

AN
HISTORICAL DISCOURSE,
DELIVERED BEFORE THE
CHARLESTON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,
AT ITS
HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY,
HELD IN CHARLESTON IN NOVEMBER, 1851.

By JAMES C. FURMAN, A. M.
PROFESSOR SACRED RHETORIC, &C., IN FURMAN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION

CHARLESTON:
PRINTED BY A. J. BURKE, 40 BROAD-STREET.
1851

Charleston, 4th Nov., 1851.

REV. JAMES C. FURMAN,

DEAR BROTHER:

In pursuance of our appointment, we take pleasure in transmitting the subjoined resolution to you, passed unanimously by the Charleston Baptist Association, at its present, the Centenary Session of said Body, and in uniting our expression of the valuable service you have rendered, by *special request*, to the Association and the cause of religion, in the preparation and delivery of the “able and interesting historical sermon” before that Body, on this Anniversary.

We further solicit your compliance with the request in the resolution contained, viz.:
“Resolved, that the tanks of this Association be tendered to the Reverend James C. Furman, for the able and interesting historical sermon delivered, *by request*, before this, the Centennial Session of this Body; and that he be respectfully requested to furnish a copy for publication, in the Minutes of this meeting.”

We are truly and fraternally yours in christian bonds,

M. T. MENDENHALL,
H. W. MAHONEY,
JAMES P. BOYCE,
Committee

Charleston, Nov. 4, 1851.

DEAR BRETHREN:

I do not feel myself at liberty to decline such a request as that which you have tendered to me in behalf of the Association. The manuscript shall therefore be at your disposal.

With a grateful sense of the personal kindness which you have taken occasion to express, in conveying to me the resolution of the Association; and with warm Christian regards, I am yours in our common Lord and Saviour,

JAMES C. FURMAN.

DR. M. T. MENDENHALL,
REV. H. W. MAHONEY, and
JAMES P. BOYCE
Committee.

SERMON.

Deut. 32:7 "Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations."

Among the most important and interesting phenomena of the human mind is the expectation of the future. Considered as a mere looking forward to time to come, it is shared by man in common with irrational creations. Beasts, birds, and insects anticipate future days. "The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed season, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming." The winter's hive is crowded with a thoughtful population, enjoying the fruits of their foresight; and the cell of the ant affords equal evidence of wise provision for future necessities. In man, however, no season, no measure of months for years, not even the term of earthly existence, limits his anticipation. Human hope includes an expectation which gazes toward the unknown and the endless; desires which, while eminently significant of our destiny, are among the most vigorous and the most numerous impulses of our nature.

Associated with this attribute of rational beings is the power to review the past. The former, indeed, without the latter, would be a blind instinct. For competent as it may be to creative power to form beings in no way dependent for a knowledge of the future upon the experience or study of the past, creatures whose splendid intuition should make them instant masters of the knowledge appropriate to their own sphere, ---it is certain that the Creator has not produced such creatures in producing man. Formed as we are, the past is in every sense necessary to the future. The future, either as affording the means of illustration, or as constituting the material of reasoning. The past, then, is an ample store-house, whose wards are full of precious things, and wise reflection is the master-key which unlocks the treasure.

Of the knowledge of the past, the most interesting and impressive is that which relates to persons, and especially that which relates to individuals. So superior is the knowledge which relates to persons, to that from the connexion of things with persons. And this knowledge acquires its highest interest, when it assumes the minute and specific character of individual history. A *true* biography of *any* human being would, without faith, excite universal interest—a fact to which two British essayists, in some respects, very much alike, though in others very dissimilar, Johnson and Carlyle, have, each in his own characteristic manner, adverted. We read the Pentateuch with a deeper interest in Moses, than in the whole college of the Seventy Elders. And in view of this fact, we may be allowed by the way to remark, that we are furnished with a striking and effective proof of the goodness of God, in employing the history of the man Christ Jesus as a medium of religious instruction. We can conceive of no work of a different form equal to *The Gospels* in the power to awaken attention, to touch the heart, to stamp impressions on the memory, to affect, indeed, all the powers and capacities of man's nature, which are affected when that nature is subjected to the process of tuition.

Next, as we have intimated, to the knowledge of individual man, stands the knowledge of *social* man. To communicate this knowledge is the great end of history.

Of the societies into which mankind are gathered, each class derives its interest from various sources. Among these sources are their origin, the ends at which they aim, the principles by which they are governed, and, in some cases, the personal character of their founders, and that of their members. Societies have existed in the regions of

barbarism, yet we scarcely regret the absence of records, where only the lowest of wants of man's nature have been regarded, and even these in a most imperfect manner. The most meager annals of one generation in a Caffrarian kraal, would extinguish our thirst for further knowledge of their history. Societies have existed amid the blaze of civilization, but their objects have been trivial and frivolous. Amusement and sport were their sole design. They have ceased to exist, and no one regrets that their memorial is perished with them. Other societies under the same circumstances have been formed, which have aspired to more solid results. They have aimed to increase and diffuse knowledge. Under their labors colleges have arisen, libraries have been gathered, minds have been educated, and coy science drawn from her natural retreats, has been persuaded to open her luminous pages, and sit down to the work of teaching mankind the truth of things. Such societies are the boast of nations – and justly so, for they are blessings to mankind. Kingdoms and states are societies of another class : and where they accomplish their legitimate end, secure the civil rights of the individuals subject to their dominion. The scope of their operation is exceedingly wide, and the accomplishment of their design exceedingly important; and these topics, viz., the character and doings of civil societies, which lays claim to higher consideration than that which is due to any other. It claims the peculiar sanction of a divine origin, for, in a higher sense than civil government, it has God for its author. Its ends are the most exalted that any creature, or any society of creatures, can contemplate; for it embraces the glory of the Divine Being, and the greatest possible good of the universal family of man. Its principles are they pure, fixed, eternal verities of God's moral government; for where it is true to itself, true to its obligations and designs, it believes nothing, does nothing, teaches nothing, but what has been divinely taught, or divinely commanded; while the men by whose labors societies of this class may have been gathered, and the persons embraced within them have for the most part been among "the excellent of the earth," characters lustrous in the eyes of angels, because clothed with that highest beauty, the beauty of moral worth.

