

LIBERAL EDUCATION A NECESSITY OF THE CHURCH.

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT THE

Sixteenth Anniversary

OF THE

SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF COLLEGIATE AND THEOLOGICAL
EDUCATION AT THE WEST.

IN THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, ALBANY, NEW YORK,

OCTOBER 25TH, 1859.

BY

JONATHAN F. STEARNS, D.D.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEWARK, N. J.

NEW YORK:

JOHN F. TROW, PRINTER,

377 & 379 BROADWAY.

1860.

501
9069

LIBERAL EDUCATION A NECESSITY OF THE CHURCH.

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT THE

Sixteenth Anniversary

OF THE

SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF COLLEGIATE AND THEOLOGICAL
EDUCATION AT THE WEST.

IN THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, ALBANY, NEW YORK,

OCTOBER 25TH, 1859.

BY

JONATHAN F. STEARNS, D.D.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEWARK, N. J.

NEW YORK:

JOHN F. TROW, PRINTER,
377 & 379 BROADWAY.

1860.

29

“On motion, the thanks of the Board were presented to Rev. Dr. Stearns, for his Sermon preached last evening, and a copy requested for publication.”

An extract from the Minutes of the Proceedings of the Directors of the Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West, at their Annual Meeting at Albany, New York, October 26th, 1859.

JOHN SPAULDING, *Recording Secretary.*

DISCOURSE.

Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.—Acts vii. 22.

WHEN God has a special work to perform He knows how to prepare the instruments to be employed in it. In the days of the captivity in Egypt, He had it in His mind to make a great religious nation out of a race of ignorant slaves ; therefore He saw fit to educate their leader in all preëxistent learning, and thus lay broad and deep the foundation on which to rear the superstructure of new thoughts and sentiments.

Moses was a divine lawgiver, an inspired religious teacher. The object of his life was to teach the Hebrew people to know, love and serve the living and true God, of whom all the heathen nations were ignorant. And yet Moses, be it remembered, for there is important instruction in the fact, was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. The great Head of the ancient Church sent him to that school, for the purpose of acquiring a thorough knowledge of that very pagan literature and science,

which, in their pagan forms, were to be wholly superseded. Egypt was then, and for many centuries, the school of the world. Thither old Homer was said to have repaired to gather materials for his songs; Herodotus journeyed thither to collect the dim traditions of the past for his history; Lycurgus and Solon to learn the principles of legislation; and Thales, Pythagoras, and Plato to be instructed in the sublime mysteries of philosophy. Thence were derived some of the seminal principles of Grecian learning, art and civilization. And thither the God of Israel sent Moses, as to the best college of his day, to gather up all that was good in the traditional knowledge and culture of the ancient world.

Something similar to this took place in the case of the Apostle Paul. He was appointed as the expounder of a heaven-descended faith—a faith which stood, not in the wisdom of man but in the power of God. And yet, under the direction of Divine Providence, he was not only brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, the most renowned Jewish teacher of his day, and so thoroughly trained in all Jewish lore; but introduced, probably in the schools of Tarsus, to an acquaintance with the literature of Pagan Greece, and, by his free birth as a Roman citizen, initiated early into the principles of Roman law. It is true, not many wise, as well as not many mighty and noble, were called to take part in the first planting of Christianity; yet to the untaught among the apostles was the gift of tongues communicated on the day of Pentecost. And what God himself interposed to furnish in the age of miracles,

may be taken as a symbol of what the Church should aim at in her subsequent and more regular arrangements.

The present age presents to the efforts of the Church a work second to none in the entire history of humanity. God has assigned the task to our own section of it to raise up in this new and vast land a form of Christian civilization and social life, a state, a nation, a branch of the Church universal, fitted to perform no mean part in the great drama of His purposes. Nor only this. This mighty host, this grand *corps d'armée* in the great army of righteousness is not only to be mustered and equipped and disciplined, but led on conquering and to conquer among the nations, under the standard of the Captain of our Salvation. In such a work the Church needs men of no limited or superficial training. She needs men of breadth, men of profound and varied knowledge, men of well disciplined powers, men of quick, versatile and practised faculties. She needs and must have, at least among the leaders of the enterprise, clerical or lay, men of liberal education in the truest, fullest acceptation of the words. The diffusion of knowledge, characteristic of our times, can scarcely be over estimated. But besides this, and partly because of this, advanced knowledge, and such mental culture as the mass of men under the best circumstances cannot be expected to acquire, is, for the teachers and leaders of the age, an indispensable requisite.

