

THE  
LIFE AND LETTERS  
OF  
Robert Lewis Dabney.

BY  
THOMAS CARY JOHNSON.



RICHMOND, VA. :  
THE PRESBYTERIAN COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.



*Fraternally Yours,  
R. D. Dabney.*



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TO  
**His Wife,**  
A TRUE HELPMET;  
TO  
**That Multitude of His Old Students**  
WHO LOVED AND ADMIRER HIM;

AND  
**To All**  
WHO HOLD IN REVERENCE FAITHFULNESS TO CONVICTIONS,  
UNSWERVING INTEGRITY, PATRIOTISM OF THE FIRST ORDER,  
HIGH AND PURE FAMILY AFFECTIONS, ABSOLUTE LOYALTY TO  
THE WORD OF GOD, AND STRENUOUS AND PERSISTING  
SERVICE TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,

**THIS VOLUME**  
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

## PREFACE.

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AN effort has been made to present, as nearly as possible, the genuine ROBERT LEWIS DABNEY in this book. He did not relish the thought of being trimmed to suit the notions of an author or an editor, and thus presented to the public. When his *Collected Discussions* were being brought out, there was some criticism of one of the articles to be presented in the first volume. The critic made the point that the article objected to would injure Dr. Dabney's reputation if republished. The Doctor, on hearing this, turned somewhat sharply to us, and said: "What do you think of this? Do you like the plan of trimming a man, whose life and work you would perpetuate, to suit your notions, and then handing the resultant down as if it were real?" We made answer, that it seemed to us that, if a man's works and life were worthy of preservation through the medium of the press, they and he should be handed down as they were, warts and all. He replied emphatically, "The truth demands it, sir." The memory of this little conversation *helps* to explain the presence of some features of the book. He was so intensely honest that he would have abhorred any effort to present him sheared to the demands of current moral and religious tastes.

A preliminary study of the materials gathered for the construction of Dr. Dabney's life convinced us that it was quite possible to bring out the story of his life largely in his own words, by the use of his letters, and to state the gist of most of his great contentions succinctly and clearly in his own words also. We resolved to do this, and thus to give the reader the comfortable feeling of certainty that he had before him the genuine history, and not simply our view of it. In addition to the feeling of certainty which this plan should give to the

reader, it has many other obvious advantages, of which it is not necessary to speak. Epistolary literature, by strong and intelligent men of the old school, writing generally without thought of publication, is about the most fascinating form of sober literature. On the adoption of this plan, it at once became necessary for the author to put the brakes on the running of his own pen. Indeed, it became his duty to say as little as was consistent with the clear presentation of the story. He has had, from time to time, to fill gaps, to bring the actors before the house, to explain somewhat the general situations, political, religious and social, etc., that some of the younger on-lookers might understand what Dr. Dabney and his contemporary friends, neighbors, foes, etc., were doing. As the work was to be a one volume octavo of not over six hundred pages, this was an imperative restraint on our pen.

The student of theology and philosophy may find fault with the work on the ground that too little space is given to the exposition of Dr. Dabney's theological and philosophical system. The general reader may find fault that too much space has been given to the treatment of these subjects. To the general reader we would say that a life of Dr. Dabney must have considerable space devoted to this part of his life's effort, in order to correspond to the reality. To the student of philosophy and theology it may be said that his published systems are to be had, and that nothing more could be attempted, in our limits, than to give a general view. The view given is believed to be accurate.

Our friend, the Rev. D. K. Walthall, Ph. D., has prepared the index for the work. Dr. Dabney's sons and his venerable consort read the manuscript, and submitted valuable criticisms, which were carefully pondered and generally applied to the improvement of our manuscript before its submission to the publishers. Thanks are due, not only to these, but to a multitude of friends and old pupils for materials carefully preserved, industriously hunted up, and forwarded for our use.

One word more: though very sensible of the honor done us in the asking of this work at our hands by his family and many of his friends, we never sought it; but, on the other hand, shrank from the responsibilities involved in the undertaking. We have never made the claim of fitness for the work. We have done the best we could under our limitations; and we send the work forth with the prayer that it may be used of God to excite in many breasts a love for truth, for honesty, for things morally beautiful, for God, like that by which Robert Lewis Dabney was himself moved.

T. C. J.

*Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va.*

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# THE LIFE AND LETTERS

OF

## Robert Lewis Dabney, D. D., LL. D.

### CHAPTER I.

#### *PARENTAGE AND BIRTH.*

INTRODUCTION.—THE DABNEYS.—IMMEDIATE ANCESTRAL LINES.—HIS FATHER'S OCCUPATION, TRAITS, CHARACTER, STANDING IN SOCIAL, CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL RELATIONS, AND HIS EARLY DEATH.—HIS MOTHER'S LINEAGE, CHARACTERISTICS AND INFLUENCE ON HER SON, ROBERT LEWIS.—BROTHERS AND SISTERS.—PRODUCT OF ANTE-BELLUM VIRGINIA CIVILIZATION.—BOYHOOD HOME.

UNDER the forms of a republican government, and in an age of advanced civilization, every man ought to be tested by his own personal merits, and with little reference to the character and the reputation of his ancestors. The readers of this biography are, accordingly, invited to test its subject by what he was and did, and not by the lines of which he sprang. Nevertheless, being mindful of the facts of heredity, and that the beginning of what he was and did was made far back of the time when his individual existence began, we must give a brief account of his parentage.

Without offending against a just theory of republican equality, Robert Lewis Dabney could cherish an honest pride in the character of his ancestry. That ancestry had not been marked by great riches, nor by preferment, which, because they are so often acquired by crooked and indirect means, are equivocal evidences of merit at best, but it had been marked by very much the same moral and religious traits that appeared in him. The Rev. John Blair Dabney, a second cousin to our subject, said to his sons, "Among your numerous connections you can count but few, if any, of the great ones of earth, but you may boast of many who were exemplary in all the relations of private life—honored and respected in their generations, beloved by their friends and kindred, useful to their fellow-men,



and active in discharging all the obligations pertaining to the social and domestic circle.

“‘Along the cool, sequestered vale of life,  
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way,’

undisturbed by the anxious dreams of ambition, and uncorrupted by the angry strife and multiplied temptations of a public career.”<sup>1</sup>

This is a very modest, but just estimate put upon their forebears. The stock from which Robert Lewis, along with John Blair Dabney derived their origin was such as to invest them with the obligation to act well their part in life, “so as to avoid the reproach of degeneracy.” That stock made it incumbent on them to manifest kind and noble dispositions, to exhibit staunch and unyielding regard for principle, energy of action, and extraordinary steadfastness of character, and to maintain an honorable course of conduct. Such ancestors as they had were, and should always be, a spur to high endeavor, and a demand for it. This was capital for the proper use of which they were responsible.

The Dabneys are numerous in Massachusetts, in Virginia, and in the Mississippi Valley. It is commonly believed amongst them that they are all related, and it is prevalently held amongst them that their origin, on this side the Atlantic, was in three brothers—Robert Dabney, or d’Aubigne, who came to Boston a short time previous to 1717, and John and Cornelius Dabney, or d’Aubigne, who came to Virginia between 1715, perhaps, and 1720. It is also their prevalent belief that these brothers came to this country from England; that the family had fled thither from France on occasion of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Finally, many in all branches of this widespread family claim descent from the old confessor, Theodore Agrippa d’Aubigne.

Whatever may be said of this claim of descent from the old Huguenot historian, warrior, wit and poet, and trusted friend of Henry IV., it will be readily conceded that many of the Dabneys possess traits of mind, heart and will similar to those

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from page 7 of Dr. C. W. Dabney’s copy of “The John Blair Dabney Manuscript, Written out with his own hand for his Children, A. D. 1850.” Copied under the supervision of Charles W. Dabney, Knoxville, Tenn. “January-February, 1901.”

which made this old hero conspicuous, and that the claim that the name Dabney is a modification of d'Aubigne is a claim demanding respect as one based upon a good deal of solid evidence. It may be admitted as practically certain that the family was a Huguenot one, and that the name went through various changes after the family left France; that, as it has been asserted, "It was variously written de Boney, de Beny, de Bonis, Daubenay, Daubney, Dabnee, Dabney."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Sketch of the Dabneys of Virginia, with some Family Records.* Collected and Arranged by William H. Dabney, of Boston. Chicago: Press of S. D. Child & Co. 1888. Robert Lewis Dabney is quoted, however in this work, p. 24, as follows: "The tradition which I heard from my parents was that the stock from which we are sprung emigrated to the banks of the York river, Virginia, from somewhere about Cambridgeshire or Norfolk, England, and that they were of the same lineage as the Daubeneys, still to be heard of there. This, however, is only a tradition." He does not seem to have made anything of his connection with the Huguenots. One thing not generally known may be mentioned of the Dabneys in Virginia: There were Dabneys in Virginia prior to 1715, when John and Cornelius d'Aubigne are supposed to have come. In the books of patents, grants and surveys, kept in the Capitol in Richmond, Va., may be seen grants as follows: one to Cornelius de Bonis, de Boney, or de Baney, of 200 acres in New Kent county, on September 27, 1664; one to (the same) Cornelius Dabney, of 640 acres, on Tottopotomoyes creek, York river, on June 7, 1666; one in March, 1678, to the same Cornelius Dabney, of 300 acres, in New Kent county, south side York river, above Tottopotomoyes creek; one to James Dabney, in 1701, of 204 acres, in King and Queen county, north of the Pamunkey river, and within St. John's parish; one to George Dabney, in the same year of our Lord, 1701, of 293 acres, also in St. John's parish, in King and Queen county; one to Sarah Dabney, sister to James Dabney, just mentioned, and perhaps to George, on April 25, 1701, of 179 acres, lying also on the Pamunkey river, in King and Queen county; and one to James Dabney, in the year 1704, of 1,000 acres in Pamunkey Neck, in King and Queen county, and among the branches of Mahixon creek.

Now, how related these seventeenth century Dabneys were to John and Cornelius d'Aubigne, to whom modern Dabneys point as their ancestors; whether these earlier Dabneys left any descendants; whether the George Dabney just named as having received a grant in 1701 of land on the Pamunkey, in King and Queen, is the same with "Capt. George Dabney, of King William county," who received a grant of 400 acres of land "lying and being on both sides of Cub creek, in Hanover county," in the year 1724, which does not seem improbable, since King

The Dabney family in Virginia is supposed to fall into three classes, viz.: First, that constituted of descendants from the elder brother, John d'Aubigne; second, that of the descendants from George Dabney, the Englishman, as he is sometimes called, the son of Cornelius d'Aubigne by his first wife, born in England, and already grown to manhood when he came with his parents to Virginia, and third, that of the descendants of Cornelius d'Aubigne and his second wife (previously his housekeeper), Sarah Jennings, or Jennens.

Robert Lewis Dabney was of the line of George Dabney, son of Cornelius and his first wife.

Of Cornelius Dabney, the first of this line, we know but little, save that he was recently from England in 1721; that his wife having died, he married Sarah Jennings, or Jennens, and that he thus gave great offence to George, the son by his first wife.<sup>3</sup>

George Dabney, the son of Cornelius, was born in England or Wales, and seems to have been grown to man's estate when he came to this country. He married in this country soon after coming, and before his father had made his marriage with Sarah Jennings. He lived till after the beginning of the Revolutionary War, though he was at that time an old man. He had at least two sons and several daughters.

William Dabney, one of these sons, was born between 1725 and 1730, probably. He married a Miss Barrett, a daughter of a "Rev. Mr. Barrett, a member of the faculty of William and Mary College." His property lay in the upper part of Hanover and the lower part of Louisa counties.<sup>4</sup> He must have been a man of fine business capacity and staunch integrity, for he was made, by the will of William Morris, the elder, the trustee of the estates devised by that will to the children of Sylvanus Morris, an office of great responsibility. His choice to this position clearly shows the esteem in which he was held by Mr. Morris, who gave evidence of being himself a sagacious business man. That he was not mistaken as to the character of Col. Dabney is evidenced by the satisfaction evinced throughout their lives by the devisees to these estates, of which there

William, with the Pamunkey basin, had been cut off from King and Queen in the latter part of 1701; or whether this "Capt. George Dabney, of King William," was the son of Cornelius d'Aubigne—all these questions must be settled by the genealogists of the Dabneys.

<sup>3</sup> *The Dabneys of Virginia*, pp. 93, 94.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 102.

is record. The general and commanding esteem in which he was held as a man on whose word all reliance might be placed might be illustrated at length.<sup>5</sup>

Col. William Dabney and his wife were both dead before the Revolutionary War commenced, although his father was still living. Their offspring were six children, viz., George, Charles, Samuel, Robert, Elizabeth and Susannah.

The greatest of these children was Charles, the second son. He developed into a very remarkable man, and as he never married, he was free to give himself without reserve to his country in the emergencies of his age. "In his early youth he marched from Hanover in that gallant band, which, in the commencement of our troubles, extorted from the reluctant Dunmore the surrender of the public powder, which that arbitrary governor had removed from the magazine at Williamsburg, with the view of depriving the insurgent colonists of the means of resisting his tyranny."

The same patriotic enthusiasm which prompted Col. Dabney in the enterprise just alluded to "impelled him soon afterwards into our Revolutionary struggle." He was appointed a captain in the Virginia line, not long after the commencement of the war, and was ultimately promoted to the rank of colonel in the same service. After remaining with his command one or two years in his native State, where, to his great chagrin, no military operations imposed on him any active service, he was transferred to the Northern army shortly before the battle of Monmouth. He was present at that indecisive action.

"Col. Dabney continued to share the fortunes of the Northern army until that glorious consummation of their trials, the capitulation of Yorktown. He took part under the command of General Wayne, in that brilliant exploit, the storming of Stony Point, one of the most daring and hazardous enterprises undertaken during the war." He bore a somewhat conspicuous part in the siege of Yorktown. After the surrender of Cornwallis, "the American army was broken into detachments and distributed in different parts of the country. Col. Dabney was stationed at Hampton, and was charged with the command of the Virginia line, which command he continued to hold until shortly before the ratification of the treaty of peace, when the troops were disbanded by the order of the Governor, and then returned home after having toiled and suffered for seven eventful years in the public cause.

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<sup>5</sup> See the John Blair Dabney Manuscript (as before), pp. 11, 12.

"Though he took a lively interest in public affairs, and had very decided opinions, politically, he was never known to seek advancement, and scrupulously shunned the broils, the intrigues and the debasing scenes which disgraced our popular elections. He was prompt to obey the call of duty in the crisis of his country's peril, but he never coveted distinction in the halcyon days of peace. He disdained to court public favor, either for the gratification of personal vanity or the promotion of his private interests. . . .

"Prior to the Revolution the means of intellectual cultivation were scanty in this country, and none of our citizens, except those whose abundant resources enabled them to visit the literary institutions of the old world, could aspire to the reputation of finished scholars. In point of education, he, like most of his contemporaries, enjoyed very moderate advantages, but his natural understanding was excellent, and he enriched his mind with a large stock of valuable knowledge, derived from his own observation and intercourse with intelligent men. His opinions on all subjects indicated sound practical sense, and as his moral perceptions were unperverted by any vicious habits, his judgments in matters of conscience were rarely erroneous; hence, he was frequently consulted as an impartial and enlightened adviser on questions of right and expediency, not only by his own relations, but by his acquaintances generally. His counsels were always freely and kindly given, and uniformly pointed to the path of duty and honor. Those who acted on his instructions never had any reason to repent compliance therewith, for they were equally prudent and sagacious, evincing alike upright principles and a thorough knowledge of human nature.

"That Colonel Dabney's natural capacity was of a high order, and would have made him conspicuous in any sphere where he chose to exert it, must have been obvious to all who had the honor of his acquaintance; but I prefer to dwell upon those moral excellences, those admirable qualities of heart and disposition which reflect the brightest and purest lustre on his well-spent life. He was the most generous and charitable of men; in his personal habits he was economical almost to parsimony, but this extreme frugality was practiced by him on principle, and not from any love of filthy lucre. He saved that he might have wherewithal to give, and I hazard little in affirming that during his long life he gave more money than any man in Virginia of much larger resources. His brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces were the constant subjects of his liberality, and he annually supplied many of his poor neighbors with the necessaries of life, but there was nothing ostentatious in this perennial stream of benevolence; so far from vaunting his good deeds, he was never known to allude to them. . . . His benefactions were not only hidden from the public eye, but were administered with the most refined delicacy, so that he might produce no painful mortification in the effects of his bounty.

"No man was ever more sincerely and unaffectedly pious than Col.

Dabney. His religion, while it pervaded his whole life and conversation, had no tincture of sourness or austerity. Though an Episcopalian from education and early predilection, his Catholic spirit embraced in the circle of brotherly love every denomination of sincere Christians. He was careless about forms, where he found the essentials of religion, and no word of censure or derision was ever heard to pass his lips to the prejudice of any devout association of men who held their faith in the purity of life; yet for cant, hypocrisy or bigotry, wherever manifested, he had no toleration. In his devotion he was uniformly regular, without being obtrusive; he made no ostentatious parade of his piety, although it breathed unconsciously in every act of his life, and diffused an odor of sanctity, a celestial benignity through his whole character. Such is the faint outline of his moral qualities. In stature, he was upward of six feet, with a body straight and athletic, and well-proportioned. His carriage was dignified and commanding, and his gait slow and measured, like that of a soldier on parade, a remnant of his military habits. Accustomed from his youth to active pursuits and violent exercise, enured to hardship and exposure by the rough trade of war and hunting, to which he was passionately addicted, temperate and regular in his habits, his physical powers attained uncommon vigor, and secured to his declining years a remarkable exemption from the infirmities of old age. His visage was massive and well defined, with a serene expression, betokening sound sense, firmness and benevolence. There was something in his whole appearance which deterred the most thoughtless and audacious from venturing on too familiar approach to so imposing a personage, and yet his deportment was so hearty and cordial and unaffected that no one, young or old, felt any disagreeable constraint in his presence. . . . He died about the year 1830, at the advanced age of eighty-five years, at his house, in the county of Hanover, in which his father had lived." <sup>6</sup>

This man may be considered to be a good type of the Dabneys of his generation. In the portraiture given of him may be seen many of the features of his great-nephew, Robert Lewis Dabney; and it is clear, from a letter of Mr. C. W. Dabney, dated April 1, 1852, to Robert L., that each of these brothers thought much about their father's uncle, Col. Charles, agitated the subject of writing his life, and entertained for his memory extraordinary veneration.

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<sup>6</sup> This account of Col. Charles Dabney is given in the words of the John Blair Dabney Manuscript, as far as possible. See Dr. Charles W. Dabney's copy, pp. 15-54. His account carries its own evidences of being just. A reduction of it is found in the Dabneys of Virginia, pp. 118-123.

Samuel Dabney, the third son of Col. William Dabney, and a brother of Col. Charles Dabney, resided in Louisa county, Va. His wife, Miss Jane Meriwether, of Albemarle county, Va., was an aunt of Capt. Meriwether Lewis, who, with Col. Clark, conducted the expedition to the mouth of the Columbia River in the years 1804 to 1806. Samuel Dabney seems to have been an honorable and upright man, but too fond of hunting and sports, and of court-house company, and to have been a poor man of business. There is ground for supposing that he also served in the Revolutionary army. His wife, Jane Meriwether, was a woman of extraordinary character, for whom her children and grandchildren, Robert Lewis Dabney amongst them, entertained profound respect. To Samuel Dabney and his wife, Jane Meriwether, were born thirteen children. Amongst these were Samuel (who became a doctor), Charles, Francis (who became a lawyer), William, Richard, Robert, Edmund, George (who served as an officer in the war of 1812), John, Elizabeth, Mildred, and Mary Jane.

Mr. Samuel Dabney had died while these children were young; his estate was not large, and his widow had much difficulty in maintaining her numerous family; but she received generous assistance in the effort from Col. Charles Dabney.

The sixth of these sons of Mr. Samuel Dabney, Richard, was a poet and a man of genius. He was possessed of extraordinary acquisitive powers in language and literature, and in his earlier years gave promise of powerful work as a writer; but he fell into dissolute habits, wasted his later years, and died unmarried before reaching forty.<sup>7</sup>

The third son was Charles Dabney, Jr., who became the father of Robert Lewis Dabney. "He resided many years with his uncle Charles (Col. Charles Dabney), assisting him in the management of his estates. When he married Miss Elizabeth Price, in 1808, he left his uncle's house," and established himself at his "mill-place" on the South Anna River, in Louisa county, Va.<sup>8</sup> He subsequently removed to his farm on Cub

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<sup>7</sup> The reader will find a sketch of Richard Dabney in Duyckink's *Cyclopædia of American Literature*, and also an estimate of his work. His volume was entitled *Poems, Original and Translated*.

<sup>8</sup> "This 'mill-place,'" says Mr. S. B. Dabney, of Victoria, Texas, "was a plantation on which certain mills were situated. As I recollect it, there were two mills—a saw-mill on one side of the river, and the

Creek, his father's home place, and there lived, till his death, the usual life of a Virginia planter of moderate means, superintending in person the usual operations of the farm, and when necessary putting his hand to manual labor.

"Col. Charles Dabney, at his death, made him his residuary legatee. . . . No man was ever more worthy of the gifts of fortune, for he had excellent sense and most amiable manners, was irreproachable in all the relations of life, and of unquestionable integrity. Possessed of such sterling qualities of mind and heart, he was the idol of his own family, and universally respected of all his acquaintances. He was indeed a worthy successor to his most excellent uncle."<sup>9</sup>

He is reputed to have been one of the first, if not the first man, in his county in his day. He served in the war of 1812, in post duty on the Virginia coast. He was thereafter Colonel of the Militia of Louisa County, and was elected to the Legislature at a time when this office was still usually given to the leading men of the country. This office he never filled, as he died soon after his election. He had sat as a magistrate and member of the county court. The office was not a paid one at

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flour and corn-mill on the other side, the same dam serving both. The homestead was entirely removed from the mills. I have been there when a child, when the place was occupied by my Aunt Ann (Mrs. G. Woodson Payne). It was a plain, old-fashioned house, with a large yard, sloping down to the public road." Dr. Charles W. Dabney, of Knoxville, Tenn., adds: "My father loaned his sister Anne the money to rebuild the old mill, about twenty years ago, and took very great interest in planning and directing the work. Modern machinery and methods for milling corn and wheat were introduced, but the country was rapidly deserted, and the mill proved largely a failure."

<sup>9</sup> See pp. 55, 56, John Blair Dabney Manuscript, as copied under supervision of Charles W. Dabney. See, also, *The Dabneys of Virginia*, p. 128. Robert L. Dabney was wont to dwell much on his father's sweetness of disposition. As illustrative of this, he used to recall having seen his father much depressed because of having been compelled to punish one of his negroes. He remembered his father, also, as a man of firmness, and as teaching him in his early boyhood that if he undertook a thing he must carry it through. They were once walking together. Robert proposed to carry a great load of lightwood home. The father remonstrated; but the little boy was headstrong, and persisted in carrying a burdensome load, but, soon getting tired, threw it down. Then the father said, "You undertook to carry it home, and now you must do what you undertook."



the time. It was one of honor. He was a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church, and was a representative of his Presbytery, West Hanover, in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, sitting in Philadelphia in 1832. It is interesting to note that amongst the novelties which engaged his attentive observation, while in Philadelphia on this occasion, were the arrangements for distributing water over the city by means of pipes leading from a common source of supply. He was not only an intelligent and honored officer, but carried his religion into his daily life. Robert L. Dabney writes on the 8th of February, 1885, to his son, Dr. Charles W. Dabney, of his parents' religious life as follows:

"When I recall what the position of Christian meant, as occupied, for instance, by my parents, it seems to me as if that type of Christianity must have been in another sphere, and before the fall of man almost! With what careful seriousness, self-examination and prayer did they take their religious vows! How regular, deliberate and solemn were family prayers! How did the scriptural instruction of us children take the precedence of all the day, and of all other duties, lessons and amusements. How sacredly was the Sabbath improved! My father went about making the best of the sacred day just as seriously and systematically as any wise business man planning to put in the best work possible on some favorable day in the middle of harvest. He evidently acted on this clear, rational and conscientious conviction, 'I have a great and urgent work to do for my own soul and others'; the one day in seven which a kind Heavenly Father has endeavored to secure for me, for this task, is none too much, if improved to the best. So I must make the most of it.' I well remember his deliberate and careful preparation of himself in advance of communion days. It began about Friday, by reducing his concern with farm matters to a *minimum*; spending the most of the two week-days in a private room, shut up with his Bible, Flavel's *Sacramental Meditations*, and such like books. One may know well *how much* the Lord's Supper meant to him, and what impulse and nourishment it was to his soul.

"So, for young Christians to presume to get on in a religious profession without a strict punctuality in private Bible-reading and prayer, and, in addition, in stated seasons of self-examination, 'taking stock,' so to speak, of their religious principles and progress, was considered out of the question, a neglect so indecent as to give reasonable evidence of coming apostasy.

"Which standard of Christian living does my father now think the right one, in the light of eternity? There can be no doubt of the answer to that."

In the latter part of August, 1833, Mr. Dabney was taken with a violent, inflammatory congestive fever, which did its work in about a week. In the prime of life, being in the forty-ninth year of his age, he died on the 6th of September. In his high character he left a noble inheritance, for the proper use of which Robert Lewis Dabney was responsible; nor did he receive such an inheritance from his father alone. Mr. Charles Dabney had married, as we have seen, Miss Elizabeth Price. She was a woman of fine mind and character, and of gracious and pleasing manners.

Mr. John Blair Dabney says of *his* grandmother, Elizabeth Price, who was the wife of George Dabney, brother of Col. Charles Dabney, that she was the "daughter of a Miss Randolph, one of the numerous and distinguished family of that name"; that the father of this Elizabeth Price was "a carpenter"; that the marriage of one of their race with a mechanic inflicted a deep wound on the pride of the Randolphs, who claimed to rank among the aristocracy"; that "the true secret of this unequal wedlock . . . was that the gentleman was handsome, and the lady not very richly endowed with personal attractions"; but that whatever his occupation was, "the alliance reflected no discredit on Miss Randolph's taste and judgment, and proved more fruitful of happiness in the end than a more ambitious connection."<sup>10</sup>

Amongst the children of this marriage of choice was Thomas

<sup>10</sup> Charles W. Dabney's copy of the John Blair Dabney Manuscript, pp. 86, 87. Dr. Robert L. Dabney's version of this story was that John Price was a carpenter and contractor, who had been employed to work on the Randolph homestead; that he was genteel in behavior, and was invited into the house and to the family table, whereupon he fell in love with Elizabeth Randolph. They ran off and were married. The old Randolph father disinherited his daughter. But Price was a good man and prospered; he became well-to-do. These Randolphs of Wilton, above Richmond, were fast people; the men raced horses and hunted foxes, and ran through their property. In their old age the old Randolph parents became reconciled to their Price daughter, and came to live and die in John Price's comfortable home, their other children being less able to care for them. Dr. Charles W. Dabney, of Knoxville, says his father "used to tell this story with much glee whenever people got to bragging of their aristocratic ancestry, and yet no one was prouder than he of his worthy ancestors." It may be further remarked here that Dr. Dabney seemed to take special pleasure in having the stock of John Price and of the Meriwethers in him.

Price, who came to be known as Capt. Thomas Price, of Cool Water. In his youth he marched with the volunteers from Hanover to recover the powder from Dunmore. In the course of his life, he accumulated, by his energy and industry, a considerable estate. "He was generally esteemed by his acquaintances as a man honorable in his dealings and judicious in the management of his affairs." He was a friend of John Marshall, and named a son after him. He married Miss Barbara Winston, and from this union came numerous children. The child of Capt. Thomas Price and Miss Barbara Winston with whom we are most concerned was Elizabeth Price, who became the wife of Mr. Charles Dabney. Her distinguished son has himself described her in describing a *Virginia Matron*. She was first of all a Christian matron, whose hidden devotional life was beautifully reflected in her daily walk and conversation. "In her was seen, more than heard, the cheerful, gentle Christian. She was probably less conscious than any of her household or visitors, of the influence that all felt and so highly prized." She was a lady of unusual native refinement, of a sweet and noble, unaffected and dignified grace of manner. She had read and conversed much and to good purpose. She was also a careful, industrious, and successful housekeeper, and head of a family. In a word, she was a fit consort for her husband, and a worthy mother to all her children. This will be made abundantly clear in the course of this work.

The oldest son of Charles and Elizabeth Dabney was Charles William. He was proud of the name Charles, the name of his beloved father and of his much-admired great uncle, but he is commonly spoken of by his friends as Mr. William Dabney, of Hanover, to distinguish him from the many Charles William Dabneys in the several branches of the Dabneys. He was a man of rare gifts for conversation and with the pen, he was a much-respected lawyer in his time, and a scientific and successful planter in the *ante bellum* days. This brother exerted a large, generous and wholesome influence on Robert Lewis Dabney. His own character is indicated, in part, by advice which he gave his brother Robert, by letter, dated June 5, 1836. He writes:

"I have seen your letters. I like the style in which you write, but would venture to suggest (if you will receive such a suggestion from the writer of this scrawl) that you endeavor to acquire a more graceful and easy handwriting. You write from the promptings of your heart.

That is the way to write, to act and to behave. Take care that your judgment is well informed, that is, that you know truly the circumstances in which you stand, and then act from the plain and unsophisticated dictates of your mind and your heart. Half the ridiculous and contemptible acts in the world, and all the ridiculous behavior almost, arises from the sole disposition to appear different from what we really are. I would also suggest, in relation to your letters, that you give us an honest foolscap, as I have done, in which you can set down your sentiments, your observations, your course of study and reading, your college adventures, and any other matter deemed pertinent by yourself. You have much to perform. You have a mind to enlarge and adorn, a heart to expand and purify, and a person and manners to improve and beautify. These duties will admit of no waste of time. Your whole time should be devoted to the one or the other of these objects, and any impediment that may stand in the way of your progress must be boldly and determinedly disregarded."

He was one of the purest and noblest of men, and for years exerted a moulding influence on Robert, between whom and himself life-long devotion existed. The second child, Mary Jane, married Mr. P. Johnson.

The third child, Ann Eliza, married Mr. G. Woodson Payne. She was a very bright and vivacious lady to the end of her days. Robert Lewis was the next child. Then came George Francis. He dropped his first name, and is known generally as Francis. He suffered from an impediment in his speech, but "his perceptions were quick and oftentimes humorous, and his conversation, which was brief and pithy, and occasionally satirical, reflected the original turn of his mind, and made him a very interesting companion."

The manners of the youngest daughter "Betty" were peculiarly gentle and attractive. She was candid and unaffected. Her intellect was of a high order. She became learned for her years, and proficient in solid accomplishments, but died early.

The whole family was closely knit in affection. Peculiarly strong ties existed between Robert and his mother, between him and his brother William, and between him and his sister Betty. He served them well, and received from them that helpful and sympathetic appreciation which is at once the strongest incentive, and aid to noble endeavor, that can be given to a generous and aspiring, but modest youth.

He was not only sprung from a pure and noble stock, and thus weighted with responsibility, Robert Lewis Dabney was the product of a phase of our Southern civilization peculiarly

fitted for the development of many-sided and great men. Many forces go into the making of a great man besides those coming through his own ancestral lines. One of the greatest of these is the peculiar civilization amidst which he is born and grows up. It was no accident that Washington was the preëminent man of Revolutionary times in military talent, nor that the Colony of Virginia furnished so many of the civil leaders of distinguished prowess in the same period; nor was it an accident that Virginia furnished the three military men of the first rank during the war between the sections. Lee, Jackson and Thomas grew up in an environment which was favorable to their highest development. Ulrich Zwingli could only have been produced amidst some such scenes and civilization as obtained in the Swiss cantons in his day. Martin Luther must needs have been born and brought up in the middle Germany of his age, else he had been somewhat different from what he was, with the strength of the north and the poetry of the Swabian hills in his blood. Similarly Robert Lewis Dabney could hardly have been made save in the best Virginia society of old Louisa county. That was a society dominated by plain, homespun gentlemen and ladies, living in modest homes, uncorrupted by wealth, marked for their hospitality, for their stress on *kinship*, and for the intelligent and kindly direction of and care over the dependent class; marked for its truly aristocratic type of representative government, and for its high spirit, and keen sense of honor; rarely educated in the essentials, and religiously trained—marked, too, for its fidelity to conviction in matters of principle.

If we look at the white population of Louisa county in 1820, we shall see that, like the population of the rest of Eastern Virginia, it is homogeneous; that it is of English origin for the most part. Into the Colony of Virginia Englishmen had poured from the South of the island. Some of these had been of the gentry in England, some of them of the yeomanry, and a few had been convicts. "A few Scotch merchants, and a considerable number of Huguenot families, widely scattered, enlivened the English stock." Naturally English ideals held sway. The organization of the colony, as afterwards of the State, was aristocratic. The scions of the English gentry developed into gentry of Virginia. Nor can it be doubted that very many of the best families of Virginia sprang from the ancient yeomanry that had come over from Southern England, where their free-

holds were being absorbed by the greater landholders, and "from merchants, middle-class men, and mechanics, who rise so rapidly in a new country." The Huguenots, who were generally of the middle class, tended everywhere to the top. Socially beneath this class, but often climbing up into it, was a large population of freeholders often owning a few slaves, "well-to-do farmers," overseers, and mechanics, who had, in the little county-seats and villages, cabinet and carriage-making establishments and wood-working shops, or shops for iron-working of a size and importance now no longer to be found in rural communities, owing to the increase of machine-made articles, and the means for their distribution. These artisans were numerous, for the society was living as yet largely on its own local productions. There was, also, a much poorer white population on the very thin lands. Here and there these constituted their own neighborhoods. In some cases these people were the descendants of redemptioners, or of convicts who had been transported to the colony. Finally, there was the very large population of negro slaves, who had been inflicted upon Virginia by the slave-trading interests of New England and the extreme Southern States until 1808. Amongst these slaves were also social grades.

The dominating class in the society was that composed of the gentry. A few of them were rich, and lived lavishly in barn-like mansions; but the majority of them were of moderate means, and lived in houses of modest comfort. The traveller on the public highways in old Louisa county, between 1820 and 1840, saw, at intervals of a mile or so, plain houses, set far back from the public road, sometimes with long avenues of trees in front. These were the residences of the planters. They were more often frame than brick. Many of them were cottages, a story and a half, the upper half story having no fire-place, but supposed to be good enough to serve as sleeping-rooms for the boys and young men. Many were of two stories, some were heavy and square in plan; others had the general shape of the letter "H," that is, one house was situated beside the other, and they were connected by a two-storied hallway. The architecture was very plain, the kind, however, that is now classed as Colonial. The furniture within the houses was simple—a solid mahogany table in the hallway, with a solid silver water pitcher thereon, ready with its cooling contents for the thirsty guest, and perhaps a strip of carpet on the well-waxed floor. In the

parlor were sofas and chairs of mahogany and horse hair, with a "whatnot" in the corner for the curiosities, and a family portrait or so, and a sampler worked by some ancestress famed for her needle. In the bedroom were rag carpets, or none at all. The furniture in most constant use was such as the country mechanic could make out of the native walnut, chestnut, cherry and poplar. Such interiors, to our more sensuous and luxurious age, would appear cold and uncomfortable. Behind the dwelling stood the kitchen with its broad hearths, ovens, spits and spiders, its wide-mouthed chimney with crooks, cranes and swaying kettles. The smoke-house and the weavers' house were hard by, and in the rear of these the cabins of the servants. In a corner of the front yard was the office, where the planter kept his books of accounts, his fishing and hunting outfit, and into which young men were crowded when the house overflowed with guests. At a distance to the rear, again, and right or left, stood the stables, barns and other offices. The lawns were neatly kept, were often large and studded with oaks or locusts.

In Scotland, by the standard of wealth, these country gentlemen would often have been ranked as mere "bonnet lairds." Many of them, with their sons, on occasion, took part in the toil of the fields. Col. Charles Dabney, the father of Robert Lewis, had two rather small plantations, his mills, and between twenty and thirty negroes. To supply the needs of his family and servants from a poor soil, and to perform his multitudinous duties to the public, it behooved him to be a man of industry and economy: and his was a typical case. It has been very generally represented that Southern gentlemen in these years were corrupted by wealth and idleness. Whatever may have been true on large plantations in the South, and in exceptional cases, the gentlemen of Eastern Virginia were not generally so corrupted. Of the very numerous small gentry in Col. Charles Dabney's county, there were a number of larger property and a number of smaller property than himself. Amongst these latter was the father of Dr. John B. Minor, of Huguenot family, who became the foremost legal light in the South.

Hospitality was one of the cardinal virtues. At the planter's home any respectable gentleman was welcome, and, in the absence of the master, mistress and family, the butler received the guest with the air of a quiet, well-bred gentleman,

and served him from cellar and pantry. Never have any people exercised freer, more gracious, or more charming hospitality. Good servants, and plenty wherewith to make comfortable the guest, stripped entertaining of any appreciable element of sacrifice on the part of the host, while his isolation and his desire for intercourse with his fellows made him positively crave the presence of guests. He was actually obliged by the sojourn of any agreeable guest, and if a passing traveller, stopping for the night, proved to be a man of cultivated intelligence, and an informing conversationalist, his visit was regarded as a benefaction. They were people devoted to serious conversation on politics, agriculture, county interests and many other topics. It was a great means of education, this conversational debate between strong, intelligent men.

Kinship was also, and in part for similar reasons, much made of. The planters longed for social converse.

This society was remarkable for the intelligent and kindly devotion to and care exercised over the servant class. Every plantation at that time carried on small manufacturing and mechanical enterprises. Weaving never stopped. The sounds of the spinning wheels and looms could be heard throughout the year. Tanning, blacksmithing, and the simpler kinds of wood-working, and the making of implements were constantly on hand, the more important operations being directed by white mechanics, half journeymen, half foremen, who went from plantation to plantation. If there were no black shoemaker, shoes would be made wholesale once a year. Provisions and clothes for forty or fifty human beings were made on the plantation, and stored at suitable seasons. Shelter was provided. All this called for constant and vigilant care. Many peculiar wants of the inferior race had also to be filled to prevent misery and to secure their health, comfort and general well-being. All this tended to make the responsibilities of the planter very heavy, and the average planter met his responsibilities with a conscientiousness and an ability which entitle him to high rank amongst men of equal wealth and social position anywhere in the world. Nor were the responsibilities of his wife less considerable. To the servants she was "old miss," whatever her age. They thus voiced the sense of the seriousness of her responsibilities. In addition to the care of her own children, and the special training of her daughters for services like her own, she had the general care of the whole black family, pre-



scribed for their smaller ailments, was head nurse to them when sick. She superintended the garment making, the weaving, the spinning and knitting. It was hers to see that the work was properly done, and that there was no idling, to superintend the keeping of the large vegetable and flower gardens, and of the lawn, and to see that there was the least possible waste, that theft was checked, tendencies to immorality curbed, marriages arranged, permitted or prohibited. In many of these duties she had the assistance, indeed, of her husband; but her own responsibilities were heavy enough and intricate enough to call forth all that was best in her potentialities, especially in cases in whom a high sense of stewardship to the great Master had its proper place, as, for example, in the case of Mrs. Dabney, who would never issue rations to the wives of her laborers, but saw to their feeding herself. He who has met one of these old Virginia matrons of this type cannot readily efface the impression she made upon his mind. She discovered an education, simple, of limited reading, but good in quality, her accent such as the man of books and public speech would like to command, her English charming for its purity, unmistakable, but unobtrusive religion, all the graces of hospitality, sweet sympathy coupled with sweet dignity and reserve. She was free of slovenliness in dress, bearing and behavior, showed that she had not lolled her youth away in rocking-chairs, but had been used rather to the back-board, the spinning wheel, and the other vigorous means of the age for physical development. She possessed poise, self-command, and the power to command others. She was gentle, truly refined, but firm. Slavery brought with it some great evils, but it elevated with wonderful rapidity one of the weakest and most savage races, and it helped to develop in the dominant race the strongest of men and of women, too passionate in some cases, and domineering, but self-reliant, able and courageous.

There was wonderful affection between the family of the master and the black household. "Old Master" and "Old Miss" were generally intensely beloved by all their servants, and this affection was more than repaid by the master and mistress and their children. This affection may be justly compared to that between the Highland chief and his followers. It is well known that a close-fisted master, if one of his people got into trouble and became liable to legal penalty, would engage the best lawyer to be had, and fight for his man as for the life of a son, paying out in fees much more than the value of the man's life-long

service. When a servant was to be sold, it was usually only because the master was driven by bitter necessity. Even then every effort was made to dispose of him in such a way as to prevent his being carried from the neighborhood.

Another feature of the life of this people, exerting great influence on their children, was their political organization. They were intensely patriotic, and, therefore, took a deep and active interest in politics. They were the sons and daughters of colonial sires, who had shaped the institutions of the State, and had taken the largest hand in giving shape to the general government. Washington, the Lees, the Randolphs, and Masons, and Madisons were the chiefs of their class. The curse of universal suffrage had not yet come. Freeholders were the only voters, and of these the plain gentry constituted a large part. There was not much voting. The electors for President, Congressmen and members of the Legislature were voted for, but no others. The Governor was selected by the Legislature, and the circuit and appellate judges also, after their institution in 1829. The voting done was done *viva voce*. "A secret ballot was considered to be fit only for cowards." It is said that a contested election was never heard of. No officer of the county court was elected by the people, although this court was the great local political power. It was composed of all the justices of the peace of the county. There were in most counties a considerable number of these. They constituted a close corporation, the members serving during good behavior. When there was a vacancy, the court submitted three names to the Governor of the State, from which he made a selection. All of these magistrates could sit, but a minority constituted a quorum. These county courts were a sort of resurrection and metamorphosis of the county courts which had obtained anciently in England, and some of which had continued to exercise their powers down to the time of Henry VII. They were established in the Virginia Colony in 1623. They were called monthly courts at first; but in 1642 they were called county courts, the name by which they are familiarly and almost exclusively known. They were eminently suited to a new country. They exercised within the county judicial, legislative and executive functions. This was the court before which negroes were tried for serious felonies. (Their other offences were punished on the plantations, and they were rarely seen at the bar of public justice.) It acted as a court of examination

also, in regard to freemen, passing the cases to the circuit court when guilt seemed probable. Within certain narrow limits also it acted as a court of chancery. It also provided for making and keeping public highways and ferries, made public contracts, levied taxes, supervised the disbursement of public moneys, and appointed the county clerk, a most important officer, "the king-pin of the county organization," and the surveyors and commissioners. The only compensation which the justices received was the emoluments of the office of high sheriff. "The sheriff was appointed by the governor from one of three justices of the peace recommended by the county court." The members aimed to confer this office on themselves in turn, in the order of official seniority. The incumbents usually farmed the office. This court is said to have given the best county government ever enjoyed by the State. The members of the court were the very best representatives of the people. No man's dignity was so great as to exempt him from the duty of serving as a justice. Washington is said to have served as a justice of the county of Fairfax in 1770. Jefferson, during a period of his life, was a justice of Albemarle. It was an expression of the truly aristocratic type of representative government. Corruption in the county courts was rarely heard of. In the Convention of 1829-'30 Mr. Benjamin Watkins Leigh said that he had heard of but two instances of corruption in the county courts in two hundred years, and declared that he had seen county courts which were amongst the ablest tribunals before which he had ever practiced, not even excepting the Court of Appeals. Chief Justice Marshall said, "It was the truth that no State in the Union had hitherto more internal quiet than Virginia. There is no part of America where less discord and less ill-feeling between man and man is to be found than in this commonwealth, and he firmly believed that that state of things was mainly to be ascribed to the practical operation of our county courts. The magistrates who composed these courts consist in general of the best men in their respective counties. It was mainly to their influence that so much harmony existed in the State." This estimate of the character of the members of the county courts was no doubt correct. The incumbents of the magistrate's bench were not moved to it by desire for money, nor lust for power, but by feelings of just pride and a sense of their dignity and importance, by a love of country and desire to serve it in this honorable way. From the earliest times county

court day had been one of great interest to all the Virginia people. It was so from 1820 to 1840. The sessions of the court were attended by a great body of freeholders. They came not only for the transaction of legal business, but various other businesses, or for purposes of sport or fisticuffs. The farmer came to exchange his produce for the goods of the merchants, to settle his taxes, and hear the discussion of current topics of the day. The large planter came mingling freely with his poorer and, perhaps, less aristocratic neighbors. The Jew was there with his pedlar's pack, and the Yankee with clocks and other goods. The office-seeker was, of course, there, shaking hands with anxious and oily suavity. It was a great time for horse-trading, and for the fighting of bullies, than which few things at court were more enjoyed by the multitude. The lawyers, the principal politicians of the time, found the very best arena in which to exploit their talents at the county court. The bench of magistrates represented the intelligence and influence of the county. Together with the large body of freeholders that almost invariably gathered on the court days, they constituted an intelligent and critical audience. Whether the great lawyers—and there were great lawyers in those days—expounded the legal principles applicable to some petty case, or harangued on the court-house green on a political topic, the minds of these freeholders were helpfully stirred and informed.

The people of this region were marked also for their high spirit and keen sense of honor. They were conscious of a good heritage and self-respecting. They were men of their word, and above tricks in trade. Generally they showed themselves truly honorable. They were, indeed, somewhat too ready to "vindicate their honor" by an appeal to force. The duel was no uncommon thing between gentlemen in this quarter—a feature of the life that cannot be justified, albeit it tended to make men more careful in their intercourse with one another.

This was a society, too, rarely educated in the essentials. The lawyers, teachers and clergymen were all educators. Many of the lawyers, including the leading politicians, lived in the country. They were planters themselves. They came into intimate contact with their fellow-planters. Many of them were men of generous culture, and they did more for the general diffusion of knowledge than their successors at any subsequent time have done, perhaps. The vocation of the school teacher was most important. They were employed by the well-to-do

planters of a neighborhood. Their school was open, however, to every freeholder's child who was willing to pay a reasonable tuition. Not only so, a literary fund was provided by the State to pay the tuition of very poor pupils. "The bare-footed sons of the gentry and yeoman attended the same schools, and were all well birched according to the immemorial English custom." Most of the teachers were young men looking to the pulpit, the bar, or some other profession than teaching; but many of them were excellent teachers, nevertheless. They taught the youths of the period in a vigorous manner calculated to develop strong manhood in them, using methods more vigorous than most parents would permit now. They were apt to be strong in the study of mathematics and Latin. They paid less attention to mere etymology and syntax than is done to-day, but they read more Latin, taught the content of the Latin authors, gave culture and information such as is rarely given to-day. They were often college-bred men. Sometimes they had received their training in academies. They were often the sons of planters. We shall see various types of these teachers in the subsequent pages of this book. The clergy, too, were generally teachers, especially the Presbyterians. Of this also we shall have instances in the ensuing pages. Moreover, these people were a reading people. They had books. These books were old-fashioned, but good. "Dr. Johnson, with his dictionary, essays, and lives of the poets, held perhaps an undue prominence, and exercised a great influence on style, which, while sincere, was formal." Shakespeare and Addison always had a place in a gentleman's library, but "the favorite poets were Pope and Cowper." Sir Walter Scott's novels, books on agriculture, political economy, practical religion, a commentary or two, the four books of Blackstone, some Latin classics and French literature would reflect the taste of different members of the family and different generations. These people were letter-writers too, writing to one another for the purpose of informing and entertaining. Thus, in these several ways, they became a people of education and culture.

Their religious culture was also very considerable. During colonial times the religious culture of Eastern Virginia, as a whole, does not seem to have been first class. There were good men amongst the clergy of the Established Church, but there were many who were not worthy. Loose moral ideals prevailed, and gross living was common. Strong liquors were cheap,

there being no requirement of license for their sale, and no tax for revenue imposed upon them. Whiskey, apple brandy and Jamaica rum were consumed in large quantities, and by all classes. Wealthy people drank heavy sweet wines. Malt liquors were not produced. The large consumption of liquors was followed naturally by unbalanced action and rowdyism, which broke out in all classes, and by much ill-health and disease, and relatively inefficient service in the war of the Revolution. Meanwhile, as time had passed, the religious life had been heightened in localities by the labors of the Baptists and the Presbyterians, and perhaps by others; and while the age of the Revolution was marked by the temporary prevalence of the tendency to French infidelity, there were influential men amongst the planters, like Col. Charles Dabney, of Hanover county, whose moral ideals and dignity of character were lofty, and who maintained a simple and unaffected piety. These men exerted a leavening influence on society; the war once over the denominations, with special evangelical spirit at the time, began again their efforts. These were soon followed by a revival. This revolution of morals and religion began early in the century, but was in full tide during the years of the second, third and fourth decades of the century. Religion enjoyed the thought of the great men of the age throughout the States, and of this quarter of Virginia. Christian ministers became more and more men of education. They were everywhere welcomed, and treated with respect. They were a part of the plain gentry of the land. They exercised immense influence.

Now Robert Lewis Dabney sprang up in this society dominated by a plain, homespun gentry. He was of this gentry himself on both sides of his house. Though his father was the leading man of his county, the boy grew up in a cottage house, smaller rather than larger than the house of the average gentleman of his county. He grew up uncorrupted by wealth and addicted to industry, even to manual labor whenever there was suitable occasion. While his father lived, he taught, by example, diligence and frugality in the management of his plantations and people, and put to with his own hand at physical labor as need arose. In his modest home Robert learned with his earliest years the old Virginia way of entertaining, one of the most charming forms of hospitality that the world has ever seen. He imbibed the love of kindred at his mother's breast, and around the hospitable hearth. He enjoyed

the leisure which slave-holding gave to the sons of the planters for thorough and diversified learning and culture. On his parental estate the major part of the menial labor was performed by "neat, well-managed" and self-respecting black slaves. He profited by the excellent school which slavery presented to the sons of the dominant race for learning the art of government and command. He sucked in the political organization of his section, and made it a part of himself. He was intensely interested in politics from a child. It is said that when his father, upon his return from the county court, would give an account to gentlemen of what had taken place there, Robert, when a very little fellow, was always a most intent listener, and that he would repeat the conversations subsequently to his mother. We shall see that he never got over his interest in politics. He took to his heart also this peculiar type of aristocratic representative government, as fitted to serve the governed best, and to breed the greatest men. He partook of the high spirit of his people, and of their keen sense of honor. He took all their roads to an education, and to a many-sided education—took them as a child and as a boy. He received their religion with rare fulness and honesty.<sup>11</sup>

It may be doubted whether many more perfect products of the civilization of his section can be found than Robert Lewis Dabney. He was its child, and he loved it with all his great, big soul. This fact will help to explain some features of his life that have not always been understood.

He was born in the year of our Lord 1820, and on the 5th day of March. He first saw the light at his father's mill-place, on the South Anna River, in Louisa county, Va. While he was still a young lad, his father removed, as we have seen, from his home on the South Anna to his farm on Cub Creek, also in the county of Louisa. This place was about sixteen miles east of Louisa Court-house, and about fifty miles from Richmond. It

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<sup>11</sup> In the construction of this sketch of the social environment in which Dr. Dabney's childhood and youth were spent, we have used freely the address of Judge Waller R. Staples before the Virginia Bar Association, in 1894, on "The County Courts." In connection with the account of the County Court system and its influence, we must also express our indebtedness to Judge Beverly R. Wellford, of Richmond, Va. For very much of the matter needed to construct other parts of this sketch, we are indebted to S. B. Dabney, Esq., of Victoria, Texas. His modesty forbids a more detailed acknowledgment.

INTEGRAL

The following are the principal elements of the system of Integral

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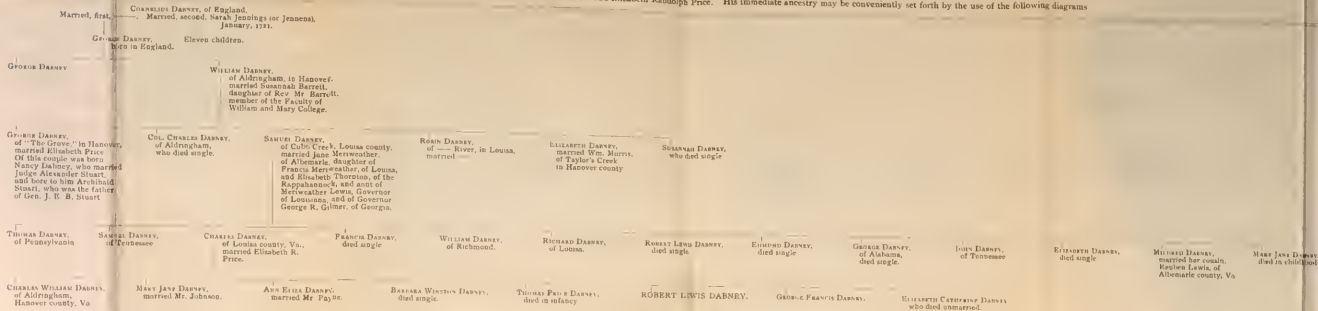
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## ANCESTRAL TABLE—PATERNAL LINE.

ROBERT LEWIS DABNEY was the sixth child of Charles Dabney, of Louisa and Elizabeth Rauldolph Price. His immediate ancestry may be conveniently set forth by the use of the following diagrams



ABSTRACT TABLE

Author	Title	Journal
[Faint text]	[Faint text]	[Faint text]
[Faint text]	[Faint text]	[Faint text]

ANCESTRAL TABLE—MATERNAL LINE

JOHN PRICE, a Welshman,  
married Betsy Randolph, of Walton.

PRICE,  
died single.

CAPT. THOMAS PRICE,  
of Coolwater, in Hanover  
county, Va., married  
Barbara Winston, of Hanover.  
Her mother's maiden name  
was Ann Parrott.

ELIZABETH PRICE,  
married George Dabney,  
of "The Grove."  
Progenitors of  
Gen. J. E. B. Stuart.

H. FARRIS PRICE,  
married his first cousin,  
Abeth Winston.  
They became parents of  
several children,  
progenitors of Prof.  
S. R. Price  
Columbia College,  
New York City.

NANCY PRICE,  
married Col. Collis.

THOMAS PRICE,  
married Maria Temple

WILLIAM PRICE,  
died single

MARY RANDOLPH PRICE,  
married Walter Coles,  
of Hanover

ELIZABETH PRICE,  
who married Charles  
Dabney, of Louisa.

BARBARA PRICE,  
married Hugh Pettus—  
They were parents of  
Samuel Pettus, who fell  
in Texas, in Fanning's  
massacre.

JOHN MARSHALL PRICE,  
of Louisa C. H.,  
married Elizabeth Mosby,  
of Hanover.

PATRICK PRICE,  
of Coolwater married  
Eileen Crutchfield

JANE PRICE,  
married Mr. Philip  
E. Winston,  
Clerk of Hanover

ROBERT LEWIS DABNEY  
and his brothers and sisters.

SAMUEL MOSBY PRICE

WM. HENRY PRICE

REV. PHILIP B. PRICE

Several other children.

was about three miles south of the main road leading from Louisa Court-house to Richmond. Here in this modest home<sup>12</sup> his parents lived in the old Virginia way. Here Robert grew up.

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<sup>12</sup> The house was a very modest one, a story and a half, with dormer windows. There was a basement underneath. There were two large rooms on the main floor, and two bed-rooms above. Adjoining one of the rooms on the main floor there was a "shed bed-room." After 1850, Mrs. Dabney added a two-story addition to her house. The kitchen was at a distance of several yards from the house. There was a considerable yard or lawn, and in it at least two fine old trees, an oak and a walnut. There was a fine terraced garden, planted "in all kinds of shrubbery and flowers," and beautifully kept. There was an orchard near by, which was made to serve as a vegetable garden as well. The stables and barns stood at some distance.

## CHAPTER II.

### *EARLY BOYHOOD.*

(March 5, 1820—June 1, 1836.)