Such is the true character in which a Church of Jesus Christ stands before us. And if to the Israelites, gathered into the theocratic society of which they were members, reason and a divine commandment made it a duty to review the past, to "remember the days of old," and to "consider the years of many generations," it is surely incumbent on us to do so, in respect of the Churches of Christ; more particularly when occasions arise, which strongly remind us of the lapse of time, and which, as they give us an elevated stand-point, where we may pause and look back, afford us the best preparation for our future journey.

Such an occasion is the present. In the good providence of God, the Charleston Baptist Association is just completing its hundredth year. We are naturally reminded of the great events in the history of human kind, with which the scroll of this century is written within and without – the changes of empire, - the progress of nations, - the discoveries of science, - the improvements of art, - the establishment of the noblest republic the world has ever seen, and the ominous cracking of its foundations, - the resuscitation in Christendom of the Apostolic idea of duty to the Heathen, - the appearance of remarkable men, of the Cincinnatus of modern history, - of the soldier, who with the blood of nations, has written his name along with those of Alexander, and Caesar, and Charlemagne, - and of the modern Paul, that man of a martyr spirit, who around American Christianity from her slumbers over the unrelieved agonies of perishing

paganism, and seizing her hand, conducted her timid steps to the field where she might reap honor to her Master, and joy to herself; --who, like Moses bringing water from the smitten rock for a thirsting multitude, has given a translated Bible to ignorant millions--who, having actually resisted unto *blood* striving against sin, and bearing in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus, like a warrior covered with scars of honor, and never conquered, sank into the heat of combat, "with his back to the field, and his face to the foe." And has found a sublime repose in the most fitting cemetery which earth could afford; where, to the eye and the ear of faith, the light of heaven illuminates the epitaph which the solemn winds unceasingly rehearse. "The sea shall give up its dead," and "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever." Such events form parts of the magnificent picture of the last hundred years : but, though we are reminded of them, yet our business does not allow us to consider them. Like the traveller, who, from some lofty peak, has gazed with sublime emotions upon the wide amphitheatre of mountains – its thousand pinnacles tipped with the gold of the setting sun – and then descending, has felt the play of other, but not less grateful feelings, as he has entered a sequestered valley, and made his way amid its quiet cottages, we pass these things by, to attend to others, which belong to the class of the less observed of human events.

A full review of the history of the Charleston Association would dwell upon accounts of the men by whom it was founded, and of those by whom its affairs have subsequently been conducted. This is an inviting field, but we cannot enter it now. Of these men of God, whose works in other respects follow them, the written and the printed memorials are indeed imperfect; yet they constitute materials for a fuller notice than it would be practicable, under present circumstances, to take. Our retrospect must be confined to the progress of the body itself over the pathway of the past. If, from her starting place to the stile at which she now rests, she has pursued her course, by the way-marks of truth and duty – then her way will have been as Wisdom's way, "pleasantness," and "peace;" – the pleasantness of usefulness to men, and the peace of the divine approval.

With the Charleston Baptist Association thus before us, a question naturally arises, What is an Association? To this question we answer: an Association is a body made up of "delegates from Churches voluntarily appointing such delegates to represent them, for the purpose of consulting and acting with other Churches upon matters of common interest." There is an early document of the Charleston Association, under the name of A Summary of Church Discipline, and which really served for years as the constitution of the body, in which, respecting Associations, it is said, "such a conjunction of Churches is not expressly commanded in Scripture; yet it received sufficient countenance from the light of nature, and the general laws of society; but more especially from a precedent established by Apostolical authority, recorded Acts xv. chap.)* Further, it is said, "The Association thus formed is a respectable body, as it represents not a city, country, or a nation, but the Churches of Jesus Christ. Yet it is by no means to be deemed a superior judicature vested with coercive power or authority over the Churches: it presumes not to impose its sentiments on its constituents on pain of excommunication; nor doth it anathematize those who do not implicitly submit to its determination," &c.

* It is to be regretted that this article does not define in what particulars, and to what extent, this case it to be regarded as a precedent. There was a peculiarity in that case which can never exist in any other, viz., the presence of Apostles.

“The Baptist Association, therefore, arrogates no higher title than that of an Advisory Council, consistently with which epithet it ought ever to act, when it acts at all, without intruding on the rights of independent congregational Churches, or usurping authority over them: Matt. xxiii. 10-12.” These views are substantially re-affirmed in the Constitution adopted at the ninety-ninth anniversary.

The references here made to “Churches,” make it necessary to enquire into the meaning of the term Church, as understood by Baptists, when applied to an organized society upon earth. In “Summary of Church Discipline” we have this language: “A particular Gospel Church consists of a company of saints incorporated by a special covenant into one distinct body, and meeting together in one place, for the enjoyment of fellowship with each other, and with Christ their head, in all his institutions, to their mutual edification, and the glory of God, through the Spirit.” (Sum. Of Disc. P. 4) “A Gospel-Church is not national by congregational.” “A Church *** has the *** power of government within itself, having Christ for its head, and his law for its rule. It has the power and privilege of choosing its own officers, Acts vi. 3, xiii. 2; exercising its own discipline, Matt. xviii. 17; and of administering the word and ordinances for the edification and comfort of its members, Acts ii. 46. All which, with every other act of discipline, each distinct Church may exercise, without being subject to the cognizance of any other Church, Presbytery, Synod, or Council, whatever: 1 Cor. v. 12, Matt. xviii. 17.” Sum. Of C. D. pp. 5,6.)

These views Baptists profess to hold as the result of a strict interpretation of the sacred records. To borrow a phrase from the vocabulary of politics, they are *strict constructionists*. With them scriptural precepts are authoritative to *the very letter*, except in the case where the reason of a precept is apparent, and that reason would demand a departure from the letter, in order to secure compliance with the spirit of a precept. Thus they do not feel themselves bound to anoint their head when they fast, since this was commanded the hearers of our Lord in order that they might avoid public notice; and they doing of it *now*, would invite that notice. With this exception, they consider themselves bound to yield exact obedience to divine commands. In like manner the form given to the Churches, founded by the Apostles, and the conduct of those Churches under the training of those inspired teachers, they regard as authoritative examples – the highest style of precedents. It is not argument with them, that there is no section of the New Testament which treat exclusively, and at length, upon the nature of a Church of Christ: its form, its officers, its government, its ends. There is no one spot in nature where flowers and vegetables grow according to scientific arrangement – and yet the classifications of botany only reveal the plan of the Creator. The Scriptures themselves gives us their great doctrinal truths without exact method, yet none can doubt that a perfect system underlies them all. In the absence of any such special treatise, they find the inspired writers employing the word church “in the singular number upward of fifty times, and the word churches upward of thirty times,” as denoting the idea of “a society of believers, who meet in one place for worship of God, and for the united observance of the ordinances of the gospel.” (Cromwell’s Church Member’s Manual, p.35.) In such authority as this, they, as has been said of Roger Williams, “feel the rocky foundation of their strength.”

