common, and a rare value was set upon excellence in composition and extemporaneous speaking. Such was the spirit in the university and the seminary that "a young man felt himself bound to excel in something."

Edward Gurney's life in Rochester was filled with enthusiasm. By the end of his first week in the seminary he had drawn up for his daily schedule a Spartan regime: "for the attainment of a higher standard of piety, that I may be more faithful and efficient in my mission to glorify God by winning souls to Christ. ... Arise at four o'clock in the morning—Return thanks for the continuance of life and seek guidance through the day. Attend to my correspondence and other miscelany till six o'clock. Reading and exercise till Seven o'clock. Breakfast and Family devotion. Eight o'clock, Study. Quarter before nine attend chapel. Private devotions. Half past nine till twelve, study. Dine at twelve, recreation. One o'clock till three study and private devotion; three to five recreation. Tea at half past five, recreation till seven. Evenings Reading, Writing, attending lectures or church. Evening devotion at Nine and then retire to rest."

The devout, intensely religious atmosphere was filled with concern for the souls of the unconverted. It was the aim of the faculty, to quote the third annual catalogue of the university, "in connection with the discipline of the intellect, to inculcate a pure morality, and the great truths and duties of evangelical Christianity. . . . A Missionary Society for Inquiry, composed

of members of the University and Theological Seminary, holds two public meetings monthly—one for prayer, and the other for a report on some important theme connected with the missionary enterprise. . . ."

The Judson Society of Inquiry was named for Adoniram Judson, a nineteenth century leader in the American movement for foreign missions, missionary to Burma, and translator of the Bible into Burmese. Its purpose was to "inquire into the moral and religious condition of the world and to foster the missionary spirit among its members." Occasionally the members heard an address given by a missionary on furlough from the foreign field. After listening to one of these, young Gurney wrote poignantly, "Oct 3rd 1851. Sabath Eve. Attended the Judson Society of Inquiry. 'Lord what wilt thou have me do?' The remarks made have disturbed my rest." The emotional and conscientious student longed to set out for far-off Burma or India but felt held back by his uncertain health. Much inward debate and prayer, followed by a long talk with the visiting missionary, gave comfort to his anxious heart, and he learned to be satisfied with the vast amount of work to be done on the home scene.

Fortunately, life had its brighter side. Commencement Week was a gala for the whole city. Even the public schools were closed on the great day so that scholars and teachers might march in the procession. During their first years the university and the seminary celebrated together. The events of the first commencement began on the evening of Monday, July 7, 1851, in Corinthian Hall, when the members of the sophomore class gave their prize declamations. Tuesday was a solemn day with a sermon in the morning before the Union for Ministerial Education, reports by the board of trustees and the treasurer in the afternoon, and the annual sermon before the Judson Society of Inquiry in the evening. On Wednesday "the largest and most imposing civic procession ever seen in the streets of Rochester" thrilled the populace as the graduating classes, faculty and trus-

tees of both the university and the seminary, not to mention the mayor, the Common Council, the Board of Education, the public school teachers and pupils, and the sheriff of the county rode or marched from University Hall through Buffalo Street to Corinthian Hall for the commencement exercises.

On Thursday the Anniversary Day ceremonies for the seminary were opened with prayer and music. Each of the six graduates delivered an oration, the subjects of which ranged from the theology of "Grace Glorified in Election" and "Regeneration—Demanded by the Laws of the Mind" to the more practical considerations of "The Relations of the Christian Minister to Civil Government." There were addresses by Professors Maginnis and Conant interspersed and followed by music before the final benediction. A patient age!

The solemnity of commencement was brightened by the hospitality of the faculty. Kingman Nott, when he graduated in 1857, wrote to his family in a mood of relief and gaiety, "Examinations are all passed and we are graduated. Only the final bow remains. Dr. Robinson held us yesterday for ten mortal hours—seven on theology and three on strawberries."

Sermons

The preparation of sermons for frequent preaching engagements filled the hours that could be spared from classes, study, prayer meetings, and church-going, and sometimes helped to strengthen shaky finances. Rural communities and even urban parishes were happy to have their pulpits "supplied" by the young seminarians.