MODEST CIRCUMSTANCES.—HIS FIRST TEACHER.—AN OLD-FIELD SCHOOL.—HIS TEACHERS IN SUCH SCHOOLS, HIS BROTHER CHARLES WILLIAM, MR. CALEB BURNLEY, MR. THOMAS MEREDITH.—HIS TEXT-BOOKS.—MR. CHARLES BURNLEY.—HIS STUDIES UNDER THE REV. JAMES WHAREY.—HIS FATHER'S DEATH.

IT has been seen in the foregoing chapter that Robert Lewis Dabney was born in a family of modest comfort; that his parents were neither poor nor rich. His father was a planter of moderate means, who needed to use frugal thrift in order to educate his children, and to give them comfortable starts in life. The father died early, and the mother had her hands more than full to do for her children what together they had hoped to do. There was constant need for industry and economy, which, however was an advantage rather than a disadvantage. He could never have done the great work of his mature years without both industry and economy, and it was well, accordingly, that he should have these qualities developed in his boyhood days.

An important part of his boyhood was spent, as we might expect, in primary schools. He was entered at a country school, for the first time, when seven years old. His mother had previously taught him to spell. His first school teacher was his oldest brother, Charles William. He was not only a young man of amiable disposition, excellent manners, and ideals much above the average, but had been taught in the best private schools of the country, and possessed "an excellent and thorough knowledge of Latin (Cicero, Virgil, Tacitus and Livy), of arithmetic, algebra, geometry and surveying, and was well read in old English literature. On the whole, he must have been well qualified to do his work as teacher in the neighborhood school. After Robert Lewis Dabney had become eminent, Mr. Charles William would sometimes laughingly say,

'I gave Robert his start. I prepared him in Latin.' He taught this school for three years. It was held in a log-house near the Dabney home, on the South Anna River."

About 1830, Mr. Charles Dabney removed from the place on the South Anna to his farm on Cub Creek; and in 1831 he and his neighbors employed as teacher Mr. Caleb Burnley, an excellent young man of the neighborhood. Mr. Dabney provided the house in which the school was held. It was built on his land—a log-house, with a clap-board roof, log chimney, and one glass window. In his old days, Dr. Robert Lewis Dabney described this house as we have done, and then added that this was the style of building in which the sons of the planters in Virginia in that day were taught, having "always good teachers and plenty of birch—the teachers being very strict about our manners."

During the next three years, he went to a similar school, which was held on the farm of a neighbor, Dr. Meredith. This school was taught by Dr. Meredith's son, Tom. A feature of the school which impressed itself very clearly on the mind of young Dabney was the old-fashioned way of spelling, twenty or thirty thrown into a class in the afternoon toward the close of the session, and "trapping." By trapping is meant the system which provided for the good speller's working his way to the head of the class by going above those who had missed a word which he himself spelled correctly when it came to him. The "turning down," or "going up," produced a rivalry which resulted in good spellers.

At this school he studied the following text-books: Pike's Arithmetic, Madam Willard's Astronomical Geography. The New Testament was his reading book. He also studied Latin and Greek. In Latin he studied Ruddiman's "Institutes of Latin Grammar," Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary, Colloquia Scholastica, by Corderius, Cæsar, Sallust and Virgil, in which he read an extensive course, the whole of Horace and Cicero's Orations; in Greek he studied Bullion's Greek Grammar, Schrevelius' Lexicon Manuale Græcorum Latinum (a Greek dictionary in which the Greek words are defined in the Latin language), a part of the New Testament in Greek, Xenophon's Anabasis, and a compilation in two volumes, octavo, called Græca Minora and Græca Majora, containing some simple Greek fables and extracts from Xenophon, Herodotus, Plato,

Homer, Anacreon, and so forth. "We 'parsed' extensively, an excellent way, now out of fashion."<sup>1</sup>

It is worthy of remark in passing that his studies at this period of his life seem to have covered no great number of topics, but that they were extensive in the classics. Two advantages naturally followed from this: concentration of energies along a few lines enabled him to put more force out along those lines, and accomplish relatively great things in those studies; he was also preserved from falling into the habit of skimming over the surface of things. In his modest way, he tells us here that he had, prior to entering college, accomplished more work in the classics than is now required of a candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Arts, in order to his graduation in one of our modern colleges. Dr. William G. T. Shedd, in one of his valuable books, criticizes the contemporary college curricula as having suffered from "fatty degeneration." Our academies have done the same thing. Our age would do well to study one of those old-field schools.

During 1835 he went to a similar school taught by Mr. Charles Burnley, who was a young Baptist preacher, and an excellent man.

From January, 1836, to June, 1836, he studied under the Rev. James Wharey, his mother's pastor. The gentleman, the father of Rev. Thomas Wharey and the Rev. James Wharey, was a saint and a scholar. In his old days Dr. Dabney was wont to speak of him as "a saintly man and well educated." He has the repute of having been a good pastor, and a solid and instructive preacher. He was the author of a Church History, published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, in Philadelphia—"one of its standard works, which, being condensed and suitable for general use, has had a wide circulation." Young Dabney rode seven miles on a colt once a week, and spent the day with Mr. Wharey, who, with great care, prepared him for college, pressing him on especially in his algebra and geometry. His text books at this time were Day's Algebra and Simpson's Euclid.

Meanwhile a heavy blow had fallen on the family of which Robert Lewis Dabney was a member—the death of the father.

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<sup>1</sup> From manuscript Memoranda of his Life, dictated by Robert L. Dabney, and in the possession of his son, Dr. Charles W. Dabney. Knoxville, Tenn., pp. 2, 3.

The character of Mr. Charles Dabney has already been set forth as space allowed. As man sees things, the death of such a father is an irreparable loss to any family, but he who is "a father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows" knows what is for the good of his own. In September, 1833, when only forty-eight years of age, Mr. Dabney sickened and died of fever. His death inflicted a sense of loss on his community and on his entire county. The court and bar of Louisa county gave the following expression to their sense of loss:

"At a Court of Monthly Session, held for the county of Louisa, at the Court-house, on Monday, the 9th day of September, 1833:

"It is represented to the court that Col. Charles Dabney, a member of this court, and Representative-elect for the county of Louisa in the next Legislature, departed this life on Friday, the 6th day of the present month, after a short illness of only seven days;

"*Resolved, therefore*, by the Court and Bar of Louisa, That the death of such a man as Col. Dabney is greatly to be deplored, as a loss to his country, not only for his public services, but for his private virtues, his charity, his benevolence, and kind disposition towards all persons, so well known to the county.

"*Resolved*, That in token of sorrow for the loss of a friend and fellow-citizen, so beloved and esteemed, the members and officers of the court, the members of the bar, and the citizens here assembled, will wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days.

"*Resolved*, That a copy of these proceedings be sent to the Richmond and Charlottesville papers for publication.

"Afterwards, on motion—

"*Resolved*, That a copy of the foregoing proceedings be sent to Mrs. Elizabeth Dabney, the consort of the deceased, as a token of the sympathy with her, felt by many of her fellow-citizens, at this afflicting bereavement.

"And then the court adjourned.

"A copy—Teste:

"JOHN HUNTER, C. C. L."



### CHAPTER III.

#### *WHILE STUDENT AT HAMPDEN-SIDNEY COLLEGE.*

(June 1, 1836—September 27, 1837.)

TIME SPENT AT HAMPDEN-SIDNEY. — STUDIES PURSUED TO COMPLETION THERE.—HABITS OF STUDY; NERVOUS FEELING OF OBLIGATION TO DO WELL FROM THE START; PAINSTAKING EFFORT ON EVERY PART OF HIS COURSE; WRITES HIS DECLAMATIONS.—OTHER HABITS THERE; RESPECT FOR THE RULES OF THE COLLEGE; NOT MUCH GIVEN TO SOCIAL VISITING; CAREFULNESS IN REGARD TO EXPENSES; NEATNESS.—VIEWS OF THE COLLEGE; DESCRIPTION OF THE PROFESSORS.—VIEWS OF THE STUDENTS, SHEPPERSON, HOGE.—VIEWS OF THE COMMUNITY.—PERSONS WITH WHOM HE BOARDED WHILE AT COLLEGE.—HIS LETTER-WRITING WHILE THERE; HIS HOMESICKNESS AT FIRST; WHAT SORT OF LETTERS HE DESIRED FROM HOME; WHAT HE WROTE ABOUT HIMSELF; HIS AFFECTION FOR HIS FAMILY SHOWN IN HIS LETTERS.—REASONS FOR DISCONTINUING HIS STUDIES AT HAMPDEN-SIDNEY.—VIEW TAKEN OF HIM AT HAMPDEN-SIDNEY AT THE TIME.—HIS PROFESSION OF HIS FAITH IN CHRIST.—HIS FIRST COMMUNION.

ON the first day of June, 1836, Robert Lewis Dabney entered Hampden-Sidney College as a student. He was then sixteen years and three months old—tall and slender, swarthy in complexion, with dark brown hair, and fine dark eyes, rather deeply set under a fine brow, and dominating a strong and attractive lower face, with firm mouth and strong chin. He was somewhat wanting in ease of manner, and possessed little grace of movement. He entered the sophomore class half advanced. At that time there were two sessions in the college year separated by vacations of about one month each—a session from November to April, inclusive, and a session from June to September, inclusive. Having passed through the summer session of 1836, he returned in November following for the winter session of 1836 to 1837, and then again for the summer session of 1837.

During these sessions he completed the college courses of mathematics, physics, Latin and Greek, as arranged at that time. The courses in the departments of mathematics and physics were ably taught. The languages, on the other hand, seem to have been taught with less ability.



MAIN BUILDING, HAMPDEN-SIDNEY COLLEGE.



Young Dabney, as we learn repeatedly from his letters of the period, began his college career with aspiration to become a learned man. He tells his friends at home over and over again that he has "determined that study and attention shall not be wanting." He was nervous throughout the first session as to the reputation he should make that session. He felt the importance of doing well from the start. In a letter to his mother, of the date of August 20, 1836, he says, "It is said that a student is almost certain to stand throughout his whole course just as he stands the first session, and if he gets a bad name at first, it requires the greatest exertions to get rid of it; and his habits of study will be very much the same as they were the first session, so that this is by far the most important part of my course." He seems to have put forth painstaking effort on every branch of his studies, and to have applied himself closely, and that, too, as a matter of conviction as to what was right in the circumstances. He writes to his mother on November 6, 1836, "My room-mate is a very good sort of young man, and was very kind to me while I was unwell. I think we shall agree very well. He seems very anxious to study, but does not stay much in his own room. This is a bad symptom, for, however it may be in other matters, he who gads about does not study. It is very important for a student to make himself well acquainted with his own room." In the class-room he was so good a listener and so accurate a note-taker that his notes were widely copied by his fellow-students. Writing to his mother on the 3rd of June, 1837, with all the abandon of perfect filial confidence, about his career in the study of Dr. Draper's course, he says, "There is great skill required in taking these notes well, and mine last session were almost the only ones in the class. Many of them took exact copies of my note-book after I was done with it." He adds in a sportive vein, "This you would suppose to be almost as difficult as to take the notes from the lectures originally when you remember how bad a hand I write. I used frequently to threaten that I would write them so that they should be unintelligible to every one but myself. There is, however, amongst the students a most perfect spirit of generosity in all such things as the loan of books and assistance in each other's studies. All our things are regarded pretty much as common stock amongst intimate acquaintances and neighbors." These added words may seem to some irrelevant while speaking of young Dabney's habits of study, but they serve to

emphasize further the careful and solid character of his work by showing the respect which the students had for it, while they also reveal a beautiful trait of his character, that of finding pleasure in giving any sort of aid to his fellows, and his modesty, since he can hardly refer to this eminence of his above his fellows without evident embarrassment. He was not only careful in the performance of everything that was required, his thirst for improvement led him to attempt somewhat beyond the pale of requirements, not only in private, but in his public exercise. For instance, he wrote, in his junior year, at least some of his own declamations. In the college in his day, the members of the lower classes were required to pronounce declamations once in each four weeks. They were expected to commit suitable extracts for these occasions. The members of the senior class were required to compose and deliver their own orations. Young Dabney looked on declamation as "doing no good except giving a man confidence," and accordingly resolved that he would do in his junior year that which was required of the seniors. On the 8th of September, 1836, he writes to his brother, Mr. William Dabney, "I intend to write some of mine next session. It will at least make me more familiar with composition, and I think that I can speak my own productions with a great deal more spirit than some one's else." We learn from the letters of the following year that he carried his resolution into execution once, and with results so satisfactory that he proceeded to repeat the effort.

Amongst his literary remains there are ten papers which were prepared during his days as student in Hampden-Sidney College, viz., five "compositions," two "forensics," one of them against Moses D. Hoge, and three "orations." They betray crudities, but also strong common sense, unusual intelligence and breadth of reading for a youth of sixteen or seventeen years of age. They show that he has already learned how to read history; he says, "Do we read history merely to commit to memory a catalogue of facts and the opinion which some other man has formed concerning them? Or do we not rather wish to store the mind with a series of events, whose causes and effects it may afterwards examine, and which it may compare both with each other, and with the incidents which are daily taking place?" Blind reliance on the judgment of others he condemned as well as the contemptuous treatment of their opinions. Privately also he wrought to improve himself outside

prescribed duties. On the 19th of February, 1837, he writes to his mother, "I have nearly stopped reading novels lately; but I have a novel in my room now for the first time for several months. I have read Hume's History of England nearly up to the time of Cromwell. I thought it very dry when I first began, but I have now become acquainted with his style, and like it very well. I remember that you were very anxious that I should read it, and wished me to borrow it from Mr. Minor. Now I can read it without borrowing, which you know I never liked."

He so behaved while at college that when about to leave, and looking forward to teaching school, he could say, "I feel some diffidence about whether I shall do justice to my scholars or not, but I know that I have done my best to prepare myself. Since I have been at college, I have always taken the highest mark for scholarship, and that at a time when no one else in college obtained it. I think you know me well enough to believe me when I say that I do not tell this out of any vanity, but only because it will be pleasing to you. But as every one else may not think with you and me on this point, you had better, for the sake of my good name, not repeat this."<sup>1</sup>

He was equally commendable in his other habits. The college was visited with epidemics of disorder during his residence there. There was a good deal of gambling in the winter of 1836-'37, and some expulsions and suspensions in consequence, penalties which the student body generally thought too severe. To show their displeasure at the decisions of the faculty about half the students organized themselves into a disorderly band of disturbers, and conducted a calithump extraordinary in all the annals of Hampden-Sidney College for its wildly contemptuous behavior toward the professors. In consequence of this the faculty threatened to dismiss about twenty of the chief disturbers, but the matter was finally adjusted in a more amicable manner. The offenders were "called into the chapel, and there, before the whole college, they took a solemn promise to behave well thereafter, and so forth."<sup>2</sup>

While disapproving of the faculty's management as indiscrete during these days of disorder, he kept free of disorder himself, and he expresses himself in terms of strong indignation

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<sup>1</sup> See letter of September 1, 1837, to his mother.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to his mother, dated February 3, 1837.

against the violaters of the rules of an institution on which they were attending of free choice. So far as we have been able to find, he complied habitually with all the requirements of college, unless we except an occasional absence from chapel, due to oversleeping, and an occasional absence from his assigned place in church on Sunday; and in regard to these he explains to his mother that she is acquainted with his difficulty in waking at the proper hour, and that when absent from his place in church, it was owing to his having been escort to his "Aunt Dabney," then on the Hill, who sat in another part of the building.

He was not much given to social visiting of the ladies. He felt the need of polish that comes of conversation with refined ladies, but he doubted whether, while being on the expense involved in a life in college, he should attempt to get that polish. He sought to cultivate the acquaintance only of the women of the highest type. He writes to his mother on the 3rd of June, 1837, "I sometimes doubt whether it is right in me to visit here. I do not believe that I lose much except in the time actually spent in the visits, for the images of the ladies do not trouble me in the retirement of my chamber; but still the time occupied in dressing, and so forth, is something, and I doubt whether the improvement in manners compensates me for it. However, I shall continue my visits to Mrs. Powers and her guests. She is my example of a true old Virginia lady, such an one as does honor to her country." He knew the value of money; knew to what efforts his mother was put to supply him with the necessary funds, and he was, therefore, careful as to all his expenditures. This appears often in his letters, as in the letter to his mother, dated July 23, 1836, in which he states that he will need a "few dollars" more than he has on hand, to pay his debts and his passage home at the end of September. He says, "There are a great many little expenses which no one would ever think of until he has been here, for I can say that I have not spent more than a dollar and a half in useless things since I have been here. I have set down every cent, and I will show you my account when I get home." He was also remarkable for neatness in his room and person. He had the reputation for the neatest room in college, and he seems to have been equally careful as to his dress; he criticizes some of his fellows as too indifferent to dress, and one in particular, whom he admired greatly in other respects.

He entertained very independent views as to the character of Hampden-Sidney College in his days there. He tells his mother, and his brother in particular, of the noble work it had done in the past, in turning out learned men, of its struggles with poverty, having at the time interest-bearing funds amounting to "only \$17,000," of its frequent loss of its more promising professors, and of its liability to continue subject to such losses. On the 13th of August, 1836, he writes, "I think it is paying rather dear for learning, especially if we have no better teachers than we have at home. I do not think that I learn any more of Latin or Greek than I could learn by myself, for our professor of languages is so indifferent that he does not teach us anything. The only object, then, in coming here is the study of mathematics and chemistry, in both of which departments we have very good professors; but as we are about to lose our professor of chemistry, I think that the college will be a very poor place, and the only reason why I should come here in preference to some other college, is your predilection for it." In a letter to his brother William, August 5, 1836, he had already sketched, with a vigorous hand, the professors severally. After some preliminary remarks of an introductory nature, he began:

"I will now proceed to make you acquainted with some of our professors, and first with the president. He is a nice, active man, a little below the middle size, and is a great hand to run after the students when they get into mischief. He follows the fashion about as much as you do, wears small whiskers, and combs his hair in a very classical manner. He is quite handsome, and has quite an intelligent countenance and a very fine eye. He is a very fine speaker, and in a whole sermon he will not have a single word or gesture wrong. Indeed, I think that he has rather too large a portion of outside, but he is, nevertheless, a very wise man, and well qualified for his office. Our next best is the Professor of Chemistry. He is an Englishman, and quite celebrated for several important discoveries. He is a little lower than our friend, John Fox, and much such a looking man, having a highly-colored face, as if he had been raised on Thompsonian physic. Notwithstanding his appearance, he is an excellent chemist and a very agreeable lecturer. The next is the most remarkable looking man I ever saw. He is about six feet high, but does not weigh more than 120 pounds, I should think from his appearance; his face is about the color of a dead oak leaf, though not so dark, and he wears a little pair of whiskers, each of which contains about a hundred spires of beard. He is Professor of Mathematics, and although young, he is an excellent scholar, one of the best that ever came from the University. The last in order is the



Professor of ——. He is about the size of Charles Burnley, and not so good a teacher. I think that there is some resemblance between them; he is not a better looking man, though somewhat more fashionable. But I have forgotten to give you their names, so I will give them to you now in all form. Daniel L. Carrol, D. D., Professor of Metaphysics and Moral Philosophy; John William Draper, M. D., Professor of Natural Philosophy and Chemistry; Zebulon Montgomery Pike Powers, Professor of Mathematics, and ———, Professor of Ancient Languages and Literature. . . . The lectures in mathematics are conducted thus: the Professor calls upon some one of the students, generally one whom he suspects has not been studying very hard, and makes him explain or prove any proposition as it is done in the book, if he can, and then goes over it himself, explains it fully, and tells us its applications or use in subsequent calculations. If the student is not able to explain it, he calls on some one else, and he will thus try every one in the class in a few days. In language, we get a lesson in the ordinary manner, and read it over in the lecture-room; the professor then asks questions and explains the constructions, and ought to give us a description of all the persons and places mentioned in the book, but this is very rarely done. All my studies are comprehended in these two branches. . . . Their mode of detecting mischief is to run up on the mischief-makers so that they may get close enough to recognize them; but this they rarely do, and they sometimes have most ludicrous races."

He found many men amongst the students between whom and himself there could be little congeniality. Some were idlers, some were wanting in the bearing of a gentleman. He expressed himself in terms of fierce condemnation of such; but he found some noble spirits amongst his fellow-students at Hampden-Sidney, for whom he conceived a high and generous admiration. One of these was Mr. John G. Shepperson, and another was Moses Drury Hoge. Of Mr. Shepperson he wrote to his brother on the 8th of July, 1836, "He is negligent of his dress to a fault, has a very awkward person and address, and cares not for the ridicule of any person living when he thinks that he is right; insomuch that he often does things that are ridiculous, I believe, only to show that he is independent. But yet he is esteemed by every one, and I believe that there is no person living who has anything against him." Between himself and Moses Drury Hoge there was formed at this time a friendship that was to grow strong and endure every strain till Dr. Hoge should help to bury him, his old and very honored friend, at Hampden-Sidney, in the year 1898.

Amongst his college-mates were also Thomas S. Boccock, who was to become Speaker of the Confederate Congress; V. Coleman, J. H. Fitzgerald, and William T. Richardson, for a long time the editor of the *Central Presbyterian*; Francis D. Irving, Charles S. Carrington, J. Vernon Cosby, J. W. Clapp, Samuel Branch, Willis Wilson, William H. Anderson, William B. Shepard, and John A. Lancaster. Some of these were his close friends throughout life.

During the first months of his sojourn in the college he seems to have felt that the people in the community were inaccessible; but as the months passed he was received into home after home, and grew to think Prince Edward remarkable for its hospitality. He animadverts, however, on the effort at show, "especially among the ladies"; and makes many satirical comments on their poor carriages and ill-fed beasts. He advances the opinion that it would really be more genteel to turn such horses out to graze, and to walk instead of driving to church and elsewhere.

He lived, while at college, in the college dormitories, but took his meals for a time at Dr. Carrol's, then at Mr. Vernon's; during the winter session, 1836-'37, he took them, with six other fine fellows, at the home of Mrs. John Holt Rice. This was his happiest boarding place. Mrs. Rice, the venerable widow of Dr. John Holt Rice, the founder of Union Seminary, was like a mother to him, nursing him through a brief illness with great tenderness and skill. During his last summer term the college authorities required all the students to board at the college refectory. This was greatly to his dissatisfaction, as well as to that of others, particularly Mrs. Rice's boarders.

He was a great letter-writer in those early years. His correspondents were, for the most part, members of his own immediate family. His mother seems to have laid a command upon him to write to herself or some one else of the home folks at least once a week, that she might be kept constantly informed of his condition. But stronger even than his respect for this command was the demand of his own heart for communion with his own family. He was of a most affectionate temper toward his mother, brothers and sisters, and never forgot, down to his old age, his homesickness during his first weeks in college. As he could not be at home he wanted to hear from them by letter often, and to pour himself out through his pen-point in writing to them. He remonstrates, argues and threatens, all in

order to get more letters and fuller letters. In his letter of June 14, 1836, he writes:

"I feel very lonely sometimes, although there are so many people about, and I often wish I had a room-mate. You are now, I suppose, at Woodson's (Mr. Payne's, a son's-in-law), and Betty is following Nanny about, and Francis is out with him in the new ground. I seem to see you now as plainly as if I were with you, and feel a sort of satisfaction in picturing to myself the situations of you all at this time. Therefore, when you write to me, tell me all of your plans, that I may follow you in my mind in all of your movements, and almost think myself with you."

In a letter of August 20th, the same year, he writes:

"I hope that you have a good crop of tobacco. I fancy sometimes that I can see all of that lot by the corn-house, green and fine, and old uncle Harry and Jack pulling off the worms. I assure you that I very often think of every living thing, both man and beast, on our plantation, and that the sight of Betty's kitten playing with the spool would give me the greatest pleasure; but I suppose that she has grown so large that she plays with rats now."

These are but samples. Throughout his college course he begs and pleads to be informed of everything that occurs in his neighborhood, things of moment and trifling things—he wishes to be told them all.

As for his own letters, proof has already been furnished that he wrote on a great variety of topics. But he drew his materials from many more sources than we have hitherto indicated. He adjusted himself to his correspondents. With his brother William he gave much space to the discussion of principles of behavior and to argument. With other members of his family he uses his space in descriptions of his surroundings and life. With his mother he is at his best, always tender, and respectful to the verge of reverence in manner, and dealing with conditions and principles in a way that she will most certainly approve. A few quotations will show us at once somewhat of that which he found to write of, and enable us to see some things worth seeing through his youthful eyes. He wrote to his sister Mary, on the 23rd of July, of the place and college:

"This place is not very remarkable for anything at all except poverty, for the College stands in the middle of an old field full of gullies and weeds, and the cows of the neighborhood come up to the very windows

with their bells, making such a noise that I cannot study. . . . The college is a great brick building, four stories high. It has forty-eight rooms in it besides the public rooms, making fifty-three in all. The rooms are large enough to accommodate three persons each."

We must remember that he is speaking of the campus as it was in 1836. The campus is now an unusually beautiful one, well grassed and adorned with magnificent oaks.

At that period the Fourth of July was celebrated with as much patriotism as it is to-day, and the Fourth of July, 1837, is described as follows, in a letter to his brother William, written on the sixth:

"The celebration began with one or two orations from each of the literary societies, and you must feel enough sympathy for me to rejoice that, in the opinion of the ladies at least, our speakers were the best. [He was a member of the Philanthropic Society.] We then had a dinner, to which the Faculty and all those persons in the neighborhood who were once members of college were invited. We employed ourselves some time in drinking patriotic, witty and Whiggish toasts. The Faculty took a very popular course. They mixed with the students, and considered themselves on an equality with them. To show you the freedom which prevailed, I will give you two toasts which were presented by the same student, and were taken in very good part by the Faculty. The first was, 'Mr. Powers, Professor of Mathematics: may his character prove as impervious to the shafts of calumny as the differential calculus is to the minds of the Junior Class.' The differential calculus is a study in the junior year, which it is almost impossible to understand. The second toast was, 'The size is nothing important if the head and heart are right, as is exemplified in the present members of the Faculty.' Now, you must know that all the professors are mere pigmies, except Dr. Carrol. The old Doctor was so much pleased with this that the glasses and everything around him were threatened with very serious effects from his obstreperous mirth. Another toast was, 'The tree of knowledge in Prince Edward: it is different from every other tree in that the beauties are at (the) Root's.' But these doubtless appeared more witty when the wine had made us good-hearted than they do now. There was not much wine drunk, although one or two of the students were overtaken. In the evening the Root of the Tree of Science gave a kind of musical performance. The girls mounted a kind of stage or rostrum, where the piano was placed, and played and sang before about one hundred and fifty persons. Some of them were very much confused, but some of them were wholly unconcerned. All of them must become so if they stay there long, for at examinations it is much worse than it was to-day."

Mr. Root, referred to in the last quotation, conducted a large female school at the court-house village, now called Worsham. That school presented the same sort of attractions to the Hampden-Sidney students of that time that the present residents in the State Normal School for Young Women, in Farmville, do for our young men in Hampden-Sidney to-day. Young Dabney was himself drawn occasionally to the root of science, or at any rate within the sacred precincts. But while he suffered attraction thitherward, he propounds criticism of the methods in vogue in this female school that would have astounded Mr. Root and his whole school, and perhaps the community. This school is a subject on which he writes at length. It furnished the desired occasion for the exhibition of his views on female education. Many of these views he cherished to his later years. He at this early period regarded the piano as an overvalued instrument; he tells us that he had never heard but one person play whose playing, in itself considered, was worth listening to, that there were smaller instruments out of which more music could be gotten; that too much attention was paid, in female education, to mere "intellectual varnishing," not enough to the solid furnishing of the intellect and upbuilding of character. He wished the females in whom he was interested to be taught in good home schools, too, or at most, only in small private schools, and he desired that none of their native modesty should be rubbed off.

In his letters, he gives, naturally, a full account of himself: his room, and how he kept it, his relations and life with his fellow-students, and with the members of the faculty, and with such members of the community as he came into contact with. He wrote, too, about things back at home. He is deeply interested in his brother's affairs of heart, has much advice to give, urges persistence in his suit, argues and encourages as long as there is a possibility of success. With his mother he discusses all her farming and milling operations, keeps up with the state of the crops, and probable prices of wheat, corn and tobacco, and so forth. He was especially interested in his younger brother, George Francis, whom he encourages to study, and to try to break himself of stammering. He does not wish him to be a physician, but a lawyer or preacher, and, therefore, to cultivate eloquence. Even thus early he had a peculiarly strong affection for his youngest sister—a lovely child and maiden. He advises his mother as to her studies, as well as to "Frank's"

(George Francis'), sends her messages, and pleads for letters from her—at least, for dictated messages.

These letters make it clear as the sun that he bore to all the members of his family very tender love. They make it equally clear that he was just as much loved and admired by them. The members of his family seem to have referred to him often by the pet phrase, "The old gentleman." His attitude toward the rest would suggest and justify this phrase; for he took thought at this early period for mother, brothers and sisters.

As the end of the summer session of 1837 approached, he decided to discontinue his studies in the college, a step which he took not without regret. On the 18th of September, 1837, he writes:

"I now sit down to write what I suppose will be my last letter to you from this place. . . . I look forward to the prospect of leaving these dreary walls with a good deal of pleasure, although I have enjoyed much happiness in them. If I had no home to go to, I would as soon stay here as in any place I know, if not rather. Although all the external appearances are uncomfortable and repelling, few persons ever come here without regretting their departure. I do not know whether the excellence is in the people, for they do not seem to me to be more than usually kind and hospitable, but so it is. I have always been treated with the utmost politeness whenever I have become acquainted."

Of his reasons for leaving he gives somewhat in a previous letter, written on September 1st. After indulging in some remarks concerning the peculiar pleasures and dignities awaiting the senior class of 1837-'38, he says:

"But I would not have you think that I regret leaving college. If it was so, I should not think of these idle advantages, but rather of the opportunity for study. I know that it will be more advantageous to me to teach than to study now, and I will return at a time when I shall be better qualified by my age to make full use of all the circumstances which surround a student."

He had other reasons of which he was not so careful to speak to his mother. He has left a record of them elsewhere. His widowed mother was somewhat in debt. She was, also, under the necessity of rebuilding her mill at that time. The rents from that property were absorbed in the enterprise. Young Dabney was determined not to further burden her, but, on the contrary, to help her in the work of rebuilding. He had been discussing the best kind of water-wheels with Dr. Draper and

his brother William for months; but he was ready for any sort of work, as we shall see, to set his mother on comfortable footing.

We wish we could know exactly what the people of Hampden-Sidney thought of this young man, who looked so closely at them, and discussed them so keenly, and yet so generously. Tradition says they thought him to be a great, strong fellow, with noble traits, but wanting in the graces. The faculty's report sent on the 25th of September, 1837, and covering the whole session then ending, and claiming to be a "correct and impartial statement of the conduct and proficiency of each student," assigns to him the most distinguished rank in scholarship, the most distinguished rank in behavior, and the most distinguished rank in industry, which its rules provided for the recognition of. He was the only representative of his class thus highly ranked. This report was accompanied by a letter from the president of the college, which may be presented in full:

"MRS. DABNEY:

"*Dear Madam,*—I feel great regret that your son Robert should be interrupted in his studies by teaching or from any other cause. He is now prepared to enter the Senior Class with great advantage, and to complete his studies under circumstances more favorable to his scholarship than he can hope hereafter. The Faculty have unanimously agreed that if he will continue they will not require of him the tuition fees for the next year till some future period when it may be convenient for him to pay. I hope that Robert has experienced a great change in his religious feelings lately, and this is an additional reason why we wish him to continue his education without interruption. If you can make such an arrangement as to send him back the next session it will be greatly to his advantage. You have great reason, madam, to be thankful to God for giving you such a son.

"Yours, etc.,

"D. L. CARROL."

The greatest thing in the relations of any man is his relation to God. There is nothing strange, therefore, in an assertion of Robert Lewis Dabney, when long past his threescore years and ten, viz., "The most important event of this period to me was my profession of faith in Christ," in September, 1837. He announces his change to his mother, in a letter of the 18th of that month. He tells his mother that he heard indirectly of the death of his little niece, infant daughter of his sister, Mrs.

Payne, expresses his inability to form any idea of what a parent must feel in such a situation, and then continues :

“I pray most sincerely that this may be made by God a benefit to their piety. You will be somewhat surprised, my dear mother, to hear me talk in this way; but, by the grace of Christ, I have been made to think at least a little about my sins and my eternal salvation. There has been a great deal of feeling in the college for a few days, and about twelve of the students have become religious. I know I need not ask you to remember both your son and his fellow-students in your prayers. I am afraid that the revival is dying away very fast; but we ought to be thankful for what has already been done. Dr. Carrol has had meetings every night for nearly a week, and Mr. Taylor (professor in the Seminary) and others sometimes attend. Mr. Taylor was here last night.”

Throughout his life, Dr. Dabney continued to think of this as a time when “the college was visited by a powerful and genuine awakening.”

At the close of the session, in the end of that September, he returned to his mother's, and later on in the autumn, at Providence Church, and from the hands of his mother's pastor, Mr. Wharey, he partook of his first communion. What were his thoughts? Would that he had been away from home, that to his dear ones there he might have recounted what it was to him. It remained a memorable day in his life. Toward the evening of it he said, “Since that day my face has ever been turned Zionward, though with sad defections of duty.”



## CHAPTER IV.

### *EARLY EFFORTS TO AID HIS MOTHER.*

(October, 1837—December 9, 1839.)

WORKING IN QUARRY.—HIS FIRST SCHOOL.—THE SUMMER OF 1838.—  
HIS SECOND SCHOOL.—VISIT TO HIS AUNT, MRS. REUBEN LEWIS,  
OF ALBEMARLE COUNTY, IN 1839.—THE INVITATION OF MR. AND MRS.  
LEWIS.—HIS CORRESPONDENTS THE MEANWHILE.

YOUNG Dabney was very much in earnest in his purpose not to be a burden, but a help to his widowed mother. He reached home late in September, 1837, fixed in this resolution, and he spent the rest of that year in the stone quarry, and on the boat transporting stone, which was needed in the rebuilding of the mill. We may think of this youth of seventeen years and a half, whom the members of his family lovingly referred to as "the old gentleman," or "the old man," who had won the plaudits of professors and fellow-students for talents, industry and bearing of the most distinguished sort, as suitably garbed, and holding a drill, or, it may be, driving it with a sledgehammer, or straining with a lever to move a block of stone, helping to steer and propel the boat on which it is being carried to its destination. He shows the quality here of the primordial mass of his manhood. He is the son of a slave-holder. His mother owns slaves, but she is somewhat straitened in her business. He will not be a burden to her; he will help her. There is nothing wrong or dishonorable in manual labor; he will work with his own hands, that his mother's burdens may be made lighter. Mrs. Elizabeth Randolph Dabney may have gone and looked at her son engaged in these labors, and thought of Dr. Carroll's words, "You have great reason to be thankful to God, madam, that he has given you such a son." She may very well have felt that she was getting new proof of the truth of those words.

On the 15th of January, 1838, he opened a neighborhood school. At this time he lacked one month and twenty days of being eighteen years old. The cabin in which he taught was similar to the one in which he had been taught by Mr. Caleb

Burnley. This cabin he helped to build with his own hands. There were about seventeen pupils, boys and girls. His brother Frank (and his sister Betty, perhaps) was among the number. So far as was known, he was a faithful and efficient teacher. It was important to him chiefly as bringing him, clear money, about three hundred dollars.

The summer of 1838 he seems to have devoted to farming operations, and the winter following he seems to have given to the pursuits of the planter.

During the latter part of the summer and the autumn of 1839 he taught a second school. This school was held about four miles west of his mother's, in a log cabin near Col. William Harris's. The benches on which the pupils sat had no backs. He walked all this distance of four miles night and morning, his brother Frank accompanying him. This school brought him in another three hundred dollars. The two schools together had covered a period of about ten months, and together they had netted him six hundred dollars. The last of the two closed early in December, 1839.

Meanwhile, in the early part of the summer of 1839, he had gone, riding a colt, to pay a visit to his aunt, Mrs. Reuben Lewis, of Albemarle county. She lived not far from Charlottesville, the seat of the University of Virginia, an institution whose advantages he had for years hoped some day to enjoy. In all the South, and, indeed, in all the land, there was no place with more of fame for the character of the work done by the students who were graduated. It had amongst its professors men of national reputation. The institution was established on a basis more liberal and enlightened than any other in our country at the time, and had already won a reputation abroad. While on this visit to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis he attended on the exercises connected with the close of the University session, and was greatly impressed by what he saw and heard. His uncle and aunt insisted that he should come and live with them: they offered to give him board and lodging for himself and his horse, and urged that he could ride thence to the University and back, attend the lectures and thus complete his education. This was not an offer to be lightly rejected, nor did it take young Dabney long to accept it.

Up to this time he does not seem to have abandoned the idea of returning to Hampden-Sidney. He had been entreated repeatedly to return, by his student friends, and amongst them,

Moses Drury Hoge. In August, 1839, Mr. Hoge writes, expressing the hope that they may be college-mates again and class-mates. In September, 1839, he wrote again, urging various reasons for his friend Dabney's return, one, at least, of which is worthy of repeating. It is put by Mr. Hoge as follows:

"The other day, Mr. Maxwell" (who was made president in 1838) "was talking to me of the prospects of the College, and said that it was his intention to get two tutors as soon as possible; and asked me if I knew of a young man who would answer his purpose. I immediately gave him an account of you, and he requested me to sound you on the subject. He told me that if I would teach two or three years, he would send me to Europe, and give me an opportunity to fit myself for any chair I pleased. A part of his offers I declined, for I am not willing to make any engagement that would preclude the possibility of studying divinity. I may possibly teach in the College and carry on my studies in the Seminary at the same time. But of this hereafter. It is Mr. Maxwell's plan to train young men for professorships, by first making them tutors; and although a tutorship must be no temptation to you, if you intend to teach, you might not object to being a professor. I hope you will reflect on this seriously. I regret that you cannot come in the fall and have a conversation with Mr. Maxwell yourself."

The venerable widow of the Rev. Dr. John Holt Rice also urged and entreated her "young friend Mr. Dabney" to return to Hampden-Sidney. This noble woman was one of his most regular, and, we must believe, one of his most helpful correspondents in this period. He entertained a most respectful and profound regard for her character then, and continued to cherish her memory throughout his long and full life. Certainly she wrote affectionately, tenderly, and wisely to him of his Christian life. Here are some of her words, on the 13th of February, 1838:

"I trust you will make your religion serviceable to you in every thought and action. It is of little avail if our religion is not in continual practice, if it is not interwoven in our very system. Oh! how much Christians lose by not being more entirely Christian, and how much good they lose the privilege of doing, and how much reproach they bring on the cause of the blessed Redeemer, who gave his life a ransom for all who believe and trust and obey him! I wish you to take a higher stand than the common Christians. How little use is it to pretend to be a Christian at all, when the case is so doubtful to all and even to ourselves. I wish you to enjoy all the blessed and gracious

promises and truths of God's Word; to have that faith which will purify your heart and work by love; that will ever lead you to do good, and in every way be useful. Oh! it is worth all labor, self-denial and exertion to be found so engaged as at last to have it pronounced, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' I trust you will make the Bible, and not other professors, your rule and guide. Shrink not from any duty, however difficult and painful; and diligently seek for duties."

Her letters to him abound in homilies similarly helpful. This venerated lady to whom he wrote, often two letters to her one, makes it her business to urge him to return to Hampden-Sidney. She began this as early as November, 1838. She says, in a letter of the 22nd of that month:

"Though I now have a good many letters pressing on my hands, yet I cannot delay yours, if anything I can say will aid in deciding so important a point as your next year's college course. I must say that Mr. Maxwell . . . seems to take hold of the poor old College with the right spirit; and that every son of Virginia, and especially Presbyterians, ought to hold up his hands, and aid him in every way in their power. This I would by no means wish you to do to the least injury of yourself or your dear young brother. Every man must, in a great measure, form himself, or he will not be a good scholar or anything else; and I should think recitations preferable to lectures for undergraduates. The College, as far as I can learn, is now going on admirably. Mr. Maxwell says his duties thus far are pleasures; and we are apt to attend well to what is a pleasure. He says he has to study hard, but he seems to enjoy it. He talks much of putting the place in thorough repair, and making it attractive by having fine fruits, trees, pleasure walks, and so forth, and of doing everything to improve and please, to benefit and render the students comfortable and happy. Professor Smith [this gentleman was soon to become the head of the Virginia Military Institute] is said to be a fine officer. He wishes to put the College under complete martial law, and make it a sort of West Point. Mr. Maxwell is very anxious to make a truly Christian college, and for this, I believe, ardently prays. Now, although the College has not been patronized by the State, it has been a patron of the State, and I do not think the old mother should be neglected for the pampered daughter, who has sucked all the literary resources, and yet has higher expenses. The cost there is considerably greater, and there are many more temptations to indulgence and extravagances. And as to friends, I do not expect you have one near there more interested in you than I am."

In a letter of January 15, 1839, she again speaks in praise of Mr. Maxwell's administration, and of the college generally;

says that the students are becoming better pleased; mentions Mr. Hoge as a special instance of this, and says, "They have talked of writing to you, and perhaps have, and can tell you much more than I can."

On the 9th of April following she wrote:

"I am, of course, no judge of college matters. But Mr. Maxwell seems to have his heart so much in the work, and his views seem to me so much what they ought to be in relation to such a work, that I cannot but hope he is doing very well, and that if he can be sustained the institution will yet be a blessing and a glory to our State. I should have no doubt of his success if it was not for this lamentable party strife."

The reference is to the conflict between the New and Old School Churches, with the spirit of which this good lady had no sympathy. She thought that the defenders of correct principles had shown a want of Christian charity in dealing with their opponents.

On the 16th of July she wrote:

"I am sorry to hear there will be any difficulty or doubt about you and your brother's coming this fall. This is an important crisis with the good old College, and as much as she wants money, she wants students of the right stamp more, and you know how much our country and the church at this time needs her sons to have every possible qualification for usefulness. The more I see and hear of Mr. Maxwell's views and conduct in regard to college matters, the more I approve and wish him every facility for success. He has many difficulties to contend with, and I wish him to have the aid and comfort of such a pupil as my own young friend. This, though, would not influence me if I did not feel fully assured it would be to the permanent interest of yourself and brother."

Having heard of the offer of Mr. Lewis, near the University of Virginia, to give Mr. Dabney free board, Mrs. Rice wrote, on the 22nd of September, 1839:

"I wish I were in a situation to make an offer that might equal your good aunt's. I think it of considerable importance to build up a good Presbyterian institution, such as President Maxwell has his heart set upon, where pure morals and sound learning may be taught. . . . Mr. Maxwell wishes to raise officers from our own College that will feel and act together, and strive to do good to their country through the College. He has set his heart on Mr. Hoge and young Reid, of Lynchburg, and Mr. Hoge recommends you as a suitable person to

train for that object, and, therefore, Mr. Maxwell wishes to get you here. . . . I think this may be to your advantage, and open a field for great usefulness for you. I am sure I am not making calculations for the gratification of my old age. Yet it would be gratifying to have such young friends settled around me. As far as I can see, Mr. Maxwell has very just views for managing and conducting the College, and I wish him to have help."

These letters were no doubt gratifying to young Dabney, and helpful because of their appreciation; but we cannot doubt that he chose wisely, being as mature in mind and character as he was, and Hampden-Sidney not being perfectly organized, in going to the place of larger opportunities, albeit it was also the place of greater danger. The course which might have proved hazardous in the extreme to others was not so to him, and he was too large a man to have been able to look forward contentedly to a mere professorship in the Hampden-Sidney of his day.

## CHAPTER V.

### LIFE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA.

(December 9, 1839—July 5, 1842.)

THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA AT THE TIME.—YOUNG DABNEY'S VIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY, OF PROFESSORS BONNYCASTLE, POWERS AND SYLVESTER, RODGERS AND EMMET, TUCKER AND HARRISON.—HIS VIEWS OF THE STUDENT BODY, AND THE MURDER OF PROFESSOR DAVIS.—VIEWS OF THE COMMUNITY.—HIS PAINSTAKING EFFORTS AS A STUDENT, AND HIS ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE SEVERAL SESSIONS.—ATTEMPTS AT COMPOSITION.—CHRISTIAN WORK IN BEHALF OF HIS FELLOW-STUDENTS.—MEMBER OF A TOTAL ABSTINENCE SOCIETY.—BEGINNING OF HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH THE REV. WM. S. WHITE.—GIVES ATTENTION TO POLITICS, SLAVERY, TO HIS MOTHER'S FARMING OPERATIONS.—TEACHES HIS BROTHER FRANCIS WHILE AT THE UNIVERSITY.—INTEREST IN HIS SISTER BETTY.—SOME OF HIS CORRESPONDENTS.—FUNDS WITH WHICH HE GOT THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY.

THE period 1839 to 1842 was one of change at the University of Virginia. The changes in the Faculty at Hampden-Sidney had been a factor in producing the dissatisfaction with that institution on the part of young Dabney. It was his destiny, however, to enter the University at a time of equal change. He was to see the distinguished head of the Law School cut down by the ruthless hand of an assassin, and, in consequence, the election of first a *locum tenens*, and then another head of the school. He was to see Prof. Bonnycastle pass away, and Mr. Powers, who had been his friend, and much-admired mathematical professor at Hampden-Sidney, put into Prof. Bonnycastle's place for a year as *locum tenens*, and then to see the place filled by Mr. Sylvester for one session. He was to see Prof. Blättermann's place taken by another, and still other similar changes. He was to have occasion to condemn the early fondness of the Visitors of the University for foreigners as professors. This fondness Mr. Jefferson was largely responsible for. The original body of professors with whom the University had begun in the year 1825 contained only three from the United States, viz., those of law, chemistry, and ethics. Events soon showed the inability of these foreign-

ers to understand and control our Virginia youths. Notwithstanding the seeming liberality of the step, it was not a wise one, but so great was the influence of the sage of Monticello, who was the first rector, as well as the founder of the University, that his views, including this particular one, continued for some time after his death to dominate the movements of the Board of Visitors; but these changes, some of them untoward, were not without certain beneficial results to our subject. An era of change in an institution of learning, however great its advantages to idle and vicious students, is attended with some decided advantages as well to students of the first rank. They compare man and man in the same department, and develop a relative independence and originality of mind, a consciousness of force, and a readiness to bear responsibilities for opinions.

The feeling of the young man from Louisa was one of partial disappointment with the place and the professors, when he came to take a nearer view of the University. Of the place he wrote, on the 22nd of January, 1840:

“It is quite a pretty place, though I suspect I do not think it quite as pretty as Mr. Jefferson used to think it. Almost any of the buildings would be pretty by itself, but I do not think the *tout ensemble* is very lovely. The philosophical and chemical apparatus is hardly so good as would be expected, not better than that at Hampden-Sidney. They have a library of 16,000 volumes, and a collection of some thousands of paintings and engravings, but the books, except those which relate to law and medicine, are mostly written in French and German, and the paintings have no room to be put into, so they do not do anybody much good.”

A week before he had written of the teaching, “The instructors here display a good deal of learning, and spread through a wide range, but, as far as I can see, they are not calculated to push on any one who does not study of his own accord, and as these are few, the classes are generally very deficient.”

Of Professors Bonnycastle and Emmet, he says that they are “English cockneys,” and, further, “their manners are more unsuited to my taste than the manners of the Yankees”; that Professor “Bonnycastle has an affectation of originality and independence which leads him to desert the old and settled standards of science, for no other reason, oftentimes, than because they are old.” During Mr. Powers’ tenancy of the chair,



he wrote that while Mr. Powers was not so learned a man as Prof. Bonnycastle, he was as effective a teacher.<sup>1</sup>

On October 25, 1840, he had written to his mother :

“In the event of Mr. Bonnycastle’s death, I hope Mr. Powers will get the place, as I believe him fully competent to make as good a professor as Mr. Bonnycastle, although not so learned a man, and more especially because he is one of our own people, and a good Baptist. I do not like much to see the high stations conferred on foreigners, who have no sympathy with our ways of feeling and our manners, and no love for our institutions. Mr. Powers is a Virginian, and a most warm-hearted and amiable man. I consider it very important, also, that they should get as many religious men as possible into the Faculty, and I do not at all regret that Mr. Powers is not a Presbyterian. It is best that they should have as great a variety of sects as possible, to guard against the imputation of sectarianism. They have now an Episcopalian and a Methodist, with sundry infidels, Unitarians, and so forth.”

On the 15th of December, 1840, he writes :

“We have received the last of our assortment of professors, as I suppose you have heard. Mr. Sylvester arrived about a fortnight ago, and was received by the students with an illumination and other demonstrations of respect, such as burning tar-barrels, yelling and such like dignified and manly proceedings. But, perhaps, if he knew how much of this to set down to the students’ love of frolic, and how much to their good-will to him, his gratulations to himself might be somewhat diminished. They will probably give him a little insight into this matter, by stoning his house the first time he crosses their sovereign will, which will be very soon if he does his duty. The foolish fondness which the University people have always shown for things from a distance is rebuked in his instance, and I am heartily glad of it. They were disappointed in him—more, indeed, than they had reason to be, for I think that the prospect is now fully as good as they had reason to expect. They thought that a man all the way from London, recommended by great men, and titled lords and bishops, must be a wonder in every respect. They were looking for a splendid fellow, who was to take his place in the top notch of public estimation, at once and

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<sup>1</sup> When the several representations of Mr. Bonnycastle made by Mr. Dabney are all put together, they constitute no unfavorable picture; but it is quite possible that they come somewhat short of even justice. Mr. Bonnycastle was not only a great teacher and a man of commanding talents, but of unusual social abilities when he chose to display them. See *Thomas Jefferson and the University*, by Herbert B. Adams, Ph. D., pp. 117, 118.

by storm, and to surpass everything that was ever seen in his mode of instruction, when lo! a little, bluff, beef-fed English cockney, perfectly insignificant in his appearance, and raw and awkward in his manners, only twenty-six years old, deficient in the faculty of giving instruction, and far below what we have been accustomed to in a lecturer. You may guess it required all efforts of the intended admirers to keep their countenances from falling. The students, indeed, made no secret of their disappointment; but the Faculty make much of him, and profess that they are highly delighted. He is, I should think, from what I have seen of him, which is but little, a fellow of excellent sense and good acquirements for his age, but not at all superior in intellect to Powers and many others among us. Practice, I hope, may give him the facility of imparting his ideas, which Mr. Powers possessed in a high degree. He has a hearty, open countenance, and seems to be an industrious, lively fellow. So that I hope he will make a very good professor, although I do not think he has any of that imposing greatness which Mr. Bonnycastle had, and which the people expected in him. The best professors in the institution are native Virginians, and almost all the foreigners have had some difficulty with the students arising out of their own impudence, so that I hope the Visitors will learn after awhile to be satisfied with our own men."

Of Prof. Rogers, of the School of Natural Philosophy, he wrote on the 16th of January, 1840:

"Mr. Rogers is a very good-natured man in his manners, and, I believe, in his heart. He has the manners of a Virginian, too. Mr. Rogers is rather pompous and wordy in his lectures to the Junior Class; but when we come to the tug of war in the Senior, where we take up the mathematical parts of the subject, we find him an accurate scholar. I expect that if we would divest ourselves of that foolish admiration of that which comes from far off, we should consider him just as great a man as Mr. Bonnycastle. His exterior accomplishments are certainly much greater."

In the same letter he writes of Prof. Emmet:

"Dr. Emmet seems to be more familiar with the routine of the lecture-room, because he has been lecturing so long, than Dr. Draper, but I doubt if he is a better chemist. He is certainly not so great an enthusiast in the science."

On the 12th of March, 1840, he wrote:

"There is in some odd corner of the laws of the University a clause requiring every student to satisfy the Faculty of his ability to write English correctly before he can receive any diploma. They make this

the foundation for the most pestilent examination in the whole session. This year the director of the affair is ——, who I should think, if I believed in the transmigration of souls, contains the spirits of all the pettifoggers that ever were born. . . . The old granny has a whole raft of whimsical notions about the terms in common use, and requires us to come into them. Consequently, those who have not heard his lectures on rhetoric, or found out his hobbies somehow or other, stand but a poor chance. I have no expectation of getting through as long as he has anything to do with it."

On the 13th of October, 1840, he writes to his brother William:

"You have heard, I suppose, that Dr. Blättermann is dispensed with. His dismissal causes universal joy amongst the ladies, who consider his family discipline too dangerous a precedent to be permitted in their vicinity. I have substituted in the place of his ticket (Modern Languages) Moral Philosophy. I find the professor very dull and uninteresting, which is peculiarly unfortunate on this subject, where so much depends on the perspicuity of the teacher. Our text-book, also, is written in a very diffuse, obscure style, and what with that and the impalpable nature of the subject, the matter is confusion worse confounded, by the time the professor has stumbled . . . over it."

Of Prof. Gessner Harrison he speaks only good.

Of the student body in his day he tells us that the "big men" of the time took pride in sending their sons to the University, and that there were wild, dissipated young prodigals there. Writing to his mother, on the 25th of October, 1840, he says:

"Those students who are able, and are not prevented by principle, dress in a most extravagant manner. I will give you a list of the part of one of their wardrobes, which I am acquainted with. *Imprimis*, prunella bootees, then straw-colored pantaloons, striped pink and blue silk vest, with a white or straw-colored ground, crimson merino cravat, with yellow spots on it, like the old-fashioned handkerchief, and white kid gloves (not always of the cleanest), coat of the finest cloth, and most dandified cut, and cloth cap, trimmed with rich fur. They do not think a coat wearable for more than two months, and as for pantaloons and vests, the number they consume is beyond calculation. These are the chaps to spend their \$1,500 or \$2,000, and learn about three cents worth of useful learning and enough rascality to ruin them forever. They have some old standing belles, who bloom with all the perseverance of an evergreen, whom they flirt with as their daily occupation."

He remarks of students in general, "Students are the most inflammable race of beings that ever existed, and they must be

managed with the greatest promptness and skill, for when they once get a little awry, they are perfectly unmanageable," and he continues concerning the students then at the University:

"If the students who are here now are to set the measure of morality and honor among the people in the succeeding generation, old Virginia will become but a scurvy place. At college they are removed pretty much from the restraint of public sentiment, for that which exists in colleges is altogether false and perverted; and, under the excuse that they are sowing their wild oats, they commit all sorts of vices. The worst of it is that these wild oats they sow in youth will yield such a tenfold crop of seed as will keep them sowing all their lives. Does that deserve the name of *principle*, which measures the propriety of actions only by the amount of danger to be apprehended from public opinion? Is it not rather sheer selfishness? Such is the only curb on the conduct of five-sixths of the young men in our colleges, as far as my acquaintance has gone."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, like a philosopher of vigorous parts, albeit somewhat immature, does our young man, in homespun, from Cub Creek, in Louisa county, write to his mother.

His opinion of the character of the student body at the University, during his years there, was moulded by many unpleasant experiences. Long years afterwards he was accustomed to remark on the low standard of honor which obtained amongst some of his fellow-students, and to illustrate it by incidents of his own experience. He used to relate that on one occasion, during an examination, his attention was attracted by the rapidity with which a student commenced to write near him. Suspecting the source of this unwonted inspiration, he removed his own written papers, so that they could not be seen. Whereupon he was actually requested to replace them where they could be seen. He, of course, refused. He was also wont to relate that once while there he picked up a most elaborate little manuscript book, evidently prepared to be slipped up a man's sleeve, and used on examination. He gave it to the professor having charge of the department. They both regarded it as a sort of wonder, judging that it must have cost the maker far more labor than would have been necessary to honestly master the whole subject.