The furnishing of this sort of education is the special object for which colleges are established.

With reference, therefore, to our duty in sustaining, and, as opportunity may offer, availing ourselves of the benefit of such institutions for ourselves or our children, it seems proper that I should attempt to define the nature and aim of such education, and shew why the Church needs it for a portion of her members, and on whom she must depend to afford the requisite facilities.

I. What then are we to understand by a liberal, in distinction from all other sorts of education? The term is an ancient one. Among the Romans it was appropriated to those departments of study which seemed adapted to men of leisure and easy circumstances, who could pursue learning for learning's sake, and had no necessity to reduce all their knowledge to immediate practice. This class were denominated *liberales*, and the education they pursued was called liberal, both from its supposed adaptation to their condition, and to denote its amplitude or freedom from a servile aim. With us all education is designed for use, and the highest especially so, though its uses may seem at first less obvious. By a liberal education, I understand one that is radical in distinction from superficial—a planting of the deep, strong, vital roots instead of gathering the blossoms of the tree of knowledge, and one that is general and comprehensive in distinction from specific and restricted—a training of the whole man rather than some single faculty, an introduction to the entire domain of thought instead of the exclusive pursuit of a particular department, that which confers upon its favored ob-

ject the complete freedom of the city, instead of fitting him up comfortable lodgings in some narrow corner.

There is an education which prepares men for a particular profession. The practical lawyer must be educated in the principles and rules of legal practice, the physician in those pertaining to the practice of medicine, the Christian pastor in what relates immediately to the service of the pulpit and the cure of souls. And so with those who devote themselves to a particular science or branch of literature. So with the man of business. Such an education is like that of the apprentice, having for its object the ability to perform well the particular processes of his trade. If extended, in any case, beyond the boundaries of professional service, it is only as the seaman finds it well to acquaint himself with mathematics for its use in nautical calculations, or the mechanic and manufacturer with the laws of physical forces or the principles of chemical science. The object is not knowledge simply, but knowledge for a specific end, not the improvement of the mind as a whole, but its adaptation to the performance of a definite work.

Such an education I by no means wish to disparage. It is important. It is necessary. Many, unquestionably, perform a noble part in usefulness to their fellow-men and service to the cause of Christ, without attempting to secure for themselves any thing further. Only, I wish to distinguish it from what is properly to be denominated liberal education. The object of that is to furnish the key

of all knowledge in whatever department, and develop and perfect all the powers in their symmetrical proportions.

The question is often raised, What is the use of such an education? What, for example, is the use of Latin and Greek among a people who speak only English? What is the use of Astronomy to those who neither intend to foretell eclipses nor journey among the stars? In simple words, Why should a man spend time and strength in getting knowledge which he may never have occasion to reduce to practice? The answer to this question is obvious. The immediate object of these studies is not practice, but ability. If there is a species of education fitted to give to a man's faculties their highest perfection, and to the endowments with which God has favored him their largest scope and efficiency; to open in the soul avenues of light from every quarter, and enable it to perceive not only the specific end which it may at any time have in view, but the relations and bearings of that *end* in all their complicated ramifications through space and time and into the depths of infinity; to place the mind in a posture to pursue truth, not in this or that particular direction, but in all possible directions, as the exigences of the world may require, it seems manifest on the slightest inspection, that they who have it possess immense advantages. They, other things being the same, will be the true lords in the realm of thought and the true leaders of the world's progress. And does not Christianity, does not the Church require, among the instruments of her sta-

bility and progress, a class of men thus trained and instructed?

