

THEOLOGICAL MEDIUM.

JANUARY, 1879.

ART. I.—*Fifty Years a Teacher.*

SHOULD the writer live to complete the present collegiate year in June next, he will have terminated his fiftieth year in the work of instruction. It would perhaps be remarkable if he did not contemplate such an event with some degree of interest. There have been two or three years of interruptions in the series of the years which has been mentioned, but I speak of the years which have been devoted to the actual work. My work in this respect has corresponded very closely, and has to a considerable extent been identified, with the work of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in this line of labor. When I thus speak I certainly do not intend to claim the "*quorum magna pars fui*" of the classic hero, but that I have been a sharer, however humble, in a department of service which has very properly occupied much of the time and attention of this Church for more than half a century. A consideration which has some influence upon me in the preparation and publication of this sketch is, that it may be of some service to the Church in the way of suggestions derived from an experience of unusual length in a particular department of enterprise; and, furthermore, that it may encourage other young men in what may seem discouraging labors in promoting the great interests of truth and righteousness among men. When I commenced the work of life I was young, and thought myself called to the ministry of reconciliation. I hope still that I was not mistaken on this subject. I desired no other work, nor did I crave any other honors or emoluments than what such a work would bring. Before, however, I reached the prime of life, what seemed to be an irretrievable failure of

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health compelled me to a partial change in the work of my remaining years. That guidance which I regarded as Providential I have followed with a few, but very few, interruptions to the present time. I have always, however, regarded my first work as having paramount claims upon my time and strength, as far as my time and strength were able to respond to those claims. I have always felt that the highest honor that could be conferred upon man would be to preach the gospel of salvation to a dying world, and that the highest rewards that man could desire would be the rewards of such a work. I have thought it proper that I should here, and thus, give a distinct expression of my views of the work of the ministry. I regard it as the greatest of works. I place the business of instruction next in the order of importance in the line of a minister's life. Under this impression, when compelled partially to turn aside from the one, I, to the same extent, have given myself up to the other.

Perhaps before I enter upon my sketch proper, I should explain that while I am fully aware of the delicacy of the position of a writer or speaker before the public, who expresses himself very freely in the first person, thus laying himself liable to the charge of egotism, I shall be compelled from the nature of my subject to forego the beautiful privilege of using the style of Moses and Xenophon and Cæsar, and ask the indulgence, without being misunderstood, of expressing myself in the first person. I hope by this explanation to disarm, in the outset, fastidious criticism, should I have the honor of attracting the attention of critics. I now proceed to the brief sketch of my fifty years' work.

My first school was commenced in the summer of 1818, and extended into the following winter. This was a mere experiment with a special object. We occupied a house which was connected with the old Ridge camp-ground, in the western end of Sumner county, Tenn. The Ridge meeting-house, or camp-ground, had acquired an extended notoriety in the revival of 1800, and in the early days of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The second meeting of the Cumberland Presbytery was held there about a month after its organization in Dickson county. My father had

taught in the same house six years before, and in that school I had finished my early education. Of course it was limited, to have been completed in my thirteenth year. In the spring of 1818, I had attended the meeting of the Nashville Presbytery, with a view of offering myself to the consideration of the Presbytery as a candidate for the ministry. I was not received as a candidate, and did not expect to be, at that meeting, but was particularly advised to go to school and wait to a subsequent meeting. I had no means of supporting myself at school, and, furthermore, was needed at home on my father's farm. In the summer, however, after the crop was "laid by," as we used to express ourselves in those days, I undertook the school at "The Ridge." It was a very common school, of course, but was well attended. There were but three features connected with it of any interest. Whilst attending to my duties as teacher, all my spare time was employed in studying the elements of English grammar in connection with James S. Guthrie. Neither of us was teacher; we were both learners helping one another, and both acquired in that way our knowledge of the principles of the language in which we expected to preach. I boarded at his father's, and of course we could be together every day. The next noticeable feature of the little school was that there were three boys in it who afterwards became useful and highly respected ministers of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. I speak of them as boys; one was, however, about my own age. They were Eli Guthrie, William H. Guthrie, and Allen W. Guthrie. Eli, as I have said, was near my own age; William H. was younger, and Allen W., although now a man venerable in age, was then a very little fellow in his primer. The sad circumstances of the death of Eli Guthrie are known. William H. Guthrie is also dead. Allen W. Guthrie still lives, the only representative of an extraordinary family of young men. I have described them more fully elsewhere. The third fact connected with this school, perhaps worthy of being mentioned, is that from its proceeds I procured a horse with a very moderate outfit, which enabled me two years afterwards to start on the circuit a licensed preacher. The school, however,

contributed nothing towards my own education, except what little I learned of English grammar by my own efforts, together with my friend and brother, James S. Guthrie, who was working on the same line with myself, being a year, however, further advanced in his preparations for the ministry. James S. Guthrie, Eli, and William have all been dead several years, whilst I, the frailest of the four, still live. I ask myself involuntarily, Why is it so? Still I know that it is *not for the thing formed to say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* God rules.

In 1822 my health began to fail under the severe labor of successive camp-meetings. I was ordained in July of that year, in connection with my friend James S. Guthrie, and we were immediately directed to camp-meeting work. By the last of October I was very much broken down. We were expected to preach long and loud, and we did so, up to our full measure. We had but little help, and the strain upon us was very great.

