

Dr. L. M. H. Lyle
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ADDRESSES

DELIVERED AT THE

INAUGURATION OF THE PROFESSORS

IN THE

✓ *Lyle*
DANVILLE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

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ADDRESS.

BRETHREN, a venerable father, Dr. HOGE, was originally appointed to follow your induction into office by an address suited to the occasion. He has been Providentially prevented from attending with us; and, in his absence, this duty has devolved upon me. To instruct you on the nature of your duties, and exhort you to their faithful discharge, would have been a work eminently in keeping with his age and experience. The wisdom gathered from years of study and observation would have enabled him to impart to you, many valuable suggestions, while the character, acquired by the pious and useful labors of half a century, would have given peculiar weight to his exhortations. But what would have been becoming and serviceable for him to *do*, would be unbecoming and idle for me to *attempt*. I will therefore waive all consideration of those topics to which he would most probably have directed your thoughts, and ask your attention to a subject, perhaps not less suitable to the occasion, and certainly much more suited to my abilities and position.

Twenty-five years ago, nearly to a day, I was standing on this very spot, a young licentiate, preaching from a temporary platform in this church, then unfinished, when the Synod of Kentucky, which had been holding its sessions in the old church adjoining, entered this building towards the close of the sermon. They had adjourned, to announce to the congregation assembled here, that they had determined to undertake the establishment of a Theological Seminary, and had commenced by the appointment of a Professor. The temple which David designed, it was left for Solomon to build, and the aug-

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mented wealth and the long-matured counsels of the Son, enabled him to construct it on a scale of far greater magnificence than was contemplated in the building projected by the father. So it was in the hearts of our fathers and brethren, (many of whom have fallen asleep), to build an Institution here for the glory of our God; and though their purpose was left unexecuted, it was doubtless approved of by Him, who, when forbidding David to proceed in his pious undertaking, said to him, "For as much as it was in thine heart to build an house to my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart." But what they projected, when comparatively few in number, limited in resources, encumbered by other great enterprizes previously undertaken, and unaided by their brethren from abroad, we, their sons, are left to execute, on a far larger scale, when our numbers have been increased, our resources greatly enlarged, our previous undertakings measurably accomplished, and our whole church throughout the land combined to give us encouragement and help in our work.

Much has been already accomplished, but much more yet remains to be done. To strengthen your heart in the commencement of your arduous labors, as well as to stimulate the hearts of us, your brethren, to aid your efforts to build up our Institution, I have thought it might be of service to present before you and them, as briefly as I can, OUR ENCOURAGEMENTS IN THIS GREAT UNDERTAKING, and the GROUNDS WE HAVE FOR OUR HOPES OF ITS SUCCESS.

1. *From the many and signal Providences of God, which have favored the inception of this new Seminary, we derive the strongest encouragement to hope for its full and final success.* Those of us who are best acquainted with all the trains of circumstances that have combined to produce the establishment of this Institution, have been compelled to admire and adore the hand of the Lord, working most strikingly at every stage of the movement. It would, I feel assured, be both interesting and instructive, had I time to detail minutely, the whole history of this enterprize. Such a detail would show how entirely and strangely God has carried it forward

throughout the whole of its progress. But so numerous are the incidents, that my allotted time would be consumed before I could close their rehearsal. There was a series of occurrences, *each one of which*, as we look back upon it, seems to have been *necessary* to secure the establishment of the Seminary, by the last General Assembly, and *not one of which*, could have been foreseen by human sagacity—much less, could *the whole* have been pre-arranged by human wisdom and produced by human power. Events followed each other, as if they had been the successive developments of a scheme, designed for the attainment of this end—causes combined and worked together as harmoniously and exactly as if they had all been provided and brought together by some far-reaching intellect, and all controlling power. Some of those who were confounded at the result from its unexpectedness, and chagrined at it from its thwarting favorite schemes of their own, with a lack of wisdom, scarcely equalled by their lack of charity, ascribe all this chain of remarkable interpositions to the working of human craft and human skill. Those of us who have been instruments in securing the establishment of this Seminary, feel that we have no claim to whatever either *of glory or shame* might have attached to us from having been the authors of these strange combinations. And now, in looking back upon the whole series of part events connected with this movement, we are constrained with increased wonder and thankfulness to exclaim, “Behold what God hath wrought!” Perhaps no important undertaking was ever carried forward with less concert and less planning. There was not *even consultation* among us upon *any measures* but those necessary to raise the funds deemed requisite to the attainment of the desired object.

Are we not then, warranted in the conclusion, that the Lord has wonderfully smiled upon our efforts? This wonderful harmony of unforeseen events in its favor, has been disturbed but by a *single occurrence*—the opposition excited among some of our brethren on the other side of the Ohio. And this, itself, though painful and deplorable, we can see, even with our limited vision, may have been ordered in kindness to us,

and may eventuate in good to the cause in which we are engaged.

Now, while we are aware that the smiles of Providence upon the *commencement* of an enterprise, are not an *absolute guaranty* of its *ultimate success*, yet the presumption which they furnish in proof of it is most *strong* and *encouraging*; and a presumption of this kind, stronger than the one with which we have been favored, could not have been *expected*—*could scarcely* have been asked.

2. Another *encouraging circumstance is found in the fact that this Institution has been established by our General Assembly.*

Its direction and control, its guardianship and sustentation, have been thus undertaken by the whole Presbyterian Church in the United States. It is no unimportant advantage to a Seminary, it is no ordinary element of strength in its organization, to enjoy the watchful care and the prayerful aid of a whole body of Christians, so respectable in the eye of the world, so strong in its numbers and wealth, so jealous in guarding the soundness of its doctrines and the purity of its morals, so distinguished for its liberality and zeal, so blessed of God in the prosperity of its Institutions founded, in times past, by its piety and wisdom. All men feel, that, under God, the best guaranty that can be given for the success of any Institution, is, that such a body should undertake to establish it, build it up, and watch over it. It thus enjoys, from its very outset, that public confidence in its ultimate prosperity, which is never granted to one that possesses no such *security against its perversion*, and no such *pledge for its support*. There are dangers incident to any Institution of this description, managed, and controlled only by individuals, or by an irresponsible, close corporation, which will lead all enlightened Christians to shrink from lending their means and efforts to build it up. The history of the church, during the last century, has been full of instruction, as to the danger of perversion of funds and corruption of doctrines in Seminaries thus controlled. There are unavoidable difficulties, too, connected with the manage-

ment of an Institution of this character, by an alliance of independent ecclesiastical bodies—difficulties which must render its existence, precarious, and its enlarged power and usefulness almost impossible. A league of such bodies may be formed with a view to the performance of some immediate act, or the attainment of some transient object—and such a league will often secure its end. But it cannot be relied on for the successful performance of a *series of acts, running through many successive years*, or for the management of a *permanent interest*, which requires unity of purpose, harmony of feeling and identity of interest in those who control it.

3. The *fact that it is located in the West, is a farther ground of encouragement*. There are strong reasons why those who are to preach the gospel in the valley of the Mississippi, should, as a mass, be educated on this side of the mountains. Education in an Eastern Seminary, subjects a young man from the West, to the necessity of enduring an exile from his home for three years, or bearing the expense of three long journeys, during the period of his studies. The expenses of living at an Eastern Seminary, are necessarily considerably greater than at a Seminary in this region, where the staple articles of necessity and comfort are much cheaper.

But far above all these reasons, is the consideration that those who design to preach the gospel, should be raised up, as far as it is possible, among the people to whom they are to minister; and, while it is true that, in the most important points, we are all one people, it is undeniable that, in many respects, there are very considerable differences between the habits and characters—the modes of thinking, feeling and acting—of those who dwell on the Atlantic slope, and those who inhabit this vast valley. These differences are too numerous and too obvious, to require us to consume time in pointing them out. As a specimen, we might cite the difference in the style of preaching, which in the one region is more antagonistic, in the other, more deliberative—assuming more of the form and character, in the one case, of the extemporaneous speech, in the other of the written essay. These peculiarities

are the growth of circumstances peculiar to each region ; and we allude to them not for the purpose of arrogating to ourselves any superiority over our Eastern brethren, but simply to call attention to the fact, that the Western people have a distinct character of their own, and to warrant us in the inference, that those who, during the period in which their minds and manners are receiving their cast, mingle with this people, are the persons who will most thoroughly understand and most cordially sympathize with this character, and will be thus best qualified to deal with it successfully. This is no *hidden* truth, and the perception of it will lead our young men, as a mass, to gather to a Western Institution, as soon as one shall be established, which will offer to them facilities and advantages for theological instruction equal to those now enjoyed in the best Eastern Seminaries. Such an Institution, we expect, with the blessing of God, that the one of which you are now to take charge will speedily become. If the pledge given to the Assembly that established it, shall be redeemed, it will have no competing Institution in the West, until a period shall have elapsed sufficiently long to enable it to acquire full vigor and reputation. Under these circumstances, its growth will be rapid. Nor will this growth be prevented, though it may be somewhat *retarded*, by the establishment of a rival Institution. For, so great is the extent of our region, and so unparalleled the increase of our population, that ample materials will, before many years, be furnished, both in funds and students, for sustaining more than one flourishing Seminary in this valley. The territory contains about one million and a half of square miles, and about twelve millions of inhabitants. Fifty years ago the population was a few thousands—and fifty years hence it will number nearly fifty millions. The Synods of Cincinnati, Indiana, Northern Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin, contain a Presbyterian population of upwards of twenty-seven thousand members, and three hundred and thirty-four ministers. The Synods of Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas, Nashville, Memphis, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas, contain upwards of thirty-three thousand members, and three hundred and eighty-

nine ministers, omitting Alabama, as more contiguous to the Seminary at Columbia; the other Synods in the South-west, inclusive of Texas, contain upwards of twenty-eight thousand members, and three hundred and thirty-five ministers. It would be satisfactory and instructive, if we could learn the number of young men connected with this membership, who are engaged in theological studies. One hundred candidates are reported, by the Presbyteries of the Synods just enumerated, as under their care. But this does not enable us to form even a reasonable conjecture upon the point of our inquiry, viz: the number pursuing and now ready to pursue a Seminary course. These reports comprehend both too much and too little for our purpose—too much as they embrace persons in all stages of their education, from the Academy to the Theological Seminary inclusive—and too little as they include *those only who have placed themselves under the care of the Presbyteries*. The unreliableness of these statistics for our purpose, is shown by the fact that, in some places, even those who are receiving aid as beneficiaries, are not in connection with any Presbytery, and the additional fact that in many places those who are studying independently of such aid do not usually place themselves under the care of a Presbytery, until they are somewhat advanced in their Theological course—sometimes not until near its close. Yet on the ground of such statistics, it has been published in a recent pamphlet, as remarkable for the accuracy of its facts, as for the dignity of its style, the urbanity of its temper, and the abundance of its christian charity, that Kentucky has but three candidates for the ministry! We have various churches, each one of which, has, in its membership, more candidates for the ministry than are, in this pamphlet, assigned to the whole State; and *one* of these churches, during the last year, was itself supporting in whole or in part, *eight*.

Having, then, no other reliable data from which to infer the number of theological students connected with our church in the West, we can only conjecturally deduce them, (if we may be allowed the expression,) from the number of our members; and as these amount to between a third and a fourth of the

number of our communicants throughout the whole extent of our land, we may presume that the theological students connected with the church in the West, amount to between a third and a fourth of all of that class belonging to our denomination.

4. *The fact of its location in the heart of Kentucky, furnishes a strong probability of success.* Without a liberal and large endowment, it is impossible for a Seminary to do more than drag out a precarious and pitiable existence, unable to procure a sufficient supply of suitable men to fill the Chairs, because unable to ensure to them an adequate and reliable support, and unable to secure the attendance of students, because unable to offer them the advantages of an Institution ably officered and amply provided with those other facilities for imparting a thorough education, which a large amount of funds alone can furnish. Such an endowment must be derived mainly from the churches in the vicinity of the Institution, as they derive most benefit from its existence, and feel most interest in its prosperity. Others may be expected to aid them, but this work, if done at all, must be chiefly done by them. And that the location of our Seminary, where it has been placed, will secure the doing of this work in regard to it, we have the strongest reason for believing. *The Lord has filled the hands of our people with wealth, and disposed the hearts of many of them to use it freely in His service, so that they have been in the habit of devising and executing liberal things for the advancement of His glorious kingdom.* We desire to speak of the wealth and munificence of our people, not in a spirit of pride and boastfulness, but of humility and gratitude to Him who is the only source of all good in us and to us; to feel as David felt, when, in view of all the rich gifts that his people had brought for building the temple of the Lord, he thus poured forth his grateful acknowledgements to Him from whom all were derived: "Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort! for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee."

Again, *what our churches have already done* in behalf of this Seminary, is a *pledge of its most ample endowment*. The promptness, cheerfulness, and extent of the contributions made on the first suggestion of the enterprise, surpassed all our expectations—showing that the object was one that commended itself to the hearts of the people. And as far as our churches have been applied to, they have not given us cause, (to borrow the language of Paul on a somewhat similar occasion,) “that *we*, that we say not *ye*, should be ashamed in this confident boasting” in your behalf, before our Eastern brethren.