To those who object to the principle of their interpretation, and who plead for a laxer rule, they reply, that an Apostle commended a Church or keeping the ordinances as they had been delivered unto them.

They acknowledge no sympathy with those latitudinarian views, which allow human notions of expediency to determine the forms of church organizations, so that, chameleon-like, they shall vary with the varying hues of neighboring objects. They dare not take the stand of a great modern master of Ecclesiastical history, Neander, who, while he admits a particular form as given to the Churches by the Apostles, “under the direction of the Spirit of God,” – and further admits that “it was best adapted to the circumstances and relations of the Church at that time,” and “was also best suited to the extension of the Churches in their peculiar condition, and for the development of the inward principles of their communion, yet assumes that, excepting the great principles of truth on which the Church was united, every thing “is mutable:” that “forms” “may change with every change of circumstances.” “Particular forms of Church Government,” he says, “may be more or less suited to the nature of the Christian Church; and we may add, no none is absolutely perfect, neither are all alike good under all circumstances.” (Colman’s Prim. Ch. Introd. by N.) Now, to Baptists, a practice pursued under the sanction of inspired men, is the highest reason for their adopting it, provided principles taught by the same men do not forbid their doing so.

To those who question the *accuracy* of their interpretation of the sacred record, they refer to the very strong corroboration of their views derived from most unquestionable sources. In reference to the earliest Churches, Mosheim says : “Each individual Church which had a Bishop, or Presbyter, of its own, assumed to itself the form and rights of a little distinct republic, or commonwealth; and with regard to its internal concerns, was wholly regulated by a code of laws, that, if they did not originate with, had at least received the sanction of the people constituting such Church.” To the same effect says Neander : “In regard to the relations of the Presbyters to the Churches, they were appointed not to exercise unlimited authority, but to act as the leaders and rules of ecclesiastical republics; to transact every thing in connection with the Church, not as lords of the same, but as its servants.” (C. Prim. Ch. P. 48.) Again, we have this statement from Mosheim : “Although all the Churches were, in this first stage of Christianity, united together in one common bond of faith and love, and were in every respect ready to promote the interest and welfare of each other by a reciprocal interchange of good offices, yet, with regard to government and internal economy, every individual Church considered itself as an independent community, none of them ever looking beyond the circle of its own members for assistance, or recognizing any sort of external influence, or authority. Neither in the New Testament, nor in any ancient document whatever, do we find any thing recorded, from which it might be inferred that any of the minor Churches were at all dependent on, or looked up for direction to those of greater magnitude or consequence. On the contrary, several things occur therein which put it out of all doubt, that every one of them enjoyed the same rights, and was considered being on a footing of the most perfect equality with the rest.” (Id. pp. 48, 49) Time would fail us to quote the other authorities which support the same view. We would only refer to two names. The first is that of Sir Peter King, (afterward Lord High Chancellor of England,) author of “An Inquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity, and Worship of the Primitive Church,” &c. In reference to this work, Mr. Wesley says, in his Journal : “On the road I read over Lord King’s account of the Primitive Church. In spite of the vehement prejudice of my education, I was ready to believe that his was a fair and impartial draught: but, if so, it would follow that Bishops and Presbyters are (essentially) of one

order: and that, originally, every Christian congregation was a Church independent on all others.” This conviction, no doubt, was the basis of that impassioned exhortation which the earnest old man made to Dr. Coke, against his assuming prelatical distinctions.

The other name to which we refer, is that of the present Archbishop of Dublin, to whose intellect a higher compliment can scarcely be paid than has been paid to it, in the fact that Alexander Carson pronounces him the ablest logician of the age. “Though there was one Lord, one faith, one baptism for all of these,” says Dr. Whately, in reference to the early Churches, “yet they were each a distinct, independent community on earth, united by the common principles on which they were founded by their mutual agreement, affection, and respect; but not having any one recognized head on earth, or acknowledging any sovereignty of one of those societies over others . . . Each Bishop originally presided over one entire Church.” (Kingdom of Christ, pp. 110, 136).

With this unquestionably testimony in support of the correctness of their own opinions respecting the character of the primitive Churches, and satisfied of the obligation to adhere to them as model institutions, the Baptists would cling to the independence of the Churches, if they could see *no* reason for preferring one form to another. Such, however, is not the case. Beside that highest of all reasons which is found in what they regard as the Divine appointment, they see no other reasons which lie in the motion of holiness. Two of these reasons we must mention. The first is, the independence of the Churches sets up an effectual barrier against the danger of worldliness, arising from the accumulation of power in the hands of ecclesiastical officers. Where single persons have control over large numbers of other persons, political parties and ambitious men regard their opposition as formidable, and consequently court their favor. If this control is the spontaneous natural result of the possession of eminent virtue, that very virtue is a guarantee against its misuse. On the power, since it subjects him who wields it to constant solicitations to its misuse. To this danger, (against which the Great Head of the Church has set up a safeguard in the independence of the Churches,) the members of a hierarchy are signally exposed. Ecclesiastical History, falsely so called, made up, as it is, of account of provincial Churches, and state religions, - those human improvements on a divine plan - is full of facts which illustrate this view. It shows us scenes, where, instead of piety, we witness intrigue with its whisperings and low contrivances, and envy with its colorless lips, and fierce anger with its glaring eye, and its quick, hot breath - it shows us “vaulting ambition” displaying itself as zeal for the Lord of Hosts; it shows us men absolutely, preeminently worldly - proud, deceitful, and cruel - calling themselves the servants of Jesus Christ - servants of the meek and lowly Jesus!

These are evils which can never exist among those who, believing, in their simplicity, that “the foolishness of God is wise than men,” can never be induced to surrender the independence of the Churches for any form that human policy can suggest.