The University of Virginia student body of to-day has a fine reputation for honor. It is the peer of any body in the land, and

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<sup>2</sup> Letter to his mother, December 15, 1841.

has long been so. Even from the start it had an element as noble as the best in any institution of the whole country; but it took some time for the spirit of honor to pervade the entire student body to such an extent as now obtains, and has for decades—a spirit that drives from its midst every man who attempts to cheat his way through an examination.

The students at the University during its early career were noted for their disorderly behavior. Mr. Jefferson had advocated the largest liberty to the students; he had contended that by appealing to their reason, their hopes, their generous feelings, their honor, and their manhood, and to these alone, more could be done than by multiplication of rules, and the effort to enforce them. Treat them as self-governing gentlemen, and they will show themselves to be gentlemen. The students did not respond, however, as expected. Disorder ran riot, the position of the professors became intolerable, they suspended their lectures, and tendered their resignations to the Board of Visitors. The board met, abandoned their plan of self-government, and ordered a course of rigid discipline. The Faculty began the making and enforcing of many petty rules. One rule, requiring the students to retire to their rooms at nine P. M., and to remain there till six o'clock next morning, which was made in 1834, the students flatly refused to obey. The Faculty had to withdraw the requirement. The act of refusal, known as the "Rebellion of 1834," was conducted in an orderly manner, but was the occasion of much subsequent disorder.<sup>3</sup>

During the second year of the student life of R. L. Dabney in the University, one of these outbreaks of disorder culminated in an awful tragedy, the murder of Prof. Davis, who was head of the Law School, and one of the most efficient officers and professors in connection with the institution. Young Dabney was filled with horror and indignation at the deed, in common with all the nobler element of the student body. He was honored by the body of his outraged fellow-students with an appointment on a committee to apprehend the culprit. He writes of the matter, and of his feelings on the subject, to his brother William as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> For an excellent brief sketch of early discipline in the University, see Dr. W. Gordon McCabe's *Virginia Schools Before and After the Revolution*, etc., p. 43, a copy of which has been put into our hands by Mr. R. Lee Taylor, of Richmond, Va.

“MY DEAR BROTHER :

“13th November, 1840.

“The last twenty-four hours have been the most fatiguing and exciting that I ever went through. We were alarmed last night by the news that Mr. Davis, the chairman of the Faculty, was shot, in a riot, which was held in commemoration of the great rebellion of four (?) years ago. On running up to College, we found a dense crowd around his door, in the most fearful state of excitement, awaiting the decision of the surgeons. There were only two rioters seen, who had been firing blank cartridges about the doors of the professors, masked and disguised. The two passed freely within a few feet of the peaceful students, completely concealed by their disguises, when one of the students told them to take care, as Mr. Davis was on the watch, near his house. One of the two immediately walked down that way, loading his pistol; but, in addition to the former charge of powder, he was seen to put in a ball, ramming it down against the wall of the house as he went. Nobody at that time, however, suspected anything, or felt himself authorized to interfere. A few moments after another report was heard, and the masked figure was seen making off across the lawn. Some of the students heard groans, and, going out, found Mr. Davis down and unable to rise. He said that he had gone out to preserve order; that he saw the masked figure, attempted to take hold of him and take off the mask, but that he dodged him, retreated a few yards, and then, after he (Mr. Davis) had ceased to pursue, turned and fired. The ball entered his abdomen, and for the first hour the physicians could not find it, so that the greatest apprehensions were felt that it had entered the cavity of his body, and that his case was desperate. At last, however, they found it below the hip-joint, about a foot from the orifice of the wound, and ascertained that it had glanced around to that place without touching any mortal part. Still, you may conceive that a wound a foot in extent, and by a rifled-barrelled pistol, passing through the groin and in the neighborhood of several large nerves and arteries, must be extremely dangerous and painful. There is no immediate danger now, however, and the wound has seemed favorable thus far.<sup>4</sup> The excitement among the students was so great, and everybody was so horror-struck, that no immediate steps were taken to secure the criminal. The action was so atrocious that it is impossible to conceive a motive, and still the circumstances are such that we cannot believe it to have been accidental, which we would gladly do if we could. After some consultation among the students, suspicion concentrated so much on one individual that it was determined to send a committee of the students in search of him, to endeavor to get some clue to the matter. We went, found him, and made all the investigation

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<sup>4</sup> Prof. Davis was to die from the assassin's wound, nevertheless, within a few days.

the hurried and excited state of affairs would admit of. He acknowledged having been one of the rioters, denied the act, and refused to give any information as to the names, disguises or motives of the others. As we had no legal authority, we were obliged to release him, and they very foolishly let him off, taking his word not to abscond. But, as you may guess, before the warrant for his apprehension reached College he had made himself scarce. He was seen this morning crossing the fields, and an active pursuit continued the best part of the day, by students and civil authorities, for the former had held a meeting early this morning, and unanimously offered their coöperation. Some circumstances, however, turned up to make us believe that he was not guilty, although he was accessory, and the suspicion also fell strong enough on another of them to justify his arrest. The warrant was founded on testimony given by me, and, consequently, I am placed in a rather unenviable position, for in a college any man can have aiders and abettors, however vile he may be. As the officers of the law had been all dispatched after the other man, the task of putting the warrant into execution was committed to another student and myself. By exerting some caution and self-command, the warrant was executed without the violence which everybody expected would have been resorted to. Whether the crime can be fixed on any one, I do not know. I fear the first man will escape, for all our efforts have thus far been unavailing. He could be arrested under the law as an accessory, and if we had him, I doubt not we should get to the bottom of the matter. Such a crime I never heard of. It is impossible to assign any probable motive. Mr. Davis had been peculiarly popular this session, and neither of the men suspected had been subjects of discipline or had received any cause of offence whatever. I will venture to say that no crime was ever attended with more tragical scenes and more exciting scenes. The young men who carried him in say that the sight of Mrs. Davis and her sufferings was painful beyond conception, and produced emotions in themselves more intense than they had ever experienced. Yet when we attempted to gain some information from him to enable us to identify the man, she prevented him, by her influence, from saying a word. Such is the heroic forgiveness of the Christian. At the very moment when she had every reason to believe that the man had inflicted upon her, and all that are dear to her, the greatest of injuries, she did her utmost to screen him from suffering. I must confess that it would have been more proper for a well-balanced mind to have admitted the importance of the claims of the law, and, while she disclaimed everything like revenge, to have permitted the paramount interests of society to be vindicated by the punishment of the law-breaker. However, Mr. Davis could have given no additional information, for the matter was too unexpected and instantaneous for him to observe anything. You see that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. I have not had time, during the last twenty-four hours, to

think of anything else, and consequently it is hard for me to talk of anything else now. The students celebrated the late misfortune of the nation [Mr. Dabney was an ardent Democrat] by burning tar-barrels and yelling around the professors' houses, 'Huzza! for old Tip and Mr. Tucker,' etc. What an illustration of the hollow, empty falsehood of the popular shout. Night before last the Faculty are cheered and almost idolized: to-night, one of them shot down without provocation, like a brute beast. . . .

"Yours affectionately,

"R. L. D."

In subsequent letters he follows the fortunes of the student Semmes, condemns the means used to evade trial, says the two most important witnesses have been induced to abscond, notwithstanding that one of them was bound to appear under a penalty of five thousand dollars. The lawyers for the defence, Messrs. Leigh, Lyons, and Gilmer, come in for some trenchant criticism. He says in this connection:

"I never could understand what sort of consciences these big lawyers have, when they undertake, for a sum of money, to prostitute their talents, to defend and save a man whom they know to be guilty. But the more palpable the guilt, the greater the honor of clearing the guilty, they say. I can only say that I would be very unwilling to run the risk, which they run, of finding the stain of blood-guiltiness resting on them at the last day, should any of the desperadoes who are turned loose upon society, and snatched from the wholesome discipline of the law through their instrumentality, be guilty of a second murder. Who can tell how much of the recklessness and contempt of the law which Semmes displayed may have arisen from the tales he heard, as well as all the rest of the country, of the manner in which money and influence triumphed over law in the case of Vaughan? If I could be so base as to harbor deadly malice against any one, it would not be the fear of the gallows that would restrain me from taking his life. In this country a few thousand dollars are fully sufficient to atone for the blood of a fellow-creature. The old Saxon law of valuing the life of a man at a certain sum, and putting to death only those murderers who are too poor to pay it, is virtually in force among us.

"I believe that the public attention is pretty well turned away from my humble self to more important and interesting objects. I hear of no odium attached to my name, for the atrocity of the act and the certainty of Semmes' guilt have so completely vindicated my instrumentality in his arrest that nobody, except those who are perfectly contemptible, can blame me. I did not at all thrust myself forward. I was put on a committee by my fellow-students to coöperate with the Faculty and civil authorities, without my seeking the place; but as the



lot fell on me, I was determined to stop at nothing in discharging what I thought the trust reposed in me by my fellow-students required. I took care not to push forward into the scrape, officiously; but when called upon, I had no reason for excusing myself which would not apply to any one else also. If a man is certain that it is a *duty* which calls him into danger or disagreeable circumstances, he will turn neither to the right hand nor to the left, for fear of any evils which may threaten him, from the injustice of public opinion, or from personal violence. Without this certainty, courage degenerates into rashness."<sup>5</sup>

In portraying his behavior and motives in this business, Mr. Dabney set forth himself to his brother, and through him to us. He was a man of large caution in dealing with his fellow-men, but when his judgment had once approved a course, when he heard the clear call of duty, he was going to answer, no matter what the obstacles in the way. This incident is typical of his whole life, and prophetic. He was preparing himself to uphold the right in the face of a disapproving world.<sup>6</sup>

His views of the community, perhaps, hardly do justice to the community. He complains of the want of sociability, except on Sunday, which was too much given to social visiting. He speaks as if good old-fashioned Virginia families of the gentry class were rare. He did not approve of the fashions in woman's dress prevailing about the University. He had very decided views on the subjects of female dress, and propriety of behavior at this early age, and expresses them with all directness and vigor. For instance, in the letter to his mother, of October 25, 1840, from which we have already quoted in another connection, he says:

"You will not be any less surprised when I tell you that I saw a very venerable lady, the wife of one of the professors, who has all the honors of age upon his head, and who is herself not so young as she formerly was, having had three husbands besides the present, walking out this cold, windy day in light salmon slippers, with stockings to correspond. How would it look to see old Aunt Polly [Septuagenary] hop out of her carriage at Providence [Mrs. Dabney's church], in salmon slippers,

<sup>5</sup> Letter to his brother William, dated December 7, 1840.

<sup>6</sup> The curious may wish to know something of the fortunes of Semmes. He lay in jail in Charlottesville for some months, getting very sick immediately before or on the morning of the day appointed for trial; was finally bailed out in the sum of \$25,000, on the plea of ill-health, and committed suicide in 1841.

pink merino, crimson *velvet bonnet* and *blonde veil*? I have no doubt the old lady, with her refined taste in dress, would almost faint at the idea. Yet her appearance would be identically that of the old lady I speak of, who is not old Mrs. ——, either. This evening I saw another *young lady*, walking and sentimentalizing with a student, in a wind keen and strong enough to make a man believe that he and his nose were about to part company. I suppose, though, that they were kept warm by those—

“Thoughts that burn, and words that glow,”

which folks talk of when they wish to be poetical. A few days ago, as aforesaid young lady was walking in Charlottesville, being overcome by the very unreasonable task of climbing a hill almost as steep as the one by the corn-house (three or four degrees), she fainted, and, tumbling over in a most tragic style, thumped her noddle against a stone, and had to be picked up and carried into a house insensible. How exquisitely interesting! It is a pity but somebody had been there to apply the needful remedy, a pair of scissors to the back of her—ahem!—corset. We have sundry other lovely young girls of thirty to thirty-five, whose qualifications and exploits are not a whit more undeserving of honor.”

There were, however, some members of the community for whom our young critic in homespun from Louisa had the highest regard. He formed one friendship peculiar and enduring. To this we shall revert later on.

Our young friend was not at the University, however, for the primary purpose of looking on at the doings of others, but for work as a student. He carried about in that long, slender body of his, armed with its abounding store of nervous energy, his old yearning to become a learned man. Those slender, sinewy hands fingered curiously many things the ordinary student never dreamed of as worthy of handling, those piercing dark eyes looked narrowly at a host of things that many of his fellows travelling the same paths never saw; but amidst things of interest on every side he was driven toward the mastery of the studies of the course for the degree of Master of Arts. He had *determined* to do this work, he wrote to his friends more than once. Those who looked on his strong visage saw that he had all the signs of genuine determination writ large in jaw and mouth and chin. That he worked well in the course which he had fixed upon is sufficiently shown by his achievements in the several sessions.

He matriculated on the 10th day of December, 1839. More than two months of that collegiate year had then passed by, but

during that year, nevertheless, he was graduated in physics and chemistry, "to the disgust of the professors," who did not expect him to graduate in so short a time. It was an additional difficulty in his way, that an important examination in physics, covering the work of the whole of the preceding part of the term, was held just about three and a half weeks after he was matriculated. He writes to his mother on the 4th of January, 1840:

This is almost the first moment of leisure I have had since I came up, and I cannot spend it better than in writing to you. When I got here, I found that there was an examination in one of the classes in which I wished to graduate, on this day, the 4th of January. My only chance was to prepare for it, although the time was less than three weeks, and the subject embraced the studies of the class for more than three months, and was nearly new to me. The Faculty will not allow any person to defer his examination, except for sickness, and as it was necessary that I should stand this one in order to graduate, it was my only chance, and a bad one. However, the examination is now over, and I hope that I shall squeeze through by dint of hard study. I shall not hear the decision of the professor, perhaps, for a week. But the matter is over, and I feel no anxiety about it, for I have done my best. Out of five questions which fell to my share (not questions which could be answered in a few words, but which require several pages of writing), I believe I answered four creditably. The fifth stumped me entirely. a thing which has rarely happened to me before."

During the second year he was graduated in mathematics, Latin, philosophy, and political economy. This was the year during which he found most pleasure in the studies pursued. During the third year he was graduated in Greek, French and Italian. He chose French because he wished to acquaint himself thoroughly with that language; he chose Italian because it was esteemed the easiest of the modern European languages to learn.

He attempted work for *The Collegian* also. This was the literary organ of the student body at the University. Amongst his articles in *The Collegian* were an "Essay on the Merits of Ancient Classic Literature," published in the fall of 1840; "Remarks on Planting Trees for the Adornment of the University Grounds," published in June, 1842, and "The Comparative Excellence of our Authors," which appeared in 1841. It is a somewhat curious fact that he did not take so high a view of the relative importance of the study of Greek and Latin when he

wrote his article for *The Collegian* in 1840 as he soon came to do. One smiles at the note on the back of his manuscript on "The Merits of Ancient Classic Literature," for the note is in his own hand, and appears to have been made several decades ago; the note is, "An abortion." Nevertheless, this paper shows force, and they all show that young Dabney was really using the mind God had given him, and was not swallowing what men said in his presence, no matter who the men were, without digesting.

These and other publications of his at the time had done him service, as orations or essays in the Jefferson Society, of which he was an active as well as a vigorous member. He had at this early time a developed itch for publishing his writings. In the Charlottesville *Jeffersonian* of March, 1842, he had a long and excellent article on banking. Crudities attach to his treatment, but he at least writes in a way to disabuse the public mind as to current fallacies.

While earnestly engaged in the improvement of his mind, he was not oblivious to the fact that other obligations rested upon him. He felt that he was bound to try to be his brother's keeper. Accordingly, during his one year of residence on the University grounds he was diligent in Christian work on the Sabbath on behalf of his fellow-students. He wrote to his mother on the 25th of October, 1840:

"We have also started a Bible class among the students, which will have, I hope, somewhat more than twenty members. I look to this to do a great deal of good, and shall do everything in my power to help it on the way."

During his last session of attendance on the University he was moved, by his desire to be his brother's keeper, to join a band of students pledged to "total abstinence." In a letter to his brother William, dated February 7, 1842, he says:

"We have just established a tetotal temperance society in the University, binding its members to total abstinence during their connection with college. We have about thirty members, and mean to have more. There is quite a hostility to it among some of the students, but this is a good sign. Apathy and an affectation of contemptuous neglect of the subject is what we have to fear. The plan is so rational and so beneficial that a continued attention to the subject cannot fail to win over some. I have no sanguine expectations about it; but if we can prevent one young man from going home to his parents with the seeds of

drunkenness in his habits, I shall feel that we have saved a world of misery to himself, and to his friends, and to the descendants he may have after him, and that our labors will be by no means thrown away."

There was one man in the community with whom, we may rest assured, young Mr. Dabney consulted about these Christian and philanthropic efforts. He had begun a friendship with that man of God, the Rev. Dr. William S. White, soon after reaching the University. Mr. White, being in the neighborhood in which Mr. Reuben Lewis lived, on some work proper to his vocation, found it convenient to spend a night in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis. Robert Dabney wrote to his mother on January 4, 1840:

"He is a very friendly man, and offered me the use of his books and invited me to his house. I am very much pleased with him. I have not heard him preach yet, or, indeed, any one else. The weather has been so inclement that it is with difficulty I get to the University."

Later he speaks of going to accept Mr. White's invitation; he distinguishes between invitation and invitation. Some invitations, he says, contain on their faces warnings not to accept them. Mr. White's was honest. On October 25, 1840, he writes to his mother:

"Mr. White is getting on very well, and, what is the best feature in the matter, mends upon the good opinion of the people. They are obliged to think better and better of him every Sunday. His first sermon was quite ordinary, and from that he has been getting better and better every time. There are few men in the State who do more good than he does, in one way or another. His church is flourishing, and he has a very useful, and I hope profitable, school of about sixty scholars. He told us the other day that he united three distinct professions, either of which was enough to occupy his time, and that he rarely sat down to a meal without being called off before he had time to eat. Sunday before last he told the congregation that that was the eleventh sermon he had preached that week, besides riding nearly two hundred miles to and fro. The people will have nobody else to marry them, preach their funerals, and see them when they are sick, so that he is always on the pad."

He was accustomed to visit this good and great pastor from time to time, as his opportunities and his sense of the value of Mr. White's time permitted. Thus began and grew the friendship cherished by each to the end of life. It was a great thing

for a young man to be thrown under the influence of such a pastor.

While throwing himself with great energy into his life as a student, and a member of the community around and including the University, the interests and thought of this youth were not confined to so narrow a sphere. The politics of the country, the great subject of slavery, practical measures for improving the fertility of soils that have been worn, in particular his mother's farming operations and business affairs, the personal welfare, temporal and eternal, of friends in many quarters, and also Hampden-Sidney College, engaged an amount of attention, and called forth an amount of effort on his part, which would have been fatal to his success as a student had he been a man of mere ordinary endowments.

In his politics he was already a thorough-paced Democrat. He found time to hear the speeches made by the representatives of the leading parties in Charlottesville, and took an independent estimate of what the speakers said. We may quote here from a letter to his brother William, dated April 22, 1840, as illustrative of the critical, and sometimes satirical, spirit with which he listened to the sage orators of his day:

"I am convinced, from a long specimen we have had to-night between Uncle Reuben (Mr. Lewis) and Dr. Anderson, that talking politics is a most joyless amusement, and I doubt not but that your thoughts and feelings are more happily engaged, and will continue so. If men were more in the habit of centering their thoughts and feelings at home, they would make better republicans, because, although they would not spend so much time in settling the affairs at Washington, they would feel a graver interest in the support of order and political morality, and would be more careful how they let prejudice or accident determine their political course. Among the endless improvement of the age is one in arguing, which, I think, promises to afford as much facility in settling political matters as the steam engine does in navigating the Mississippi. In old times, when a man wanted to prove anything, he was obliged to take the acknowledged facts and principles and make the best argument he could with them; but now they are not cramped by this necessity. If the premises look unpromising, why the politician just fabricates such as will suit his purpose. With the aid of this unlimited liberty, the Whigs about this Athens of Virginia (as the court-house orators call it) have proved to a dead certainty that Van Buren is a Federalist, Harrison a Republican, and comparable to Washington in military and civil talents. The Democrats have proved, with equal certainty, that Harrison is a Federalist in his dotage, and that

he never deserved any honor at all, but that the credit of his success must be attributed to those two worthies, Fortune and Col. Johnson. These are wonderful triumphs of reason, certainly, and deserve to be celebrated by a log-cabin and hard-cider procession. We have thus learned to throw off the error of that old maxim of the dark ages, that 'the affirmative and the negative of the same question cannot both be true.' In the midst of these gigantic strides towards a new era in politics, Mr. Rives has stepped forth, to help on the great cause of improvement. He has shown us how to make a standing army out of militia; how to turn a political somerset without turning his principles heels over head, or even moving them for an instant from the upright position, and several other feats equally wonderful. He has gone over to Winchester to explain the same tricks to the good people there, and big rumors are afloat of his success, although we have heard no authentic accounts. I heard his speech at Charlottesville, of which you have seen such contradictory accounts. It was extremely ingenious, touching altogether on the few points on which he can unite with his present friends without open contradiction of his previously expressed opinions, and entirely slurring over the many, on which they are as wide asunder as the poles. His speech contained more animosity and more misrepresentation, and less eloquence, than I expected from him. His cunning at twisting and misrepresenting any document he is criticising almost exceeds belief. He will slip in an idea which changes the aspect of the thing from the true one without your perceiving it, and probably using the very words of the document. The Whig battle has been fought heretofore mainly by blustering and assertion, until these weapons have become blunt. Some acumen and (apparent) argument are very necessary for them now, and these Rives has. The Whigs are making the utmost use of him, making him work for them by flattering him, as you may do with a vain negro sometimes who would not be moved by fear of the switch. The Democrats need not pretend to look on Rives with contempt. He is able to do them a great deal of mischief, and he has the will. The decline of their cause in this part of Virginia is much more owing to his efforts than to the circuit riders and yeomen, and such like measures, by which the Whigs are moving heaven and earth. I was at Mr. Gilmer's the other day, and met with him, he having come on a visit to his family. He is a very pleasing man to me, free and polite in his manners. I think, from his conversation, that if he would submit to the labor of elaborate investigation, his mind is capable of much more profound opinions than he has generally displayed. He seems to take his ground with very slight examination, and yet his views are sometimes very striking. He does not indulge in this foolish bragging about success in the elections or in any of the Whig slang. He says he hopes for a very small Whig majority in the Legislature next session, but of the election of Gen. Harrison, can foresee nothing *certain*. Perhaps I am inclined to like

him because he is an Old School Presbyterian.<sup>7</sup> All this rigmarole, I reckon, will be rather uninteresting to you; but it is about the scenes through which I have lately passed, and which are, therefore, uppermost in my remembrance. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Or, perhaps, like almost everybody else, you have turned Whig, as I have heard nothing to the contrary."

A discussion of politics is no unfrequent feature of his letters, and on the 13th of October, 1840, he paid his respects to Mr. Rives and the Whigs in a style so spicy that he could not have surpassed it in his palmiest days.

The views which he entertained on the subject of slavery, in these early days, are of special interest. He sets them forth in that part of a great omnibus letter to the homefolks, dated January 22, 1840, which was addressed to Mr. G. Woodson Payne. In condoling with Mr. Payne over the difficulties in managing the negroes, he remarks as follows:

"It seems to me that there could be no greater curse inflicted on us than to be compelled to manage a parcel of negroes. Whatever may be the influence of slavery on the happiness of the negroes, it would most effectually destroy that of the master, if they were all like me. Before the abolitionists began to meddle with our affairs, with which they had no business, I remember that it was a common opinion that domestic slavery was at least injudicious, as far as the happiness of the master was concerned. I do believe that if these mad fanatics had let us alone, in twenty years we should have made Virginia a free State. As it is, their unauthorized attempts to strike off the fetters of our slaves have but riveted them on the faster. Does this fact arise from the perversity of our natures? I believe that it does, in part. We are less inclined to do that which we know to be our duty because persons, who have no right to interfere, demand it of us. But the change of public opinion in the South, favorable to the continuation of slavery, doubtless arose partly from free discussion. We have investigated the subject, and we find emancipation much more dangerous than we had before imagined. Who knows but that this uproar of the Abolitionist, which has almost broken the ties of our political union, and thrown back the poor slave from his hope of approaching emancipation at least a half a century, which, in short, has been to our view productive of nothing but evil, may have been designed by Providence as a check upon our imprudent liberality. If we had hastened on to give the slave his liberty at once, as I believe public sentiment was tending, we might

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<sup>7</sup> This was Mr. Thomas Walker Gilmer, Governor of Virginia, 1840-1841. He was soon to become a Calhoun Democrat, exactly the party R. L. Dabney approved.



have done irreparable injury. I am no Abolitionist. I do not doubt that liberty would ruin the African race in the Southern States; that they would wane away, like the unfortunate Indians, by the effects of their own vices and from the pressure of a more powerful and more enlightened race. I cannot conceive of any duty arising from the command to love my neighbor as myself which compels me to inflict a ruinous injury on that neighbor, and such would be immediate freedom to our slaves. But yet I do not believe that we ought to rest contented that slavery should exist forever, in its present form. It is, as a system, liable to most erroneous abuses. The guilt of the matter rests not with us, as long as we fulfill our duty to our slaves, but with those who are guilty of the abuses, and with the forefathers of these Yankee Abolitionists, who entailed the curse upon us by their nefarious traffic. Do you think that there will be a system of slavery, where the black is punished with death for an offence for which a white man is only imprisoned a year or two; where the black may not resist wanton aggression and injury; where he is liable to have his domestic relations violated in an instant; where the female is not mistress of her own chastity; where the slave is liable to starvation, oppression and cruel punishments from an unprincipled master—that such a system can exist in the millennium? If not then, it is an obstacle to the *Prince of Peace*, and if we would see his chariot roll on, among the prostrate nations, it is our duty to remove this obstruction. While abolition is impossible, yet I believe much might be done to modify the system and remove abuses (of which the greatest is the domestic slave trade), while we retain the good parts of it.”

In spite of the mistaken view, expressed in the foregoing, as to the issue of the abolition movement, and the too lurid painting of the slave's condition, so far as Virginia was concerned, we have a profound grasp of the merits of the subject for a youth in his twentieth year only.

We find this same youth writing to his brother, after special conference with the professor of chemistry, of the best method of burning oyster-shells for the purpose of fertilizing lands, find him collecting views as to the way in which lime should be used on the farm for the purpose of increasing its productiveness, find him overlooking his mother's farm from the vantage point of the University. On the 15th of March, 1842, he writes to his brother Francis, who was superintending the farm that year:

“I suppose you have commenced to sow oats before now. You ought to sow a good many, for there is much land, and it is preposterous for us to go on contracting our crops year after year, as we have done of

late. We shall make but little wheat, and we ought, therefore, to make something for market in its place. Sow as much clover with the oats as you possibly can, especially up the Armstrong branch. I would advise you not to attempt to plant corn before you are ready. Plant the highland first, and be sure that you have the lowgrounds, especially, nicely prepared beforehand. You ought to aim to keep a coalter running constantly from the very day you finish planting. Do not wait for the corn to come up. One early lick is worth three late ones for helping on the corn. It is an excellent plan also to run a large harrow over the corn, and if you could get all your field well coaltered and harrowed by the time the corn is as high as your hand, the tug of war would be over with it. Do not aim to do anything with the tobacco lot, but to plow in all the coarser manure. If this could be done before beginning to plant corn, it would be much the best. Try to get a good coat of manure plowed in on the poorer places in the upper end, and the rich parts next to where Pompey's house stood you might let stand until the plants get big enough, and then manure it in the hill."

His mind reverted to the old plantation, and his letters are full of suggestions as to the management of his mother's estate.

During his second year at the University he was forced, by having early lectures, to live on the grounds, and not five and a half miles away, at Mr. Reuben Lewis's. His brother Francis lived that session in the same quarters with him, and studied under Robert's directions. This playing tutor would have been a heavy burden to some students, but Robert Dabney found a way of doing it with little burden to himself, had all the satisfaction derived from his brother's society, and the additional pleasure of having several other subjects, connected with the training of youths, to think about and write about. Hear him ventilate his views on native bents for mathematics, in a letter of May 8, 1841 :

"The mysteries of mathematics he (Francis) finds peculiarly knotty. I never believed much in the notion about natural bents of genius, but it seems that there is a remarkable difference in the readiness with which different persons acquire this science. I have been astonished at the difficulty which he finds in comprehending things which, I remember well, I could understand in my first beginnings without trouble. Perhaps, the chief reason is in the fact that he has not such a good instructor as I had in old Brother Wharey, for he shows the greatest readiness in other things. One of his chief mistakes is in investing reasoning with too mysterious and lofty a character. He cannot realize how simple and obvious, and almost trivial, are the individual steps in all our reasonings. When he comes to me to have a problem ex-

plained, I often find that the relations on which the solution immediately depends have been perceived by him, but he has passed them over as entirely too trifling and easy to have anything to do with the matter, or to lead to anything important. Another great obstacle to his progress I have found to be his inability, when he is confused by the reasoning of the author, to perceive the obvious cause of his confusion and difficulty in himself. Sometimes, when he is in a great 'botheration,' I ask him, much to his surprise, and rather insultingly, he thinks, if he is certain that he knows the meaning of all the words. He generally finds that his whole difficulty has arisen from his not affixing definite and proper ideas to some one or other of the terms. Hence, I am convinced that if pains were always taken to impress on the mind of the beginner the true, exact nature of the things he is to learn about, by repeated and accurate definitions, and by models and drawings when it is possible, nine-tenths of the difficulties would be removed from his path. When two ideas are really before the mind even of the simplest, he cannot fail to perceive the relation that is pointed out between them; but if the terms used fail to put the ideas into his mind, we need not wonder if he does not perceive the relation."

During the last session at the University he was seeking to solve the question as to how and where Francis should be sent to college; he finally concluded that it would be best to send him to the Virginia Military Institute, at Lexington, Va., and in the latter part of the year took the necessary measures to secure his appointment.

There was another member of his family for whose well-being of every sort he was solicitous throughout these years, viz., his youngest sister. Three remarkable letters from him to her have been preserved. Through these he tried to move her, so far as man may attempt such a thing, to become a child of God. In the first of these letters he, in four pages of fool's-cap, closely written, presses on her mind the dangers of delay. In the second, he takes up the same danger, and referring to the considerations adduced in the first letter, added to them that of "contracting a habit of resisting serious impressions." He begins, "You very well know that when we have done anything several times, we are much apter to do it again, and it is much easier to do. Alas! I fear that you have already contracted a fearfully strong habit of resisting God," and he proceeds to press this danger, and the consequent duty of *immediate* repentance, with a vigor and an earnestness that would be worthy of any noble pastor we know to-day. He heard that his darling sister was much affected by his exhortations and arguments,

but that she failed to take the desired step; hence his third letter, again three and a half fully and closely written pages of fool's-cap. This letter is not abler than the others, but some paragraphs may be presented as specimens of his earnest dealing with this lovely and best beloved sister. The third letter begins with a statement of his anxiety for her spiritual welfare. This is followed by a portraiture of the remorse of the lost for their failure to give the proper response to God's law, and to God's incarnation and death in the second person of the Trinity. He then presses the need of some saving system as follows:

“That your reason is convinced of the need of some plan of salvation I cannot doubt, yet I will try to set it before you with all plainness of speech once more. You cannot doubt the obligation you owe to God to obey him, and the perfect right he has to require just such a measure of obedience as he may see fit. He is your creator, and nothing can be more perfect than the right of the maker over the thing formed. You have lived upon his bounty all your life, and would have died long ago without it; and hence, even if you had made yourself, he would thus have gained a right over you. Nor can you doubt but that you have sinned, and that times and ways past numbering. Now God, seeing that it was best for his own glory, and for the happiness of his creatures also, that he should require of them a perfect obedience, has enforced his demands by a punishment threatened. It is evident that, as man is a free agent, left to do as he pleased, he could not be certain of his obedience without some  *motive*  being set before him. This motive is the fear of punishment and the hope of reward. Now, God, having made his law, that the soul that sinneth, it shall die, must of course enforce it, or be disappointed of his object. Threats made and not executed only subject the maker to contempt. So it is in this world. When a crime is committed, the law says punishment must follow; and shall God be less strict in preserving his law than man is in preserving the laws of this earth? Nay, is not God infinitely more great and glorious, and is not his government vastly more important than any earthly government? You see, then, the impossibility of atoning, by any after obedience, even supposing you were capable of it. If, therefore, you had committed but one sin, some atonement must be made for it, either by your own eternal sufferings or by the obedience and death of an all-sufficient, because an infinite and divine, Saviour. God is pleased to accept the atonement of Christ, and all you have to do is to receive it thankfully, not cavilling at the mode or the conditions. This condition, which must be fulfilled before the benefits of the atonement can be enjoyed by you, is one which is evidently proper and suitable to the nature of the case. If you are sensible that you need it, you can formally accept it, in your inmost soul, and at the same

time renounce all other hope, and this is the faith in Christ, which is the condition of salvation. By having this faith you do not become any more *worthy*. It is still sovereign grace in Christ Jesus. But by having this faith you fulfil the condition that God has been pleased to set for you, so that he can then bestow his *gift of pardon* in accordance with the plan he has been pleased to lay down. Simple as this faith on Jesus is, the carnal mind will not submit to it, and give up all its own hopes, unless by the grace of God constraining it.

"You may, perhaps, ask, 'Then if the influence of the Holy Spirit is necessary, what am I to do? If I cannot convert myself, why are you exhorting me to be up and a-doing?' If this question is asked in humility, and as the men on the day of Pentecost cried out, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?' it is a sign for good. We may hope that indeed the kingdom of God is not far from you. But if it is offered as a cavil, rest assured that it is either suggested by the devil or is the result of a heart at enmity to God, and that it is not the result of a sincere desire to be reconciled to God. If you feel this desire, your duty is plain, tangible and practical. You have just to make this formal bargain with Christ, explained above, *without delay or reservation*, under the conviction that disobedience to God is *sinful and wicked*, that the punishment pronounced against it is just, and that you have no means of escape except through Christ; and then, you have from this moment forth to set your face against sin, go right into a course of religious duties, such as conscience and the Bible direct, not with the hope of working out your salvation by them, but because it is right and proper, and God requires it. For the rest, you may then safely trust to God. 'He *will in nowise cast out* them who come unto him through Christ.' And if you think that God has not yet heard your prayer and blessed you in your first attempt to close in with Christ, make another, and another, with full purpose of heart, never to give over, and believe always that the fault is on your side, and that if you come unto him *truly*, God will in nowise refuse you."

Thus, while engaged in winning the degree of Master of Arts at the University, he could and did travail over many other things. He had a considerable list of correspondents, in addition to his home folks. He still swapped interesting letters with Mrs. John Holt Rice, and with Moses Drury Hoge, amongst others at Hampden-Sidney, who have not ceased to regret his absence from the Hill. In his letters to Mr. Hoge he discusses freely the character and place of Hampden-Sidney College, and suggests certain needed changes. He says, in a letter to Mr. Hoge, dated January 9, 1840:

"We greatly need such an institution as Hampden-Sidney College might be and ought to be. The University was not intended by its

founders as an academy to drill boys through the algebra, and geometry, and the time of the professors ought not to be so spent. This is a part of education which belongs to the secondary colleges; and the literature of our State will not reach the proper standard until this office is left to the colleges, and the University is reserved to those who have already become well-grounded in the principles of science, and who wish to pursue their studies further."

In another letter to Mr. Hoge from the University, dated March 31st (year not given) he shows that the old College receives a good deal of thought on his part. He says:

"There are a few things which I should like to see well represented to the Trustees. They are essential to the permanent well-being of the College, but were neglected when I was there, and most probably are now. The first is strictness in the examinations for diplomas. They *must* get out of the notion of giving students diplomas merely because they have been there four years. Another is to refuse a second trial to candidates for graduation within a few weeks after the first. The way they used to have there about this was the most preposterous thing I ever heard of. How can a man make up the deficiencies of four years in a fortnight? If he is not worthy of graduation on the 20th of August, how can he be on the 15th of September? This is just a way of whipping the devil around the stump. They had just as well at once resolve to admit all to the honor, deserving or not, as to practice it. Another thing is the neglect of the examinations of students entering college. This ought to be the strictest examination of all. The college stands before the world as pledged to impart a degree of scholarship proportioned to a nominal time of four years, and yet, by her own negligence, she curtails this time to two and one-half, and sometimes two years. Why does she place herself at this disadvantage before the world? I, if I had graduated, would have gone through without any regular course of study on algebra. The class I joined had already passed over it, and my examination on it was neglected. Another is the extension of the course of Natural Science. This wide and interesting field is to be explored throughout in one year, at the rate of three lectures a week, while the languages, comparatively useless, occupies at least two lectures a day of the professor for three years! The natural sciences are worth all the others put together, and yet not a sixth of the whole college time is devoted to them. The department of Natural Philosophy ought to be given to another professor, and ought to occupy as much time as is now devoted to both the branches. These instances of weak policy, I think, have done more to injure the College than the changes of professors or the want of funds, especially the neglect of examinations of students entering college. This neglect was no doubt caused by the fear that if the students were put into a lower class than they

expected they would quit college. But they had better adhere to a rigid policy, if it drove every student from the college but one. I wish the Trustees could be made to take a plain, common-sense view of these matters. Any suggestion coming from me, a mere boy, and not personally known to them, they would, of course, treat with contempt. I think the most of them are very blameable for their neglect of the interests of the College."<sup>8</sup>

He sometimes writes to his Hampden-Sidney friends twice to their once, after his old habit, so that Mr. Hoge says, in his charming way, on the 7th of January, 1842, "It seems to me that your pen is always rampant—curling its very feathers with impatience to entertain some far-away acquaintance. Wonder not if you excel your friends in the possession of such a ready servant, as in other things." The fountain of energy in him ran a bold stream, and the waters divided and ran in many fructifying channels.

The students of to-day of small means may be glad to learn how his expenses were paid. He had earned six hundred dollars by keeping school in the interim between his student days at Hampden-Sidney and those at the University. He sold a horse, which his mother had given him, for about one hundred and fifty dollars, his mother gave him one hundred and twenty-five dollars, and he borrowed during the last session one hundred and fifty dollars from a friend of his, Col. Harris. His most expensive year at the University was the second, during which, on account of the early hours of some of the lectures, he had to live on the grounds. His expenses for that year were four hundred dollars. He denied himself everything but the necessaries. By boarding in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, five miles and more from the University, during the first and last sessions, he got through on much less for the session.

Many young men would have thought the riding back and forth, over five and a half miles of muddy road a day, too big a price to pay for an education. This lank youth, of noble ambition and heroic will, was philosopher enough to hope that those long, cold, muddy horseback rides would improve his health; and his health was, perhaps, the better for it. Certain it is that his year of residence on the grounds, with its press of

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<sup>8</sup> This letter is in the possession of Mr. R. L. Traylor, Richmond, Va. Mr. Dabney came afterwards to take a much higher view of the relative value of the ancient languages than is here taken.

work, saw him sick, at the close of the session, of an attack that laid the foundation of his subsequent years of ill-health.

Many young candidates for the ministry, instead of practicing this severe economy, and taking these long horseback rides throughout two sessions, would have availed themselves of the concessions of tuition fees to students of their class; but this, thank God! was not young Dabney's way. He knew what personal consecration meant, that it involved his being careful about all use of public moneys. He was not afraid of enduring hardness as a good soldier. He was so masculine in his Christian character that he preferred, from head to foot, "to paddle his own canoe." He had the independence of manly strength.

When he left the University, at the close of the third session, he left with his degree of Master of Arts, which he had determined to win, in his possession, and with a mind enriched and ennobled.



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE INTERVAL BETWEEN HIS UNIVERSITY AND SEMINARY LIFE.

(July 6, 1842—October, 1844.)

MIND MADE UP TO STUDY FOR THE MINISTRY.—REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO THE SEMINARY AT ONCE.—MANNER IN WHICH THIS INTERVAL WAS ACTUALLY PUT IN: MANAGING THE FARM, TEACHING CLASSICAL SCHOOLS, GETTING MEANS WITH WHICH TO GO THROUGH THE SEMINARY, READING AND CORRESPONDENCE.—OTHER VOCATIONS OFFERED.—DETERMINED TO THE MINISTRY.

IN his later days, Dr. Dabney was accustomed to speak of himself as having made up his mind to preach the gospel before going to the University; but there are pretty good reasons for thinking that he was unwilling at the time to make an open announcement of his purpose. His mother's pastor, the Rev. James Wharey, in a letter, dated January 17, 1841, urged the claims of the ministry on his attention, saying, amongs other things:

“Have you not determined to devote yourself to the ministry of the gospel? There is a loud and pressing call at this time for more ministers. I hope that you will find it to be your duty to turn your attention that way. It is the way to usefulness and respectability, if not to honor and wealth. Think prayerfully on this subject; and may the Lord guide you.”

From these words it is clear that Mr. Wharey did not regard the matter as settled. Elsewhere we learn, also, that while young Dabney was anxious to secure an abatement of fees at the University, he would not receive gratuitous tuition, seventy-five dollars *per annum*, conditioned on a declaration that he was a candidate for the ministry. This had been offered. He refused it. He did not relish being treated differently because he was a candidate for the sacred office. It seems that he would not have been willing to accept this abatement had he been ready to declare himself; but it was clear that he was not ready to commit himself publicly. His purpose to be a minister was probably firmly fixed in his own mind before he entered the

University, but his caution and strong sense of responsibility would naturally lead him to maintain a prudent silence for some years. By the time he is ready to leave the University, however, his friends generally, as his correspondents show, understand that he expects to be a minister.

Accordingly, many of those friends expected and desired to see him go straight to the Seminary for the study of divinity. Young Moses Drury Hoge exhorts, and would command him if he could, to come straightway to the Seminary. Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Lewis, who have come to look upon him with the affection of parents for a son, deprecate his stopping midway in his preparation, to begin again after an interval. They think he ought to go right on, as the Seminary course is itself a long one. Others, in like manner, urge him to this step. But for certain reasons he decided not to do as these friends had urged. His brother Francis was still quite a boy, and had made no great success as manager for his mother during his one year of trial in that capacity. Besides, he was precisely at that age when he ought to have been attending college, if he was to take such a course of training at all. Betty, the youngest daughter of his mother, and his best beloved sister, was also in need of a capable and scholarly and efficient teacher; but the expenses of sending Frank to college, and of procuring a suitable tutor for Betty, would be too heavy for his mother, who had fallen somewhat into debt again during Robert's career in the University. He felt that she needed and was entitled to his help. He decided to become himself the manager of her farm until he could secure a good man to take the place, decided to act as tutor to his sister Betty, and to replenish his own treasury by teaching a classical school, and so to be able to relieve his mother of embarrassment, to pay his own debt to Col. William Harris, and to lay up something on which to live while in the course of Seminary training.

He spent the last half of the year 1842 as manager for his mother. The crops, which he found in weeds and grass when he got home from the University, he put into order, and on their maturity, garnered them, wound up the year, and procured a manager. He sent his brother Frank to the Virginia Military Institute. He opened a small classical school in his mother's house, from which he derived an income of about four hundred dollars a year. In connection with this school he taught his sister Betty, who blossomed, under his tuition, into a fine

scholar, reading French and Latin with remarkable ease. He threw himself, with his characteristic energy, into this work. Amongst other things, he wrote for his sister Betty an entire Latin Grammar, Part I., in which he set forth, in his own way, the principles which govern word formation. The handwriting is, as always, somewhat cramped, but neat, clear and easily legible. This manuscript volume contains one hundred and fifty-eight closely written duodecimo pages. It is bound in blue manilla paper. On the title page are the words:

"GRAMMATICA LATINA.  
*In usum*  
*Sororis serenissima.*"

The first and second pages *verbatim* are as follows:

I.

"PRINCIPLES OF ETYMOLOGY.

"If any language consisted of words which underwent no changes, either of sense or form, the labor of learning it would be confined wholly to learning the meaning of the words. The language would have neither accident nor syntax, and the labor of the grammarian would be nothing. But the Latin language, as does every other, admits of changes both of sense and of form, to a great extent, and it is the part of etymology to describe these changes and to give the rules which regulate them. The change of form is intended to represent a change of sense, and, consequently, we may usually expect that the former will not take place without the latter. But—

"(1.) A word often changes its sense without changing its form. They often, indeed almost always, have a meaning derived directly from their composition, which is considered as the leading or *primary* meaning, and then they have several secondary meanings flowing from the first, in succession, by some obvious principle of similarity, or by taking them in a figurative sense. Thus: *Lingua* means, primarily, *a tongue*, hence it is used to mean a language—the tongue being supposed to be the organ of speech. *Virtus* is derived from *vir*, and means *manhood*; hence, *hardihood*, *courage*, and lastly, in our language, *virtue*, because, among a rude and warlike people, courage is regarded as the chief virtue. If the student would learn the true powers of words, he must seek first this primary meaning, and see how the other meanings flow from it.

"(2.) A word often changes its sense, without other change of form than is necessary, in passing from one language to another. Example: In Greek, *κοίλον* is the neuter of an adjective which means *holloce*, *concave*. In Latin it is written *Cælum*, and means *the sky*, which is concave. *Τεννω*, *I stretch*, in Latin is *Tendo*."

The production of this volume, which to most, even of the Master of Arts graduates of his *alma mater*, would be a tedious and irksome, if not an impossible labor, was simply a pleasureable vent for his overflowing energies. Of course, it is a philosophic etymology of the Latin. Probably few of the great philologists of the country would agree to all of the explanations, but it was fitted to interest the student, and to make her think. It is the work of one with the instinct of the teacher born in him.

For his teaching in this period he took in about eight hundred dollars. With this he was enabled to repay to Col. Harris his loan of one hundred and fifty dollars, to restock his wardrobe, and to contemplate with equanimity the relatively small expenses to be incurred in two years of seminary life. This was in addition to his satisfaction from the improved income of his mother, which was owing to his supervision of her affairs, and to the pleasure which he derived from having conducted his sister Betty's education to its completion.

Mr. Dabney's letters of this period have apparently been lost for the most part. He corresponded much, for he has saved letters from many persons received in these years. They contain many allusions to his letters, and show clearly, if incidentally, that, though living a retired and sequestered life, his mind was careering around over all the sphere of the individual histories of his friends and acquaintances, the current questions in politics and religion, and in science. Amongst his correspondents are two venerable old ladies, *quondam* University friends, and Moses Drury Hoge. He wrote some at this time for political as well as religious papers. His friend Hoge thinks so, and congratulates him on the successful cover of his identity, which he had found in his pen name. One of the articles which he published at the time was on "The Probable Sum of the Numbers of All the Generations since Adam." This came out in the *Watchman of the South*, about the spring of 1843. Amongst his unpublished manuscripts of the period are "Jehoshaphat: A Sacred Drama," translated from the Italian of Metastasio; "North Wind's Autobiography," in fifteen stanzas of nine lines each, and a "Valentine," in four stanzas of four lines each. These papers show that he had the itch for versification in his early days, as well as in his old age. Indeed, throughout life he was wont to employ odd moments of leisure in this fashion. His translation of Metastasio makes easy reading.

He was a man capable of success in any one of many fields, and efforts were made to secure him for other work than that which he had cut out for himself. Mr. Thomas Ritchie, the distinguished editor of the Richmond *Enquirer*, and one of the dominating men in the councils of the Virginia Democrats of his day, and the Richmond Campaign Committee, offered Mr. Dabney a salary of twelve hundred dollars a year, with a contingent interest in the net profits, on condition of his becoming editor of the party organ in Petersburg. This gives color to the view that Mr. Dabney had shown his skill already in newspaper debate. His friend, John S. Caskie, of Richmond, strongly urged him to accept this work. He writes, in a letter of September 23rd (year is not given):

“Dabney, depend upon it, you can do this great service to your party and yourself. I am no flatterer, but must be permitted to say that in my estimation there is no man of your age in the Union your superior as a writer. In the editorial chair you would powerfully aid a great and glorious cause, and in so doing would win for yourself a reputation wide and high. Nature meant you for an editor. If you be a Calhoun man, I know your heart is glowing in his behalf, and now here is an opportunity to do him and your country service.”

In the summer of 1843, Mr. Dabney had the pleasure of declining another offer of employment of a more peaceful kind. Dr. S. Maupin needed some one to fill the place of the classical teacher in his school in Richmond. Certain gentlemen called his attention to Robert L. Dabney, of Louisa. The salary offered to this post seems to have been seven hundred dollars per annum. This place, though possessing certain incidental advantages, Mr. Dabney could not accept without sacrifice. At home he was educating his sister, giving a very helpful, if general, supervision to his mother's business, and, in addition, taking in for his teaching of outsiders four hundred dollars in the course of a session. But this, as well as the other offer, shows the general esteem in which he was held, and that he had at the early age of twenty-three won an enviable reputation.

This reputation was deserved. He had developed himself on many sides, and was competent to distinguished work in many different departments of life; but he was fixed in his resolution to be a preacher of the gospel, and with a mind at ease concerning his mother's family, he repaired, during the early days of November, 1844, to Hampden-Sidney, to be ready

for the work of the Seminary on its opening. Soon after, he presented the following introductory letter to the Faculty:

"RICHMOND, VA., November 7, 1844.

*"To the Faculty of Union Seminary.*

"DEAR BRETHREN: Although the bearer, Mr. Robert Dabney, has been introduced to all of you, yet you may not remember him. At all events, I take great pleasure in saying to you that he has my entire confidence as a gentleman, Christian and scholar. I have known him for some time, and have always highly esteemed him and all his family. I hope you will give him your confidence from the first. He is a candidate for the ministry under the care of West Hanover Presbytery. I trust his time at the Seminary will be spent pleasantly.

"Accept my kind regards for yourselves and your families.

"Very truly yours,

"WM. S. PLUMMER."

## CHAPTER VII.

### *STUDENT LIFE AT UNION SEMINARY.*

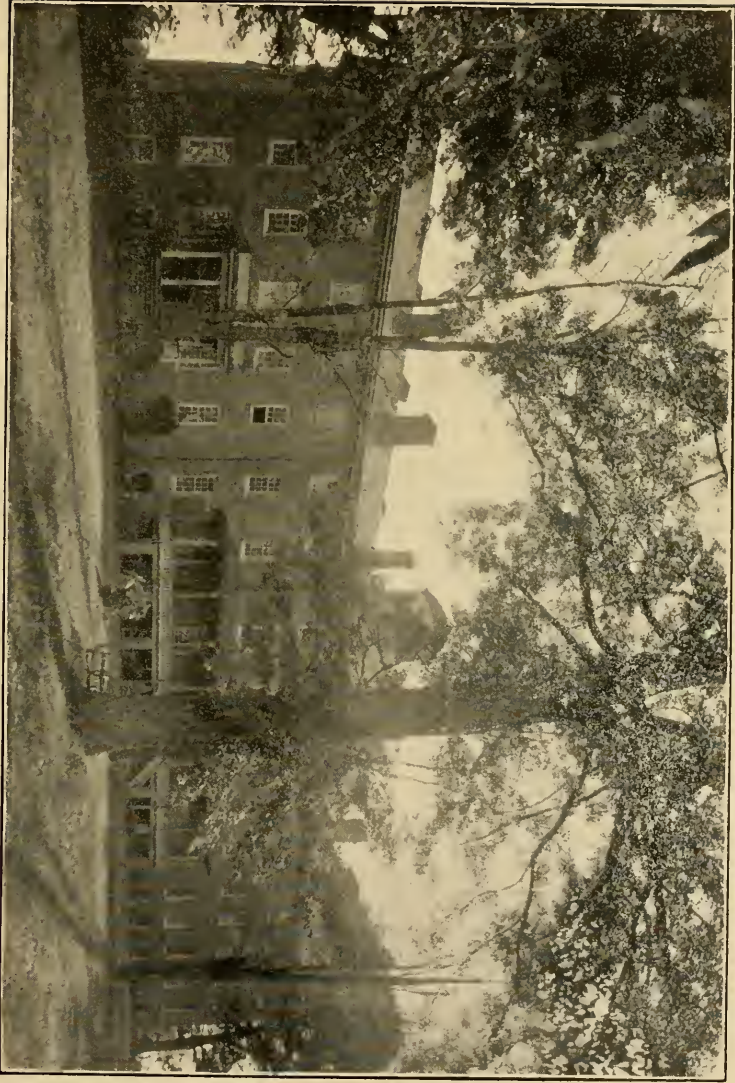
(November, 1844—May, 1846.)

UNION SEMINARY IN 1844.—MR. DABNEY'S JOURNEY THITHER.—HIS ROOM IN SEMINARY BUILDING.—HIS BOARDING-PLACE.—IMPRESSIONS OF THE FACULTY; OF HIS FELLOW-STUDENTS; OF "THE HILL" PEOPLE; OF THE PEOPLE OF PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY.—TIME HE SPENT HERE AS A STUDENT.—HIS ENERGIES IN STUDY.—EFFORTS TO PREACH.—THE CRITICISMS.—EFFORTS TO WRITE.—FORMS OF EXERCISE.—FORMS OF RECREATION.—HIS CORRESPONDENCE.—HIS LICENSURE.—COMPLETION OF STUDIES AT THE SEMINARY.

UNION SEMINARY was under a cloud of depression in 1844. There was a Faculty of three professors, viz., the Rev. Samuel B. Wilson, D. D., professor of Systematic and Polemic Theology; the Rev. Samuel L. Graham, D. D., professor of Ecclesiastical History and Polity, and the Rev. Francis S. Sampson, D. D., professor of Oriental Literature. There were only eighteen students on the roll, whereas there were nearly one hundred and fifty at Princeton. There were few candidates for the ministry in the Synods of Virginia and North Carolina: some of those few were attending the Seminary at Columbia, and others were at Princeton. Mr. Dabney seems to have had some difficulty in deciding where he was to go for his theological training; but he was, even at this early period, an advocate for building up our own peculiar home institutions. This decided him in favor of Hampden-Sidney.

In the early days of November, 1844, he set out from his mother's home. Certain considerations seem to have called him by Richmond, whence he went by canal-boat to Cartersville, in Cumberland county, and thence by stage to his destination, at Hampden-Sidney. Our facilities of travel have improved since his day, and the manners of those who officer the lines. He wrote to his mother on the 12th of November, 1844:

"I took the canal-boat Friday evening as I expected, and found the captain drunk. He had a fight in the boat with one of the passengers who was also drunk, an old Irishman named Irving, who lives near



MAIN SEMINARY BUILDING, HAMPPDEN-SIDNEY.





Cartersville. The chief part of the fight took place at the supper-table, and made one of the most disagreeable scenes I ever saw. I suppose, if the captain met his deserts, he has been discharged before this time. I arrived at Prince Edward Courthouse a little after dinner Saturday, having had a very pleasant trip in the stage, except the cold in the morning."

He was soon domiciled in his room in the main building of the Seminary. He describes his room, in a letter to his brother William, dated November 22, 1844, in the following terms:

"My situation here is very much what I anticipated, and in some respects better. I have a good room up two pair of stairs, facing the south, with two windows, a convenient closet, and sufficient furniture of the plainest sort."

Of his boarding-place he writes, in the same letter:

"The living with the steward is, upon the whole, much better than I expected to find it, although there is still room for improvement. One thing was rather annoying to me at first—we sit upon long, and not very nice benches at our meals. We have good bacon, and beef, and sometimes fowls, and a little milk. We shall all make out doubtless to eat as much as we ought."

Of the Faculty he has noted his first impressions as follows:

"Dr. Wilson is an old Virginia gentleman, in the true sense of the word, mild, polite, and courteous, and still, natural and dignified. Dr. Sampson and his wife are both very clever."

He soon came to have a profound veneration for the person and character of Prof. Sampson. In his old age he wrote, too:

"Let me say that if I ever had any special intellectual growth and vigor, I owed it to three things, first, to the Master of Arts course in the University of Virginia, second, to Dr. Sampson, and third, to my subsequent mastery of Turretin."