I continued my work, however, upon the circuit to the summer of 1824, when I was partially laid aside with chills and fevers, which, after a short respite, terminated in the bilious fever. The fever came upon me at a camp-meeting in Stewart county. I was hauled from the meeting in a wagon, and confined to the neighborhood about two months. There was a partial recovery, but I was threatened, or seemed to be threatened, with a pulmonary disease. I preached no more till the following spring. I struggled through the spring and summer of 1825, preaching a little and making two or three excursions over the ground which I had been occupying, but the understanding was with both myself and my friends, that my work was substantially done. The school-room was, by common consent, my only resort. I had improved my education through the liberality of friends while a candidate for the ministry, and considered myself capable of teaching a decent school. My father died in the summer of 1825, leaving a family of small children who needed a teacher, and that circumstance seemed to make it necessary that the school should be near my step-mother's

home. Everything considered, there appeared to be but one course for me.

Accordingly I went around among the neighbors and solicited their patronage. I received but little encouragement, but it seemed to be a point that was not to be yielded, and in November of that year, in a house almost as inadequate as it could be, in one of the darkest corners of Henry county, in Western Tennessee, I opened my school. I mean to say that it was a dark corner then; no doubt it is greatly improved now. It had, indeed, greatly improved when I ceased to be acquainted with it. But certainly no man ever commenced an enterprise under more gloomy prospects. The literal truth could hardly be believed, if it were made known, and I take no pleasure in dwelling upon it now, at the expiration of fifty-three years. Still the hesitation of the people is not a matter of so much surprise when it is considered that they knew very little of me, except that I was a young circuit rider and a partial invalid. Furthermore, I had no denominational influence to support me. In that respect everything was positively against me. But I have forgiven the good people long since for their hesitation in acknowledging my claims. I know they were very excusable.

It turned out, however, that the school was one of the most agreeable that I ever taught. Soon after it was commenced, the neighborhood seemed satisfied to co-operate in the experiment. They sent their children. The little school-house was crowded. Several boarders came in; four or five young ladies of excellent character and habits, and from good families, became pupils, and one of the best young men that I ever knew turned in with us. Besides, there were two young men preparing for the ministry—John McKee, who died some years since, and Thomas P. Stone, who still lives in an honored old age. It was a signal but noiseless triumph, and to this day I reflect upon that year's work with an interest altogether unusual. I remember, too, with gratitude the spirit of kindness and personal respect towards myself which seemed to grow up among the people, and which appeared unabated as long as I continued to visit them. I receive some tokens of these even now.

In the fall of 1826 I went to what afterwards became McLemoresville, in Carroll county. I was earnestly solicited to do so; it was a Cumberland Presbyterian community, and I thought the prospect for establishing a permanent school there better than in Henry county. The personal influence, too, of R. E. C. Doherty, a prominent man in society, and also a prominent member of the Church, contributed largely to my removal. He was a generous man, and I do not think that I ever had a more sincere friend. His kindness and even liberality continued as long as I knew him, and although I have understood that his latter days were passed under a cloud, I take this opportunity of bearing my public testimony to his unfaltering fidelity in all his relations to myself during our entire acquaintanceship, which continued through several years. During all these years I am certain he never faltered in his feelings; at least, he never faltered in his expressions of kindness. If he committed errors, I mourn over it, but I should be ashamed of myself if I did not spread the mantle of charity over them.

In November of 1826 I commenced my school at what was then called Doherty's Office. Everything worked well enough through the first year, but at the commencement of the second year an opposition school was originated under sectarian influence. The community, of course, became divided. I did not feel happy in such a condition of things; I did not think a victory in the case worth the time and annoyance of a conflict, and at the close of the second year I closed my labors there. In the course of the two years at Doherty's Office, which in the meantime became McLemoresville, Silas N. Davis, John McKee, a young brother Ward, James McKee, and William A. Bryan were members of the school, the two latter preparing for ordination. The others were not so far advanced in their preparation for the ministry. They all became good and useful preachers. James McKee died early, after a brief but brilliant promise. The others all reached maturity and usefulness, and left honored names behind.

On leaving McLemoresville I returned to the home of my step-mother, and fitted up a little room for the purpose,

and spent the winter in teaching her children and young brother Ward, who spent the winter with us. In the meantime I engaged to commence a school at Huntingdon, the county-seat of Carroll county, in the spring. Accordingly, about the first of March, I entered upon my engagement at Huntingdon. I was to teach a year, allowing a short vacation in the fall. Early in that year, through the agency of a friend and merchant with whom I boarded, I secured Horne's "Introduction to a Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures." In reading this work I became so deeply impressed with a sense of the insufficiency of my own knowledge of what it seemed to me every minister ought to know, that I began seriously to consider the subject of taking some decided measures towards supplying what I felt to be my deficiencies. About the same time Mr. Campbell's version of the New Testament fell into my hands, and the reading of that work deepened the impression which had already been made upon my mind. Another consideration came in also for its share in my thoughts, not quite so spiritual, it is true, as those already mentioned, but still not without its influence. I seemed to be doomed to the school-room for life, as a means of keeping myself from want. If it were to be so, I reasoned that it would be worth while to spend some time in improving my stock of knowledge, in order that, if I must teach, I might be able to do so on a larger and more liberal scale, and make the work, I will frankly acknowledge, more respectable and more lucrative. As I have said, this last argument did not base itself so fully upon considerations of duty, but rather looked to interest, and perhaps appealed to a chastened ambition, but I have never seen anything wrong in it. Whatever considerations, however, might have been mixed up in my mind, my great object was to be able to read the New Testament in the original language. This consideration, I know, was controlling, and, at the time, was the utmost limit of my aspirations.

The work of my school at Huntingdon went on very well. I had some good boys and girls under my care. I recollect several of them with great pleasure, and have the satisfaction of knowing that many of them have done well for this life,

and still more for the life to come. My friend and fellow-laborer, Robert Baker, was in the school awhile preparing himself for teaching, at least temporarily, in order to supplement his other resources.