The *very peculiar and great benefits which it can be shown that our churches will derive from the location of the Seminary in our midst*, give us a *further ground of assurance that they will do for it everything that is necessary to make it all that we could desire it to be*. The churches in the vicinity of such an Institution enjoy special facilities for procuring acceptable and useful preachers. Even the weak churches of such a region are enabled to secure the permanent services of some one or other of those who, while students, and visiting among them on agencies or excursions for recreation, become interested in their welfare. Thus it is evident that a Seminary must prove a great blessing to any section of our country in which it is established. But while its presence and influence would be an *advantage to any other churches* in the midst of which it might be placed, to *our churches*, its location among them, is *almost essential to their existence*. Many of them are weak. The steady stream of emigration, which has, for years, set toward the North and West, has swept away multitudes of our members and carried them to those parts of our great valley where the lands are comparatively unoccupied and cheap. Looking at the influence of this great movement upon the general interests of the Redeemer’s kingdom, it is not a subject of regret, but rather of congratulation. New churches are planted by it, Presbyterianism is more widely spread, and many receive the gospel who would have perished without it, had not our emigrants carried it with them into these newer settlements. But it is a movement that threatens to be disas-

trous to the churches that are thus continually drained of their physical and moral resources. They do not present as inviting fields of labor as those churches in which a man can see the seeds that he has planted, growing up around him and bringing forth fruits before him. Our ministers thus catch the spirit of emigration, and numbers of them have been swept away by the same current that has carried off so large a portion of our people. How are their places to be filled? and how are we to furnish with preachers those portions of our State, in which new churches might be formed and built up? Even now our young men, educated in the East, become estranged from us by their long absence at a distance. Some never even return to look at our destitutions—many more come back with their minds set on other fields, and scarcely tarry with us for a night. For upwards of twenty years I have had occasion to note the course of things to which I am now alluding. There have been for many years, and there are now, fields of missionary labor within the bounds of our own Presbytery, in which churches might have been built up by the faithful and persevering efforts of an energetic minister. Our wealthier churches have annually raised funds, far more than sufficient to sustain comfortably the laborers in these fields, but we have ever failed to procure them; and this evil, under which we have suffered, would be felt far more severely if our young men were sent to a Seminary located North or West of us in our own valley. What chance would there be of their return to us, when they had been educated for years, in a place where they had been taught to believe, that ours was a region given up to moral waste and desolation—that to the enterprising and energetic the newer regions afford the only inviting prospects of settlement? How could they be expected to come back to us, when to do so, they must stem the tide of emigration which they feel pressing them onward, and which they see hurrying many others away from that spot to which they are invited to return?

These considerations (and they might be much more fully and strongly presented, if time permitted,) show the deep interest

which all our churches have in sustaining and strengthening the Seminary, which, by the blessing of God and the favor of his people, has been established among us. By contributing to the utmost of their ability to its full endowment, the stronger churches will be making the best provision for furnishing the preaching of the gospel permanently to the destitute districts of our own State, as well as to their weaker brethren—while these latter, on their part, should be impelled to strenuous efforts in its behalf by the instinct of self-preservation.

Our brethren in other quarters ought not to grudge us the local advantages derivable from this Institution. They are far greater to us than they could be to them, if it were placed among them. To them its presence would only be a *benefit*, to us it is a *necessity*—their *increase* would be promoted by it, *our continued and healthful existence* depends upon it. Something, too, ought to be considered as due to those churches which have colonized with their offspring, so large a portion of this valley. If *we* are *weak*, we have been *weakened by strengthening the whole church in the West*; and does not this give us some claim upon the gratitude as well as sympathies of our brethren?

There is another consideration which should render the location of the Seminary generally satisfactory. Placed where it is, the benefits derived from it by the churches in each of the other districts of the valley, are greater than they would be if it were located *any where else, except immediately among themselves*. More of those educated in it would be induced to settle immediately around it, if it were situated in any of our younger States, than will be induced to settle around it here; and thus *fewer* would be *left to settle* abroad and supply the other destitute portions of our land. We expect, that for years to come, the stream of emigration will continue to carry both our people and our preachers to every quarter of the valley. Where should a reservoir, designed to irrigate a great sloping plain, be constructed? If it is placed high up the slope, it is only necessary to open the various sluices, and the waters will naturally *flow downwards*, conveying themselves over *all the*

ground that needs their refreshing influence. But construct it at some distance *down the descent*, and the fields above must be given up to sterility, or watered only by some slow, laborious, painful, artificial and expensive process. There are natural laws that govern the *movements of men*, just as fixed and certain as those that govern the *material elements*, and it is the part of wisdom to pay due regard to these laws in all our arrangements. If this Seminary were located in Indiana, Illinois or Ohio, what proportion of its students would be found naturally directing their way to the interior of Kentucky ?

Before I pass from considering the effects upon the Seminary of its position in Kentucky, there is an advantage of another kind, derived from its location, that is not undeserving of notice. Ever since Seminaries have existed in our country, it has been observed as a fact, that each one of them gives a kind of common cast or mould to its students. While there are many varieties of individual character among them, *all* are seen more or less to have a *generic likeness* to each other. This is owing, in some degree, to the Professors, especially to those of them who were called upon by Providence, to form and direct each one of them at its origin, and who, thus almost necessarily, imparted to it somewhat of their own character, and mingled some of their own peculiarities with those elements that constitute its organic life. But this generic character of the pupils of an Institution, is *partly* ascribable to what may be termed local influences. There is every where a *genius loci*—there is a tendency to the formation of habits, of thoughts, and feeling and action, peculiar to the region. The causes that originated this tendency may have passed away, yet the effect will continue to exist and perpetuate itself. Thus national and sectional character, when once formed, remains for ages unchanged. The extraordinary and trying circumstances under which the early settlements of Kentucky were formed, the severity of the privations endured by the original settlers, the imminency of the perils by which they were constantly surrounded, the watchfulness, vindictiveness, and sagacity of the foe, from whom they won their lands, and the richness of

the prizes for which they fought, all combined to work in them some marked and peculiar characteristics. These causes operating on people in their formative state, naturally produced a character shrewd and enterprising, active and energetic, bold and confident. These qualities develop themselves in the style of speaking as well as acting; and, as far as they exist in any man, they render him more interesting and able in speech, as well as more energetic and successful in action. It is certainly, to say the least, no disadvantage to those who are in training to qualify themselves for proclaiming the truths of the blessed gospel, and exercising government in the heritage of the Lord, to receive their education in a spot, where the characteristics of those by whom they are surrounded, are such as their peculiar circumstances, have imparted to the people of Kentucky.

5. Another circumstance, which I regard as highly favorable to the prosperity of the Institution, is, that *it is situated in a village*. It is not desirable that any class of human beings should dwell apart from their fellow men and form a community by themselves. The camp, the monastery, the nunnery, the college building, occupied exclusively by young men—all exhibit a mode of life unnatural, and consequently vicious. Many evils, which I need not now specify, flow from such a system. The young especially, ought, as far as possible, to live in families—enjoying somewhat of social and domestic life. An Institution like this, ought, then, to be located in a community large enough to absorb and admit into its membership, by temporary adoption, those who shall attend its instruction. The community in which it is placed, ought, for very obvious reasons, to consist in the bulk of its members, neither of the very poor nor of the very rich. Ministers of the gospel are required to mingle familiarly with all classes of society. It is, then, altogether desirable, that, during their education, they should form such manners, habits or tastes, as would render it easy and unembarrassing for them to have free and familiar intercourse with the high and the low. Over-refinement and fastidiousness will impair a preacher's usefulness as well as vulgarity and rudeness. For these reasons, a village

which with its neighborhood contains a large population, whose intelligence, manners, and style of living, present a fair specimen of the substantial Presbyterian people of our land, appears to me to commend itself to every reflecting mind, as the sort of community in which to plant a Seminary. Some are advocates of a city location for such an Institution. But the schools of the prophets in ancient days, were never established in cities. Retired country places and villages, were the spots in which inspired men instructed and trained those who were to be the teachers of Israel. The cities of the Levites, too, where the priests and ordinary expounders of God's law were reared, were little cities of the size of our villages. The influence of a large city, I regard as exceedingly deleterious to the minds of the young, who are preparing for the work of the ministry. The din, the bustle, the shifting scenes of a city, are inimical to that calm reflection and undistracted investigation, without which, the student can never become acquainted with the subtle workings of his own heart and the profound truths of God's blessed word. The period of theological education is to be mainly devoted to meditation and study, to the acquisition of stores of knowledge for future use, to the cultivation of pious principles and emotions, and to the formation of those intellectual habits, which will enable the preacher to go on increasing in mental attainments, even amid the constant embarrassments and interruptions occasioned by the multiplied and distracting duties of practical life. To the devotedly pious student, the opportunities for active usefulness, which are presented on every side, are strong temptations to neglect his appropriate work, and his conscience is soothed, while yielding to them, by the reflection that he is doing good. To the less devoted, the numberless allurements that, on every side, address themselves to his tastes, his passions present such strong temptations to the indulgence of his propensities, that it is well if he only wastes his time, and does not make shipwreck to his soul.

The extraordinary expense necessary to be incurred in establishing a Seminary in a great city, or in a suburb of such a

city, as well as the extraordinary expense entailed on the successive sets of students who shall attend its instructions, constitute a formidable objection to such a location. Its building and endowment would cost nearly double the amount of one established on the same scale in a village, and the expenses to a student in a city, are far greater than the cost of similar accommodations in a retired and plain community.

The advantages urged in behalf of a city location are, the facilities furnished to students for the cultivation of their practical powers, and the influence that might be exerted by the professors on the population of a great city. But surely, the four or five months of his vacation are, *at least enough*, for a student to devote to *action*; and as to the incidental good that is to be expected from the residence of learned and pious professors in a city, it must result from their habitual private labors among the destitute civic population, or from their occasional public efforts in vindicating essential truths, or enforcing important duties. For the first, they have not leisure,—and without disrespect for their piety or ability, we may aver that, for doing good among the poor, the labors of an ordinary city missionary, would be worth more than all the services that could be rendered by a whole corps of theological professors. Their influence as occasional public lecturers, whose services might be needed a few times in a year, would not be diminished by residence, at half-a-day's distance from a city.

Two objections have been urged against the location of this Seminary—there are two causes that, it is said, will operate seriously against its success. Permit me to occupy a moment in examining them and ascertaining their proper weight.

1. It is objected that *our location is not central*. We admit it, and admit further, that, a few years ago, this objection would have been fatal. But great changes have already taken place, (and greater are in progress,) which almost destroy the force of this objection. The recent invention of railroads, has wrought a geographical change that has altogether altered distances. Places have been brought within a few hours of each other, that were formerly days apart; and we can now, in a

single day, arrive at a point, which, a few years ago, it cost us a fatiguing journey of a week to reach. This change is still rapidly progressing by the construction of new roads. Our conceptions have not had time to adjust themselves to this new condition of things, and our ideas lag behind the reality. In a short time, this spot will be as accessible from all parts of the valley, as Princeton was a few years ago, from central Pennsylvania.

2. It is objected that the Seminary is *located in slave territory*, and that in consequence of this fact, *it will not draw students from the free States*. We admit that there is great force in this objection. Had it been otherwise, I would have deemed it a waste of time, to have called your attention to the various causes that are at work to secure the success of our enterprise. At a *single glance* it could have been seen that a union of all our Western States in the support of a single Seminary, could not fail to secure to it, with the ordinary blessing of God, all that is requisite to the highest prosperity of such an Institution. But while we admit that its location on the soil of a slave State, will operate to some extent against our Seminary, it will operate to a far less extent than is commonly supposed and asserted. What, let me ask, is the influence that is to prevent candidates for the ministry in the free States, from coming here for instruction? Simply and solely, a *prejudice*, and a prejudice of such a character, that, when fairly confronted and examined, it must soon lose its power. That it is a prejudice, I am warranted in asserting, because those who most strenuously urge the existence of some such influence, *do not pretend to account for it*, and we cannot ourselves discover any *rational ground* on which it rests. Can any man assign any valid reason why theological students should, (as it is asserted they will), decline attendance on an ably-officered and well-endowed Institution located in a slave State, and prefer one with inferior advantages in a free State? What are the imaginable influences that would lead them to such a course? Do temptations to vice, which might endanger their morals, abound here? Those who know the character of the population here, will at-

test the correctness of the assertion, that for exemption from vice and its allurements, this location could well challenge a comparison with any place that could be selected in our land. Is living more expensive here? It is, at least, as cheap, if not cheaper, than in any town or city, where an Institution of learning is located in a free State. Is there anything here that weakens the intellect of a student, or in any way hinders his improvement? In answer to this, we appeal to those specimens of the intellectual culture attainable here, furnished by numbers of those who have gone out from among us, and are scattered over the North-West, filling the?r places at the bar, in the halls of legislation, and in the pulpit. It has, indeed, been urged as a grave objection, that young men here, will enjoy the attendance of servants, and thus be rendered effeminate. But the amount of small offices performed by students, depends not on the absence or presence of slavery, but on the comparative social condition of the community in which an Institution is placed. As society advances and improves, the division of labor takes place to a greater extent, and servants are advantageously employed, for services, the performance of which requires but a low degree of intelligence.

To hold that young men ought not to be educated where there are servants, is equivalent to holding that they should be educated only where society is in a rude and early stage, and where the conveniences and comforts of life, have not yet been accumulated.