II. Briefly to answer this question will be my object in the second place.

And here let me revert to a fact already hinted at, that the Church in all ages has borne her practical testimony to the affirmative of this question. The cases of Moses and Paul during the period of inspiration were followed by a long line of corresponding cases in the subsequent ages. Such names as Jerome and Augustine and Chrysostom and Origen and Tertullian stand amidst a host of others as monuments of the value and influence of learned men in the early Church. By such men was the battle with paganism fought successfully. By such men was the faith once delivered to the saints, developed in its systematic relations and the Scriptures translated and expounded for the use of the people. They were men who understood languages, were familiar with Jewish and pagan law, and had sounded the obscure depths of pagan philosophy. Nor is it easy to over-estimate the service which such men performed, not for their own times only, but for ours. The works of Athanasius and Augustine still shed a flood of light on the truth as it is in Jesus; and we are enjoying at this day the benefit of their learning—their acquaintance, I may say, with *heathen literature* and philosophy, in the beautiful and exact statements of Christian doctrine, which now lie familiar as household words on the pages of our catechism. Not that they transferred pagan philosophy into the Christian creed—so far as any of them did that, they

did the Gospel a wrong. But that philosophy helped them to perceive where lay the dangers to which the human mind is most exposed in its inquiries for truth, and what were the avenues of error which most needed to be guarded.

Even during that long and gloomy period proverbially denominated the dark ages, when classic literature and refinement, having grown prurient through pagan immorality, had been overborne and trampled down by barbarian rudeness, and Christian truth, as yet but partially apprehended, had not gained such ascendancy over the minds and habits of men as to produce a civilization and a social culture properly its own, intellectual light was preserved from being quite extinguished, more by the fact that the Church, even in her degeneracy, believed that learning ought to be cherished, and learned men enlisted in her service, than from any other cause. And it was chiefly because the learning of those same men was not *more* ample and varied, more *liberal* in the best sense of that term, that it became subservient to so great an extent to the cause of a corrupt Christianity. It deserves particular notice, that the first dawnings of a better day—a day which rose in splendor at the breaking in of the Protestant Reformation, were to be discovered in the recurrence to departments of old classic literature which, for a long time, had been left in neglect. The chains of scholastic and papal divinity, riveted as they were by an exclusive adherence to the Aristotelian philosophy, were just loosened by the revival of classic studies in general, and the philosophy of Plato in particular.

And thus it was that men were led back to the study of the Scriptures in their original languages, and to a thorough reëxamination of the whole system of Gospel doctrine. Wickliffe and Huss of the earlier day, Erasmus, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin and Beza were learned men; and their learning, under God, was the chief weapon with which they fought the mighty forces of the papacy, entrenched as that foe was behind a system of most inveterate prejudices, and institutions strengthened by self-interest and defended by power. Thus were they successful in letting in the light of day upon the dungeons of error, and giving back the precious Bible and the glorious liberty of the children of God to a world enslaved and spoiled of its best treasure.

I know indeed that learned men sometimes go astray from the simplicity of the true faith. Examples of the fact may be found all down the history of Christianity. Infidelity, in all its shapes, has its learned champions. Heresy has found its chief support in the subtle reasonings of learned men. But this fact does but make the necessity of well-directed and sanctified learning the more apparent. You cannot refute and put down falsehood, unless you know thoroughly the basis on which it has erected itself. It is perfect folly to stand by in cold dignity and say the Gospel is true and divine, and needs no defence. The truth may stand. But sinful men, led away by the devices of Satan, will refuse to stand by it. And if you would save men from error, you have got to refute its boastful sophistries. If the attack is made from the department of geology,

somebody must know geology in order to wrest from the foe that stronghold. If from physiology or natural history, somebody must have acquaintance enough with those sciences to show them to be where they truly are, on the side of truth, and not of infidelity; if from philosophy, ancient or modern, French, English or German, somebody must have so mastered the subtilities of that philosophy, as to discover the secrets of its power and be able to expose its false pretensions. Nor will any partial or restricted education, any exclusive devotion to a particular science, qualify a man to perform successfully this service. There is a common bond, as an old master of learning has said, among all the branches of knowledge. And the principles, at least, of them all must be understood, if we would defend truth when attacked on one side, without the risk of opening a new breach to the foe on some other. It has been the grand mischief attendant on the sincere efforts of some eminently scientific men, that for want of a more broad, systematic and radical training, they have given arguments to the unbeliever in the very act of taking others out of his hands.