Of Dr. Graham he wrote, in the letter already repeatedly quoted:

"Hoge's remark seems perfectly true, that when you visit him, the only smile that illumines his countenance is when you take your leave. I do not expect I shall ever enter his house as a visitor."

This was not a true prophecy; our prophet's letters of a later date betray a rather unusual intimacy between Mr. Dabney and

this same cold Dr. Graham, and he must have found Dr. Graham's house a sufficiently comfortable place on occasion. He writes to his mother, on December 4, 1845:

"Last night I went to a little gathering of young folks at Dr. Graham's, a real old-fashioned *candy stew*. . . . Mrs. Graham is a very old-fashioned sort of body, and does everything at her house pretty much as it is done in the country, and we had quite an old-fashioned frolic."

Now, generally, the word "old-fashioned" in Mr. Dabney's mouth means something superlatively good.

Of his fellow-students he writes, November 22, 1844:

"There are about eighteen students here. There are a few of them of good families, and of pretty high character, as to acquirement and manners. The rest seem to be just what Aunt Coles would call 'good creatures,' very kind and quiet and very uninteresting. All of them, I believe, are young men in limited circumstances. Not many of the rich of this world cast in their lot among us. Some of them are sons of mechanics, and are supported partly by charity, or by school teaching, and so forth. When I consider the way in which ministers are generally received into the best society of the country in which they live, and the power they have of giving a tone to manners and feeling in the community, there often arises a feeling of repulsion against this class of candidates for the responsible duties of the office. But, upon the whole, it is right, I am convinced, to employ such materials unless better can be found. In a great house there must be vessels for honor and for dishonor. These sorts of preachers generally find their level, after a little fluctuating, and either learn the air and deportment of gentlemen, if they have quick parts, or else find their proper place in some plain neighborhood, and work to advantage among people of their own class. There is much ministerial work for which the refinement and sensibilities of gentlemen would almost disqualify them, which these sorts of men can do without repugnance; and it should be said, too, that they are generally very exemplary and correct in their characters. In this respect, too much honor cannot be done them; and, upon the whole, there are not more men of this grade in the ministry—nay, not near so many—as ambition or avarice has pushed into the other genteel professions. It is quite surprising to what an extent they do shed their native rudeness. The strict morals, the literary pursuits, and self-denying manners, which they are obliged to cultivate, does as much towards making them real gentlemen as anything could. There is a young man here now, . . . the son of a mechanic, who is really quite an accomplished fellow. We have also a young man who was once a Catholic, a brother of Prof. Ewell, of Hampden-Sidney College."

During the first year there were amongst his fellow-students the following, who afterwards became well known throughout the church, viz.: William T. Richardson, for many years editor of the *Central Presbyterian*; Jacob Henry Smith, long one of the leading pastors and preachers of the Synod of North Carolina, and of the whole church; William Stoddert, a man of many marked idiosyncrasies, but of eminent talents, and much beloved wherever known; Clement Read Vaughan, for some time professor of Systematic and Polemic Theology in Union Seminary, his *alma mater*, a *prince and great man in Israel*, and a most intimate and life-long friend of Robert L. Dabney. John Marshall Grasty, of the class next in succession to Dr. Dabney's, also became widely known as a racy and evangelical writer and preacher. In this little class of five was also William Henry Ruffner, a man known and venerated throughout Virginia, and more widely still for ministerial gifts, and in his later years for services in behalf of public instruction. So small was the attendance on the Seminary at the time, that his two-years' residence there seems to have brought him into contact with less than twenty-four fellow-students in that institution. Of certain of these brethren, it was a grief to Mr. Dabney that he could see so little. Mr. Richardson, whom he had known both at Hampden-Sidney College and at the University of Virginia, and for whose character he entertained great esteem, was a tutor in College, and consequently had his lodgings there. After a little, he found in Mr. Vaughan, perhaps, his most congenial companion. A laughable incident in the life of one of his fellow-students was celebrated, one night after hearing it, by young Dabney in eighty-five iambic hexameter lines, showing that he was able to get something out of the lives even of those between whom and himself there was little congeniality.<sup>1</sup>

Of the people on the Hill he took a view, which, not unfavorable at first, rose steadily as long as he stayed there. There had been many changes in the Faculties of the College and the Seminary since he had left the College in the year 1837. The

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<sup>1</sup> The incident which excited this ebullition was the adventure of one of the brethren with the house dog of the gentleman who kept the refectory. The brother had gone to the well for water. The dog appeared, and the brother climbed a tree. There he sat until nearly frozen. He climbed down. The dog ran. The poet narrated the incident, and draws a moral.

great Dr. Baxter had died in 1841, and his family, who had kept open house, were gone. The magnetic Dr. Stephen Taylor was gone; Dr. Goodrich was gone. There was a new Seminary Faculty, with their families. The changes in the College had been hardly less sweeping, so that the *personnel* of the Hill was almost entirely changed when he went back in the fall of 1844. He writes:

"My old associations here are almost entirely broken up, and the sight of so many familiar places unpeopled of all their former occupants makes me feel very lonely. Mrs. Rice (the venerable widow of Dr. John Holt Rice) is still here, and promises to make an agreeable companion, as formerly."

He found there also Mrs. Wharey, the wife of the old pastor from Louisa, and after a little, enlarged his "list of widows," making it include Mrs. Rice, Mrs. Caruthers, "the widowed daughter of Dr. Wilson"; Mrs. Wharey, and Mrs. Palmer. Mrs. Rice and Mrs. Caruthers were very sprightly and accomplished ladies, compelling the highest respect for their characters as well. They were his favorites amongst the ladies. He visited them often, and has not a little to say of the pleasure and profit to be derived from their conversation. The wife of one of the venerable professors, he learns, is addicted to the use of the pipe, and he tries to secure from his own regions some peculiarly delicate tobacco, that she may enjoy this small vice all the more.

Of the larger community about the Hill his opinion rises just in proportion to the extension of his acquaintance. He pronounces the people of Prince Edward county, marked for their superior intelligence, culture and character, notwithstanding the fact that they were generally people of very moderate means. We shall see, after a little, that he enjoyed hugely short visits to these most excellent and hospitable people.

Mr. Dabney began his studies in Union Seminary early in November, 1844, and completed them in May, 1846. Prior to 1845, the Seminary had two sessions a year: a summer session of four months, June to September, inclusive, and a winter session of six months, November to April, inclusive. The vacations were May and October. In 1845, the session was changed, and made to be of nine months, beginning with September and ending with May. In these two years Mr. Dabney completed the three years' course, served Dr. Graham by copy-

ing a manuscript of his in preparation for the printer, wrote some articles for publication, took an unusual interest in all preaching and forensic enterprises, read somewhat widely, visited a good deal, made some excursions, and spent his surplus energy in corresponding. He was the most distinguished student of his classes, and received the usual certificate of graduation conferred in his day.

He was remarkable amongst his fellow-students, not for the time he pored over his books, but for the intensity of effort with which he applied himself while at it. While he worked he worked, and when he played he played.

He threw himself into his preaching exercises and forensics with as much zeal as he displayed in the preparation for his recitations. He availed himself of all invitations to preach, feeling that the way to learn to do a thing is to do it. After his first sermon, he writes to his mother as follows, in a letter dated July 8, 1845:

“Last Sunday I preached my first sermon at one of Dr. Graham’s country churches. The congregation was small, pretty select and pretty critical, the very worst sort of a place to preach in you ever saw; and, besides, they only regard the preaching of the seminarians as a sort of imitation of the reality, and look on with no other feeling than curiosity to see how complete the mimicry will be. I kept the attention of my congregation pretty well; only two leant on their elbows for a few minutes, which I think was very well for so hot, sleepy a day. I found preaching tired me, both body and voice, much more than I expected. The bodily labor is not any great thing, but the strain of mind is so great that when the excitement passes away the preacher feels like a drunken man sobering. To be obliged to talk or keep company in such a state is almost torture. If you want to consult their comfort after preaching, you should give them, first thing, some place to lie down in perfect quiet and rest, especially if they have to preach a second time the same day. I was a good deal agitated, but excitement usually makes me more wide-awake, and I avoided all blunders or mistakes completely until the dismissal. Then I thought the thing was all over, and feeling perfectly indifferent and self-possessed, made a mistake in giving out the doxology. I am convinced by my first trial that I can never read sermons to my people in any comfort. *Extempore* preaching is the thing for me. I could notice the difference plainly between the paragraphs I threw in, although not expressed with half as much propriety of language as that which was on the paper. It is much more important that sinners should be excited to listen to the truth than that I should have the reputation of a pretty writer.”

During his student days, however, he never liked to preach on "The Hill," or in the surrounding community. The criticism, rampant in the place, and helpful in its final influence on the young men going out from the Seminary, was hard for him, as well as for most of these brethren to bear.

He writes on the 14th of April, 1846:

"I rejoice to tell you that I preached my last sermon in this neighborhood yesterday, being a sermon to the negroes. There are two things which make preaching here hateful to me: one is the criticising, part of it official by the professors, and part voluntary; and the other is the fact that we have hereabouts the most ill-behaved, gospel-hardened and God-despising congregations I ever saw. South Anna is perfect propriety to it. During public prayer, no matter who preaches, there is a constant whispering and shuffling, and when you open your eyes you find perhaps that a large part of the congregation has changed its position. Some who were on one side of the house when you bowed down in prayer are on the opposite side when you rise up, and some have gone out. And then, as Dr. Graham says, they all criticise, from suckling babies up, through the children, the negroes, and all. However, all these things move me not. I have tried to preach whenever my turn has come, both to white people and negroes, with plainness and affection, and would continue to do so if my lot was cast here.

"Regular criticism of our public performances is an important part of the training here, in its extent at least, if not in its good effects. The effects I am inclined to rate very low, unless perhaps they may have some moral effect in keeping us humble. Their futility, as a means of information, will appear from a few instances. The professors criticise our sermons, and our fellow-students the speeches we make in the debating society. Concerning a speech I made in the latter, last winter, it was claimed that I spoke too much like a popular declaimer, with more warmth than becomes one addressing educated and reflecting persons, who weigh thoughts, not sounds. The last time I preached in the chapel, Mr. Sampson said, that as it was the last time he should have the opportunity to criticise me, he would inform me, as he had done twice before, that the greatest defect in my preaching was the *lack of animation!* And, as if this was not strange enough, he added, 'It is true that we all see that Mr. Dabney is animated himself, but he is unable to express that animation to his audience!' Then I should like to ask, if I am not able to express it to my audience, how on earth do they all notice that I have it? Criticisms as rational and consistent as these could only make a man's style of speaking a medley of everything that was affected and contrary. The truth is, what I suppose Mr. Sampson felt, although he could not express it. I have a bad habit of exerting myself more than is necessary, while there is not sufficient cadence in my voice from high to low, and from low

to high—a fault which I am fully convinced of, and have long been striving to correct. There is one part of the conduct of the students regarding each other's sermons which is worthy of all commendation and of imitation. No one, after he has preached, gets the remotest hint as to what his comrades think of his performance. However much they may admire it and praise it to others, to him they are as mute on the subject as if it had been a fatal failure. This effectually removes all temptations to vanity."

The manuscripts which have come down from these years show that he was careful, painstaking and able in all the scholastic duties connected with the Seminary. There is a careful, thoughtful, and up-to-date "Report to the Society of Missionary Inquiry," bearing the date of March 1, 1845, and dealing with the recent China treaty, and the consequent obligations to missionary effort there, on the part of American Christians, and also with recent circumstances in India, and the probabilities of the more favorable progress of the cause there. There is a trenchant and able review of "Bush on the Resurrection," bearing date of June, 1845, which was prepared as a class exercise. There is also a bright paper on "Transcendentalism," dated July, 1845, in which the young Seminarian lets flow his vein for ridicule and light sarcasm. In August, 1845, he prepared a historical essay on "What Causes Checked the Progress of the Reformation?" It was a thesis "for graduation," or certification rather, since at the time the Seminary bestowed no degrees. This is a genuinely philosophical discussion of the subject, and does great credit to a man of his years, indicating the keenest insight into the conditions of the time. His mind was so much alive that he did fully all the work that was assigned him, and then went out in search of more. He actually prepared, during his first year in the Seminary, a "Series of Articles on the Second Commandment and Popish Idolatry," which he published in the *Watchman and Observer*.

During his Seminary life, Mr. Dabney's health was not good. He inherited an unfaithful liver, and the dysentery, with which he had suffered at the University of Virginia, predisposed him to bilious colic, in which he suffered the severest pain from cramps. He had one very severe spell in February, 1846. He was afflicted, also, with weak eyes in the spring of 1846, and throughout the following year. He was at first afraid he was going to lose his eyesight, and received some letters of sym-



pathy, with that apprehension in view; but he got a physician's advice, used them only for brief intervals at a time, allayed their inflammation by frequently bathing them in hot water, and so gained a measure of relief and slow improvement.

His physical troubles caused him to take much bodily exercise. The forms of exercise show that he was ready at any time to vindicate the dignity of labor. He was remarkable in later days on "The Hill" for holding forth the duty of the young men to find some useful labor at which they might exercise, maintaining that such exercise gave the most perfect rest from ordinary mental toil; that there was refreshment coming from the very consciousness of doing something useful, something having a purpose. He entertained this theory in his youth. Accordingly, he took exercise in caring for his room, in cutting his wood, in working a large watermelon patch, and in building a summer-house on the Seminary campus, and by trying in other ways to beautify the campus. It may be a surprise to men of to-day that some of the students in this period, being sons of slave-holders, and men of comfortable means, would cut their own wood, sweep and dust their own rooms, make their beds, and take the whole care of their rooms, but such was the case. In this form of exercise, Mr. Dabney was simply doing as his fellows did; but his working a watermelon patch was, we may believe, not so common a form of exercise. In this work he found much to interest him, certainly. He had attempted the enterprise while a college boy. He begins it again in the spring of 1845. He wrote on the 15th of March of that year:

"I have just begun to-day to work on my watermelon patch. It is a tolerably rich piece of land, but rather too clayey, and rather too far from the house. I shall expect to see the most of them stolen, but it is the exercise I go in for chiefly. I am digging holes to manure under the hills. I shall have about seventy-five hills, and one of the brethren talks of working with me; but we have no help from the plow, and it will keep us pretty busy in our odd moments."

It may be doubted as to whether he made a great success with his watermelons, but he seems to have gotten varied forms of exercise through that patch, for he writes to his brother, Mr. William Dabney, on the 2nd of August:

"The most immediate interest I have in the drought is my watermelon patch, which is most miserably cut short. None of the melons are larger than a baby's head, and the most of them are sick ripe."

During the winter of 1845-'46, he planned exercise in the improvement of the Seminary campus when the spring should come. Of this he wrote his mother, on December 4, 1845:

"Brother Hogshead and I talk of making a summer-house, after the wood-cutting season is past, in the yard of the Seminary. They have named one-half of the yard North Carolina, and the other half Virginia. The Virginia side was the highest; so that, in levelling, all the soil was carried off it and put on the Carolina side. Besides, the latter has a summer-house, and some flowers, while old Virginia is nothing but a barren waste of dry, stunted weeds. I wish to make a summer-house there also, and to stimulate the ladies to do something for its improvement. This shall be my spring work, as there will be no use in making a watermelon patch next summer."

This young man who was doing his class work in two-thirds the usual time, and leading the classes, and who was writing and studying much on outside matters, but who found much exercise necessary, and who found all these homely forms of exercise interesting, was nevertheless very social in his instincts. He craved society, the society of refined, elegant and interesting people. He was the son of a home of refinement, as we have seen, in spite of the modest circumstances of his mother. Society was a sort of substitute for the pleasure of home. Moreover, he sought the good society to be had about and on the Hill for the sake of improvement in manners. He felt that these were very important in the minister, and that it was a part of his preparation to acquire agreeable manners. Accordingly, he did a good deal of social visiting in the families on the Hill. He also found that he was the better for an occasional walk to a gentleman's house at a distance of several miles. He writes to his brother, on February 4, 1845:

"My life here is just the reverse of the one you describe yourself as leading. Everything is as regular as clock-work. It seems to suit some of them to admiration, but I have so much of the Price blood in my veins that it is necessary to be stirred up in some way occasionally. My usual resources are a long ramble, or a visit to the country. I have not many places to visit far enough off to make a pleasant excursion, but I have access to almost every family in the immediate neighborhood. The people are plain, but well informed. There are few counties which have so respectable a population. They are a regular and stable people in their politics, and in all their doings. . . . I have been twice to the house of Mr. Treadway, a retired merchant of the old school."

In March, 1845, he went on a brief excursion to Charlotte county, and while there, to visit the house of John Randolph. After describing the estate, in a letter to his brother Francis, dated the 16th of March, he continues:

“The house, or rather houses, are in the midst of the woods, some distance from the low grounds, and entirely out of sight of all the cultivated land, except a little garden. They are two little one-story houses, with two rooms on a floor without any passage. The oldest one, which was the only one till the latter part of his life, is a little dark-looking, low affair. . . . The posts of the porch were oak saplings, skinned, and put into the ground like fence posts. The new house is entirely unconnected, and about eight yards off. It was quite well built, and is rather higher pitched, and more comfortable. There was a good deal of very fine furniture, but old-fashioned, and a great many very fine books. Some of our party estimated them at two thousand volumes, almost all of them English editions, and many of them bound in calf-skin and gilt. There were nearly all sorts of books, a good many Latin and Greek, and a good many theological; among the rest, Scott’s *Commentaries*, and Henry’s. There were two defects which struck me very forcibly: one was the want of all mathematical works (the only one I saw was Newton’s *Principia*), and the other, the meanness of his law library. Any young county-court lawyer would have a better one; but it is possible that all his valuable law books have been borrowed, perhaps by Judge Tucker. All his favorite books had his name pasted on them, with his coat-of-arms, and his motto, ‘*Fari quae sentiat.*’ His foible evidently was the wish to regard himself as a nobleman. His chamber was hung around with coats-of-arms, portraits of horses, a portrait of himself in his boyhood, and of Juba, and of his lap-dog. There was an old arm-chair, . . . and on it was hanging the far-famed white flannel morning gown, in which he fought the duel with Mr. Clay. The holes of Mr. Clay’s bullet are there still, darned up roughly. His boots and shoes were hanging up in a little closet, some of them worn and some new. You have heard, I suppose, that the will case is decided at last, and the negroes are set free.”

On one of these excursions he accompanied his friend and class-mate, Mr. Vaughan, to his home in Farmville. Mr. Dabney was very much interested in the inmates of this home, and much entertained by them; but the most notable thing he found in Farmville was a factory full of negroes singing hymns. He writes:

“They sing with very great effect, and fully maintained their reputation as musical geniuses. Indeed, some of the finest vocal music I ever

heard was in this factory. They carry three or four parts, and as many of the pieces they sing are those which they caught from the church choirs, I could perceive that the accompaniments were greatly varied. Indeed, in many cases they seem to be almost entirely of their own manufacture. Their favorite accompaniment seems to be the bass, and a sort of counter-sing falsetto. The effect of the latter is sometimes very fine, for some of the lads have falsetto voices as clear as a sky-lark's, which run through the mass of harmony like a golden thread through a dark robe, slender, and yet distinct. There was one big, burly fellow in a corner from which the heaviest bass seemed to come, and I took it for granted that he was their chief bass singer; but when I went near him, I found that he was singing the finest falsetto. This passion for music might be made the means of conveying a great deal of religious truth, if the masters would encourage it a little, and give it a right direction. All persons, and especially the illiterate, learn by heart words which are accompanied by good melodies much more readily than in any other way, and I believe it would be very easy to sing a company of negroes into a competent system of Bible truth. The General Assembly of our church once entertained the intention of having the Authorized Version of the Psalms set to music, so that each psalm might be stereotyped, as it were, to its own melody, and thus the sense and the music might go together in the memory, and help to suggest each other. The work has been begun, indeed, by the great masters of the last century, and there is already a large proportion of the most striking psalms set to fine anthems, and so forth. If the work was completed from the music left by Handel, Hayden and Mozart, and by the aid of living composers, it would present a most elegant and impressive body of divine truth. If the music was really good, and of a strong, popular style, not the fine-drawn, lack-a-daisical melodies fashionable nowadays among the opera composers, and if the work was introduced into common and regular use in our churches, it would result in storing the memories of the people, in the course of time, with the larger part of the psalms. We would thus have an invaluable body of inspired truth conveyed in the most permanent form to the mind, without labor to the learner, and connected with the most pleasant associations. I hope that when a taste for vocal music becomes more common in our churches the work will be done."

There were other excursions. These will suffice to show that he went with open eyes and ears, and a mind that never ceased its activities. For him to make an excursion was to see something worth seeing, and for him to see that thing was to begin to think of it in many of its important relations, bearings, and suggestions. After the above disquisition on the teaching power in melody when connected with truth, and the duty of

the church to set the psalms to music, he gives some strong animadversions against instrumental music.<sup>2</sup>

He was as much of a correspondent in these years as he had been in previous years. He added to the range of his topics. Seeing the farmers along Buffalo attempting irrigation, he finds in that enterprise a new subject on which to write to his home folks, and suggest that some of their lands can be easily irrigated. Naturally church matters engage more and more attention. He studied the Old School Assembly of 1845, especially the positions touching Romish baptism and slavery, and wrote of it with penetration and vigor, if not with masterfulness.<sup>3</sup> But he never needed topics, when writing home, in order to satisfy his home people. What they wished to hear about was himself. They loved him devotedly. His mother dreads the close of his student days at the Seminary, lest he be sent far away from her. She exclaims: "See how selfish I am. I think of you, and want to see you all the time."<sup>4</sup> Betty, the fair and much-loved sister, writes: "Whatever the church may think, I am very sure that you are as far above him [a brother minister whom the young lady had been criticising in previous letters, and Robert had been defending to the verge of self-immolation] as the sun is above the earth."<sup>5</sup> In the same letter she tells him that she hears that he has preached at least one sermon "that could not be surpassed." The whole tone of her letter shows that she believes everything good said of him.

Mr. Dabney appeared before West Hanover Presbytery, at its session at Pittsylvania Courthouse, Va., the last of April, or first of May, 1846. He came armed with a Latin thesis of eleven closely written pages, on the subject, *Quomodo homo justificatus sit*. This exercise was no farce with him. He was not the kind of candidate to turn a part of his trial for licensure into a farce. He begins by speaking of the importance of the subject; then inquires into the status of man with God, and the true nature of justification. Having done this, he disposes, last of all, of the question, "*Quomodo*," etc. He brought with him, also, a critical exercise on Hebrews vi. 4-6, covering thirty-eight pages of sermon paper—a strong and useful piece of

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<sup>2</sup> Letter to Mr. William Dabney, February 5, 1846.

<sup>3</sup> Letters, June 7, 1845, p. 3, and June 12, 1845.

<sup>4</sup> Letter to Robert, dated February 6, 1846.

<sup>5</sup> Betty Dabney's letter to Robert, of April 10, 1846.

work. All his tests seem to have been equally satisfactory, and on the 4th day of May, 1846, the Presbytery licensed him to preach the gospel of Christ, as a probationer, for the holy ministry, within the bounds of this Presbytery, or wherever else he should be orderly called, William C. Scott being Moderator, and P. J. Sparrow, Stated Clerk.

At this time he looked so thin and pale that the Presbytery thought his life would probably be a short one, and that he needed the care of interested friends. A few weeks before, the church of Providence and the South Anna and Green Springs neighborhoods, in Louisa county, had been thrown together, thus constituting a missionary field. As his mother's home was in this field, and as the field was vacant, the Presbytery assigned Mr. Dabney to it.

With his license in his hands, and his immediate field for active work assigned, he left Pittsylvania Courthouse, went back to the Seminary, completed the session's work, and, upon its close, received, on the 10th of June, 1846, the usual certificate granted to those who had completed the entire curriculum of studies.

Subsequent events were to prove that he had made on the Faculty, upon his fellow-students, and upon the community about, an impression as of a man who could show himself equal to a post and burden of unusual responsibility; but our next chapter will carry us with him into a small missionary field, such as would have been despised as too mean by some of his fellows for any but men of the humblest capacities. He does not seem to have had any question as to whether or not it was good enough for him.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *A MISSIONARY IN LOUISA COUNTY.*

(June, 1846—June, 1847.)

DISINCLINATION TO UNDERTAKE THE WORK.—WANTED BY THE PEOPLE.—PLEASURE IN HIS WORK AND ACCEPTANCE WITH HIS PEOPLE.—VARIED AND EXTENSIVE CORRESPONDENCE.—CONTINUED ILL-HEALTH.—TRIP TO THE WHITE SULPHUR AND TO THE HOT SPRINGS.—INVITATIONS TO OTHER FIELDS.—THE ADVICE OF DR. MEREDITH AND THE INVITATION TO VISIT TINKLING SPRING.—THE CALL AND DECISION TO ACCEPT IT.

MR. DABNEY, on some accounts, was naturally drawn to the Louisa field. He would be able, while working in the field, to make his home with his widowed mother, who had long leaned on him in a peculiar way. On his going to the Seminary, his mother had written:

"I knew I should miss you very much, but it is worse than I expected, even. Francis is as kind and attentive to his business as he can be, but still you are wanting here for my comfort; but I know that I have to give you up, and I will not complain, but live in the hope of seeing you in four months from this dark morning. . . . Your room here looks like there had been a death in it. Indeed, I know not what we shall do without you."<sup>1</sup>

Of warm, generous affections, disposed to bear the burdens of the weak all about, his home folks naturally leaned on him; nor did time efface the sense of their loss. When the Louisa field was offered, he knew that his going there would comport with his mother's happiness and comfort. The destitutions of the field also appealed to him. There was little worthy preaching at the time in the county. The Baptists and Campbellites, then holding forth there, were, for the most part, but poorly furnished to teach the way of life. There seemed to be an advantageous opening for a preacher of his faith; so, at any rate, thought West Hanover Presbytery; but there were other reasons why Mr. Dabney was strongly disinclined to take the

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<sup>1</sup> Letter, dated December 2, 1844.

work. The chief of these was that "No prophet is accepted in his own country." This was the people among whom he had grown up. Many of them were related to him by ties of blood. His connections were still more widely ramified. By nature he was modest and shrinking. He distrusted himself as equal to the task of doing his proper work as preacher and pastor in this place.

But this people, amongst whom he had grown up, desired him, and some of them very much. On the very heels of the Presbyterian Committee's determination to construct the Louisa field, the session of Providence Church had held an informal meeting, and desired the Rev. William S. White to call Mr. Dabney's attention to that field, and ask him "to visit them" as soon as his licensure should be over, "with a view to settling among them." It was, in part, in recognition of this known desire that the Presbytery assigned him to the field as a missionary licentiate. That the congregation of Providence would have given him an early call to the pastorate, had he been disposed to cut short the period of his licentiateship, there can be little doubt. This fact is made clear, as well as the general esteem in which Mr. Dabney was held, by such proofs as the following letter from Mr. Launcelot Minor, an elder in the Providence Church:

"LOUISA, May 29, '46.

"REVEREND AND DEAR FRIEND: I take this mode of saying something more to you in regard to your accepting the invitation to preach in our Providence field, which will be very certainly extended to you, lest I should not have an opportunity of saying it verbally.

"Your only objection seems to be the fear that you will not be able to do good, on account of your being "in your own country," and, on the first view of the subject, it would seem to be well-nigh an insuperable objection. I mean, it would appear thus to a stranger to all the circumstances. As I said to you the other day, you would begin your ministry, I am convinced, under much more favorable auspices than usual. As the son of a man to whom the people of Louisa, and all, indeed, who knew him, delighted to do honor, you will stand on higher ground than any stranger could; your being but little known *personally* to the people of the field, but most favorably known as a young man of learning and sense, would give you much stronger claims than others; and your being known as one who was sound on all the questions which seem to be separating the various sects of Christians, would, in my esteem, be a very strong lever in your favor. But all, all these sink into perfect insignificance compared with the acknowledgment of



our utter dependence on a Higher Power; to do his work acceptably to himself, or indeed with any success, 'tis *absolutely* necessary that we should be conformed to his likeness. We must be *lowly and meek in spirit*; we must be kind and forgiving and courteous to all; finally, we must say nothing or do nothing that will militate against our gaining the confidence of the community, or which will lead men to speak lightly of the religion of our Master as set forth in us. The minister's is truly a life of crosses; he must expect to be crossed every hour of his existence. He must expect to have his sermons found fault with because of their being too plain—and because they are not plain enough; because he writes them—and because he does not write them; because he reads them—and because he does not read them; and at last, after being covered with abuses of this kind, he will find himself charged with seeking a livelihood, or fortune, under the guise of the blessed religion of Jesus Christ, so fickle and vain is this “stiff-necked and gainsaying people” with whom the minister of Jesus Christ has to do; but, thanks to a merciful and gracious God, there is in this world some relief to this dark picture. I have never yet seen the humble, devoted Christian, I have never yet seen the individual—private or public, rich or poor, male or female—whose life was devoted to deeds such as are the fruit of the Spirit, but in the end assumed such an influence over those he had to do with as most effectually checked and overawed vice and obtained the admiration of all. . . .

“With the advantages you possess over young men starting in the ministry in their native neighborhoods, together with a *faithful* and entire dependence on God, I cannot myself see an objection to your taking the field with the utmost confidence of being successful. Faith! faith! is, I think, in religion, pretty much what action is said to be in an orator—it is to be asked for first, and asked for last; with it we can do anything, and without it we can do nothing. The next thing to be sought in prayer is, I think, the constant presence of the desire to do all that we do to the glory of God, that we may be divested of self, and be actuated only by supreme love to him and desire to glorify his name; to count all things but dung, so that the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus is won. . . . I think I have shown satisfactorily that in regard to temporal or worldly qualifications you are all that the people could desire. As to the rest, yourself and your God only can answer. I hope, my dear friend, you will forgive my having spoken thus freely to you; be assured the whole is prompted by the ardent desire to see you useful in the service of God and his church. May he, by the power of his Holy Spirit, guide and direct us, the church, in the choice of a pastor! and may he direct you in the decision which you may make! and may it all redound greatly to his glory. I do most sincerely pray. Believe me,

“Yours affectionately,

“L. MINOR, JR.”

The issue showed that the people of Providence Church were not mistaken in Mr. Dabney. He was happy in his work. At least, he was as happy as a man in such a precarious state of health could well be. His field was a large one; it took him about a month to get around. He could use the same sermon several times. He thus had ample time to prepare his sermons, and was able to sustain the reputation, with which he came from the Seminary, of being a powerful preacher. He loved to preach to these first people of his. When Providence made it his duty to be elsewhere, and to preach to strange people, he wrote, "I hunger for the opportunity of preaching to my own congregation."<sup>2</sup> Shortly afterwards, he wrote, "I am sick for an opportunity to preach to my own people."<sup>3</sup> His preaching was duly appreciated by the little flocks to which he ministered. Moreover, he commended himself to all classes, by his blood earnestness, and uncommon honesty of word and behavior, by his unaffected and thorough-going interest in the well-being, both temporal and spiritual, of his parishioners, and by his genuine sympathy for all the weak and the suffering. His labors were so acceptable to his people that when the time came for him to go to another field, many of them could hardly see that he ought to go. At that time, Mr. Launcelot Minor voiced again the views and wishes of the people of the field, in a long and eloquent letter to Mr. Dabney, toward the close of which he says:

"I have come to the deliberate and sincere conclusion that, taking all the circumstances into consideration, there is not a man of my acquaintance in the church of God who, with a tolerable show of health, could do so much toward the establishment of religion as you in Louisa—such an assertion to be qualified with the sentence, which is always understood by Christians, when this labor is bestowed with an eye single to the glory of God. What I mean is this, that as the son of Col. Charles Dabney, and being what you are in qualifications, with an humble dependence on God for his blessing, no other man could do in Louisa what you could."<sup>4</sup>

He affirms his competence to decide this question quite as well as the Presbytery.

While winning these golden opinions as a preacher and min-

<sup>2</sup> Letter from White Sulphur, dated September 5, 1846.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from the Hot Springs, September 14, 1846.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from L. Minor, Jr., dated May 4, 1847.

ister in Louisa, Mr. Dabney was as devoted to correspondence as ever. He was in steady correspondence with William T. Richardson, Alexander L. Hogshead, Stephen A. Stanfield, William Stoddert, Clement Read Vaughan, and William Henry Ruffner, and others, in addition to previous correspondents. At the same time, he indulged, with still others, in correspondence of a more fugitive character. There were two or three very bright men in this number, and in them "Bob Dabney," as some of them call him, must have found peculiar delight. Ruffner went to Princeton for the session of 1846 to 1847. He sketches for his friend Dabney the Princeton professors, when Princeton was in her very zenith. Here is the sketch which the eager-minded Louisa missionary got one day in November, 1846, out of the post, by paying five cents therefor:

"Dr. Alexander is just what he appears to be in his books, a man of wonderful sagacity and acquaintance with the human heart. In private, his manners are not as affectionate as one would be led to suppose; but he never cuts but to remove an excrescence. His powers of managing and trimming into shape all sorts of characters, such as come here, are remarkable. His lectures would be considered able were he in an ordinary faculty.

"Dr. Miller is a cheerful, polished, rather formal and pompous old gentleman of seventy-seven; very affectionate towards the students, and a man of great learning and piety. He is commonly spoken of as 'tedious' and 'prolix,' etc., in his lectures. I am inclined to think that such a manner of speech about Dr. Miller is one of those hereditary fashions which are often perpetuated in a public institution, without anybody's, or but few, going to the trouble of comparing the opinion with the fact. Dr. Miller delivers lectures on Church History supplementary to Mosheim, which are rich with most valuable and interesting information (*me judice*). He uses circumlocution always, rather than employ cant, or inelegant phrases, but that is a trifle compared with the facts of a rare and improving nature which his words convey.

"Dr. Hodge is the theological Polyphemus. He gives us a lecture once a week on theology, and presents a subject in a stronger manner than we can find it treated in any text-book; but I will defer particulars for a future communication. We use no particular text-book on theology. Dr. Hodge gives us about twenty-four questions a week, on which we read and write. *Turretin* is the principal book used. Hill stands next in repute, and Dick at least third or fourth. Knapp is considered valuable. . . .

"The ablest speaker in the Faculty is Dr. Addison Alexander. He keeps an audience feeling like a stream of galvanism was running

through them. He is one of the most brilliant men, in all of his productions, I have ever seen, perhaps the most so; but in private he is a real character. He is as unsociable as a comet, and looks as grim as a *taurus*. We have a tutor named Green, who is a smart fellow. Minutiae must be reserved till the press of matter is off.

"I do not think the course is as well arranged as at Union, but it is more extensive, and we have more work than we had at Union."<sup>5</sup>

The suggestions in this description of the Faculty, which was probably provoked by questions in the letter to which this was the reply, was not lost on this young man in Louisa, who was to rival, and, in some respects, excel Hodge as a teacher of theology.

The brightest, keenest, most fascinating blade amongst these youthful correspondents was that of young "Clem" Vaughan. Here is a piece of a letter that at once illustrates the raciness of Vaughan and characterizes, not unhappily, a certain feature of some of the early letters of Mr. Dabney:

"UNION SEMINARY, *January 25, 1847.*

"AMICE CARISSIME: This day one month ago you dated an epistle to me, and as I have worked hard all day to have a chance of uninterrupted chat with you to-night, I don't see why I should not have that pleasure. Do you? I'll commence by telling you that it is my intention at least to talk about something besides topographical matters. Blast ye, ye beast! Why didn't you tell me something, my dear old crony Bob Dabney, instead of gabberin' abune bad roads, cross-country routes, etc.? Your sheet was just like a surveyor's chart—minus the diagrams; graphic and accurate in description, it is true; but, like the hungry sailor who was turned, by the guid wife, into the stable, 'the ignorant beastie went off widout even so much as tastin' a strae!' you fed a heart, hungry for the gossip of intimacy, with large descriptions of the localities of Buckingham, and its adjacents. Now, verily, I could bite ye, if there wern't just a little about yourself. I love to peep into such places, to see a family knit in love, meeting together after long separation in this selfish world, on the cheery, hearty festival, which rough, good-humored old winter always gives to Virginians, at least, to make amends for pinchin' their noses and bitin' their toeses with his savage cold. Fraternal and filial affection is a beautiful thing. Why is there so little of it? And, in fact, my heart grows soft when I recollect you thought of me on that day. I'm almost ready to forgive you for writing me a (first-rate) engineer's report. I believe I'll do it. But remember, I'm shakin' my fistie at ye, nevertheless."

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<sup>5</sup> Letter from William H. Ruffner, dated November 13, 1846.

On he runs, telling of the quips and quirks of the Seminary life, bubbling over now and then with affection for "Old Bob Dabney," whom he seems to have loved next to his sweetheart, father and sister, recounting his preparations for Presbytery, scintillating, with his ambition for self and his piety in a wrestle. With his friend Dabney he unbosoms himself. He would remind, at that age, an observing horseman, of a mettlesome, blooded young race-horse hitched to a cultivator. Such a correspondent was a corrective and a help to Mr. Dabney.

But there was another side to his life than that of successful missionary worker in old Louisa, and helpful and delighted correspondent with many young men, and support and comfort to his mother; he had to struggle with ill-health. His old enemy, bilious colic, was as troublesome as ever. With the hope of cure or partial relief, he went, in the fall of 1846, to the White Sulphur, and then to the Hot Springs. He derived no substantial relief by his stay at either place. He enjoyed the new scenes, however, and sent back some letters descriptive of the Valley, through which he passed, and portions of Monroe county, which he visited while at the White, which his friend Vaughan would have called excellent "engineer's reports." Naturally he did not at first find the water at the White very palatable, but saw more to interest him in the company gathered there. He says, in a letter to his mother, dated August 17, 1846:

"The water was very nauseous to me at first, but it is becoming less so. If anybody wants to get a tolerably good idea of its smell and taste, let him wash a dirty gun and drink the washings. Still the water is beautifully clear, and the spring very bold. You may smell the sickening, sulphurous odor a hundred yards. It had a somewhat cathartic effect on me at first, but I have been very moderate in my use of it, drinking only two glasses a day as yet. Some people guzzle it in most ridiculous quantities.

"There are several distinguished men here, among them, Mr. Calhoun, Mr. Rhett, Col. Hayne, Mr. McDuffie, etc. Mr. Polk is expected. I have not been introduced to any of them, because, though their conversation would be most delightful to me, I abhor anything like toadyism towards the great. They say Mr. Calhoun is very accessible, and very plain, affectionate and domestic in his habits. He is very ugly, and looks quite old, but still bears the appearance of greatness about him. Mr. McDuffie is very infirm, and does not go out. He fought a duel many years ago, and his antagonist's ball lodged in the small of his back, so near the spinal marrow that they were afraid to take it out. Ever since he has been a miserable invalid.

He soon found agreeable society, as his later letters show. However, his sojourn at the White, and his similar sojourn at the Hot, both failed to do him any real good. He suffered an attack of his old malady while at the Hot, and returned home in late September in very low spirits, so that his friends were much worried. Vaughan, hearing how matters were, wrote:

"I do not think that you have cause for despondency. I'll tell you the reason I think so, and beg, at the same time, that you will not think me a flatterer when I say I cannot believe that God will take from his vineyard a laborer so well prepared by his creative hand and his providential superintendence of your education before the blood of a single cluster of grapes has stained his hand at the wine-press. So cheer up. Don't let a relaxing and stupefying foreboding settle upon your mind; but if you feel disposed to give up, call to your aid the resources of your own healthy intellect, and if evils come, meet them with a cheerful front, and measure the length of infliction by the strength of a faithful endurance. You may read with a smile this homily from your blue-devilishly disposed friend and pitcher; but, I tell you, avoid depression of spirits as much as possible, because I know, by a sad experience, how bad the effects are upon the mind, the body and the heart. It starves and clogs the energies of all these, prevents close and accurate thinking by dissipating the mind in wild and dreary reveries, sours the temper, makes one careless of health and the means of preserving it, and, in fine, is the very worst state of mind in its practical influence on a man's usefulness of anything I know."<sup>6</sup>

Such words were hardly much needed by a man whose character was so strong as Mr. Dabney's, but they could hardly fail to be helpful.

It makes little difference where a young minister goes to work; if he has learning, talents, and character fitting for a wider sphere of usefulness, and is not bound by something very peculiar in his circumstances and accidents, representatives of the wider spheres will very soon have their eyes on him. So Robert L. Dabney found it. He had hardly begun his labors in Louisa before the session of the Presbyterian Church in Norfolk invited him to become stated supply, for a period of six months, at the rate of six hundred dollars per annum, alleging their unanimous view that he would probably be called as pastor as a result of this term of service. Six months later the church in

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<sup>6</sup> Letter from C. R. Vaughan, dated October 3, 1846.

Danville was making overtures for his services; but he preferred some place where the work would not press so heavily, where there would not be so many sermons to prepare, and where he would be assured of opportunity for a more satisfying development. He preferred old Louisa. Dr. Dabney, in his old days, gave the following account of his removal from Louisa:

"Matthew Henry says, 'He that notes providences shall have providences to note.' What does this look like? Returning from preaching about the first of April, 1847, I met in the road Dr. William Meredith, my mother's physician, then out of practice. He was a man of great experience and sagacity. He said, 'You look badly. I hear of your colic. What do you take? Calomel and opium, I suppose. Now, Mr. Dabney, you will never be cured by taking medicine. Your hope is in a change of climate and water. You must get into a region entirely free from malaria, and drink limestone water. I wish you could have a year in Staunton, and drink out of the well at Mrs. Garber's tavern. No one ever had a chill, *i. e.*, a native-born chill, in Staunton. This will cure you.'

"I said, 'No doubt, Doctor; but my living and work is here. I know of no opening whatever to such a region. I might as well expect to marry a princess.'

"Within ten days I got a serious overture from Tinkling Spring Church, of Augusta county, seven miles from Staunton. This was chiefly through the Rev. David Humphrys, of Augusta county, an intimate Seminary friend. I visited the church, staying a fortnight; had no colic symptoms while on limestone water. I accepted a call from them, and went there July 1, 1847. I left my dear mother and sister, and my nursling churches, with deep regret, but all justified me."

Dr. Dabney's memory must have played him false in regard to the date of his talk with Dr. Meredith. It was probably six weeks or two months earlier in the year, for his friend, Rev. William T. Richardson, then at Waynesboro, had written him, on the 12th of February, asking whether he was movable, and begging to be permitted to press his name as a suitable man for the Tinkling Spring pastorate.<sup>7</sup> On the 12th of March he writes again, telling Mr. Dabney that the congregation will certainly, on the next Sunday, take steps to invite him to come and preach to them, with a view to a call.<sup>8</sup> On the 15th of March, 1847, Messrs. John McCue, David Gilkeson, Jacob

<sup>7</sup> Letter of Rev. Wm. T. Richardson, dated February 12, 1847.

<sup>8</sup> Letter of Rev. Wm. T. Richardson, dated March 12, 1847.

Van Lear, and H. G. Guthrie write to the Rev. Robert L. Dabney:

"The old church and congregation of Tinkling Spring have instructed us to invite you to visit them at an early day, so that they can have an opportunity of hearing you preach, and becoming acquainted with you, and you with them, with a view to your becoming the future pastor of this church, should each party be equally well pleased."

They further informed him that the session of the church had "appointed a communion season for the second Sabbath in April, next," and expressed the desire that he should be present on that occasion. This invitation Mr. Dabney accepted. On his return he stopped at the home of his aunt, Mrs. Mildred Lewis, with whom he had lived during his course at the University. From that point he wrote to his mother, on the 17th of April, 1847:

"I returned to Aunt Mildred's last night (Friday), well and hearty. I spent a week in Augusta, and preached four times, and visited twelve or fifteen families connected with the church. The Tinkling Spring Church had appointed a communion for Sunday. A Mr. Love preached in the morning and I in the evening. This was the largest congregation I ever preached to, and one of the most orderly—at least four hundred people. I have addressed more immortal souls this week than I had the whole of last winter all put together.

"The result of my visit, I believe, will be a very flattering and prompt call from the church. What to do with it I am as much at a loss as ever. The prospect of immediate usefulness there is immeasurably greater than in Louisa, for I should reach as many minds there on every Sunday as I would in Louisa in a whole month, with all my laborious periphrasings and at all my different preaching places, and that under more favorable circumstances. But in Louisa the destitution is greater, and unless some one is contented to stay there, and be satisfied with the day of small things, the destitution must continue."

On the Sunday following, this church gave Mr. Dabney a practically unanimous call. Of this call he received notice in the following letter, which deserves a place in these memoirs as descriptive of the field in which he labored for about six years:

"*AUGUSTA COUNTY, April 19, 1847.*

"*To the Rev. R. L. Dabney.*

"DEAR SIR: It affords us great pleasure to inform you that you were on yesterday, by an almost unanimous vote of the congregation



of Tinkling Spring, elected pastor of that church, only two dissenting. The cause of their disagreement, being wholly political, should never be permitted to enter the church of God. A call was prepared in the usual form, and signed by a large committee of the congregation, and the blank filled with the sum of six hundred dollars. This will be sent to you by mail after the meeting of the Lexington Presbytery, or carried by a commissioner to be appointed for that purpose, to the meeting of the West Hanover Presbytery. We do sincerely hope that when the call is presented to your Presbytery, that body will place it in your hands, and will throw no obstacle in the way to your accepting it, provided it may be your wish to do so. The field to which we call you is a very interesting one in very many respects, and holds out many strong inducements for you to come and occupy it, viz., its geographical position, the large and very interesting groups of young people growing up in the midst, most of whom are out of the fold of the Good Shepherd, a large and floating population who have no identity with any particular church, many of whom we think may be brought within the fold of Christ, and that we have been without a pastor for eighteen months, that this is the fourth effort we have made to secure one, and that you have been *elected* with almost *unprecedented unanimity*. Should you *fail* or *refuse to accept the call*, owing to the opposition stated, it is the opinion of the more intelligent and discreet members of this church, Mr. Calhoun uniting with them in that opinion, that it would be attended with the most disastrous results to the peace and amity of this ancient congregation. . . . That the great Head of the Church may guide you to a correct decision of the all-important question presented for your consideration is the sincere prayer of your friends and well-wishers,

“JOHN McCUE,  
 “DAVID GILKERSON,  
 “JACOB VAN LEAR,  
 “H. G. GUTHRIE.

“*Rev. R. L. Dabney.*”

The call from Tinkling Springs was reinforced by letters from many quarters. Mr. Richardson argued, urged and pled. He predicted disaster to this important church in case Mr. Dabney should not accept the call. Rev. B. M. Smith, then pastor at Staunton, united his voice with that of this church, whose members “cover fifty square miles of fine land,” are most substantial in character, almost entirely devoted to the Presbyterian faith, so far as they have ecclesiastical predilections.” He tells him that his “specimens of preaching have given universal satisfaction, and produced deep impressions on the minds of some young people, of whom there are fifty or sixty. that

have knowledge of the truth, but have hesitated to avow a faith in the Lord Jesus.”

Mr. Dabney was perfectly open in dealing with his people in Louisa as soon as he began to contemplate the probability of change of work, and won their hearts still further by this thorough honesty. He was much perplexed, but, with the aid of his Presbytery, decided to go to Augusta.

Many men would have decided quickly on the simple question of salary. He had worked all the year in Louisa, travelling through sunshine and storm, and had received only the pittance of three hundred dollars; but he was not much affected by this consideration, for he lived in Louisa in his mother's home. Moreover, he was not moved by greed.

In our next chapter we shall present him in his pastoral care of Tinkling Spring.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE PASTORATE OF TINKLING SPRING.

(July, 1847—August, 1853.)

THE BEGINNING.—LABORIOUS AND SUCCESSFUL PASTORATE.—A SEASON OF DESPONDENCY.—REVIVAL.—AN HONEST, FAITHFUL, ABLE PASTOR.—HOME WITH MR. HUGH GUTHRIE.—MARRIAGE TO MISS MARGARET LAVINIA MORRISON.—STILL AT MR. GUTHRIE'S.—“SLEEPY HOLLOW.”—“STONE COTTAGE.”—“BOBBY” AND “JIMMY.”—DOMESTIC TRIALS AND JOYS.—STILL THE BEST OF BROTHERS AND SONS.—ABUNDANT IN OTHER LABORS, ALSO.—PREACHING TOURS.—SCHOOL-KEEPING.—CORRESPONDENCE.—FARMING.—STUDY ON SPECIAL LINES.—ABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO PAPERS AND PERIODICALS.—CONDITION OF THE SEMINARY AT THE TIME.—DIFFICULTY IN PROPER FILLING OF THE CHAIRS.—AN ARTICLE ON DUTY OF PRAYER FOR CONVERSION OF OUR YOUTH AND INCREASE OF MINISTERS.—HIS ELECTION IN MARCH, 1852.—GENERAL COMMENDATION OF THIS ACT.—RECEIVES TITLE OF D. D.—GOES TO HAMPDEN-SIDNEY.

THE beginning at Tinkling Spring was not without its salt of suffering, but was, nevertheless, just about what one might naturally have expected. He wrote of it to his mother:

“The first Sunday I was here I had a slight attack of colic, enough to make me miss preaching. There was a tremendous congregation, and all agog with curiosity to see my *debut*. I think it was very fortunate that I was prevented from preaching, for it is next to impossible for a man to satisfy expectations on such an occasion; and the people were not met in a temper of mind which promised any profit. I have been well since, in the main, although very closely confined, and I think there are appearances of a favorable change in my system. But I am not sanguine, as I have never been, and am willing to wait for a radical improvement.

“Day before yesterday I went into Staunton to be examined on my college studies. Yesterday the Presbytery met and heard my sermon, and nearly all the rest of my examinations. There is no doubt of my being sustained, and they expect to proceed to my ordination to-day. To-morrow and Sunday we expect to hold a communion season, Mr. Benjamin Smith assisting us. Before you receive this I shall be a bishop, if nothing happens.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Letter to his mother, July 16, 1847.

He labored in this field as preacher and pastor for six years and two months. He threw himself with energy into his work, and with success. Under his inspiration, stimulus and supervision the congregation built the present excellent and commodious house of worship. This consumed much time and energy in the year 1849. Like other church builders, he found the enterprise annoying. He says, in a letter of March 8, 1849:

“Of all annoying and pestilent concerns that ever a man undertook, to please a whole congregation of people about a new church, more especially when that congregation is composed of Scotch-Irish, of all people in the world the most inflexible and obstinate, is the most so. I am chairman of the Building Committee, and have a thousand difficulties to reconcile and clashing views to conciliate.”

On the 30th of July he wrote:

“Our church building is progressing tolerably well. We have succeeded in getting a most excellent kiln of bricks, which are now ready. We begin to lay, probably to-morrow, and the mason says he can finish the walls in four weeks. The wood-work is well forwarded, and we shall have the shell of a house, at least. I fear, however, that by the time the house is finished there will be no congregation to worship in it. They seem to be, a part of them, possessed with the desire to quarrel about every trifle in the arrangement of the matter. I have been fretted until I heartily wished the old trap standing still, with all its defects. Both parties in these altercations are to blame, some for meddlesomeness, and some for repelling that meddlesomeness in too rash a manner. Meantime, by an exertion of great forbearance, I steer clear of both, and try to keep the peace between them, but in vain. The Scotch-Irish are the most inflexible people in the world when they are right, and the most vexatiously pig-headed and mulish when wrong, on the face of the earth. . . . But while such foolish contentiousness is extremely disgraceful to religion, and no doubt throws the devil into perfect convulsions of sardonic glee, it is consoling to see that the persons really active in the evil-doing are few, and that there are many moderate, forbearing, forgiving Christians, whose pious endurance of these annoyances honors the gospel as much as the conduct of others disgraces it. When I think of some of the pettifogging quarrels of some persons, I feel myself getting so angry that I feel as if it would be a great luxury to tell them just what opinion deserves to be passed on them. But I hold my tongue, and that is a great assistance in keeping one's temper. The quiet ones seem to hope that they will have done quarreling now, but I am not so sanguine.”

But at length the building was done, and became a great source of pleasure and comfort to the pastor and people.<sup>2</sup>

He had at once, on beginning his life at Tinkling Spring, showed great diligence in pastoral work, being persuaded, as he tells his correspondents, that the pastor ought to know the spiritual condition of each member of his flock. He was, perhaps, better fitted to edify God's saints than to win the unrepentant to God. He was preëminent, even in these early days, for instruction in the teachings of Scripture. He broadened, and deepened, and built up his people in their knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures. In order to this, he not only generally used the didactic form in preaching, but conducted a Bible-class of such as were more inclined to learn. Amongst his manuscripts of this period is a small book, entitled, *Bible Questions on the Acts of the Apostles*, covering the first sixteen chapters. There are from twenty-one to thirty-nine questions on each chapter. They are well conceived, and suited to open up this tract of Scripture to an earnest class. Most of the references are to *Scott's Commentary*.

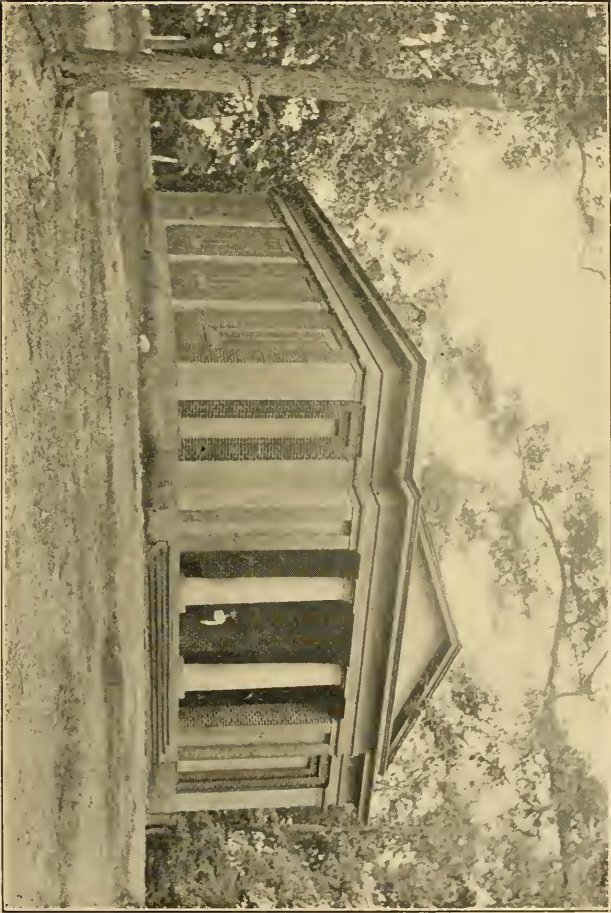
He had fruit, indeed, in the way of conversions, but the number of the communicants grew slowly, on the whole. Some years his session reported no members as received either by profession or by letter.

He often mourned the absence of spiritual life in his church. On the 9th of January, 1849, he wrote his mother :

"I have experienced more depression of spirits the last few weeks than for many a month before. A part of it is caused, I reckon, by anxieties about my wife, although there is no peculiar ground of anxiety that I know of; and more of it by the apparent fruitlessness of my ministry. My charge hangs on my hands like a growing burden, heavier and heavier continually. They listen to my preaching very attentively, and often with fixed interest; but it always feels to me like the interest of the understanding and imagination only, and not of the spiritual affections. My preaching seems to human eyes to be utterly without effect; bad for me, and bad for them."

He evidently wrote in this tone of despondency to his friend and mentor, the Rev. William S. White, of Lexington. In a

<sup>2</sup> He had not allowed his people to relax in their support of the evangelical causes while building the new church. During the years 1848 and 1849, he secured by subscriptions, most of which he collected himself, four hundred and forty-nine dollars and fifty cents for Union Seminary, at Hampden-Sidney.