It is feared by some of our brethren beyond the Ohio, that the young men educated here, will acquire erroneous principles in regard to slavery. This would suppose as true, that which they would be loth to admit, that the sight of the working of the system of slavery, would produce admiration of it—that witnessing its effects would make men its advocates. If it is wrong, should not the opportunity of understanding its character, from seeing its practical operation, make those who enjoyed such an opportunity its abler opponents? If it were admitted, that the existence of slavery among us, ought to prevent pious young men from coming to sojourn temporarily

here, and for a purpose that would not, in any way, practically connect them with the system, it would follow as a necessary consequence, that no such person ought ever to settle among us permanently as a preacher. For the same reasons which prove the impropriety of temporary residence of a student among us, would prove more strongly the impropriety of the permanent residence of a preacher. Those, indeed, who urge this view, hold, some of them avowedly, and others tacitly and perhaps only semi-consciously, that no preacher of the gospel ought to settle or reside where slavery exists—thus consigning, if their principles were adopted, the people of the South, with their three millions of blacks, to the condition of the heathen. If we had reason to believe that this prejudice would continue, it would not merely furnish us with a strong argument for building up a Seminary among ourselves, but would make it a matter of absolute self-defense, that we should do so. No preachers could ever be expected to labor among us, but those raised here. It would be a suicidal policy in us, to build up Institutions, in which our young men would learn that duty forbade their settlement on a soil where slavery existed—it would be contributing our men and means to aid in our destruction.

But this prejudice is already giving way. The history of the College located here, is itself sufficient to show that an Institution can flourish where slavery exists. Twenty-three years ago, I heard predictions of its failure, grounded on the existence of the same prejudice against education in a slave State. Now it has reached a higher point of prosperity than any other College in the West, save one that has enjoyed the advantages of a double patronage, civil and ecclesiastical—one endowed and fostered by the state, and, at the same time, supported by three distinct denominations of Presbyterians, who have hitherto regarded it as their place of education. We might refer to other illustrations of the fact, that, in regard to even anti-professional education, this prejudice is rapidly passing away—a prejudice that formerly induced a large portion of our own people to send their sons to Institutions in other States.

This prejudice never existed, to the same extent, against pro-

fessional education in a slave State, as is shown by the catalogues of our medical and law schools, which have drawn many of their pupils from the north side of the Ohio. And we fully believe that the establishment of this Seminary will furnish another and striking illustration of the fact, that this prejudice is disappearing.

Some of the most flourishing Institutions in the Old World, have been located in some of its smaller States. They have drawn most of their students from countries larger in territory and denser in population than their own. Young men will resort for education to the spot where most attractions of a proper kind are presented. Comfortable and cheap accommodations, pleasant and improving society, with able and pious instructions—these constitute a desirable Seminary—these are the advantages sought after by young men enquiring for a place of theological training, these, as far as they are possessed, give to Seminaries their power of attraction. *Some* of these we have here *already—all of them*, with the blessing of God, we *can have*—and *all of them*, in humble but firm reliance on Him, who has thus far so wonderfully helped us, we are determined that we *will have*.

Such, brethren, are according to human view, the grounds of our confidence in the success of the enterprise, which you are commencing. But in God's favor alone, is our sure reliance, and we must never forget, that "except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." If you labor for Him you are sure of your reward. And though much imperfection mingles even with our purest purposes and holiest services, if you undertake and prosecute this work with the sincere desire to honor Him, you cannot fail to receive His blessing. Even should your labors be frustrated, they will not be forgotten by Him who said to his servant of old who designed to honor Him, "thou didst well that it was in thy heart."

You are now to assume a solemn and responsible office. To you is committed in a great measure, the trust of training the minds of those who are to be the guides, the teachers, the ex-

mplers of multitudes. Your characters, your labors, your prayers, and your examples, are to operate through them, upon the thousands whom they will influence for good or for ill. It is a fearful responsibility, and one from which even a good able man may well shrink, exclaiming in heart-felt distress and trembling apprehension, "Lord, who is sufficient for these things." But, my brethren, the Lord God is your helper. To Him belong the treasures of wisdom, and the treasures of grace, and He has promised to dispense them largely and freely to you if you call upon Him.

These brethren and fathers will aid you with their prayers—many others of God's people throughout the land will aid you—asking earnestly and continually, that you and the Institution which you are to direct, may be made the instruments of conveying innumerable and invaluable blessings to our church to our country and to the world.

THE
INAUGURAL DISCOURSE

OF

ROBERT J. BRECKINRIDGE, D.D., LL.D.,

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY, &C.

Delivered by order of

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, UNDER
THE CARE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRES-
BYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA, AT DANVILLE, KY.,

ON

THE OPENING OF ITS FIRST SESSION,

IN

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN DANVILLE,

OCTOBER 13, 1853.



CINCINNATI:

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1854.

DISCOURSE.

THE position in which we all find ourselves to-day, my brethren and friends, is one of profound solemnity. Here, in the bosom of the venerable Synod of Kentucky, we are met to inaugurate one of those schools of the prophets, towards which her heart has yearned, from the first moment of her own existence. Her strong desires, manifested through so many years and by so many efforts, are at last fulfilled, but in such a manner as to throw on her the chief burden, as well perhaps, as the chief recompense of so great an undertaking. Not in vain has she sought to honor God. He has accepted her vows at last. Let her bless His name, and beware how she neglects to fulfill her sacred obligations.

But there is a far wider field which these ceremonies open to our view. We act, to-day, with the sanction and in the name of the whole Presbyterian Church in this great and free empire. We, who are to be installed, are its servants for Christ's sake, and will fill places created by it, to promote the glory of Christ's name. The Moderator of its General Assembly is here, to give the highest official dignity, to proceedings directed by its acts, and consummated in its name. That great Christian brotherhood—that wide spread organization of Christ's followers—which less than two centuries ago, had hardly any visible existence at all in a few scattered households along the margin of this vast continent, now comes with the authority of nearly three thousand churches, far out into the centre of the continent, to accomplish, at the special call of eleven Synods, and with the common approbation of the whole church—

that last and most difficult work of our organized Christianity—the proper teaching of the teachers of God's people. It is an event profoundly solemn. An era—for us a crisis—in that sublime progress of an exalted civilization and a divine religion, of which our country affords the most memorable example. How momentous is the career which this day's work recalls! How vast are the results to which these proceedings point, and to which they commit the church of which we are members!

There is also a narrow view—too narrow, perhaps, to be allowed to break into the continuity of these high thoughts—and yet I ought not to pass it over in total silence; for to me, personally, it is the most solemn view of all. Why do I stand here to-day? Why is there any part for me to perform in these solemn proceedings? I have not sought it; nay, I have sought to shun it. I have not deemed myself fit for it; nay, I have many times and on many occasions, shrunk from similar employments, which seemed to be attended with far less risk and toil. The shadows of declining life are lengthening around me. Daily toils, which never knew a respite, have broken the force of life; and nightly vigils have dimmed, before the time, its precious light. Action, too, somewhat more than meditation, earnest thought rather than patient study, search into the ways of God much more than into the sayings of men—have formed the training, which, however it may have fitted me to perform my own part, seemed hardly to qualify me to guide others in a part, not likely to be very similar to my own. So I have urged in unaffected self-distrust, and in sincere desire for at least the prospect of that repose between the struggle of life and the silence of the grave, which is often a passion, and always a necessity of the human soul. My friends, my brethren, my church—and as far as I could interpret His will, my Master—judged otherwise; and I reverently bow my head, and consecrate—amidst abounding sacrifices, on the same altar where I have already consecrated all I had—whatever remains to me that is worth bestowing. Frankly, without a murmur and without alarm, I, therefore, accept the

perils, the responsibilities and the toils, which, if left to myself, I would have shunned ; and will do what God enables me, to justify the act.

And now, let me state briefly those views of the great work upon which I am about to enter, which seem to be required from me by the Board of Directors, and which may exhibit a general outline of my conception of the subject, and of the domain of our new Institution.

The church of the living God, is before and is above all ordinances, all office-bearers, and even all visible organizations. She is the bride of the Lamb, and upon her has God bestowed every spiritual gift, which has adorned and blessed the earth. Her scattered members become a visible community under the ordinance of God, and whatever authority she may rightfully exert, and in whatever mode, is only in His name, and by His authority, and in pursuance of concessions made to her by Him. The truth committed to her hands, is the truth of God, and is so committed to her—in part for her own felicity, and in part, as a heritage, in trust, for a ruined world. Her ordinances and offices are such, and such only as God appoints ; and they can be established, continued, modified or abolished, only as God himself may direct. And her office-bearers are to be sought, instituted and displaced, in that precise mode, which God appoints, and in no other. Simply and absolutely, all these things appertain to the bride of the Lamb, by the gift of God, ascertained through a divine revelation ; and it is beyond all authority which is below that of God himself, to add anything thereto, or take anything therefrom.

The mission of the church to the human race, directly considered, is to convert men to God, and train them for a glorious immortality. Under the Christian dispensation, the fundamental principle of this whole work of the church, lies in the sublime truth, that whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. The prophet Joel, eight centuries before Christ, announced this as the grand characteristic of those times in which God's spirit should be poured out on all flesh ; and the apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, in full view of the stu-

pendous incoming of those long predicted times, bade the thousands who witnessed the event, take note of the words of Joel, fulfilled before their eyes, and of the conclusive evidence therein, that the church now entered upon her great work. The spirit is poured out, and therefore, whoever will call upon the Lord shall be saved; and therefore, again, upon the spot, the earnest preaching of Peter, and his loud call upon every one to repent. So the Apostle Paul, in his great discourse to the beloved of God in Rome, teaching them that no righteousness is of any avail, but that which is of faith, and that it is accessible to all men, and to be made known to all men, quotes the precious words of Joel and of Peter, and presses the necessity of the universal preaching of the gospel, after this wondrous fashion: Whosoever will call on the name of the Lord shall be saved: but how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how can they hear without a preacher? and how can any one preach except he is sent? So that the two points on which the efficacy of the church rests, if not indeed the very possibility of its continuance on earth, namely, the outpouring of God's Spirit and the salvation of sinners, are made the basis of the first direct duty of the church to men, namely, to cause the everlasting gospel to be preached, by those sent expressly on that errand, in order that lost sinners may learn and believe, and be saved by calling on the name of the Lord. To reject the means is to frustrate, according to our power, the end itself—since those means are ordained of God, no less distinctly than the end for which he has ordained them; and the whole career of the church teaches us nothing more distinctly than that, in this very thing, her fidelity and her glory, are always exact measures, one of the other. Amongst men, nothing is more certain, than that they, to whom the preaching of the gospel is foolishness, perish; while they, to whom it is the power of God, are saved.

Equally clear is the use and the divine obligation of a living ministry in the other great point of the church's direct mission to men. The Apostle Paul, in that glorious revelation address-

ed to the Saints at Ephesus, plainly tells us that not only do natural men need to have the eyes of their understanding enlightened, that they may know the hope of the calling of God, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the Saints, and the exceeding greatness of his power toward all who believe; but that the Saints need to be perfected, and the body of Christ to be edified, until they come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to be perfect men and attain unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. For this end, Christ, when he ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, gave to men gifts suitable to its attainment; inestimable gifts, worthy of the ascending Saviour, and capacious of such infinite blessings to His Saints, as should satisfy his own soul, even when he should recall its fearful travail. To some—even to the world that then was, and through it to all coming generations—he gave Apostles and Prophets; here, in the Scriptures, are a portion of their services and blessings to men. To some—even to all in all ages, who are far from God and who may be sought and won for him—he gave Evangelists; and from that day to this, their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world—all the livelong day of the world's life, stretching out their hands, in God's name, to a disobedient and gainsaying people. And to some—even to all his gathered churches, and to all his scattered children through all time, and now, here in these ends of the earth, after the lapse of so many centuries, even unto us—he gave pastors and teachers; and the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things, are as beautiful to-day, upon the mountains, as they were in vision to Isaiah, twenty-six centuries ago, when he heard their cheering cry to Zion, Thy God reigneth! And this is their cry to Zion still, Thy God reigneth. And still they are the gift of the glorified Redeemer. And while he reigns he will continue to give them, as proof that he did ascend, and that he does reign. And while Zion continues to receive and cherish them, she will continue to possess the appointed instruments whereby the Saints may be filled with all the fulness of God, and

whereby lost sinners may be brought to know Him, whom to know aright, is life eternal.

No man may take this divine office on himself; but he must be called to it of God. And the church may not take as certain, the declarations of men that God has so called them; but she must ascertain for herself, in the mode pointed out by God, the reality of their divine vocation. These are points of the very highest importance—needful to be stated—but not proper to be discussed in this particular connection, except so far as the entire question of the training of those who propose to preach the gospel, involves throughout, a trial of the fact of their vocation, as well as a preparation for the right performance of the high duties on which they are sent. In whatever point of view, therefore, the subject can be presented, the highest interests and the plainest duties of the church are seen to be involved in all that concerns the progress of men into the ministry of the gospel. It is a progress every step of which assumes as true, a peculiar interposition of God, and requires a special judgment of the church; an interposition guiding the servant of God on his way towards his sacred work—and a judgment attesting the conviction of the church, that a divine interposition has really occurred. It is not surprising, therefore, that throughout her whole career, the church of God has manifested so profound an interest in everything that relates to the training of those who look towards her ministry, as their vocation; and that she has steadily and uniformly vindicated her right, and acknowledged her obligation, not only to determine in the final act, and upon a full view of the case, whether she will accept as of God, or reject as from man, every applicant for her ordination; but also to superintend and prescribe, to provide for and to regulate every part of the means that may bring on the final result.