The Church needs men of this sort of education, to lead or pour their influence into every department of Christian civilization. For, be it observed, Christian civilization, Christian society and a Christian State are both the natural product and the indispensable instruments of Christian piety. They are, so to speak, the crystallized results of the Church's influence, and to be cherished, purified, and directed to the wisest ends with the same jealous care as her own proper organization. She needs men of this

stamp in the chair of magistracy, on the bench of justice and at the bar, in the houses of legislation, on the stage of public debate or popular harangue, in the editorial sanctum or the author's closet, among the leaders of popular education, and at the head of all sorts of great enterprises of benevolence and social improvement. To be a statesman, for example, in the noblest sense, there is need of something more than a familiarity with politics. There must be also an acquaintance with the history of states, and the principles on which social order and the intercourse of communities rest. There must be a profound knowledge of human nature, individual and social, intellectual, moral and religious. There must be a true and profound knowledge of the laws of God, the principles on which this vast universe is built. Maxims and precedents may guide a man in ordinary circumstances. Shrewd practical common sense may avail in many cases. But exigences will arise requiring a resort to first principles. And then only he is adequate to the position, who, with practical judgment, based on observation and experience, combines a large share of comprehensive and radical knowledge. He must know principles as principles, and have some acquaintance with their mode of development, not only in the particular sphere in which he is now required to apply them, but in others whose connection with that is to be found only in the principles.

But while it is true that, in all the great departments of her service, the Church has need of men liberally educated, preëminently true is it in the de-

partment of religion, specifically so called. No science occupies so central a position or is so intimately and widely related as that of Theology; history, philology, natural science, mental and ethical philosophy, the science of law and government—all have a direct and manifest relation to it; so that an error in either of these departments produces error or raises doubts or difficulties in that. Theology has been said justly to be the science of sciences, the science of those deeper first principles, out of which, what are esteemed first principles in all the others have their beginnings. Hence, in order to be well versed in theology, especially to be a competent theological teacher, a man must be able to take a wide range among all the departments of human thought. I might point, were it desirable, to some notable instances of defective systems of theology, framed by good men and displaying eminent genius, whose defects, vitiating all their excellences, could be traced plainly enough, to some want of breadth and comprehensiveness in the mental training or attainments of those who composed them. Had certain truths of which they are ignorant been once communicated to them, had their minds traversed certain fields of thought of which they now seem to have no conception, such positions as they take and hold would at once have been abandoned. The Church will never reach that most desirable of attainments, a full-orbed system of Christian truth, till our theologians are able, through a more complete mental culture and intellectual furnishing, to contemplate the doctrines of their faith more

comprehensively as well as radically, in their wide and manifold relations.

The service of the preacher and pastor finds occasion for, if it does not indispensably require an education as complete if not as profound as that of the theologian. The men who have moved the world most deeply and produced the most lasting impressions upon the hearts of the people have not usually been men of small or confined knowledge. Not such was Whitefield or Wesley, Baxter or Edwards. Our missionaries in foreign lands have met with a success unrivalled if not unparalleled, in their efforts to impress Christian truth upon the minds and hearts of the most diversified specimens of the human race, because, unlike those who have been sent out by some other missionary associations, they have been generally above the ordinary rank, both in ability and learning. The churches of America have not acted upon the principle of sending abroad those who were too ignorant to be useful at home, but have in general culled their choice men, and had them trained in the best manner which the facilities of the country would allow. Hence they have been at once respected by foreign sojourners in their fields of labor, and, by the grace of God, made deep and lasting impressions on some of the strongest, as well as the most susceptible minds, of their respective communities.

