



MEMORIAL VOLUME

OF THE

SEMI-CENTENNIAL

OF THE

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AT

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA.

COLUMBIA, S. C.

PRINTED AT THE PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING HOUSE.

1884.

OPENING ADDRESS.

BY B. M. PALMER, D. D., LL. D.

THE pleasant duty devolves upon me as Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements, fellow Alumni, of welcoming you to this fiftieth anniversary of our venerable Mother, and to this golden wedding of the senior Professor who was married to her in his youth, and has given to her the affection and toil of his life. The tender words which are to fill his ear will be uttered by another, chosen as our representative to express the reverence and love in which we hold both his person and his work. It is enough for me simply to allude to the double character of this festival, which commemorates at once the founding of an institution that has been a source of blessing to the Church of God, and the life-long labors of this revered father in our Israel, beginning almost with its birth and running through its history to the present hour.

When this celebration was first suggested, our beloved Seminary appeared to be moving forward upon an even and prosperous career. With a corps of instructors nearly complete, and with a fair proportion of students, to those who watched her from a distance she seemed a goodly bark speeding with favorable winds over a smooth sea. But before a meeting of the Alumni could be held to authorize our present assemblage, she had struck upon a hidden reef, and threatened to founder beneath the shock. Causes, to which I need not here refer in detail, led to the sudden suspension of all the offices of instruction. The tidings fell upon the Church like a fire bell in the night, and roused from their slumber the whole constituency upon whose support the Seminary more immediately depends. None who were present can forget the gloom which settled over the meeting of the Alumni in the city of Charleston in the month of May, 1880; nor the clarion call which sounded out from that gloom and summoned to the rescue. Without the contradiction of debate, it was resolved to raise the sum of at least \$30,000 to repair the shattered endowment; and this was consecrated to a memory that will ever be dear in our his-

tory as "The Howe Memorial Fund." Under the stimulus of this high purpose, it was further resolved to go forward with the proposed Semi-centennial, though it should be under the shadow of a cloud. Hoping that the month of September would find the doors of the Seminary reopened, this celebration has been adjourned almost to the close of 1881. Alas, we find those doors still sealed against approach, and the halls still silent which used to echo with the voice of worship and of song. We behold these reverend teachers still seated before the gates, in painful expectancy of the dawn when busy feet shall again tread these lonely courts, and the sons of the prophets again catch the inspiration of wisdom from their lips.

It is impossible for us not to feel the depression of the hour; and to some desponding heart we may seem to gather here for funeral obsequies rather than for marriage festivities. My brethren, I speak nothing new to Christian pastors, when I say that faith does not know the meaning of the word despair. In the exactions of his adorable providence, God sometimes draws upon that faith down to the very bottom of its strength; yet in its mighty rebound it will spring above the stars and lay hold upon the power that is divine. In the old mythology the giant wrestler rose from every fall to renew the struggle, receiving strength from the contact with his mother earth; but in our better theology, faith refreshes itself by looking into the face of its Father, God, and is then ready for the heroic. It says to the very mountain which obstructs its path, "Be thou plucked up and cast into the sea." It may know disaster, as we know it to-day, but it knows not defeat; neither, my friends, shall we. The courage which does not rise to the level of every exigency, is cowardice; and the faith which measures possibilities by the standard of human weakness, is simple unbelief. When ancient Rome was besieged by the armies of Carthage, the very field upon which the tents of Hannibal were pitched was sold at public outcry in the beleaguered city at its full value—" *nullo pretio diminuto*" is the language of the historian who records the fact. Never was Rome more sublime than in this confidence of her future destiny. It was the expression of that indomitable will which gave to her at

length the empire of the world. You remember, too, the parallel incident in Hebrew history, in which a like heroism was born of a divine faith. When Jeremiah was languishing in the court of the king's prison, and Judah was about to hang her harp on the willows by the waters of Babylon, the prophet who had announced the captivity bought the field that was in Anathoth, subscribing and sealing the evidence before all the Jews, in token that "houses and fields and vineyards should be possessed again in the land."

Fellow Alumni, we are here for this self-same purpose to day. We gather around the prostrate form of our mother, not to smooth her dying pillow, but to raise her from this temporary syncope, and bid her live. She was founded in the faith and prayers and tears of God's people when they were fewer and weaker than they are to-day; and we are degenerate sons of the fathers who begat us, if our zeal will not perpetuate the legacy which they bequeathed. What! shall an institution die which has three of its chairs actually filled by the most distinguished men in their respective departments, who are to be found in all our borders? Shall a school perish before our eyes which has a vested fund of more than \$100,000? Why, the fathers who planted it fifty years ago rejoiced over a great success when they had gathered but half that sum, and felt that a covenant-keeping God had answered their prayer and rewarded their faith. Many of us here remember well "the day of small things," when we were trained for our future work under only two Professors, one of whom remains to this present, the Nestor of those old Greeks upon whose shoulders rested a weight greater than we are called to bear to-day. If we inherit the piety and faith of those fathers, let us remember that we are the heirs also of their responsibilities and trusts; and that they call upon us from the bosom of their history to finish the work which they auspiciously began. "Nothing is so hard to kill as a Presbyterian church," said one of our eminent divines not long since translated to heaven; and I do not see why the perseverance of the saints should not be as effective in perpetuating the mother of churches as one of the daughters of her loins; nor can I see why the covenant of God

should not be as good a basis for the united, as for the individual, faith of his people. If the prayers of two generations have gone up as incense before the throne, and their alms as the memorial of their obedience and trust, does it not inspire us, who enter into their labors, with hope that he who has gathered their tears in his bottle will yet pour them down in rich drops of blessing upon the institution of their love?