Immortal honor has settled upon the brow of the founder of Rhode Island - the first statesman building up a government upon the acknowledged rights of conscience as the corner-stone. By the chief glory of Roger Williams is not a political discovery - by the honest carrying out of the New Testament idea of what constitutes a Church. Let the world adopt these views, and religious persecution comes to a perpetual end. It is true some times said every sect has persecuted in its turn. The charge is untrue. The Baptists - from a sentiment very different from denominational pride - may glory in their ability to

plead not guilty to the charge, and in the fact that they *never can* persecute while they adhere to God's word.

The other reason in which we propose to mention, is the bearing of this system of Church order upon individual character. Much is gained for human virtue, whether in the family, the State, or the Church, when each member is impressed with a sense of personal moral accountability. It is important to prevent the individual's feeling himself lost in the mass. In bodies which have their own government in their own hands, whose members chose their own officers, and interpret and apply their laws, this vital sentiment – the sense of responsibility – is kept in healthful activity. And, if, on this principle, the republic is a good a school for the development of the highest grade of citizen character, on the same principle, the independent Church is the best organization for the cultivation of that type of Christian character, which results from social influences.

Long as we have dwelt upon this topic, we cannot dismiss it without adverting to an objection sometimes made to our theory of Church organization. The objection is founded on the alleged *weakness of independent Churches*. It is assumed that, considering Church organization as an instrument of power for the accomplishment of purposes where union is necessary to results aimed at, a number of members distributed into independent Churches would be weaker than the same number congregated into one mass, and brought under the action and control of a central power. We grant that this is so in some cases. At the same time, we do not allow that the weakness, which is thus admitted, is an argument against the Divine origin of the plan of government in which it is found. For on what does the weakness depend? The only real hindrances to union and efficiency among Independent Churches, are ignorance of the Scriptures, and a sickly piety – the want of light, and the want of love. Give them light and love, and they are strong enough for all purposes. The oneness of views, and the genuine sympathies which spring out of an enlightened piety, draw such Churches together in the prosecution of common ends; and just in proportion as just principles prevail among them, and right feelings sway their hearts, will their union be delightful, strong, and efficacious. No ecclesiastical body in America can compare with the Congregationalists, in the extent of their efforts to spread among the heathen the knowledge of salvation. Baptist Associations are feeble bodies, hanging loosely together, and accomplishing little, only where God's word is little studied, and true religion is low. On the other hand, where personal piety flourishes, the same bodies are instinct with life, bound together by a three-fold cord, and laboriously active in the promotion of holiness, although it may be, like their Divine Exemplar, noiselessly, and without parade. Now we ask, whether it is not probable beforehand that a holy God, who has given his word, and who imparts his spirit for the promotion of holiness on earth, would, in establishing human societies for the same purpose, make knowledge and holiness indispensable conditions of their success? If, in the absence of these, independent Churches are weak, in that weakness any evidence that their organization is not from God? Nay, were they efficient, while these elements of sacred power were wanting, would not that fact constitute just ground to fear that they were contrivances of human policy? Does not the very necessity for knowledge of the truth, and for love of the truth, under which they are placed, authenticate their system as from God? Is not, in fine, the simple arrangement of Church independency, the Divine handwriting renewing an ancient but most important lesson, "Not by might or by wisdom, nor by power: but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

If the opinions which we have now expressed to be just, we see that a Church of Jesus Christ is a society of its own kind, (*sui generis*.) It has no perfect types in any human society. It is subject to the will of an absolute sovereignty, yet it differs from any monarchy in the part which its members perform in interpreting and applying the laws which govern it. It is not a republic, for its tribunals consist not of representatives, but of the whole body. It is not a democracy, for no vote of the largest majority can change the constitutional code. It is, in fact, as Alexander Carson, in his "Reasons for separating from the General Synod of Ulster," has styled it, a *Christocracy*. And this was the idea which the fathers of the Charleston Association expressed, when they said, "An Association is a respectable body, as it represents not a city, country, or nation, by *the Churches of Jesus Christ*."

In looking back, then, upon the past history of the Charleston Association, the question, which justly takes precedence of all others, is, have the inalienable rights of the Churches been respected? Another union – a union for secular purposes – the theory of which, in the mind of the sage of Monticello, is said to have been a reflection of Baptist usage, has risen in giant proportions before mankind. It is at this moment a subject of painful study. Eyes which once delighted to gaze upon its past as glorious, and full of thrilling reminiscences, now look to its future as portentous. The mere agent, it is feared, will supplant his employers; and as the most formidable of all tyrants is the crowned slave, sober minds begin to apprehend the destruction of the most sacred rights, - the rights of conscience, of property, and of life, - under an unwieldy usurpation, rendered the more odious by the value of the principles it will have trodden down, in its ascent to power. From this scene we turn to a union not of States, but of Churches; and we ask, how have these men, who fear God, demeaned themselves? They have passed not three, but four quarters of a century. In all that time, has any Church complained of a trespass on its rights? There has not been a whisper of complaint. And the harmony which subsists to-day through all your borders, is an impressive lesson on the importance of respecting the fundamental principles of a compact – a beautiful comment on the truth – that "the effect of righteousness is peace."

So far as we have been able to examine the recorded doing of the Association, there has been a tender and scrupulous regard to what belongs to the Churches. If there be a solitary exception, it is found in the rather synodical tone a resolution of 1839, in which a menace of expulsion is made against a Church that might fail to adopt the course, in regard to ordination, recommended by the Association the preceding year. The spirit of this resolution is in so strong contrast with the customary spirit of the Association, and with the spirit of former resolutions upon the very same subject, (1791,) that we can account for its passage only on the supposition of inadvertence. We feel very sure that as an act of the body it is a dead letter. Ordinarily the body has, with modest dignity, given then gravest counsels as respectful recommendations to the Churches.

This brings us to consider the manner in which the Association has fulfilled its functions as *an Advisory Council*. "In the multitude of counselors there is safety;" for the same question will appear in different aspects to different minds; and even an inferior mind will sometimes aid a stronger one to solve a difficulty, which either of them alone could not have mastered. This is one reason for the value of religious counsel.