The result of all my reasonings with regard to the future, which I have mentioned, was that I borrowed the only Latin grammar and lexicon which I suppose were in the town, if not in the county, and in the course of my summer session commenced the study of Latin. This was the starting point in my new departure. I made no explanations to any one. It was my own counsel. In my short vacation I attended the customary camp-meetings, generally carrying my borrowed Latin grammar with me, and improving my spare time upon it. A young lawyer of the town, a well educated man, learned by some means that I had taken up the study of Latin, and encouraged me, and, furthermore, offered me any assistance that he could render in my new pursuit. I went to his room occasionally at night and recited a lesson. In this way I passed through the second session of my school, teaching all day and reading Latin as well as I could at night. When the school closed in the spring of 1830, I had made up my mind to spend some time at Cumberland College, and had made my arrangements to go to Kentucky in a few weeks. I was now in the thirty-first year of my age and in the tenth of my ministry. It is at present a common thing for young men of such an age to attend our institutions of learning, but then I suppose it was nearly, if not wholly, unprecedented. There were difficulties in my way, however, more serious than my age. My step-mother had been in the habit of looking to me for yearly assistance from the time of my father's death; but I had counted the cost and the purpose was fixed. In May of 1830 I entered Cumberland College. How I met my obligations to my step-mother's family I need not explain, but I *met* them.

As I have intimated already, I did not think at first of a full course of college studies, but only of so much Latin as would serve as a stepping-stone to Greek, and so much Greek as would enable me to read the Greek Testament with some degree of confidence and satisfaction. As I have written

elsewhere, however, the way was providentially opened before me and my interest in the course of studies increased, and in two years and a half I had finished the college course, with the exception of a single branch of study, and by way of compensation I made that the subject of my graduating address. So I went over the whole ground acceptably, at least to the College authorities. The day after graduation in September of 1832, I was appointed Professor of Languages in the College. It was the first regular Professorship of Languages that was officially recognized in the institution. It was a position which I had too much self-respect ever to have asked, but which I would have desired above all others. I thus stood upon a new plane, and looked out upon life with a new interest.

I remained at Cumberland College, happily enough associated with Dr. Cossitt and Prof. Lindsay, from 1832 to the fall of 1838. We had but little trouble, except what arose out of the operations of the farm and the boarding-house. But the students were constantly coming into collision, especially with the manager of the farm, and sometimes with the superintendent of the boarding-house. The troubles became so serious and frequent that I learned to have a dread of the approaching footsteps of the manager of the farm. My recitation room was in the second story of the building, and I could hear his footfalls as he approached, and I became accustomed to regard them as presages of trouble. I was, too, more annoyed, as for the most of the time I was the only member of the faculty who lived on the premises, and of course was more accessible.

My work in the department of instruction was agreeable. I have a particular recollection of the highest class I had in Latin when I commenced my course of instruction in the College. They were reading in Cicero's Orations. They were all young men, well matured, and very much interested in their work. They roomed in the Brick Row. A few of my readers will know what I mean by the *Brick Row*. Some of the classes were slow in moving when the bell rang, but this class were generally out of their rooms and on their way to the recitation by the time the sound of the bell had

died away. It was a pleasure to hear their recitations. Noble young men they were. Some of them died early, and of the others I have lost sight. A great many interesting incidents occurred there in the course of my first years of service in the College. I labored very hard to raise the standard of scholarship, and hope that I contributed something to that end. On two occasions in the course of my six years I was brought very near to the border of the grave from sickness.

In the summer of 1838, very unexpectedly, I received a call to the Professorship of Languages in Sharon College in Mississippi. This was projected as a Union College, in which Presbyterians, Cumberland Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists were represented in the Board of Trustees, and to be represented in the faculty. The President of the College came all the way from Mississippi to Kentucky with a certified copy of my election by the Trustees of Sharon College, and with authority to stipulate with me for an annual salary of fifteen hundred dollars. My salary at Princeton was six hundred dollars, and I was not receiving really more than five hundred. I was discouraged and thought I foresaw what occurred to Cumberland College in the course of two or three years. There were other reasons of a personal character that operated on my mind; and notwithstanding I had not much confidence in the success of enterprises based upon the assumption that sectaries were too public spirited, and had too much of the spirit of Christ, to be *sectarian*, I accepted the call to Mississippi and determined to change my field of labor. The trustees and students were both kind enough to give me written testimonials of respect and confidence, and some of the business men of the community, I have no doubt, regretted the step I was taking. I hope I may be allowed to mention one case without seeming to be desirous of attaching importance to myself. A leading merchant of the place took me quietly into his room one day, after the business had made some progress, and told me that if money was the consideration which was influencing me, he was authorized to say to me that the difficulty could and would be removed—that what might be necessary would be forthcoming. I replied to him that money

was not the whole consideration, and that my mind was *made up*.

On the 19th day of October, 1838, I started with my little family through the country to Mississippi, a distance of about four hundred miles. A common barouche and two very common horses carried us all. When I reached Sharon the prospect seemed rather unpromising. The President, Rev. Alexander Campbell, a Presbyterian clergyman from Delaware, was on the ground, together with the preparatory teacher. The school was in operation and they were giving instruction in the male department. The College included two departments, male and female, under the control of one Board of Trustees and one President, but otherwise entirely distinct and occupying separate buildings at some distance apart. Of course I took my place in the male department, as the young ladies were not ready for Latin and Greek. Several efforts were made to secure Professors from the other Churches but without success. A disposition, which I might have expected, and which I really did apprehend from the beginning, soon began to develop itself. It seemed to the other Churches that whilst the institution was to be organized and carried on upon union principles, it was likely to be wholly Presbyterian. Jealousy arose. Twenty-five thousand or thirty thousand dollars which had been subscribed in the county, as an endowment of the school, was nearly all withheld. At the expiration of the first year we received our stipulated salaries, but from that time we were thrown upon the resources from the uncertain patronage of the school for our support.