In a special manner the exigences of the present age demand this class of scholars both for the defence and promulgation of the Christian faith. It is with us an age of unparalleled mental activity. A

spirit of inquiry has been aroused, and truth is questioned for its credentials from every quarter. New sciences, or new discoveries in science, are continually breaking in upon us, which demand, with a tone of authority, that religion should either bow before them or reduce them to her service. There is, besides, growing up around us a vast and powerful democratic nation. All sorts of elements are included in it, and all forms of thought ever generated in any portion of the world go to make up its public opinion. The men who are to instruct such a people and bring them to accept, in spite of all their prejudices and their lawless self-confidence, a religion that shall control and mould them, must be no novices. Meanwhile, all the world seems opening to receive the arguments and feel the influence of Christian truth. All forms of error, superstition, infidelity and paganism, are coming into immediate contact and uncompromising conflict with the religion of Jesus. And what sort of men must they be who shall grapple successfully with these manifold and strong hostile forces, who shall root out Buddhism, and Taouism, and Confucianism from China, Hindooism and Lamaism from the interior of the Asiatic continent, and Mahommedanism, Judaism and false Christianity from Western Asia and Europe? Men who know little of languages and history, little of the various forms and phases of literature, little of science and philosophy? God may work a miracle if He chooses; but until He authorizes us to expect a miracle, we have not the slightest reason to expect He will convert the world

by such instruments. The polished shafts with which He ordinarily accomplishes such achievements—the instruments which He has given us reason to believe suit His purposes, are formed and sharpened for His use after another manner.

III. Admitting, then, that the Church needs—especially in such a land and age as ours—for the accomplishment of her grand mission in human history, a class of men liberally educated, the question arises, in the third place, on whom must she depend to provide the requisite facilities for their training?

As already observed, the furnishing of precisely this sort of education is the object for which colleges are established. The functions which they perform are twofold—the cultivation and advancement of the higher learning in general, and the training of individual men.

In the former, they may be regarded as standing witnesses, strong and permanent garrisons, great light-bearers of truth and knowledge. Around them cluster as to a common centre all sorts of scholarly influences. In their libraries, lecture-rooms and cabinets, all that is rare in learning or significant in the products of nature, or excellent in human art, finds a natural depository. In their chairs of science and literature, the choice intellects of the land, themselves liberally educated, devote themselves to the cultivation of each his own particular department; while the daily mutual intercourse of such men, the geologist and chemist with the metaphysician, the philologist with the professor of natural history, the professor of history or law with

him of Latin or Greek, the mathematician with the professor of rhetoric and belles-lettres, the professor of moral science and practical divinity with them all—maintains the liberal character of every scientific and literary specialty, and guards effectually against the narrowing tendency of devotion to departments. Nowhere is learning so cultivated in its full-orbed beauty and organic completeness; nowhere are its varieties so displayed in their unity, or the crown of unity made so resplendent with all the gems of variety; and nowhere is the division of mental labor made so available without the slightest disconnection or disproportion of the product. There is a silent influence going forth, hour by hour, from such institutions, of immense value. The farmers and mechanics feel it as they come and go in sight of the college walls. The very sight of those walls stimulates the thirst for knowledge. And the little lads, as they pass and strain their eyes up to the venerable towers, reminded that within sits enthroned the queen of learning and what a beautiful queen she is, vow to pay her their homage as soon as their young frames shall begin to acquire manly proportions. Thus are hundreds led to devote themselves to learning, who, but for the presence of the college, would never have aspired to higher knowledge than that of the mechanism of a shoe or the qualities of bees and horses.