It is only the portion of that training which is strictly professional, that is the particular subject of our present consideration. The parental consecration, and the watchful, loving, prayerful rearing of the young, with a longing hope that God will call them into the ministry of his Son; the sedulous,

unwearied tender care of God's ministers over the lambs of their flocks—watching for indications that this one or that one was called from his mother's womb, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ; the whole tenor and course of Christian education, only the more thorough, broad and exact, because it is directed upon exalted principles to exalted ends, developing along its whole track, to watchful spirits, who they are whom God has chosen for this great work: all this, full of interest as it is, I pass by, together with that large class of untimely cases, larger by far than our weak faith admits, wherein God seeks his ministers in the mid-race and mid-fight of life, long after the dew of their youth is gone. It is this strictly professional part of ministerial training for which provision is made, in Institutions like the one in which I have just been installed one of the first Professors. Recognizing the inestimable value of knowledge to all men, and especially to public teachers; persuaded of the extreme importance of thorough education, as it is a training distinct from the value of the actual treasures it may have bestowed; seeking earnestly, and as a true portion of her high calling, to promote all the interests of mankind, and amongst the very highest of these, the exalted progress of society; the church of God does not admit, except upon the most extraordinary proofs, that God calls into the ministry, men either incapable or unwilling to make the efforts, and if need be, the sacrifices requisite to place them, at the very least, abreast with society in its onward march. It is not to make those preliminary attainments that men are to resort to the Institution we are founding; but they are presumed to have made them laboriously, elsewhere. And the higher they have reached, and the better they are instructed before they come here, the greater will be the probability of their reaping when they come, all the advantages of the new course of training upon which they will enter; seeing that all parts of knowledge have certain relations to each other, and every method of superior education in order to advance at all, must have a certain respect to the methods that lie beneath it.

It is worthy of the deepest consideration, whether this funda-

mental idea has hitherto worked out all that it was capable of effecting for the education of our young ministers, or the advancement of the Institutions established for that object. The difference between primary, collegiate, university and professional education, is neither fanciful nor arbitrary, but is inherent in the nature of the various subjects to which the attention is directed in the various stages of our progress, and in the methods by which instruction can be most effectually imparted, touching the subjects themselves. And of all professions, that of the sacred ministry demands a professional training the most extensive, the most peculiar, and the most difficult. As a mere profession, it requires a training as strictly professional as can be required by any other. As a profession extremely peculiar and infinitely momentous in the subject matter of its course, its training demands a corresponding exaltation. As a profession, in which the personal character and intimate life of the person himself, is a fundamental element not only of his success, but of his very right to pursue his profession at all, a new and altogether singular element is introduced into the required system of training. And finally, as a profession combining duties and employments, widely different in their character—the teacher and the administrator of religion, both in one—the preacher of the gospel and the ruler amongst the flock—that rarest of all combinations in earthly things, high theoretical skill, and great practical success—the training that can fit one for all this, is liable to still higher and more peculiar modifications. It need not be denied that much must depend upon the personal gifts and qualifications of those who are entrusted with a work so great and difficult; and that they who are highly endowed by God for it, may do much which no definitions can express, and no rules enable others to achieve. But it does not suffice to leave so great a subject merely to such contingencies; nor are these contingencies themselves always fortunate. The principles which control the subject ought to be distinctly settled—and I must add, in a manner, different in my opinion, in some very important respects, from what has hitherto prevailed amongst us. And I cannot forbear to add,

that the changes which these suggestions intimate, would confer upon the church this double benefit, that greater endowments and greater efforts would be required of the Professors in her Seminaries, and her students of theology would be delivered from certain vicious methods of training, which are essentially unsuitable to their stage of advancement, and certain topics which do not belong essentially to their proper professional training, would be substituted by such as do—and the misarrangement of the peculiar advantages of their public and private student-life—if not, indeed, an almost total sacrifice of the latter, would be corrected. If we allow ourselves to reflect on the controlling importance of those parts of our own mental and moral development, and those portions of our personal acquisitions, which, have been of the most signal use to us in our own ministry, we shall perceive without difficulty what are the real necessities of our younger brethren, and so be led onward to the proper mode of supplying them, so far as that is possible in Institutions of this sort.

It was not without serious misgivings that the Presbyterian Church in the United States, determined, less than fifty years ago, to establish at Princeton, in New Jersey, its first Theological Seminary. There was great difference of opinion as to the wisdom of embarking in such an enterprise at all, and a further difference as to the proper mode of proceeding, supposing the general principle favorable to that method of educating our ministers to be adopted. Since the establishment of that Institution, the Church has seemed to consider the question settled, that our ministers ought to receive their professional training in separate schools, expressly designed for that object; and all christian denominations, and both the other learned professions, and many particular callings in life, seem to have arrived at a general conclusion similar to our own. Our first Seminary has been the general model after which all our subsequent attempts have been regulated, and the high character and qualifications of the Professors in that Seminary, and the distinguished success in life of many of its students, inured to the benefit of the plan itself, and stamped it with an appa-

rent public approbation, which the frequent changes in it suggested by those especially entrusted with its control, would seem to show, was far too indiscriminate and decided. So deep were my own personal convictions on this subject, that being obliged, as chairman of the committee on Seminaries, in the last general Assembly, to take the initiative in the matter of the organization of the new Institution located in this place, I ventured to suggest the provisional adoption of the plan of Princeton, and the appointment of a committee to revise the whole subject, and report for us, a permanent plan to the next Assembly. Pending the labors of that committee, more especially as I am a member of it—this occasion requiring of me the notice of these facts, exacts, in addition, no more than the expression of general and matured opinions. Beside what I have already intimated, therefore, I content myself with saying, that the trial that has been made, reveals some serious defects in the general plan of our Seminaries, which the present undertaking affords a most favorable opportunity of endeavoring to remedy. It seems to me, that the mode of dealing with the whole matter, in the way of instruction, should be by subjects, and not by classes and years—the thing aimed at, being not the amount of time consumed, but the amount of progress made; a change which draws after it, many very important consequences. Moreover, I feel persuaded, that far too little is attempted or even proposed in the moral and practical, as contrasted with the merely intellectual culture, and that even in the department of intellectual training, the strength is laid out, not so much in any true culture, as in the acquisition of mere knowledge, and even in this acquisition the student is not so much taught as he is merely superintended as he gropes his way: points in regard to which, the highest interests of the church demand that nothing should be spared to perfect our system. And, I not only fully concur in those indications coming from time to time, from the boards which control our Seminaries, and without exception, I believe, from our students, whenever they express themselves on the subject, that the term time of these Institutions, even shortened, as in many of them it has been, is

inconveniently and injuriously protracted: but I am convinced that some of the highest objects of the Institutions themselves, and some of the most important interests of the students, are jeopardised, if not defeated, by a singular attempt to assimilate the Seminaries to primary schools for youth, rather than to professional schools for men. Health—often life itself—nay, reason too, not unfrequently; all just and effective opportunity of self-culture in private, which is the highest culture of all; all profitable employment of time during recesses, which are too short to be really available for any good end; all precious employment in the sweet services and duties of one's own congregation, and neighborhood, and home, which is the best training of all; all gentle, and filial, and inestimable offices in the study and around the hearth of one's own pastor, one's own spiritual father—one day of whose converse is often of priceless value; all this, and how much more, is sacrificed to the inexorable demands of absurd theories, which put the life and the soul, both of teacher and pupil into scales, and weigh them against the value of so many hours, and so many pages, and so many pence. These things leave their mark upon us. And yet they are things, which if the church but willed it, it were easy to correct.

To advance another step in our subject, let us suppose ourselves in the midst of those young brethren of the Lord, who are objects of so much solicitude to the church, and let us see to what subjects it is that they are directing their earnest labors. Many years and many toils, have brought them to these class rooms: many prayers, many tears, many heart struggles, have attested the depth of their conviction, that they ought to be there; and many gentle, loving and faithful spirits far away, are solemnly mindful of them, as they go in and out in their preparation for the self-denying, but august calling which the Lord has chosen them for. The widow's son, and the stay of the poor man's house, and the hope of the rich and great, and the light and joy of the highest in the land; all are there. I have seen them all, mingled on those humble forms, and the only rivalry is, or should be, who is most willing, who most

fit, to labor and to suffer for Christ's sake. Thus marshalled, let us begin the work. *First* of all, here are those strange tongues, in which, and in no other, it pleased God to bestow on man, the knowledge of himself. These are the very words of eternal life, and herein are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. These tongues must be mastered, and the teachers of God's people must be brought, every one for himself, into that direct and personal communication with the divine spirit, which may be obtained by the precise knowledge of the very words he caused inspired men to utter. This knowledge is presupposed in every other part of their professional education, and is absolutely necessary to the highest professional knowledge and usefulness in every subsequent employment of life. It does not confer, even when it is most thorough, the true knowledge of God; because it is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness. But it does confer one means, which nothing can adequately supply, of that true knowledge of God to the renewed heart which seeks to comprehend His whole counsel. *Next*, in the natural order of the subject, comes the systematic study of this blessed truth of God, to be nearer to which are all the labors indicated above. What, precisely, are the separate truths which God has taught to man; and what, exactly, is the great system which taken according to the divine proportion of faith, these truths all united, make up; and what, exegetically on the one hand, and logically on the other, is the method of deducing, first the separate truths, and secondly the general system from them all; and what, in its moral and spiritual import to us personally, is the value and significance of all this truth, to the life that now is, and to that which is to come; and what is the foundation and the extent of the certainty that we may here risk our souls; and what, finally, are the impregnable defences, behind which we may maintain, even against principalities and powers, this heavenly treasure. What infinite subjects! *After* this, pursuing the same natural order, comes the history of this truth, in its glorious career from the bosom of God—all across the track of ages, down even to the hour that is passing over

us ; its conflicts, its victories, the blessings it has conferred, the perversions it has endured, and the disasters it has sustained—all considered in a light purely abstract—as of the truth by itself ; then its concrete history, as it is embodied and held forth, in the visible church of God, living and struggling throughout all generations ; and then the still more complex history of the truth, the church, the nations, and the race, all mutually affecting each other, and all united exhibiting the entire course, and to a vast extent the causes and the significance, of God's entire dealings with men. Again, what infinite subjects ! *Last* of all, comes the church itself, living and struggling before us, the whole truth of God put into actual movement before our eyes, and in a measure in our hands ; the divine organization to which the truth is committed, and through which it lives for ever ; the direct preaching of the blessed gospel, with the fruits thereof, and the power thereof ; the superintendence and administration of the church of the living God, in all the amazing efficacy of that sublime spiritual force ; history itself, creating in a sense, its own terms, and enacting its deep secrets before our faces, and the real power that has all along decided all things upon earth—here contemplated, as it determines them, by little and little, afresh in our view ; God's truth, God's church, God's people, God's ministers, in all God's heaven appointed ways, and under God's all guiding providence—acting, and to be expounded to living men. Once more, what infinite subjects ! These are the topics which make up the round of strictly professional study, in the most general estimate of its merely intellectual part, to which those who seek the ministry in our church, should be required to address themselves, and which those who are called to instruct them are presumed to be competent to illustrate and enforce. Need we wonder at the solicitude of the church that these things should be provided for in a manner suitable to their transcendent importance ? Need we be surprised that a munificent liberality should mark the conduct of so many of God's people, towards such enterprises ? Need we feel alarm, when many shrink back, and many fail, whether as teachers or pupils

when brought face to face with things so vast and momentous ?

It is impossible to view these great interests even in the most cursory way, without being struck with the difficulty of providing for them in a satisfactory and permanent manner. Even independently of its inherent difficulty from its own intimate character and from the nature of all its objects, there are external obstacles, which render the establishment of a Theological Seminary of superior merit—one of the very most difficult undertakings about which men can concern themselves. In our church, the attendance of the candidates for the ministry upon any Theological Seminary, and if upon any, then which, is most properly, purely voluntary; and many candidates, probably more than a fourth part of the whole number, never attend any of them. From the nature of the case, this state of things, may be expected to continue. In addition, the whole number of candidates for the ministry, in any particular denomination, bears a very low proportion to the whole number of young men in that denomination, and still lower to its aggregate population. In the minutes of our General Assembly for 1853, the entire number of those candidates is set down at 363; which, on an average is one to every six or seven of our ministers and licentiates, one to about eight churches, one to more than six hundred communicants, and a little over two to each Presbytery. Nor is it possible for any human means to increase the number of those whom God calls into the ministry of his Son; nor can anything but evil come to all concerned, from seducing into that sacred calling those whom God never appointed thereunto. All this part of the subject lies in the domain of faith; and our Seminaries must be content to let it remain there, or they must be willing to become instruments of the greatest evil to the church. But this only explains more clearly the nature of the particular difficulty here pointed out. Add to this, that for the numbers served, this form of instruction is necessarily the most expensive of all, and this method of providing it, the most costly of all. The church has deliberately and most wisely determined, that if her sons will give themselves, she may be expected at least to furnish the means

of training them, so that instruction in all our Seminaries, is absolutely gratuitous ; and while the Lord sees fit, as he has always done, to call into the ministry many of the children of poverty, the church has no alternative, but to support as well as educate them, or else to refuse many of the most precious of Christ's ascension gifts to her. Now the least consideration of what all this involves, in the support of Professors, the erection of suitable buildings, the cost of necessary Libraries, and the various unavoidable expenses incident to the carrying on of such institutions, will enable us to perceive the causes of their great relative costliness, and to estimate the difficulty resulting from that quarter. Without pressing this matter farther than to a candid and clear statement of its general nature, we have no reason to doubt that the church, in a just estimate of all the labor it demands, and all the cost it may involve, is wisely and deliberately, and may I not add, gratefully prepared to do all that may be required at her hands, in order to secure to her such ministers as she approves, and to esteem any price and burden, a privilege to her, provided the object is attained. This has always been her answer, to all who have fainted and repined, in the face of all her great undertakings. Let them cost what they will, so that the cost be necessary, and the object well achieved, they are worth infinitely more than they cost.