As I am writing history, however, I take occasion to say that I believe the trustees acted in good faith in making their appointments and stipulating to pay the salaries which they promised. They relied upon the subscriptions to the endowment to enable them to make payment. They elected two distinguished Methodist ministers in succession and a distinguished layman of the Baptist Church to Professorships in the institution, but none of them accepted. As I have mentioned before, it seemed likely to become a Presbyterian school, and this was very conveniently used by the

subscribers to the endowment as a pretext for not paying their subscriptions, and consequently they had no means of paying the teachers beyond the patronage of the school. We carried forward the operations of the institution under the forms of a college two or three years, but of course it soon ran down to nothing.

Rev. Alexander Campbell was of course of Scotch descent, as the name imports; was a fine scholar and a most estimable gentleman, but not very popular in his address. He was, however, an excellent and successful teacher. He was, moreover, one of the most unselfish fellow-laborers with whom I was ever associated. He had great physical endurance, compared with myself, and was always willing to take the heaviest share of the burden that was upon us. He became discouraged, however, at length, and resigned, and, together with the Presbytery with which he was associated, endeavored to revive the old Mississippi College, which had been neglected for some years, and had ceased to be regarded as an institution of learning. It had very good buildings and some property in addition. The Presbytery was strong and there was some hope of infusing life into an institution which seemed to be dead, whilst one that had been thought to promise life was evidently about to die. The Presbytery contemplated a theological department in connection with the Mississippi College, and my good friend, Mr. Campbell, was kind enough to offer me the Professorship of Theology in their institution. This is a small item in my own history which I suppose has never been known to half a dozen Cumberland Presbyterians. The offer was not made in a selfish, proselyting spirit. It originated, I am sure, in personal kindness and the partiality, perhaps undue and undeserved, of a friend. I have mentioned this, as I have intimated, to a very few persons, but have always regarded it as one of the most agreeable and flattering incidents of my life. I did not accept the offer, of course, and my attention was soon turned to my old field of labor.

I have always reflected with satisfaction upon my experience, as a whole, in Mississippi. Sharon College failed, but I had become acquainted with new men, and with a new

phase of society, which, however it may have been misunderstood at a distance, and sometimes maligned, too, developed a great many interesting features. I do not speak here of slavery. I had spent my entire previous life in slave-holding States. But I allude rather to features of society which perhaps grew out of slavery, more fully developed than it ever was in Kentucky or Tennessee. The people were generous, liberal, hospitable, and rather a high order of intelligence was common. My new literary associations were also profitable. I met with men who were outside of the literary range to which I had been accustomed. Besides, I had two of the most loveable little congregations to which any ordinary minister ever ministered. One of these I organized myself. My heart was united to them, and I had some reason to believe that my feelings were reciprocated. I have said elsewhere that the darkest day of my previous life was the day in which I determined to turn my back upon Mississippi. I found my reasons in what I thought considerations of duty, but these need not be detailed here.

I took one step forward in my literary life while connected with Sharon College, upon which I have ever since congratulated myself. I might have taken this step elsewhere, but, however this may have been, the measure turned out to be a Mississippi development. Upon the close of my first collegiate year in the College, which occurred the first week in August, 1839, we had a vacation of three months. I was afraid to travel much, from apprehension of the heat of a Mississippi sun. It was considered perilous to persons not acclimated. Furthermore, there was no inducement to go abroad. My family and myself were boarding. I was consequently not burdened with domestic cares. The vacation was at my own disposal, and the question was as to the manner of spending it. It occurred to me that in the three months I could acquire a sufficient knowledge of Hebrew to enable me to read the first chapter of Genesis. I had a deep anxiety to be able to read that chapter for myself, from the recent attack which had been made upon it in the interest of geology. There was a young minister connected with the female department of the Col-

lege, a graduate of a New England university, who had pretended to study Hebrew; but finding that the young ladies had no need of instruction in that language, and not being much addicted to the work of the ministry, he was willing to dispose of his Hebrew outfit. I bought, I suppose, his entire stock of Hebrew books—Bush's Hebrew Grammar, Gibbs' Hebrew Lexicon, and a good, sound Hebrew Bible. The grammar was a good deal dilapidated, but I have it yet, together with both the others. I thereupon set in, without the aid of an instructor, with the view of the mastery, if possible, of the first chapter of Genesis. I need not pursue the subject further. I did, however, accomplish my task, and read the first chapter of Genesis. I did not find, nevertheless, much more satisfaction in the original than I had found in our own version upon the question of its geology. Still I had made a start, and found that the Hebrew Scriptures were not a sealed book. I have always considered it a vacation most fortunately spent. I did not stop with the first chapter of Genesis, but more than this I consider that delicacy forbids me to say, except that if the outgrowth of that vacation's work were a merchantable article, no man could buy it from me. I am thankful to God that he turned my mind, when I had leisure, although I was carrying years upon my shoulders, to the study of the grandest and most sacred of the languages of antiquity. Some of my good friends were surprised that I was not contented with what I had acquired, and wondered if I thought my Hebrew would be of any service to me in heaven. Still I held on to my Hebrew and to some extent, at least, hold on to it yet. My last vacation at Princeton had been improved in a similar way, and the improvement has been a matter of interest to myself and others, but I do not wish to say more than to allude to the fact, and now return to the thread of my narrative.