TINKLING SPRING CHURCH.



letter to Mr. Dabney, dated January 26, 1849, Dr. White exhorts:

"Remember that it is 'neither the first blow nor the last that fells the oak'; therefore, strike away, and the tree will fall and the forest be cleared. I know no means of building up and extending the borders of Zion but the truth studied, learned, communicated, and then followed by prayer. Preach as if your preaching was everything, and then pray as if it were nothing. If I could not rest in this view, I should despair."

He was hungry for revival. God seems to have let the hunger continue unappeased throughout the year 1849. Early in 1850, Mr. Dabney wrote to his brother, Rev. C. R. Vaughan, whom he had comforted, and was to comfort and to counsel again, expressing his longing for the breath of the Spirit of all grace on his people; and this brilliant young pastor of twenty-three, whose church had recently been blessed with a powerful work of grace, replied to his friend's yearning as follows:

"You have my deepest sympathy in your yearning for a revival. It is as natural for a minister who has one single adequate idea of his office as the wish for bread is to the starving stomach. Indeed, my dear brother, the keenness of anxiety that breathes from your letter is one symptom that your desires are to be gratified, if I may reason from the parallel of my own case. For months before there was an expression of interest in my church, my own heart was bursting with the burden of my people's welfare; and to gain relief I was obliged to pray; and the effect of that told upon my preaching with wonderful effect. All you need do, my dear friend, is to pray and trust and preach straight at the conscience. As for the 'objurgatory aspect' of your manner (a phrase which Robert Hall has immortalized in his review of 'Zeal Without Innovation'). I reckon you take yourself to task too hard. Preach earnestly, no matter if your manner may seem harsh. The manliness of your mind and the sincerity of your heart will both keep you from putting on feeling which you do not possess. Simply cultivate a single-eyed earnestness, and you may let the other go; and if that very earnestness be the cause of apparent harshness, let it go. I'll assure you the very best way I have ever tried to break into the conscience is to strike straight at it with a deep, consuming feeling that all is at stake, and that there is no time to stop to calculate the degree of offence that may justly be taken to mere manner.

"I also sympathize deeply with you over the black sheep of your flock. I have some, too; none notorious for immorality; but cold-hearted, worldly, selfish, liquor-selling fellows. My male membership is some twelve or thirteen, some of them the biggest sorts of grains in the salt of the earth, some moderate religious, and others Sabbatically



religious only. It will give you pleasure to know that the state of feeling in my church is still encouraging. A new case of awakening has occurred within a week, apparently without a cause, in a quiet way. I am now trying to rouse my church members to self-examination and prayer by preaching closely to their consciences, and by personal appeals to them in pastoral visitation. May the good Lord grant us both a large refreshing from his presence, for Christ's sake. If God should ever grant you a large revival, don't do as I did, and preach yourself to the dregs as I did. My great mistake was in having too many meetings, and I expect the cause of it all was nothing but unbelief; an unwillingness to let Christ do his own work, and a desire to do too much myself. Brother White sent me word not to do the thing to a crackling; but I was out of breath, pretty nearly, before the wise and friendly warning came."

At last the congregation of Tinkling Spring received a gracious season of refreshing. Mr. Dabney gives some account of this in a letter to his mother, written on the 8th of June, 1850. He must philosophize about the proper conduct of revivals in writing to his vigorous-minded old mother, and, though there are certain apparent crudities in some of the views expressed, they are not unworthy of the man. He writes as follows:

"I have been so busy of late that I have but little time to think of anything, much less to write letters. I have not had any more preaching to do the last two weeks than usual, indeed, rather less. Other ministers have been with me at times. It is almost vexatious to see the mistaken kindness of people when they hear that you have somewhat of a revival in your church. During all the wearisome months and years when you are toiling to bring the people up to the proper state of spirituality and zeal, and preaching indefatigably to drowsy and careless hearers, dragging the vast mass of inattention along by a self-destroying effort and overstraining of your energies, brother ministers seem to think you need no help. But when they hear this long toil has been instrumental in bringing round the harvest season, then they come flocking in uninvited, or on the least pretext of an invitation. This is just the time I don't want them. Now it is a delightful indulgence to preach. The congregations full, the listening intent and solemn, one's own mind roused and elevated, and the people catching up any portion of divine truth, as if it were most powerful eloquence (provided it be spoken with unction), it is no effort to preach and no trouble. I don't want help. It is like taking the bread out of a hungry man's mouth, just when he had been toiling a whole year to get it ready. Besides, very few ministers, coming from other congregations in a cold state, are up to the mark of our feeling. They come here with their old, time-yellowed manuscripts in their pockets, and give

us their cut-and-dried orthodoxy in so chilling a style that it ruins the whole affair. And, then, there is an utter want of unity and coherence in the effect of the different sermons of the different men. One sermon is out of joint with the next. The variety awakens mere carnal curiosity. (For these reasons it is that the preaching at Presbyteries is so utterly without effect, usually.) There is another reason of pastoral *policy* which should prompt the pastor to do most of the preaching for himself in his own revival, no matter who is there. It is this: when a church is revived, they listen with so much more interest that the same sort of preaching would seem to them just ten times as able and forcible as it would at other times. Now, if the pastor does all his own preaching in times of coldness, and lets his brethren do it for him in times of revival, it will cause his people to draw most unfavorable comparisons between him and his brethren. It will ruin any man."

He proceeds to cite an instance of a clever pastor who had pursued just this policy, with the result that he was held as a most sorry preacher, while loved as a pastor, and then continues:

"If Dr. Plumer were here now, he should not do any preaching for me. I expect a visit of a few days from an acquaintance, a minister; and although I should be delighted to see him at any other time, I am in fear and trembling lest he should come to-day, and expect to preach to-morrow. If he does come to-day, I am determined I will invent some way to manage and get around the clerical etiquette. I mean to preach to-morrow myself. We have preaching twice on Sabbath and once on Wednesday evening of each week. I expect to have something of a protracted meeting before harvest. We have about twenty-five or thirty under concern, and out of them a goodly number hoping that they have been born again. I think if I could get the church aroused we should have a glorious work. But, alas! this is harder even than to arouse sinners. More than half of them are fast asleep. They all come Sunday, but when working day comes, why they are plowing corn, and the revival and the Holy Spirit, and the souls of the anxious may all go, for them. But I must not be censorious; to their own Master they stand or fall."

On the 29th of July he wrote again to his mother:

"I fear the interest in my church has rather declined. We have no inquiry meetings now, and although the congregations are still large and solemn, there is less tenderness. Some few who had and avowed strong convictions have cast them off, and now appear careless. But one thing very gratifying to me was that almost all who ever attended inquiry meetings made a profession of religion, and the most of them a highly credible profession. You know a person cannot help having

his ideas about the character of others; and I have my notions as to which of these young Christians are in earnest, and are truly born again, and which are self-deceived. In every case, those whose professions I consider most doubtful are the ones who had least advantages of pious education. Some of them seem to be taking a noble stand as Christians, and, I hope, will maintain it. There seem to be no cases of pungent conviction, so far as I know, similar to those which occurred in the spring; but there are quite a number who seem to be serious and concerned. Some of these I have visited and talked to, and I must see the rest. Some of them profess a saving concern, but hesitate; others say they are not serious, but still show some seriousness. I fear their impressions are not deep enough to amount to much."

During this year his session received thirty-three members into the communion of the church on the profession of their faith. This was almost, and perhaps altogether, as many as were received in this manner during the whole rest of his pastorate.

This part of his work must, on the whole, be pronounced successful, as it was unquestionably honest, faithful and able. There is not wanting evidence that more than one Virginian in this period felt about Mr. Dabney, as his young crony, the young pastor at Lynchburg, wrote, on the 5th of March, 1853:

"You do not know how much I value you, Dabney; and I value you mainly because I think you are the most honest—almost the only honest—and the least selfish man I know in the ministry. I mean the younger ones. I preach for show. So does ——, ——, and most others, if they would be as bitterly candid as I am. I hate myself for it; but still I do it; and I speak what I believe when I say that you are the only young minister in my acquaintance of whom I do not feel the suspicion."

This may be a bit too hard on others, including Mr. Vaughan himself, who was evidently given to almost morbid introspection, but it expresses a common conviction amongst Mr. Dabney's friends that he was honest to the back-bone. His work was universally regarded as very able also. The most of his Sunday morning sermons were not only planned with much profound study, but were laboriously written out in full. Thoroughness of investigation and weight of conclusion was characteristic of all his preaching. His sermons were so full of thought that they seemed packed. If this was a fault, it was one that tended to make stable men of those who heard him.

When Mr. Dabney went to Tinkling Spring, he was like pastors generally who go to charges without manses, under the necessity of seeking some abiding place. He found his first home with Mr. Hugh Guthrie, between whom and himself a friendship was commenced that lasted as long as life. Mr. Guthrie was at the time a bachelor, but well-to-do, and kept a comfortable establishment. Mr. Dabney seems to have gravitated his way naturally. He writes to his mother, on the 16th of July, 1847, about ten days after his arrival, from Mr. Guthrie's residence:

"It seems that it was the expectation and design of the congregation that I should board here, as well as his. This, indeed, would be very far from deciding the matter, for I am not much in the habit of letting other people choose for me. But I believe, on the whole, the place suits me better than any other where I could be taken in. There are one or two that would perhaps be preferable, but there are obstacles to my going there, in one case the ill-health of the mistress. There is a Mr. ———, who has a large and good house, a fine wife, and everything suitable; but from the specimens of the power of his children's lungs, which I heard there on a short visit, I think I should not better the matter by going there. He has been married six or eight years, and has a growing crowd of little children. Here the table is generally good and the house comfortable. I can be more unconstrained and can have a better command of my time; and the neighborhood is so thick that fifteen minutes' walk will bring me into company at any time. I have a large room, with four windows, on the second floor, and with a porch in front of it."

Here he lived, at first single and then married, till the end of 1849. In less than a year after going to the Valley, Mr. Dabney got the "wife appointed him by Providence." The story of his winning her, and his admiration for her, is here given in his own words, for the most part, viz.:

"The Rev. James Morrison, of New Providence, Rockbridge county, was always hospitable, especially to ministers. He sent me an invitation to visit him on my way to the Presbytery, that was to convene in August, '47, at Bethesda Church, seven miles off. I had been ordained the end of July. Accepting this invitation, I reached Bellevue (Mr. Morrison's) the day before Presbytery. An elderly gentleman met me at the gate, just dismissing another guest. He was, in person and manner, remarkably like Gen. Robert E. Lee. He kindly took my hand, saying, 'This is our young brother, Dabney,' at the same time giving me a cordial reception. There was already company at the house, on the way to Presbytery. Now, my associates in the Seminary from

Rockbridge and Augusta, had often spoken of Miss Lavinia Morrison, the second daughter, whom they truly regarded as the most charming lady in that region for piety and good sense, and as the best of daughters, but somewhat indifferent to marriage. She was then about twenty-four years of age. When approaching Bellevue, I, like any unmarried young man, had indulged my imagination as to the appearance of this young lady I was about to meet. I said to myself, I suppose that Miss Morrison is one of your pattern young ladies, of Puritan manufacture. So I shall find her a tall, angular person, with sandy hair and blonde complexion, sharp Roman nose and gold-rimmed spectacles, and very primy manners, talking of 'missionary heralds, theology,' etc.

"At dinner she did not appear, nor during the afternoon. Towards sunset I was sitting with Mr. Morrison, where I could see out into the front hall. A young-looking girl, I thought about eighteen, crossed the hall and tripped up the stairway, her hair and eyes brown, her cheeks rosy, very slender in figure. She was dressed in a blue gingham, and wore, also, a housekeeping apron. I said, 'This is not Miss Lavinia, but some young cousin or niece,' not thinking that this was the pattern young lady I had heard of. Well, it was. Mrs. Morrison was in feeble health, and such hospitable people as they were had to make much preparation for Presbytery; for, in addition to the entertainment at home, they carried a huge basket of food each day, to be eaten in the grove by the church. So Miss Lavinia had been working that day in the kitchen, making cakes, pies, bread, etc., etc. Her father had told us, at dinner, to excuse his daughter, as she was helping the cook to prepare for Presbytery. The next day I was her escort, both of us on horseback, and during the meeting I had several rides with her on horseback. Miss Lavinia had a fine horse, and she was a very fine rider, and could manage a horse perfectly. I thought she was remarkably graceful. Mine was very nearly a case of 'love at first sight,' but I have never thought this unreason or rashness, as I had heard much of her character from her admirers, whom I knew to be young men of good sense and truth. So I was acquainted with her essential traits. It only remained for me to see if her person and manners would suit my notion. I soon decided this. Then began the first and last love affair of my life. We were married on the 28th of March, 1848."

Dr. Dabney added to this account of his courtship and marriage, the whole of which was written for his children, "You, her children, need not be told what she was as a wife and mother, how faithful, industrious, true and devoted she has been."

Good Mr. Guthrie took Mr. Dabney and his bride into his house again, and there they boarded until late in 1849. Meanwhile, something had stirred Mr. Guthrie himself to try for a

wife from the Lord, an enterprise in which he, too, found the blessing sought.

Mr. Dabney's love of farming, and various other practical considerations, conspired to make him think of buying a little farm, and having a home of his own. On March 8, 1849, he wrote to his brother William:

"I have been looking around me a little for some small piece of land, but unsuccessfully heretofore. One man offered me a piece of poor gravelly ridge, the poorest arable land in the neighborhood, with no orchard nor any improvement whatever, except a bleak, clumsy log house, at the rate of twenty-five dollars per acre. Another offered me twenty acres of very good land, with a reasonably roomy log house and other conveniences, for seventy-five dollars per acre. So they go. They all take it for granted that a preacher must be gullible about the affairs of 'filthy lucre,' and wish to make off of him. They will find themselves a little mistaken. I am not at all uneasy about getting a home, having a very pleasant boarding-place as yet, and a great many other kind friends who would stand by me; and at the worst, if the difficulty of getting a suitable home to board, rent or buy should actually come to a crisis, why I would just quit, and not be shut out of all the world, either. But I have no disposition whatever to leave the neighborhood; and I shall continue to keep one eye open for some suitable location when it can be got on good terms."

He recognized, what many about him did not, that the prices of land and farm products were temporarily much inflated in the Valley, while the railroad to the White Sulphur Springs was being made, the tunnels bored, and so forth. An unusual home market, to last only for a while, was thus created. Some of his friends advised him to buy, on the grounds that prices were bound to advance. He held the contrary view; still he desired to purchase a small farm; he wished to go to house-keeping. Hence the purchase of his first little farm, "Sleepy Hollow," described in a letter to his brother William, dated October 3, 1849, a part of which reads as follows:

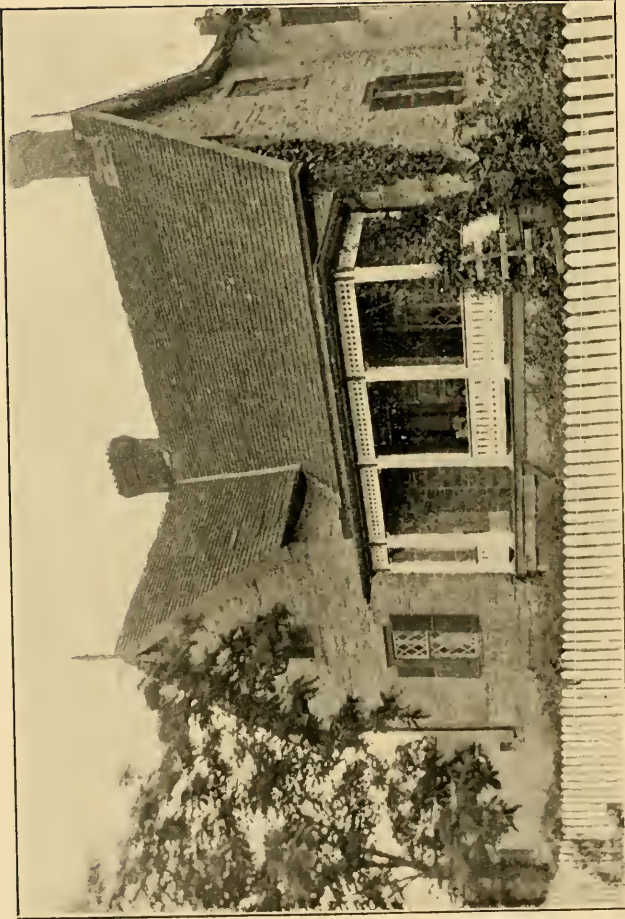
"I have feared for some time that we, or rather Bob [his little boy], were creating some discomfort for our kind host, and this made me nervous. So the other day I went and made a bargain to buy a little homestead, on the main road between Staunton and Waynesboro, quite convenient to the church, etc. It is a poor place, but the only habitable one in the whole congregation in which I could hide my head at all at the present time. It contains about one acre of timber and nine acres of open land. The land is of excellent quality, with a well

and pretty good water on it, with a pump, a little cottage of four small rooms, one brick and three log, where one can keep warm and dry enough, but ugly and ill-arranged; an outhouse in bad repair, and a small stable, enough for my horse and a cow or two. For this I have to pay nine hundred dollars, half cash, and half a year hence. According to the way little places sell here, this is about one hundred dollars too much. Besides my pressing anxieties to have a place of my own to hide my head and be independent, two motives influence me to buy. One is that if I should leave the congregation in a few years, the total of the purchase-money being so small, the risks of loss in the sale of the property are very small. There is no place where I could have the essentials of a home with so small an aggregate of property; and, therefore, in reselling my total loss must be small, even though I were compelled to sell at a considerable per cent. below what I give. The other consideration is, that what with the prospect of railroads, and the inroads of the Germans, who are always *land-mad*, the price of land is run up entirely too high. As a matter of money investment, no man ought to buy land now in this neighborhood. The prices are exorbitant, and the prospective rise very great *for a few years*. The great collection of laborers and beasts of burden at the tunnel and on the Staunton section of the railroad will create an unusual demand for produce, and sustain this absurd speculative rise for five years. Then things will go flat enough. . . . Therefore, I think that any man looking for a landed investment of money ought to buy almost anywhere rather than here. . . . On the other hand, I cannot live without a home five years, till the mania is cured. So my policy is to buy the least land possible, and even to give too high a rate for a very little piece, of which the total purchase is trifling, rather than to be investing largely in land under such adverse circumstances. These ideas have caused me to think this, under the circumstances, a judicious purchase. I think I run no risk of a loss greater than a hundred dollars in resale at any time. The place is very desirable for a mechanic, and the house is such as would satisfy the tastes and ideas of the laboring classes much better than mine."

The business sagacity of our young minister was vindicated by the issue, for when the day for resale came, he did better than he had hoped. He was no mean farmer, and "Sleepy Hollow" took on a look of thrift. The repair of the buildings gave a pleasant as well as profitable sphere, in which he took at least all necessary physical exercise. Here they "lived comfortably for three years, his salary being six hundred dollars." They kept two good horses and two cows. He hired a negro man and a cook, "lived well, and was as happy as a king, and entertained much company."







STONY POINT COTTAGE.

After a while he had a chance to sell "Sleepy Hollow," and thinking his "wife had a right to a better home," he sold it for thirteen hundred dollars, which covered his outlay, and bought one hundred and twenty acres of land, lying about two miles distant from "Sleepy Hollow," on the road from the church to South River, and about a mile from the church. On this place, which he called "Stony Point," he built a stone cottage, which he regarded as a "very peculiar, picturesque, and tasteful house, and within, a perfect little snuggerly." He built this house, in part, of the stone cut out of the living rock on which the house was founded. By finding his quarry there, he made room for a cellar of suitable proportions. With his own shoulder he helped to put many, perhaps most, of the stones in place, and formed stronger local attachments for the place than for Hampden-Sidney, or any other place in which he ever lived. In his old days he said, "The grey-stone cottage I thought a gem. Had I lived there, it would have been a beautiful place." His neighbors were very kind in helping to get his new house habitable. He wrote to his mother, on the 30th of June, 1852:

"I have had as few annoyances and difficulties about it as any one could expect, and the neighbors thereabouts have been very kind, especially Mr. Gilkerson. He just comes and see what is wanting, and has it done as if it was his house. They have hauled all my sand for me, and Mr. Guthrie has given me the lime thus far; but lime is a much more trifling article here than with you—one shilling a bushel."

He moved into this house the first of January, 1853, and only lived there eight months. He began at once planting fruit trees and making a garden. He had set out and cultivated a fine orchard in "Sleepy Hollow."

It may be conveniently remarked here that he retained possession of this estate till during the first year of the war, when he sold it for four thousand dollars, lent the money to the Confederacy, and lost it all without regret, as it went to the service of his country, though he had saved it, for the most part, from his earnings.

During these early years of their married life, Mr. and Mrs. Dabney were blessed with two little boys. The first, "Bobby," had been called for his father, Robert Lewis. He had put in his appearance on the 19th day of February, 1849. His father described him as a Morrison in his appearance, with white skin and brown eyes. The second, "Jimmy," was called, for his ma-

ternal grandfather, James Morrison. Following closely on the heels of his brother, he put in his appearance on the 1st day of April, 1850. These were bright children, and very precious to their big-hearted father. Though we shall, in the next chapter, see him and the mother crushed to the earth over their little graves, who shall say they had no important mission on the earth? They were God's ministers, to soften and ennoble and further fit the father for his great work in the world. Ever after, he was to have unutterable sympathy for those who had lost little ones.

In these homes, with his loving wife and his bright little boys, he had the usual ups and downs of householders. It is to be questioned whether many men have enjoyed their downs so much. On the 31st of December, 1849, he wrote his brother William:

"For your amusement and Cordelia's, I will give you some account of our getting along in the interval between the *hegira* of the old hirelings and the coming of the new. Wednesday the last of them went, leaving us without a soul to do anything, indoors or out, except a little girl of nine years, which Mrs. Morrison gave Lavinia. Friday the new hirelings came, by special agreement. Well, we had a carpenter here; who was doing some very urgent repairs, and therefore consented to work Christmas. I asked Lavinia what was to be done for the cow. She said she could milk, and, indeed, quite prided herself on it. I thought it would never do for a boarding, school miss' fingers, trained to belabor the piano and handle the painting pencil and embroidering needle, to grasp a cow's teats. But the more I opposed, the more she insisted. So, when I went to feed the horse and cow, she sallied to the stable, and, after a few graceful tremors and starts, succeeded in milking the cow very effectually. There was a churning of cream that she thought needed attention, so, as she could not possibly find time, I volunteered to churn. So I beat away for two mortal hours, and then she tried her hands for an hour longer, but not a bit of butter would come. So we had to resign that as a bad job. Next morning she got up complaining that her thumb was as sore as if it were out of joint (from milking), and her shoulders so stiff (from churning) that she could not lift her hands to her head. So I thought I would try my hand at milking. I did very well by persevering, but found it rather harder work than grubbing. The old lady managed to get breakfast; and afterwards, with a degree of hardihood which displayed more adventure than prudence, determined to set afoot a rising of lightbread to be baked at evening for supper. It turned out as you might expect. Very soon, however, her cooking operations were sadly interrupted, for the lifting of pots and oven tops gave her the backache

(most unromantic ailment). So I had just to subinduce my Atlantean shoulders to the burden. Behold the Rev. R. L. D., then, for the rest of the time, presiding in the kitchen as first vice (under the direction of the madam, who maintained, in the main, the same dignified abstinence from the practical toils which great generals commonly exercise at a pitched battle), lifting ovens, washing out skillets with a dish-clout, baking bread and potatoes, and frying pork. You may guess that when the hired woman came Friday, just after dinner was served (my last exploit and my *chef d'œuvre*), she was hailed with great pleasure, and I abdicated in her favor with more promptitude than Napoleon after Waterloo, or any other of those celebrated chaps who had got hold of a bag that grew rather too heavy for him to hold. The Scripture says, 'It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth.' This is the youth of my housekeeping, and I certainly have borne the yoke. Civilization makes a vast amount of work. What a saving it would be to live in a hut, eat out of one's fingers, and save all this tremendous routine of cooking and cleaning up. How much easier it would be, if all that was necessary to wind up the dinner arrangements, after the meal was dispatched, were just to lick your fingers, and wipe your knife on your breeches and pocket it, instead of having dishes, cups, saucers, knives and forks, pots and kettles, to clean after every meal."

There is ample evidence that he met the demands of his position as the head of a household, whether of the nature of emergencies or of a more ordinary sort, with ready sagacity and resourcefulness. Strong common sense was a chief, if not his preëminent characteristic. This is constantly illustrated in the homeliest manner, as when he writes to his mother, on the 8th of October, 1849:

"I will tell you what I want you to have done for me, against I come by from Synod. Have a bag of yeast cakes ready. Have me a good *garden hoe* made; for here they do not make broad hoes; they buy a set of little worthless things, made out of sheet iron, from the stores. And also a bread-tray, if there are any of your colored acquaintances that deal in those articles. I can carry it up under the seat of my buggy. If you can get these things, I would thank you to have them ready against I return from Synod. Also, I wish Frank to chaffer with Sam Mason, or any other good and cheap smith in the neighborhood, about making and ironing for me a set of *one-horse wagon* wheels, good and strong. The prices of smith's work here are exorbitant. I find a good one-horse wagon, ready for use, will cost me here not less than seventy dollars. This I can't stand. I think it probable the rates of work are so much cheaper down there that I can buy the four wheels and have them hauled up cheaper than I can get them here. Then I will make the axles, shafts and bodies myself."

Life came near being all a thing of choice with him. He drifted nowhere. On the thousand small things of life he thought, thought through them, and did consciously what he did, in preference to many other courses contemplated as possibilities. More courses lay open to him than to most men, because of his multitudinous capacities. In the matter of the one-horse wagon, he was competent to a course which would have been open to few gentlemen. He had such skill in wood-working that he could not only make nearly every part of that woodwork with accuracy, but could do the fine work of a trained joiner. He had made a good deal of the furniture that went into his house at "Sleepy Hollow."

It is said that most sons, once they marry and have families and homes of their own, cease to be the interested and helpful sons and brothers they were before marriage. Robert L. Dabney was an exception in this respect. On the 20th of February, 1849, he writes to his brother William:

"I have been wishing to give mamma some help this year, in squaring up her little matters. I have not drawn any of the mill-rent for the year 1848,<sup>3</sup> and wish one hundred dollars to be applied to the payment of her accounts, so as to help her in bringing up the arrearages. I would be glad that you would attend to the matter, and see this much of the money applied in this way."

This is but one instance in his daily thought for his mother, and it wants somewhat of being a characteristic instance. He had not only the disposition to aid his mother at the end of the year, but he supervised in a friendly way her affairs, giving suggestions about every sort of interest, year in and year out, from his perch in the Valley. The health of his sister Betty declined in the year 1849. He construed, in his own way, the mildly expressed fears in the letters from Louisa. He counselled energetic measures to counteract what he looked on as tendencies to scrofula. He had her come to the Valley that summer, and carried her himself to the Rockbridge Alum, and thus did much to stay the progress of the malady; but the best testimony to his unchanged devotion to his family is found in their feelings on the subject. Even his sister Betty, his former pet, declared that Robert was one son and brother whose active

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<sup>3</sup> At this time Mr. Dabney owned a one-fourth interest in what had been his father's mill farm.

and practical interest in their concerns marriage had not changed in the least.

This filial and fraternal devotion was paid for in appropriate coin. A sister writes to him: "Never did a son have a more devoted mother than you. I believe she thinks of you constantly." Her own admiration for her brother was hardly less than that felt by the strong-minded old mother. They all admired him for his talents, cultivation and character, and they all leaned on him in every crisis in their individual lives as a safe support, and they all loved him for what he was to them and did for them.

His labors thus far recounted, and the family interests to which he gave attention, would have filled the mind and heart of any ordinary man, and pressed him sorely; but this man abounded in this period in many other forms of labor. Several summers he partly spent in preaching tours, usually in accord with the appointment of his Presbytery, going once or twice as far as Pocahontas county, now in the State of West Virginia.

In 1852, Mr. Dabney added to his other forms of labor that of school-keeping. The Tinkling Spring people, though a rich agricultural community, had neglected to have a classical school. On the ground of this want, Mr. Dabney explained the fact that they had reared no ministers. He proposed that they should no longer be without such an institution. In September, 1852, he began the conduct of a classical school in the session-room. He got his people to put up a nice school building at Barter Brook, very soon had twenty-six or seven scholars, and made the school yield him seven hundred and fifty dollars as an addition to his income. He had scholars that year who became a credit to him. Amongst them was Mr. Walter Blair, for a long time a distinguished and honored member of the Faculty of Hampden-Sidney College. Many stories, more or less characteristic of the man and his methods of discipline, have been told. He was always energetic. It is said that in this school he sometimes broke slates over the heads of naughty pupils, and left the frames around their necks as ornaments, that he found it convenient to pitch books, keys, sticks of wood, and other bric-a-brac, at the heads of the lazy and disorderly. Many of these stories are probably apocryphal, but they may be taken to indicate somewhat as to the energy of his methods. It is perfectly certain that he meant to be master in that body, no matter

what the cost, for in a letter to his sister Betty, of March 4, 1853, he tells her that the mother of one of his pupils had written to her son not to submit to being whipped. He says:

"On hearing this, I told him that we must settle the question of supremacy at once; and while I was gone to get some switches, he might make up his mind either 'to cut dirt' or take a thrashing again. He elected the former. His parents foolishly backed him up in his insubordination, and so I told them he would have to stay expelled."

On one occasion there was something approaching mutiny in the school. Mr. Dabney had given one of the young men a flogging which some thought too severe. There was talk of combining against him and flogging him. He suspected something of the kind. His face became more grim and determined than usual. At recess he strode to the woods near by, cut an extra handful of stout switches, and also a stout hickory cane, with which he could have felled an ox. When he returned, the boys looked at his instruments of education. They subsided. Nor did they ever forget the look of his face. That the teaching added to his reputation shows that it was able; but his many kinds of enterprise pressed heavily on his strength and health; accordingly, he engaged Mr. J. N. Craig, afterwards the Rev. Dr. J. N. Craig, long Secretary of Home Missions, as his assistant.<sup>4</sup> He took the school when Mr. Dabney was called to be professor in Union Theological Seminary. It was for a long time kept up at least intermittently, under the blessing of God, and sent not a few young men into the ministry.

Mr. Dabney's correspondence in this period grew heavier, and took a wider range of discussion. Religion, politics, law, literature, farming, school-teaching, family life, local history, etc., etc., gave him occasion and furnished materials for his self-expression in epistolary effort.

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<sup>4</sup> Dr. Craig was a spiritual son of Dr. Dabney. The Rev. William Price writes: "About 1848, J. N. Craig, then at the Fishburne School, at Waynesboro, wrote me at Marlin's Bottom, now Marlinton, Pocahontas county, W. Va., to let me know that he had given his heart to Christ and united with the church, as a result of continued religious services conducted by the pastor, W. T. Richardson, assisted by Rev. R. L. Dabney, pastor of the neighboring Tinkling Spring Church. He referred to one of Mr. Dabney's sermons as the impulsive agency that led to his taking the stand he had, as an open professor of the faith in Christ as his Lord and only hope."

The following letter to the Rev. Moses D. Hoge may be presented as a fair sample of many in this period, dealing with subjects at once important and delicate:

"January 28, 1852.

"DEAR BROTHER HOGE: I had heard nearly the proposal of your letter from a highly respectable source at Synod, and am glad to find that it is exciting attention. I concur fully with the reasonings you present on the main point, and in most of the details. There is nothing more repugnant to my judgment and my feelings than the proposal to force Dr. —— to a resignation by any sort of expedient. I consider it not only unkind, but unjust to him; and it would be disastrous to the Seminary. I was much struck by a remark made by Dr. McGuffey last summer, in talking of this very case: that he had never known a literary institution, from which an old *locum tenens* of tolerable respectability had been ousted by any such means, that was not seriously injured by it. And you may depend upon it that all such plans and changes will only realize for the Seminary the fable of the fox and the flies. One swarm of cavillers will be quieted only at the expense of raising an opposite swarm. For instance, Boccock, and many such geniuses, are resolved not to give any hearty support till Dr. —— is supplanted. Now, his man to succeed him is Brother ——, a person whose peculiarities of style would raise far more opposition among many of the plain seniors than even Dr. ——'s supposed old-fogyism raised among the ecclesiastical chivalry. This shows how wrong and unjust it is to suspend our support of the Seminary on having all the men of our choice there. But there will always be such people; and, my dear brother, we must only go on sustaining the Seminary magnanimously and disinterestedly, whether everything suits our personal preferences or not.

"I foresee very great difficulty in any man's now accepting the vacant professorship who is fit for it. So much has been said, and said by directors and electors, about the necessity of a man of transcendent abilities and reputation, to work some miracle for the raising of the languishing institution, that it seems to me any man who should now accept must either be very conceited or very destitute of proper respect—unless elected unanimously. Who can now command a unanimous vote? But if an Adjunct Professor of Theology were elected at the same time, and if he were a man in whom the Professor-elect of Church History had confidence, it would greatly smooth the way. The idea is decidedly a good one. As to the talk about the folly of electing a fourth man to teach twelve students, this weighs nothing with me. We are not working for the present only. We have not so little hope and faith; our aspirations for our Zion are not so low and mean as to be willing that things shall always remain as they are. We build for the future. We should act as though we really expected a blessing on our



prayers and labors, and expected the church to grow. The farmer builds a barn when he has not a sheaf of ripe wheat. Who charges him with folly? Nor would the expense of the support of the new professor be an obstacle, if the church *chose* to put forth her strength. There is money enough if the church chooses to give it.

"The difficulties which weigh with me are these: Might not the election of this adjunct professor be interpreted by Dr. —— into a wish for his resignation? and thus lead to his immediate departure. That the adjunct professor should take any share in the agency for the collection of his own salary strikes me very unpleasantly. I think no man would consent to it who had much delicacy. His salary must be somewhat precarious, resting on such a basis as the annual subscriptions of the churches; and the man who should take this chair must make up his mind to a good many sacrifices and uncertainties until Dr. —— retired. Again, I do not know where to look for the men. I have great repugnance to truckling longer to the suicidal notion that foreign things must be best, by going abroad for professors. While I am ready to sustain heartily any respectable man whom my brethren may select, I should have great difficulty in pointing out a man to my own satisfaction for either chair. But there is no more difficulty in finding two than one.

"The ordering of this step must come, I suppose, from the Board of Directors; and I, being an elector, can have no other agency in it than as a well-wisher. If it can be heartily done, I shall rejoice to see it done. I shall take the liberty of suggesting your ideas to Rev. William Brown, Smith and White, and advocating them as well as I can.

"I have been wading, for the last week or two, through all the annoyances of a removal into an unfinished house. And this week there are superadded the annoyances of Christmas. Most of my servants are hirelings; they are now free. I have just finished replacing my books on the shelves to-night. After filling the day with multitudinous offices, among the rest, paving a path with broken stone, I cut wood for the family, fed the hogs (one of which showed fight, not liking a white skin), and stooped about over my books, till my brain was nearly addled. I doubt not you will see manifest evidences of this in my letter. I can most heartily wish you a Merry Christmas; but if you enjoy it, you are better off than I.

"Sincerely your brother,

R. L. DABNEY."

Another of Mr. Dabney's avocations was that of farmer. This has been implied in the accounts given of his homes; but he had so much interest in all the operations of farming, and did his own farming so well that it deserves, at least, distinct recognition in his life at Tinkling Spring. He compared the methods of farming in the Valley with those east of the Blue

Ridge. Some of the habits of the Valley farmer he regarded as slovenly and wasteful; others he prized highly. He noticed the relative economy in labor in the Valley. Thus he wrote to his brother William in October, 1851:

"Here manure is never scraped or dug up in the barnyard or wood-pile, nor is any dung fork strained nor strength expended in tearing it out of a tough mass. The manure heap is plowed with a common two-horse plow, and after the fork has done its work, a scraper is used to gather the balance. It is just as uniform a thing to see the prints of the plow at the stable or wood-pile, in the fall, as to see those of the harrow-teeth in the wheat field."

He also found time for special study along chosen lines. Thus, in 1850, he must have made a very careful and thorough study of that immortal work, Butler's *Analogy*, for amongst his papers, in his own neat and very characteristic hand-writing, is an excellent syllabus of the whole work, and bearing the date 1850 immediately after the title. In the course of these years he bought many valuable books. The lists of his purchases from Robert Carter & Brothers, New York, amongst his papers, show that he was buying the *best* books, the masters in theology, philosophy, and sacred history, and along with them certain lighter works, in the sphere of biography, popular history, and pastoral theology.

In the course of these years he made able contributions to newspapers and periodicals. In 1848 he published two sermons in the *Watchman and Observer*. One of these was on the "Relation of Popery to Republicanism. In 1849 he published, in the same paper, an article against the use of "Organs," and two articles on "Dangerous Reading." In 1850 he published one or more papers on the department appropriate to one when approaching and while attending the house of God, and one on "The Most Fashionable Church." His object in the paper against the use of organs in worship was to "vindicate the great body of the Protestant Church of his day from the charge of bad taste, rudeness, and blind prejudice in their opposition" to instrumental music,—an object which he accomplished easily, displaying, incidentally, a remarkable theoretical knowledge of music also. His object in the paper on "The Most Fashionable Church" is to expose the meanness of those who would determine the church they are to join by the consideration of the social standing of those who are already its members.

It is a proof that he knew how to use sarcasm and ridicule, along with strong arguments, in a good cause.

In 1850, the young pastor, thirty years old, and with only four years of ministerial experience, writes for Lexington Presbytery a pastoral letter to the sessions of their churches. The letter is strong and dignified in tone, and impresses and argues well the duty of holding services in their own churches every Sunday, whether there be a minister to officiate or not. The letter was published in the *Watchman and Observer*.

In December, 1850, and January, 1851, he published a series of four articles in the *Watchman and Observer*, on the proposed innovations in the Board of Education. He opposed these innovations, and particularly that the church should assist in the college education of persons who are not destined to be ministers at all, as it now assists the education of candidates for the ministry, and that it should extend aid even to those who are not professors of religion at all.

In 1851 he reviewed, in the columns of the same paper, the Assembly of that year, of which he had been a member. He had a series of five articles of considerable length. He again paid his very particular respects to the Board of Education. At this time he held firmly to the view that the church, as such, should have nothing to do with secular education directly. The church may, and should, by its teaching of Scripture truth, and the use of appropriate discipline, arouse its members to do their duty as individuals in the way of giving an education.

In the spring of 1851 he published a series of articles on the *slavery* question in the *Richmond Enquirer*. These articles received wide and favorable notice. The whole line of the fight between the sections was closely scrutinized by Mr. Dabney, who "read the newspapers very little," but seemed to be aware of, and to have formed his judgment on, all the more important political movements. He felt that the ethical character of the relation of slavery ought to be vindicated before the great public. He had written to his brother, on the 15th of January, in this year, 1851, on the proper attitude for the South to maintain against the North. In the course of these suggestions, he writes:

"Another thing which should be done is this, to push the discussion on the fundamental ethical question of the justifiableness of slavery. This question of *moral right* is at the bottom of the whole matter. It is the  $\pi\omega\omega$   $\sigma\tau\tilde{\omega}$  from which the whole matter is set in motion. For

those who do not really act from principle, make a pretext of the moral principle. If we possess ourselves of this *πῶς στῶ* we shall undermine the whole cause of our adversaries. The justice of the Wilmot proviso is founded in the justice of the anti-slavery theory. The fact that slavery is wrong is, ultimately, the pretext of the whole movement. We should be striking home, therefore, at the foundation of the whole matter. And, rely upon it, the proper way to argue this ethical question is to put the Bible arguments. A few philosophical minds may *reason* out moral relations; but with the masses the spring of their moral ideas is in their *religious* ideas. Our political men have neglected the religious element too much, in attempting to manage human opinion. If we want to effect the general current of national opinion on this subject, 'Is slave-holding intrinsically immoral or unjust?' we must go before the nation with the Bible as the text, and 'Thus saith the Lord' as the answer. This policy is the wiser, because we know that on the Bible argument the abolition party will be driven to unveil their true infidel tendencies. The Bible being bound to stand on our side, they will have to come out and array themselves against the Bible. And then the whole body of sincere believers at the North will have to array themselves, though unwillingly, on our side. They will prefer the Bible to abolitionism. I know the temper of my own denomination. There is in the Northern States a vast, powerful and usually sober body of Presbyterians, in the abstract anti-slavery, but not abolitionist, who have given their weight to the Wilmot proviso. If abolition was driven to assume an infidel ground, these men would array themselves actively against the abolitionists, out of their sincere love for the Bible. Here is our policy, then, to push the Bible argument continually, to drive abolitionism to the wall, to compel it to assume an anti-Christian position. By so doing we compel the whole Christianity of the North to array itself on our side. This would be an immense political advantage.

"But to enjoy the advantages of this Bible argument in our favor, slave-holders will have to pay a price. And the price is this. They must be willing to recognize and grant in slaves those rights which are a part of our essential humanity, some of which are left without recognition or guarantee by law, and some infringed by law. These are the rights of immortal and domestic beings. If we take the ground that the power to neglect and infringe these interests is an essential and necessary part of the institution of slavery; then it cannot be defended. One thing is certain, the relations of an immortal being to his maker override all others. We must come out and grant that our right to hold slaves to labor does not include a right to make a husband guilty of the sin of separation from his wife, for other cause than fornication, or to violate the chastity of a female by forcible means; and that practices or laws which do any of these things are not a part of the scriptural and lawful institution, but abuses. Unless Southern men are willing to take this position, they cannot conquer in the discussion."

Mr. Charles William Dabney took the liberty of showing Mr. Ritchie the letter from which the quotation just made was taken, and he expressed his great readiness to have the suggested articles. Accordingly, they were soon prepared, and appeared in the *Enquirer*, over the name "Chorepiscopus," a name over which most of his contributions in the *Watchman and Observer*, also, had appeared.

He published, in the October issue of the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, in 1852, an article of thirty pages, entitled, "Principles of Christian Economy," an article well fitted to awaken high expectations of the future of the writer. It may have been somewhat wanting in that it did not set forth "a general rule by which to proportion the proper degrees in which men of different degrees of wealth might indulge that species of self-improvement which consists in the cultivation of taste, etc." This criticism was passed upon it by a man of great critical ability, who, also, pronounced the article very valuable.

These articles, and others which he published in this period, gave him a well-deserved reputation for vigor and learning, as well as for a sound conservatism. They no doubt served to show the church, and especially the Synods of Virginia and North Carolina, his fitness for service as a professor in the Seminary at Hampden-Sidney. Another article in the *Watchman and Observer*, in November, 1851, on the duty of "Special Prayer for the Conversion of our Youth, and the Increase of our Ministers," had done not a little in the same direction. It was a single, straightforward plea for the performance of this duty on the part of the people, in accord with the solemn injunction of the recent Synod of Virginia.

The condition of Union Seminary was apparently precarious in 1852. After Dr. Graham's death, there were but two professors, one of them an able and efficient teacher, the other already burdened with years, though a very excellent man. The endowment was very small. The salary paid a professor was only twelve hundred dollars and a house. The number of students, eleven; and the opinion had gone abroad that the institution had poor prospects. Students from the two controlling Synods were inclined to go to Princeton or to Columbia.

Under these circumstances, it was naturally difficult to properly fill the vacant professorship. It was, indeed, rather hawked about. There was a natural desire to elect a man of

note throughout the country that attention might be attracted to the Seminary, and attraction thither created by his influence. In the summer of 1852, the electors offered the position to Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge. Mr. Dabney, who was a member of the electoral body, was dissatisfied with the election, having preferred the Rev. Benjamin M. Smith, though he had hesitated to vote for him, on account of Mr. Smith's being a brother-in-law. He gives, at least, a partial explanation of his not voting for Dr. Breckinridge, in a letter to his brother William, dated June 28, 1852. He says, after giving an account of a sojourn in Lynchburg:

"I went from Lynchburg to Union Seminary in a day, fifty miles. When I got there I found the Board of Electors busy, hammering at their nominations. I had purposely fixed my arrival after the hour set for the meeting, in the hope that the business might be done before I got there. But an unexpected trouble had arisen. Some had taken it into their heads that Dr. R. J. Breckinridge, of Kentucky, was dissatisfied with his present position, rather broken in health and spirits, and, on the whole, might be willing to 'retire' to the quiet of the Seminary. We believe that the real promoters of the idea never had the remotest thought of his accepting, but only used it as a ruse to delay the election of Smith, to whom they were opposed. Alas! that there should be ruses among Christians. The idea of a man of his tastes and reputation, of his varied wealth, with twelve children and step-children, his wife's daughters keeping their own carriage, his wife keeping hers, administering her own splendid estate and moving among the *haut ton* of Lexington, Ky., a man who spends five or six thousand dollars a year, and holds one of the highest elective offices in Kentucky, coming to live in quiet Union Seminary, with a salary of twelve hundred dollars a year, to assist in teaching a few poor young men divinity, is preposterous. Those who nominated him did not believe it. In itself, I did not consider the choice a good one. The case of Judge Tucker and the Law School of the University has taught me the folly of electing a man who has the disposition to *retire upon his ease* to such schools. Dr. Breckinridge was raised a lawyer and politician, and only became a minister after he settled in life. But he has sense, and would soon have scholarship enough for any such office, in a short time, if he had a suitable temper, and chose to bend his mind to it. He is supposed to have one of the most active minds in the nation. Dr. Alexander, a very sober judge, said he believed he had more forensic talent, take him all around, than any other man in the world. His first wife was a Preston. Being with Mr. William C. Preston at Washington, one day, he met with Mr. Calhoun, and Preston being called out, he and Mr. Calhoun were left a good while together. Breckinridge was always a

Clay man, being a neighbor, and they entered into a conversational debate on nullification. When Mr. Preston returned and Breckinridge went away, Mr. Calhoun expressed his amazement at the acuteness and force of his mind, and said he found him harder to answer than any of the professed politicians, asking who on earth he could be. Mr. Preston said he was only a Presbyterian parson from Baltimore. But with all his noble and generous traits, and his piety, which seems to be unfeigned, his temper is irritable, so that he has never done a great deal of good. I voted for Smith, but without any active participation in the struggle. Breckinridge was elected by one vote. But it is all a farce. They might just as well have elected Dr. Whately or Dr. Merle D'Aubigne, of Geneva."

His prophecy as to the issue of this election came true. Dr. Breckinridge did not come. It was in the preceding November that Mr. Dabney had published, in the *Watchman and Observer*, the article on the "Reasons for Observing the Day of Prayer for the Conversion of Youths, and the Increase of Ministers." In this article, after showing that only two men, out of about five hundred and fifty youths pursuing a liberal education, and not connected with denominations other than Presbyterian in three colleges in Virginia, only two men from the Synod of Virginia, although the Synod contained over a hundred ministerial families, and over five hundred elders, whence our ministers, for the most part, come—only two men were added to the Seminary for the session 1851-'52; that from the Synod of Virginia, Union Seminary had only five or six men altogether, and of these, only two native-born Virginians, he broke out:

"Hear this, ye Christian fathers! Hear this, ye mothers in Israel! In truth, we have been sliding down the cold and drowsy descent of worldliness till we have unconsciously reached a state that is absolutely frightful. That spirit of consecration to God, of which a desire to serve God in the ministry is the sure indication, has almost utterly deserted our churches. . . . How bitter must be the divine frown that rests upon us, and to how alarming an extent must the Holy Ghost have withdrawn his true power from us, when in all these professedly Christian families there was only enough of self-devotion to lead two young men from us to the school of the prophets. . . .

"Now, if other churches have lent us a few of their sons to supply the shameful destitution we have created, far be it from us to look coldly on the gift. We rejoice in the acquisition of every true minister, from whatever source. We are the last to intend anything invidious towards those who come to labor among us. But yet, are we willing, as Virginians, to sink into this state of intellectual and spiritual vas-

salage to other communities; we, who have given so many intellectual rulers to the human race? No Presbyterian need be told how extensively an educated ministry rules and molds the minds entrusted to it. And of all Virginians, are we, *Virginia Presbyterians*, we who have given a Hoge, a Rice, an Alexander to the church and to the world, willing to resign ourselves to a foreign guidance? And of all times, are we willing that the control of public opinion shall be given up to other sections at *this time*, when differences of opinion, and even lamentable hostility, have separated them more widely than ever from us, and when the ill-will which pervades the South against the Northern men, whether well or ill founded, has almost made it impossible for the natives of the North to do good amongst us?"

This, and more of the same character, in this article, had pleased mightily many of the leaders of the Presbyterian Church in Virginia and North Carolina. In July, 1852, he came out again, in a long and important article, in the *Watchman and Observer*, on the "State and Claims of Union Theological Seminary." He does not seem to have contemplated any such effect, but it was natural for the church at large to raise the question as to whether this young man, who could argue the importance of the Seminary to Virginia and North Carolina Presbyterianism so ably, could not serve the church well in one of the professorships there. In May, 1853, the Board of Electors offered the vacant chair of Ecclesiastical History and Polity to Mr. Dabney. He was not a candidate for the place, and did not desire it. He knew nothing of the movement to put him into the position, though his friends, such as Rev. Moses D. Hoge, and Rev. C. R. Vaughan, had been telling him, for two years back, that he ought to be chosen as a professor in the Seminary, and Mr. Hoge used every exertion to secure his election, and expected it fully. Mr. Dabney was happy in his manifold labors at Tinkling Spring, in his preaching and pastoral work, in his school-keeping, and in farming and building a house, in his writing for publication and correspondence. He has told us that one Saturday he was in his little corn-field, with his hired negro, planting corn, that his wife sent a boy to call him, that he called saying, "Mrs. Dabney says come to the house. Who do you suppose has been elected professor in Union Theological Seminary?" "Who?" "She says you are." He says that, in much astonishment, he went to the house, where she gave him an official letter, which threw him into great perplexity; that he much preferred to stay in his own sweet home, and with his



church and his prosperous school. He was also in doubt as to whether he could have his health in Prince Edward county, for his health had suffered during his stay there as a college student, and again during his career as a seminary student, a fear which in his old days he regarded as proven justifiable by his experience of thirty years there as professor; for during all that period he never enjoyed established health. He feared, however, that he might do wrongly by deciding in accord with his personal preferences, and against what seemed to be a call of duty. The call of the Board of Electors, which had been unanimous, received commendation from every side. Drs. Wilson and Sampson, of the Seminary, wrote the most affectionate and urgent letters, and to his replies, replied again, arguing with him point by point. Mr. Vaughan, of Lynchburg, wrote that he must go, no matter what his feelings were. Drs. Foote, of the Board, and William S. White, and Dr. McGuffey, of the University of Virginia, and many others, urged him energetically to accept the election. Thus called and urged, he submitted the call to the judgment of his Presbytery; his congregation, which had seen, bursting frequently from beneath his usually severe bearing, flashes of tender and intense affection, not only trusted him absolutely, but had come to love him devotedly. It made a most affectionate and energetic protest against his leaving, maintaining that such a step would not only greatly injure Tinkling Spring congregation, but Valley Presbyterianism. There was a very solemn discussion before the Presbytery, resulting in the decision that he ought to go to the Seminary.

As illustrative of the way in which he was urged by letter, and of the view of the case which his Presbytery took, the letter of the Rev. William S. White, D. D., of Lexington, is presented:

"LEXINGTON, VA., *April 4, 1853.*

"MY DEAR BROTHER: I greatly desired to see you as I passed through your neighborhood, but being in the stage and in great haste, I could not.

"As to the general aspects of the question submitted to your consideration by the recent vote of electors of Union Theological Seminary, of which, as chairman of the committee appointed for the purpose, I have already given you official information, you are just as well acquainted as I am. I regard the position to which you are invited as more important than any pastoral charge in the land. And I am free to say that your habits, tastes and general qualifications fit you for

the station. The experiment you have made as a writer is quite sufficient to prove that, with the opportunities which this office will furnish, you may reasonably hope, through God's blessing, not only to serve your own, but succeeding generations by your pen. You know me too well to suppose that I intend this for flattery. I will also say that this opinion is entertained as far as my acquaintance extends.

"As to the election itself, you know that I have been long anxious to elect Mr. Smith. But in this I was not sustained so as to make his election desirable, even if it were practicable.

"It will surely be enough for you to know that your election was unanimous and cordial. Others were voted for, but your name was among the first put into nomination. The men who seemed resolutely resolved not to support Mr. Smith in any event, went promptly and earnestly for you. As I stated in my official letter, there was not even a minority to acquiesce.

"From the Seminary I went to Farmville. There I learned that your election was most acceptable. Even Dr. Leech spoke in strong commendation of it. The Petersburg and Richmond brethren were highly gratified. Indeed, Hoge and Van Zandt took a very leading part in the matter. In Charlottesville I spent a day, and there, too, it was highly approved. My own people I find greatly delighted. Indeed, it meets with universal favor. So far, then, as the voice of the church can be regarded as any index of the will of Providence, that will obviously is that you accept the appointment, and enter with all prudent haste upon this new, wide and promising field of labor.

"I have never known the Board as much united, nor as much in earnest. Your place at Tinkling Spring may readily be supplied—that at the Seminary cannot be. My heart's desire and prayer to God is, that you may see the finger of God pointing distinctly to acceptance.

"A brighter day is dawning. I never saw so noble, so promising, though so small, a band as they now have at the Seminary. There is not an indifferent young man among them.

"The number of young men looking to the ministry is increasing; or, what is more certain, is that ministers are beginning to talk and preach and pray about this matter as they have never done in my day.

"Dr. Junkin says 'the glory has departed' from Princeton; that his two sons, now there, 'are not at all pleased.' I know that but for their enjoying the proceeds of two scholarships, they would forthwith leave and come to Union. Two young men have already done this, and one of them told me, on my late visit, that they were pleased they had done so.

"I went by Richmond chiefly to see if good Brother Gildersleeve could not be bought out. Since I reached home I have had a letter from him expressing his willingness to sell, and stating his terms, which seem to me to be reasonable. The plan is to have the paper

edited by an association of gentlemen—Hoge, Moore and Van Zandt have already promised to be three of the number. We only want one more. Smith of Staunton, or Sampson of the Seminary, or yourself, must be the fourth.

“Several of my people are very sick. My hands are very full; so farewell for the present.

“Tell Lavinia that she and Bob and Jim are not to say a word against this Seminary business. Give them my love, and the love of my wife and children.

“Yours truly and affectionately,

“WM. S. WHITE.”

In this summer of 1853, when Mr. Dabney had just been elected to the professorship in the Seminary, and when he was only thirty-three years of age, he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. On occasion of this recognition of his abilities, attainments and character, by the eminent Board of Trustees of that institution, his friend Vaughan writes characteristically:

“How do you feel? I could not help being amused at imagining how you must have looked and felt when you got the notice of the action of the Board—to fancy the strong, sarcastic expression that twisted your dear old long, severe face, as it struck you the Board might have waited a little longer, and the gradual modification of this expression, as your religious instincts began to whisper, ‘Maybe it may be for the interests of the Seminary, however embarrassing to me.’ Have I spelt you right, *mon cher*? But really and heartily, all badinage aside, my dear friend, I congratulate you. Your blushing and well-deserved honors are budding thick upon you this year. You are worthy of this title, far more so than a thousand that have it. The title of D. D. was originally intended to reward high scholarship in the ministry. But of late years it has grown down very much into a distinction merely of age, pastoral fidelity and general usefulness. It ought to be restored to its original basis, and on that basis you may accept it without the embarrassment that you will probably feel at the recollection of your age, and the recent period of your elevation to a public post in the church. . . . It may add weight to your professorial character and extend your influence abroad on the fortunes of the Seminary. But whether you accept or reject it, you may be sure that those that know you will not dream that your personal merit will be affected by it. It did not take the title of doctor to make them respect you, nor will either its acceptance or rejection alter their views for the better or the worse.’<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Letter of C. R. Vaughan, June 27, 1853.