The historian of the Seminary will, perhaps, during this celebration, tell us of the necessity under which it was in the first instance founded. He will also exhibit the facts which show that, in conjunction with the sister institution in Virginia, it has, under God, given, during the fifty years of its history, that best of all blessings to any Church, a native ministry. Is the necessity any less for its continuance than for its origination? When was there ever greater need for thorough knowledge of Hebrew language and literature than in this age of a pretentious and flippant criticism, which seeks to undermine the authenticity and canonicity of our sacred books? When, since the days of Augustine or of Calvin, was there greater need of a sound systematised theology than in this age of rationalistic speculation which would trample in the dust every supernatural element in Christianity, whether of doctrine or of experience, deleting the miracles and flouting the inspiration of a divine record? When, since the earliest discoveries of modern science, has she been more impudently suborned to deny the intervention of the Deity in the control of his own handiwork, and to cut off the soul's privilege of personal communion with that Being in whose likeness it was originally fashioned? When was there ever greater need of the lessons of Church history than in unmasking the old heresies which, under gilded names, go forth in our day to shake the faith of the unstable? And when did the Church need more to be established in her ancient polity, than in this day of revolution and change; when even religious tramps, with indecent defiance of authority and law, impugn the order of God's house and invade the very structure and being of the Church as a visible corporate society upon earth? When was the call ever louder for a vigorous and efficient ministry to overtake the population spreading

from ocean to ocean over the breadth of the continent, and then to keep pace with advancing civilisation over the entire globe? The demand for well-equipped theological schools is more imperative now than ever: and it was in providential foresight of this present necessity they were doubtless providentially brought into being through the agency of our fathers. The fact is, the mission of the Church is that of a witness-bearer of the truth; and while the conflict rages between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light, so long will the Church be called to launch her testimony against error. There are certain epochs in which the battle is fierce along the entire line of controversy; and it is in just one of these that our lot is cast to-day. We are summoned to the defence of each cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith; and beyond this, for the very records in which that faith is embalmed. It is not the time to dismantle our fortresses, but to strengthen them in bastion and tower, "from turret to foundation stone."

Pardon me, my brothers, if in the heat of these utterances I should seem to breathe an unworthy suspicion of your loyalty to our Alma Mater. It is neither in my thought nor in yours to hint the possibility of her dissolution. But my heart burns within me as in your presence the memories of other days crowd upon me "feelingly and fast." The fathers, where are they? Goulding and Leland and Jones and Thornwell and Plumer sleep in the tomb. We turn from these and look upon the faces of the living. How long will it be before the venerable Howe will carry his learning away and leave us to mourn the greatness of our loss? How long before Wilson, with his heart of oak, shall cease to sound the bugle call and marshal the sacramental host for conquest upon heathen shores? The chill of December is upon the blood of all the protagonists of this School of the Prophets—and in the generations that are younger, the signature can be read upon the forms of more than one, warning that life's work from this time forth must be quickly done. Only the other day the gifted Robinson passed to his reward; and over all the land the veterans who have fought the battles of truth, and held the posts of toil and trial, are going with their scars to the tomb. Shall

we not be permitted to say, then, "instead of the fathers shall be the children"? Then let the mother of the children live; let the succession of faithful pastors continue to issue from these sacred halls. Join me, brethren, in the prayer, which shall also be with us a purpose, that our beloved Seminary may no longer sit in the dust as a widow bereft of her children, but rise to a new career of usefulness and renown, of which the past shall be only a prophecy. And may the Lord our God "lay her stones with fair colors and her foundation with sapphires, and make her windows of agates, and her gates of carbuncles, and all her borders of pleasant stones"!



CONGRATULATORY ADDRESS TO DR. HOWE.

BY THE REV. JAMES H. SAYE.

MY BELOVED TEACHER AND FATHER: It is made my duty to say a few words to you on this occasion. I know of no better theme in the review of the past than to mention our reasons for thanksgiving and gratitude to the Giver of every good thing. We have cause of thanksgiving, that our fathers were moved, a little more than fifty years ago, to establish a school for the better training of men for the discharge of the duties of the ministerial office; that they located it at this place; that God's people were influenced to endow it by their gifts, so as to render it a fountain of light in the land; and that God in his providence brought you from your pleasant home in another State at the right time, to take your place in this infant institution. We are thankful that you had such an affection for it that you could not be induced to forsake it, either by the rude shock of friends or by the pressing invitations to other fields apparently more desirable. We are thankful that your life has continued, and that you have held your place in this institution for half a century; and I am thankful that I am able to say, that though I have known many very popular instructors of youth, I have never known one