In 1842 the revulsion occurred at Princeton. Early in 1843 my attention was called, as I have said, to the old College as the forlorn hope of its friends and a small part of the Church. The authorities there urgently invited me to their assistance. I was fully aware of the responsibility of accepting the call, and of the labors and trials which it would

bring upon myself. Considerations, however, were connected with the call which I did not feel myself at liberty to overlook, and I accepted. These considerations were chiefly known to myself. Had the full *weight* of them been known, I cannot tell how I might have acted. They proved, however, to be of little weight. But I had accepted and acted before the proof was made. In September of 1843 I started from Sharon for Kentucky, and on the first day of October I reached Cumberland College. Rev. F. C. Usher, who had been appointed Professor of Languages, was on the ground, and seventeen students. Six or eight students came with me from Mississippi, and so we had something of a beginning for a school. But the buildings were dilapidated; the Brick Row, which I have mentioned, was a mass of ruins; and the college bell was broken, and everything had the appearance of a chaos on a small scale. It was, upon the whole, a dark prospect, but I was there and committed, and well knew that if light came, it would have to come from the future, and that nothing but hard work would bring it. But I was in the prime of life, and had some strength of body, and, I think, more heart. I never had so much energy before nor since. Nine years I labored there. They were the best years of my life. It was quiet labor, but if the Church knew it, the labor was not in vain. Some of its fruits are in their turn bearing fruits to-day, and certainly in no small measure. We added to the buildings a value of five thousand or six thousand dollars, more than had ever been expended there in that way before, and collected and invested in bank stock about seven thousand dollars. We educated some men whose worth is not to be estimated in dollars and cents. But I have gone over this chapter before and need not enlarge.

I should do great injustice to my own feelings were I to neglect to call to mind the estimable men who co-operated with me at Cumberland College. Professors Usher, Riley, and Biddle have passed away. Their memories deserve to be honored. Rev. F. C. Usher was a good and worthy man, well educated by the liberality of his parents, who were old and honored members of the Church. Mr. Usher was not

appreciated and encouraged as he should have been. Rev. J. G. Biddle was, as well as Mr. Usher, a graduate of the College under its first administration. He was a Pennsylvanian and an estimable gentleman. He became prominent as a teacher, and was an excellent preacher. William S. Delany was a son of one of the oldest preachers, an excellent scholar, and is now a prominent lawyer and civilian in Texas. Rev. Dr. Azel Freeman was with us several years—a scholar, a superior teacher, and a Christian gentleman. In more important positions, his works have commended him. Philip Riley entered Sharon College soon after I reached it. I started him in the Latin grammar. He came with me to Kentucky. I was personally almost his sole teacher through his whole college course. He was a natural gentleman, and one of the purest men that I ever knew. He died two or three years ago in Texas. These were my fellow-laborers. In all our intercourse a sharp word never passed between any of us, nor was there ever an unkind thought of one towards another, as far as I knew. I honor the memory of the dead, and hear with deep interest of the successful struggles of the living in the great battle of life.

I should add also that our esteemed friend, Rev. W. G. L. Quaiter, afforded us efficient aid in procuring notes for the endowment of the institution and for improving the buildings, and Mr. Charles T. Caskey in making collections. And it affords me great pleasure to say, after all has passed off, that I have no recollection of a single note or subscription, large or small, made for either of these purposes, which was not paid sooner or later, and generally with promptitude. This is a testimony which I could not in justice to my own feelings withhold. Every one that acted seemed to be in earnest. It was a noiseless work, but we worked.

In 1852 the General Assembly determined, after several years of deliberation, to establish a Theological School. A plan was matured by a committee previously appointed, and being submitted was adopted, and it was determined to locate the school at Lebanon, Tenn., as a department of Cumberland University. In the spring of 1853 the writer was nominated to the General Assembly by the Board of

Trustees of the University as Professor of Systematic Theology. The General Assembly, which met two or three weeks after the action of the Board, confirmed the nomination.

The following is a copy of my letter of conditional acceptance, written as a reply to the Secretary of the Board on the occasion of my being informed of my nomination. It will be perceived that Dr. Cossitt was first nominated by the Board to the General Assembly, but he having declined in consideration of his age and increasing infirmities, the appointment was tendered to myself:

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE, May 4, 1853.

BROTHER McCLAIN—Dear Sir: Yours of the 22d ult. came to hand a week ago. I have not replied before for the reason that I wished a meeting of our Board of Directory previous to my doing so, and have not been able to secure a meeting until last evening. I regret very much that Dr. Cossitt did not accept the nomination. But as the matter is now before me, I hasten to make the following response:

First. I have never desired the nomination, and do not now desire the appointment. I involuntarily shrink from it. I am certainly somewhat aware of the responsibility which he incurs who takes the position. I would have preferred its being assumed by another.

Secondly. I will find it difficult to disengage myself here. The subject was distinctly presented to the Board last evening. To the rest of the community nothing is known of it. The Board seem very unwilling to give me up. I hope further reflection will lead them to juster views of the question than they seem at present to entertain. But it would be a great trial to me to leave here under circumstances which would be likely to endanger the vital interests of this institution; and certainly I might be expected to consider such a question presented in such aspects as a question of duty.

Thirdly. I do not feel at liberty, however, yet to decline the nomination. The way before me is dark. I am willing to let the nomination come before the Assembly. Of course, the spirit manifested by that body would contribute very much towards inclining or disinclining me to a final acceptance of the situation. I make this statement in view of the probability of the Assembly's confirming the nomination. They might, however, reject it altogether. They might also confirm under such circumstances as would make me consider it unsuitable to accept. I will try to obey the call of duty in whatever direction it may lead me. Duty combines, however, many things. My first duties I owe to the Church; but there are duties more grave and imperative which I owe to myself and family, and I will certainly be allowed to feel myself under some obligations to this institution and this community. Could all questions be settled, however, in any considerable degree to my satisfaction, notwithstanding I would assume its responsibilities with unfeigned hesitation and self-distrust, still I would consider it my duty to make trial of the situation which you propose, in the event of the nomination being confirmed.

