

THREE CHANGES IN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS.

AN

INAGURAL ADDRESS

DELEVERED BEFORE

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

OF

THE FURMAN UNIVERSITY,

THE NIGHT BEFORE

THE ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT, JULY 31, 1856,

BY

JAMES P. BOYCE,
PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC AND POLEMIC THEOLOGY.

“Read not to contradict and refute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider.”—LORD BACON.

GREENVILLE, S. C.:
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The Center for Theological Research
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Fort Worth, Texas
Malcolm B. Yarnell, III, Director

REV. JAMES P. BOYCE,

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Furman University, on the 31st of July, the undersigned were appointed a Committee to request of you for publication your Inaugural Address, delivered on the evening previous. In performing this duty, allow us to express the hope that you will comply with the request.

Affectionately and respectfully yours,

B. C. PRESSLEY,
T. B. ROBERTS,
C. J. ELFORD,
R. G. EDWARDS,
E. T. WINKLER,

COMMITTEE.

AUGUST 1st, 1856.

ADDRESS.

Gentlemen of the Board of Trustees of the Furman University:

I congratulate myself that I address to-night a body of men pledged to the interests of Theological Education and that I do it in the existence of our present relations and in the discharge of the duty assigned me. Otherwise, to those who judge so superficially as to merge the end and the means, and to make the opponent of the latter the enemy of the former, it might appear from the sentiments I shall utter that I am opposed to the thorough training and education of the Christian Ministry. The circumstances however under which we have gathered together this evening, indicate at once the deep interest felt by you and by myself in the cause of Theological Education, and that whatever sentiments may be spoken by me or heard with approbation by you, we hold the Education of the Ministry a matter of the first importance to the Churches of Christ.

Indeed, did we think otherwise, we could no longer justly stand forth as exponents in any sense of the opinions upon this subject which prevail in our denomination. The Baptists are unmistakably the friends of education, and the advocates of an Educated Ministry. Their twenty-four Colleges and ten Departments or Institutions for Theological instruction in this country, as well as the extent to which they have assisted in the establishment of general institutions, and of those under the control of other denominations, furnish sufficient testimony to the fact that they feel the value of education, and the importance, under God, of the means it affords for the better performance of the work of the Ministry. And rather would I that my tongue should cleave to the roof of my mouth than that I should say anything to-night which might justly be construed into dissent from an opinion so truly in accordance with the word of God and the enlightened sentiments of the age.

So far am I from entertaining such opinions that I would see the means of Theological Education increased, I would have the facilities for pursuing its studies opened to all who would embrace them, I would lead the strong men of our Ministry to feel that no position is equal in responsibility or usefulness to that of one devoted to this cause, and I would spread among our Churches such an earnest desire for Educated Ministers as would make them willing so to increase the support of the Ministry as to enable those, who are now forced from want of means to enter without the fullest preparation upon the active duties of the work, so far to anticipate the support they will receive, as to feel free to borrow the means by which their education may be completed.

I cannot perceive, however, how the most earnest desire for thorough Theological Education is inconsistent in any degree with the advocacy of the changes I propose, nor how can any scheme be regarded as unfavorable to that education, which, while it abates not the attainments urged upon all so far as practicable, seeks to provide such instruction as, so far from

throwing upon the Churches a mass of uneducated Ministers, will take the mass now uneducated and make them capable and efficient workmen for God.

The truth is, that the time has come at last when the sophistry of the objection here supposed will be easily detected. The mind of the whole denomination has been awakened to the want of success under which we have suffered in our past efforts, and the best intellects and hearts in all our Southern bounds are directed to the causes of our failure, and to the means by which success may be attained.

In the efforts to establish the Common Theological Institution, proposed as a remedy for the evil, I heartily concur. I do not think that the demand for Theological Education calls at present for more than one Institution. The experiments to be made in finally securing the best ends, will be experiments for the common good, and should be at the common expense. It is only by such a combination that we can secure the means by which to procure the best and ablest instructors afforded by our denomination throughout the world. And it is thus only that the scheme adopted will attract sufficient notice and sympathy to secure to it at once a trial adequate to test beyond doubt its value as a remedy for existing evils, and as a means of developing additional changes for the improvements of Theological Instruction.

The recollection of past efforts to create union among us upon this subject, leads many, however, to suppose that the present one will end in disappointment. I confess that many indications favor this opinion, and if they be verified, and this attempt at united efforts fail, nothing will remain for us but the hope that some one of our present Institutions may be able, single handed, to make the experiment for the whole, and to establish the true principles of Theological Education.

Indeed, gentlemen, since the Common Institution would only have greater facilities, and since the introduction of these changes, perhaps to the full extent at present necessary, will come within our power, why may we not make the experiment at once? The organization of the proposed Institution will take time, especially if the location of one of our present Colleges be not selected, and the amount of time during which it may yet be incumbent upon you to provide for the instruction of the Ministry, while it may not give opportunity for the fairest trial, especially under the circumstances of isolation in which the University stands, as the Institution of a single State, may yet be more than adequate to prove the entire practicability of the plan, and to secure the honor of its inception. And more than this—should it prove successful, the knowledge of the fact will be to the denomination at large a most powerful motive for selecting this location for the Common Institution.

It is on this account that in performing the duty assigned me, I find myself irresistibly forced from other subjects which might have been appropriate, and led to suggest to YOU THREE CHANGES IN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS, which would enable them to fulfill more adequately at least, if not completely, the hopes of their founders. These changes are intended to meet evils which, in one case by the many, in the others by the few, have been already experienced, and they are suggested as furnishing ample remedies for the existing evils.

The first evil to which I would apply a remedy, is one which has been universally experienced—which, more than anything else, has shaken the faith of many in the value of Theological Institutions, has originated the opposition which they have at any time awakened, and has caused the mourning and sorrow of those who, having laid their foundations, still continue to cluster around them. I refer to the failure of the Theological Institution to call forth an abundant Ministry for the Churches, and supply to it adequate instruction.

Whatever other purposes may have been intended to be accomplished, there can be no doubt that this has been the primary object of all our educational efforts. The University, over the interests of which you are called to preside, must for one at least be regarded as the growth of this single idea. From the very beginning of Baptist efforts for education in this state to the present moment, this has always been the mainspring of our movements. Looking back upon that band of worthies of whom but a few remain to counsel us by their wisdom, and to move us to self-abasement by their piety and zeal, in whose minds first originated the idea of the Furman Academy—and glancing along the ranks of all those who have stood by it in its darkest hours, often trembling with solicitude at the perils through which their youthful offspring had to pass, yet trusting in the God they served and sought to glorify—and inquiring of them, and of you, gentlemen, who now hold and exercise the sacred trusts of its guardians, the objects of all the efforts put forth, I hear but one overwhelming response—that we may have an abundance of able, sound, and faithful men to proclaim the Gospel of Christ, and “to feed the flocks over which the Holy Ghost shall make them overseers.” The University is the offspring of prayers to the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest. It is the method our best wisdom has devised to make, through the aid of his grace, of those whom he sends in answer to our prayers, “workmen that need not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth.”

It is mournful that we are forced so inevitably to the conclusion that these prayers have not yet been answered, and that these purposes not yet fulfilled. The Theological Seminary has not been a popular Institution. But few have sought its advantages. But few have been nurtured by the influences sent forth from it. And while our denomination has continued to increase, and our principles have annually been spreading more widely, it has been sensibly felt that whatever ministerial increase has accompanied, has been not only disproportionate to that of our membership, but has owed its origin in no respect to the influence of Theological Education.