This was the period of the great revivals. Charles Grandison Finney, in his visits to Rochester in 1830, 1842, and in 1855, met with extraordinary success especially with the well-educated, affluent classes. Finney himself remarked with satisfaction that he understood that many of the university students had been converted. Young Strong, a junior at Yale home for the spring

vacation of 1856, was one of the converted of the college generation. "Mr. Finney's reputation and an inner unrest of spirit led me to attend one of his meetings. . . . I went out into the dark that night, doubtful about my future course; but I went back to college determined, at any rate, to be a Christian."

His resolve held. As a student at the Rochester Theological Seminary, for over a year, he walked every Sunday to "The Rapids" for Sunday School in the afternoon and to preach in the evening. This little hamlet, the home of rough river boatmen, was on the banks of the Genesee, three miles south of the city, opposite the present campus of the University of Rochester. Each Sunday, Strong attended monring services at the First Baptist Church, taught the women's Sunday School class, then walked three miles often in rain and through mud to the home of Mrs. Charlotte Stillson, where he was given a cold lunch. Then out to the tumble-down schoolhouse for Sunday School, back to the Stillson's for supper, and out again to preach to a congregation which often crowded the little building to the doors.

The entry in Edward Gurney's diary for January 4, 1852, reads, "Have preached 6 times during the year. . . . Preached this evening. Hope not without effect. Tried the plan of preaching with only notes—succeeded beyond expection. . . ." On December 21, he wrote, "Preached to the Third Baptist [Negro] Church in the afternoon—felt my heart drawn out in sympathy for that degraded and outcast and enslaved people—enslaved here as elsewhere—enslaved by public opinion. . . ."

Gurney had made friends among his rural congregation, for on December 28 he wrote that he was spending the Christmas vacation in the country among his friends and had preached at Fairport in the afternoon. Summer must have been a pleasant season for him. He evidently "boarded round," paying for his keep by helping with the farm work and supplying in the pulpit on Sundays and on prayer-meeting nights. He enjoyed the country where his delicate health was restored and where

he was the center of kindly attention and the love of the people. He grew in confidence and experienced more and more the ease and spontaneity of preaching rather than of reading a written sermon. "Been working in the harvest field most of the week. Preached to young men from 'I write unto you young men because you are stronger.' Enjoyed myself very much—and had considerable freedom. . . ."

Sometimes remuneration in hard cash was added to food, lodging, and companionship. On April 25, 1852, "Preached at Palmyra all day. Enjoyed my mind exceedingly well. Longed to enter the whitening field. Two men gave me $4, the first I have ever received for preaching." Summing up on January 2, 1853, "This year I have preached 38 times. In the last two years 46—for which I have received $33. . . . Some of my efforts have been admired but how many have awakened—edified and been made the means of grace. I hope they have not all been as a tale that was told, heard, and forgotten and useless."

The gifted Kingman Nott was, of course, in constant demand and by very impressive congregations. The invitations that came to him for the summer vacation of 1856 marked him as already well-known and of really great promise. He accepted an important post, that of the Tremont Temple in Boston, which had a seating capacity of three thousand. He was so successful that the church was sometimes packed in spite of the summer exodus. In October the First Baptist Church on Broome Street in New York invited him to supply one Sunday. He preached to about eight hundred people and described them as a "good people—strong, united, social, old fashioned, and stiff. They are one hundred years old, preserve the old forms of doctrine, which I like, and have had in their time four pastors and three church clerks."

He was invited again, and the result was that the deacons unanimously voted to call Kingman to the pulpit—a signal honor, for his predecessor was distinguished and much beloved.

But the devotion and enthusiasm of the "boy preacher" matched his ability, and he was successful from the very first. It was tragic that the brilliant career was cut short two years later by his accidental death by drowning.

Ezekiel Gilman Robinson

"Today we bury our beloved teacher Dr. Maginnis," mourned Edward Gurney on October 19, 1852. "We had just begun to learn to love him—just begun to anticipate the rich lessons of instruction and wisdom of which we were to be recipients and our love was robbed of its object—our hope of its ray. . . ." No one can doubt the sincerity of Gurney's sentiments, however effusive in their high-flown Victorian style, but his hope need not, after all, have lost its ray. Dr. Martin Brewer Anderson, president of the university, sought out his old friend and fellow student, Ezekiel Gilman Robinson, pastor of the Ninth Street Church in Cincinnati and prevailed upon him to accept the professorship of Biblical and pastoral theology.