Again. We are so constituted, that in addition to the affections – say of reverence, admiration, love, &c. – excited by truth itself, there are affections of a like kind produced

by the character of the sources whence, or the channels through which, the truth is derived to us. The same words uttered by one person may offend – if uttered by another by heard with indifference—or if by a third person, may deeply touch our feelings. In this fact lies the philosophy of the Divine rule for religious teachers, “speaking the truth in love;” it being a general law, founded on the principle of “like producing like,” that the instructor who is moved by sincere affection for the taught, will excite a sentiment in them answering to his own. No more interesting and promising relation between the givers and the receivers of instruction can exist, than does exist between a serious religious people, and their own counselors and guides, chosen by themselves, imbosomed in their confidence, respect, and affection. Now this is but the picture of a connexion between an Association and the members of the Churches, and the circular letters, (which are extant,) show how well, in the case before us, this relationship has been fulfilled. Some of these queries were so easy of solution, that there would seem to have been no special reason for putting them: but they are honored with patient and respectful answers. Other were of a kind which pious people, with limited means of information, might well be expected to entertain. To these, also, opposite responses are given in the same spirit of kind consideration. Others still, were of a kind which would originate in the minds looking acutely into moral questions, and searching diligently for the will of God – and to these, answers were returned full of deep spiritual wisdom. A compilation of these answers – touching, as they do, upon points of Church polity, Church discipline, Christian doctrine, and Christian ethics – would be a valuable manual. It would contain the results of grave and elaborate thought upon subjects on which many minds, without aid, find it difficult to decide. Of how much use they were, as they were delivered to relieve the doubts of the conscientious, we may conjecture. As to the Circular Letters, we might speak of the solid thought, and the chaste and masculine style by which many of them, at least, are distinguished. But we pass them by to say – what is more relevant to our present purpose – that they are characterized by a deep and fervent spirit of piety. He who reads them, will feel himself in communion with men who feared God, and were pursuing His glory with a steadfast and earnest aim. A volume of these would take their place in that class of books which, had they the gift of speech, might say, “We have an unction from the Holy One;” – books, in the perusal of which, the reader is conscious that his vision is introverted, his conscience quickened, and his best affections deeply stirred; books, which constitute the gold and the precious stones of literature.

In Apostolic times, the members of certain Churches sent aid to others more destitute than themselves. From particular Churches, Ministries received compensation for labors bestowed on others. “I robbed other Churches,” says Paul to the Corinthian Church, “taking wages of them to do you service.” And in some instances, Churches *were united* in these acts of holy enterprize and kindness. Such an association certainly existed among “the Churches of Macedonia.” A “brother whose praise in the Gospel was in all the Churches,” was chosen by the Churches of Macedonia to accompany the Apostle Paul as an almoner of their bounty. To this brother, and to another whom he “had oftentimes proved diligent in many things,” the Apostle refers, by saying – “if our brethren by enquired of, they are *the messengers of the Churches*, and the glory of Christ.” Has the Charleston Association been conformed to *this* model? This is our enquiry.

There are no printed Minutes of the body extant earlier than those of 1775. And the original “Minutes Book,” of which Dr. Manly had the use, in the preparation of his “Discourse, containing some Fragments of the History of the Baptist Church in Charleston, S.C.”* has unfortunately been lost. This much, however, we know, that in 1775, they entered upon the work of Missions in the State. A noble example! For their numbers must have been very small – but three Churches being present at the formation of the body; and the whole number in 1775, after a lapse of twenty-four years, being only nine. Like ancient Israel, prepared by the discipline of trials for works of faith and labors of love, they seem to have learned not to “despise the day of small things.” And though beholders who knew not the ground of their confidence might have said: “What do these feeble Jews? Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall;” yet they themselves, conscious of their true resources, would have said: “The God of Heaven, he will prosper us; therefore, we his servants will arise and build.” Providence signally seconded their efforts. Their first “messenger” was an eminent man of God – “as an itinerant inferior to none but Whitfield.” This was John Gano. Mr. Gano went to his grave after having labored, with distinguished success, in the South, the North, and the West, in various capacities, as a Missionary, a Chaplain in the Army during the Revolutionary War, and as a Pastor. He raised the standard around which baptized believers first gathered in New-York city. Of him, a friend who loved him “much in the Lord,” but whose judgment was never betrayed by his feelings, has said: “As a Minister of Christ, he shone has a star of the first magnitude in the American Churches, and moved in a widely extended field of action. For this office God had endowed him with a large portion of grace, and with excellent gifts. He lives to a good old age; served his generation according to the will of God; saw his posterity multiplying around him; his country independent, free, and happy; the Church of Christ, for which he felt and labored, advancing, and thus he closed his eyes in peace, his heart expanding with the sublime hope of immortality and heavenly bliss. Like John the harbinger of our Redeemer “he was a burning and shining light, and many rejoiced in his light.” Resembling the sun, he rose with morning brightness, advanced regularly to his station of meridian splendor, and then declined with mild effulgence till he disappeared without a cloud to intercept his rays, or obscure his glory.”*

In the Minutes of 1775 we have this entry: “Agreed to recommend to our Churches, to contribute to the relief of our brethren suffering under ecclesiastical oppressions in the *Massachusetts Bay*. And that the money raised by sent to the Rev. Oliver Hart, to be by him remitted to the Rev. Isaac Bachus, for that purpose.”

In the difficulties with the mother country in which Massachusetts became involved, South Carolina was the first of the Colonies to place herself by her side. The Baptists of South Carolina, who joined in the first patriot movement, no doubt lent their whole influence to the support of Massachusetts. Has the memory of this ancient friendship perished in the State, and in the Churches? South Carolina holds the *tessara* (the white stone) which commemorates it; and the Baptists of South Carolina look with sorrow, for Massachusetts’ sake, upon the spirit which could close the door of Baptists pulpits on a successor of Oliver Hart!

* This discourse we have used as authority for some of the statements in this discourse.

* Dr. Furman’s Account of Rev. John Gano, in Benedict’s History of the Baptists.

The course of action thus begun has since been continued, under some varieties of mode, and doubtless with some variations of zeal; yet substantially in the same spirit. Indeed, the Domestic Missionary operations of the Savannah River, and the Welsh Neck Associations – those noble scions of the old stock – and others which have grown out of these, are but fruit from a common root. To the labors of evangelical charity, begun as we have seen, we may trace the maintenance of Churches while in the feebleness of infancy, or when debilitated by other causes; the establishment of Churches where there were none, and the effectual preaching of the word of life to many immortal beings. “The wilderness and the solitary place have been glad for them; and the desert has rejoiced and blossomed as the rose.”