Every new attempt to found an additional Seminary, is attended, from the nature of the case, with great risk of finding those difficulties which are inherent in the subject, increased rather than diminished, for it. For there can be no assurance of any increase in the candidates for the ministry, either in consequence of, or commensurate with, the additional facilities thus afforded ; nor can there be any security, that the new one will receive its due share of the patronage already existing. And yet it is required, from the very commencement of its existence, to assume a position such as others have reached only after years of effort and experience, and to present advantages of all sorts bearing some fair comparison with those possessed by Seminaries in which the ablest men have labored, and toward which the most abounding liberality has been

shown. In the present state of Theological education, and of the country, Seminaries of this sort must have a very brief infancy, or a very premature old age. There are, moreover, local jealousies to be encountered, and they, with narrow and selfish minds, are the bitterest, as they are the lowest jealousies of all. And there are sectional interests to be reconciled, and those hallucinations on questions which are not of themselves sectional, which so frequently attach themselves with the tenacity of interest and fanaticism combined, to questions of that sort, and embarrass wise men in the wisest undertakings. And then there is the great inert mass to be moved, which does not desire to be openly classed with the opposers of any good thing, but which so often carefully solicits and perseveringly clings to any sort of excuse for declining to give efficient aid to every good thing. And after all these obstacles are surmounted, besides those differences of opinion which may always exist amongst good men, there remains the open opposition of false brethren unawares brought in; some misled, no doubt, just because they are false, and some enraged because the church has overlooked them, or set them aside, and some alarmed by imaginary danger to some small particular matter of their own—all uniting as vigorously to pull down what the church desires to build up, as if the founding of a Seminary was the very blackest of mortal sins, and they who have the chief part in such an enterprise were thereby put out of God's protection.

Yet the judgment of the church has not more deliberately, or more repeatedly affirmed that the professional education of her young ministers may be best conducted by means of Theological Seminaries, than that those Seminaries must be multiplied, according to her own opinion of her own necessities; both of which judgments are older than the ministerial life of the great majority of her present ministers, and firmly settled perhaps, as any other points of living opinion in her bosom. I have already said, in an earlier part of this discourse, what seemed to me needful, as to the first of those judgments; and now as to the second one, I give it my hearty approbation, not only in its immediate application to the case

before us, but as a settled principle in the great movement of the church. Whether we consider the great extent of the country and the church; or the diversified interests of their great natural divisions; or the magnitude of all these interests combined; or their momentous importance; nothing seems to me plainer than that every consideration of prudence and convenience prompts us to multiply and scatter the Institutions in which we propose to educate ministers for a field so vast. The risk is too immense to stake on a single experiment, no matter to whose hands that experiment is confided; and the moral power is too great to be safely confided by the church to any one Institution. If these Seminaries are really blessings to the church, as we trust they all may be, it is of great moment to create in them, many centres from which the expected blessings may be more profusely scattered; and if there is to a certain extent, as experience and reason alike proves there is, danger of perversion in all perpetual corporations, it is of the highest importance that the church should always keep those corporations in such a position, that the power of none of them can ever be wielded to her serious disadvantage. Nor can it be denied, that after such Institutions have reached a certain, though it may be an indefinite point of elevation, they have been found liable to relax their efforts, or to misdirect them, or even to pervert them; and if nothing of this sort occurs, the greatly increased number of their pupils, is itself both a temptation to neglect that assiduous personal care and superintendence of them, which their moral training so urgently demands, and a great obstacle to the faithful performance of this solemn duty. I am very far from believing that the church ought to establish numerous petty Seminaries; but I do believe that according to the exigencies of times, and places, and seasons, and populations, she ought to stand prepared, as the Lord from time to time calls upon her, to advance her banner, in this, as in every other department of her heavenly mission; and that in this, as in all the rest, she may safely trust the Lord for wisdom to discern and faith to obey his providential guidance.

That the time had fully come for the General Assembly to

interpose, and establish and endow a new Theological Seminary under its own care, in this great central portion of the West, was attested in a manner the most conclusive and remarkable. After years of consideration and discussion, and after anxious and ineffectual trial of other methods, a unanimous and reiterated call to interpose, was made upon the Assembly of 1853, from nearly every portion of the West, and by nearly every channel through which it was possible to approach that venerable court, and in nearly every form in which application was ever made to it; and not one whisper of opposition, jared amidst those loud and anxious appeals. This, in effect, appeared officially to the Assembly, and that body voted, unanimously, official acts, that the substantial facts so appeared before it. Thus appealed to, it determined, by a unanimous vote to establish in the West, by God's blessing, such a Seminary as was asked for; and by another unanimous vote, it determined to settle, by a vote of its own members, the point in the West, where the new Seminary should be located; and it had in its hands, and has printed in the appendix to its minutes, the unanimous attestation of delegates, organic members too of itself, from eleven synods in the West and South-west, that these two very things were exactly the things which it was especially desired to do, and that if it would do them, no opposition should be made to what it should undertake. I think, since the world began, a plainer case was never made out—for a church to take up, in the fear of God, a great cause; and till the world shall end, no church can ever proceed in anything, with greater unanimity, than our General Assembly did, in this case, up to this point; that is, up to the naked question, where shall the new Seminary be located. Upon that question one call of the roll of the Assembly was had; and Cincinnati in Ohio, Nashville in Tennessee, and Peoria in Illinois being first withdrawn, the vote stood for Danville in Ky., 122 votes; for St. Louis in Mo., 78 votes; for New Albany in In., 33 votes; and then, as the record shows, "on motion, the Moderator led the Assembly in offering thanks to God for the harmony of feeling in arriving at this result, and

implored his blessing on the enterprise, at this beginning." It was a great cause, brought to a great issue, under the guidance of the great God; and his church saw his hand and followed his guidance, and reverently blessed his great name. And that faithful God is able to do all that he allowed his servants to trust, was implied in his acts; and that believing church, will redeem every word of her promise, and fulfil every part of her sacred obligation; and coming generations will rise up and call the one and the other blessed, as that day and its fruits are remembered. Yea though the memory of the wicked rot, men will not let good and great acts die, and God himself will hold them in everlasting remembrance.

Upon the distinct presentation and discussion of the question, it seems to have been considered by the General Assembly, that the new Seminary for the West, ought to be located in the valley of the Ohio, and not west of the Mississippi river—the combined vote being expressed by the figures 155 to 78. Upon a like presentation of the question, whether the new seminary should be placed within the borders of the slave-holding or those of the non-slave-holding states, the issue is represented by the figures 200 to 33, in favor of the former. Combining all the elements that entered into the subject—Danville was selected as the place by 122 votes to 111 for all other places united—and by 122 votes to 78 votes over the highest, and by 122 votes to 33 votes over the lowest place put in nomination against it. And New Albany, from which and on whose behalf so great a clamor has been raised, and such torrents of malignant slander have been poured out since the adjournment of the General Assembly, after the fullest presentation of its claims as a place, and its claims as a Seminary already existing, claims founded on all the reputation of the past, and all the means of the present, whether moral or pecuniary, and all the promise of the future—was able to command about one vote in seven of an Assembly, then casting 233 votes. What may have been the special motives actuating each particular person in casting his vote—or what the reasons were, general or particular, which determined his mind; or, on the other hand, to

what extent, and in what direction, changes in the state of the vote might have occurred, if all the questions argued and determined had been voted on separately, or in different relations to each other; it is, at present, wholly impossible to ascertain—nor do I pretend to know. But I do know with perfect certainty, and I assert with emphasis on this solemn occasion, that the vote locating this Seminary, at this place, was neither a party, nor a local, nor a deceived, nor a fraudulent, nor a purchased, nor a coerced, nor a sectional, nor a pro-slavery vote—all of which it has been asserted or intimated to have been; but that it was a free, fair, pure, disinterested, christian vote, of the very largest, and one of the most illustrious General Assemblies ever convened in the bosom of the Presbyterian church in the United States. And it remains for those upon whom the responsibility of that fruitful and overwhelming vote rests, to vindicate its justice, forecast, and wisdom, by acts that God will bless, and all good men honor.

For my personal share in these transactions—which I admit was very great—I have been assailed with a ferocity almost without parallel during a life, now not very short, and which has had its full share of the hatred and abuse of bad men. In two official papers, purporting to emanate from the Theological Seminary at New Albany, one from its board of directors, and the other from its board of trustees—and in other publications coming from quarters not worthy to be named on such an occasion as this, calumnies for which there was no shadow of foundation, almost numberless, charging me with offences, which, thank God, are characteristically repugnant to my nature, and abhorrent to the whole tenor of my life—have been scattered in newspapers and pamphlets over the face of the whole country, with a diligent malice, worthy of men, who, having ruined one Seminary, and lost the confidence of the church, determined by deliberate covenant-breaking and slander to prevent a successful service of God, which they were unable to endure in another Seminary. It is neither to repeat, nor to refute these calumnies, that I allude to them here. But it would be the merest affectation to pass by in silence, what the

religious press, extensively throughout the land—beginning, I believe with our own state, has thought fit to publish—and what therefore all men have heard. I therefore take issue with these calumniators, and hold them to the responsibilities they have incurred. Nor could any occasion be more proper for me, or any presence more appropriate, than this occasion and this presence, to discharge the duty which these atrocities seem to impose upon me. Here then and now, in the very act of consecrating myself to the final work, perhaps, which God gives me to do on earth—I assert in the face of the people of this place, whose noble munificence lay at the basis of whatever success I had—that I dealt with them, in all the matter, before, and during, and since the Assembly—with perfect simplicity and sincerity towards them, and towards all mankind; and I beseech them to contradict me, if I utter ought but truth. And here and now, in the very bosom of the venerable synod of Kentucky—in whose name, I and her other sons made pledges, which we told the Assembly, in our filial trust in her, we would ourselves redeem, if she would not—I confidently appeal to my fathers and my brethren in Christ, if I have not always, in every matter touching this question of a Theological Seminary, about which I have so often participated in their counsels and their acts, pursued a course of perfect candor, and fairness, and integrity towards every party and every interest that was at stake. And here and now, in the face of my colleagues from this synod, in the General Assembly itself—and in the presence of the Moderator of that venerable court—who has known, perfectly, the manner of my going out and in, from the moment when he received me into the communion of the church, nearly twenty-five years ago—to the present moment, when he witnesses my solemn dedication to one of the very highest trusts that beloved church can confer; I demand, if my conduct throughout that assembly, and on all other occasions, touching this whole question of a Western Seminary, was not a true, a righteous, a loyal—yea, a magnanimous conduct. And now and here, without passion, and without revenge, and with a full sense of the respon-

sibility I incur, both to God and man, I denounce so many of the Board of Directors of the Theological Seminary at New Albany, and so many of the Board of Trustees of the same institution, as have put forth the calumnies which pass under their name; and I denounce the other inferior calumniators whom I will not condescend to name on this occasion—simply and without circumlocution, as wicked slanderers of God's people—of God's church, and of me his minister. And for lack of other remedy against such wrong doers—with profound sorrow, but also with profound conviction—I appeal to God, to judge between them and us, for all their wicked endeavors to hinder us in so great a work for the glory of his blessed name, by means so perfidious and disgraceful. *

The Presbyterian church in the United States has a glorious mission to fulfil; and not the least glorious part of it will be enacted in this great valley of the West. It is not now for the first time, that my voice is lifted up in that consecrated host, cheering it onward to higher efforts, and broader conquests, and deeper trust in God. They say in scorn of the church and in bitter hatred of me, that I have led her many times, and always led her astray. Since I sat for the first time in her great council, twenty-three General Assemblies have been held, and nearly as many years have passed away. I have been present at nearly all of those Assemblies, and have been many times a member of them. Those twenty-three Assemblies have formed a great era. Those twenty-three years

* The author of this Address deems it due to all concerned, to state distinctly what follows: He had not the smallest idea, when he wrote this Address, who was the author of the atrocious publications made in the names of the Board of Directors, and Board of Trustees, of the Seminary at New Albany. About the time of the delivery of the Address, and of its being sent off to be printed, he heard, with great astonishment, the name of a Minister of the Gospel, with whom he had never had any relations, except to confer benefits on him, connected with those publications. At present he is left as he supposes, without any room to doubt, that the Rev. E. D. McMASTER, D. D., is the author of those publications, and chiefly responsible, in every way, for their contents, and their wide circulation. The sole object of this note, is to state the foregoing facts, and to add, that in the full belief that Dr. McMaster stands related to the New Albany publications, as above set forth, the author of this Address, sees nothing that he can mitigate in his mode of treating his slanderers, and considers it unnecessary to add, as he justly might, expressions of personal contempt and scorn.

have constituted an eventful period. Is there no moral in the story of those years and those Assemblies? Remember what we were; survey what we have become; reflect on what we have achieved; consider the trials and dangers through which we have passed; ponder the means which we have employed. Is there no moral taught us, by all this? Now look around, and look before us. Are there no more dangers to be incurred; no more toils to be endured; no more triumphs to be achieved; no more recompense to be won? Oh! that I were worthy to be heard, and that my voice could reach every heart throughout our borders! How would I lift it up in passionate entreaties, that the church would rouse herself up and lay hold on God. Not in this enterprise, nor in that; not in this place, nor in the other; but in every thing and in every place—the moral of her history, so far as I have acted in it, and the absolute sum of all my poor endeavors on her behalf, may alike be expressed in a single word. What has she ever gained by distrusting God? What has she ever lost, by heroic faith? In her darkest as well as in her proudest day—alike when patient counsel alone could save her, as when vehement effort was her only stay—equally when her duty was to suffer all, as when it was to dare all: this has been at once her safety and her renown, that she saw she could gain nothing by distrusting God, that she felt she could lose nothing by heroic faith. And while she thus sees and thus feels, God will be in the midst of her, for her defence, for her refuge, and for her exceeding great reward; when she encamps, Jehovah dwelling, as with Israel of old, amongst the thousands of his people, and when she sets forward, Jehovah rising up to scatter all her enemies, and put to flight them that hate her.