Respectfully yours,

RICHARD BEARD.

I have introduced this letter that the Church and other readers may know, as far as it may be read, something of the spirit and temper with which I undertook my present work, which I regard as the most important of my life. I have often doubted whether I should have undertaken it, but I did so under the circumstances and with at least something of the spirit indicated in this letter, and the steps are not to be retraced now. *What has been done, has been done.*

I did not leave Princeton until the following February, allowing the Board of Directory there time to supply my place in the College. On the 12th day of March, however, in 1854, I was regularly introduced into my new field of labor in Cumberland University. I readopted the Confession of Faith and Form of Church Government *ex animo*, and pledged myself to teach in conformity with the principles of both. The questions were propounded and a very impressive charge was delivered by my old friend and instructor Dr. Cossitt. I prepared a schedule of studies for three years; but objection was made to the length of time, and the course was reduced to two years, and it was finally reduced to one year. It is now, however, brought back to two years of forty weeks each. Two years of forty weeks each are nearly equal to three years of the ordinary theological schools of the country.

The prospects of the school were very unpromising from the beginning. For two or three years there was hardly what could be called a patronage. There were thirty candidates for the ministry in the College; but it seemed to me that some of them regarded me with distrust, as though I had come in with a scheme formed mainly to extend the time of their education—additional time, too, which was not likely to be of much service. They generally, however, attended my lectures very respectfully, and by degrees some of them entered the department for the study of theology. The prospect began to be encouraging, when the war came on, and that threw everything into confusion.

As I stated in my letter of conditional acceptance, I undertook the work with hesitation. In my expression on that subject I was sincere, but if I had been able to foresee all

the future, my hesitation would have been still greater. I was told by a distinguished layman of the Church that he considered the prospect of success in establishing and enlarging the school almost hopeless. He thought the Church was not ready for it. In the course of the first session a good minister who knew something of the difficulties of the work, gave me to understand that the general impression of those favorable to the enterprise was, that it would wear out at least one man before it could be made a success. He meant that the time, and labor, and the sickness of hope deferred would be more than one man could bear. Of course I knew that the *one man* was to be myself. In a very few cases personal discouragements came from sources from which, least of all, I would have expected them. Still, no one has been quite worn out, and the Church, as a whole, has responded to the efforts of the instructor with as much generosity and Christian sympathy and liberality as could have been expected. It would be a gratification to myself to mention a few names in this connection, but delicacy forbids and I forbear. I have lived to see the Theological School occupy a status of respectability before the Church and before the country. *I thank God and take courage.*

I beg leave to add a few paragraphs to this brief sketch, which reflections upon my quiet experience have suggested. And,

First. In the providence of God it has been my experience since I turned my attention to a higher order of educational attainments and labor, to be connected with struggling enterprises. I have sometimes said that I have been under sheriff's hammer ever since 1832. This is not literally true, but it is a very near approach to a *general* truth. In the first summer of my connection with Cumberland College as a student—the summer of 1830—there were great discouragements in regard to the condition and prospects of the College. It was, too, only in the early part of the fifth year of its existence. It was known to be in debt. It owed a debt even then, the result of which was feared, and which only twelve years afterwards temporarily crushed out its life. In the course of that summer a few good young men were in

the habit of meeting together and talking over the affairs of the College, and making conjectures as to what its future would be. That was a sort of informal club. Many a half hour did Cyrus Haynes and Elim McCord and John D. Perryman and John Napier, and others, spend in that way. I was admitted, of course, to their councils and to a share in their sympathies. We were deeply concerned for the destiny of our *Alma Mater*, and for the honor and prosperity of the Church whose fortunes seemed to be closely connected with the fortunes of the College.

Dr. Cossitt, too, was greatly discouraged. From my age and previous experience, he was kind enough to admit me, although a student, to his friendship and, in some degree, to his counsels. He never tired of speaking of his discouragements. His labors and responsibilities were great and his compensation was small. He thought, too, that his labors were not appreciated by the Church. It took nearly all the money accruing from tuition to meet other demands against the College. Of all the debts contracted, those to the teachers were the last paid. At least this was his construction of the prevailing economy. He had a large family of children growing up around him, and a frail wife who was soon to leave them motherless, and he hardly knew what the end was to be.

In 1832, with my eyes open, I stepped in under the College burden myself, as a sharer with others. My object was not money, or I would have sought other locations or other pursuits. My nominal salary was small, but my real salary was smaller, as I have related. It worked well enough while I had no family, or a very small one. When it became larger the condition of things was changed. I went to Mississippi with the prospect of a liberal remuneration. It was realized the first year, but after that I received what I could get, and our bubble of a College, as any of us might have expected, came to nothing.

The second experience at Princeton was a struggle for life. We taught, not two or three, but six or seven hours a day, and gained something, but all was lost at last.

Of the trials of Cumberland University I need not speak. They are familiar to most of those who will read this article.

Of those which have been experienced, the Theological Department has certainly had its full share. Still, it has not been sold out, nor has it begged its way, and its prospects, as it has been already stated, are more promising than they have ever been before. It is due to truth, however, to say that we have reached this condition of things under a strain. One of the instructors performs his work as a labor of love; another is supported by private subscription; of the third I have not been in the habit of saying much, and I shall say nothing here. Of the Theological School I hope it will not be considered impertinent or indelicate in me to say that it ought to be one of the most interesting and cherished agencies connected with the Church, and that I do most sincerely believe that the neglect of it, should it be neglected, on the part of the Church and our young men preparing for the ministry, will prove to be suicidal. This is my last word on this subject to my older and to my younger brethren alike. The Church to-day needs *men* more than she needs anything else.