Thus came to the seminary one of the greatest of its faculty, an inspiring teacher and preacher, progressive, broadminded, and courageous, an outstanding administrator, who was able to lead his faculty and to negotiate with university officials whose ideas of the future of the seminary differed widely from his own and from those of the seminary trustees. The new professor, a graduate of Brown University and of Newton Theological Institution, was twenty-eight years old. He had held pastorates at Norfolk, Virginia, and at Cambridge, Massachusetts. He had been, for a short time, professor of Biblical interpretation at Western Theological Institute in Covington, Kentucky, until that school was literally torn asunder by the slavery controversy only three years after the first opening of its doors.

Dr. and Mrs. Robinson came to Rochester in January 1853 upon the promise of a salary of twelve hundred dollars a year and a small addition for some special instructions—a lower

stipend than he had received in Cincinnati. "We took a cottage with ample grounds and fruit trees; and language fails to express the satisfaction and relief from the sense of care with which I found myself in my new house. My wife speedily regained her health, and I addressed myself with energy to my new duties. The very skies and atmosphere, so unlike those of Cincinnati, inspired me with an ever-increasing exhilaration of spirit."

Since he could not launch his complete teaching schedule until the autumn, he decided to begin by giving a course of homiletic instruction to the graduating class in theology. Dr. Conant had read to the class the theological lectures of Dr. Maginnis, but the students needed training in sermon preparation. "The literary instruction they had received," Dr. Robinson observed, "had by no means made them all master workmen. The exercises, whether profitable to them or not, were specially useful to myself. They gave me an opportunity to take a long breath in thinking of the work which I was to assume the coming autumn, and also to prepare what was already called an Inaugural Address, to be delivered at the coming Commencement." He had been warned that what he said must be "distinctly and pre-eminently orthodox."

Dr. Maginnis, his predecessor, had been a Princetonian theologian "of the straitest sect." Dr. Robinson represented the more liberal tendencies of Brown and Newton. In fact, the theology taught at Newton was so unlike the Princeton variety, that some orthodox Baptist ministers refused to put their sons under what they regarded as heterodox teaching. Thus Dr. Robinson, whose teachers had all been noted for their independence, began his administrative career in a seminary "where the traditions, though brief, were in favor of an old-fashioned theology. New England thinking was regarded as a sort of free-thinking." He himself said that in 1853 he "had no theological system whatsoever," and since his special work was to be instruction in

systematic theology, this worried him. His views were uncertain, but there was no text he could conscientiously use. He read widely, day and night, in whatever books he could lay his hands on—whether American, English, or German. His custom during his first year of teaching was to work out brief propositions which he could dictate to the class, "often rushing from my desk to the classroom before the ink of the last sentence had been fairly dry. Around these propositions, we indulged in ample discussion; but I was as much an inquirer as any of my students.

"In all that was given, either in dictation or discussion, I was most distinctively and guardedly orthodox; but the question continually before us all was, not what is the orthodoxy of the sect, but what is the truth."

He believed that it was impossible that theology, which is the understanding and the organization of the truths of the Christian revelation, should remain the same from generation to generation. "The first chapters of Genesis are no longer quoted as a minute record of scientific or of historical facts, but as an Oriental and pictorial way of representing the great truths that God is the author of the universe and that man came to his estate of moral disease and death through conscious violation of the moral law. . . ."

At a memorial service for Doctor Robinson, held at the University of Chicago in October 1894, George Washington Northrup of the class of 1857 and, from 1857 to 1867, professor of ecclesiastical history, gave an address which indicated that the particular influence of the seminary's first president upon theological education stemmed from his liberal habit of thought, his ability to foresee the future development of human knowledge.

To paraphrase one or two of Northrup's remarks—in Dr. Robinson's theology Christianity should not be regarded as standing apart from, as unrelated to, the other "spheres of God's universal self-revelation." Since all fields of knowledge—science,

philosophy, history—are ever widening and deepening, it is of the utmost importance that the theologian relate theology to the new learning of the age in which he lives. Robinson's respect for modern science, in its conflict with established religious dogma, is reflected in one of his lecture-room sayings, "Physical science will undoubtedly smash some of our crockery gods."