In 1802, the Association established its mission among the Catawba Indians. This pious enterprize was continued for several years. Its good effects were in the end destroyed by a terrible cause, which indeed was too relentless to spare the very life of this remnant of a *once* sober people. The almost total extinction of the tribe is to be set down to the account of white men – and to be placed in that category of multitudinous ills, the evils of intemperance.

In 1813, Luther Rice, just returned from India, appeared at its session held with one of the mother Churches, the Welsh Neck, after delivering a communication in writing, addressed the body at length. The Minutes contain a synopsis of this address. “These communications,” they add, “were received with much satisfaction.” A report upon them was made by a committee consisting of Dr. Furman, Gen. Thomas, and Rev. J. B. Cook, and contained a plan of action – which being submitted, “passed unanimously in the affirmative.” Before this time, the Pastor of the Charleston Church, who was in the habit of correspondence with brethren in England, had been employed in sending aid from his own Church, to the supporters of the Baptist Mission in the East. Indeed, as early as the year 1800, the same Church had presented a query for the consideration of the Association, in these words: “Is there not, at this time, a call in Providence for our Churches to make the most serious exertions, in union with other Christians of various denominations, to send the Gospel among the heathen, or to such people who, though living in countries where the Gospel revelation is known, do not enjoy a standing ministry, and the regular administration of divine ordinances among them?” A part of the answer to this query is as follows: “There appears, indeed, to be a *general* call of Providence for all the Churches of Christ to make serious exertions to diffuse Gospel light and liberty among the heathen who known not God and our Redeemer: but the *particular* call to *us* seems to be, to turn our attention to that description of persons mentioned in the latter party of the query.” But now Providence opening the way, the Association at once fell into line with the Baptists of Boston, Philadelphia, and other places, in this movement against the gray battlements of idolatry. Accordingly, when the Moderator reported at the meeting of the body in 1814, (at Beulah,) the Constitution and Address of the General Convention held in Philadelphia for Missionary purposes, and the participation in that meeting of himself and Judge Talmage, as Delegates appointed by the Special Committee of the Churches, and asked for a decided and public expression of the sentiments of the Association on the subject, they unanimously approved the measures taken, and commended them to “the cordial and firm support” of the Churches. Since that day she has never furled the banner thus flung to the breeze.

It is time that we bring in review the manner in which she has regarded another object of general interest, and intimately related to those which have engaged our attention – *the Education of the Ministry*.

On questions of religious duty, about which different opinions may exist, a body like an Association will, from a principle already adverted to, be almost certain to hold those opinions deliberately maintained by its Ministers. The Ministers who signed the articles of the associational union in “Charlestown” in 1752, in ratification of what had been done the year before, were John Stephens, Oliver Hart, Francis Pelot, John Brown, and Joshua Edwards. Of Mr. Stephens it is enough to say, that as the Pastor of Ashley River Church, he was the successor of a man of learning – the Rev. Isaac Chanler. Mr. Hart, the Pastor of the Charleston Church, after his license to preach, had been under the tuition of Rev. Isaac Eaton, Pastor of the Church of Hopewell, N.J.; “the first man,” as says Benedict, “among the American Baptists, who set up a school for the education of youths for the ministry.” He here had known the fellowship of a student’s life with such men as Dr. Hezekiah Smith, and Dr. James Manning, 1st President of Rhode Island College. Mr. Pelot, the Pastor of the Euhaw Church, was a man of letters. Of Mr. Brown, and Mr. Edwards, we know that they represented a Church, (the Welsh Neck,) a remarkable feature of whose history, (considering them as a country Church,) and a striking evidence of their just valuation of the ministry, is that for more than a century they have never consented to close their doors upon the Lord’s Day. In an Association, with such men to lead the public sentiment, we naturally expect to find the friends of education, notwithstanding the failure of some to appreciate its importance and its claims. In 1756-7, some funds were gathered by the body, and aid was thus extended to young men, among whose names are those of Pugh, Stillman, and Botsford. This effort seems to have given way to the formation of a society under the name of the Religious Society, which, among other objects, contemplated education as the primary one.

In 1733, Messrs. Hart, Pelot, and Gano, “addressed the Baptist Associations throughout America in favor of a plan of contribution for augmenting the funds of Rhode Island College,” and Messrs. Hart and Williams were nominated to receive contributions for that Institution, and to transmit the same to Col. Job Bennet in Newport.” The Mr. Williams here mentioned, was the son of Rev. Robert Williams,* (of the Welsh Neck Church,) and the father of David R. Williams, formerly Governor of South Carolina.

Causes, which we cannot now with accuracy trace, but among which must be numbered the effects of a state of war upon the condition of religion, seem to have diverted the attention of the Churches from the subject of education for a series of years. The circular letter of 1785 brought it up again, in an earnest appeal. In 1789, a proposition was submitted to recommend a mode for forming funds in the several Churches, in order assist pious young men in their studies for the ministry. Accordingly, the general outlines of a plan were submitted and adopted the following year. Thus originated “The General Committee of the Charleston Baptist Association Fund,” the Chairman of which submitted a system of rules, which were considered at two annual meetings, and having been approved of by the Association in 1792, were then ratified by the Committee. At once the body entered upon this work. And from that time to the present, it has continued its agency on this behalf. During this period it has, as the

* Rob. Williams is mentioned by Benedict as an instrument of great good to the early Churches of North Carolina.

minister of an enlightened and far-reaching Christian kindness, extended its helping hand to near sixty young men. To a very small portion of these, its aid consisted in the donation of books. The larger part received the more substantial advantages of scholastic education, of greater or less extent. In these benefactions, young men of promise from Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia, have shared, in common with those from this State. Among those from North Carolina are the names of the Rev. Dr. Brantley, the Rev. I. L. Brooks, and the Rev. P. W. Dowd. And it is a delightful reminiscence, on which no friend of the Charleston Association can dwell without grateful emotions, that upon its list of early beneficiaries stands the name of that eminent "man of God," the venerable founder of Mercer University – an institution of noble purpose – in whose growing prosperity and usefulness, Fathers and Brethren of the Charleston Association, you have a special right to rejoice.