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BY

EDWARD P. HUMPHREY, D. D.

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DISCOURSE.

The department of instruction, which I am required to sustain in our Theological Seminary, is styled the Professorship of Biblical and Ecclesiastical History. The distinction taken between these two branches of learning rests, I presume, on the sources from which they spring. Biblical History, is derived from the sacred Scriptures; Ecclesiastical History is derived from uninspired historical documents. The former records the development of the church of God in the two dispensations, the Patriarchal and the Levitical, through which it has passed; the latter describes its progress during that under which we live, the ministration of the Spirit. The two, taken together, comprehend the whole history of the church since the world began.

It were difficult to prescribe limits to the inquiries falling into this department. The time through which Church History runs is now six thousand years. The territory over which it ranges is the whole habitable globe. It weaves into its narrative every important incident which has occurred in the career of nearly two hundred generations. The societies, whose affairs it investigates, are all the kingdoms of remote antiquity; the great monarchies of central and eastern Asia; the two empires of the early christian era; the Mohammedan dynasty; all the modern dominions, imperial and republican; and in brief, every historical race which has flourished on earth. This branch of history connects itself, also, with the philosophies which have, from time to time, established themselves in the convictions of mankind, with the various sciences

which have been pursued, with the manners and customs which have prevailed, with all the occupations of men, even agriculture, navigation, and the arts; and with whatever has, at any period, or in any land lent a charm to the worship of God in its purity or its corruptions, even poetry, eloquence, music, painting, and statuary. And, further yet, since this history is a record of God's Providence over that which involves at once his eternal glory, and our eternal welfare, it identifies itself with his far-reaching purposes, his immutable will, his adorable perfections, and his almighty power. To explore this vast field of inquiry, and to conduct the researches therein, of our candidates for the ministry, is the work set before me. I will say nothing more of its difficulty nor of my insufficiency for it. The only apology, which I can offer to myself or to my fellow men for adventuring on so high an enterprise, is the profound conviction that I am providentially shut up thereunto; and accordingly, I am here, at the appointed time and place, ready to attempt what is required of me, humbly invoking the divine blessing and the indulgence of my brethren in the Lord.

It will be proper, perhaps, on this occasion, to consider, with some care, the proper method of church history. Since, however, each branch of the science requires a method adapted to its own nature and the sources from which it is derived, and since it would not be right to trespass on your patience with a discussion of the subject in both of its parts, I purpose to limit this discourse to the method of Ecclesiastical, as distinguished from Biblical History. Now the method for which we are to seek will be determined by the views we take of this history, in the first place, as to the matter of it; next, as to the form in which its materials will be most useful to the preacher; and lastly, as to the intellectual states which should be brought to the study. To these three particulars, therefore, I shall reduce all that I have to say.

It is a fundamental idea, that History, as to the matter of it, is a collection of facts. Neither philosophy, nor doctrine, nor theory, nor hypothesis, but fact is the subject matter of this de-

partment. It does, indeed, involve a strict inquiry into the causes and effects and relations of events; it admits of speculation and discussion, and the largest discourse of reason looking before and after; it investigates philosophy, systematic theology, political science, and even the useful and ornamental arts; yet its essential characteristic elements consist in what has been spoken, done and suffered, as touching the church of God. It does not, as its primary object, inquire what is true in religion, but what progress that truth has made in the world. It will not settle the doctrine of the trinity, but it will inform us what Arius and Athanasius taught respecting it, and through what controversy in the schools of Alexandria, and in the council hall at Nice, and through what over-ruling Providences in the world, the faith of the church in the Lord Jesus, as God manifest in the flesh, was conclusively established. Nor will our science discuss the question whether the prelacy exists in the church, by right divine; but it will describe the origin and progress of that wide spread delusion. Nor does it determine whether the primacy of Peter, and his pretended successors at Rome, is laid either in the Scriptures or in the constitution of the church, as that is divinely revealed, but it traces the historical development of that usurpation of God's prerogatives and that despotism over man's conscience, at once a blasphemy and a conspiracy. It is therefore a fundamental idea in this department that we are to deal with facts—*facta*—things done; to trace the course of events; to ascertain what man has attempted to do, and what God has enabled or permitted him to accomplish in the progress of the church.

This idea indicates the surpassing value of the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles, as text books in this department. Considered as historical documents, merely, the information which they communicate is of the highest importance. They relate the planting of the Christian church and its history, for the first thirty-five years of its existence. The wonderful out-pouring of the Holy Ghost, sealing our dispensation, as the ministration of the Spirit, is described. The doctrines preached on that

occasion, together with the directions given by the apostles to those who asked what they should do to be saved, are recorded. These books, moreover, inform us into the gradual development of the church state on earth ; the principles which enter into its fundamental law ; its interior organization ; its relation to the secular power ; its officers ; its councils ; the duties of its presbyters ruling and teaching ; and the prerogatives of its members. And yet more, these writings put upon the primitive church its true aspect as a missionary society, expressly commissioned and required to preach the gospel to every creature ; supplied with miraculous powers ; armed with forces divine ; and striving to the very uttermost to fulfil its great offices.

But the historical value of these writings lies, also, in their authenticity. We may rely on the books themselves as genuine, their text having been neither mutilated nor interpolated, and upon their statements as unquestionably true. It is remarkable what obscurity rests on the history of the primitive church, so soon as we leave the sphere of light supplied by the scriptures. We have, it is true, what purport to be the writings of five authors, styled the Apostolical Fathers, who are said to have been the immediate disciples of the Apostles. But of all the works ascribed to Clement of Rome, only one is generally accepted as genuine, and the text of that seems to have been corrupted. Fifteen epistles are attributed to Ignatius. Eight of these are spurious, and of the remaining seven, one is doubtful and the others have been grossly interpolated. A single epistle only bears the name of Polycarp, and the genuineness of that is disputed by high authority. The composition ascribed to Barnabas may be genuine, but is of little historical value ; while the production of Hermas consists of imaginary and wearisome dialogue between celestial spirits, suggesting the alternative doubt whether it was forged in the name of Hermas, or whether Hermas himself was insane. In comparison with these spurious and mutilated, or if genuine, almost worthless documents, the Acts and writings of the Apostles assume a transcendent importance. We are sure of

them as genuine in all their pages, and authentic in all their statements. Their truthfulness was insured by divine inspiration; and the purity of their text has been secured by God's eternal Providence.

Assuming then, that the true idea of history, as to the matter of it, is a collection of facts, it seems indispensable that these should be reduced to some scientific order. Otherwise it were impossible, either to grasp the immense mass of material that has been accumulating during the course of centuries, or to subject that material to any practical uses. Mosheim, deservedly called the Father of modern Church History, assumes, as periods, the successive centuries of the christian era. Dividing the history of each century into two parts, he treats in one, the external, and in the other, the internal relations of the church. He disposes the external history into two chapters; in the first, recording the prosperous, and in the second, the adverse events of the church. To the internal relation of the subject he devotes, usually, five chapters; exhibiting the history of learning and science; of teachers and government; of theology; of rites and ceremonies; of heresies and scisms. The chief advantages of this method are accuracy and fulness of dates; complete catalogues of distinguished persons arranged contemporaneously; and the facility which it affords of surveying the entire condition of the church at particular periods: showing, for example, the relation, from century to century, between its doctrines, its forms of worship, its government, its spiritual life, and its spread or limitation in the world. It may, however, be objected to this arrangement, that the continuity of important events, some of which fall into one century, and others, into the succeeding period, is disturbed in the narrative. And, further, the arrangement itself wholly breaks down at the period of the Reformation, when the doctrines which had been condemned as heretical, were discovered to be divinely revealed, and when what was styled the church was found to be Antichrist. This change of position assumed by the whole subject, throws Mosheim's plan into confusion, indicating that the plan itself is radically defective. It is

proposed, therefore, by more modern scholars, to adjust the chronological divisions not to centuries, but to some grand epochs in the development of the subject. Gieseler, for example, proposes four periods. The first, to the time of Constantine, the development of the church under external oppression ; the second, till the beginning of the image controversies, the development of the church as the prevailing religion of the state ; the third, till the Reformation, the development of the Papacy prevailing over the state ; and the fourth, the development of Protestantism.

The student having adopted this, or some similar arrangement, and having thoroughly acquainted himself with the historical facts belonging to the several periods assumed, will be prepared to recast these materials into such forms as will contribute most to his professional advantage. This is the second particular involved in our general topic. It is the design of our Seminary, to educate men not for the pursuits of the chronologist, or the political or the religious philosopher, but for the ministry of the gospel. A thorough preparation for the work requires the candidate to comprehend the historical development of the church in all its relations. He should, therefore, pursue the subject after what may be called the topical method. The highest place should be given to the history of christian doctrine. He might well follow the arrangement adopted in our confession of faith, and trace out the history of each doctrine in its several branches, through all the controversies and corruptions and reformations which have prevailed. This work accomplished, the student should then acquaint himself, systematically, with the history of christian worship, through all the stages of ritualism, until its return to the primeval simplicity in which we, this day, serve the God of our fathers. Next the history of church government, should be traced from the presbytery of the Apostolical age through the presidency, prelacy, and papacy, until its reformation into its free and scriptural form. And, still further, the manifestations of the inner life of the church, its relations to the state, and its extension among the nations, should all be attentively considered.

We may be able, possibly, both to explain and recommend this method by two or three illustrations drawn from what has just been termed the highest branch of the science, the history of christian doctrine. The influence of philosophy on the dogmatic faith of the church shall furnish one of the proposed illustrations. We may take for an example, the doctrine concerning Christ, as it was affected by the Gnostic Philosophy. Now it is necessary to state that this philosophy proceeded as to one of its branches from an inquiry into the perplexed question of the origin of evil. It took its departure from the proposition, as a first truth, that the Divine Being was in no degree, not even the most remote, connected with the origin of sin. It denied that he even permitted its existence. But as it was impossible to doubt the fact of evil, some source must be assigned to it. This philosophy solved the problem by assuming that sin and all evils are properties of matter. But did not God create all things? The answer was, that matter is eternal. The inherent pravity and eternity of matter were, therefore, fundamental ideas in this philosophy. One irresistible conclusion from these premises was, that the God of the Jews, having been occupied in the construction of the world out of matter, was a wicked spirit. By another deduction, equally direct, the humanity of Christ was denied; for matter being inherently malignant, the incarnation of Christ would have constituted him a sinner. Accordingly, for many hundred years, one of the most wide-spread delusions, which ever afflicted the church, was the absolute denial that Christ came in the flesh. It was held that what seemed to be his body was a mere image—a phantom, an incorporeal vision. From this it followed that he did not, in reality, suffer death; and, still further, that he made no atonement for sin; and further yet, that the resurrection of his body, and of his saints, is a mere delusion. So fruitful in religious errors was this philosophy, that it was not until Gnosticism itself became obsolete that the errors were extirpated.

Another peculiarity of this system may be mentioned. In order to place the Divine Being at an immeasurable distance

from contact with matter, it was maintained that he reigned in spotless purity, in remote and inaccessible glory. From him it was taught, spiritual beings emanated partaking largely of his nature, but inferior to him. These emanations, or *Æons*, as they were styled, gave existence to others, yet inferior to the first; and so on in a long succession, each series or generation of *Æons* gradually degenerating. At last, widening out from the original uncreated centre and fountain of life, as circles widen upon the agitated waters of the lake, they passed the boundaries of the *Pleroma*, or the dwelling place of God, and came in contact with matter. One step further brings us face to face with Arianism. When Arius divulged his doctrine of Christ, as existing indeed from before the foundation of the world, but yet inferior to God and a creature of his power, he found a philosophy current which was ready to adopt his hypothesis. This philosophy, engrafting christianity upon itself, proclaimed Christ as one of its Emanations, or *Æons*, related more nearly or remotely to the Absolute God, according to whims of each particular inquirer. The false philosophy was wide spread in the convictions of mankind; and in it the error took deep root and filled the earth. The great Athanasius began his resistance to Arianism, by repudiating the Gnosticism, out of which it sprang. The controversy was settled as to the church, at the council of Nice; but the error itself did not cease out of the world until the philosophy was exploded. The heresy of the *Docetæ*, who denied the humanity of Christ, and the heresy of Arius, who denied his divinity, were the direct out-births of the Gnostic philosophy. They flourished and they perished together. Other delusions touching the same subject have prevailed and do yet afflict the souls of men, such as Sabellianism and Socinianism. But Arianism and Docetism, properly so called, have been obsolete with Gnosticism for nearly fourteen hundred years.