Turn we then to the other function of these institutions, and here we find them performing a service to which no other known agency is competent. Not that all who enter and pass through a college

actually become liberally educated, nor that liberal education, in some true sense of the word, may not sometimes be obtained apart from their training; but because ordinarily there alone are to be found the facilities and appliances, the intellectual discipline, incitement, direction and controlling influence, which will carry a young mind through the obstacles, and straight forward to the goal of his aspirations. Into those quiet retreats the din and turmoil of the world seldom intrude, or are heard only as a distant rumbling. The gayeties of social life, so apt to entice young minds from fixed thought, are reserved chiefly for the solace of vacations. The control of authority and college rules, are just sufficient to relieve the pressure of individual responsibility, and secure the greater mental freedom. The curriculum of college studies, in which the student begins at the beginning and goes forward in regular series to the close, has been arranged with special reference to just the object he is aiming at. The same essentially in all well regulated colleges, it is the result of the collected wisdom, not of our own country only, but of the venerable universities of the old world. And though, it is true, our best college systems are as yet imperfect, and attention needs to be drawn to departments hitherto neglected, as well as a higher standard to be raised in departments now deemed important, the course which prevails at present could not, it is believed, be fundamentally changed, without serious disadvantage to the end in view. There, in every department, are provided the best facilities

for instruction and illustration. Some of the best minds of the age come into direct and daily contact with the student's own. The noblest of the youth of his own age are brought into generous competition with him. The leading men of the community watch his progress as trustees or patrons, and meet to witness his success at the public examinations or the annual commencement. A numerous body of Alumni sympathize with his progress and wait to welcome him to their fraternity and rejoice in the honor he confers on their and his Alma Mater. And it is all his own fault if, possessing tolerable natural abilities, he does not, during the four quiet years he spends under such influences, lay, broad and deep, the foundations of mental culture, and seize the keys with which to unlock the boundless treasures of knowledge.

But the question returns: if the Church must have men liberally educated, and colleges are the proper institutions in which to give that sort of education, on whom is the Church to depend to establish and foster these institutions? They are not the spontaneous growth of circumstances. Somebody has got to exert himself. Some man or class of men has got to supply the means, and to supply them bountifully. And here, I do not hesitate to reply: The Church has got to depend upon herself. I use the word *Church* with no restricted application, meaning thereby, not this or that denominational organization, but the great body of the disciples of Christ, with those who sympathize with them in the great mission which God has assigned

them. If she does not supply these institutions for herself, she will either not have them or not be able to avail herself of their influence.

It is a fact too well authenticated to be denied, that almost every great impulse given to education in modern times has owed its origin to religion. Of all the great schools and universities in the world, by far the greater part were founded by religious men, and for religious purposes. The world at large are not insensible of the value of learning, and worldly men are often ready enough to avail themselves of their opportunities to give their sons so valuable a benefit. It has often happened that men of this class have given liberally to the endowment of colleges. But few among them have had the forethought, or the benevolence, or the faith to encounter the discouragements of raising from its infant feebleness an institution of the higher order. Corrupt or defective Christianity has had vitality enough to do it; but infidelity or religious indifference almost never.

And did the disposition exist, the Church would be exceedingly unwise to leave to such hands the founding and direction of colleges. The education which she requires for her purposes is *Christian* education, an education based and constructed throughout on religious principles, one whose culture shall be moral and religious no less than intellectual, and whose learning, in all its departments, shall not fall short of those first principles which are to be found only in the attributes and purposes of God. The college which ignores Christianity will

be, to all practical purposes, an infidel institution. And as are the colleges such are likely to be the common schools of the country. As are the colleges, such will be, sooner or later, the pulpits, such the prevailing character of the press, such all the other great fountains of popular opinion. Whoever controls these institutions, holds the key to the religious character of the surrounding region. Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth,—these formed, in the early days, our northern quadrilateral. It was hard for infidelity or heresy to get much foothold while these remained faithful. What was it that made eastern Massachusetts to so great an extent Unitarian? The religious defection of Harvard. What led the way in the recovery? The advancement of Williams and the rise of Amherst. Yale college has, for years, given tone to the theology of Connecticut. And the strong Presbyterianism of New Jersey is to be traced, not more directly to Princeton Theological Seminary than to Princeton college. Over its own graduates, the religious influence of a college is hardly less than of a mother's early lessons. Even the worldly among them feel its force. It abides through life, and insinuates itself into all their habits of thinking. The opportunity thus offered of impressing Christian truth upon the minds of those who shall hereafter occupy posts of influence in the State and the secular professions, is one which must repay tenfold all the expense which the Church must incur in taking these institutions under her patronage. And then, there is the education of her own ministers. Will