Mr. Dabney went alone to the Seminary, in August. In October, he brought over his family. They were assigned the residence in the eastern part of the main building.

He and his good wife must have felt very keenly the difference between the life in a pastorate, and that in a scholastic institution. His Valley charge had been his first real pastoral charge. He loved that people as he never loved any other to the end of his life. They were hard-headed folk, as the Scotch-Irish ever are, and hard to lead; but his own honesty and earnestness had met honesty and earnestness in them; and they loved him as they have loved few pastors. Here are letters from the Guthries, and the Bells, and the Van Lears, etc., lamenting his departure, and breathing out a reverential affection for him. The new environment was, for a time, less agreeable, but the new post was more important.

At Union Seminary he was to stay thirty years, fill, with great distinction, two professorships—first, that of Ecclesiastical History and Polity, and, later, that of Systematic and Polemic Theology—he was to be co-pastor for many years of College Church, the adviser of many in need in his community and elsewhere. There he was destined, by his writings, to bring the philosophical and theological world into debt to God for him; and, while residing there, he was to figure as a patriot and soldier.

In the next chapter we shall study his life while he was holding the first-named of the professorships.

## CHAPTER X.

### PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY AND POLITY.

(August, 1853—May, 1859.)

VIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHAIR.—TIME DURING WHICH HE OCCUPIED THIS CHAIR.—HIS INAUGURAL.—METHOD OF TEACHING.—HOLDS HIGH IDEALS BEFORE THE STUDENTS.—VIGOR AND SUCCESS OF HIS WORK IN THIS DEPARTMENT.—OTHER LABORS FOR THE SEMINARY.—RAISING MONEY; DRUMMING FOR A HIGH ORDER OF STUDENTS; SUPERINTENDING IMPROVEMENTS; SEEKING PROFESSORS; TEACHING THEOLOGY TO THE SENIOR CLASS IN 1858-1859.—HEAD MAN IN THE SEMINARY AFTER 1854.—DR. SAMPSON'S DEATH IN 1854, AND LOSS TO THE SEMINARY.—DR. B. M. SMITH'S ELECTION TO FILL THE VACANT CHAIR.—DR. WM. J. HOGE'S ELECTION TO FILL THE NEW PROFESSORSHIP.—REORGANIZATION OF THE SEMINARY STUDIES.—VARYING FORTUNES OF THE INSTITUTION IN THE PERIOD.—MR. DABNEY'S DEVOTION TO THE INSTITUTION.

WHEN Mr. Dabney went from his large and important congregation, leaving also his flourishing classical school behind him, to the professorship in run-down Union Seminary, where only about a dozen students had been gathered the preceding session, he seemed to some to be leaving a larger work for a smaller; but he did not view the matter in this light. He saw the pervasive character of the influence of the theological teacher. The motives by which he was actuated are set forth in a letter of his to the Rev. Dr. G. B. Strickler, dated October 8, 1883. Mr. Strickler had, in the meantime, passed through the Seminary under Dr. Dabney, had won a most distinguished place in his regard, and subsequently an enviable place in the estimation of the whole church, and had just been elected to the chair of Ecclesiastical History and Polity in his *alma mater*. Mr. Dabney, in this letter, is setting forth the motives by which he thinks his friend Strickler should be moved. They were those which had availed with him. The letter is, in part, as follows:

“HEARNE, TEXAS, *October 8, 1883.*

“*The Rev. G. B. Strickler, D. D.*

“DEAR BROTHER: I was sorry to notice in the last *Central* I saw, now more than a week old, that your church in Atlanta had voted

against your going to the Seminary, declaring your post in that city more important than the other. Their position tacitly concedes the logic that *if* the Seminary position were the more important one, it would be their duty to give you up. On the premise (the respective importance of the two spheres) they evidently utter the judgment of local prejudice and erroneous information. Nobody can doubt that to train up many pastors, and thus multiply yourself, is better than to do the work of one pastor. There is the case in one sentence. So Dr. Chalmers decided for himself, in leaving the greatest pastoral work in Great Britain, sustained by the most brilliant personal abilities, in order to teach theology in the Free Church College, in Edinburgh, then a comparatively new and problematic enterprise.

"There is another reason, which, in your case, is even more decisive for your going to the Seminary. You have that *didactic* turn of mind which is so rare, and so hard to find in a high degree, and which is the crowning qualification for eminent usefulness in the Seminary. It exists in few, in combination with mental vigor, learning, prudence and moral character. It is precious and essential in the church's teaching work. Where it exists the church is *entitled* to lay hands on it, and appropriate it to its highest exigency in training its pastors. . . .

"Very faithfully yours,

R. L. DABNEY.

"P. S.—Is not this a proper element of the argument to be taken in? In what sort of situation would your refusal at this time place the Seminary? Would it not be simply terrible? When I *had to leave* (it was no free choice) we had the hope that you would supply my place. If you refuse, the case is almost desperate."

Dr. Dabney taught in the chair of History and Polity for six sessions. His inaugural address, delivered at the close of the first session, showed an unusual conception, at once, of the difficulties, the importance, and the dignity of the historian's work: <sup>1</sup>

"There is no department of human study requiring wider or more profound knowledge, and a rarer union of varied talents, than are requisite for him who would be master of the science of history. The study of this science is no dull tread-mill of names, dates and events, as some seem still to imagine. It is based, indeed, on a multitude of facts; but it is concerned with all their causes and relations. For the mere verifying of these facts there must be a combination of accurate and extensive knowledge, with patience, impartiality, sound judgment, subtlety and perpetual watchfulness against the blinding influences of prescription, habits, great names and prejudices. All the faculties which

<sup>1</sup>The reader can find this address in Vol. II. of *Discussions by R. L. Dabney, D. D.*, edited by C. R. Vaughan, D. D. It is the leading article in the volume.

are requisite for eminence in judicial transactions are here called into play; for the historian must sit in judgment on a multitude of competing witnesses, and hold the balance of truth with an acute eye and steady hand. Nor can he seek his witnesses only among compilers and professed historians. He must ascend to the contemporary sources of information; he must know the literature and the spirit of the age he studies; he must gather notices of the true nature of events from every side, because statements or hints which are collateral or accidental are often, for that very reason, most impartial. The more rigidly he questions the original witnesses for himself, the more will he be convinced that those writers who have professed to compile and digest the materials to his hand have discolored or misinterpreted the true, living picture of events. De Quincey has said, 'Two strong angels stand by the side of History as heraldic supporters: the angel of Research on the left hand, that must read millions of dusty parchments and of pages blotted with lies; the angel Meditation on the right hand, that must cleanse these lying records with fire, even as of old the draperies of asbestos were cleansed, and must quicken them into regenerated life.'

In such wise he vindicates the dignity of his science, then sets forth its importance with equal eloquence and vigor, and concludes:

"And here, fathers and brethren, you will assent that I have bestowed upon my science the most magnificent encomium which is possible, when I have said that the history of the church is one of the studies and enjoyments of heaven. But is it not true? Here, then, let me stop, only repeating the expression of unfeigned diffidence with which I assume a department of instruction demanding for its most successful treatment universal scholarship and a mind whose imperial powers unite the sagacity of the statesman with the epic vision of the poet. I am well aware that such an undertaking cannot fail to result in a lifelong sense of deficiency. Let it be mine to feel this sense as a stimulus to greater diligence. And, above all, I would seek the guidance of him whom we expect to be our teacher in heaven to unfold the divine dealings. May my historic muse be that power invoked by Milton:

"And chiefly thou, O Spirit that dost prefer  
Before all shrines the upright heart and pure,  
Instruct me; for thou knowest. Thou from the first  
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread,  
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,  
And madest it pregnant. What in me is dark,  
Illuminate; what is low, raise and support;  
That to the height of this great argument  
I may assert eternal providence,  
And testify the ways of God to men.'"

The method of teaching history which he pursued, Dr. Dabney has himself described in another letter to Dr. Strickler. In view of the possibility of his accepting the call to the professorship of History and Polity, in 1883, Dr. Strickler had requested of Dr. Dabney a description of that course as conducted by him in these years, 1853 to 1859. Dr. Dabney wrote as follows:

"November 2, 1883.

"DEAR BROTHER STRICKLER: I promised to write again and reply to your inquiry about my method of teaching Church History in the Seminary. This was a long time ago; my teaching was doubtless very crude and imperfect; and Dr. Peck, with his longer experience and more elegant scholarship, will doubtless be able to give you better lights.

"The plan of our Seminary, as a *biblical* seminary, makes the Bible itself a text-book for every professor. The Old Testament was my text-book for the history of the church of the old dispensation; my human helps, Prideaux's *Connexions* and Alexander's *History of the Israelitish Nation*. The Book of Acts was my text-book for the apostolic age of the new dispensation, with old Mosheim for the rest (with Murdock's notes). The extent of the Old Testament history was so large, and the time so short in which I had to dispatch it, that I made a sort of *syllabus* of the narrative in the form of *questions*, referring to the Old Testament by book, chapter and verse, or to Prideaux, to give the answers. Some interesting topics, as the Usherian chronology (as against the Septuagint), etc., I made the subject of special lectures. This series of questions, I think I have still at Red Hill. I lent them once to Dr. Addison Alexander, in Princeton, and then to Dr. Peck.

"Coming to the New Testament dispensation, I expounded most of the Book of Acts from the Greek. I then made the class recite on the whole of Mosheim (with all of the important notes), and lectured on salient points, as Prelacy and its Development; The Development of Roman Popery; the Crusades; The Relations of the Feudal System to the Church; The Theory of Persecution; Of Indulgences, etc. For instance, my lectures on Acts and the first three centuries, or the development of prelacy, and the *true prelatie conception* (which I think very few of our book-makers really grasp intelligently), are, in substance, presented in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, article, 'Prelacy a Blunder.' By the way, I wish you would examine the theory I there set forth. In teaching Church Government, my main reliance was on my own lectures, with *Mason on the Church*, which I made the class read, and references to Turretin's *Eighteenth Locus*. I also made the students write a few essays on points selected for them. Of these, some were capital. This was about all I did.

"I still think Murdock's Mosheim, on the whole, about the best class book. Heavy, objectionable on many grounds, but yet learned and



weighty, and introducing the student to the wide literature of the subject. Dr. Peck came to use Kurtz.

"Dr. Philip Schaff had then written the first volume of his *Church History*, extending to the Council of Nice. I thought *extremely well of it*. He has since continued his work. I surmise it is very valuable; may have the makings of a valuable class-book. Gieseler, translated by Cunningham, is invaluable. His text is a mere string. The valuable feature is the well-selected and germane notes, and full citations from the contemporary literature. Read, for instance, Mosheim's sketch of the Nestorian question, and then Gieseler's citations; and you will feel that you *have daylight*, where Mosheim left you in moonlight; that you have gotten to the kernel of the heresy, while Mosheim left you in the shell.

"Torrey's translation of Neander I consulted a good deal. The style is heavy and very Germanish, and metaphysical in places. Yet it is a storehouse of information. Neander's accounts of the History of Doctrines must be taken '*cum grano salis*.' He tries to make out that all the fathers, and especially the Greek, thought *a la* Schliermacher. Hallam's *Middle Ages* I regard as invaluable, as giving a proper conception of the feudal system, and its influences on the church.

"I found the chief drawback *to be this*, in teaching Church History: that to study it intelligently, and *especially* to grasp anything of the *philosophy of history* (the only thing in it worth keeping), requires much general information; and our college graduates have *so little*.

"Best wishes for Mrs. Strickler.

"God be with you, my dear brother,

"R. L. DABNEY."

He held aloft a high ideal before his students, taught them that they were in the Seminary for training, for "bodily work." He made the opening address of the session 1854-'55; his subject was "Methods of Studying." He insisted on the necessity of *active* habits, *elastic* labor, on learning to think with definiteness, abhorring a vague idea, reproducing in our own verbiage an author's train of thought, on "*studying fast*," holding that otherwise a man could not study much, specially after becoming a pastor, on the student's availing himself of every means of improvement. He warned them that, if they were lazy as students, they would be lazy as future ministers. He not only taught along this line, he lived a highly strenuous life.

He studied and taught his course with great vigor. As early as January 11, 1854, Dr. William H. Foote had written:

"BROTHER DABNEY: I want to ask a small favor of you. I understand that your labors are very acceptable; that your lectures are listened to with deep interest, and that your example of study and investigation is impressing the students favorably, both as to yourself and as to their personal duties. In all this I rejoice. To see the Seminary begin to lift up its head again and be reckoned among the first in the land, and its example and arrangements claiming not only attention, but fixing a mark for others to aim at—all this is exceedingly encouraging. And now, my dear brother, I ask a favor; that is, that you will not on any account sit up and continue your studies after nine or ten o'clock at night."

And the good Doctor goes on to argue why this favor should be granted.

On March 10, 1856, his friend Vaughan wrote:

"I trust you will never listen to any proposition to change your present position, either for a church or another chair. Write a *Church History*. This, in my judgment, is your work. It is my deliberate opinion that you can do it better than it ever has been done, not with the learning, but with a spirit, life, power and completeness never yet displayed in writing the history of the most wonderful institution ever known on earth. Let your inaugural discourse be to your future labors what Macauley's paper on 'History' in the *Edinburgh Review* has been to him. You can't do this without sticking to your chair. But if you will, you will make a book that will give you more reputation, that will put money in your pocket for your family, and that the church will not willingly let die. This is a favorite scheme of mine for you. What do you think of it?"

His students of this period, still living, as Dr. James P. Smith, of Richmond, Va., often speak of the freshness, penetration and vigor of his occasional lectures on important parts of Church History, and of his general success as a teacher in this department; but his greatest work as a teacher was to be done in another department.

His teaching of Church History and Polity was only a part of his work for the Seminary during these years. He made laborious tours every vacation at his own expense. In the summer of 1855, he travelled as a collector for the additional endowment, raising about three thousand dollars.

During other years he visited churches, colleges and universities, preaching, endeavoring to give a favorable impression of the Seminary, and canvassing for the "right sort of students."

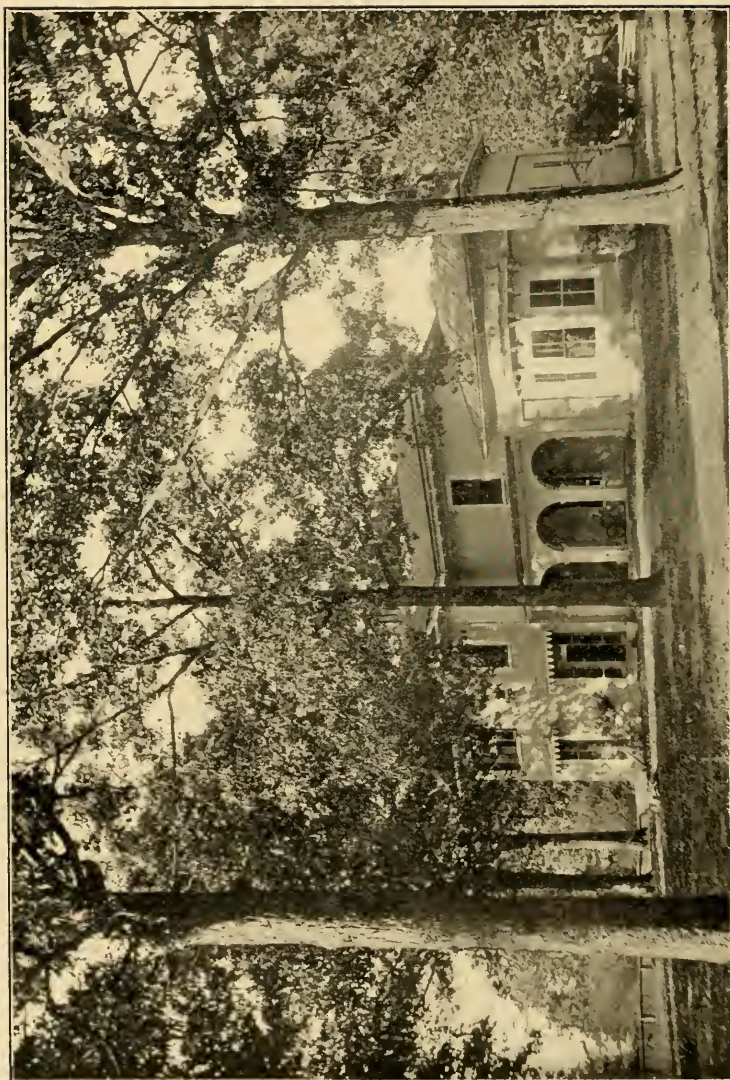
His aim was "to get hold of men of worthy antecedents, breeding, and piety of a decided sort," and, as far as possible, of men of culture or of unusual susceptibility therefor, instead of dependent and ill-educated men. He was besought to do this by friends of the Seminary in many of the Virginia Presbyteries, and in several of the Presbyteries of North Carolina. On September 8, 1857, Dr. Charles Phillips, of the University of North Carolina, writes:

"I do most sincerely hope you will carry out your plan of visiting us; and please try to give us a Sabbath, and preach to our boys in the College on Sunday at 11 A. M., and at night in our village church as often as you please. We had four hundred and four on our roll the other day, and several look to the ministry, and others might well be influenced that way."

At another time Dr. Phillips writes him that the pastors and sessions are indeed under obligation to seek out suitable men for the ministry; but it is still the duty of Seminary professors, as opportunity offers, to come to the help of the local presbyters in the effort to increase the number of candidates. Dr. Dabney was fully convinced of the propriety and importance of such endeavor on the part of Seminary professors, and did not spare himself in regard to it. For example, in the summer of 1858, he made two such tours—one to North Carolina, visiting Chapel Hill, Yanceyville, and Milton, and other points, and another to the Valley of Virginia, visiting and preaching at Lexington, New Providence, Tinkling Spring, Winchester, Charlestown, Martinsburg, Berkeley Springs, Falling Water Church, Romney, Moorefield, Petersburg, New Creek, Piedmont, and Cumberland, Md. During this vacation he was separated from his family nearly three months on itineracies. His journeying may have been somewhat greater that summer than usual, but it was typical of his vacations throughout this period. He spent them in laborious effort to build up the Seminary, and ennoble it by attracting a high class of students.

In 1856, the election of an additional professor required the building of another house. Dr. Dabney was made chairman of the building committee. He gave the Seminary, as a free gift, eight acres of land, on which the house was built; he drew all the plans, and superintended the building of this, the fourth residence. This house, which was very attractive in appearance, and a model of convenience, was assigned to him to dwell in.





RESIDENCE BUILT AND OCCUPIED BY DR. DABNEY AT HAMPDEN-SIDNEY.

He went at once to work to create a garden spot. The soil was most unpromising, full of small stones and of small black-oak stumps. He soon made it a famous garden, and similarly improved the whole lot attached to his house, planting an orchard, and an additional garden, which he watered by irrigation.

This period was one of change in the professorial body. His deep interest in the fortunes of the Seminary made him anxious that the proper men should be secured as professors. Though not a member of the Board of Electors, he was, as greatly honored and trusted by them, naturally invited to take an active, though unofficial, hand in securing suitable men.

In the year 1858, his burdens in the service of the Seminary were materially increased by the request, on the part of the Board, that he should conduct the senior class in the Department of Systematic and Polemic Theology. The Board had felt that Dr. Wilson needed help in that department. A most excellent man, and very much beloved and respected as such by all who knew him, Dr. Wilson was burdened by years, and could not carry the work. Some of the representatives of the church were in favor of his retirement from the position; to many of the noblest ministers and elders, however, such a course was abhorrent, on account of his eminent character and services. Of this latter party was Dr. Dabney, who always entertained great esteem for his venerable colleague. If the Seminary was not to suffer, however, it was necessary that some one else should take a hand in the teaching of that chair. Dr. Dabney seemed to have the surplus energy and the ability, of every sort, needed, and, accordingly, he was asked to take charge of the senior class, for the session of 1858-'59, in theology, as well as to continue his work in his own chair of Church History and Polity.

He had undoubtedly been the head man, the leading member, of the Seminary Faculty since 1854. This will be made clear, incidentally, in the course of the following paragraphs. It may be noted here that the evidence is abundant that he was regarded, throughout the controlling Synods, as the leading man in the institution. It would not be proper to exhibit this evidence at length. It would, indeed, be invidious; but the following excerpt, from a letter of the Rev. John W. Pugh, of Warrenton, in the Presbytery of Winchester, which had recently passed a set of resolutions reflecting, to a degree, on the

management of the Seminary, may be cited as an example. The letter bears date October 8, 1857. In it, amongst many other things, Mr. Pugh says:

"You may rest assured, however, that at *no time* have you been stronger in the affection and confidence of Winchester Presbytery. We all are rejoiced that Dr. Dabney holds the chair that he does, and if ever any wish for a change, so far as affects him, has entered the mind of any one, it was only that he might occupy the chair of *Didactic and Pastoral Theology*."

The lamented Francis S. Sampson had died on the 9th of April, 1854. His death was a great blow to the Seminary. He was a man of eminent piety, unswerving in the path of duty, very modest and very humble, but very courageous in behalf of right, and against every form of sin. His scholarship was exceptional, and his teaching abilities of a very distinguished order. The churches had begun to appreciate him at his approximate worth. The belief that he should have him as a collaborer, in his efforts to build up the Seminary, and raise it from its decrepit position, had been one thing that reconciled Mr. Dabney to undertake that "almost hopeless enterprise." The death of Dr. Sampson, his most venerated teacher, and then his colleague, only a few years his senior, and knit to him closely by ties of affection and a common deep concern for the Seminary, left Dr. Dabney alone with the venerable Wilson, who was overburdened with years, to carry on the work. On the 24th of April, 1854, Dr. Dabney writes to his brother, Mr. C. W. Dabney:

"Dr. Sampson's death was a great blow to us, and I fear it will be to this institution. He was eminent just in those departments in which good scholarship is rare in this country, Hebrew, etc. His sickness was short, and though his lungs had long been in a suspicious state, he seemed better the last winter than he had been for many years. He leaves a very helpless young family, and dies intestate. But these are comparatively unimportant matters to one who has any proper appreciation of that world which has now been brought so near to us by his entrance into it. I fully believe that he was a good man, and is now blessed. Although his death occurred a few hours earlier than the physicians anticipated, they had only a faint gleam of hope. He was not aware of his *certain* death, even up to the time when he ceased to communicate with his family and attendants; but, from an early stage in his sickness, was aware of the extreme probability of such an issue. I believe that there never was a man who faced such prospects with

more rational calmness. He said to one member of his family about three days before, 'I now experience what I believed before, that a sick, and probably dying, bed would be a miserable place to prepare for eternity. But, thanks to the Redeemer, my preparation is not to be made now. I have been ready for a long time to go any day.' He told his wife several times the last day or two, 'I have a great many things which I should wish to say to you and the children, if I am going to die now; but the doctor says that my little chance for recovery depends entirely on my not talking or getting excited, and my life belongs to the Seminary and to the church as well as to my family.'"

In the summer of 1854 the Board elected Rev. B. M. Smith to fill the chair made vacant by the death of Dr. Sampson. Dr. Dabney was heartily in favor of this election. He believed that Mr. Smith's talents and qualifications were such that he could speedily fit himself for filling the post well, should he concentrate the energies of his very active mind on the accomplishment of that one purpose. With his usual energy and force, he urged Mr. Smith to accept the election. The reply of Mr. Smith does honor to both men. He wrote, July 31, 1854:

"You are a very sincere man. No one ever accuses you of flattering, and you are not generally in the habit of saying pretty things merely to say them, or to compliment others. Your very great earnestness that I should accept this appointment, and the terms in which you speak of me, and of the prospective value of my services, and the serious consequences which might result to our Seminary on my declination, have produced a most painful effect on my mind. If certain others had said twice as much, I do not know that I would have been particularly affected, for I know they use such language, with sincerity, it is true, but as expressive of rather less than it usually means. Instead of any elation being produced, I am profoundly humbled, that in the opinion of so many brethren, and especially in yours, I occupy such a position. I am scared lest, maybe, I have so acted heretofore as to make false impressions, and led others to think of me 'more highly than they ought to think,' but they are doomed to a bitter disappointment. I feel humbled for our church in Virginia and North Carolina, that it is, in any sense, thought to be dependent on me in this matter. I will tell you the truth: I do really fear that in God's controversy with the Seminary and our church, he is sending me there to help break it down, and to do a part towards rearing men for the gospel ministry who will prove dead weights. These are not fantasies. I trust, too, that they will prove to have been only fears; and yet my mind is constantly harassed with convictions of my own unworthiness, and a depressing fear that my brethren expect too much of me. In all this you can easily see *that selfishness* which may be at the bottom, and



yet there is truly a deep concern for the high and solemn interests to which I am called. But enough; I daily pray to go in the strength of a divine arm. . . . Your views of the importance of the position of Union Seminary are exactly mine. I felt their force very much, and they greatly tended to decide my mind."

Dr. Smith did the Seminary great service in the course of his long professorship, but in the *ante bellum* days he was not particularly happy in its service. He was, throughout this period, inclined to be despondent about the future of the Seminary. It is quite possible that Dr. Dabney held him to his post in the Seminary during some of these years.

In 1856, the Rev. William J. Hoge was elected to the newly established professorship of Biblical Introduction and New Testament Literature. Dr. Dabney, probably at the instigation of the Board, had been feeling, with great earnestness, during the preceding session, Dr. Nathan L. Rice, of St. Louis; but Dr. Rice was not willing to allow his name to come before the Board. Dr. Dabney received Dr. Hoge with open arms on his election. Dr. Hoge was a most lovable man, born pastor and preacher. He received numerous and flattering calls to pastorates in 1859, and accepted that to be co-pastor with the venerable Dr. Gardiner Spring, in the Brick Church, New York. About these calls for Dr. Hoge's services, Dr. Dabney writes familiarly to his mother, on the 22nd of February, 1859:

"Another charge of my better half was that I should give you all the points about what now constitutes the chief topic of the talk-mongers, Mr. Hoge's numerous and flattering calls to the cities. . . . I suppose you saw some notice in the papers of Hoge's preaching in New York, and the compliments, etc. Well, a few weeks ago, there came on a deputation of two elders, from the Reformed Dutch Collegiate Church, with a call to be one of their four pastors, at a salary of five thousand dollars a year. This he declined. Last Friday, who should pop in but the veritable old Dr. Gardiner Spring, of New York, pastor of the old *Brick Church*, which has been lately removed in grand style to a very fashionable quarter, high up on Fifth avenue. He is getting old; and his people want to get an assistant, with a view to stepping into his shoes. The next day, two elders (rough-hewn fellows) followed. I suppose their purpose was to get further acquainted with Hoge, with a view to a call. As it was, they came very near not hearing Hoge at all, for it was my day in morning in the church, and there was a Bible Society meeting in the chapel at night. My hoarseness made a good excuse to request Hoge to preach in the poor little N. S.

Church, near the Court-house, in the afternoon. So I lent him my buggy and horse to carry his friends down to see him show his paces. When he got there, Dr. Smith (a Dick-at-the-minute man), who had kindly *volunteered* to perform the service for me, hearing that I was hoarse and desired a substitute, was in the pulpit, and had begun the services. So there was a fix! Hoge dropped down among the hearers. Old Dr. Spring, after fidgetting for a while, actually got up and went into the pulpit during the second hymn, and made a clean breast of it to Smith. Smith, of course, immediately got up and told the congregation that I (R. L. Dabney), whose the service was, had, as he now learned, deputed Brother Hoge to fill my place, and to him he accordingly gave place. So Hoge went up, under these circumstances, and preached. When I invited him, I told him the afternoons were so short he must limit the whole services to an hour; but he, as usual, was lengthy, and held on till dark. Smith says one of the New York elders went to sleep, and waked up highly pleased with the sermon, as was also Dr. Spring. I suppose good Mr. Knapp would have justified his nap by saying that he knew his wise old pastor was there, and wide-awake to watch for him.

"I invited Dr. Spring to preach for me in the church Sunday morning, which he did. He unfortunately misapprehended the size of the house, and spoke as if he had been in a common-sized parlor. Half the people did not hear him; those who did were very much pleased with his dignified simplicity and paternal unction. His preaching is a good deal like Dr. Wilson's, and not any better. He has a little more airish grace, but less animation. A nice old gentleman. I don't know whether they have made Hoge any offer, nor what. If they make him a fair one, I think he will go. . . . Smith is again down in the mouth, of course. He thinks the constant changes will render the success of the Seminary impossible, and those who *can* go, with advantage, are running away from it like rats from a sinking ship. My motto is, 'Never say die.' I am not running away. . . .

"Now you will think this a pretty rigmarole for a sick preacher to write. I will tell you the reason: my mistress says, 'Betty and mother and Lou are so shut up there in the mud, do write something to amuse them. So you see, I had no option, in view of the command, coupled with the well-known fact that a little piquant piece of gossip is the best thing to amuse the ladies.'

The fortunes of the Seminary improved greatly during this period. The number of students became greater than it had been since the death of Dr. Baxter. We shall see the Seminary run the session of 1859-'60 with thirty-eight students. The character of the student body, also, was higher than had been known there for many years.

By his aid, and under his inspiration, in considerable part, the course of studies in the Seminary was reorganized, and greatly improved in plan, the plan being adopted by the Board in 1856. This plan Dr. Dabney set forth in the *Central Presbyterian*, in August, 1856. It contains views, most of which he continued to hold throughout life, as to the proper adjustment of the parts of theological discipline, and as well, defines the spheres, in which he successively labored while connected with the Seminary as a professor. This exhibition of it is as follows:

"1. The first department is that of *Systematic and Pastoral Theology*. (Dr. S. B. Wilson.) This course of instruction begins with a resume of those points of moral science and natural theology which touch the Christian system; and then, assuming the Bible as inspired, proceeds to treat of a full system of revealed theology. The instruction in pastoral theology begins with a discussion of the call to the ministry, and then proceeds to the pastor's duties, responsibilities, temptations and encouragements. In this course of study are expounded the pastoral epistles, *i. e.*, those to Timothy and Titus.

"2. The second department is that of *Oriental Literature*. (Dr. B. M. Smith.) This embraces the instruction in the Hebrew language and literature, and in the Chaldee, together with the study and exposition of all those parts of the Old Testament which are read in the Seminary. This professor also teaches the exposition of the doctrinal epistles of the New Testament and lectures on the theory of hermeneutics, or interpretation.

3. The third department is that of *History and Church Government*. (Dr. R. L. Dabney.) This embraces the history of the Christian Church from the Christian era to the present century, the history of doctrine and theology, and the nature, planting and government of the church. The history of doctrine unfolds the rise of the successive forms of theology and philosophy which have prevailed in Christendom, and embraces the polemical discussion of errors, thus presenting the course of polemic theology, so far that it is not necessarily introduced into systematic divinity. This part of the course is, in short, a discussion of theology historically presented. As an introduction to the history and government of the church, the important parts of the Acts of the Apostles are expounded in this department. Sacred rhetoric is also temporarily committed to it.

"4. The fourth department is that of *Biblical Introduction*. (Rev. William J. Hoge.) The phrase biblical introduction has always been of a somewhat indeterminate meaning and use among theologians, possessing sometimes a wider, and sometimes a more limited sense. The Board, justly regarding it as a *general phrase*, including under itself the special subjects of biblical criticism, antiquities, etc., have adopted it as the title of this department, embracing all those subjects which

prepare the pupil for approaching the direct critical study of the Scriptures themselves. This department, then, embraces a course of biblical archæology, under which are included not only the chronology, geography and antiquities of the Hebrew people, but their political institutions *and history* to the Christian era. These several subjects are not taught separately, as has been before most inconveniently and unphilosophically done; but after the example of De Wette, in his *Archæologie*, are welded into one continuous course of instruction; geography, chronology, antiquities and historical events continually illustrating and impressing each other. In this way, several minor studies, which have usually been regarded by divinity students as irksome, trivial and 'scrappy,' are formed into a course worthy the interest and labor of any professor or of any students. The fourth department also includes *biblical criticism* proper, *i. e.*, the discussion of the state of the text; and the canon, in which study is included the whole discussion of the evidences of inspiration. It has been common for the Professor of Biblical Literature to give a course of instruction on the canon of Scripture, *i. e.*, the consideration which entitle each separate book to its place in the *list* of inspired writings, and for the Professor of Theology also to introduce his course of revealed theology with some discussion of the evidences of the inspiration of the Bible. This ill-arranged method resulted either in two incomplete discussions of this fundamental topic, or in inconvenient repetitions. The two subjects are now thrown together, for they are in fact one; so that the Professor of Theology approaches his subject with the postulate that the Bible is inspired, and proceeds at once to draw from it his system of doctrines. The Professor of Biblical Introduction also teaches the exposition of the Gospels to the newly arrived students, as introductory to that more thorough exegetical work to which they will proceed when, better furnished with their critical apparatus, they attempt the difficulties of Hebrew poetry and prophecy and of the doctrinal epistles.

"The numbers which we have used above, of course, do not indicate the order in which the student will approach the several departments, but only the seniority of the professorships. The logical and natural order of approach is rather this (and the consideration of it will, we think, display the consistency of the arrangement above unfolded): the student begins with the great fact that the Word of God (in the originals) is the grand repository of all the *data* of the science of divinity. First, then, he will apply himself to those preparatory studies (biblical introduction) which are necessary to facilitate his study of the Bible itself when he directly approaches it, connecting with them, of course, the mastering of the Hebrew language. Having thus arrived, as it were, at the open door of the temple of divine truth, equipped with the necessary means for its inspection, his second step is to enter in and acquaint himself in detail with its contents. This is the work of hermeneutics and exposition, which chiefly occupies the Professor

of 'Oriental Literature.' The student is now possessed of the data of his science; but they are not in scientific order. He needs, therefore, to proceed next to the Professor of Systematic and Pastoral Theology, who teaches him, with the Bible still in his hand, to methodize and understand the mutual relations of the Scripture facts and doctrines, that they may assume in his mind the strength of a *system*. But the student intends to use that system not only as a believer, but as a minister; not only for his own enlightening, but for the redemption of men. This is pastoral theology. But once more: that saving system of truths has developed itself in a great organization, the Christian Church. In the thinking and acting of this vast society, God's truth has worked itself out as mixed with and modified by the sins and the traits of that human nature, with which the minister has to deal. The student must, therefore, mature his knowledge by studying this living exemplification, in the events and opinions of the church. And as he is also to be an officer in the visible kingdom of Christ, he must study both scripturally and historically the nature, functions and organization of that kingdom. This finally equips him for the actual use of his knowledge as 'a scribe instructed into the kingdom of heaven.'

"The prime and fundamental idea which has governed in this distribution of studies is obviously to make the Bible the great centre of study, and the biblical department the great one. Our Seminary has, in fact, two biblical professors. Instead of limiting *biblical literature* to one-fourth, or a little more than one-fourth of the course, and giving to it only a fourth of the professional labor, the idea here is to make it the grand concern, to make it *a half of the whole course*, and to give it *the labor of two professors*, distributing its parts among them in a natural and convenient order. This institution was intended by its great founder, Dr. John H. Rice, to be a school of *Biblical Theology*; and now at length, twenty-five years after his death, his wise and scriptural conception begins to be realized. According to that conception, the *Bible*, THE BIBLE, is the text-book of the theologian, and the grand concern of his training is to fit him for understanding its contents. While the importance of pastoral theology, or of polemic theology, or of church government, or any of those studies which have been sometimes erected into professorships, is not depreciated, it seems to us, in view of the great principle we have just announced, a great waste of labor and learning, to devote a man's whole time in this way, where only four men can be had. Far better that the great biblical department be made complete, whatever else is left incomplete; for it is there that the essential work of learning Bible truth must be done. These biblical studies again should be most perfected in the Seminary, because they are most likely to be least cultivated in subsequent life. But lay the foundation here thoroughly, and a respectable theological progress in after life is ensured.

"Nor are the less important departments of pastoral, polemic and

ecclesiastical study depreciated in their distribution at this Seminary. On the contrary, we believe they are placed where they can be taught to better advantage, and with less repetition and loss of time, than if they, or any two of them, were erected into a separate professorship. It is most natural and facile for the professor who has just shown how to systematize the truths of redemption, to show the proper mode of their presentation to the human mind, that is, the conduct of the pastoral work. The polemical refutation of errors should ever be connected with the history of their occurrence, except so far as that refutation is unavoidable in treating systematic divinity. The erection of polemics into a department, separate both from the history of heresies, and the demonstration of the contrasted truths, is not justified by the old and usual plea that error, like truth, ought to be discussed as a whole and a system. Error cannot be truly systematized; it is self-contradictory and inconsistent. And the experiment of the polemical treatment of theology in the Protestant universities of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was unlucky. It did not promote orthodoxy; and it produced a type of pastors dry, bitter and barren in their spirits. Where else can error be so well considered, as amidst the native circumstances where it actually grew up? Again: the subject of church government ought never to be separated from that of church history. When the history of the church is presented, all the materials are provided for the historical argument on its government; and a Professor of Church Government could not discuss that argument without repeating the facts already stated by the church historian.

"The second and subordinate idea which has governed in this distribution of studies is that each professor shall be required to expound some portion of the original Scriptures. This is important to the teacher himself, that he may be brought into immediate contact with the Word of God in his studies; and that the reverential regard for the inspired Word as the only safe evidence of his propositions, and wholesome distrust of mere human speculations, may be cultivated. Exegetical study is the great means for cultivating a right literary spirit in the theologian. This idea is important also, as an application of the first principle, that the Bible is the text-book. The pastoral epistles are the text-book of pastoral theology; the Book of Acts, of church government, and to a certain extent of church history. It may be objected, that as the Professor of Theology will be chosen primarily for his theological ability, and not for his exegetical, and the Professor of History chiefly for his historical knowledge, the exposition committed to them is likely to be worse taught than if it were committed to its appropriate professor, who has been chosen for his fitness for this very thing. The answer is, that the man who cannot expound Scripture respectably can certainly never be qualified to teach Christian theology. And the portion of the Scriptures committed to these non-biblical professors is so small that, even if they are expounded by

them less perfectly, the student's loss is over-balanced by the advantages of the arrangement which have been pointed out.

"Once more; none but the Professor of History can treat the subject of Historical Theology to the best advantage, because his studies lead him perpetually into the immediate neighborhood of that subject, and because the events of history are often determined by the opinions found in history. The interest and value of this course of instruction, as illustrative of that on systematic divinity, can scarcely be overstated. The study of systematic theology is like the labor of the botanist or mineralogist arranging his dried specimens and ores in a cabinet; the study of the history of theology is like that of the same inquirer, examining and gathering those specimens as they bloom on the living plant or lie embedded in their native strata. The truest and readiest means to apprehend the relations and affinities of any dogma is to learn the circumstances amidst which it was originated. We are convinced that when once the student's mind is possessed of the current ideas and nomenclature of theology, there is no study, except that of the Scriptures themselves, which can contribute so much as this to the fullness and maturity of his opinions, and to his familiarity and readiness in their defence.

"It may be stated that the leading ideas which underlie this classification of studies are known to have been favorite ones with some of the wisest fathers of our Israel. Perhaps the particular shape which has been given to the arrangement was determined as much by the advice of the lamented Sampson as by any other cause.

"For the first time since the disastrous separation of 1837, the Seminary is now brought again to the model designed by the General Assembly in its foundation. Its faculty is complete in numbers. Everything seems to be in that situation where success is certainly within reach of vigorous effort. May not the Seminary ask of the churches the generous support which will realize that success? Much has been recently done for the enlargement of its funds and buildings; but much yet remains to be done, or the efforts of its friends will be partially abortive."

The material side of the institution had advanced greatly. The endowment had been very much increased, a fourth professorship had been established, and a new and commodious residence for a professor had been built; and it is merely bare justice to Dr. Dabney to say that all this advance was largely the result of his influence. He was, in this period, the one professor, in the vigor of his powers, who regarded himself as permanently attached to the Seminary; the one professor, in the vigor of his prime, who could not be tempted to remove, who did not despair or despond about his work, who was happy

in his work. His services to the institution, to its general interests, in these years, can hardly be put too high. His colleagues were noble men, and did good service, but he was preëminent among them as a servant of the institution; he could write, in the beginning of 1858-'59, when the number of students was small again for a year:

"Some of my colleagues seem mortified and discouraged; but I allow none of these things to disturb my peace or provoke murmurs. I feel conscious that our depression is not due to my fault; and I try to go on working just as cheerily as though I were confident of succeeding admirably. If I had foreknown that I was not to have Dr. Sampson's coöperation in attempting to resuscitate this Seminary, I suppose I never should have thought for a moment of coming here, for my confidence in his capacity and influence was my main dependence. So judged Dr. McGuffey. . . . However, I am now in for it. The Directors have treated me with noble generosity and confidence; and I feel it my duty to labor for them (which I can do happily), even under discouragements, till perseverance plainly appears to be folly."<sup>2</sup>

He anticipated no such aspect of perseverance. He believed the Seminary ought to succeed, and set himself to make it succeed. His devotion to the interests of the institution received a signal illustration in the year 1858, when the Trustees of Hampden-Sidney College came in a body to his house, and into his sick chamber, and urged him, with unanimous voices, to accept the presidency of that College, to which they had just elected him. The reader is at liberty to suppose that Dr. Dabney was pleased with such a manifestation of confidence on the part of the venerable Board of Trustees; but the call was altogether unsolicited, and was at once politely declined, on the ground that his duty was to the Seminary. The presidency of the College was, at the time, a more dignified position than his professorship in the Seminary, and the emoluments were much greater; but he was not to be moved by such things from the path of duty.

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<sup>2</sup> Letter to Mr. C. W. Dabney, October 21, 1858.



## CHAPTER XI.

PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY AND POLITY.

(Continued.)

(August, 1853—May, 1859.)

LITERARY LABORS: MEMOIR OF SAMPSON; CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE "CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN," THE "PRESBYTERIAN CRITIC," AND THE "SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW."—INCIDENTAL LABORS AS PULPIT SUPPLY, AS PROFESSOR OF MENTAL AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN HAMPDEN-SIDNEY COLLEGE, 1857-'58.—TRIPS TO NEW YORK.—MEANWHILE, A CHECKERED HOME LIFE: A DEVOTED WIFE; OTHER CHILDREN BORN; DEATHS OF JIMMY AND BOBBY.—HIS GRIEF.—EFFECTS ON HIS PREACHING.—SYMPATHY SHOWN.—IMPERFECT HEALTH.—A VOLUMINOUS CORRESPONDENCE ALL THE WHILE.—MUCH CONSULTED.—LETTERS FROM HIS FRIENDS AT TINKLING SPRING.—LETTER FROM THOMAS J. KIRKPATRICK.—LETTERS TO HIS WIFE.—HIS SOCIAL LIFE AT HAMPDEN-SIDNEY.—THE VIRGINIA SOCIETY HE LOVED.

ALTHOUGH these years were so busy in professorial endeavor, and his vacations taken up in touring in the interests of the Seminary, Mr. Dabney found time to write a good deal for publication. His most dignified production of this kind was his *Memoir of Dr. Sampson*, a very respectable brief sketch. Dr. Sampson's life, like that of most scholars, had been relatively quiet and uneventful. The *Memoir* is a character sketch, rather than a life. As such, it is an acute and able piece of work, though wanting in the charm that more of incident and fuller narration would have given it. The volume was written by Dr. Dabney in 1854, by order of the Board, and was handsomely printed, in Richmond, Va. It was a thin octavo. It has been republished in the fourth volume of the *Discussions*. He also edited, during the next two years, Dr. Sampson's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. He prepared a preface for this, and expended no inconsiderable labor on the body of the work as editor.

His contributions to the *Watchman and Observer*, and to its successor after 1855, *The Central Presbyterian*, in this period,

would have made a respectable little volume. In 1853, an article on "The Danger of Secular Prosperity to Christians"; in 1854, a vigorous article on "The Inadequate Support of the Ministry," and one embodying an "Appeal of the Board of Directors of the Union Theological Seminary," appeared. During 1855, he took a hand in converting the *Watchman and Observer* into *The Central Presbyterian*, under the editorship of Messrs. Moore, Hoge, *et al.* The rising leaders of Presbyterianism in Virginia had determined to have a paper conducted with more alertness and vigor than that which had characterized the *Watchman and Observer*. They proposed to make it the medium for the expression of Virginian Presbyterian views, theological, ecclesiastical, moral, and evangelical, and an instrumentality for furthering the interests of the church in their region, and beyond, wherever they could secure entrance. The scheme was consummated during the year 1855. *The Central Presbyterian* came into existence the first week of January, 1856. Drs. Hoge and Dabney had much correspondence on the subject. The part Dr. Dabney took in the enterprise is indicated in the following letter:

"November 7, 1855.

"DEAR BROTHER HOGE: Your letter was handed me by the Rev. I. L. Wilson, in Greensboro. I was very glad to hear that the *longæ ambages* about the paper were brought to a conclusion, and that so much was done in setting the project afloat. I made a talk in the Synod of North Carolina about the project, which was received with very great satisfaction. All, nearly without exception, seemed to hail it as good news, said that there would be no difficulty in largely increasing the subscription list, and promised coöperation. I got, as you will see, four subscriptions besides my own. I fear that I shall find it hard to furnish the cash for the first half of my share; but if it is necessary, I will either raise or borrow the money. If you will recur to our correspondence, you will find that this idea was expressed; that for the purchase of the paper, Mr. Gildersleeve only asked bonds well secured, as he only wished a safe and profitable investment. I replied that I would cheerfully give my bond for \$100 to him, to be paid with not more than a year's delay, or thereabouts. I do not mention this as a ground for *declining* the cash advance which the terms of our joint stock company require; but as an explanation of my unreadiness. It might, perhaps, seem that such an unpreparedness was inconsistent in one of the chief advocates of the plan.

"My opinion *clearly* is (as Dr. Green's) that we ought to *begin* with an enlargement of the paper. I would like that our first number should be a seven-column paper, so that we could make our first appear-

ance before the public, saying, 'You see we give you at once an enlarged return for your money; and this is an earnest of the liberal policy with which we will repay liberal patronage.' I believe that the issue of the paper from a form of the same size with the *Watchman* will have a disastrous effect, though the typographical appearance is improved. People will say, 'Well, it is the same old "slow coach" under a new name; this little blush of improvement will only last a few months.' I believe in a liberal policy as the most profitable.

"The Carolina brethren expressed cordial feelings to our Seminary, with perhaps one exception. They say they wish us to get money from their churches; and that they must have a native true Carolinian in the Faculty. We had a new student the other day from Rockbridge. Our whole number this session has been twenty. Only nineteen are now in connection.

"My boy Robert has been very ill with an inflammatory sore throat, and was at death's door while I was gone. I received a dispatch while in Greensboro, Sunday night, and returned hurriedly, in great anxiety. Jimmy is now taking it, and Bob is convalescent. We do not know what is in store for us. I greatly fear for our infant, for the disease seems to be epidemic among children. With kind regards to Mrs. Hoge.

"Yours affectionately,

"R. L. DABNEY."

Early in 1856, he published in the newspaper an article on "Removal of Ministers," and on the 29th of March, another and a notable article—a leader—on "Pray for Your Country." This paper was a plea for peace. It was written at a time when nearly all Southerners were lulled into false security by the "Clay Compromise," on the free-soil question. It took the ground that the calm was deceitful, that the storm was coming, that the politicians were powerless to avert it, and that the country would be ruined unless God interposed, and the Christian conscience came to the rescue. It reads like a prophecy. On June 28, 1856, came out, not only in the *Central*, but in the Presbyterian papers generally, the Pastoral Letter of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church on Ministerial Support, penned by him. During the summer, in a series of articles, in the *Central* also, he reviewed the Assembly of that year, in a popular, but trenchant manner. Then followed his "Exposition of the Course of Studies in Union Theological Seminary," "A Macedonian Cry," and an editorial on "The Necessity and Importance of a Law-abiding Spirit." In 1857 came "St. Ambrose's Morning Hymn," with notes illustrative, and two editorials on "Were the Vaudois Prelatic in Church Order?"

another on the "Wants of the Board of Domestic Missions," and "Systematic Benevolence," and about a half-dozen other editorials, including a capital article headed "Our Examination Rule." This paper was devoted to a justification of the Old School requirement, that a Presbytery shall examine on theology ministers coming from sister Presbyteries.

During March and April, 1858, he published a "Review of Breckinridge's Theology," in which he handled, in a manner thorough and severe, the audacious Dr. Bob. The review received wide approval. Dr. John Maclean, President of the College of New Jersey, wrote to the editors and publishers of *The Central Presbyterian*, on April 8, 1858:

"Let me take this opportunity to say that I have read with much pleasure the review of Breckinridge's Theology by one of your correspondents. The review is both able and just, and reflects great credit upon the writer. I trust he is not done, and that he will take notice of Dr. B.'s adoption of Staffer's opinions on the subject of imputation. Have you seen the article in the New York *Evangelist*, in which it is exultingly said that Dr. B. holds new school views in regard to this important doctrine? When the professors in our theological seminaries are inaugurated, do they not give a solemn promise to teach no doctrine inconsistent with the standards of our church? Is the doctrine of 'mediate imputation' a doctrine of our 'Confession of Faith'? Has Dr. B. sinned wilfully, or through ignorance? I hope the latter, taking the exposition of the doctrine as he found it in Staffer, and believing it to be a happy mode of presenting the subject, not knowing that it is subversive of the faith as it is taught in our standards. Is it not incumbent upon the General Assembly of our church to inquire into this matter? I am sorry that some of our Presbyterian papers were committed in favor of the book before the editors had informed themselves respecting its structure, its plagiarisms and its erroneous teachings. I hope you will have the review in your paper published in a pamphlet form, on good paper and fair type. It ought to be widely circulated in our church. If sold at twenty-five, or even at fifty cents a copy, a very large number would be purchased by members of other churches, as well as by persons belonging to our own church, at least I think so. I form my judgment from what I know of the views I have heard expressed by different persons in regard to the desirableness of a republication of the review in pamphlet form."

Dr. Dabney was almost as little inclined to commit himself to immediate imputation as to mediate. He did up Breckinridge thoroughly, without altogether pleasing Princeton in the end.

In January, 1859, he published, in the *Central*, his "Treatise on a Call to the Ministry." This, republished in pamphlet form, has been very fruitful of good. In the issues of January 22nd and 29th appeared, also, as an editorial, his "What is to be Done?" in which he undertakes to show how we may reach the destitute, without lowering our standard of ministerial education, or in any wise change our Presbyterian system. In an editorial, in the issue of May 28th, he argues overwhelmingly against the social dance. These are only some of his articles in the *Central* during this period. His articles sometimes appeared as editorials, sometimes as contributions, sometimes signed, and sometimes unsigned.

He was a contributor, and something more, too, to that bright publication of brief life, *The Presbyterian Critic*, which was founded in 1855, and lived only two years. He writes of his relation to this periodical to his brother, Mr. C. W. Dabney, on the 20th of January, 1855:

"I have embarked with Mr. Robinson and a few other of our ministers in the publication of a monthly of a rather nondescript character. It is devoted prevalently to religious and denominational matters; and is intended to be less heavy and formal than the quarterlies, but more substantial than a weekly newspaper. The pecuniary risk on my side is very small, only about twenty-five dollars, and, indeed, small on all sides. We buy no material, and do not even have an office. The whole work is done by contract, and the few accounts necessary kept in the counting-room of a Presbyterian book-seller in Baltimore, who acts as general agent. Each monthly edition will be sold chiefly as Harper's is. The sales in every case are for cash, and the co-partnership lasts only for one year. The worst risk, therefore, which we run, is that if it should not be popular enough to sell, we may sink the fund of a few hundred dollars, which we raise to start with, by a small contribution from each member. But I have no fear it will not sell. Each member of the association has a circle of friends who would buy it from personal motives; and these, put together, will make most enough to support it. And there is no fear, from the pens which are enlisted, that it will not be spirited enough to draw attention. A part of them are Rev. Stuart Robinson, William Hoge of Baltimore, Dr. McGuffey, J. H. Boccock, Dr. R. J. Breckinridge of Kentucky, Ben Smith, etc. The Northern Presbyterian journals are so excessively genteel and proper, so full of cowardly prudence, and so hide-bound about admitting any novelty of discussion, that they have sunk into the unutterable dullness of aristocratic gentility. They 'stand so high' that they have the quiet and freezing atmosphere of Mount Blanc."

*The Presbyterian Critic*, under the direction of Stuart Robinson, assisted by Thomas E. Peck, was one of the strongest and breeziest publications that the Old School Church, or her heir, the Southern Church, has ever been blessed with. There were giants in those days, stars of magnitude, and amongst them all there was not a greater giant than R. L. Dabney. Others of these stars scintillated more brightly, but there was a steady luminousness about him equal to that of any of the rest. In the first volume of the *Critic* he has papers on "Relation of our Theological Seminaries to our System of Government," "Relation of the Seminaries to the General Assembly," "Sabbath Railroad Trains," "Abstractionists," "Gospel Idea of Preaching," "Review of Bledsoe on Liberty and Slavery," "Influence of Popery on Literature and Mental Cultivation."

He was also an occasional, as well as a valued, contributor to the *Southern Presbyterian Review*. The editors write to him, and tell him that they desire just such contributions as he makes, and that they wish them to come more frequently and regularly. The appreciation in which his writings in this period were held by the readers of the *Review* may be fairly illustrated by the following letter from the Hon. Job Johnston, of South Carolina:

"NEWBERRY, February 8, 1858.

"DEAR SIR: Pardon the liberty taken by one entirely unknown to you in addressing you thus unceremoniously. I have read with uncommon pleasure your article on 'The Sabbath Controversy,' published in the last October number of the *Southern Presbyterian Review*; and have drawn the attention of others, on whose judgment and piety I strongly rely, to it; and from their opinion of it, concurring with my own, I am induced to suggest to you that if it were published as a separate tract by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, it might do infinite service to the cause of truth and religion.

"It seems to me that it is a work which, in brief limits, more completely exhausts the question which it handles than any I have seen. The style is clear, and so far well suited to produce popular effect. The question discussed is one of vital importance; and it is very desirable that a production so well calculated to give it a satisfactory solution should be elevated from the ranks of fugitive to that of permanent sacred literature. . . .

"With sincere respect, etc.,

"JOB JOHNSTON."

The labors peculiar to his burdensome professorship, and his more diversified labors in behalf of the general interests of the

Seminary, and these literary labors, wanted much of absorbing all the energies of this young professor of Church History; he performed much in the way of pulpit supply. During the years 1855 and 1856, he supplied the New Store Church, in Buckingham county, which was distant from the Hill eighteen miles; then the Village Church, at Charlotte Courthouse, which was twenty-one miles off, and Briery, which was fourteen miles from Hampden-Sidney; and in 1858, he and Dr. B. M. Smith took charge of the College Church, first as supplies, and then as co-pastors, a relation which was to continue down to 1875, when, in consequence of a spell of bronchitis, he resigned the pastoral office.

The character of his preaching has been described by one of the students at the Seminary during the period, the Rev. W. T. Price. He writes:

“Dr. Dabney’s preaching was pungent and searching, and, in instances known to myself and others that I have heard of, the searching of heart and a sense of unworthiness have been such as to overwhelm pure-hearted, conscientious young seminarians to such an extent that they would not be equal to their student duties for days, and it sometimes looked as if they might give up in despairing sense of unfitness, and relinquish their studies for the ministry. Whenever I think of the influence exerted by some of his sermons, what is told us about apostolic preaching readily recurs, where Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, observes, ‘For behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourselves; yea, what indignation; yea, what fear; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge.’