Whether this philosophy was prevalent in the age of the Apostles, may admit of a doubt. Without entering upon that question, we may presume at least that some of its fundamental ideas, were at that time obscurely working themselves out

in the minds of men. If this be so, then we can appreciate the reason, which led the Apostle Paul to lay such stress upon his warnings against “profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called;” “philosophy and vain deceit;” “vain words;” “the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” And if we may assume that the Apostle John detected, in his last days, the germs of the heresy which taught that the body of Christ was not real flesh and blood, but a phantom only, then his language takes the form of a prophecy as well as a warning: “Hereby know ye the spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ *is come in the flesh* is of God: and every spirit that confesseth *not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*, is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist whereof ye have heard, that it should come; and *even now already it is in the world.*”

The method of history now recommended, will also enable the student to trace the gradual but progressive settlement of our system of doctrine. It has been proposed, as is well known, to arrange under four grand divisions, the whole scheme of revealed religion. The first is theology, strictly so called, or the doctrine concerning God, his attributes, his mode of existence in trinity and in unity, the relations of the several persons in the Godhead to each other, the eternal generation of the Son, the procession of the Spirit, and whatever else falls into this general head. Now it is a remarkable circumstance that the controversies of the first three centuries of the christian era, related almost exclusively to this subject. The vastest stores of learning, the utmost wealth of genius and polemic skill were exhausted in that great contention. At last the council of Nice, having been summoned for the purpose, determined, for all time to come, the faith of the true catholic and universal church touching the divinity and humanity of Christ. We may adopt the maxim of the stern old Puritan, that “the decree of a general council hath just so much force, as there is force in the reason of it.” Yet so much force is there in the reason of the Nicine creed, that not only has the

doctrine affirmed been accepted by the whole church of God, but no important change has been made in the mode of stating the doctrine, from the fourth century, the period of the council, to the seventeenth, the period of the Westminster Assembly. And now in the last half of the nineteenth century, we are here to lay the foundation of a school which shall teach the same doctrine, in almost the same terms. For fifteen hundred years, the faith of Athanasius and his compeers concerning the Son of God, has been the settled faith of the church. It has been often assailed, but never shaken. It has been denied ; just as the inspiration of the scriptures has been disputed. But in each instance he who disputes the faith of the church takes his place, as to that, with the infidel. Within the church the question was settled, ages ago for all the ages to come, until the Lord Jesus shall himself appear to vindicate, by the brightness of his coming, the testimony of all his faithful servants.

Another department of divine knowledge contemplates the truth respecting man. It includes the whole christian doctrine of sin, original and actual ; the guilt of the first man's first sin ; the imputation thereof to his posterity ; man's actual condition as a sinner, the immedicable disease and the irremediable ruin of human nature ; and all the topics of religious inquiry which spring from these germinant centers. This department it is proposed to call anthropology. Now historical theology informs us, that about the time when the doctrine concerning Christ was settled, the one concerning man was taken under public discussion. This is not the place to report the great debate between Augustine and Pelagius and their several parties. But in the course of one hundred years the question was settled, partly by the authoritative decree of the council of Carthage condemning Pelagianism, but chiefly by the spirit of God enlightening his people into the knowledge of the truth. The testimony of the divine word was thoroughly sifted, the doctrine established by it ascertained, that doctrine reduced to sharply defined propositions, these propositions traced to their logical conclusions, and then those conclusions no less that the

propositions from which they were drawn, tried by the infallible word. Now we greatly err, when we treat the main questions touching sin in such manner as to indicate that we ourselves regard them as debatable and unsettled ; and as if the truth now depended on our own skill in expounding the scriptures. It is not so. The decisive battle was fought many hundred years since. Then the victory was won. Then the issue was determined for all ages. Our modern controversies are but rehearsals of the original strife ; as if the battle of Marston Moor should be repeated by a few regiments of holiday troops, for the amusement of the people, or for their own improvement in military strategy. We should manage this controversy, whenever it is thrust upon us, with the lofty spirit of men who contend for what has belonged, from time immemorial, to them and to their fathers ; and not in the hesitating temper of him who is striving to gain possession of a territory long and honestly disputed. If we carry the day over our adversaries, let us not be unduly exalted ; for we have only fought over an old battle, with well tried weapons, on a vantage ground, where it has been won a hundred times. If we seem, in the estimation of the bystanders, to be defeated, let us take courage again, as we remember that we have lost only an inconsequential skirmish, or at most that it is the advocate and not the truth that has been beaten. The truth was long ago established on foundations, as immovable as the mountains that are about Jerusalem.

The third division of sacred science treats of the way of salvation. The debate here lies between those who maintain the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and those who contend for the idea of justification by the sacraments ; which is the point at issue betwixt Romanism and Christianity. In historical theology, we say that this point was conclusively settled at the period of the Reformation. The violent controversies, which sprung up at that time, did not turn, in any degree, on the mode of the divine existence, nor on the sinful character of man, nor on the condemnation that rests upon him by reason of sin, nor upon the nature of sin itself. Another issue was

joined ; and this was, precisely, the doctrine of justification. The Protestants held that man was justified by faith alone. The Romanists taught that this justification is by the sacraments rightly received ; rightly administered by a priesthood duly ordained ; that ordination being in the succession of the Roman Church. The infinite debates of that era, and the immense libraries of polemic theology created then, are reducible, as to their subject matter, to this single doctrine of justification, its meritorious ground, the methods of its communication to men, and its effects. The whole subject was settled, finally, at that time, and the Protestant doctrine of justification is, just as clearly and essentially, an article of the true church as the idea of the divine existence.

The last of these four great heads of christian doctrine, is in a position of greater uncertainty. This relates to the church, its nature and attributes, its marks and notes, its constitution, officers, powers, prerogatives and whatever pertains thereto. These are subjects of present inquiry and discussion. The faith of the people of God is quite unsettled as to several of these particulars. Indeed, the question, what is the church ? divides the opinions of eminent men in every denomination. It is certain that there is not an agreement in even our own communion upon questions which go to the very core of the subject. Some of our most learned divines, for example, maintain the validity of Popish baptism, teaching not only that this is christian baptism, but that the Romish establishment is a part of the visible church of Christ. It may appear singular that brethren who are agreed in holding, as of faith, that the Pope is Anti-Christ, should yet differ as to whether the body of which he is the head, and to which his headship is claimed to be essential, is any part of Christ's church ; and as to whether its sacraments are Christ's ordinances. Such, nevertheless, is the divided state of sentiment among us ; and it may serve to show that the doctrine of the church is not yet conclusively settled. In this particular, historical theology can do no more than report the progress of the discussion to the present time, and then clearly state the questions that are still at

issue. But, as we have seen, the higher truths of revelation, those which relate to the Blessed God our Saviour, the lost estate of man, and the way of salvation, are unchangeably established. It is the province of ecclesiastical history to trace out, step by step, the processes through which these great results have been reached.

The method now under reflection, will likewise exhibit to the student, the history of our doctrinal standards. Historical theology reveals, most clearly, the fact that our confession and catechism owe their excellencies not to the divines assembled at Westminster, nor to their contemporaries, but to the labors of many generations of men, mighty in the scriptures. The light was on one day created and it shone, with rays diffused, in the newly made firmament and over all the earth and waters, and on another day those scattered beams were assembled, in the burning orbit of the sun. In like manner the truths of the gospel were slowly wrought out, one by one, and then, at last, gathered upon the luminous pages of our confession. The real history of this document, is the history of the church itself. Let us find an example of what we mean in the Christology of our standards. After two centuries of debate, it was determined in the Nicene council that, according to the scriptures, the Lord Jesus was divine and that he was incarnate and became man. Thus these two capital points were settled. Then it was asked whether a human soul formed a necessary part of the humanity of Christ. Apollinaris, a celebrated bishop of Laodicea taught that the higher reason of man could be of no use to him, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. Through the labors of Athanasius and his compeers it became the received doctrine of the church that Christ possessed a perfect human nature including a rational soul. The Westminster divines simply adopted the result of this discussion into that answer of the two catchisms which ascribes to Christ "a reasonable soul." In the following century, Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, uttered the opinion, that in Christ there were two distinct persons as well as two distinct natures. Cyrill, patriarch of

Alexandria maintained the contrary opinion, and Nestorius was condemned in the council of Ephesus. Now we find the traces of this famous controversy in the chapter of our confession which affirms that the two distinct and perfect natures of Christ "were inseparately joined together." A few years afterwards, by a reaction from Nestorianism, a powerful party arose which maintained that the two natures of Christ were blended into one, the divine having absorbed the human. This error was condemned in the council of Calcedon; and it furnished to our confession, the idea that the two natures were united in Christ "without conversion, composition or confusion." Then the Monophysites raised the question whether Christ possessed a corruptible or incorruptible body, bequeathing to our standards the doctrine that Christ "took a true body, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof." Thus, gradually, and one by one, the truths revealed in the word of God respecting the person of the Redeemer, were discovered by learned men, laboring from age to age in the work, until nothing remained to be done, but to combine into a single comprehensive chapter all these discovered and established ideas. What is true of this head of doctrine is true of all. Point by point, doctrine by doctrine, conclusion by conclusion was wrought out in the lapse of centuries, until the materials were prepared for their final adjustment into one complete confession of the faith of the church. No long debates were needful in the Westminster Assembly. These had been heard and finished at Nice, Carthage, Ephesus, Calcedon, Constantino-ple and Antioch. The timbers and stones of Solomon's temple were hewn in the distant mountains; so that there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was building. The truths of the Bible had been thoroughly elaborated in other lands and in other councils of the church. It was needful only to determine the relations of some of the few doctrines, to reduce a few of them to exact and intelligible terms, and then to adjust them all into a single document. No strife of tongues or war of words could find place in such a deliberation.

This method of history, moreover, reveals the origin of the terminology employed in our standards. A memorable incident in the Nicene council, as related by Maimbourg, may serve as an illustration of this statement. That body gave much attention, not only to the doctrine that was to be affirmed, but to the terms in which it should be stated. The Arian party were willing to adopt a creed affirming that the Word was God and of God, and the perfect image of the Father ; because these expressions might apply in some sense to man, and so could be explained in their favor, while they could also be received by the orthodox. The council perceiving the evasion, sought out some new expression which would admit of no equivocation whatever. At last it was remembered that a letter of one of the Arian party contained these words: "If we say that the Son of God is uncreated, from that itself we confess that he is CONSUBSTANTIAL (Homoousion) with the Father." The council seized upon the word "consubstantial" to express their own meaning ; for the term, by the consent of the Arians themselves, admitted of no double sense, but conveyed unequivocally this idea and none other, that the Son was of the same substance with the Father. The Arians resisted to the utmost, the use of the term. They proposed subsequently, to compromise on the word Homoiousion, "similar in substance." But the orthodox were immovable. They perceived that the resistance made to the use of the former term fixed, more unalterably, its precise signification, and vindicated the wisdom of adhering to it, while the expression proposed as a substitute abandoned the truth : for Christ is not similar, but the same in substance, with the Father. Mr. Gibbon derides "the furious contests which the difference of a single diphthong excited between the Homoousians and Homoiousians." The remark may fulfil the conditions of a sneer, but for the reason of the case he might as well have added that all the conflicts between Christ and Antichrist are reducible to a single preposition. The original word, however, was resolutely adhered to ; it passed into nearly all the orthodox creeds of succeeding centuries ; and the Westminster Assembly did not hesitate to

employ its equivalent phrase, "the same in substance," to express one of the most subtle but important ideas in the doctrine of Christ. The pages of ecclesiastical history are full of such illustrations. The student cannot fail to perceive how intimately the true doctrine is identified with the terms in which it is conveyed. It is a conclusion, long ago foregone, that if you would retain your ancient faith you must cleave also to your ancient nomenclature. If you mean to defend every one of your doctrines, you must not give up any one of your terms. The apostle himself counsels us to "hold fast the form of sound words." In theology words are things. Here the gem goes with the setting, the painting with the canvass, the statue with the costume. We may not exalt a word above a truth; neither may we forget that "a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

The method of history now proposed exhibits the comprehensiveness of our symbols of faith, as compared with the preceding christian documents. The most venerable of the ancient creeds, however admirable as statements of particular doctrines are yet palpably deficient in completeness. So far from exhausting the science of theology, they do not profess to touch some of its most important heads. The apostle's creed, so called, is included among our standards. Yet this celebrated formulary, although containing little else than the doctrine concerning Christ, makes no allusion not even the most remote to the atonement by his death, nor to justification by faith in his finished righteousness. History, in explanation of this circumstance, informs us, that at the time when this creed was framed, there was no controversy in the church touching justification or the atonement. All debate turned then on the questions, whether Christ had a real body; whether he was actually born, crucified, and slain. Accordingly the creed contains, in its brief compass, no less than five statements predicated of his humanity. Although adapted to its particular design and most orthodox as to the matter then in dispute, it is yet far from being complete as a symbol for all ages. It is simply absurd to affirm that it contains all that is

essential in the faith of the church. It was intended, by its framers, for no such purpose, but to meet existing and flagrant errors. The same is true of the creeds of Nice and Constanti-
nople, the Athenasian creed, those of Irenæus, Tertullian Origen and the Apostolical constitutions. In a less degree, the documents of modern dates, such as the Lambeth Articles, the XXXIX articles, and the judgment of the Synod of Dort are liable to the same criticism. They are, to their own extent, most excellent and scriptural. But they do not contain explicit and unequivocal statements of certain doctrines; or they omit entirely some important heads of theology. But the Westminster standards survey the entire field of divine revelation, and aim at giving the whole mind of the Spirit touching the whole faith of the church.