At an early period of the history of the Baptist General Convention, the Moderator of this Association brought before that body the claims of ministerial education – in the same spirit of serious conviction and earnest advocacy, with which he had presented the same subject some twenty years previous, in the circular letter of the body. This movement had an instantaneous effect. It stirred the Northern mind on the subject. At the meeting of this Association in 1817, the letter from the Boston Association "was read with much interest and cordial approbation." It contained "a judicious and animated address to our Churches at large, recommending to them a vigorous co-operation in measure for promoting the education of pious young men designed for the gospel ministry; and for the erection of one Theological Seminary, or more, for this purpose." Such a Seminary having been set on foot in Philadelphia, by the General Convention, and Dr. Staughton appointed to office, we find the General Committee making contributions – as much in 1820 as \$500 – toward its support. When the Columbian College superseded this earlier design, it obtained large donations within the bounds of this Association, and was supplied with students.

In the meantime the Baptist interest in South Carolina having considerably increased, the desire was felt to erect a platform upon which the different Associations might meet. The Minutes of 1819 contain the following article. "Query from the Church at the High Hills of Santee: 'Would not the formation of a General Association, composed of delegates from the several Baptist Associations in South Carolina, be desirable and advantageous to the interests of the Baptist denomination, and the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom in general?' Answered in the affirmative unanimously. And the Moderator, agreeably to notice and recommendation contained in the letter from the Church in Charleston, brought forward the subject in a more enlarged form, with a plan for promoting Education and Missionary interests: which was accompanied by a serious address to our sister Associations; the spirit and design of which were highly approved by the Association, and a committee composed of Dr. Furman, Dr. Roberts, and Mr. Cook, was appointed to revise the same, fix upon a day for the proposed meeting, sign the address in behalf of this body, and send it to the different Associations concerned." This is the germ of "The State Convention of the Baptist Denomination in South Carolina."

For a history of the Convention this is not the proper place. This much, however, it behoves us to say, that to the interests of education its attention has been mainly directed; and that to the special agency which it has been conducting, the cause of

religion and virtue is more largely indebted than even those of its own friends who have not taken pains to enquire, may be aware. To its operation, the Churches of the State are indebted, for the larger part of its most useful pastors. There is not a district in the State, (unless Pickens is an exception,) which has not enjoyed, or is not now enjoying, benefit from the labors of Ministers strengthened for their toil by its discipline; while New York and Philadelphia, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, (Louisiana and Texas,) Burmah and China, are even now served by men, who can never forget the Academy and the Institution, which originated in the zeal of this Association for the glory of God. These recollections are shaped by many who are here present this day, and are fraught with sacred sympathies; and to no other class, (if one of their number may speak for all,) is this season of holy festivity of deeper, dearer interest, than to them.

Upon other topics connected with these “days of old,” we could with interest dwell, but our review must come to its close. It has been our delightful privilege to contemplate the doings of good and wise men: I say *wise* men – eminently wise; for they were men shaping their whole spirit, and guiding their whole conduct, by a remarkably single regard to the truth of God’s word. Superior to human applause, because the feeling of their nature, which might have sought it, was sublimated into a concern for a higher approbation, the fathers of this Association, like their Divine Master, did not strive nor cry, nor cause their voice to be heard in the streets. With all humility of mind they served the Lord. They served their generations according the will of God. Their happiness this day is not matter of conjecture, nor even of hope; for God’s own hand has written them among the blessed. They rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.

Permit me, Brethren and Fathers, to present two reflections, suggested by a comparison of our circumstances with theirs; the first as a lesson of caution, and the second as an incitement to action.

In the earlier periods of the existence of the Association, the territory which it covered was very large. Of the Churches which were represented in the meeting of ’52, the delegates from one Church (the Euhaw) had to travel a distance of more than 70 miles; and those from another, in an opposite direction, (the Welsh Neck,) passed the weary distance of 150 miles. At a later period, Churches belonging to the body were found in the districts of Fairfield and Chester, on the waters of the Saluda, and within the limits of Georgia and of North Carolina. The difficulties of intercourse which then existed we can scarcely realize now. At a time when the sight of the present beautiful capital of our State was covered with the forest growth; when roads, which have long since been thoroughfares, had not been blazed; when deep and broad swamps and streams opposed formidable obstacles to the traveller’s progress, and when thinly scattered habitations gave him uncertain promise of accommodation, attendance at the meetings of the Association called into requisition the same spirit, which made the pious Israelite in ancient times pass cheerfully through the dry and barren valley of Boca, as through it were well watered. These difficulties of our forefathers encountered, and the endurance of them imparted a hardiness and healthfulness to their religious spirit. We have fallen upon other times. What was to them a toil, is to us a pastime. If their journeys to the places of meeting were a laboriously service, demanding some resoluteness to undertake it, ours are a holiday recreation which, for its very pleasantness, we are reluctant to forego. Before them was much land to be possessed, and the prospect nerved them to exertion: we are enjoying the acquired territory, and in the compound folly of pride and

unbelief, may be tempted to number Israel. To them the means of grace were rare and valued: to us they are common, and liable to be not duly esteemed. There circumstances forced them upon strong faith in God for consolation, ours entice us to enervating self-indulgences. Religion with them flowed between deeper banks, and with a stronger current; with us it is more diffused, and shallower. The great danger of our times, then, is the falling into spiritual feebleness and inaction; and hence our lesson of caution. Permit me, therefore, Brethren, amid the solemn and instructive recollections of this hour, to summon you to a conscientious regard to the claims of a deep personal piety. To adopt the language of the first religious counsel, given in those memorials of the Association which have been preserved to use, I would say, as if speaking for the venerated dead: "Be careful to maintain the life and power of godliness in your souls; in order to which, keep close to God in prayer."

The other reflection, with which we conclude, we offer as an incentive to action.

In 1791, when the General Committee was organized the Welsh Neck, the number of Churches in the State, belonging to the Charleston Association, was twenty-one. The number of these represented in the Committee was nine.* The whole number of the members of the Churches was two thousand and eight. Two years previous to this time, (in 1789,) "the back parts of the State," (Min. of '89,) whose Churches, then sixteen in number, were spoken of as "the Churches on the frontiers." This body was the late Bethel Association, and this frontier region embraces a portion of that section of the State known as the middle country, and all of that known as the up-country. A considerable part of the population by which it was settled consisted of emigrants from Virginia, who had seen and felt the oppressions of an establish religion, and a secularized Clergy. Their feelings thus produced ran to excess, so that the sentiment, which should have spent itself upon the rapacious gatherer of tithes, was extended to the laborers who were worthy of their hire. Intent upon condemning the assumption of a false claim by others, they overlooked their own failure to fulfil a plain obligation. The mercenary minister was repudiated, but the honor claimed by Christ for his faithful servants was withheld. This wrong state of opinion and practice was probably supported by the teachings of the "Separates", as they were called, under whose labors many of the Churches in that region were formed. Certain it is, that throughout this interesting part of our State, there long prevailed extensively among the Ministry and the Churches, a distrust – not yet totally effaced – of any one who might appear as the advocate of ministerial support, or ministerial education.