“In every instance, however, known to me, except one, the parties so exercised have attained high reputation as useful, spiritually-minded, eminent ministers. The exception referred to became a good physician, and one of the very useful, conscientious Christian laymen of his vicinity, in a large city.”

In the autumn of 1857, the President of Hampden-Sidney College, the Rev. Lewis Green, D. D., severed his connection with the College, and went to Kentucky. The Trustees asked Dr. Dabney to teach the senior class the course in Mental and Moral Philosophy, usually taught by the President. As something incidental to his other labors in the community, he did all the President’s teaching work for one year, receiving therefor three hundred and twenty dollars. His success in teaching Philosophy there gave a considerable impulse to his reputation,

and led, as we have seen, to his unanimous election to the presidency of the College.

In 1856, he served his Presbytery by going as representative to the General Assembly, which convened that year in New York. He does not seem to have taken a prominent part in debate, but he was a most interested observer, and keen critic of the work of the Assembly, and of the great city in which it sat, as the following letters show :

"NEW YORK, *Monday, May 19, 1856.*

"MY DEAR WIFE: I do not remember now how much I told you in my last letter of our prospective arrangements, so I will just begin at the beginning. We left the St. Nicholas Friday evening, Anne and Betty to go to Mr. King's, where there were some Albemarle people staying with Cousin Harriet, and I to go to Dr. James Alexander's. I did not go near the Committee of Arrangements Friday morning when I went up to the First Church, where the Assembly was sitting. To those who inquired why, I said simply that I had ladies with me. Dr. James Alexander came to me, saying that he was a member of the Committee of Arrangements; but he would just cut the matter short by taking me to his house, where he had a spare room. I very gladly went, and found old Mrs. McClung, Mrs. Lyle, Miss Mary Lou Reid, and one of the Miss Waddels there. So we have a purely Virginia crowd. It is a delightful place, and I have had a pleasant room to myself till Mr. William Hoge, of Baltimore, came to-day. He is not a member of Assembly, but came here, having heard of his election, to see Mr. Harrison and me about it. I see very little of sisters Anne and Betty. The Assembly keeps me so busy, and New York is such a big place, that it is hard for me to go over there. I will try to see them to-night. Yesterday (Sunday) I went over to Brooklyn and preached for Mr. Van Dyke, and dined with him. The big guns, Drs. Humphrey, Thornwell, Rice, Plumer, etc., preached at several of the most prominent churches. I missed hearing Dr. Rice, but heard Dr. Thornwell last night, on the subject of Foreign Missions. I had not been introduced to him, but he sent to ask me to sit in the pulpit with him and make the closing prayer. He preached a noble sermon. He is a *common* looking little stoop-shouldered man; but he has a fine mind. His manners are very simple, friendly and natural. There was a tremendous congregation, and four people (perched up in a box) did all the singing.

"I have not taken any part yet in the business of the Assembly. There are so many that want to talk, and the body is so intolerant of any waste of words, that I shall be very chary. Dr. Breckinridge is not here, but is very poorly.

"Saturday evening I went with sisters to a concert. I will tell



you more about it when I see you. It was given in a building called the Academy of Music, which is fixed like an opera-house. This is a grand city. In many parts the houses are palaces. I promise myself great pleasure in telling you all these things. But I cannot tarry on them longer now, for it is late in the evening, and I am a long way from the post-office. If I don't get a letter there I shall feel very sad. The Secretary of the Assembly has several times received bundles of letters for members, and read out the names. My heart beat so that I could hardly sit still; but my name was not called. Amidst all the intense excitement of this great city, I never forget to pray for you and dear Charley morning and evening. May God bless you, my darling, and keep your soul and body in health. May our little boy grow and flourish like an olive plant beside our table.

"YOUR AFFECTIONATE HUSBAND."

"NEW YORK, *Friday evening, May 23, '56.*

"MY DEAR WIFE: . . . The matters of our Seminary went through the Assembly entirely smoothly. They have nominated Stuart Robinson for Danville. Dr. Breckinridge is not here, but has sent Dr. Humphrey to manage things for him; and he has done it most adroitly. He hoodwinked Mr. Harrison completely, so that *he* actually got up on the floor and made a Danville speech. Dr. Rice thought, as I did, that the Assembly was completely entrapped; but he said that he was tongue-tied by considerations of prudence, as I was. I went there, determined that, to manage the thing as they might, I would not open my mouth. I think they have made fools enough of themselves; but so be it; it is the concern of the Assembly, and not mine. They will find out the trap into which the have gone soon enough. Humphrey has actually managed to get the Assembly to say that there is a covenant engagement, binding *all* future General Assemblies to secure a full endowment for Danville, as a first-class seminary of the whole church, and that it earnestly advises *all* the churches under their care, including Prince Edward, for instance, to give money to Danville. Nobody dreams that the Assembly means it; but they have said it; and Dr. Breckinridge has his policy in it. He knows what use to make of it. We shall see.

"To-morrow the Assembly is invited, along with the New School General Assembly, on a steamboat excursion. They have issued twelve hundred tickets, of which I have gotten two for Anne and Betty. They say it is a grand affair; I expect it will be to me a grand *bore*. . . .

"As ever, your loving husband,

"Love to mamma."

R. L. D."

"NEW YORK, *Thursday night, May 29, 1856.*

"MY DEAR LOVE: I went to the post-office this morning, and got your sweet, precious letter, which seems to have been written last

Saturday. It made me happier than you can conceive, unless you judge by your own love for me; both because I heard that you and Charley were well, and because of the dear words of love you wrote in it. Nobody can write so sweetly as you. As soon as I saw your handwriting I tore the letter open, and began to read it in the midst of the great crowd which throngs that place at every hour, forgetful of pick-pockets, curious eyes and everything else. When I had run my eye hastily over it, devouring the contents as a horse devoureth the ground, with his swiftness, I lifted up my heart, with a long, long sigh, in thankfulness for your welfare, and then put it away, to be read again in the quietness of my own chamber.

"The Assembly adjourned very late last night, after hurrying through a great deal of work for a day or two. Dr. McFarland delivered a very appropriate and feeling valedictory, and one of his best prayers. We then sung the hymn,—

"'Come, Christian brethren, e'er we part,'—

to the Old Hundredth (making, to my ear, better music than all the organs in the world), with the doxology, and separated. It was the most solemn moment of the sessions. Many of the members left this morning. I have spent to-day in shopping and sight-seeing. But there is a drawback on all my pleasure: you are not with me to share it. Sometimes I think that if you *could* not come consistently with duty (as I know you could not), I ought not to have consented to come and see or enjoy anything without you, and that it is selfish to do so. But I know your love will not judge thus. I see a great many things which are extremely interesting; but I am not happy, except for a few minutes when I forget myself. My soul goes hankering after my Binney and Charley.

"This morning Mr. King took us in and through the custom-house, a most massive marble building; the Merchants' Exchange; the church and steeple of Trinity, whence we had a most noble view. I went then with Betty into the Dusseldorf Gallery of pictures, a collection of the works of a certain company of German artists, celebrated for brilliant and tender coloring; but, above all, to see a glorious, inexpressible picture, which is now exhibited free at a store, Maria Antoinette coming out of court after she had been condemned to death by the revolutionists in France. No words can describe it. It was painted by a celebrated French painter, De La Roche, and belongs to a German prince—Von something or other. The way it comes here is curious, and will illustrate the way many such things are done in New York. Some of these New York merchants have *hired* the picture (hardly any money could buy it), and brought it to America for a while. They will have a large *engraved* copy made of it, and advertise that the picture itself may be seen at a certain store, *free of charge*. Their ideas are that they will get subscribers to the engraving which is to be made, and which they sell at from ten dollars to twenty dollars for a single

sheet. I bought a handsome copy of Jay's *Morning and Evening Exercises* for you, the bonnet, the hat for Charley, as exactly like your directions as possible, and as fine as a fiddle. I have a most noble copy of the Book of Psalms, which the American Bible Society has presented to you, with each letter nearly as big as your little fingernail. The rest we will arrange hereafter. Did I not write you night before last about the party I was invited to at Mr. Jeffray's? I fixed up as smart as I could, and went about half after ten. (Pretty hours, you will say, for a parson.) I did not see that it was any better than what I have often seen in old Virginia. I send you herewith the invitation. The lady is the daughter of Dr. Phillips.

"Saturday, the day your letter was written, I was by no means pent up in brick walls, but making our notable steamboat excursion on New York bay. I send you a copy of the *New York Observer*, containing an account of it, very much exaggerated. To-morrow morning we start for Niagara. I did not conclude to go till I got your letter this morning, when, finding that you were all well, and that you were willing for me to go, and that my sisters were anxious to go, I concluded to venture. I do not know that we shall ever have a better chance; and everybody who can should see that great work of the Creator once. Besides, I have worked hard, and made several hundred dollars extra this last year, and I feel like indulging myself, and my better self, my Binney, was not unreasonable. Hold yourself in readiness, when we return, for a trip to Old Point. The sea-bathing is the very thing for you. If you get that money from Walker, and take tolerable care of it, we shall have enough left to make it out very well. A fortnight there would cost us about fifty dollars, and I think it would do you a great deal of good.

"I cannot say exactly when we will be able to return. We will get to Niagara, we hope, Saturday evening, and it is possible we *may* return to New York by the Erie railroad Monday night. If we do, we shall leave here Tuesday, and go to Princeton, N. J., where I want to spend a few hours. Then we will take the road for home.

"I hope you have at last gotten off to Louisa. I should have enjoyed my visit here a great deal more if I could have known that you were in dear, good mamma's society. I will send this to Thompson's X-Roads. Now, I bid you good-night, with a thousand kisses. May the angel of the Lord encamp round about you this night.

"YOUR OWN HUSBAND."

Dr. Dabney made a second trip to New York in 1858. The occasion of this journey was to preach for the Board of Foreign Missions, on Sabbath evening, the 2nd of May. Early in the year he had been requested, by the Executive Committee of the board to preach this sermon. He anticipated a large and select audience. He was equal to the occasion. Taking for his text

John iv. 35. "Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to the harvest," he put his subject into the form of a predication followed by an injunction: *The World White to the Harvest; Reap, or it Perishes*. The sermon was at once popular, profound and powerful; he believed that "the same vast, old, familiar truths, which made Paul, Peter, Jesus Christ, missionaries, viz., that the whole human race are children of wrath, and in the highway to everlasting ruin," and that we know of the one way of salvation, must move our missionary efforts also. Dr. John A. Broadus, the late prince amongst our Baptist brethren, pronounced this sermon to be "one of the most powerful sermons with which he was acquainted."<sup>3</sup>

While undergoing all these labors, Dr. Dabney had experienced a chequered home life. He had, indeed, a pleasant home. Though he spent the first years of his residence at the Seminary in the eastern end of the main building, he removed to the new residence, whose construction he had superintended, as soon as it was completed, and thenceforth commanded a picturesque and attractive house, with ample premises. He was also blessed with a wife of marked faithfulness and devotion, whom he loved fervidly, and who loved him "better than her own life." She bore him other children, too—Charles William, on the 19th of June, 1855, while they were still residing in the residence portion of the main building; Thomas Price, on the 5th of September, 1857; Samuel Brown, on the 8th of June, 1859, and Louis Meriweather, on the 11th of August, 1865. The last three sons were born in the new residence. Dr. Dabney's love for his children was strong, like all his affections; but the Lord not only gave him these little ones to love, he took from him his two first-born, in the year that Charles William came, and in

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<sup>3</sup> This sermon appears in the first volume of the *Discussions*. Dr. Dabney was entertained, while in New York on this occasion, in the home of Dr. J. Leighton Wilson, a circumstance which did much to heighten the warm friendship which was growing up between the great secretary and the young professor. Dr. Dabney came to have, as will appear, a vast respect, as well as vast affection, for Dr. Wilson. It is said that Dr. Dabney and Dr. Peck had, a few years later, so much respect for Dr. Wilson, that when he visited the Seminary periodically, their *manner* of speaking of him to the students, even when their words were few, filled the student body with huge respect for Dr. Wilson and his cause, and gave great impetus to the missionary cause.

1862 the fourth son was also taken away. Two out of the three he looked upon as his very brightest children. In these bereavements, he suffered as only a very strong man, a man of persistence and intensity of character equally marked, could suffer. They were all carried off by diphtheria, and the awful sufferings incident to the disease made the stroke all the harder for the parents. The following letters set forth the affliction, as he saw it and felt it; and they also serve to indicate, possibly, a part of the divine purpose in the chastisement:

*Ch. W. Dabney, Esq.*

*“November 15, 1855.*

“MY DEAR BROTHER: YOUR letter was received yesterday, and found us in great sorrow. I was very grateful for the cheerful kindness and affection breathing from it; and could not but think how sympathizing your language would have been, if you had known at the time the sorrowful circumstances in which it would find us. Last Monday, a little after 12 o'clock, our little Jimmy was taken from us by that fearful enemy of the young, putrid sore throat. Just a fortnight before, Bob had been taken, at first not very violently; but afterwards he was for two days and nights at death's door. When he was taken, I was about to start to the Synod of North Carolina, at Greensboro, about one hundred and forty miles off. I hesitated a good deal about starting, but Lavinia thought I might venture. From the time I left, Bobby grew rapidly worse; and Sunday evening I got a letter and telegram, telling me that he was extremely ill. His attack had developed itself as putrid sore throat, and threatened suffocation. I started that night, travelled all night, and reached home the next night about 8 P. M. Bobby was greatly relieved, but exceedingly feeble, having had a terrific attack. Now he is feeble, and threatened with a rising on the neck. The rest seemed well, but the next evening (last Tuesday week) we discovered that Jimmy was chilly and feverish, and, in short, had the sore throat. We used prompt measures, and sent early for the doctor, who did not think his case dangerous; but he grew gradually worse until Sunday, when his symptoms became alarming, and he passed away, after great sufferings, Monday. He was intelligent to the last, even after he became speechless, and his appealing looks to us and the physician would have melted a stone. Some half hour before he died, he sank into a sleep, which became more and more quiet, until he gently sighed his soul away. This, my dear brother, is the first death we have had in our family, and my first experience of any great sorrow. I have learned rapidly in the school of anguish this week, and am many years older than I was a few days ago. It is not so much that I could not give my darling up, so far as self was concerned, but that I saw him suffer such pangs, and then fall under the grasp of the cruel destroyer, while I was impotent for his help. Ah! when the mighty wings of

the angel of death nestles over your heart's treasures, and his black, noisome shadow broods over your home, it shakes the heart with a shuddering terror and a horror of great darkness. To see my dear little one thus ravaged, crushed and destroyed, turning his beautiful liquid eyes to me and his weeping mother for help, after his gentle voice was obstructed, and to feel myself as helpless as he to give any aid—this tears my heart with anguish. And, then, I remember that this death reigns over all else that I love—over wife, remaining children, friends, and my own body—and may seize them, I know not when. How fearful is it to live and love in such a world! How awful that sin of which death is the wages! Such are the feelings with which the natural heart regards these calamities; but, blessed be God, to Christian faith they wear a different aspect. Death is no longer a hellish monster and tyrant, but Christ's messenger. Our parting is not for long. This despoiled and ruined body will be raised, and all its ravished beauties more than repaired. And as to the other beloved ones whom I see exposed to disease and death, I know that death cannot touch them, unless that Heavenly Father who orders everything for me in love and wisdom, sees it best. So that I can trust them, though tremblingly, to his keeping, and be at peace. Our little Jimmy, we hope and trust, is now a ransomed spirit. He had not reached such years of understanding as to be able to express an intelligent faith; and in such cases I believe the souls of the young are redeemed in the second Adam without their personal agency, even as they inherited their sinful and mortal state from the first. This is a hope inexpressible and full of glory. As I stand by the little grave, and think of the poor ruined clay within, that was a few days ago so beautiful, my heart bleeds. But as I ask, *Where is the soul* whose beams gave that clay all its beauty and preciousness? I triumph. Has it not already begun, with an infant voice, the praises of my Saviour? Perhaps some loving angel, one of those that assisted to release and bear home the spirit (nurse purer and tenderer than his dear mother, even), has been deputed to teach it and train it to heavenly manhood. Perhaps it has been committed to our sainted father, or to my wife's sainted grandmother, as one of their redeemed posterity, to keep and train till we can embrace him again. At any rate, it is in Christ's heavenly house and under his guardian love. Now I feel, as never before, the blessedness of that redeeming grace and divine blood, which have ransomed my poor babe from all the sin and death which he inherited through me.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Those who are concerned to do so may find Dr. Dabney's most careful teaching concerning the salvation of infants dying in infancy, in his *Discussions*, Vol. III., pp. 188 to 194. In this passage Dr. Dabney sets forth, as usual, his belief, or hope, that all infants dying in infancy are saved; but vindicates the present phraseology of our Confession of Faith (Chap. X., § 3); and to the question, "Why, then, did not the

“Dr. Sampson used to say that while he trembled with almost daily solicitude for his father’s soul, respect, and the fear of seeming insolent, interposed an almost insuperable barrier to his saying anything to promote his salvation. I have felt just the same solicitude, and the same diffidence towards you, my senior, guardian, second father and faithful guide, whom I feel to be as superior to me in all merely human virtues as in age. But coming from this awful, agonizing death-bed of my boy, from this verge of the eternal world, I feel that my tongue is untied. I can speak; I will speak now; not as an instructor or rebuker, taking the attitude of superior wisdom or merit, but as a soul once sin-sick and miserable, pointing a beloved brother-sinner to the Divine Physician whom I have found. My dear brother, you know that “except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”; that without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and repentance towards God, no sin can be pardoned; and the wages of sin is eternal death. Have you sought and found these preparations? You say that time hurries away with impetuous speed, and there is leisure for less and less, as you grow older. How short a span is a year now? A few more of these fleeting moments will bring you to an awful eternity. You are no longer young. Secular occupations and cares have a giant hold on your affections, habits and thoughts. You should tremble also to think how seldom, and how irregularly you are brought under the influence of the faithful, scriptural and fervent preaching of the gospel, and under the blessed teachings of Sabbath institutions. You feel and confess that you are not at ease nor interested in your avocations. It is because your better self tells you that they are too trivial to deserve the toils and cares of an immortal being who has the cares of an immortality unsettled. I beseech you, begin to search the Scriptures, to think of your danger, to remember the immortal interests of your beloved wife, my sister, and your three children, to weigh your danger and settle the question, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ In the appendix to the little memoirs which I sent you, you will find a sermon answering this vast question. I sent you the book, partly as a testimonial of my perpetual love and remembrance, but more that you might read this sermon. It is not grandiloquent nor original, but it is an admirably satisfying, simple and luminous statement of what salvation is. Every sentence is full of solid instruction. Will you read it for my sake, with such careful pondering of its statements as you would give to an im-

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Confession speak out plainly and say whether it supposed there was any soul, not elect, which ever died in infancy?’ he answered, ‘Because on that question the Bible has not spoken clearly.’” He adds: “Herein is the admirable wisdom and modesty of the Westminster Assembly, that however great the temptation, they would not go beyond the clear teaching of revelation. Where God is silent they lay their hands upon their mouths.”

portant law paper? and then let me know your answer to the question, 'What think ye of Christ?'

"Do not suppose, my dear brother, that these words are the temporary effusions of a grief and alarm excited by the watchings of the sick-room, and the terrors of a death-bed; the mere morbid feelings of an overwrought soul, which will be forgotten as soon as the steady sunshine returns to my household. They are my habitual feelings. They are just the words I have *always* longed to speak, but feared lest I should offend. Oftentimes when we have been together, just such words have been in my heart. I have seemed to be interested in our talk while it was all of the earth, in order that I might find a loophole in which to introduce the great concern without rudeness. I have essayed to introduce it again and again, and shrunk, and postponed it, with a weak, and no doubt a sinful fear. A thousand times have I prayed for you and yours in secret, when all was in customary peace and prosperity, and besought the Lord that he would turn your feet to his testimonies, and make our father's God your God. Now, I beseech you to consider whether you have any time to lose. My dear sister is inclined, I know to serious things, and is hampered and retarded by your influences. Your children are losing the fairest time for good impressions; and, above all, uncertain, terrible death is advancing on us all.

"My dear wife is in bed, partly from her herculean labors and anxieties, partly from a mild attack of the same disease, which seems to be contagious here. Bobby is still on his back. Our little Charley Willy seems well; but we tremble every day lest he should draw in the infection with the very milk which is his necessary food. God only knows what is in store for us. But we strive to be patient and trust in God. All things shall work together for good to those that love God.

"Lavinia sends her dearest love to you and sister Cordelia. Remember me to the boys.

"Yours affectionately,

"R. L. DABNEY."

"December 12, 1855.

"MY DEAR BROTHER: I am indebted to you two letters for the tender and generous sympathy of which I can never be thankful enough to you. But I do not know whether I should have found heart to answer them now, were it not that your kind invitation is of such a nature as to demand some response. I can assure you that there is nothing within the range of possibilities for which my heart yearns so much as the visit you propose. Whether it would diminish my depression and sadness I cannot be so certain, for everything at your house and mamma's would remind me of those beloved little ones who were with us when we were there last. But it is out of the question now. My absence from home (ill-starred), my afflictions and sickness, have thrown my



classes very much behindhand. Our session is in full progress, and if I am ever to work, now is the time when work calls me most urgently. I feel that after having received such warnings of sin and death, and being brought so near to eternity, it is no time for me to be remiss in duty or self-indulgent in the employment of my time. Bobby left us Wednesday night at 12 o'clock. We buried the poor ruined and despoiled remains Friday. The next day I went to work, in my sick room, and the next week regularly resumed my lectures. It required no effort for me to do so. Work has long been a second nature to me, and the only consolation I have now is in the attempt to do my duty.

"It is painful to me to write to my friends now, delightful as it is to receive their communications. I cannot speak of anything except that which fills my mind every waking hour, except when I drag it away to my daily occupations, my two boys gone from me; and yet it is painful to speak of them, too. When my Jimmy died, grief was pungent, but the actings of faith, the embracing of consolation, the conception of all the cheering truths which ministered consolation were proportionably vivid; but when the stroke was repeated, and thereby doubled, I seem to be paralyzed and stunned. I know that my loss is doubled, and I know also that the same cheering truths apply to the second as to the first, but I remain stupid, downcast, almost without hope and interest. When I turned away from Jimmy's corpse to my lovely infant, my affections and my fears seemed both to flow out towards him with a strength delicious and agonizing. I never tired of folding him in my arms, as the sweet substitute for my loss, nor of trembling for him also, lest the loss should extend to him. But when Bobby was taken, and our little one remained our only hope, it seemed to me, I was both afraid and reluctant to centre my affections on him. I feel towards him a mixture of languor and pain, not having the heart to be happy in his caresses, and not daring. This is strange, perhaps inexplicable. Death has struck me with a dagger of ice. He has not only wounded, but benumbed. I believe that Jimmy was too young to be responsible, and that as such, though by nature depraved, he is saved, renewed and glorified by the grace of God; and Bobby, if not also too young to be responsible, which is most probable, showed such sweet and striking evidences of ripening for heaven, that I cannot believe he is anywhere else. Yet believing this as I do firmly, I hardly have life to rejoice in it.

"But thanks to God, I am not moping nor murmuring. If I could see the blows blessed to myself, my kindred and my friends, I should in time be able to bless God for it; and this is my constant prayer. I needed just such warnings, to make me more faithful in striving to do good to my friends. Would to God that I could be a blessing to you. This alone would almost be consolation enough for my losses.

"Lavinia is well in body, and usually, entirely calm, but deeply sad. She expresses fervent thanks for your affection, and sends her best love.

Her parents are here for a short time, but not, I think, to her solace. Mr. M— is exceedingly broke, depressed and feeble, and is on his way with Mrs. M— to the South, on an almost hopeless search for health. His pecuniary affairs deranged, and his children scattered, I think his presence rather saddens Lavinia. With love to Sister C— and the little ones,

Yours aff.,  
R. L. D.

One who was a student at this time writes :

“Among the most gloom-giving days to me that occurred during my seminary course, were the ones when his children, James and Robert, died and were buried. To me, personally, those were ‘rare and radiant’ little boys, and they had a very warm place in my heart. There was but a brief interval between their funerals. In the many burial scenes I have witnessed, your father was about the only heart-broken mourner, without visible tears, that I have ever seen. Before that, I had never realized the deep and well-nigh unearthly significance of a sorrow too deep for tears. At the burial of Robert, there was something in his features so pallid and deathly, as he took a parting look at his dead first-born child, that some of us had our forebodings that he was not long to survive the ordeal.

“In a little while, however, for the good of us all, he emerged from the gloom of this afflictive dispensation, and resumed his duties with quickened zeal and impressive unction. In his prayers, thereafter, in class-room and chapel, his pupils felt and saw, what is to be but rarely seen, how one of the most imperial of human wills may humbly bow, pass under the rod, and caress with filial affection, the fatherly hand that chastises. In these prayers, he repeated, with notable frequency and characteristic unction, words like these, as if he had newly awakened to their import, and was desirous that we all, gathered about him as learners, should realize their consoling influence, and be prepared to comfort others with the comfort wherewith he himself was comforted, in the supreme sorrow of his eventful life :

“‘May we not despise thy chastening, O Lord, nor faint whenever we are rebuked by thee.’

“‘Ever help us to realize that while no chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous, yet nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.’

“‘May it never be with us, as it is when a hungry man dreameth and behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty; or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold, he is faint and his soul hath appetite.’

“Dr. Dabney’s sermons, too, were in a different vein thereafter, so long as I had the privilege of hearing them. Previously, much of his preaching was not such as I had expected from an ambassador so eminent, beseeching men in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God, or

knowing the terror of the Lord would persuade men, for the tenor of his preaching savored very much of the minatory type or ring. He never seemed more at home in the college pulpit than when revealing, by anticipation, the presence of the Lord Jesus from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired of all them that believe in that day.

"At such times he seemed defiant, and would warn men at their peril to make their peace with God.

"I remember vividly how impressed I was with the change in question, by his comments on one of the first hymns he had us sing at the first preaching service he conducted in the Seminary Chapel after his sad bereavement, beginning, 'Come humble sinner in whose breast.' The emphasis he laid upon the word 'perhaps' caused my nerves to tingle as he recited these stanzas:

"All to the gracious King approach,  
Whose sceptre pardon gives;  
Perhaps he may commend my touch,  
And then the suppliant lives.

"Perhaps he will admit my plea,  
Perhaps will hear my prayer;  
But if I perish, I will pray,  
And perish only there.'

"He looked as if this word 'perhaps' was suggestive to him of a very realistic apprehension of the ever-present power of the serpentine, satanic accuser of Christ and his would-be brethren. The preacher turned partly around, he fixed a piercing downward gaze, his eyes flashing with indignant, fiery emotion, his heavy right heel smiting the floor with rapid, startling stampings, he, in the meanwhile, exclaiming, with an intonation that of all the speakers I have ever heard, only Dr. Dabney could voice: 'There is no *perhaps* about it. It is a libel on the promises, which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. There is no *perhaps* about it, for the gracious King will admit the humble sinner's plea, and will hear his prayer. There is no *perhaps* about it.'"

Few men can have had more of sympathy shown them in times of trial. Many of his friends understood him, and knew and felt for him and Mrs. Dabney in their awful suffering. There are amongst his papers a score and more of letters of condolence and sympathy sent him on this occasion. Amongst the writers were William S. White, William Henry Foote,

Moses Drury Hoge, John H. Boccock, C. R. Vaughan, William T. Richardson, many of his faithful friends at Tinkling Spring, of his old class-mates, his kinspeople, etc.

Not because they are more affectionate in tone than the others, but because they come from one who understood Dr. Dabney's feelings better, perhaps, than any of his contemporaries, these two letters from Mr. Vaughan, of Lynchburg, may be read, viz.:

"LYNCHBURG, *November 20, 1855.*

"MY DEAR DABNEY: It gave me great pain, as I went down to Richmond last week, to learn that your noble boy Jimmy had been taken away from you. At this, the earliest practicable moment for writing, I sit down to tell you and your dear wife that your sorrow is not unfelt by your friends. My heart goes out most earnestly towards you. It is a fearful thing to see a spirit so affectionate and so vehement as yours brought into this sensible contact with some of the griefs of this, our mysterious and awful life. The griefs of life! Gracious Heaven! what stupid sentiment—what heartless rhetoric—what feasts for vanity and pride are made over them! Yet how keen and bitter they are. My poor, dear friend, when they are on us after a real fashion—when the stroke comes so suddenly and so sternly as almost to take away our breath, and leaves us partly amazed in the deep infinite contrast between the sensations of one week or one day and the sensations of the next—I know something of this, although only at intervals of time am I able to see it. You have been looking with a confounded sense—hardly able to believe, then too bitterly convinced of the terrible fact—into the dead face of your son. I have been looking at times—for generally I am very stupid about it—into what seems to be my own last resting-place. It is a fearful thing, Dabney, to feel as I do sometimes, that I am actually stricken with a mortal disease! It must be a fearful thing to gaze on the evacuated countenance and noble form of a child, so dear to poor human nature as they are! I have tried to conceive how I could feel if one of mine were dead, that I might be prepared to sympathize truly with you; but the conception, feeble as it must be by the side of the fact, is painful beyond thought or expression.

"Now, just think that sorrows like yours and sorrows like mine, often far worse, are the common lot of man; that all must come to it, and millions without the support and consolations which I trust that God has given to both of us! What a world! It looks like the ante-chamber of hell, under certain of its aspects! How can any man of ordinary sense grasp the obvious facts of human life and combine them together, and look at them as a whole, conceive them justly, and yet question whether the world is under a curse or not! But there is consolation in the gospel, rich, sustaining, *sufficient*. It is a grand

and awful, yet glorious, phase of consciousness, to feel the power of those precious truths triumphing over a *real* sense of the woe of life, the blended masses of cloud and sunlight struggling until the spreading radiance is the victor. May your consolations be as vivid as your grief, and your solid profit in the sanctification of your nature be richer than both. It is a phase of life through which you have passed. I have not. It may be my time next. Oh! that we could be what we ought to be, under liabilities so fearful and so unforeseen, so uncontrollable, even if foreknown. Dear Dabney, accept my earnest sympathy, and tell it to your wife, for she shares largely in it. It is a time with you when you need to hear the voice of affectionate communion in your sorrow. Be assured of both mine and my wife's. Your loss is very great; but the grace of your Master is *very, very* great. Your noble boy is gone; for he was noble. I remember him—the young Webster—the calm, steady, great black eye; the mouth and cheek expressing firmness and decision far more than is at all usual in a child; the noble head. I remember all. But he sleeps. Let the Master have him. Farewell.

“Yours most affectionately,

“C. R. VAUGHAN.”

“LYNCHBURG, *December 4, 1855.*

“MY DEAR DABNEY: I received with emotions of distress and almost of terror, on Saturday, the tidings of the renewed affliction which God has been pleased to send upon you. I at once began to make my arrangements to come down and see you, to express in person my deep sympathy in your singular and bitter sorrow; but the sudden sickness of my wife, with other circumstances, has prevented it for a few days, at any rate. If I can come this week, I will, and in case you are not able to come up to aid me at our next communion—a point on which I wish to hear from you so soon as you can make it convenient—I will come some time in the next fortnight and spend a night with you. I write now just to say that my heart is sad for you, my brother. Your two bright and noble boys, both gone! What a grief! what an overwhelming sorrow! God is in this matter, moving amid the cloud and darkness of a throne which is nevertheless all spotless and full of glory. It is a case in which you must trust God, and trust him utterly. There is reason to trust him *at all times*. This is easy enough admitted in the abstract. But in the intensity and vehement energy of the conditions with which your heart is agitated, it is no doubt difficult for you to see into the full significancy, the deep and powerful force of the idea. Yet there is, for all that, a ground for your trusting in him, though he slay you. No doubt affliction now seems to you a far more intense and *real* thing than it ever did before; the griefs of human life are far more awful and terrific to you now than they ever before seemed, even to your most realizing and comprehensive conceptions. But *the power of grace is master of them*, and as you feel with such intensity the

power of the ill, do not allow it to fill up your soul so as to exclude the other truth. Steady your spirit in the storm for an instant, and fix your attention on the fact that, awful as is the grief which darkens your house, yet there is a power to master it, and that no matter how fearful may be the trouble, it may be cast upon the Lord; no matter how great the tribulation, you may still *rejoice* in it. Alas! our minds are commonly as senseless to the real force of the evils of our lot as they are to the grace that subdues them. We are often as senseless to the real weight of the sorrows of a Christian, the real solemnity of the *discipline* of the saint, as we are to the retribution of sinners; and the practical consequence is when the discipline comes it seems so heavy, so real, so intensely and unutterably bitter, it is almost impossible to recognize it as discipline and not retribution, and we who suffer it, as the objects of the love and not the wrath of our Father in heaven. But such a conclusion would be wrong. Has your Christian hope been blown out by this tempest? Have you questioned whether God could deal with you thus if you were his child? If you have, it is a natural, but not a sound conclusion. Was not Job beloved of God at the very time when his children perished at a stroke? Do not give up your trust in him; wait, bow, submit—submit even to bear the rage of your own unbelief, and say to him, 'Even amid my agony; yea, amid the rebellion and unsubmitiveness of the wicked part of my nature, yet I will trust in thee, though thou slay me, too.' I do hope and pray that God may give you grace to exercise a faith which will humble, comfort and cheer your inmost soul. But if you cannot so believe, at least let your faith lay hands on your bleeding and darkened spirit, and drag it along the way of duty. Follow the Master's will, in comfort if you can, but follow it. He will bring you out into a large place in his own time.

"Give my earnest sympathies to your dear wife; it is painful even to imagine such grief as hers and yours. Accept my affectionate solicitude, and also my whole family's. My father seems specially moved for you.

Yours very truly,

"C. R. VAUGHAN."

It is not the biographer's business to explain what God meant in these bereavements to his servant; but the reader may get a glimpse of a further part of the divine intention, in an incident of his life furnished by Mrs. Margaret Kemper Boccock, the venerable widow of Dr. John H. Boccock, pastor, at the time of the occurrence, in Georgetown, D. C. Mrs. Boccock writes:

"About the year 1859, Dr. Dabney came to our house to deliver an address in the Bridge Street Church, before the Bible Society, for my husband, who had the appointment, but for some reason had to be absent. Dr. Dabney was our guest, and I much enjoyed his company.

Of our near neighbors were Mr. and Mrs. Offutt and their little boy, an only child. This child was ill with fever. One morning, I told Dr. Dabney of their grief, and my fears that he would die, asking him if he would not go over with me. This was soon after he had buried two dear boys at Hampden-Sidney. He, without hesitation, granted my request. Without ringing, we gently walked through the house to the back parlor, where the child was lying. Mrs. Offutt was on her knees near her child; Dr. Dabney stood erect, between the wide folding-doors, with his arms crossed, silently taking in the whole scene. Soon he walked to the bed, and kneeling near the mother, gave way to a flood of tears such as I then thought I had never seen a man weep. Then he offered such a prayer as you can well imagine that great tender heart, so recently bereaved, would offer for the afflicted parents, and the precious child then *almost in the Saviour's arms*. When we arose, he repeated some suitable tender words of the Saviour to the mother, and departed. Mrs. Offutt told me afterwards that that visit of Dr. Dabney did her more good than all the visits and prayers of *all other friends*. She was a member of another church; the dear child was buried in the beautiful Oak Hill Cemetery in a few days."

During this period, Mr. Dabney did not enjoy very robust health. Once, in the winter of 1856, he was laid up with a slow, catarrhal fever, followed by bronchitis, for several weeks; and in the winter of 1857, owing to his over-much work and exposure on his long rides to fill preaching appointments on the Sabbaths, he had a serious spell of sickness.

But, notwithstanding his relatively poor health and his many and severe labors, already noticed, his volume of correspondence grew in this period. He still poured himself out in his letters to his mother and his sister Betty. The following letter, written on occasion of an illness of his mother, hardly comes up to the average of his letters as marking his constant attitude of tenderness for those two dear ones. It is presented because of its incidental touches as to the character of his mother as mistress of a household and mother of a family:

"WEDNESDAY NIGHT, *December 2, 1857.*

"MY DEAR MOTHER: Frank's letter, which I suppose was written last Thursday, and mailed from Thompson's Cross-Roads last Friday, only reached me this evening. Sister Anne's letter gave me no proper idea at all of your sickness; and consequently, we were not in a state of uneasiness about you; but since the receipt of Frank's, and learning how serious your attack has been, both I and Lavinia have felt great uneasiness. You are no longer as young as you once were. I fear you exposed yourself too much in attending to sick negroes. The pangs of

anxiety and uneasiness which I have suffered this evening tell me how ill we can afford to lose you. I debated with myself all the afternoon the propriety of my starting to-morrow morning to see you; but the hope that by this time you were a great deal better, as Frank's letter is nearly a week old, and regard for my own health, determined me to wait for another letter from you. I was caught out Sunday week in the bad weather, and had to do a very hard Sabbath's work, in addition to the labors of a busy week, which brought me altogether to the verge of an attack of bronchitis, such as I had last winter. I am now getting better; but feel somewhat afraid of venturing away from home to take the chances of the uncertain weather, until I get well. I do trust that Betty or Frank has sent me a letter by your Tuesday's mail, which I shall get to-morrow. If we hear nothing then, we shall be very uneasy. Should you not mend as fast as we hope, and should you feel any desire to see me, I will make some arrangement with my colleagues, and come at all risks. Your sickness was needed to teach us all your value, and the love which we ought to feel and manifest for you. If there ever were children who owed a heavy debt of gratitude to a mother, we are among them; and if there ever was a mother in whom the description of Proverbs ought to be verified, 'Her children rise up and call her blessed,' surely our mother is one. I find my best solace in uncertainty to be in praying that the God and Saviour, whose compassions fail not, and who is in Louisa as truly as in Prince Edward, will soothe all your sufferings, heal your sickness, and make affliction bring forth a far more exceeding weight of glory.

"Tell Marietta [his old nurse] that I feel very sorry for her, indeed, at losing her husband. She must learn to say from the heart, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.' She must try to teach her children to fear and serve God. Lavinia will tell Daphne to-night about it. She has been an excellent girl lately, and nurses the children so well that they love her like a mother.<sup>5</sup>

"Give my best love to dear Betty, Frank and Louisa. Tell Sister Lou that the Cowper was *for her*. The cloak for Bob. As to the difficulty of not having any place fine enough to visit in it, I can offer an easy solution. Come with Sister Anne to see us.

"We are all well except the baby, 'Thomas Price,' who is slightly disordered to-night. Lavinia sends a great deal of love. I wish she could cook up something nice for you and send it.

"Your affectionate son,

R. L. DABNEY."

He endeavored to keep an eye on his mother's affairs, and took measures to keep them in a safe and comfortable condition. He may have been over-cautious, and at times given advice for

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<sup>5</sup> The women referred to in this paragraph were servants (slaves).



which there was no need. For example, he wrote, on the 24th of May, 1855, to Mr. C. W. Dabney:

"DEAR BROTHER: I was somewhat in hopes that I might meet you to-day at mamma's, where I am now writing. I reached here yesterday to dinner, and must leave to-morrow, so as to reach home Saturday night. Lavinia's situation forbids my staying longer from home. . . .

"Mamma and Francis were telling me to-day that \$2,500 of mamma's money is in the hands of Col. Peter Guerrant, with you as security. Excuse me for saying that I think this is a very undesirable arrangement. I know that these loans are essential to mamma's comfort, for the farm hardly clears itself; and I feel exceedingly anxious that the safety of the funds and their annual income should be entire, at least during her life. No considerations of delicacy towards, or pains to be inflicted on any other person, in the way of guarding her *rights*, ought to weigh one moment against her comfort in this matter. Now, I understand that Col. Guerrant's affairs are complicated, his management dilatory and confused, and his solvency already questionable. In the case of such a man as he (waiving wholly the last point), there is always some doubt about the continuance of his solvency. Now, it is entirely improper that *you* should, in such a case, stand in the breach. I do not want to see you pay other people's debts, under any circumstances. It is peculiarly unfortunate that you should have to pay a security debt to your own mother or brothers, incurring thereby a risk of any of those painful heart-burnings, which usually grow out of these transactions: and as you are to some extent Col. Guerrant's partner, the failure of his solvency would inevitably affect your ability to pay any such sum with convenience. I see nothing but trouble ahead, and possibly a disturbance of fraternal concord infinitely more precious than money, from this arrangement. I have, therefore, advised mamma, and I write to urge the advice on you, either to demand of Col. Guerrant *other* and satisfactory security; or, better still, to collect the money at once, and invest it elsewhere. It may be inconvenient for him to pay it, and it might very probably be painful to you to urge its payment; but the first trouble is tenfold lighter than the last will be, if the thing is postponed. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

"I learned lately from a Kentucky gentleman that the Illionis Central, and Mobile & Cairo Railroads are tending towards their focus, in the region of our Kentucky land.<sup>6</sup> The Arkansas people are also projecting a railroad from Ohio City, opposite the mouth of the Ohio, diagonally in a southwest direction across their State; and Congress has made liberal grants of public land to it. If these converge at that point of the Mississippi, they will give an importance to our lands that

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<sup>6</sup> These lands were a part of the Virginia military grant to Col. Charles Dabney.

makes it well worth looking into. I hope we shall be able to sell it some day for something worth while.

"Mamma and the family are well. I was very hopeful of being able to get her or Sister Anne to go home with me; but I believe I shall fail. With love to Sister Cordelia and the little ones.

"Yours affectionately,

R. L. DABNEY."

This letter is one of many, showing his practical concern in his mother's temporal welfare, and if it was a product of over-caution, many of them were not. His suggestions touching the management of her estate were usually wise, and were highly appreciated by her.

He maintained a constant and most intimate correspondence with his much-respected and loved older brother. One of the motives to this correspondence was the desire to win this brother to an open profession of Christ. The following letter is presented as an instance of his wrestling for this purpose:

"December 23, 1855.

"DEAR BROTHER: My last letter was little more than an acknowledgment of the receipt of your two. Both lack of time and lack of composure forbade me to say what I wanted to say then, and I now, therefore, consider myself as *answering* your letters.

"When we consider how little the habitual talk and feelings of Christians, and even of Christian ministers, *seem* to correspond to their profession and preaching, it is no wonder that the men of this world feel as though this preaching was mere words of course, not intended to be taken in its living and literal force; but I can testify, from my own experience, that this seeming is often very unfair. Many an imperfect good man feels a deep and abiding desire for the salvation of his neighbors and associates; in intercourse with Christians likeminded, the 'things of the kingdom' are most dear and tender topics of communication, and in his retirement he often mourns over his unfaithfulness to the souls around him, and longs for strength to be more faithful; but when in the presence of the world, a diffidence and difficulty, partly sinful and partly arising from a proper feeling of the awful sanctity of the subject, seal his lips, and the remaining worldliness of his own affections hurries him away, to talk too exclusively, and too warmly, of the things of this earth. Christians need the judgment of charity, for they 'have a law of sin in their members, warring against the law of their mind, and bringing them into captivity to the law of sin.'

"But I do not wonder that the mere man of the world should reason thus. 'Here is a set of people who profess that the soul is of vastly superior importance to all the world; that I am unregenerate, and so in danger of hell fire; that *they* have some of that spirit of love for lost

souls which Christ felt, etc. How is it that they can see me exposed to a danger *they think* so vast, and yet I have been living on friendly terms with sundry of them for twenty, thirty, fifty years, including some preachers, and one of them has hardly alluded to the subject? They cannot be in earnest.' Thus, our fault casts an air of unreality, vagueness, and uncertainty, over the whole subject of redemption. We should not palliate our guilt herein; but still the inference is unjust.

"The statements you made in your first letter, as to your views of Christianity, could not but be very gratifying to me, although not unexpected. I did not believe it could be otherwise with the son of such a father. You say that you feel a true interest in the public exercises of Christianity, and take pleasure in attending on them whenever it is in your power. But is not this feeling social and intellectual, rather than spiritual? If it is the latter—that is, if it is a true interest and pleasure in the *holiness* of God, the holiness of his law, and the holiness, truth, wisdom and fitness of his way of redemption—then you are a Christian, whether aware of it or not. But if it were so, how comes it that you do not take a similar pleasure in the *secret* and *domestic* worship of God? Search, then, and see. You remark, in accordance with the very feelings I have described on the preceding page, that perhaps your frequent observation of the fanaticism and insincerity of those who profess a new birth, may have made you less sensible of its reality and necessity than you should be. Let us look at this. Is not this doctrine, 'Ye must be born again,' the common doctrine of the Old and New Testaments, of all Christian churches, and of all respectable Christians of every age and denomination? Let me ask you to read Psalm li. 5-10; Jeremiah xxxi. 33; Ezekiel xviii 31, xi. 19, 20; John iii. 1-15; Ephesians i. 19, 20. These are a few of a multitude. Let me appeal to your own consciousness and experience. Is not *this* obviously the correct view of human nature; and that not only in things religious, but in all things, that man has certain prevalent dispositions which are *innate*, unchangeable by human power, and dominant, and which determine the force and effect of motives on him, and the nature of his preferences and actions? For instance, there is the love of the approbation of fellow-men; a principle not *taught*, but *inborn*, not *adopted* or *selected* by the person's own choice, but prior to, and prevalent over his choice, by the influence of which *every* man naturally seeks a part of his happiness in the applause of his associates, and naturally does many things to gain that applause. Knowing that this is a *natural* trait of the soul, we expect to find man guided by it more or less with absolute certainty and in every human being. We are willing *beforehand* to assert it of every human being in the world, however unknown to us, that he is sensible in some respects to this love of applause, and does some things to win it. And if any man tells us, 'No, *he* has rid himself entirely of it by an act of his choice, or has been educated or persuaded out of it entirely' (like the hermit,

for instance, who professes to forget the praise of men in his desert cell), we tell him he is only mistaken. An inborn disposition is not so eradicated; he still feels it, but unconsciously. A man cannot (because he will not) choose or be persuaded to divest himself of one of these native dispositions of the soul, *because it is they* which determine the nature of its choices. We might draw a similar illustration from the native *love of self*, the native sense of *meum and teum*, or *love of property*, the native *sexual propensity*, the native *love of society*, etc., etc. Now, is there not in all of us a similar *native*, dominant, original disposition for earthliness, rather than godliness; a disposition which turns us *away from* the holiness and spirituality of God to the *world*, as *our preferred object*, and causes us to adopt *some form* of disobedience to his law as our habitual course and career? Every man is conscious of it. I *know* it *was* so with me. I see it is so with every human being I know, who is not changed by God, and so I believe the Bible when it says it is so universally. It is a disposition innate, fundamental, original, itself determining the force of motive and the nature of our preferences, and not, therefore, to be revolutionized by mere motive. Education, habit, persuasion, self-government, may curb or conceal, but cannot eradicate it any more than *eradicate* self love, the sensual propensity, or the love of applause. There is not an instance of such a thing in the history of the human race. Is it so, then, that this native ungodliness is in us, and is utterly ineradicable by any *mere* human influence? There is no denying these two facts.

"But reason and Scripture both say that it must be eradicated, or there is no true, no effectual redemption. 'Ye must be born again;' 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh' (possessed of man's *nature*). 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.' And there are two reasons why this must be so.

"1. As David says in the fifty-first Psalm, 'God requireth truth in the inward parts.' As a spiritual, heart-searching and perfect being, he cannot be satisfied with a service or regard that is external or merely interested.

"2. Man cannot be happy without the change. Impunity could not make him happy. Heaven could not. This dominant disposition is called in the Scriptures *carnality*. It attaches itself to *the world*, the objects of merely natural and earthly desire, as its preferred good, and turns away from God and his more spiritual qualities with native repugnance. But 'naked we came into the world, and naked we go out.' The time is coming when God and his worship will be the only objects proposed to any soul as a *summum bonum*. Now, what more utter misery can be imagined than to be stripped of all which our native disposition prefers as its good, and confined to that to which it has no appetency or relevancy at all; on the contrary, a repugnance; and that forever.

"Is it not, then, a fact most palpable, practical, experimental, that

man needs a fundamental moral change—one which neither his own resolutions, choice, self-control, self-discipline, nor habit, education, persuasion, nor mere force of truth, will ever work? It is the most awful, startling, and awakening of all truths, more than those awful facts of an uncertain approaching death, a judgment to come, and eternal retributions, because *these* may be a few, a good many years off, but *that* presses you this moment and every moment, and shows you as much a *lost soul* as those already doomed; but here the gospel comes in, and says that *God* will work this change, which natural means cannot, by his almighty Spirit, working in connection with gospel truth heartily embraced and obeyed. This new creating grace, God says, is an influence mysterious, invisible except by its moral *results*, not discernible even by him who experiences it, except by the changes which it produces, and supernatural. But it is real. There may be tens of thousands who persuade themselves they have experienced it, and are mistaken, and hundreds who hypocritically profess it for selfish ends; but if there is one unmistakable instance, where the native disposition has been thus fundamentally reversed, where the well-sustained conduct shows that (amidst remaining imperfections) God and his favor have become the soul's chief good instead of the world, there is sufficient evidence. There is a mental phenomenon, which no natural principle can explain, any more than the resurrection of Christ's body. There is the finger of God.

"Now this great and awful fact leaves man in a state of dependence on God. There is no pardon, except in connection with the new birth. Guilt and depravity must both be removed together, if at all. Sinful man hangs on God's good pleasure. Well, if this is so, what is the madness of provoking this holy being by further pursuing a life of sin? Do you object that you are dependent (according to my teaching) on grace to arrest that sinful life to any good purpose? Well, if continuance in sin is madness and guilt, and cessation of sin will not take place without divine help, the only dictate of good sense is to fall as a helpless, passive sinner on the promises; to resign one's self at once to be *saved as one helpless* by the gospel plan. This state of mind is what leads to faith, thoroughly convinced, emptied of self, despairing of self, wholly resigned to God's righteousness and grace. To such a mind the promise comes in, 'To as many as received him, to them gave *he* power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on his name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God.' (John i. 12, 13.) Weigh every word.

"You will say I send you a sermon instead of a letter. Well, I will add one more feature of resemblance; and as the preachers follow their sermons with a prayer for the divine blessing, after I have folded up this lame and halting composition, and directed it to you, I will kneel down, and pray to 'the God who seeth in secret,' to guide you into his truth, to show you the way of salvation, and place you in it, to bless

your little ones and make them his children, and to give the sweetest and best influences of his grace to my dear sister; and may the Lord forgive me that I, so poor and beggarly a sinner, should try to unfold the riches of his grace to one less guilty than myself.

"We are all reasonably well. Betty urges me to join you all at Christmas at mamma's. This is impossible, as I have no recess, and cannot leave Lavinia. My heart will be with you. As to our griefs, our life is as April weather. R. L. D."

While betraying, in most of his letters to him, this earnest desire for the conversion of his brother, their correspondence ranges over the spheres of scientific farming, law, politics, the state of the country, and churches. He pours out his fears of "mischief to come in our political relations"; sets forth his views, very moderate and cautious as to the stand the South should take<sup>7</sup>; and expounds the duty of Christian people to save the country from coming political evils.

He is much consulted, not only by his brother ministers, touching calls, after the manner of many theological professors, and by congregations touching supplies; but by men of enterprise in behalf of the cause of the church generally. When Dr. McGuffey would prepare a scheme for a second course of lectures on Christianity in the University of Virginia, he consults Dr. Dabney amongst others; and he replies with two or three elaborate schemes as "suggestions." His old congregation at Tinkling Spring numbered amongst it some of the warmest friends and admirers he ever won anywhere. They were long in finding a successor to him to please them; he commended to them man after man, but they drew a contrast unfavorable to the candidate, even when partly disposed to accept him. But for his intense affection for the people of his old charge, and for some of them in particular, the correspondence must have proved irksome and burdensome; but there is no sign of this on his part. Indeed, he had formed friendships amongst these sturdy Scotch-Irishmen that remained amongst the dearest of his life.

During this period he received one letter by way of consultation, which is a marked proof of the great honor in which he was already held, as well as indicative of character of the highest order in the writer. They were long mutual friends.

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<sup>7</sup> See letter to Charles William Dabney, Esq., February 15, 1857.

Their regard increased with age. The letter is from Thomas J. Kirkpatrick. He writes:

“LYNCHBURG, *May* 3, 1858.

“MY DEAR SIR: Your favor of the 22nd ultimo was received as I was about leaving home for a week’s absence. This fact occasioned the delay in my answer. It was by no means ‘meddlesome’ in you to address me on the subject of your letter. I welcome your interest in me and in the cause of our common Redeemer! I feel that I need the counsel and sympathy of God’s people;—especially in reference to this great question of duty. I will endeavor to give you a candid statement of my situation and views. I ask that you will do me the favor to consider them, and then give me your advice.

“I believe that I love Jesus Christ with an ever-increasing affection. I desire, above all things, to do his will. I hope that I am prepared to make some sacrifice for the glory of God, and sincerely pray that my soul shall be so fixed with his love as to make it my meat and drink to do his will altogether.

“I have, during the last two years, frequently deliberated the subject of entering upon the life of a minister. Yet whenever I examined my motives very closely, I have seen very clearly that they were impure. I have seen that I desired to be a minister of the gospel, rather to be freed from the trying temptation of my present profession, rather to enjoy the means of grace, than to glorify God by dispensing those means to others. This motive was selfish and pusillanimous. I am satisfied, too, that it was based on false notions of a minister’s life. For some time past I have been quite active in conducting prayer-meetings—frequently making public exhortations. I have thus had a *taste* of the preacher’s experience. This taste has satisfied me that his pathway is full of pitfalls. I have found the devil assailing me in quarters and with means that I never dreamed of before. Oh! how wonderfully deceitful is the human heart.

“But these are considerations that do not deserve so much notice. The question is, *What is my duty?* This I desire to know; and in arriving at an answer, the teaching of God’s Providence demands the first consideration. It is here that I encounter the most serious difficulties, which I will briefly state.

“My father died when I was very young. He left my mother, with a large family, in straightened circumstances. It was impossible to keep my education steadily advancing. For several years I went to miserable teachers, though they pretended otherwise. Once or twice the plan of my education was changed, Greek given up altogether. So that at seventeen years of age I was badly prepared for the sophomore class at Washington College. I managed, however, to get through that year, but was then compelled to teach in order to provide the means for continuing my collegiate course. I could get only a small school; made nothing. My friends then induced me—unadvisedly, per-

haps—to commence studying law. I entered the bar when twenty years of age. Two or three years afterwards—madness! you will exclaim—I married a poor girl, the daughter of a widow with three children, all girls. One year afterwards my mother-in-law died, when her family became my own. In the meantime, and up to the present, I have to contribute from \$150 to \$500 annually to the support of my mother's family.

"I professed religion just before my marriage; but embraced the Confession of our church with so many and important qualifications as to render my entry upon the life of the minister wholly impossible. These difficulties grew gradually less until two years ago, since which period I have looked upon our Confession as embodying my own fixed convictions and principles. Since then, also, I have been considering whether God did not call me to preach his gospel.

"But I now find that my classical attainments, never respectable, have suffered from long neglect and a naturally bad memory. I have confined myself for ten years to the study of my profession and of metaphysics, the latter in all its branches, mental, moral and theological. I now know very little of the Latin—nothing of the Greek language.

"Add to these facts the others, that my family are dependent upon my labor for their support, and that some of them are in such ill-health as to require much of my personal attention, and I think you will agree with me in thinking that it would require many years of the interrupted labor (which is all that is possible in my case) to prepare me for the work of a fully-equipped minister. During this period my family would be obliged to suffer.