And this seems to be the general law in the denomination. The complaint is not peculiar to our Institution. It seems to exist every where, despite all the efforts to counteract it which have been put forth; and not to be confined to Baptists, but to be the lamentation of all. You will see it in the organs of all the prominent denominations, and the cause of it is the subject of earnest inquiry. That, too, which seems to mark this state of affairs as peculiarly unnatural is, that so far from a diminution, there has been an actual increase in the causes to which, as natural means, we have usually looked for the development of the Ministry. The whitened harvests, the awakened activity of the Churches, the favorable reception given to the word of God, have never been more signally manifested. Never have been heard more piercing cries for the Gospel, than those with which Ethiopia accompanies her outstretched hands; never have been felt deeper longing for the coming of the kingdom of God, than are uttered by praying hearts throughout christendom; never has sin appeared to develop more fearful evils; never has “hydra headed error” so fully or so variously exalted herself; neither has God ever multiplied to so gracious an extent the means which he gives the Church as an aid to the Ministry not to diminish its labors, but to make them four-fold more abundant and an hundred-fold more valuable. The world seems ready, lying at the very door of the Christian Church, yet calling for laborious efforts to gather it in. Oh! were there ever a time when we would expect that God would answer the prayers of his Churches and over flood the land and the world with a Ministry adequate to uphold his cause in every locality, it should seem to be now—now, when the wealth of the Churches is sufficient to send the Gospel to every creature; now, when, in the art of printing, the Church has again received the gift of tongues; now, when the workings of God himself indicate his readiness to beget a nation in a day; now, when the multiplication a thousand fold of the laborers will still

leave an abundant work for each; but now, alas! now, when our Churches at home are not adequately supplied; when dark and destitute places are found in the most favored portions of our own land; when the Heathen are at our very doors, and the cry is help, help, and there is no help, because there are not laborers enough to meet the wants immediately around us.

There are serious questions presented to us here. To what are these things due? Have we not disregarded the laws which the Providence and Word of God have laid down for us? And does He not now chastise us by suffering our schemes to work out their natural results, that we, being left to ourselves, may see our folly and return to Him and to His ways, as the only means of strength!

In ascribing this evil for the most part to our Theological Institutions, I would not appear unmindful of other circumstances upon which an increase of the Ministry in our Churches depends. Never would I consent to lift my voice upon such a subject as this, without a distinct recognition of the sovereignty of God working his own will, and calling forth, according to that will, that many or the few with whose aid he will secure the blessing. Never could I proceed upon any assumption that would seem to take for granted that there is not the utmost need of more special awakening to devotion and piety in our Churches, and a more fervent utterance of prayer for the increase of the laborers. Neither would I have it supposed that all that the Theological Institution can effect will be fully adequate to our wants, while our Pastors neglect to search out and encourage the useful gifts which God has bestowed upon the members of their Churches, or the Churches themselves neglect the law of God which provides an adequate support for the Ministry. But while due prominence is given to all of these circumstances, it yet appears that the chief cause is to be found in our departure from the way which God has marked out for us, and our failure to make provision for the education of such a Ministry as He designs to send forth and honor.

Permit me to ask what has been the prominent idea at the basis of Theological Education in this country? To arrive at it we have only to notice the requisitions necessary for entrance upon a course of study. Have they not been almost universally that the student should have passed through a regular College course, or made attainments equivalent thereto? and have not even the exceptional cases been rare instances in which the Faculty or Board have, under peculiar circumstances, assumed the responsibility of a deviation from the ordinary course.

The idea which is prominent as the basis of this action, is, that the work of the Ministry should be entrusted only to those who have been classically educated—an assumption which singularly enough is made for no other profession. It is in vain to say that such is not the theory or the practice of our denomination. It is the theory and the practice of by far the larger portion of those who have controlled our Institutions, and have succeeded in engrafting this idea upon them, contrary to the spirit which prevails among the Churches. They have done this without doubt in the exercise of their best judgment, but have failed because they neglected the better pointed out by the providence and word of God.

The practical operation of this theory has tended in two ways to diminish the ranks of our valuable Ministry. It has restrained many from entering upon the work, and has prevented the arrangement of such a course of study as would have enabled those who have entered upon it to fit themselves in a short time for valuable service. The consequences have been, that the number of those who have felt themselves called of God to the Ministry, has been disproportioned to the wants of the Churches; and of that number but a very small proportion have entered it with a proper preparation for even common usefulness. And only by energy and zeal, awakened by their devotion to the work, have they been able to succeed in their labors, and to do for

themselves the work, the greater part of which the Theological school should have accomplished for them.

In His word and in His providence, God seems to have plainly indicated the principle upon which the instruction of the Ministry should be based. It is not that every man should be made a scholar, an adept in philology, an able interpreter of the Bible in its original languages, acquainted with all the sciences upon the various facts and theories of which God's word is attacked and must be defended, and versed in all the systems of true and false philosophy, which some must understand in order to encounter the enemies who attack the very foundations of religion, but while the privilege of becoming such shall be freely offered to all, and every student shall be encouraged to obtain all the advantages that education can afford, the opportunity should be given to those who cannot or will not make thorough scholastic preparation to obtain that adequate knowledge of the truths of the Scriptures systematically arranged, and of the laws which govern the interpretation of the text in the English version, which constitutes all that is actually necessary to enable them to preach the Gospel, to build up the Churches on their most holy faith, and to instruct them in the practice of the duties incumbent upon them.

The Scriptural qualifications of the Ministry do, indeed, involve the idea of knowledge, but that knowledge is not of the sciences, nor of philosophy, nor of the languages, but of God and of His plan of salvation. He who has not this knowledge, though he be learned in all the learning of the schools, is incapable of preaching the word of God. But he who knows it, not superficially, not merely in those plain and simple declarations known to every believing reader, but in the power, as revealed in its precious and sanctifying doctrines, is fitted to bring forth out of his treasury things new and old, and is a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, although he may speak to his hearers in uncouth words or in manifest ignorance of all the sciences. The one belongs to the class of educated Ministers, the other to the Ministry of educated men, and the two things are essentially different. The one may be a Bunyan, unlearned withal, and in many respects ignorant, rough and rugged of speech, with none of the graces of the orator or the refinement of the rhetorician, but so filled with the grace abounding to the chief of sinners, so learned in the Scriptures quoted at every point for the support of the truth he speaks, and discoursing such sweet and godly doctrine, that he is manifest as one taught so truly in the Gospel that the most learned scholars may sit silently at his feet and learn the wonders of the word of God. The other may be a Parker, with all the grace and polish of the finished scholar, poring forth the purest and most powerful English, able to illustrate and defend his cause by contributions from every storehouse of knowledge, presenting attractions in his oratory which induce his educated audience to receive or to overlook his blasphemous doctrines, yet so destitute of the knowledge of true Christianity, and of a genuine experience of the influences of the Holy Ghost, that he denies the plainest doctrines of the Bible, saps the very foundation of all revealed truth, and manifests so profound an ignorance of the book he undertakes to expound, and the religion of which he calls himself a Minister, that the humblest Christian among our very servants shall rise up in condemnation against him in the great day of accounts.

Who is the Minister here—the man of the schools, or the man of the Scriptures? Who bears the insignia of an ambassador for Christ? Whom does God own? Whom would the Church hear? In whose power would she put forth her strength? And yet these instances, though extreme, will serve to show what may be the Ministry of the educated man, and what that of the illiterate man, the educated minister. The perfection of the Ministry, it is gladly admitted, would consist in the just combination of the two; but it is not the business of the Church to establish a perfect, but an adequate Ministry—and it is only of the latter that we may hope for an abundant

supply. The qualification God lays down is the only one He permits us to demand, and the instruction of our Theological schools must be based upon such a plan as shall afford this amount of education to those who actually constitute the mass of our Ministry, and who cannot obtain more.

The providential dispensation of God, in the administration of the affairs of His Church, fully illustrate the truth of this principle, so plainly in accordance with His word. That the education of the schools is of great advantage to the Minister truly trained in the word of truth, has been illustrated by the labors of Paul, Augustin, Calvin, Beza, Davies, Edwards, and a host of others who have stood forth in their different ages the most prominent of all the Ministry of their day, and the most efficient workmen in the cause of Christ; while in the eleven Apostles, in the mass of the Ministry of that day, and of all other times and places, God has manifested that He will work out the greater portion of His purposes by men of no previous training, and educated only in the mysteries of that truth which is in Christ Jesus.

Never has He illustrated that principle more fully than in connection with the progress of the principles of our own denomination. We have had our men of might and power who have shown the advantages of scholastic education as a basis, but we have also seen the great instruments of our progress to have been the labors of a much humbler class. Trace our history back, either through the centuries that have long passed away, or in the workings of God during the last hundred years, and it will be seen that the mass of the vineyard laborers have been from the ranks of fishermen and tax gatherers, cobblers and tinkers, weavers and ploughmen, to whom God has not disdained to impart gifts, and whom He has qualified as his ambassadors by the presence of that Spirit by which, and not by might, wisdom or power, is the work of the Lord accomplished.