Comparing this past with the present, we find the number of Baptist Church members not less than forty thousand. Prejudices, which hung over the Churches were like mists, rapidly rolling away. In the "frontier" region, large assemblages of Brethren have listened, within two years past, with candor and undisguised interest, to arguments in favor of the education of the rising Ministry; and at this moment there are, in the constituency of the Convention, ten Associates.

* The delegates were Rev. Messrs. Richard Furman, Henry Holcombe, Edmund Botsford, Hon. Robert Ellison, Rev. Gabriel Gerrald, Mr. Josiah Cockfield, Col. Geo. Hicks, Rev. Messrs. John Goldnice, and Joshua Palmer.

The Churches represented were: Charleston, Euhaw, Welsh Neck, Ebenezer, High Hills of Santee, Lynch's Creek, Cheraw Hill, Black Swamp, and Lower Fork of Lynch's Creek.

During this period the apparatus for education has undergone changes of form and place. The Rev. Mr. (afterward Dr.) Roberts, who has been sent to College by the General Committee, having established a school at the High Hills of Santee, young men were placed under his care and tuition. Subsequently, in the expectation of co-operation from Georgia, "the Academy" was located at Edgefield Court House. This expectation failed, for Georgia stood aloof. Again the Hills were selected as a location, and provision was made by a subscription for five years, for the maintenance of two instructors. Before the end of this time, many Brethren who were sanguine of the success of manual labor as a part of the general system of education, urged a trial of the scheme. That conscientious and laborious man of God, the late Nicholas W. Hodges, supported by Judge O'Neill, and Rev. Mr. Manly, urged a removal. This was effected – and an English and Classical School, with manual labor as an appendage, was opened. This project failed: and to other losses, had to be added that of a large building, set on fire by a singularly depraved boy, who had entered as a scholar. The plan of more general education was thus discontinued, and the Theological Institution stood alone. After the lapse of several years, the thoughts and wishes of many Brethren, in different part of the State, found public expression; and are now embodied in the actual enterprize of founding a Seminary for general, as well as Theological learning, worthy of a denomination possessing the numbers, the wealth, and the intelligence, which the Baptists of South Carolina do possess. The accomplishment of this design made it important, for reasons which we cannot now specify, but which are clear and strong, to subject the institution to another removal. And this has been effected – the last remove: the Jordan has been passed, and the tabernacle around which the tribes of our Israel shall, in time to come, annually gather, has entered the promised land.

The removals have been censured: *we* have no doubt the finger of God has directed them. In the dealings of His Providence, he often leads his people, like the blind, by a way which they know not. The stay of the Institution in the place of its last sojourn, has been like the abode of the Ark in the house of Obed Edom. Prudent and good men, who for their own sake laments its departure, approve of the change of location, as important to its great object.

We have ventured to style the region, where it now exists, the promised land. We have done so, because it is a region where the salubrity of the climate, the beauty of the scenery, and the character of the population, conspire to form one of the most eligible situations for a seat of learning. In this region, from its proximity to the mountains, and its consequent adaptness to the production of grain, rather than of cotton, a tendency which exists in other parts of the State is arrested – the tendency to the relative increase of the slave, and decrease of the white population. Besides, its numerous and beautiful streams exhale no miasma to destroy the inmates of human habitations which may dot their margins, while they afford impelling power for machinery enough to occupy thousands upon thousands of human beings. In this lovely regions stands the town of Greenville – a town where the gentle undulation of the surface, and the graceful flow of its river, and the blue line of the mountain in the horizon, justify the appropriateness of a name which blends the ideas of the beauty of spring, and of the quietness of a rural retreat. Within the limits of this town rises a height whose base is washed by the modest river, and upon whose slope and summit stand the venerable trees of the forest, spared hitherto by the woodman's axe, as if an invisible hand reserving the spot for a noble purpose, had secured it from some desecration. Upon this height – which few seeing it

would not pronounce the most beautiful for such a purpose in the State – will rise as the Acropolis of Greenville – if the Baptists of South Carolina are true to the spirit of their fathers – their own University – a school for their own sons blended with a “school of the prophets.”

“If the Baptists of South Carolina are true to the spirit of their fathers!” Are we justified in making such an hypothesis? Is it a doubt, Brethren, which you will allow to exist? Shall not this centennial meeting be signalized by such an answer as shall go far to make the doubt an impossibility? Ye men of the olden time, Pelot, and Hart, and Botsford; and thou, venerated man of God, whose name has come down to us with theirs! we feel the force of your example. Though dead, ye speak; and in the chambers of our hearts your voice to-day resounds. And the work which you have bequeathed to us, with the help of God we will do!

What we do, Brethren, it is important to do quickly. The population of which we have spoken are about to undergo a great moral experiment. That art which almost annihilates time and space, is about to place Greenville in the suburbs of the great city. The pat of the iron horse is even now being opened, and ere long the valleys will be echoing with the muffled thunder of his approach. The partridge on the wooded hill-side will hush her note, startled by the hoarse whistle of the locomotive; and a quiet rural people will come under the influences of modes of thought, and modes of feeling, and modes of action, transported from a distance. Soon busy Commerce, with tresses wet with the ray of the Atlantic, and with Camilla-seed, will enter this hitherto quiet region, and with her beating heart will discourse of sudden gains and princely wealth, to those who have heretofore learned only the calm lessons of patient Husbandry. Vice, too, will be there, with diversified artifices to decoy, to capture, and to destroy her victims. How important, then, that we anticipate these dangers, and that we give to Sacred learning the opportunity to provide against them. When an English Episcopal Society attempted Missionary labor in South Carolina some hundred years ago, their Ministers reported that wherever they went, the Baptists were before them. Such was the spirit of our fathers. Let it be said of us, by all the social influences which shall be brought to bear upon our mountain population, wherever we went, the Baptists were before us! And in the same region where the Table Rock stands in sublime grandeur, a monument of the Creator’s power – and while it stands – may institutions founded on the Bible, and a community trained by the bible, exist to the praise of His wisdom and His grace. – Amen.