I will indicate another point of view from which the history of christian doctrine casts light upon our confession. It is an armory stocked with weapons for the defence of the truth. He who has not attended minutely to the subject cannot appreciate the polemic skill with which our faith is stated. Every conceivable objection is anticipated, and its force is broken by some word or clause. Every old controversy into which the truth has been drawn is remembered and provision is made against the day of its renewal. Upon abstruse and recondite topics such as free-will, predestination and the divine decrees, the supposed sense of the Word is unequivocally and boldly stated; yet the statement is surrounded with guards and walls like a defended city. He who would espouse its cause should see to it that he make no incautious statement of the doctrine or any part of it at variance with the standards. He who would assail it, must consider well his objections and enquire whether those objections have not been completely forestalled by the terms in which the doctrine is conveyed or by some limitation imposed upon them. Let him who is in the city not depart out of it; and let him who would take it by force, first go round about it, tell the towers thereof and mark well its bulwarks. Those old walls were built in troublous times. They went up in the presence of hosts of enemies. Of those who labored

at them, the half wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears and the shields. The defences were all proved as they were built, and they are not to be easily overthrown. If at any time, therefore, one of our brethren have occasion to engage in controversy with our adversaries, whoever they may be, Popish, Prelatical, Armenian, Antinomian or Socinian, let him state his propositions in the language of our formularies ; let him take up his positions on the ground staked out for him there, and he will be astonished to behold what walls of strength rise up around him and what mighty weapons are put into his hands. The definition of the church contained in the twenty-fifth chapter of our confession, pulls down into the dust the whole huge and gorgeous temple of Popery, as effectually as the Hebrew giant demolished the temple of Dagon when he bowed himself upon its pillars. He who will begin his labors in the Popish controversy—in some of its phases the great controversy of the day—by planting himself upon that simple description of the church, if he will resolutely adhere to it and fight out the whole battle on that vantage ground, may defy the whole hierarchy on earth from Oxford to Rome. These articles of faith, these definitions and distinctions and limitations and explanations remind us of a collection of ancient British armor. This is the cuirass in which Richard defeated the Saladin and rescued the holy city from the infidel. That shield, battered but not broken, was borne in the battle of Banockburn. That spear did good service at Flodden Field ; and this broad-sword clove through helmet and mail at Cressy and Halidon Hill. We may safely trust this spiritual armor of ours, if indeed we have the strength to bear it into the field. It girds the limbs with irresistible might. It realizes the sentiment of the sacred lyric ;

“ These weapons of our holy war
Of what almighty force they are.”

It were easy to indicate at still greater length the instruction to be gathered from the history of theology. The relations between doctrine and modes of worship are shown historically in the circumstance that the evangelical system resting on the

idea of justification by faith, has been uniformly associated with simple and scriptural forms of worship ; but the opposite system, resting on the idea of justification by the sacraments, has ever established for its disciples the worship of pomp and sense. The worship of the Kirk springs from the theology of Westminster, and the ritual of Rome from the theology of Trent. The relations between the doctrine and the government of the church are equally intimate. The evangelical system as an historical fact, has identified itself with a free church government ; while sacramentalism in doctrine shows an elective affinity for Popery in discipline. Not less striking is the connection between the dogmatic faith of the church and its inner spiritual life, on the one hand, and its missionary undertakings on the other. From all these particulars, we might derive illustrations of both the nature and advantages of the topical method of ecclesiastical history.

But the limits prescribed to this discourse require me to proceed without delay to its concluding topic. Now some of the intellectual states appropriate to this department of knowledge, are indicated by the circumstance already mentioned, that history as to the matter of it, is a collection of facts. The student should therefore, discipline his mind, in the first place to the love of the truth ; and next, to all the processes of thought, inquiry and analysis, which enter into the idea of a severe induction. He should make himself acquainted with the vereties of the subject. To this end he should investigate its sources with the ardor of the advocate and the sobriety of the judge. Heedless of all consequences as to the bearing of his researches on his own cherished opinions, or on those of others, he should seek for the truth, by ascending to its higher head-springs. He should approach the final results of his inquiries with cautious, patient thought, remembering that he is seeking for that which when found is to be believed ; and he that believeth should not make haste. When at last, he has reached the truth, let him gaze with faith as well as wonder on its unveiled majesty ; let him receive its dictates with a fixed and absolute conviction ; and then let him act on that conviction with an unwavering

steadfastness ; knowing this, that belief in the simple uncorrupted truth is ever more the law of the spirit of life.

Still further, it is indispensable, that the student in history enter into a true sympathy, a living communion with the periods which he investigates. A great biblical scholar has said, that he who would interpret the prophets in the Old Testament and the Apocalypse in the New Testament must steep himself in Orientalism. In like manner if we would comprehend the past we must allow it to enter into our spheres of thought, living its peculiar life, assuming its own antiquated forms, and robed in its now faded garments. We have spoken of the council of Nice. We may not content ourselves with the chronology of that assembly, the names of its most celebrated members, the Greek text of its creed and of its decrees. We must endeavor to reproduce the whole scene as it passed over its generation.

The Roman Empire, of the age of Constantine, must reestablish itself in our consciousness. We must surround ourselves both with the tokens of its grandeur, and with the signs of its rapid decline, which have been accumulating for the space of three hundred years. Then a greater empire than that of Rome, the kingdom of Christ on earth, must display to us its insignia. It has passed through its period of primeval purity, at once the victim of remorseless persecution, and the medium of a divine and saving power ; it has won possession of the world, but it is falling into degeneracy and is nearly ready to mount the imperial throne. Herod in mockery put the purple robe upon the Saviour ; now Constantine is about to put that robe in honor upon the church. But in each instance the purple is the prelude of a crucifixion ; first that of the master, then that of his cause. We must survey also, the great christian capitals, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, Carthage and Rome, visit their episcopal palaces, and observe the painful contrast between the carnal pomp of the hierarchs and the humility of the fishermen of Galilee, of whom these pretended to be the successors. But in the ranks of the inferior clergy we shall find here and there one like the youthful Athanasius,

in whom are revived not a few of the apostolical virtues. The image of the emperor Constantine also will rise before us ; his majestic person, his graceful mein, his courage, his vigorous understanding, his resolute will, together with his pride, voluptuousness and prodigality—his character, the natural product of an era, in which were strangely mingled the elements of barbarism and christian civilization. The prevailing philosophy of the day must likewise be investigated in its origin, dogmas and practical tendencies ; and we must see how this philosophy lay compacted beneath all the turbulent waters of religious and political excitement, and furnished a holding ground in which the errors of the Arians and the Docetæ could firmly anchor.

We must witness the assembling of the council at Nice. Let that ancient city rise from its ruins ; Let the beautiful plains of Bythinia assume their pristine beauty ; and the neighboring lake reflect again the walls of the imperial palace. Three hundred and eighteen bishops with the most learned of their inferior clergy, together with a multitude of others, assembled in the early summer of the year 325. They came from the most distant parts of the empire. The historian saw in the council a reproduction of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, when devout men were gathered from every nation under heaven. Syrians and Cilicians were there, together with Phœnicians, Arabians, Thebans and Libyans, Persians and Scythians. Pontus, Galatia, and Pamphylia, Capadocia, Asia and Phrygia furnished their most distinguished prelates. They brought with them strange costumes and discordant tongues, but a true faith, also, in the divinity of the Lord Jesus. Among them were not only the most celebrated bishops of the day, but the patriarchs from Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem. There were present also not a few of the noble army of confessors. Some were there who afterwards entered through martyrdom into the joy of the Lord. Others present were always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in their bodies. A venerable servant of Christ was there from Egypt, one of whose eyes

had been plucked out in the persecution of Maximian. Another had lost, in that persecution, a left arm and a right eye. One went thither from the banks of the Euphrates, whose hands had been branded with hot irons; and another from Cyprus, who had suffered the fury of the tyrant in the loss of an eye and a leg. These and many others were there, whose wounds were in testimony that they counted it all joy to enter halt and maimed into life eternal.

We should, as far as possible, reproduce the debates in council. On the one side was the subtle and equivocating Arius. On the other Athanasius, then only a youth in age and a deacon in office, filled the whole council with admiration for the eloquence and learning with which he vindicated the truth. At length the day arrived when the questions at issue were to be determined in the presence of the emperor. He entered the hall preceded by a procession of courtiers and the sound of the trumpet. He wore the Roman purple, the imperial mantle, the sash of silk embroidered with gold and sparkling with diamonds. The assembled Fathers rose to their feet; for he seemed, says Eusebius, like "some heavenly messenger of God." His chair was placed lower than the rest as a token of honor to the church; but it was made of gold and set by itself in the upper end of the hall, to show what was due to his royal dignity. He would not sit down until desired to do so by the council in deference to its ecclesiastical authority; but he sat down first and then commanded the Bishops to be seated to signify withal that he was their master. The ceremonies proceeded. The patriarch of Antioch made an elaborate oration. The emperor replied speaking in Latin to sustain the dignity of the empire, and commanding a secretary to read his address in Greek for the satisfaction of the assembly. Then they came to the final decision; and the Lord Jesus was declared by acclamations of above three hundred bishops to be the Son of God, "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God." The emperor heard their judgment with great joy, and instantly ordered Arius to be banished and the Bishops who refused to unite in his condemnation, to be

deposed. Then followed public prayers for the emperor, and after them public games, banquets, combats and diversions. The council was closed with a banquet in the imperial palace, and not one of the Bishops excused himself on account either of his age or the austerity of his life. They passed through ranks of guards, entered the royal apartments, were entertained by the emperor himself at sumptuous tables, and departed laden with magnificent presents. We may sympathise with the exultation of the Fathers when they exchanged the dangers of Maximian for the palace of Constantine. We may even excuse the bishop of Caserea who saw in this strange and incongruous scene a lively image of Christ's kingdom. But he who first enters into the spirit of true religion and then contemplates this spectacle, will see in it a medley of light and darkness, representing most faithfully an age which was the product at once of the primeval but declining purity and power of christianity and of the corruption and pride of lingering barbarism. A love for the truth was mingled with the spirit of the world. The Cross was set side by side with the Labarum. A military chief, who had not even humbled himself to receive christian baptism, was invited to settle the faith of the disciples in the Son of God. Solemn prayers preceded the old pagan games. An imperial revel celebrated the adoption of a holy creed.

With what gratitude to God do we turn from this imposing, but mournful spectacle, to that which is now passing before us! We have a true gospel, a pure church and a free commonwealth. Here are the sacred scriptures. Here is our confession of faith, summing up the labors of God's people, through all past ages, in the interpretation of his Word. Here is the assembly of his saints, in the midst of which we honor the Son even as we honor the Father. And here is a venerable Synod of the church, a council composed not of prelates and patriarchs after the commandments of men, but of teaching and ruling Presbyters according to the ordinance of God. Its records are adorned by the names of Rice, and Campbell, and Nelson, and Cameron, and Blythe, and Blackburn, and Wilson—men

mighty in the scriptures, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. Herein is that saying true, one soweth and another reapeth. Other men labored and we have entered into their labors. And here and now, we accomplish at last, the desire of their hearts, and finish the work of their hands, while we lay in the bosom of this Synod, the foundations of a school of sacred learning.

Now, therefore arise, O LORD GOD, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength ; let thy priests, O LORD GOD, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness !

DANVILLE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

This institution was organized under the control of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, by the inauguration of two of its Professors, on the 13th of October, 1853.

Its first session is in progress, under most favorable auspices, and will continue till the 10th of May, 1854. Its second session will commence at such period of the autumn of 1854, as may be designated in the plan for its permanent management, to be adopted by the next General Assembly.

Students are permitted to enter the institution at any part of the course.

Danville is accessible from all directions, by public conveyances, on very fine roads. It is a beautiful town containing about two thousand inhabitants, situated in one of the finest regions of the West, and affording every facility for the successful prosecution of the objects of the Theological Seminary established there:

Students can obtain all the necessary comforts and conveniences of living quite as cheap and good, it is believed, at this place, as at any other, where a similar institution exists. No worthy young man in indigent circumstances, who has the ministry in view, in our church, need hesitate for want of means. All such will be taken care of. Those who desire it can enjoy *gratuitously* any advantages they need from the flourishing College, established in this place nearly thirty years ago by the Synod of Kentucky, and now occupying the highest rank.

The officers of the Board of Directors, at present, are

REV. JOHN T. EDGAR, D.D., Nashville, Tenn., President.
REV. R. C. GRUNDY, D.D., Maysville, Ky., 1st Vice President.
REV. JAMES COE, Hopkinsville, Ohio, 2d Vice President.
REV. S. J. BAIRD, Batesville, Arkansas, Secretary.

The Instructors in the Seminary, at present, are

REV. ROBERT J. BRECKINRIDGE, Professor of Theology, &c.
REV. EDWARD P. HUMPHREY, Professor of Church History, &c.
REV. JOSEPH G. REASER, Instructor in Sacred Languages, &c.

A full course of instruction is given by them.

It is expected that the next General Assembly will elect two additional Professors.

Efforts are now being made to raise in Kentucky and Tennessee One Hundred Thousand Dollars to endow the four chairs of the Seminary; and the success of the effort is not doubted by the friends of the institution. Besides that, at least Fifty Thousand Dollars more will be required from the whole Presbyterian Church, to erect buildings, purchase a library, &c. In the mean time, the public accommodations afforded by the buildings of Centre College are ample, and the Trustees of that College, and the Synod of Kentucky, have put them at the disposal of the Seminary,—so far as the use of them will not interfere with the regular duties of the College itself.

Besides the supposed necessity of this publication, as an *advertisement*, it is desired that the friends of this great undertaking will consider it in the light of a *personal appeal* to each one of them. The Assembly's Committee on the endowment of the Seminary, and the various agents temporary and permanent of it, and various church courts, will, no doubt, do their whole duty; but they who love and are willing to advance so good a cause need not wait on them; but let each be ready to go before another in doing liberally and spontaneously, as many have already done their portion thereof.