The Baptists of America, especially, should be the last to forget this method of working on the part of their Master, and the first to retrace any steps which would seem to indicate such forgetfulness. It has been signally manifested in the establishment of their faith and principles.—The names which have been identified with our growth, have been those men of no collegiate education, of no learning or rhetorical eloquence, of no instruction even in schools of theology. Hervey, Gano, Bennet, Semple, Broadus, Armstrong, Mercer, who were these? Men of education, of collegiate training, of theological schools? Nay indeed. All praise to those who did possess any of these advantages. They were burning and shining lights. They hid neither talents nor opportunities, but devoted them to the cause they loved, and accomplished much in its behalf. They maintained positions which perhaps none others could have occupied. But their number was not sufficient for the work of the Lord; and He gave a multitude of others—men who were found in labors oft, in wearisome toils by day and by night, in heat or in cold, facing dangers of every kind, enduring private and public persecution, traveling through swamp and forest to carry the glad tidings of salvation to the lost and perishing of our country. And the Baptists can neither forget them nor the principle taught us in their labors, by the providence of God. Whatever may be the course of those who have the training of their Ministry, these ideas have sunk so deeply into the minds of the denomination, that they can never be eradicated. And the day will yet come, perhaps has already come, when the Churches will rise in their strength and demand that our Theological Institutions make educational provisions for the mass of their Ministry.

I have spoken of our Ministry in the past, as composed of men whose success illustrates the theory of the need only of Theological Education. And yet it is apparent that they enjoyed none of the advantages for that purpose which are connected with the present arrangements for

study. In the absence of these, however, they did attain to the amount of Theological Education which is essential. This was accomplished through excessive labor exercised by minds, capable of mighty efforts, and drawn forth under circumstances favorable to their development. When we look attentively at the record they have left us, or contemplate those of them whom God's mercy to us permits yet to linger with us, we perceive that they were not the uneducated Ministers commonly supposed. It is true, as has been said, that they had not the learning of the schools.—A few books of Theology—perhaps a single commentary—formed, with their Bibles, their whole apparatus of instruction, and measured the extent of their reading. But of these books they were wont to make themselves masters. By a course of incessant study, accompanied by examinations of the word of God, they were so thoroughly imbued with the processes and results of the best thoughts of their authors, that they became, for all practical purposes, almost the same men. And if, by any course of training, substantially of the same kind, our Theological schools can restore to us such a mass Ministry as was then enjoyed, the days of our progress and prosperity will be realized to have but just begun; and we shall go forward, by the help of the Lord, to possess the whole land which lieth before us. If by any means to these can be added at least five-fold the number of those now educated in the regular course of Theology, I doubt not but it will be felt that the most sanguine hopes they have ever excited will be more than fulfilled.

I believe, gentlemen, that it can be done; and more than this, that in the attempt to do it, we shall accomplish an abundantly greater work. Let us abandon the false principle which has so long controlled us, and adopt the one which God points out to us by His word and His providence, and from the very supplies God now gives to us may be wrought out precisely such a Ministry. Those who have entered upon the work will be rendered fully capable to perform its duties, and numbers besides will be called forth to it who have heretofore been restrained by insurmountable obstacles.

Let such a change be made in the Theological Department as shall provide an English course of study for those who have only been able to attain a plain English education. Let that course comprise the Evidences of Christianity, Systematic and Polemic Theology, the Rules of Interpretation applied to the English version; some knowledge of the principles of Rhetoric, extensive practice in the development from texts of subjects and skeletons of Sermons, whatever amount of Composition may be expedient, and full instruction in the nature of Pastoral duties—let the studies of this course be so pursued as to train the mind to habits of reflection and analysis, to awaken it to conceptions of the truths of Scripture, to fill it with arguments from the word of God in support of its doctrines, and to give it facility in the constructing and presenting such arguments—and the work will be accomplished.

Experience alone can determine the length of time such a course should occupy. It should be so arranged for two years, however, that the better prepared and the more diligent may be able to pass over it in one. Doubtless this would be done by the vast majority, at least of those of riper years.

By the means proposed, the Theological school will meet the wants of a large class of those who now enter the Ministry without the advantages of such instruction—a class equally with their more learned associates burning with earnest zeal for the glory of God and deep convictions of the value of immortal souls, one possessed of natural gifts, capable even with limited knowledge of enchaining the attention, affecting the hearts and enlightening the minds of many who surround them—a class composed, however, of those who, with few exceptions, soon find themselves exhausted of their materials, forced to repeat the same topics in the same way, and finally to aim at nothing but continuous exhortation, bearing constantly upon the same point,

or as is oftentimes the case, destitute of any point at all. In their present condition, these Ministers are of comparatively little value to the Churches, having no capacity to feed them with the word of God, affording no attractions to bring a congregation to the house of God, and no power to set before them, when gathered there, such an exposition of the word of God as may, through the influences of His Spirit, awaken them to penitence, and lead to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. What the same men might become were they better instructed, is apparent from the results attained by men of the same previous education, who, possessed of more leisure, or of a greater natural taste for study, have so improved themselves as to occupy positions of greater respectability and usefulness.

The class of men whose cause I now plead before you, is of all those which furnish material for our Ministry, that which most needs the Theological training, I would ask for it. Every argument for Theological schools, bears directly in favor of its interests. Are such schools founded that our Ministry may not be ignorant of the truth? Which class of that Ministry is more ignorant than this? Is the object of their endowment that such education may be cheapened? Who are generally in more straitened circumstances? Is it designed to produce an abundant, able, faithful and practical Ministry? Where are the materials more abundant? Whence, for the amount of labor expended, will come more copious harvests? So that it appears that whatever may be our obligations to other classes, or the advantages to be gained in their education, the mere statement of them impresses upon us our duty, and the yet greater advantages to be gained by the education of that class which should comprise two-thirds at least of those who receive a Theological education.

The men who go from College walls untaught in Theology, have yet a training and an amount of knowledge of incalculable benefit. They can do something to make up their deficiencies. But what chance is there for these others? They know not how to begin to study. Let one of them take up the Scriptures, and he finds himself embarrassed in the midst of statements which the Church, for centuries after the Apostles, had not fully harmonized—statements which constitute the facts of Theology, from which, in like manner with other sciences, by processes of induction and comparison, the absolute truth must be established. If, to escape the difficulty, he turns to a textbook of Theology, he is puzzled at once by technicalities so easily understood by those better instructed, that this technical character is totally unperceived. If he turns in this dilemma to our Seminaries, he finds no encouragement to enter. A man of age, perhaps of family, he is called upon to spend years of study in the literary and scientific departments, before he is allowed to suppose that he can profitably pursue Theology. Straitened, perhaps, in his circumstances, and unwilling to partake of the bounty of others, he is told that he must study during a number of years, his expenses during which would probably exhaust five-fold his little store. With a mind capable of understanding and perceiving the truth, and of expressing judicious opinions upon any subject, the facts of which he comprehends, he is told that he must pass through a course of study, the chief value of which is to train the mind, and which will only benefit him by the amount of knowledge it will incidentally convey. I can readily imagine the despair with which that man would be filled who, impelled by a conviction that it is his duty to preach the Gospel, contemplates under these circumstances the provisions which the friends of an educated Ministry have made for him. We know not how many affected by that sentiment are at this moment longing to enter upon preparation for a work which they feel God has entrusted only to those who, because of their knowledge of His Word, have an essential element of aptness to teach. Be it yours, gentlemen,

to re-animate their drooping hopes by openings up before them the means of attaining this qualification.

The adoption of the true principle will not only tend, however, to secure for us this education in the masses, which we need, but will also increase five-fold the number of those who will receive a thorough Theological education. It will do this by the change of policy to which it will lead in reference to another class of our candidates for the Ministry.