As a theologian, he was critical, rather than constructive, and he bore a sceptical attitude toward great schools of theology, although he always discussed them with respect and their learned promulgators with sympathetic understanding. Thus there was little dogmatic instruction in the years 1857-1859. The professor's dictations, said Augustus Strong, were not a system so much as a series of suggestions to stimulate inquiry. For some years after his coming to Rochester, Robinson's lectures and sermons were closely followed because of his advanced views—"views which, in their essential lines, have become common beliefs today," wrote J. M. Taylor, president of Vassar College. ". . . his examination days brought out many a keen discussion. 'Look out, gentlemen,' he once said as some examiners were pressing a student with questions,—'look out; they scent a heresy.' "

Even some of his own faculty scented a heresy. Dr. Strong remarked that during his student days it was evident that Dr. Velona Hotchkiss, "a good man, but narrow" and a firm believer in the fundamentalist theory of the creation of the universe, did not get on with Dr. Robinson, who was always questioning the old views.

In his second year, as part of his effort to present theology as living truth rather than an abstract dogma, Robinson combined his lectures in systematic theology and in homiletics. This joining together of sermon content and the art of preaching became one of the distinctive features of the seminary in its early days. As to the content of sermons, his one aim was to make the student think for himself.

To Augustus Hopkins Strong, Professor Robinson's personality was even more valuable than his teaching. He lacked the outgoing friendliness, the warmth and easy, informal manner that endears instructors to their students, but a threatening manner concealed a really kind heart. He encouraged any glimmer of original thought, no matter how flickering. The Reverend Wayland Hoyt of Minneapolis recalled that in spite of Robinson's scorn for lazy sermon plans, "he would brood over a poor plan, but with real attempt and thought in it, as a June sky does over laggard flowers." He could give delicate and stimulating praise and put courage into a man who had tried.

In many respects the first president was ahead of his time. With the class entering in 1860, he extended the course from two years to three, and, as the years went on, his suggestions for a four-year course became emphatic. Provisions for some system of advanced study for qualified men was his favorite dream—a dream that was realized in some small degree during his working years.

The years from 1868 to 1872 were his finest at Rochester. "Whatever he was to other men or elsewhere, by the five successive classes to whom he taught theology with tireless energy and boundless enthusiasm Dr. Robinson was considered equal to almost any mental effort, however difficult or impossible it might be for ordinary men," reminisced Dr. Benjamin Osgood True, a graduate of the class of 1870 and subsequently professor of church history. "The number and quality of the students had never been more satisfactory. Dr. Robinson fairly revelled in his work. He was at his very best everywhere, and nowhere more easily than in the classroom, where he worked with the greatest efficiency. By many those days are recalled with inexpressible gratitude; to some they furnished the opportunity of a lifetime." As a direct result of his courses in theology, four members of the class of 1870 proposed to return to Rochester after their graduation for another year of study. These

men met regularly, during the scholastic year of 1870-1871, for post-seminary study—a program undertaken by few professors of theology in the United States at that time. The group met on Tuesday and Thursday evenings in the Robinson parlors. Mrs. Robinson was keenly interested and was always there, ready to relieve the three-hour sessions with welcome hospitality. She often contributed to the discussions as well. The work consisted of reading and the presentation and discussion of papers, some of the subjects of which were "Historical Books of the Old Testament," "Christian and Heathen Morality Compared," and "The Old Testament." The paper on the Old Testament, recalled Professor True, a member of the class, would probably seem crude to a modern theologian, but the searching analysis of the dates and composition of the books of the Old Testament with reference to objections and doubts as to their trustworthiness, was a valuable preparation for the progress of modern thought. The phrase "Higher Criticism" with regard to the Bible was not then common, but much of what it involves was foreshadowed in Dr. Robinson's parlors.

One of the most important of President Robinson's achievements, because it was basic to the very existence of the seminary, was his investigation of the confusing and shaky finances of the institution and his success in stabilizing them. Small as he knew his salary was to be, he soon found that it was not always to be paid promptly, except in promissory notes to be redeemed at maturity or to be renewed as the circumstances demanded. The situation forced him to supply in various pulpits, one of which was the First Presbyterian Church. Consequently, for over a year, a Baptist clergyman preached there on Sundays, gave a mid-week lecture, and preached the sermons preparatory for communion, yet he himself never appeared at the communion table. He enjoyed the work at First Presbyterian. "Its congregation," he wrote, "was one of the most intelligent and attractive that a preacher could desire to address. Its large pro-

portion of liberally educated men, especially of the legal profession, furnished a stimulus to the fullest exertion of a preacher's power."