Secondly. Our age which is just closing, has been an age of transition from an imperfect itinerancy to the permanent pastoral system of supplying the congregations with the word and the ordinances of the gospel. It is true, many of the old preachers were pastors, yet they divided their time often, and the young men generally received a training on the circuit. The pastoral system is, however, the natural system of Presbyterianism, and is the system upon which it must mainly rely for its growth and strength. This does not include the labors of evangelists or home missionaries, of whom every Presbytery ought to have one, if possible, and every Synod one or two. But the pastoral system is the system natural to Presbyterianism, and, as I have said, must be its main reliance for the fulfillment of its mission. This implies a reasonable support of the pastor on the part of the people. "Even so hath God ordained that they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel." Now, when I went to the school-house we had no rule on that subject. The rule was in the New Testament, but we had not reduced it to practice. While I was on the circuit I received forty or

fifty dollars a year, and socks enough perhaps to fill my saddle-bags. But when I engaged in teaching these resources were dried up. But I loved to preach—thought my mission in that line was not yet fulfilled. I took more delight in seeing the Sabbath dawn than any other day of the week, and I preached, although I neither received nor expected to receive money nor anything else. I suppose I preached as regularly on the Sabbath, sometimes connecting Saturday with it, as any pastor in the country or anywhere else. I kept up the habit while a student at college. Hardly a Sabbath passed in which I did not go out and preach to some country congregation. I had the advantage, it is true, of ordinary students—I had preached ten years before I went to college, and had a good deal of old material on hand which I used very freely. It is becoming the common theory now that if a man is not wholly devoted to the work of the ministry, he has, therefore, no business in the pulpit. What I wish to urge is that if a man is called to preach, he *has* business in the pulpit, and he ought to be there, as a general rule, on all suitable occasions. And then if the school-house or the corn-field is between him and starvation, he is an honest man if he goes into the school-house or corn-field, and he is not to be scouted and despised because he does so; but he ought to *preach, preach, preach*, as well as he can. I once heard a prominent elder in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church jestingly allude to a preacher who was a farmer on a small scale, and express a wonder where he found material for his sermons and how he prepared them; yet that was a faithful preacher, and preached with almost constant regularity. I knew him well from his boyhood to his grave. He unfortunately entered upon his work before he was well prepared, and married early, but the people who heard him preach forty-five years ago, remember him and speak of him with interest yet. He was, however, one of the most earnestly spiritual preachers that I ever knew. He was attacked with the disease which carried him off at a sacramental meeting, and died at his post in the far West. His call to the ministry never exhausted itself. The memory of such men is to be honored. If he had had the advantages

which our schools and colleges are now offering in vain to three hundred and fifty young men,* he would never have been under the necessity of resorting to a farm for the purpose of supplementing a meager salary. There were congregations even then that would have kept him in the pulpit. We have enough such now.

Thirdly. I hope I may be allowed to say that a controlling thought with me, at least for thirty-five years, has been the education of the ministry of the Church to which I became providentially united at first, and with whose doctrines and order I have been in hearty and earnest sympathy since I became capable of understanding and appreciating them. I have always regarded this Church, in its origin, as a providential necessity. It became an agency for reaching and bringing under religious influence, thousands of the best people of the West and Southwest who could hardly have been brought under such an influence by any other agency. I told Dr. Archibald Alexander in his room in the Seminary at Princeton a few weeks before his death, that I regarded the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in such a light, and in illustration of it, that from my own surroundings in early life, and from early influence exerted upon me, I did not know how I could ever have been brought into the fold of Christ by any other agency, and that there were multitudes of men and women in this country in the same condition. It was, therefore, a very natural conclusion with me that the existence of the Church was providential. I thought the good man believed me. He was a little more susceptible than some of his brethren have been. But let me not wander. I have been burdened with the impression that such an organization, if really of providential origin, and bearing such truths as it does bear, and offer to a dying world, ought to be furnished with religious teachers who would be able to represent it in the most effective manner before the world. I have believed, and still believe, that with such a ministry this Church could collect congregations

* The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly reports four hundred and forty candidates and licentiates belonging to the Presbyteries. Perhaps ninety of these are at school.

anywhere, not by making inroads upon other denominations, but upon the great empire of Satan. I make no apology for expressing myself thus. We have many preachers, and I will add, many *good ones*, but it is plain that we have not enough of such as I have described. If we had, why have we not congregations in Philadelphia, in Louisville, in Cincinnati, where we have made failures? Why have we not three or four in Nashville, in Memphis? Why is there such a struggle at St. Louis? Why have we not resident pastors and flourishing congregations in Fayetteville, and Shelbyville, and Clarksville? All these latter points belong to our own Middle Tennessee, in which our Church was organized. And outside of Tennessee, besides those I have mentioned, there are fields innumerable, both towns, cities, and country places, where our ministry would be made welcome and useful. Why are they not in all these places and at work? Those of us who understand the condition of things a hundred miles from home, know the reason well enough. Pardon me while I say it: I sincerely believe, and have believed for forty years, that we need to some extent, and I will say to a very considerable extent, a more highly cultivated ministry in our Church. They are an absolute necessity. My reader will mark my words; I say, *to some extent at least*. I respect the feelings of good men, and unless I lose my senses or forget myself, I shall never treat them rudely. It is not intended that this high culture should be universal on the part of the ministry, but that it should be largely increased among us. This is the necessity which I call *absolute*. A man of high culture can preach anywhere, as well among the low as the high; a man of indifferent culture cannot preach everywhere. He is restricted, of necessity. I mean he is socially restricted. But we need a larger proportion of men who can preach anywhere and everywhere. Furthermore, we owe to the world and to ourselves, great and learned expounders of the truth—men who can stand shoulder to shoulder with the highest and the best. My reader must pardon me; I never exhaust myself when I enter upon this subject. Let me add, however, that we need men for the foreign missionary work, and we cannot escape the call of Providence.