We have among us a number of men who have enjoyed all the advantages of College life, but who have not been able, or willing, to spend the additional years needed for Theological study. These are possessed of far greater advantages than those of the other class, men of polished education, of well trained minds, capable of extensive usefulness to the cause of Christ, but their deficiencies are plainly apparent, and readily traceable to the lack of a Theological education. They are educated men, but not educated Ministers, for, while familiar with all the sciences which form parts of the College curriculum, they are ignorant for the most part of the very science which lies at the foundation of all their Ministerial labors. The labors of their pastoral charges prevent such study of the word of God, either exegetically or systematically, as will enable them to become masters of its contents. Having entered upon the work of the Ministry, however, they are forced to press forward, encountering difficulties at every step—fearing to touch upon many doctrines of Scripture, lest they misstate them—and frequently guilty of such misstatements, even in the presentation of the simpler topics they attempt, because they fail to recognise the important connections which exist among all the truths of God. A few, indeed, possessed of giant minds capable of the most accurate investigations, and filled with indomitable energy in the pursuit of what they feel to be needful, overcome every obstacle, and attain to knowledge often superior to that of others whose training has been more advantageous. But the vast majority find themselves burdened with a weight which they cannot remove, and by which they feel that their energies are almost destroyed. It is needless to say of these that the Churches do not grow under their Ministry; that, not having partaken of strong meat, they cannot impart it, and that their hearers pass on from Sabbath to Sabbath, awakened, indeed, to practical duties, made in many respects efficient in co-operating with Christ's people, but not built up to this condition on their most holy faith, but upon other motives which, however good, are really insufficient for the best progress, at least of their own spiritual natures. Such is not the position of the Ministry which four-fifths of our educated men should occupy. They will tell you themselves, gentlemen, that this should not be the case.—If due to their own precipitancy, they will attach blame to themselves, but if it result from the exclusiveness of Theological schools, their declaration is equivalent to testimony in favor of its removal, and of the admission of all who are capable of pursuing the regular course to participate in its advantages. The disturbances left about unsettled doctrines, the inability experienced to declare the whole counsel of God, the doctrinal mistakes realized as frequently committed, have long since convinced them that all of their other education is of but little value, compared with that knowledge of Theology which they have lost in its acquisition.

The theory of the Theological school should doubtless be to urge upon every one to take full courses in both departments; but when this is not possible, it should give to those who are forced to select between them the opportunity of omitting the collegiate and entering at once upon the Theological course, I see not how anyone can rationally question that many, if not all of those who are fitted for the Sophomore, or even the Freshman class in College, are prepared, so far as knowledge of books or languages is concerned, to enter with very great, though not with the utmost profit, upon the study of Theology. The amount of Greek and Latin acquired, is

ample for this purpose.—The study of Hebrew and Chaldee are commenced in the Theological course, while that which is really the main object for the younger men in the Collegiate course, the training and forming of the mind so far as at all practicable, will for the old students have been already accomplished, or for them and for the younger ones may be compensated in great part by the more thorough training in the studies of the Seminary, necessary to all who would acquire such knowledge of Theology as will make them fully acquainted with its truths.

Since this is the case, why compel this class to spend their time in studies which, however valuable in themselves, have but a secondary importance, compared with those they are made to supersede? If there be any who will pursue the studies of both departments, their number will never be diminished by the adoption of the plan proposed. If it will, better that this be so than that so many others neglect Theology. But we may confidently believe that the results will only be to take from the Collegiate course those who would neglect the other, and cause them to spend the same number of years in the study of that which has an immediate bearing upon their work. It is simply a choice as to certain men between a thorough Literary and a thorough Theological course. The former may make a man more refined and intelligent, better able to sustain a position of influence with the world, and more capable of illustrating, by a wide range of science, the truth he may have arrived at; the latter will improve his Christian graces, will impart to him the whole range of revealed truth, will make him the instructor of His people, truly the man of God prepared in all things to give to each one his portion in due season.

The bare announcement of the changes proposed in the application of our principle, will show that but little additional provision will be needed to put it into operation.—The same course of Systematic Theology will be sufficient for all classes—the advantages possessed by those more highly educated, enabling them simply to add to the text book or lectures, the examination of Turretine, of some other prescribed author. In the study of Scripture Interpretation, it may be necessary to make two divisions, though experience will probably prove the practicability even of united these. There will be needed for all classes the same instruction in the Evidences of Christianity, in Pastoral Theology, in the analysis of texts, the construction of skeletons, and the composition of essays and sermons; and in all of these the classes may be united. So that, really, we will only so far revolutionize the Institution, as to add numbers to the classes, and permit some of those whom we add, to take up those studies only which the plain English education will enable them to pursue profitably. All the inconvenience which may accrue therefrom, will be gladly endured by all for the benefit of the masses, and because of the mutual love and esteem which, by their throwing together, will be fostered between the most highly educated and the plainest of our Ministry.

Is it too much, gentlemen, to ask that this experiment may be tried? Does it not seem practicable? Are not the fruits it would produce, if brought to a successful issue, an ample inducement to us to venture upon an experiment so likely to succeed, and which, if unsuccessful, can so easily be abandoned? And would not that trial seem to put the Institution upon the basis of that principle which God has established, and which we may therefore expect him to bless by sending forth, as the Lord of the harvest, an abundance of laborers into the harvest?

In adopting this change, we are so far from saying that education is unnecessary, that we proclaim its absolute necessity. We undertake, however, to point out what education it is that is thus essential, and what that which is only valuable; and while we urge upon all useful knowledge as an aid to that work, we point out the knowledge of the word of God as that which is first in importance, and we provide the means by which this second class may pursue its appropriate studies, and those by which adequate Theological instruction may be given to the

four-fifths of our Ministry who now enjoy no means of instruction. And we look with confidence for the blessing of God upon this plan, not because we believe that He favors an ignorant Ministry, but because, we know that He requires that His Ministry be instructed, and that by His word and His providence He has pointed out the nature of the learning He demands we believe that the plan proposed is based upon these indications; and that His refusal to send forth laborers has been chastisement inflicted upon us that we may be brought back to His own plans, which we have abandoned for those of men.

I proceed now to speak more briefly of a second change needed in our Theological Institutions, by which it is to be hoped they will be enabled to produce scholars adequate to the exigencies of our own denomination, and to the common cause of Christianity. It is singularly enough the case, that while they have abandoned the education of the masses for the thorough training of the few, God has not permitted them to accomplish the very object made most prominent in their pretensions. It is not to be concealed that upon this point a dissatisfaction exists which, though not so general, has taken deep root in the minds of our better educated laymen and Ministers.

I refer not now to the charge that there has been want of practical training by which those who have taken a Theological course, have been practically but little benefited immediately thereby. This evil, which I believe may be justly urged against the instruction of every Theological Institution in our country, is to be attributed to the fact that the Professors place the means of instruction in the hands of their students without exercising over their pursuit of those studies the superintendence which is needed. It has arisen from the supposition that the previous Collegiate training has furnished to the Theological school minds thoroughly prepared for unaided study—which, however justly to be expected, experience proves to be lamentably a mistake. The remedy for this evil is the adoption of that method of instruction which should have marked the previous Collegiate course. The studies should be so pursued as to call forth and improve all the powers of analysis and synthesis in the consideration of the subjects presented, and so to practice the student in the quick production of this thoughts, as well as in deriving the appropriate subject from his text, and in forming skeletons of discourses that he will not only be fully acquainted with the truth, but also able to present it readily and appropriately upon all occasions. If this course be pursued, and the student be encouraged at the same time to engage in every practical work, such as instructing in Sabbath Schools and Bible Classes, conducting Social Meetings in destitute places, preaching where the only ambition will be to present the truth plainly and simply, the complaints about the lack of efficient and practical training in Theological students will no longer be heard.

Neither do I allude to the inability of our Institutions to compel the attendance of those immediately about them who seek the highest attainments. To remove this, the department must also secure a sufficient number of ablest men, the course must be extended to three years, so as to furnish time for the pursuit of the widest range of study, and the practical training already referred to being then adopted, the superior advantages afforded would soon manifest themselves in the character of the scholarship and the Ministry it would send forth. Under such training, the same material would be made doubly as efficient as under that of any of our present institutions.