she trust to the State, infected as all its agencies are, and must be, with the corrupt atmosphere of politics, will she trust to any agency not specifically and emphatically Christian, to give them the most controlling elements of all their thinking? Will she trust to her ability to give that thinking a new direction afterward, in the theological seminary? It is the marvellous outpourings of God's Spirit, in connection with the lessons of holy wisdom given in Christian colleges, that is bringing so many young men into the classes of these seminaries. And were it otherwise, it might then be quite too late to give their minds a new bias, especially if the chairs of sacred science were all filled, as they would be likely to be, by ambitious men trained themselves in the same manner. No. If the Church would have at her service, and as the leaders of progress in her noble enterprise, men of the right stamp, she must educate them herself. She must have colleges of her own. Indeed, in every aspect of the case, it is an essential requisite of success that she possess the colleges of the land and imbue them with her influence; and if so, then she must *found* them. She must incur the expense of sustaining them; she must endow them. The motto, "Christo et ecclesiæ," and that still earlier device on the seal of the first college ever founded in our land, an open Bible with VERITAS written across its sacred leaves, must be the stamp of their character and the guide of their destiny.

Thank God the Church in this country has not, thus far, been unmindful of her privilege in this par-

ticular. Our fathers showed a pious alacrity to anticipate all others in the founding of colleges. Scarcely had the band of Puritans in Massachusetts Bay reared their houses and their churches before they were at work breaking ground for such an institution. Nor was it a casual occurrence that the theology of Calvin, transplanted to this unknown wilderness, began thus, and has gone on multiplying and improving institutions of the same character at every step of its progress. It was a necessity growing out of its *own nature*. The tree was in the seed germ, and time and circumstances did but give it development. The faith of the Gospel is a vigorously intellectual, as well as emotional and æsthetic faith. This strong form of the Christian faith, this faith which more than all others grapples with roots and lays its foundations among the primitive formations of mental and ontological science, requires learning, requires libraries as the food of learning, requires colleges as the trainers of the mind to vigorous and penetrative thinking. Harvard College was emphatically the *child* of the *Church*, and the Church nurtured it. Yale was founded a few years later "from a sincere regard and zeal for the upholding of the Protestant religion by a succession of learned and orthodox men." Princeton had its birth in a great religious revival, and its chief motive was to provide men who should perpetuate the influence of the revival. And what shall we say of our young and yet struggling colleges of the West? A touching incident, related in one of the reports of this Society respecting one of them, may serve as a

specimen :—" The enterprise was resolved upon at the close of a meeting for consultation and prayer held by several almost penniless Home Missionaries, and continued through three days. This little company of praying men then proceeded in a body to the intended location in the primeval forest, and there, kneeling on the snow, dedicated the site to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for a Christian college." There is something to me inimitably beautiful and sublime in that simple incident. When the valley of the Mississippi shall become the centre of an empire second to none that the world ever saw for numbers and power, and from its now infant institutions shall go forth an influence to be felt round the world, this little story of the founding of Wabash College will, I doubt not, take rank in respect to interest with the story of the Pilgrim Fathers, or the oath of Grütli in the land of Tell.

To assist in sustaining, during their infant period, such institutions as these, is the object for which this Society was formed. It had its origin in a special exigency. Four colleges and one theological seminary, all of which had been prosperous, were in great need, and some of them, through disappointed expectations, on the verge of ruin. Its timely aid saved them from the catastrophe; and by the encouragement it has afforded, three of the number have already reached permanent endowments, and the rest, with others since brought into existence, require only one more strong and generous effort to place them beyond the need of depending upon its patronage.