I beg leave to introduce here an extract from an article written by myself and published in the *Banner of Peace* thirty-seven years ago. It expresses what were my views and feelings on this subject then. The experience and observation of the thirty-seven years since have produced no change, except in strengthening the convictions expressed then. The article was the close of a series written and published in 1842:

AN EDUCATED MINISTRY—THE CONCLUSION.—NO. XIII.

With this paper I shall be compelled to conclude this discussion, at least for the present. It is the first subject that I ever brought before the Church, and it will perhaps be the last. I am not seeking notoriety. I am an obscure member of the body, and hope that I will be contented with my obscurity. I can certainly say as Paul said, "I seek not *yours*, but *you*." I have been cradled in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. I was taught from my infancy to revere its ministry. I considered them the greatest and best men in the world. I embraced religion and entered the ministry in early life. I took my first lessons and received my first training on the circuit. I have climbed mountains, swum creeks and rivers; have been drenched with the showers of heaven; have shivered through the drifting snow; have eaten coarse food and lain upon hard beds in open houses, and still preached day and night. I am a Cumberland Presbyterian of the old school. These statements are made that my readers may know that I am no ecclesiastical exotic, bringing into the Church sentiments and sympathies acquired elsewhere; or inexperienced student, fresh from college, or laureated tyro, still under the impression that his college is half the world, and his degree *the chief end of man*.

The views and feelings expressed in these papers are, as far as I am able to determine, the result of experience and observation. My conviction is deeply settled that our ministry ought to be *more thoroughly furnished*; that unless they are, they cannot be what the ministry were designed to be, "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." My conviction is as thorough that they ought to be furnished from original sources. Biblical literature ought to be made a primary matter. I look prospectively. The young men are mainly interested in this subject. One word must be said, however, in relation to the past. I love the fathers. I honor them. They were raised up for a crisis, and well and nobly did they meet it. They were formed by their circumstances. There is a Providence in all these events. They were men of power and spirituality, and Heaven blessed them. But the crisis is past—the circumstances have changed. We must rely mainly upon a settled ministry. I speak of the body of the Church. Let the frontier Presbyteries manage their own matters. A settled ministry cannot be useful without a more thorough preparation than has been common with us. Twenty years will decide whether I am right or wrong on this subject.

As I have said, this is an extract from the last of a series of articles for the *Banner of Peace* of 1842, in which I entered

very fully and earnestly into an argument for an educated ministry upon the basis of our Confession of Faith. In order to understand the extract fully, the reader must be informed that I did not write under my own but under an assumed name. Whether twenty or thirty-seven years have confirmed my argument or not, I leave to the decision of others.

Fourthly. I could hardly have been expected to go over the ground which I have thus briefly sketched, without at least a mixture of sadness and melancholy in my feelings. A public life of near sixty years, fifty of which have been devoted to a laborious and responsible profession, and partially to another, equally laborious and more responsible, would bring a mixture of events and experiences. It has, of course, been so with myself. Entering the ministry young, with some prospects of success and usefulness, before I had been able to make full proof of myself, I was laid aside, as it seemed for a time, hopelessly by a failure of health. Taking up another profession under the pressure of necessity, I had to undergo a new discipline in order to be prepared for it. As a result, I suppose, of this change, at least in part, the eight or ten years which succeeded 1825, in which I commenced my work as a permanent teacher, were the most gloomy and despairing years of my life. I look back upon them as the valley of the shadow of death. It was not known to the people or my friends that my experience was so bitter. I look back upon those years, as I have said, to-day with a sort of irrepressible sinking of heart. God was good and had, I suppose, something better in store for me, or I should have sunk under my burden. I take no pleasure in details, and doubtless my readers would take less, and I forbear. In 1829 my mind, from some cause, turned itself to new thoughts, and in 1830, as I have related, I entered Cumberland College. I found new friends there and new sympathies. A new class of pursuits opened out before me. At length employment came congenial with my taste and suited to my health. It has always seemed to me providential, and I am thankful to-day that my steps were thus directed, as I think they were, from under the gloomy

cloud which had covered them during the few preceding years. Through the remaining years up to the present, I have labored hard, but with as much cheerfulness and satisfaction as most men experience in fulfilling the tasks assigned them in this world of service. The shadows of the evening are growing long with me, but I bear my armor still. I hope to bear it quietly and cheerfully, *standing in my lot* while God requires, and *awaiting the end of the days.* *Laus Deo.*

ART. II.—Amusements.

PRINCIPLES.

IN offering the following considerations to Christian people on the subject of amusements, I am not by any means unaware of the fact that I am proposing to enter upon debatable ground. That, however, is no reason for refusing to try if some elevated standing point cannot be found from which such a survey of this debatable ground can be made as will help us to arrive at some definite conclusions as to the true nature of the region overlooked. It would be a very strange discovery, one full of evil augury for society, if it should happen that the minds of Christian men were found to be not open to influence on any subject which affected their position as "lights in the world." Discipleship involves all that mental and moral self-discipline which comes from correction of false or defective views of things. Wherever there is stolid unimpressibility, there is a state of mind undoubtedly anti-Christian. I cannot persuade myself that any Christian mind is unwilling to review the position it holds in respect to any matter fairly open to serious question. Many persons assume that this whole question of amuse-