Nor is the change here proposed connected with a project which was at one time, perhaps is now, a favorite scheme, for the benefit of Theological Institutions—the establishment of a Professorship devoted to the relations of science and the Bible. There can be no doubt that Christian minds should be devoted to the consideration of this subject. And were there no other

means, it would not be a waste of time or money that Professorships should be endowed, and men selected to devote to this subject their entire energies. But this seems to be already accomplishing among the many who, having like Christian sympathies with us, regarding the Bible as a book not to be interpreted in any way fancy mat direct, and believing equally in the verbal inspiration of its writers, occupy such positions in connection with our Colleges and scientific schools, as lead them to devote their attention to this subject, and to stand forth as champions of the Scriptures—abating in no respect their authority, showing their true relations to science, and holding forth increasing evidences of their inspiration in the language upon their pages, which accords with the exactest discoveries of modern science, and confirms our conviction that the men who wrote it when these discoveries of modern science, and confirms our conviction that the men who wrote it when these discoveries were unknown, were guided in their very language by Him to whom are “known all His works from the beginning of the world,” “who looketh to the ends of the earth and seeth under the whole heaven.” While we enjoy the labors of these men in original research, it seems scarcely necessary, at least while we fail to provide for other matters more important, that more should be done in this direction than would be accomplished by a short course of lectures, accompanied by directions to the student for the guidance of his private reading on the subject. And this might be given without the proposed addition to the corps of instruction.

The dissatisfaction to which I refer, has been awakened by the inadequate extent to which all Theological Institutions have pursued their studies, and the consequent lack among us of the scholarship which prevails in some countries abroad. It has been felt as a sore evil, that we have been dependent in great part upon the criticism of Germany for all the more learned investigations in Biblical Criticism and Exegesis, and that in the study of the development of the doctrine of the Church, as well as of its outward progress, we have been compelled to depend upon works in which much of error has been mingled with truth, owing to the defective standpoint occupied by their authors.

And although the disadvantages of American scholars have been realized as arising from the want of adequate Theological libraries, as well as from the inaccessible nature of much other material, it has been felt that it has also been in great part due to the limited extent to which the study of Theological science has been pursued among us, that we have been so much dependent upon others so unable to push forward investigations for ourselves, and even so inadequately acquainted with the valuable results of others who have accomplished the work for us. But a few perhaps have participated in this sentiment, but the evil which awakens it is not, therefore, the less momentous.

It is an evil which may be regarded as pervading the whole field of American religious scholarship, and the remedy should be sought alike by all denominations. It is a matter of the deepest interest to all, that we should be placed in a position of independence in this matter, and that our rising Ministry should be trained under the scholarship of the Anglo Saxon mind, which, from its nature, as well as from the circumstances which surround it, is eminently fitted to weigh evidence, and to decide as to its appropriateness and its proper limitations. But the obligation resting on the Baptist denomination, is far higher than this. It extends not merely to matters of detail, but to those of vital interest. The history of religious literature, and of Christian scholarship, has been a history of Baptist wrongs. We have been overlooked, ridiculed and defamed. Critics have committed the grossest perversions, violated the plainest rules of criticism, and omitted points which could not have been developed without benefit to us. Historians who have professed to write the history of the Church, have either utterly ignored the

presence of those of our faith, or classed them among fanatics and heretics; or, if forced to acknowledge the prevalence of our principles and practice among the earliest Churches, have adopted such false theories as to Church power, and the development and growth of the truth and principles of Scripture, that by all, save their most discerning readers, our pretensions to an early origin and a continuous existence, have been rejected.

The Baptists in the past have been entirely too indifferent to the position they thus occupy. They have depended too much upon the known strength of their principles, and the ease with which from Scripture they could defend them. They have therefore neglected many of those means which extensive learning affords, and which have been used to great advantage in support of other opinions. It is needless to say, gentlemen, that we can no longer consent to occupy this position. We owe a change to ourselves—as Christians, bound to show an adequate reason for the differences between us and others—as men of even moderate scholarship, that it may appear that we have not made the gross errors in philology and criticism, which we must have made if we be not right—as the successors of a glorious spiritual ancestry illustrated by heroic martyrdom, by the profession of noble principles, by the maintenance of true doctrines—as the Church of Christ, which He has ever preserved as the witness of His truth, by which He has illustrated His wonderful ways, and shown that His promises are sure and steadfast. Nay, we owe it to Christ himself, whose truth we hold so distinctively as to separate us from all others of His believing people—to whom we look confidently to make these principles triumphant, for whose sake on their account men have been ever found among us willing to submit to banishment, imprisonment or martyrdom; and for whose sake, in defence of the same truth, we are willing now to bear the scorn and reproach, not of the word only, but even of those who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

But the question arises, how can we avoid it? The amplest course now afforded, gives to students but slight preparation for entrance upon such duties. Our Ministry receives no such support as warrants the purchase of more than moderate libraries. The labors of most of our Pastoral charges are sufficient fully to occupy the time of those upon whom they are devoted. And how shall we avoid it?

It is a ray of hope to us, gentlemen, that even under these disadvantageous circumstances, some are taking steps to this end. These are men of such indomitable energy, so fertile of resources and so full of faith, that no work seems too great to undertake, and no difficulties too serious to overcome. And some of these are already among us, and justice shall not altogether be long refused us. But the men of whom I speak are too rare, and the obligation which we owe, too great for us to be thus content. We must provide facilities to these and necessities to others, if we would yet occupy our true position.

It is scarcely necessary to remark, that any plan which can be devised, must be based upon the presence in the Institution of a good Theological library—one which shall not only be filled with the gathered lore of the past, but also endowed with the means of annual increase. Without this, no Institution can pursue extensive courses of study, or contribute anything directly to the advancement of learning. The Professor is cut off from valuable and necessary books, and the student hindered from making even the least important investigations in the course of study he is pursuing.

The plan I propose to you, supposes the possession of such a library; and this, even if it be such, is its only peculiar item of expense. Taking the idea from the provision made in some of our Institutions for the degree of Master of Arts, it has occurred to me that an additional course of study might be provided for those who may be graduates of Theological Institutions.

This course might extend over one or two years, according to the amount of study the student may propose to accomplish. In it the study of the Oriental languages might be extended to the Arabic and Syriac. The writing of exegetical thesis would furnish subjects for an investigation, and give a more ample acquaintance with the original text, and with the laws of its interpretation. The text books or lectures studied in Systematic and Polemic Theology, could be compared with kindred books; the theories of opponents examined in their own writings, and notes taken for future use from rare and costly books. These and similar studies which should be laid down in a well digested course would bestow accurate scholarship, train the student in the methods of original investigation, give him confidence in the results previously attained, and open to him resources from which he might draw extensively in interpreting the Scriptures, and in setting forth the truths they contain. The result would be, that a band of scholars would go forth from almost every one of whom we might expect valuable contributions to our Theological literature.

It is to be expected that but few would take advantage of this course. Such would certainly be the case at first. The only result would be that but little additional provision will be needed. Two additional recitations a week for each of three or four Professors, would be more than adequate. And though such students should not be more than a twentieth part of those graduated, though not more than one each year, will not their value to the denomination more than counterbalance the little additional attention which will, thus, be given?

Were the production of this kind of scholars the only advantage to be gained, we might readily rest upon this the advocacy of this change. But there are others connected with it which may still further commend it by an apparently more practical tendency. I have mentioned the Arabic as one of its studies. The knowledge of that language would be of obvious value to those who go forth as missionaries to Central Africa. Mohammedanism is there the only form of religion, which is violently opposed to the truth, and the language of the Koran is a medium of common intercourse. This, however, would be but trifling, as compared with those common to all our Missionaries, who may be instructed in such a course. The results of past Missionary efforts, appears to indicate that we, like the Apostles, must adopt the system of home laborers, if we would evangelize the world. We must get natives to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. The men whom we send forth to Missionary stations, must then be qualified to instruct the native preachers in all the elements of Theological Education. They will not only have to put the Bible in their hands as a textbook, but they will have to prepare, in the native language, or translate into it such books of Theology, as shall give them adequate instruction.—There are but few of those who take the ordinary course, that are capable of this. Theology is not a science so easily understood, and a mistake about which is of slight importance, that the instructor in it dares attempt his work without ample investigation. In the course of Missionary labors, many years must, therefore, elapse before opportunity can be gained for such research; and if this be afforded, the Missionary, with his few books, limited time, and weighty responsibilities, will still feel the great importance of the advantages gained from this course, and will be grateful to that Institution which has placed it within his reach. And while from this class we would furnish such instruction abroad, would it not be to them also that our Institutions at home would chiefly look for their Professors? And though there were no others to take advantage of its additional instruction, would not the impetus given to these, the love of learning which would be begotten, the ready preparation to enter at once upon any field to which they might be called, and the number from which we might select the most competent, be ample inducements to lay down this additional course? I have striven, gentlemen, merely to suggest the benefits to be derived. Multiply and develop them for yourselves, and realize the results. I cannot see how any

conception can arise which will prove extravagant. Learning will abound among us. The world will be subdued to Christ. The principles dear to our hearts will universally prevail.