Meanwhile the boundaries of the west have been removing farther and farther from the eastern coast. New states have sprung into being with a startling rapidity, and with them have been developed new Christian activities, and new demands for institutions of learning. Long since has the enterprise of this Society crossed the Mississippi. Its fostering care has been extended from the neighborhood of St. Louis within the borders of the Southern States, to the Falls of St. Anthony and the beautiful Minnehaha, and far away to the Pacific coast in California and Oregon. And still its field is expanding. Still are the calls coming to it to rock the cradle of learning in Kansas and Nebraska, and throughout the length and breadth of our yet unoccupied territory.

Some may fear lest we multiply too fast these imperfect nurslings. And doubtless there is need of a wise caution in this particular. It is one of the merits of this Society that it has been the means of *exercising* this wise caution. But, with its exercise, I have little fear. The exigencies of the present day require that the facilities of learning be brought to the very door of every newly gathered community. No doubt, one or two great universities, amply endowed and amply officered, would present some decided advantages. But the time has not come for these yet. We are building now what seem isolated colleges. But the occasion may arise hereafter to combine them into a grand unity. When we compare their distances with the wide spaces of the country, and then consider the increas-

ing facilities of intercommunication, they are scarcely more distant from each other than are the particular colleges that go to make up the grand old universities of Cambridge and Oxford,—St. Johns, for example, from Christ Church, or Queens from Jesus. And the time may come when Iowa and Yellow Springs, Beloit and Knox and Illinois, Wabash, Western Reserve and Marietta, may be united by some system of organization and intercommunication into one grand western University, bearing relations to the destinies of the Valley of the Mississippi somewhat like those which the Universities of England have borne so long to those of that compact kingdom. But we must not despise the day of small things.

It is to meet the particular exigencies of *such a day as this*, that this Society asks the co-operation of the Church of Christ. She can point confidently to what she has done, as an earnest and evidence of what she is yet competent to do. Nine noble institutions on the east of the Mississippi, already firmly seated in the confidence of the country, often blessed by the gracious influences of God's Spirit in a remarkable manner, in which already more than a thousand Christian men equipped for the Lord's service have, it is believed, been born from above, and many more, Christian ministers, missionaries and others, have been prepared to go forth for the redemption of the world, require now only the small sum of twenty-nine thousand dollars to place them all beyond dependence and complete the Society's work in that section of the western valley.

We call for aid from the generous and able men of this old and thriving community. Shall this Society hold its annual meeting in the good old city of Albany, and not go forth strengthened by large and liberal accessions to its working means? Is there not some individual in this assembly, who, by a single generous donation, will take at least one of the institutions in question off the hands of the Society? Are there not as many as *four* who will take each his own institution, and thus leave the Society free to move its entire force triumphantly across the Mississippi? If any are ambitious, where will they find a nobler object of ambition than to link their name (as are the names of Harvard and Yale and Bartlett linked with noble institutions of New England) with some promising and beneficent institution of learning in the western valley? If any are desirous of doing a good work whose influence shall spread wide and last long, where can they find a more fitting opportunity?

We commend this cause, brethren and friends, to your sympathies, your benefactions and your prayers. It is for no merely secular purposes that we urge forward the enterprise of founding and sustaining institutions of Christian learning. It is for the Church's sake and for the sake of her great and sublime work of converting this fallen world and all that belongs to it, transforming it by the divine energies of truth; for the blessed Master's sake whose are the riches and the power, the capacities and the affections of men, and whose cause requires just this class of instruments for the accom-

plishment of its purposes. There is a day coming when all knowledge shall be seen and felt to be, as it truly is, the knowledge of God and His wonderful works, and when all human powers and attainments shall be devoted, as they ought ever to be, to the service of Christ. In that day Christian colleges will be among the most sacred as well as beneficent and powerful institutions. Their instructors will be true priests of the living God, and the learning and culture of the land will be a sweet incense ascending from pure hearts to His throne. We work, in all our efforts to establish and advance them, in anticipation of that day—a day predicted by the seers of old—a day sure to come, though we know not how soon, when the whole earth, ignorant and benighted as are now large portions of it, shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.