During the summer of 1861, he began weekly trips to Albany to preach at the Pearl Street Baptist Church. Sometimes he was able to leave on Saturday morning, but often he had to take the evening train which arrived in Albany at four o'clock on Sunday morning. This week-end schedule continued for over a year. He perhaps would not have agreed to carry this burden had not the Albany church been embroiled in a perilous disagreement over the resignation of its pastor. The deacons begged Robinson to take on the congregation until it could patch up its differences to the point that it could agree on a new incumbent.

As the first decade of the seminary's life drew to a close, financial matters went from bad to worse, and no salaries at all were paid for several months. A conference was held at which the Reverend Zenas Freeman, in his financial report, disclosed that the assets consisted of fifty thousand dollars and the money contributed by Roswell Burroughs of Albion to purchase the library of Dr. Johannes August Wilhelm Neander, a famous Biblical scholar of the day. Professor Robinson was sadly puzzled by this report. First—how could a gift of money intended for the purchase of a library be considered as part of the endowment? Second—if there were indeed an endowment of fifty thousand dollars, why was there no income to pay professorial salaries? It was then made clear to him, for the first time, that the fifty thousand dollars were the first funds which had been collected for the endowment of the university, the income of which accrued to the university, and to the university alone, in scholarships for undergraduates who intended to study for the ministry. "The result of the conference was a dissipation of our imaginary endowment; the $50,000 never again figured among the assets of the Seminary. Unfortunately this episode gave me the reputation of being the disturber of an existing harmony."

Such was his rueful description of the outcome of his uncomfortable curiosity and sense of good business.

Closely allied to the money problem was the question of a future home. The location of a permanent building was a thorny subject. The university trustees wanted the new seminary to be built on the university campus, and Dr. Anderson was especially anxious for this. The seminary trustees were determined to have another site. President Robinson spent every vacation of 1865 and 1866 travelling to New York, to Connecticut, to New Jersey seeking endowment funds. In 1868, John B. Trevor of Yonkers, who became one of the most liberal benefactors of the seminary and the university, accepted the burdens of trusteeship under the earnest persuasion of his pastor, Dr. Adolphus J. F. Behrends of the class of 1865. Mr. Trevor furnished the cost of Trevor Hall at the corner of East Avenue and Alexander Street, as well as an endowment of thirty thousand dollars for a professional Chair of New Testament Interpretation. In the spring of the same year, another generous friend, Jacob F. Wyckoff of New York, purchased a home for the president of the seminary, whose salary the trustees had spontaneously raised to $4,000. Work began immediately on Trevor Hall and progressed so favorably that students and faculty were able to occupy the dormitories and lecture rooms in the autumn of 1869.

The successful flouting of the wishes of President Anderson and his trustees inevitably brought about a cooling of the friendship which had stood since 1840. President Robinson thought that their two minds were very different, President Anderson's being divided into tight compartments like a "modern sea-going streamer;" faith and science stood on separate grounds. With President Robinson faith and science had to be reconciled with each other. Robinson considered, however, that the university president possessed a mind well-furnished with a wide range of knowledge. His teaching was interesting, not to say racy. As a companion in social life, his visits were always more

than welcome. He was free in his criticism of Robinson and him. But Robinson always made it clear that his "estimate of seminary affairs, and so was President Robinson in criticism of him as a man and as the executive of a college was of the highest."

Robinson's friends and collegues contributed a series of "Critical Estimates" which were included, as a supplement, in the autobiography published after his death. President Strong had this to say: "But it is still true that to Dr. Robinson the institution at Rochester owes more of its character and success than any other single man. The Seminary, which at the beginning of his administration in 1853 was absolutely destitute of property or endowments, had, in 1872, resources amounting to $224,000. This increase represents an amount of personal and skilful work on the part of one man which would simply challenge admiration, if it were not so pathetic and incongruous an expenditure of energy. That a thinker and teacher of such mark should have been compelled to turn aside from his proper work in order to solicit rich men's gifts, and to make his own living not by week-day instruction but by his Sunday preaching, is pitiful enough. Yet such are the toils and trials that have gone to the founding of all our great educational institutions."

Yet, in spite of such prolonged and frequent turning aside from his proper work, many were of the opinion that enough had been accomplished to number the seminary among the nation's finest theological instructions. Professor Northrup, in his Chicago memorial address, considered that, "No more stimulating and faithful work in the way of education has been done in this country than was done in those days in the old hotel building in Buffalo Street, which contained for some years all the lecture-rooms, dormitories, and libraries of the University of Rochester and the Rochester Theological Seminary."

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