The change which I would in the last place propose, is not intended to meet an evil existing in our Theological Institutions so much as one which is found in the denomination at large, and which may at some future time injuriously affect this educational interest. It is the adoption of a declaration of doctrine to be required of those who assume the various professorships.

The most superficial observer must perceive that in our day the sound doctrine of our Churches is much imperiled. Campbellism, though checked in every direction in which it attempted to develop itself, has left no little of its leaven among us, and exerts no inconsiderable influence. The distinctive principles of Arminianism have also been engrafted upon many of our Churches; and even some of our Ministry have not hesitated publicly to avow them. That sentiment, the invariable precursor, or accompaniment of all heresy—that the doctrines of Theology are matters of mere speculation, and its distinctions only logomachies and technicalities, has obtained at least a limited prevalence. And the doctrinal sentiments of a large portion of the Ministry and membership of the Churches, are seen to be either very much unsettled, or radically wrong.

Sad will be the day for this University, should such sentiments ever obtain prevalence in your Board, or receive the sanction of any of your Theological Professors. And yet that this is not impossible, is evident from the history of others similarly situated. The day has already come when it has been made matter of congratulation in a Baptist journal of high standing, that at the examination of perhaps the best endowed and most flourishing Baptist Theological Seminary in America, the technical terms of Theology were no longer heard.

A crisis in Baptist doctrine is evidently approaching, and those of us who still cling to the doctrines which formerly distinguished us, have the important duty to perform of earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. Gentlemen, God will call us to judgment if we neglect it.

The evil is one which calls for the adoption of a remedy by every Church and every Minister among us. It demands that every doctrine of Scripture be determined and expressed, and that all should see to it, the Churches which call and the Presbyteries which ordain, that those set apart to preach the word be men “whose faith the Churches may follow,” “who take heed to themselves and the doctrine,” and “are not as many who corrupt the word of God.”*

* It is not my design here to urge that the same abstract of faith be applied in like manner to members of Churches, to Ministers and to Theological Professors. It is right that the doctrine held by every Church should be distinctly declared, but Scripture and experience teach that many members are as yet babes in Christ, and therefore, not prepared to express that knowledge of the doctrine of the word to be expected of those who are teachers thereof. The Apostolic rule in such cases is plain—“him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.” If, therefore, an applicant for membership gives evidence of a change of heart, and is so far convinced of the truth of these peculiarities which mark us as a denomination as to desire to unite with us, he should be admitted—it being admitted that he is not to disturb the Church about any different opinion he may entertain, until by thorough examination of the Scriptures he has satisfied himself that the Church is in error.

While, however, this is all that should be required of a member of the Church, we should ask of one of its Ministers such an agreement to its expressed doctrine as should be even more than substantial. The points of difference here allowable are very trivial, being such as will not in any respect interfere in his ministrations with that fullness of agreement of Scripture truth, through which he is enabled to preach the word of God without danger of misleading his people in any particular.

Peculiar obligations rest, however, upon those to whom are entrusted the education of the rising Ministry. God in His mercy preserve the instructors from the crime of teaching a single error, however unimportant, and grant unto all our Boards the grace necessary for faithfulness to the trusts developed upon them, that false doctrine, however trifling, may receive no countenance.

It is with a single man that error usually commences, when such a man has influence or position, it is impossible to estimate the evil that will attend it. Ecclesiastical history is full of warning upon this subject. Scarcely a single heresy has ever blighted the Church, which has not owed its existence, or its development, to that one man of power and ability, whose name has always been associated with its doctrines. And yet seldom has an opinion been thus advanced, which has not subsequently had its advocate in every age, and which in some ages has not extensively prevailed.

The history of our own denomination in this country, furnishes an illustration. Playing upon the prejudices of the weak and ignorant among our people, decrying the creeds as an infringement upon the rights of conscience, making a deep impression by his extensive learning and great abilities, Alexander Campbell threatened at one time the total destruction of our faith. Had he occupied a chair in one of our Theological Institutions, that destruction might have been completed. There would have been time to disseminate widely, and fix deeply, his principles, before it became necessary to avow them publicly; and when this necessity arrived, it would have been attended by the support of the vast majority of our best educated Ministers. Who can estimate the evil which would then have ensued!

The danger which threatened in this instance, may assail us again. Another such, and yet another, may arise, and favored by better circumstances, may instil false principles into the

But of him who is to teach the Ministry, who is to be the medium through which the fountain of Scripture truth is to flow to them—whose opinions more than those of any living man, are to mould their conceptions of the doctrines of the Bible, it is manifest that much more is requisite. No difference, however slight, no peculiar sentiment, however speculative, is here allowable. His agreement with the standard should be exact. His declaration of it should be based upon no mental reservation, upon no private understanding with those who immediately invest him into office; but the articles to be taught having been fully and distinctly laid down, he should be able to say from his knowledge of the word of God, that he knows these articles to be an exact summary of the truth therein contained. If the summary of truth established be incorrect, it is the duty of the Board to change it, if such change be within their power; if not, let an appeal be made to those who have the power, and if there be none such, then far better is it that the whole endowment be thrown aside than that the principle be adopted that the Professor sign any abstract of doctrine with which he does not agree, and in accordance with which he does not intend to teach. No professor should be allowed to enter upon such duties as are there undertaken, with the understanding that he is at liberty to modify the truth, which he has been placed there to inculcate.

I have added this note that my meaning upon this point may not be misconceived. The same principle of Scripture lies at the foundation of the requirements here proposed for members of Churches, Ministers and Theological Professors; and it is to that principle that I refer above. But its application is confined to the necessity of the case. In the Church the great essential to membership, is that a genuine work of grace be evidenced. Hence we apply a test sufficient to secure this. In the Ministry, it is essential, however, that the word of God be preached in its purity and power. Hence must a Minister be not only a converted man, but one acquainted even more than substantially with the system of truth taught in the Bible. But the Theological Professor is to teach Ministers, to place the truth, and all the errors connected with it in such a manner before his pupils, that they shall arrive at the truth without danger of any mixture of error therewith. He cannot do this if he has any erroneous tendencies, and hence his opinions must be expressly affirmed to be upon every point in accordance with the truth we believe to be taught in the Scriptures. What is here laid down as the application of the principle referred to above, is essential respectively in each of the relations sustained to us, to give that confidence in the individual which will secure to him our Christian sympathy, support and fellowship.

minds of his pupils, and sending them forth to occupy the prominent pulpits of the land, may influence all our Churches, and the fair fabric of our faith may be entirely demolished.

This it is that should make us tremble, when we think of our Theological Institutions. If there be an instrument of our denominational prosperity which we should guard at every point, it is this. The doctrinal sentiments of the Faculty are of far greater importance than the proper investment and expenditure of its funds, and the trusts devolved upon those who watch over its interests should in that respect, if in any, be sacredly guarded.

It is gratifying to remember that this Board has not been in the past altogether forgetful of this important duty. The rule adopted by the Board of The Furman Institution, which required that each Professor should “submit to the Board for approval a statement of the text books he would use, and the plan of studies he would pursue; neither text books nor plans to be adopted or continued contrary to the judgment of the Board,” is a manifest indication of this fact. The subject regarding which they were so jealous, will be perceived from the fact that when a scholarship was founded by the “Charleston Juvenile Female Education and Missionary Society,” the Convention imposed but two limitations upon the power of the Society to transfer the right of presentation to any Church—the one, that the student should be approved by the authority appointed by the Convention for receiving beneficiaries; the other, that the Church designated should hold and continue to hold the Confession of Faith then acknowledged in the Charleston Baptist Association.

The rule of the Board was probably, at the time of its establishment, ample for all purposes. The denomination was then fully agreed in its doctrinal sentiments, and the instruction given seems to have been confined almost entirely to text books. Changes, however, have no occurred. Unanimity of sentiment does not so extensively prevail. The studies of the course must, in part at least, be pursued through lectures. And hence arises the necessity of establishing some test by which the Board may be assured that the instruction of the Department is conducted in agreement with the sentiments of its founders. For all the purposes aimed at, no other test can be equally effective with that Confession of Faith—the doctrines of which had almost universal prevalence in this State at the time of the foundation of the Institution. Let that then be adopted, and let subscription to it on the part of each Theological Professor be required as an assurance of his entire agreement with its views of doctrine, and of his determination to teach fully the truth which it expresses, and nothing contrary to its declarations.

It seems to me, gentlemen, that you owe this to yourselves, to your Professors, and to the denomination at large; to yourselves, because your position as Trustees, makes you responsible for the doctrinal opinions of your Professors, and the whole history of creeds has proved the difficulty without them of convicting errorists of perversion of the word of God—to your Professors, that their doctrinal sentiments may be known and approved by all, that no charges of heresy may be brought against them; that none shall whisper of peculiar notions which they hold, but that in refutation of all charges they may point to this formulary as one which they hold *ex animo*, and teach in its true import—and to the denomination at large, that they may know in what truths the rising Ministry are instructed, may exercise full sympathy with the necessities of the Institution, and look with confidence and affection to the Pastors who come forth from it.

But some one will object that Scripture authorizes no such test in our Churches; and that as Christians, who claim even in matters of Church government, to be guided merely by Scripture example and precept, the Baptists cannot consistently introduce it. Let the objection be admitted. It would operate only against the use of such tests in a Church, and not in any voluntary society or combination into which we enter of our own accord. The Theological

School is not a matter of Scriptural regulation, as is the Church; and in arranging its laws, we have only to see to it that the principles upon which they are based, do not violate those of the Scriptures. They may be matters of mere expediency. The Church being a Scriptural institution, receives its laws and its forms from the commands or examples contained in the New Testament; but the Theological Institution receives such laws as human wisdom can best devise, to carry out the laudable designs of its founders.

But I cannot grant that such a test is without due warrant from Scripture, even in the Church. The very duties which God enjoins upon the Churches, plainly suppose the application of every principle involved in the establishment of creeds. They are directed to contend earnestly against error, and for the faith once delivered to the saints. They are to mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which they have learned. They are to cut off them which trouble them by the proclamation of false doctrine. A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonitions, is to be rejected. They are commendable when they try false prophets and pseudo-Apostles, and blameworthy whenever teachers of false doctrine are found among them. So far indeed did the Apostles enjoin the trial and reprobation of men guilty of false doctrine, that the Christian, even in his private capacity, is told that in receiving such an one into his house, or in bidding him God speed, he becomes a partaker of his evil deeds.

The obligations thus imposed upon Christians, involve the decision of what is truth, not merely that they may believe it, but that they may repudiate those that reject it. They compel every man to establish his own standard of Biblical doctrine, and by it to judge others. He does not obey the Apostolic injunction by receiving men simply because they profess to adopt the same canon of Scripture, but by requiring assent also to the particular truths which he knows to be taught therein. It is not whether they believe the Bible, but whether believing it they deduce from it such doctrine as shows, according to the judgment of the Christian, that they have been so taught by the Spirit of God as to be guided into the knowledge of all truth.

The standard thus established by the Christian, should moreover be openly avowed. Those whom he judges have a right to know in what particulars they are thought to deviate from sound doctrine. And if this right be not admitted, he and his fellow Christians are obliged, on their own account, to determine upon that standard, so far at least as the point in question may be concerned, before they can decide in the capacity of a Church upon the doctrinal soundness of any charged with error.

The adoption of an abstract of doctrine, is but the means taken by a Church to meet these obligations. Perceiving the probability, that at some time such questions must arise, she acts beforehand, when her judgment is perfectly cool, when there are no outward circumstances to warp it, and when she can patiently examine the word of God, and know if these things be so. The time of trial is not the time for legislation. Too many evil passions are then awakened, too many unfounded prejudices then excited, to allow that freedom from bias necessary to justice, as well to the purity of the Church of Christ, as to the orthodoxy of the member arraigned before it. Matters of doctrine then about which, if approached with prejudiced mind and excited feeling, there is such liability to mistake, must be arranged beforehand, when God can be approached in prayer, when His word can be diligently studied, and when the mind is ready to receive the conclusions to which prayer and study may lead.

This development of their necessity, leads us naturally to believe that doctrinal confessions were applied to this purpose in the Apostolic Churches. Accordingly, we find that the germ of them as used for a two-fold purpose, the declaration of faith and the testing of its existence in others, seems traceable to the Apostles, and even to Christ Himself. It is remarkable

that it has been so frequently overlooked, that upon almost every approach to Him for the performance of a cure, Christ demanded that public confession of his ability to do so, which involved the confession of His Messiahship and Divine authority, and manifested the individual approaching Him to be one of those who had taught by the Spirit. That was a memorable illustration of the same principle, when, after inquiring the views of others, He made a direct appeal to His own disciples, and said—"But whom say ye that I am?" and when Peter answered "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," in commendation of that declaration, He pronounced him blessed, and taught by His Father in heaven. This commendation was given to an express Confession of Faith. The act of baptism also, enjoined by Christ as the initiative rite of His Church, is an act which involves the very formulary which accompanies it, profession of doctrinal belief.

The idea of a profession of the name and doctrine of Christ, originated by these, and doubtless by many unrecorded circumstances, had in the times of the Apostles universally spread. It was then that the confession of doctrine became more particularly the test of pretension to the name of Christian, and to the authority of teacher of the word of God. The gospel which Paul preached, by which is meant the doctrine he had taught them, was, not in the particular words uttered by him, but as they had been understood by Galatians, to be such a test that he who should speak otherwise was to be regarded as preaching another Gospel, and was to be accursed. The Apostle John, in his first general epistle, charges the Churches to try the spirits, whether they be of God, and encourages them to that duty by calling to their remembrance their past victories over error. The confession of that particular doctrine then chiefly denied by the heretics who abounded, was the test to be applied. Here it is evident that a general declaration of belief in the truth of the Scriptures, or the authority of the Apostles, was not to be deemed sufficient, but a declaration to be made in the form of words which puts a particular interpretation upon the Scriptures, "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," was required by Apostolic command of every teacher of the Churches. The allusion made by the author of the Book of Revelation to the relations borne to heretics by the Churches to which he wrote, confirms us still more in the opinion that the Churches of that day, by means of confession required of their members and others, were accustomed to receive a declaration of doctrine, to judge of its purity, to exclude for any defect therein, and that this was done with reference to certain doctrinal sentiments avowed, and not to any denial of a general belief of Scripture.

The same two-fold use of creeds may be traced, historically, through the fathers of the first three centuries—these things being apparent—that these formularies of doctrinal confession continued to exist—that they were used at the baptism of Christians—that they were applied to the doctrine of error—that they were of various extent, comprising several doctrines of Christianity—that the doctrines added to those which were so fundamental as of necessity to be included in all creeds, were such as were opposed to the peculiar heresies of the section of country which used them—that they were gradually increased as questions about doctrines multiplied in the Churches—and that they were not in the same language, betokening their separate origin in the particular Churches which used them. Their use in these centuries, however, is simply valuable as showing the growth and development of a Christian practice already established—as manifesting the value attached to them by the more immediate successors of the Apostles, and as evidencing, by the providence of God, that He intended them, like all other blessings conferred upon the Churches, to be continued in use to the remotest ages.

By the Baptists of all ages, creeds have been almost universally used, and invariably in this two-fold way. To some of other denominations, it has seemed that we have been without

them, because the principle of liberty of conscience which we have at the same time maintained, has forbidden the laying of civil disabilities upon those who have differed from us. We have appeared to them, therefore, to put them forth only as declarative of our principles. It is to be regretted that many Baptists in our own day have given countenance to this opinion by misstatements of our practice. And it would, therefore, have been to me to-night a pleasant labor to pass over the history of our denomination in the past, in proof of the position we have undoubtedly occupied. But I could not have done this without sacrificing a stronger desire to present to your consideration questions of greater practical utility. Suffice it to state, that we have simply maintained that civil disabilities are not the means of punishing the offending members of the Church of Christ. We have looked to the Scriptures for the rule to govern us in such matters, and we have adopted the truly Apostolic plan by which we have accomplished all at which they aimed. The truth of God, which we have held, has been plainly declared. A confession of faith in Christ, and in at least the prominent doctrines of Christianity, has been required of the candidate for baptism. By the principles thus set forth, we have judged the heretical among us, and wherever they agreed not with us, have excommunicated them from our Churches and our fellowship. The ideas which we have held of the spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ, have developed the principle of liberty of conscience, and debarred us from the infliction of bodily punishment, or the subjection of any civil disability. But the same views of the spirituality of the Church, have impressed upon us the necessity of excluding those who have violated the simplicity which is in Christ.

It is, therefore, gentlemen, in perfect consistency with the position of Baptists, as well as of Bible Christians, that the test of doctrine I have suggested to you, should be adopted. It is based upon principles and practices sanctioned by the authority of Scripture, and by the usage of our people. In so doing, you will be acting simply in accordance with propriety and righteousness. You will infringe the rights of no man, and you will secure the rights of those who have established here an instrumentality for the production of a sound Ministry. It is no hardship to those who teach here, to be called upon to sign the declaration of their principles, for there are fields of usefulness open elsewhere to every man, and none need accept your call who cannot conscientiously sign your formulary. And while all this is true, you will receive by this an assurance that the trust committed to you by the founders is fulfilling in accordance with their wishes, that the Ministry that go forth have here learned to distinguish truth from error, and to embrace the former, and that the same precious truths of the Bible which were so dear to the hearts of its founders, and which I trust are equally dear to yours, will be propagated in our Churches, giving to them vigor and strength, and causing them to flourish by the godly sentiments and emotions they will awaken within them. May God impress you deeply with the responsibility under which you must act in reference to it!

These, gentlemen, are the changes I would propose in Theological Institutions. To you I submit them as unto wise men; judge ye what I say. I feel confident that I need not ask you to consider them in a spirit of candid injury. The very subject with which they are connected, commends them to your attention. I believe that I address no one among you who is not deeply impressed with the value of Theological Education—who feels not his position as a guardian of its sacred trusts, whose sole desire, as before God, is not to fulfil those trusts in the manner best for the welfare of the cause of Christ, and for the increased efficiency of the Ministry to whom that cause is entrusted. With such men I feel that appeals are superfluous, and that changes, the scripturalness, practicability and importance of which seems so manifest, will be made the

subject of earnest prayer to God for guidance, and will secure your approval and adoption, if that guidance be vouchsafed.

I may be permitted to say, however, that we have reached a crisis in Theological Education. Some change has become necessary. The dissatisfaction which prevails in the denomination taking various forms in different individuals, is indicative of the common sentiment that our past efforts have been a failure. Had we labored alone in this cause, I might have believed this due to the want of a sufficiently elevated Institution. But the failures of other denominations at whose Institutions are pursued as extensive courses of study as can be compressed into three years, and who have in charge of Theological Education men of preeminent abilities and scholarship, show that the evil rests not entirely here. While, therefore, we seek a change by aiming to establish a Common Institution, let us see to it that our changes there and elsewhere are not confined to the extended facilities for scholarship we afford. As I have shown you, there are vital interests which in that case would be neglected—interests of ten-fold more importance than the single one the Institution would secure.

The changes I propose to you, neglect not these interests, nor the extensive scholarship at which others aim. They present facilities to all of our Ministry. They give to everyone those facilities he most needs. They offer inducements to secure the utmost progress possible. While they hold forth the possession of adequate scholarship as alone necessary, they contend for the possession of all knowledge as important. They urge upon the student such a consecration of every power to Christ as leads to the attainment of the highest possible learning. They provide the means by which the most extensive acquirements may be attained. They point out work before our thinking and reading men, the accomplishment of which will be of inestimable value of our denomination. They furnish the means for the proper education of our Missionaries, giving them the knowledge requisite to establish schools of Theology for the native preachers, and to instruct them in the truth at a period when a single error may result in irreparable injury to the progress of pure Christianity. And all of this is to be accomplished, if at any, at the most trifling additional expense, either of time, talent or labor.

The principles upon which these changes are based, are undoubtedly scriptural. Indeed, in the first case, and in the last, they are not simply based upon scriptural authority, but upon its injunctions and commands. So far, therefore, we seem to have no liberty to reject them.

The details by which they are to be carried out, it is acknowledged, rest simply upon their applicability to these principles, and the simple manner in which they seek their development. Any improvement here will be hailed as matter of additional advantage, and as cause for great rejoicing. It will be perceived that the great peculiarity of the plans proposed is, that they contemplate gathering all our students into a single Institution. The courses of study are all to be pursued conjointly. The several classes of young men are to be thrown together in the pursuit of their respective studies. It is for this, as opposed to any other method, that I would strenuously contend. The object is not the centralization of power in a single Institution, for I believe the adoption of these changes will make many Seminaries necessary. I advocate a single one now, because the demand for more than one does not exist. But it is that our young men may be brought into closer contact with each other. Various prejudices are arising in our denomination among the various classes of the Ministry. This would be my scheme to remove them. The young men should be so mingled together as to cause each class to recognise the value of the others, and thus truly to break down entirely any classification. Those who take the plain English course, will see the value of learning in the increased facilities for study it affords to their more favored companions. Those who have this learning, will see that many of the other

class are their superiors in piety, in devotion to God, in readiness to sacrifice for His cause, in willingness to be counted as nothing, so that Christ may be preached. The recognition of such facts will be mutually beneficial. The less educated Ministers will feel that they have the confidence and affection of their brethren; the better educated will know the esteem with which they are regarded, and the bonds of mutual love will yearly grow stronger, until we shall see a Ministry of different gifts, possessed of extensive attainments, thrown into entirely different positions in the field, yet laboring conjointly, mutually aiding and supporting one another in advancing the kingdom of Christ, in preaching His glorious gospel, in calling forth laborers into His field, and in fostering those influences which shall tend to the education of a sound and practical and able Ministry.

On the other hand, let these Institutions be separated, and the fate of our Theological Education is sealed. Jealousies and suspicions will be constantly awakened. The inadequacy of the one and the learning and fancied arrogance of the other, will be made the subject of mutual crimination. In some of our Churches prejudices will be excited against our largest, and on that account our most useful class of Ministers. In others, the value of learning will be despised. It will be thought that the mere knowledge of the English Scriptures is alone necessary. Ideas contrary to the education of any kind, will begin to be awakened, and unless the excitement of mutual jealousies, motives most unworthy, should sustain them, the instruction given in either kind of Institution will have to be abandoned.

Said I not truly then that we have reached a crisis in Theological Education? A change is demanded, and will certainly be made. But though indiscretion, it may be so made as to lead to the destruction of all our hopes, to the removal of all our present advantages, and to the substitution in their place only of such means of education as shall be mutually subversive. Let us avoid this change, and adopt such an one as shall confine all classes to a single Institution. If more than one be found necessary, let them all be conformed to this model. Let thorough training for each class be provided in them; and let us take advantage of the bonds which so strongly bind together fellow students to make the Theological Institution the means of begetting union, sympathy and love among our widely scattered Ministry.

It seems to me, gentlemen, that the opportunity you have to show that this is possible involves you in deep responsibility. The denomination will look to you to meet it. It will feel the momentous interests involved, the dangers which threaten, the advantages which may be gained, and the importance at the juncture of trying an experiment which may be a guide to all future efforts. Let me ask you, gentlemen, to meet all such just expectations, by candidly examining the necessity of the changes to which I have referred, and the adequacy of the remedies proposed. It is to your wisdom that I have submitted them. To your candor, to your love of truth, to your sense of the value of Theological Education, I commend them; and should you judge that thus the increase, the knowledge, the power and the soundness of our Ministry will be best advanced, I ask you to adopt them.