"These facts demand consideration, and I think they show—at least, with tolerable certainty—that God intends me to remain where I am. Yet I wish the matter was *more clearly* settled. I want to do something—I want to do great things for Christ's kingdom. My dear sir, every day I live, I am more and more amazed at the love of God in Christ. That love, as I witness its work in my own poor soul, contemptible in comparison with what the work might be, is yet past all comprehension. I long to tell and to teach others the blessedness of this glorious inheritance. I want to be honored of God, by being used by him in bringing sinners to the marvellous light of his gospel. I pray to be wholly delivered from everything not consonant with this high honor, this most exalted dignity. Will you, most respected sir, give me the help of your prayer just on this point? Pray that I may be delivered from all cowardice, all fear of sacrifice. May the Holy Ghost imbue me with his gracious influence, and lead me to love the Lord Jesus with every faculty of my being!

"Forgive my troubling you with this long dissertation on myself. May I ask, in conclusion, that you will consider my case, and help me with your advice? I thank you for your kind offers of help and sym-



pathy contained in your letter. May God bless you, dear sir, and honor you greatly in his blessed service!

"Very sincerely and respectfully, your friend in Christ,

"THO. J. KIRKPATRICK."<sup>8</sup>

The most delightful part of his correspondence in this period is that to his wife. This has already been illustrated in the treatment of other topics, as, for instance, in that of his first trip to New York. His letters to Mrs. Dabney were always affectionate and tender in a high degree, but they were always the letters of a man of intellect, powers of observation, humor, sometimes sarcasm; they were often descriptive, and would be useful to the historian trying to reproduce the Virginian life of his time. Take this as an instance:

"*Thursday morning.*

"MY DEAR BINNEY: I reached mamma's last night about an hour of sun, and found mamma and Betty still at brother's, but they are expected this morning. I got on very well, indeed, after starting Tuesday, eating my snack about twelve o'clock at the Tearwallet spring a mile and a half from Cumberland Courthouse, and reaching Mr. Harrison's early. I had the pleasure of travelling in my own dust all the way, which has aggravated, I think, the inflammation in my nostrils and throat. It seems to me, at any rate, that I have the symptoms of cold *all the time*. I rode with Mr. Harrison over his farm, which is very extensive. He has a hundred acres sown in peas, and three hundred in wheat. Of the latter, he expects to make 5,000 bushels. There is, besides, a monstrous tobacco crop, and this year he is selling some corn at \$5 a barrel. Such is his income. Now I will give you an inventory of the furniture in the chamber I lodged in, which was very comfortable and nice: One sycamore bedstead, worth about \$4.50, with shuck mattress, calico counterpane, etc.; three calico window-curtains, three split-bottom chairs, homespun; one neat, two-ply carpet, one *little, little* pine washstand, one white delf wash-bowl, smallest size; one brownstone pitcher, same material of the common crocks; one little looking-glass, on a pine dressing-table, worth about \$1.50; one pine cupboard. *All clean.* All good enough. His coat and pantaloons cost about \$2.75 per yard, coarse grey cloth. *All* the ladies of the family in calico, except Mrs. ———, who, being poor, was finer. She had on a black stuff dress in the evening, and white cambric wrapper in the morning. Now this is the way rational people live, who really are rich. Mr. Harrison says that he about lives on his income, and in educating his boys has been

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<sup>8</sup> Major Kirkpatrick never entered the ministry, but blessed the whole church by his life as a Christian, and his services as a ruling elder.

obliged to contract some debt. Now here is a truthful picture from *real life*. Harrison's land is worth about \$40,000, and his personal estate as much more, say \$80,000; and here is the sort of thing which a rational, experienced man, of highest social standing, thinks that fortune will justify. . . .

"When I came out from Mr. Harrison's, Marquess looked so gaunt and dissatisfied that I stopped in Cartersville to have him fed. This, together with the abominable ferry (the bridge is gone), detained us till near eleven o'clock. I came by Union Church, Providence, etc., and got to Mr. Payne's at three o'clock. A threatening cloud was just coming up. They said the house was locked up, Payne gone to Richmond, Anne to mamma's, etc.; but Maria got me some dinner (hoe-cake, fried middling and milk), with a shoe knife and iron fork for table furniture, and a stool for a table. Some of Anne's windows were up, so I climbed in clandestinely at a window, opened a door, and sent her man William in to let them down. After the rain I came here, and found Louisa and Frank in possession. She is a charming woman, and none the worse in my eyes for being a "fruitful vine." I came right in on her without two seconds' warning. (Anne had left in the morning for Mr. Johnson's, so I missed her.) Louisa's dress, I suppose, cost (including everything but breastpin) about \$4, a very plain lawn, a neat little collar, and a band of black ribbon, with a bow around her fair hair, but all was clean, tidy and fresh. She did not have to run and hide, as certain other females would be very apt to have to do, and undergo a hurried primping, to make herself presentable to a brother-in-law from a distance; but, hearing my step on the door-sill, looked up, and rising, came at once to meet me as she was. Her children are very well, and unusually fat. Mamma is tolerably well, they say, and very anxious to get home.

"With best love to Charley, I would ask you to write to me; but that I know I should not get the letter. You will get this Friday, and might write Friday evening; send it to Richmond Saturday, so that I would be sure to receive it Tuesday; but your letters always travel so deliberately.

"Your affectionate husband,

R. L. DABNEY."

It might have been expected that a man pressed by all his cares and labors would have cared little for the social life of the community in which he lived; but this was not the case; he was often for an off day, a relief from pressure, a freedom from the stress of regular work, and wanted still more frequently an hour's pleasant, restful chat. The society of the Hill and the surrounding community was of a very high order. Rarely is a community so entirely made up of the refined, the cultivated and the excellent in character; but it was also a community of

busy people, and of people without such tremendous energy in work, and such demand for restful change as he found in himself. Hence he has the leisure to complain in his correspondence, now and again, of there being too little social visiting amongst them. In a letter of December 25, 1857, to his brother William, he writes :

“No doubt, society here possesses many advantages over that of most country neighborhoods, or even towns. While there is vastly less of luxurious display, and expenditure, there is an almost entire absence of that vulgarity which is so often connected with it, and a very high grade of propriety and intelligence; but it seems to me that I and most of my neighbors are able to profit very little by our social advantages. Whether it is that our professions are really so exacting, or that the idea that we can see each other so easily any day, makes us postpone our visits to every other occupation, I do not know. Sometimes I hardly see my own *colleagues socially* for a month. We meet officially, or pass each other on our daily errands with a nod, and this is all; but I am conscious that I have too many irons in the fire.”

In later years he drew some sketches of people of Virginia of this period—a society which he dearly loved, and of which he would have seen more. With which sketches, under his own chosen heading, we shall conclude this chapter :

#### “A SURPRISED NEW YORKER.

“*A Virginia Reminiscence.*

“BY R. L. DABNEY.

“During the ‘fifties’ the Virginia State Agricultural Society was in its vigor and glory. Its membership included thousands of the old landholders, both planters and yeomanry. It owned extensive grounds, ornamented with pavilions, sheds, etc., in the western suburbs of Richmond, the place so well known in the more unhappy years as ‘Camp Lee,’ the camp of instruction for the new soldiers. The great annual meeting was held in the glorious October weather, and was attended not only by thousands of farmers, but by many of their wives and daughters. The great society itself, under the direction of its president and vice-presidents, had an annual address upon the science of agriculture, or such as bore upon it, from some distinguished citizen. At the period in question, the elected speaker was Dr. William H. McGuffey, the Professor of Philosophy and Economics in the State University. It was delivered before a vast crowd in the largest public building then in the city. The main topic of Dr. McGuffey was that economic law of production bearing upon the Malthusian theory of population, so powerfully illustrated by the then recent work of John

Stuart Mill. The main proposition of the doctrine is that agricultural industry, unlike manufacturing, cannot make increments in the returns proportional to the increments of capital and labor applied. But if equal annual additions are made to this capital and labor upon any given soil and crop, the additions thereby gained to the annual crops diminish instead of increasing in inverse ratio to the increments of outlay. A thoughtful reader can see how this fated law may bear, not only upon Malthus' doctrine of population, but upon other questions vital to farmers, such as how far it is wise to carry 'intensive farming,' and what was the wisest policy for that generation in the large areas of Virginia. These the professor elucidated with his marvellous clearness of intellect and power of illustration, combined with beautiful simplicity of style.

"There was then in Richmond a citizen of New York, a young gentleman of first-rate culture, the guest of one of the Richmond pastors, who had a continental reputation both for talent and courtesy. This divine entertained his charming New York guest at the greatest hotel, where he was himself a boarder. He did his best to enable his young friend to see the most characteristic things in that gala week of Virginia and her capital. Of course, he took him to the great meeting and discourse of the State Society. When they retired the Richmond man asked his New York friend, 'What thought you of our Dr. McGuffey?'

"He answered, 'Oh! of course I was charmed with the discourse; it was a model of scientific clearness, but I feel one great objection to it.'

"'What is that?'

"'That it was entirely above the comprehension of an audience of clodhoppers, and must have gone clean over their heads.'

"The Richmond man said, 'So you think that it is an audience of clodhoppers?'

"'Why, yes, of course, or at least of yeomen. Is it not a farmers' society? And the general aspect of plainness, not to say rusticity, including even the leaders upon the platform, confirms me.'

"'Well, did you notice that iron-gray old gentleman on Dr. McGuffey's right, with his long locks and plain gray suit?'

"'Oh! yes; rather a striking-looking old codger, one of the oldest and most influential of the clodhoppers.'

"'Just so,' said my friend; 'that is the famous Edmund Ruffin, Esq., perhaps the foremost regenerator of Southern agriculture, the eminent man of science, author and editor, the lord of inherited acres, deriving almost a princely revenue from them, and the high gentleman and incorruptible patriot.'

"'Indeed!' said the New Yorker, dryly.

"'I will try you again,' said my friend. 'You noticed the portly old gentleman on Dr. McGuffey's left, with the flaxen hair and placid blonde face? He was dressed in a decent suit of home-made black

jeans, and had on plain walking shoes, with dust on them. Who do you suppose that was?

"Oh! of course I noticed him; studied him, indeed, as an interesting specimen of the old rustic Hodge, retired upon his earnings."

"Well, that was Franklin Minor, Esq., of Albemarle, an M. A. of the great State University, an elegant classicist, and principal of the most famous "fitting school" in Virginia, and also the administrator of his splendid inherited estate of Ridgeway."

"But the evening showed that our elegant New Yorker was not quite cured. After dinner his Richmond friend said to him, 'I can secure you a capital chance to see many of the wives and daughters of these farmers. These are lodging in this great hotel. At night the great parlors will be filled with them and their friends, in evening dress, and, as it will not be a formal reception, though as crowded as if it were, you and I, as lodgers here, have full right to enter, and as I know the parents of many of the young ladies, I will introduce you extensively.'

"Oh! yes,' he exclaimed, eagerly; 'that will be ever so nice. I will see for myself the country swains and bumpkins, and the rustic belles, and study the manner of their flirtations. It will be better than a comedy.'

"Well, at the proper time, his Richmond friend took him to one of the grand folding-doors, and pulled them wide open. The New Yorker advanced two steps, and stopped as suddenly as if he had been struck. His smiles were replaced by an absolute paleness. These were the things that met him: A blaze of gas lights, a great crowd of tastefully dressed young people, and the aristocratic hum of well-bred conversation. The New Yorker had to be almost dragged along. When introduced, he was almost dumbfounded; he could not recover his self-possession, but became the most awkward man in the room, and before long intimated his desire to withdraw. His Richmond friend afterwards asked him, 'What struck you when you opened the doors?'

"Astonishment struck me,' he replied, 'with the conviction that I was myself an ass. I had come to Richmond with our current erroneous and arrogant conception of the Virginians, and my mistakes of the morning had not cured me. I thought that I was going to be amused with the ways of rustics; but when I saw inside of those parlors, I had sense enough left to see that I was face to face with the most elegant, cultured, and graceful assemblage that I had yet seen anywhere. Why, those evening costumes—what a union they were of refined taste and grace, with appropriateness and moderation! I never saw so many accomplished women in one set of parlors, so marked by gentle dignity, affability and culture.'

"His Richmond friend said to him, 'Now you are nearer right, but not quite. Whence do you suppose those graceful costumes came?'

"From Paris, or New York, of course.'

“There you are wrong again. I know the habits of those families thoroughly. On nine-tenths of those costumes no paid *modiste* ever put a finger; they were fashioned by the young ladies at home, with the assistance, in some cases of elder sisters and aunts. Did you not perceive, sir, that the most of their materials were inexpensive? Was there any parade of diamonds? No; on the contrary, little jewelry of any sort. Those charming combinations of graceful forms and subdued colors in those dresses were simply the expression of the sober and refined home taste.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>The reader will note with interest that Dr. Dabney's letters make it probable that he attended more than one of the fairs in person.

## CHAPTER XII.

### *FIRST YEARS IN THE CHAIR OF THEOLOGY: TRYING TO STAY THE COMING OF "THE IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT."*

(May, 1859—May, 1861.)

THE PROSPERITY OF THE SEMINARY, 1859-1861.—TRANSFERRED TO THE CHAIR OF SYSTEMATIC AND POLEMIC THEOLOGY.—RELATIONS WITH DR. WILSON.—METHOD OF CONDUCTING THE COURSE IN THEOLOGY.—SUCCESS IN HIS NEW CHAIR.—OTHER LABORS FOR THE SEMINARY.—LABORS AS PREACHER AND PASTOR.—GROWTH OF HIS CONGREGATIONS.—BUILDING OF THE PRESENT COLLEGE CHURCH.—ATTEMPTS MADE TO MOVE HIM NORTH: TO FIFTH AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH; TO PRINCETON SEMINARY.—LABORS AS A CHRISTIAN MINISTER TO STOP THE RISING RANCOR BETWEEN THE SECTIONS.—"CHRISTIANS, PRAY FOR YOUR COUNTRY."—"CHRISTIANS' BEST MOTIVE FOR PATRIOTISM," AND OTHER EFFORTS.—VIEWS HIS EFFORTS AS FRUITLESS.—CONTINUES THEM IN THE "PACIFIC APPEAL TO CHRISTIANS."—VIEW OF THE PROPER ATTITUDE OF THE MINISTER, AS SUCH, TOWARD POLITICAL QUESTIONS.—HIS MINISTERIAL WORK OF THIS KIND MUCH COMMENDED.—HIS OWN POLITICAL VIEWS.—HIS WIDE CORRESPONDENCE ON THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.—PROTEST AGAINST NORTHERN AGGRESSION: "ON THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY."—CAUGHT IN THE CURRENT OF THE PREVAILING ENTHUSIASM.—OTHER LITERARY LABORS.—CONTINUED DEVOTION TO HIS MOTHER AND OTHER MEMBERS OF HER FAMILY.

**D**URING the session of 1859-'60 there was a vacant place in the Seminary Faculty. The Rev. Thomas E. Peck had been elected to fill this vacancy, but Baltimore Presbytery had decided adversely to his removal from the pastorate in that city. The progress of the Seminary was impeded thereby; but the Faculty, acting under powers committed to them by the Board of Directors, secured the services of Rev. Thomas Wharey, of Briery Church, as assistant teacher of Hebrew and Biblical Introduction, divided the history course amongst themselves, and conducted their departments with vigor. The Seminary was full of hope. It had now thirty-six matriculates, of whom five were from the bounds of the Synod of North

Carolina, twenty-five from those of the Synod of Virginia, three from Winchester Presbytery, one from Tennessee, one from Missouri, and one from New York. Less than seven years before, the Seminary had only two professors on the ground, three professorships scantily endowed in the sum of \$58,600, one endowed scholarship, and eleven students. Many of its friends had been disheartened, and the public interest and confidence had been greatly alienated by its depressed condition; but God had put it into the hearts of a few, amongst them Sampson and Dabney, to love it, to pray for it, to devise liberal things, and to give liberally. The professorships had been increased to four, its endowed scholarships to six, and the churches, by their donations, had raised its permanent endowment to about \$90,000.

It will appear, in the course of this chapter, that, in the judgment of the men of the period, all this growth was due to Robert L. Dabney more than to all others put together. He, under God, seems to have inspired and stimulated the whole progress. The session of 1860-'61 was still more prosperous. The Faculty was strengthened by the accession of Mr. Peck, one of the grandest men that ever served in the Faculty of Union Seminary. The student body numbered thirty-nine men.

In the spring of 1859, Dr. Dabney had been transferred from the chair of Ecclesiastical History and Polity to that of Theology, taking the title of Adjunct Professor of Systematic and Polemic Theology and Sacred Rhetoric. Though Dr. Wilson was allowed to outrank him nominally, his teaching was confined to the sphere of Pastoral Theology, for the most part, and the whole brunt of the labors of the department fell on the adjunct, who became at once the real head. His salary was that of the full professor at this date, in spite of his subordinate title, and properly. This title he continued to bear till the death of Dr. Wilson, in 1869, when he was formally transferred to the professorship of Theology.

He would have had no other title as long as Dr. Wilson lived. He honored and loved that excellent and aged man, and would not have diminished his honors for any consideration. There never seems to have been the slightest unpleasantness between them. Mutual love and esteem obtained between them. Dr. Wilson looked upon his strong and generous young colleague as the very hope of the Seminary and the church in Virginia.



He treated him as a son. His family treated him as a brother. No stronger proof could be desired in support of the assertion that Dr. Dabney behaved himself nobly in his particular relations to Dr. Wilson.

In his later years, Dr. Dabney was accustomed to look upon these as the years of his most thorough work as a teacher. It was a theory of his that once a man had mastered a course well, his next year or so is the period of his greatest efficiency as a teacher, because at such a time the truth to be taught has its freshest hold on the teacher. He then naturally has most enthusiasm for it. He does his work with most fresh joy. His enthusiasm is contagious. He had, also, in these years, good material to work on, largely young men of the best class, and well educated. His method of teaching systematic theology was as follows: Two class-meetings were devoted to each topic, separated by the interval of two days. At the close of the second meeting, the class found on the black-board a syllabus of the topic next to be taken up. The leading points in the topic were stated in the form of questions, and under each, exact references were written out, to the parts of leading authors treating that particular point. The most important reference was written first, the next most important second, etc., and the students were urged to read as many of them as they could. The text-book was Turretin in Latin. At the next meeting he held a recitation on Turretin, covering ten to twelve pages. The students were required, during the second interval of two days, to write, each one, his own thesis upon the topic. He did not waste the time of the class by having these theses read aloud, but "put them into his hat," took them home, then read and corrected each one, and returned it to its author afterwards. The second hour of class-meeting he spent in delivering to the class his own lecture on the same topic. These syllabi and lectures composed the main part of his work on theology.

One result of this method was expressed by Henry M. White, a distinguished student of the period, now the Rev. Henry M. White, D. D., Winchester, Va., as follows:

"We think we have made quite a good thesis, but as soon as Dr. Dabney gets them into his hat, he begins and reads us his lecture on the same subject; then we see what poor stuff our theses are in contrast with the thoroughness and grasp and power of the lecture, so he makes us feel like *ninnies*, and that we have much to learn in order to become good theologians."

Another result is seen in the character of the men turned out at this time, for not a few of them are amongst the ablest to be found in the church to-day.

His success in his new chair was greater than in that of history. It was not only emphatic, decided and distinguished—it was huge. He had found his most appropriate sphere. His whole subsequent history is a proof of this.

He still continued his more diversified forms of labor in behalf of the general welfare of the institution. He was the active and energetic representative of the Seminary in the efforts, which were at last crowned with success, to secure Mr. Peck for the chair of Church History and Polity; and we find him in this period still toiling for the upbuilding of the material interests of the institution. No matter is too trifling to engage his attention, if it promises anything for the Seminary. We find him stirring up some of the Valley churches in 1860 to furnish rooms, each church a room, in the Seminary, that the students may be made more comfortable.

He continued, during this period, his labors as preacher and pastor in the College Church. If those who heard him at the time can be trusted, he was now a great preacher; and there is every reason to believe them. He was didactic, he had always been so, he was to become so more exclusively in his future preaching; but he was at this time given to descriptive preaching, in part. Major A. R. Venable, of Hampden-Sidney, a man very capable of judging of preaching, says that he has never heard from any man higher flights of descriptive eloquence than from Dr. Dabney at this time. The wonder is that he could have won such a reputation as preacher, preaching in this community so often, and burdened with such severe labors as professor in the Seminary. He had, however, been most diligent as a sermonizer while at Tinkling Springs, writing many sermons out in full, and others in the form of full briefs. He thus had a great number of excellent sermons carefully prepared. These he sometimes re-wrote, or delivered with the modifications natural to a growing man. He had learned to husband his moments, to secure mental rest by a change of labors. It was his wont to prepare his sermons, in part, on his way to and from his classes in the Seminary.

However he did it, there is no question that he preached in this period in a manner to draw. His congregations grew. They grew until the old house became too small. People came,

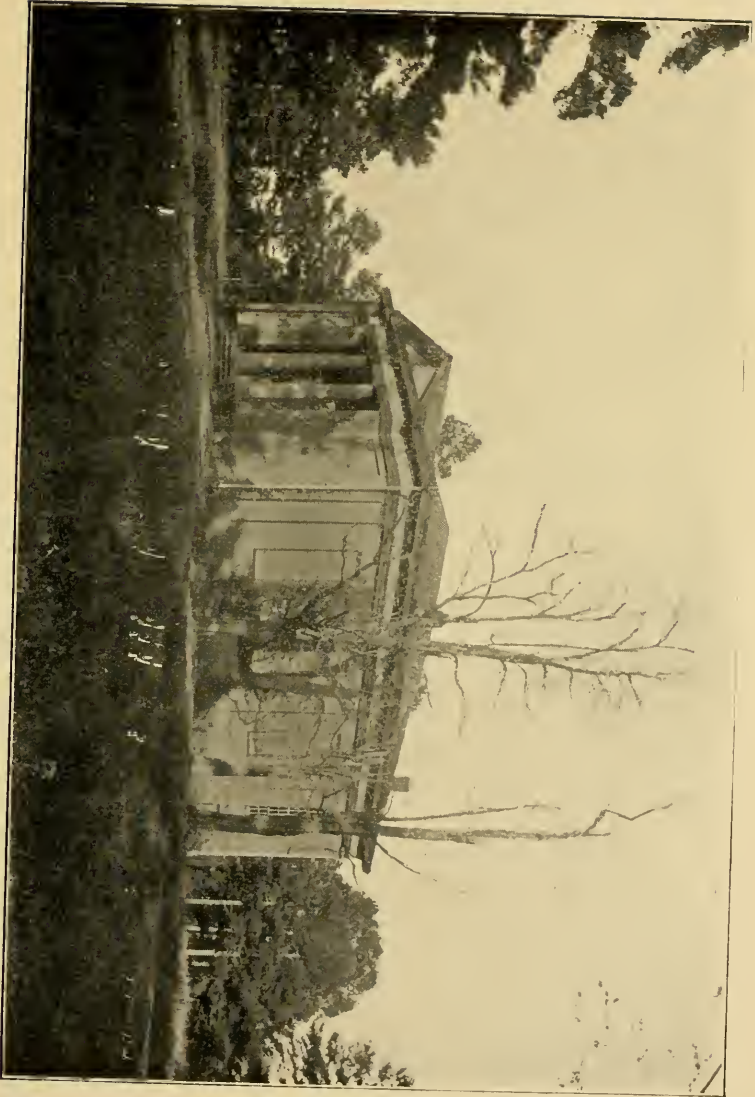
filled every seat, the doorway. Dr. Smith was a worthy colleague. They constituted a noble collegiate of the pastoral kind.

The Old College Church was a substantial, but ill-contrived, structure, with its "Saxon arches of brick." When the congregation grew till this house could not contain it, the officers consulted an architect, who said he could re-seat the house so as to make it hold the white people of the congregation comfortably, provided they would exclude the negroes. But these pastors and their elders could tolerate no such suggestion. They held that the negroes must be accommodated in God's house as well as the white people. Hence they decided to build a new church; and in 1860 a large church was erected, with five hundred sittings for white people, and three hundred for blacks. This was a heavy tax on a community so limited in wealth. Dr. Dabney was the architect, made all the drawings, was the superintendent of construction, and, in addition, was, through Mrs. Dabney, a most liberal subscriber.

In one respect his design was botched. His plan called for a front tower, which was to have carried up the proportions of the pillared vestibule, and given finish and impressiveness to the façade; but the money gave out, and the oncoming of the war made its raising impossible. Hence the present blank, unfinished look.

In the year 1860 two attempts were made to move Dr. Dabney North. The first was to the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, in New York City; the second was to Princeton Seminary. In July, 1859, Dr. James W. Alexander, pastor of the great Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, the greatest church then, and, perhaps, now, in the communions of American Presbyterians, had died. His people had begun to cast about for a successor. In the spring of 1860, Mr. Thomas R. Price, a well-known Richmond merchant, and cousin of Dr. Dabney's, was in New York buying goods. He was approached by an officer of the Fifth Avenue Church, with a view to opening a correspondence with Dr. Dabney. Later Dr. Dabney received a letter, and perhaps letters, from officers in that church, urging him to allow them to make him a candidate for the pastorate, and expressing the opinion that he would be elected; but he declined, and stopped the movement.

In January, 1860, Dr. Joseph Addison Alexander, "the most learned man on the continent," died. This was a great blow



COLLEGE CHURCH, HAMPDEN-SIDNEY—BUILT BY DR. DABNEY.



to Princeton. Dr. Charles Hodge proposed a certain reorganization of the curriculum, and that Dr. Dabney should be carried to Princeton, and put into the chair of Ecclesiastical History. The correspondence on the subject, which has been preserved in full, is of great interest, being thoroughly characteristic of these great men.

Dr. Hodge, opening up his plans to his distinguished young brother in Virginia, writes:

"PRINCETON, *March 24, 1860.*

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR: You can well understand what an overwhelming blow the unexpected death of Dr. Addison Alexander was to all connected with this Seminary. He was our dependence, our delight and our glory. And I doubt not you have deeply sympathized with us in our affliction.

"Since his death our minds have been much and anxiously exercised as to the methods of filling up the breach which his departure has occasioned. Recognizing fully the sole right of the Assembly authoritatively to decide that question, yet it is an obvious necessity that the friends of the Seminary should be prepared to lay before that body some plan for their consideration, and not leave everything to the hurried consideration of the few hours which in the multiplicity of their business they can devote to the subject.

"There are two conditions which in our peculiar circumstances it is very important should be met. First, Dr. McGill, having Pastoral Theology, Sacred Rhetoric, Church Polity and Ecclesiastical History, is entirely overburdened. This he feels, and earnestly desires relief. This is the more necessary for two reasons. The one is that, from disposition and ability, he has been led to take upon himself a great part of the management of the external affairs of the Seminary. This is very useful to us, but it is very burdensome to him, requiring much more than half his time. The other reason is that from the same causes he has been led to devote great attention to the culture of the students in writing, preaching and criticising. This, again, is very useful to the Seminary, but it renders it impossible that he should be able to satisfy himself in the conduct of the historical department. One essential condition to be met in our prospective arrangements, as it appears to us, is that Dr. McGill should be relieved of a part of his burdens.

"The other is that provision should be made for filling the New Testament department. Its language, literature, its canon, its vindication, its interpretation, was the field to which Dr. Alexander had devoted himself with all his heart. It is of the greatest importance. It cannot be neglected without the most serious injury to the best interests of the Seminary.

"The plan, therefore, which the professors and all the directors, so

far as I have ascertained (with the exception of Dr. John McDowell), are prepared to recommend to the Assembly is the appointment of two professors, one for the Department of Biblical and Ecclesiastical History, the other for that of New Testament. Dr. McDowell, who is over eighty years old, is the only director, so far as I know, who objects to this plan, and he only because it is new. Provision for the support of the N. T. or additional professor is secured.

“Now, my dear sir, would that I could sit down by your side, or even at your feet, stranger as I am, and beg you, with many prayers and supplications, to consent, should God see fit to call you to come and help us in our great sorrow and need. To you, the judgment, the hearts and desires of all the friends of the Seminary, so far as I have been able after extensive inquiry to ascertain, turn with singular unanimity. It is to the Historical Department they wish you to consent to come. Of course, all we dare venture to ask is that you will not forbid your name being used. It is surely a question worthy of consideration; one which ought not to be decided on the impulse of the moment. Let the voice of the church sound in your ears before you close them. If it were a question whether it would be pleasanter to you to be here or there, whether Union or Princeton has the stronger claims on your heart, we would not venture to say a word. But as the simple question is whether you could be more useful in this Seminary than in Union, whether you could do more to promote the glory of our blessed Redeemer, to advance his kingdom, to promote the union, the efficiency of our church—as this is the question which will be presented to your reason and conscience, and not to your feelings—we do hope that you may be led, and, may I say without presumption, led by the Spirit of God, to see the matter as we see it. So far as we know our own hearts, our earnest desire that you may be brought to accept of a professorship in this Seminary arises from good motives; from the conviction that you would be a blessing to the institution and a greater blessing to the church here than in the situation you have so long honorably filled.

“There is one consideration which weighs with great force on my mind. You are not only a historian, but a theologian. Dr. Alexander, of set purpose, would not turn his mind to philosophical or theological subjects. In him, with his wonderful gifts and attainments, and with the firm faith which he had by early training and by his religious experience, in our system of doctrine, this was of the less account. He, however, never wrote on any theological subject, never exerted himself in the explication or defence of our peculiar faith (except, of course, in his expositions and lectures), or in the refutation of opposing views. This dissociation of theological and historical learning is, of course, in itself very undesirable, and their union in your case is one of the many reasons which satisfy my judgment that you are eminently qualified to fill the post to which we are so anxious you may come.

"Much as I have this matter at heart, unless I am altogether deceived, my sincere desire is that the decision may be made by God, and not by man, that his will, and not the judgments or wishes of men, may be accomplished.

"Praying, therefore, my dear sir, that your own mind, and the mind of the Assembly, may be determined in the decision of this question by the Holy Spirit.

"I am, with the highest regard, your friend and brother,

"CHARLES HODGE."

On receiving this letter, Dr. Dabney at once acknowledged its receipt, and promised to give answer after a few days of deliberation. To this note Dr. Hodge replied :

"PRINCETON, *March 31, 1860.*

"REV. AND DEAR SIR: I have just received your letter of the 28th inst. It is better than our fears, but not so favorable as our hopes. What I have now, my dear sir, to beg of you is simply to do nothing; do not forbid your name being used. You are not obliged to do anything, and your silence will not impose any obligation to accede to the wishes of the Assembly in the event of your election. The facts of the case are these :

"1. You are not only the first, but the only choice of the friends of this Seminary. There is, as far as I know, not only perfect unanimity of judgment, but an earnest desire on the subject. Dr. Spring is in Savannah, and has not received the letter of inquiry directed to him. Dr. McElroy, Dr. Philips, Dr. Potts, Dr. L. Wilson, Dr. Boardman, Dr. Musgrave, Dr. Beach Jones, Dr. Bachus, and other friends of the Seminary, have been consulted. There has not been a dissenting voice among all those to whom we have had access. The professors also are of one mind on the subject.

"2. Our Directors meet on the 24th of April, not on the 10th of May. It is morally impossible that anything like unanimity could in so short a time be brought about. No two persons probably have their minds turned in the same direction, in the event of your declining.

"3. This is a subject in which the whole church is interested, and on which the whole church should be heard. It is not a question to be decided by the friends of your Seminary, or by the friends of this. If the mass of your brethren in the church generally believe in the sight of God that you could better serve the cause of Christ here than elsewhere, that judgment ought to have great weight. It is not decisive on you. You may know reasons, not before the minds of your brethren, to constrain you to differ from them. Still, as it seems to me, you ought to allow the church the opportunity to be heard.

"4. I believe it would be a less evil to this Seminary for you to de-



cline after an election, than to refuse to allow your name to be used. That is, it would be far better for us to let the professorship remain unfilled for a year, than to have it filled by an unsuitable person chosen on the impulse of the moment, and without the cordial consent of judgment on the part of the church.

"Is it, my dear sir, too much to ask nothing, to beg you simply to be silent and wait to hear what God, by his church, or through his providence, or by his Spirit in your own heart, may say—after time has allowed for first impressions to fade away, and first impulses to subside? As all those impulses on your part are generous and pure, they are entitled to all respect and deference; but there are other guides and voices entitled to be heard. Pardon my importunity on this subject. I have passed my whole active life in this Seminary, and no man now living has so much reason to feel deeply anxious as to the character of the men who are to fill the rapidly thinning ranks of its professors.

"Should this letter reach you after your having written a second time to me, may I still beg the favor of a reply to it?

"I am, dear sir, very sincerely, your friend and brother,

"CHARLES HODGE."

To this letter Dr. Dabney replied, or rather to this and the previous one together, as follows:

"UNION SEMINARY, VIRGINIA, *April 10, 1860.*

"*Rev. Charles Hodge, D. D.*

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR: Your letter of March 31st reached me a few days ago, and before I had written a second time to you. I beg you to believe, my dear sir, that I am truly distressed by the exigency which seems to have arisen, and by the scanty time which seems to remain for meeting it. I have, although conscious that the time is very short before the meeting of your Board, retained your second letter a few days, in order to give its contents that serious and deliberate attention, which your great and undeserved courtesy to me, and the gravity of the interests at stake, both required. Inasmuch as my judgment is affected as it is, I believe that honesty requires of me that I shall not comply with your request to 'do nothing,' and 'to be silent.'

"The respect due from me to your opinions and wishes, and to those of the great and good men in concert with whom you have acted in this matter, requires that I should at least state the operative reasons which cause me to reach a conclusion opposite to yours.

"Let me say, then, that I am led to it by no affectionate clamor on the part of brethren here against my leaving them. I have consulted only one or two, and they, I am assured, have endeavored to look at the question, as I have, in the fear of God alone. I might attach some weight to the considerations that in removing to Princeton

I must finally rupture the ties of affection and dependence which bind me to my servants, must see my black household scattered abroad, to be reassembled no more, and must subject my wife to domestic arrangements untried by her. But if I know myself, I have been able to set these considerations aside fully as much as was righteous. I might dwell more upon my collegiate pastoral relations, formed only one year ago, with an interesting, important, affectionate people; which I must surrender, and surrender to have it replaced by no such relation elsewhere; so that my removal would be a final relinquishment of this part of my usefulness. But I have not made this a prominent consideration. I might attach much weight also to the peculiar relations between myself and the Board and professors of this Seminary. The Board took me up, a young and obscure man, have uniformly treated me with generous kindness and confidence, and have vigorously seconded my plans. My colleagues have all (except the venerable Dr. Wilson) come here largely at my solicitation, in compliance with which they have embarked themselves in an enterprise of difficulty and doubt. Does not this create some obligation on me to stand by them? But I know that both the Board and my colleagues would be too generous to exact this of me, if conscience impelled me to quit my post here. This, also, I set aside, as of comparatively small weight.

“The true question, as you have correctly stated, is, In which position shall I be likely to effect most for Christ and his church? And I cannot avoid the conviction that, so far as our fallible wisdom can judge, the post of superior usefulness for me is here. My reasons for this conclusion may be briefly summed up in this statement: that by going away I shall inflict an almost fatal injury on a minor interest of the church in order to confer a very non-essential assistance on a major interest of the same church. Pardon me for saying, my dear sir, that we here know and understand the interests of Princeton better than Presbyterians of the Middle and Western States comprehend those of Union. The explanation is natural; it is because Princeton is deservedly prominent, a centre of all eyes, while Union is obscure and unobserved. I, therefore, do not expect that you will be able to see the grounds of my reasonings as I see them. But I may explain that the two great States, which this Seminary undertakes to supply, present ‘a great and effectual door’ for usefulness, while there are many adversaries. God has given us access to the ears and hearts of the people. If we had enough good laborers, we might do a great and glorious work in this corner of the field for our common Presbyterianism. It is enough to say, without entering into details, that facts and experiences have convinced us that these laborers will not be procured in sufficient numbers, except by the sustaining of a prosperous Seminary in our own borders. While I would by no means obtrude a vain estimate of my own importance, I may say, also, that my services are obviously essential at this time to the hopes of this institution. Affairs have come

into such a position, by reason of circumstances which need not be detailed, that my removal would obviously be the knocking out of one stone from an arch, still uncemented in part, but promising an early hardening into strength and solidity. This, so far as man can judge. Should it seem good to the Sovereign Disposer to remove me by his own immediate hand, doubtless he would make it all right. But for us to strike the blow is surely a very different thing!

"Now, on the other side, I cannot conceal it from myself that the larger and more populous field of choice possessed by Princeton cannot fail to provide her with a man at least as good as I am. She is attractive; our Seminary is unattractive. My refusal to serve her will not arrest her prosperous career. She will scarcely feel the jostle; but will continue on her way, honored, well-attended and useful. Here, permit me to say, that if we should attempt to measure the relative prospects of my usefulness by this fact alone, that there I might aid in instructing one hundred and seventy students, while here I instruct thirty-six, we should adopt a very fallacious standard. The true test is this. Would my presence at Princeton secure the presence of ten students additional to those who will be there under the good brother whom God will raise up for you in place of me? I suppose not. But, on the other hand, in all human view, my desertion of my post here would initiate changes which would speedily reduce our thirty-six to eleven, the number I found here seven years ago, or possibly to none; and that in a place where a home-bred ministry is more direfully necessary than in your section.

"Again, we have been laboring here under bitter discouragements, for many long years, sustained, impelled by the conviction which has been taught us by a disastrous experience, that without a home supply of young ministers, God's cause cannot be forwarded in these States. We have struggled on, waiting to see whether God would take pleasure in us or not. Now that he seems to smile on this perseverance, by giving us more of the favor of his people, increase of students, and usefulness, surely it is not the time for us to desert his work?

"You have more than once intimated that a general expression of desire for my removal in the General Assembly must have almost decisive weight with me. Candor requires me to say, that while such an expression would be extremely touching to me, as an undeserved and unexpected evidence of their kindness and favor, it would not appear to me necessarily decisive; for how can I hide it from myself, that any nomination, not specially obnoxious, which the venerable Board at Princeton might make, would command very much the same assent in the Assembly? The vast preponderance of the alumni of your Seminary there would naturally account for a preference of the interests of Princeton over those of Union; but it is my duty to remember that our little Seminary is also an interest of the Assembly, although a much smaller interest, that it was founded by the Assembly, and is now governed and

possessed by it (true, under a mode of control somewhat different), and is designed to further the same cause, that of the Head of the church.

"Last, I give no little weight to this thought, that I am most probably deciding as a Christian should, because I am deciding contrary to the promptings of ambition, and, indeed, of nearly all the natural affections of carnality. In the eyes of the Presbyterians of Virginia, Princeton is ever esteemed venerable and attractive. Do not suppose, my dear sir, that I am insensible to her superiority. The man who goes there and does his duty, will have his name blown much further by the trumpet of fame than mine will ever be. He will be in the focus of national observation, at least, for Presbyterians; I shall remain in comparative obscurity. He will teach the many, I the few; for I do not dream that your Seminary will cease to maintain the preëminence so honorably earned; and especially, the faithful and useful man at Princeton will probably receive that most gratifying of all earthly rewards, a united, enlightened, and steady support on the part of the proper constituency of the Seminary, which Presbyterians in Virginia have not always been accustomed to bestow, even on those who attempted to serve them faithfully. I have my eyes open to all these things, and because my sense of duty outweighs them, I feel a good confidence that it is conscience, and not carnality, which decides me.

"The statements which you make in your last letter, concerning the probable embarrassments which your Board, and your Seminary may experience, in consequence my adverse decision, have caused me pain. Yet you will bear me witness, that those embarrassments will not have been procured by me. Of course, it is neither courteous nor proper for me to venture any suggestion as to the mode in which these difficulties may be best disposed of. I cannot believe that they will be found very serious. My duty, I conceive, is discharged by giving you the above candid statement of my views. In consistency with them, I cannot encourage you to proceed to my nomination by your Board, and I see no reason whatever to believe that anything which may emerge, will change my judgment hereafter, for such a step can only modify the question of duty to me, by creating a set of motives and grounds for solicitation, purely fictitious and adventitious to the case. Certainly, it would be little better than profanity in me, to procure the creation of these new circumstances, against my present sincere views of duty, and then plead them as the 'leadings of Providence.'

"So much of my thoughts as may be proper I would request you to communicate to your friends, in order to clear me from the appearance of inattention or discourtesy towards their request. That request I feel to be kind and honorable to me far above my deserts. I, therefore, beg that you will communicate to them, and accept for yourself my gratitude for your favorable opinion, and for the manner of its expression.

"I remain, with affectionate respect, your friend and brother.

"R. L. DABNEY."

Dr. Hodge replied to this letter at considerable length, combating some of Dr. Dabney's arguments, and expressing himself as in favor of his Board's going on with the election of Dr. Dabney, notwithstanding his discouragements.

Dr. McGill undertook to champion further the cause of Princeton in the following manner:

"PRINCETON, May 3, 1860.

*Rev. R. L. Dabney, D. D.*

"MY DEAR SIR: You are doubtless aware, by this time, of your nomination by our Board of Directors. It was at my request that Dr. Hodge wrote to you first on this subject, and I have heartily concurred in all the urgency, with which the position has been tendered to you, thus far. As the matter more immediately concerns me than any one else, it being my own chair that is divided, you will appreciate my solicitude as natural and just, when I venture to ask you for some more definite expression of your mind, before we go on with an election at the Assembly. It is of the greatest moment to me, in regard to health and happiness, as a professor in this institution, that we be not disappointed, or obliged to go, for another year, without filling this post.

"If your acceptance must be despaired of, it is my purpose not to relinquish the historical chair, but the practical, believing that the latter can be more easily filled, if we are compelled to choose a professor from the list of our pastors.

"Of course, a change like this in our plans would need a little time for conference and deliberation. I do not ask you to make a formal and definite decision, but merely to intimate enough to set my own mind at rest, respecting your favorable disposition. It may be just as private as you please. No one knows of this letter to you but myself. I should say, however, that many of the Directors expect you to make some explicit intimation, before the matter is canvassed by the General Assembly, especially if it be your determination to decline. I confess that your correspondence with Dr. Hodge discouraged me; but I now share with others a hope that the nomination made by our Board, and farther reflection and prayer, may have modified the tone, which I thought unfavorable.

"No one would exult more than myself in your accession to Princeton, and none would feel your refusal to come a more grievous and oppressive disappointment. Hence my unwillingness to prosecute an object so hopeless, as I would consider your coming to be, without more encouragement than came to us before the meeting of our Board.

"With great respect and fraternal love, yours,

"ALEXANDER T. MCGILL."

In answer to this letter, Dr. Dabney wrote:

“UNION SEMINARY, VA., May 8, 1860.

“*Rev. Alex. T. McGill, D. D.*

“REVEREND AND DEAR SIR: Permit me, in reply to your letter received yesterday evening, to express my high sense of the undeserved kindness and good opinion which you have shown towards me. The one painful thing connected with the subject of your letter is, that I should feel compelled to seem too little sensible to the great honor done me by the Faculty and Board of your Seminary. But if I did not feel assured that I am of far less importance and account than your preference would make me, this circumstance would be far more painful.

“Let me thank you warmly, my dear sir, for the justice you do me (more than, I fear, some of your directors are disposed to do me), in testifying to the real tenor of my letter to Dr. Hodge. Had I received that meed of confidence which you accord me, viz., to be supposed *to mean just what I said*, would any one have been misled by me, when I used this language? ‘In consistency with them’ (my views of duty), ‘I cannot encourage you to proceed to my nomination by your Board; and I see no reason whatever to believe that anything which may emerge will change my judgment hereafter. For such a step can only modify the question of duty to me, by creating a set of motives and grounds for solicitation, purely factitious and adventitious to the case. Certainly, it would be little better than profanity in me to procure the creation of these new circumstances, against my present sincere views of duty, and then plead them as the ‘leadings of Providence.’

“It seems that my course in preparing this avowal, with a full review of the reasons which led me to it, has been misapprehended. Had I said the substance of the above, *sans* phrases, I should probably have received the credit of being in earnest. But because my high respect for the great and good name of Rev. Charles Hodge, and the venerable men on whose behalf, he stated, he was writing to me, induced me to shun the appearance of a discourteous insensibility to their judgment, by unfolding the solemn considerations which seem to me at this time to hedge up my way, it is probable some have understood me as insinuating a willingness to carry on a coquettish debate upon the question of my removal, thus keeping it still open. Let me again thank you that you have not thus misapprehended me. And, for the satisfaction of any others, I can but repeat the substance of what I said to Dr. Hodge: that, *with my present views of duty, I could not go to Princeton if elected by the General Assembly*, and that I see nothing in the future which is likely to change them, at this time.

“You mention, my dear sir, that your writing to me is not known to any one; and that my answer to you may remain, if I desire it, equally private. I have no desire whatever to make it confidential; but would prefer that all who are entitled to know should be again informed of my views.

“But I must most emphatically enter my protest against the justice

of that expectation, which you say many directors entertain, that I should give some explicit intimation of what I propose to do before the matter is canvassed in the General Assembly. I protest against the censure on my proposed reticence implied in such an expectation; first, because I have already given, as I conceived, an explicit intimation; and, second, because Dr. Hodge, writing on behalf of leading directors, requested me urgently *not to give* such intimation, if it was likely to be adverse; "to do nothing," to remain passive and silent. And he distinctly declared that, even if my final conclusions were to be negative, he would rather the matter should go to actual election in the General Assembly than be arrested by my negative at an earlier stage; because he thought it better that the chair should remain empty one year than that I should decline at that stage. Such having been the requests made from, and on behalf of, Princeton, when I proceeded, against these requests, to 'volunteer' an 'intimation' which I endeavored to make explicit, in my bungling way, I cannot permit any one to hold *me* responsible for any subsequent disappointment arising out of my final negative. I take them to witness that I expressly precluded all hope of any other final answer than a negative, in terms as positive as my sense of the courteous permitted me to use.

"If I may be permitted to express an opinion on a point which belongs to you rather than to me, I would add that I fully concur in the wisdom of your views; that the plans of the Board as to me ought yet to be modified before the Assembly acts upon them. And the change far the most acceptable to me would be to simply retract my nomination and substitute some other.

"Should any embarrassment result to you from these transactions, or to your Faculty, I shall sincerely lament it; but I cannot believe that Princeton, with its many attractions and wide field of choice, will find any difficulty in securing those who will serve her far better than I could.

"With sincere and fraternal regards, I remain, yours, etc.,

R. L. DABNEY.

Others than members of the Faculty and Board of Directors of Princeton were pleading with him to go to Princeton. For example, his friend, David Comfort, Esq., writes:

"If you want my honest opinion as to your fitness for the situation, I will frankly say that I know no man in the entire South that can fill it as well; none that would be more cordially received, or that could probably exert a more healthful and conservative influence in the institution, and through it on the Northern section of the church. I am not given to flattery, as you know, but speak my honest convictions. I believe that you would more than satisfy public expectation, and that, I need not say, is high. If you had sought the situation, directly or

indirectly, my views would probably have been modified. As it is, I think I see plainly the finger of God in the thing. When I first heard of the movement being contemplated, I involuntarily remarked, 'Dabney won't come; he is entirely too Virginian in his feelings. And yet I verily believe, if they could get him, it would be the very best thing for the Seminary that could happen.' And to the belief expressed in the last sentence I adhere with increasing confidence. If I did not think so, I would tell you so."

Dr. Dabney was not a man to noise abroad a call which he did not propose to accept. He consulted a few men, in whose judgment he had great confidence. Amongst them was the Rev. William Brown, D. D. Dr. Brown wrote to him that, after full reflection, he had never come to a clearer and more decided conclusion in any important matter, and that his conclusion was this, viz., "You ought not to go to Princeton, or anywhere else, so far as I can see." He says that he has no doubt that Dr. Dabney can maintain himself, be very useful, and add largely to his reputation in Princeton; but that he brings "the case to a most positive and absolute decision *on this ground alone*, were there no other, viz., *Your removal from Union Seminary would be equivalent to its abandonment.* Of this I feel well assured, and say it in all sincerity." He continues:

"You know well the trials through which Union has passed, and among them has been that of very frequent changes. Just now, we are beginning to inspire the churches with unwonted confidence in its stability, and all know that your connection with it is contributing more to its name than that of any one else. The occasion requires I should say this. I could not tell you how utterly disastrous to its rising prospects would be the fact of your leaving it, at the very moment when it has the prospect of better days, and a complete instruction. I am sincere, and I believe correct when I declare it is my decided opinion that such a step would likely *result in the formal abandonment of Union*; if not that at once, it would so completely dishearten us all that such would be the case in a short time. It all comes to this, if Union Seminary is to go on and live, you must stay and live with it."

Drs. Moses D. Hoge and T. V. Moore, stirred up by rumors that reached them to fear that he might go to Princeton, try to dissuade him from the step. Dr. Moore wrote, on the 9th of May, 1860, arguing most urgently against his leaving Union Seminary. He says:



"The fate of Presbyterianism in Virginia is bound up in that Seminary, the one falls with the other. Your removal will kill the Seminary to all intents and purposes, and with it the future of Presbyterianism in Virginia. This would not be an immediate result, but a sure one."

He argues his position vigorously, and asks whether God calls him "to inflict such a blow on the institution and church." He says that men will wonder whether, beneath consciousness, at least, Dr. Dabney is not moved by ambition if he goes, and that he will lose largely of his influence for good; that he does not suit "Princeton, with its starch, red tape, and studied culture of the proprieties and finicalities of things"; and that Princeton will not suit him; that he will be unhappy there, and soon pine for the more genial atmosphere of Virginia; that his present position is more honorable and useful than that offered in Princeton, and that the political state of the country makes it the duty of every son of the State to cling to her.

This letter was written the day after Dr. Dabney's decisive reply to Dr. McGill. Had his friends known him a little better, they would have given themselves no uneasiness. He understood the situation with sufficient clearness, and seems never to have had any, even temporary, inclination to move North. Amongst his colleagues, Dr. B. M. Smith seems to have expected him to go to Princeton, and to have deemed him foolish in declining. The venerable Dr. Wilson was much troubled by the calls, and while they were pending, proposed, one day, a walk with his young colleague. His object was to remonstrate against Dr. Dabney's leaving Union Seminary. He argued that if he should go, the Seminary would lose its real support, and collapse; that he must not pull down the work of his own hands. Dr. Dabney at once relieved him, by telling him that he was not going at all. Dr. Wilson expressed his pleasure, and also his surprise, and asked for a statement of the grounds on which he would refuse to go. Dr. Dabney set them forth in a manner that the reader of the previous pages can easily conjecture, laying emphasis, however, on the political situation. He declared that the Abolitionists would probably have forced the country into a war between the sections before he could get a fair start in Princeton; and that he could not "side with the fanatics and usurpers against his own state and people." Dr. Wilson expressed surprise at this view as to the imminence of

war. He, in common with the mass of Southerners at the time, saw nothing of the kind close ahead.

While very much afraid that war was inevitable and impending, Dr. Dabney saw that it was his duty, and that of Christian ministers and people, to do all that was right in the circumstances to stop it; and, with his usual energy and singular devotion, he toiled to assuage the bitterness between the sections, and to bring about a peaceful readjustment, under the blessing of God. Gifted with more than the ordinary powers of forecast, he had, as has been shown, as far back as 1856, published, as an editorial in the *Central Presbyterian*, an article headed, "Christians, pray for your country." In this paper he showed that disunion was imminent, that the national passions of the Free Soil party were "clothing themselves in the garb of religion," and becoming "as ungovernable as a storm, and as implacable as death." "Already," he says, "do the low mutterings of the rising cloud of civil war come from our Western border. Let that cloud break forth into the thunder of battle, and before the winds have swept its roar to the Atlantic, the angry passions now smouldering in magazine will be lit into universal blaze, as if by the touch of lightning. Let those weapons, now pointed against each other in angry array, be once lifted up to the nation, reeking with fratricidal slaughter, and they will muster the foemen from North and South to the battle, like the fiery red cross of Clan-Alpine." In the second place, he showed that if disunion should come, it must be accompanied, or followed, by war; that such a rupture could not come peacefully, that two republics could not arise quietly in the place of one. He showed again that the war must be "the most bitter of all." "The very nearness and intimacy make each more naked to the other's blow." "How fatal the blows, when the republican hardihood and chivalry, the giant strength and the teeming wealth, which begin to make the mightiest despots respectful, are turned against each other! Some among us seem fond of placing the relative prowess of North and South in odious comparison. Brothers, should we not rather weep tears of blood at the wretched and wicked thought, that the common prowess, which hath so often made North and South, side by side, carry dismay and rout into the ranks of common enemies, that terrible prowess, which, in North and South alike, withstood all the force of the British lion while we were yet in the gristle of our youth, and which, ever since, has

overthrown and broken and pierced every enemy with the lion's force, and the swiftness of the king of birds combined, should hereafter expend its might in fratricidal blows." He asks: "Christians of America, will ye suffer this?" And in noble and powerful language, he exhorts them to toil for, and pray to the Prince of Peace to give our country, peace.<sup>1</sup>

But war was to come, and it had drawn near in the fall of 1860. Virginia Christian patriots were in a state of profound sorrow and anxiety. Mr. Lincoln had

"been nominated upon an open free soil, and a covert abolition platform. His opponents were fatally divided under three leaders. The old line Whigs, who had not gone over to Free Soilers, nominated John Bell, of Tennessee, and Mr. Everett, of Boston, upon the naked platform of the Constitution and Union. This, of course, meant nothing, and pledged them to nothing. They seem to have been actuated simply by their old hatred of the Democratic party. The only result was that they drew off enough votes to defeat the Conservative candidate and insure the election of the usurper. The Democratic party was also fatally divided by the cunning of Stephen A. Douglas, who, after making a great following for himself by professing equal justice to both sections, led his people off into virtual support of abolition by the rascally evasion of squatter sovereignty. Of course, all sensible men foresaw Lincoln's election. This would place us between two cruel anxieties. On the one hand, Lincoln, when elected, would wrest the Federal Government into an agency for the disgrace and oppression of the South—a course full of deadly danger to the Union and the peace of the country. On the other hand, we feared that the Gulf States, maddened by this prospect, would act too rashly and hastily, and so compromise their righteous cause. Both evils, in fact, happened."

Under the circumstances thus depicted by Dr. Dabney himself, the Synod of Virginia met in Lynchburg, in October, 1860, and elected him as Moderator. The Synod, with great solemnity, appointed the Sabbath before the federal election as a day of fasting and prayer, and ordered each minister to preach a sermon upon the duty of Christians as peace-makers. This seems to have been the result of Dr. Dabney's work, in large part. He had felt long the duty of this sort of effort. In the previous summer he seems to have contemplated an address to the Southern States, on the part of some of the most distin-

<sup>1</sup> This noble paper may be found in the *Discussions*, Vol. II., pp. 393 ff.; and should be read.

guished Christian ministers of the South, but the scheme failed of encouragement. The spirit of secession was in the air. In pursuance of the injunction of the Synod, he preached in the College Church, on the first Sunday of November, on "The Christian's Best Motive for Patriotism," from the text, "Because of the house of our Lord thy God, I will seek thy good" (Psalm cxxii. 9). In this sermon he begins with teaching that the Christian has a motive for patriotism far stronger and holier than those of all other men. Out of his consuming desire for the welfare of the cause and kingdom of Christ, he is to pray for peace in such a country as ours. Seasons of political agitation, and, much more, seasons of war, are unfavorable to spiritual prosperity. Having shown this by a brilliant historical argument, he declares, "In the sight of heaven's righteous Judge, I believe that if the Christianity of America now betrays the interests of men and God to the criminal hands which threaten them, its guilt will be second only to that of the apostate church, which betrayed the Saviour of the world, and its judgment will be rendered in calamities second only to those which avenged the divine blood invoked by Jerusalem on herself and her children." Next, he asks, "How, then, shall Christians seek the good of this country for the church's sake?" He answers: "First, by everywhere beginning to pray for their country, and along with this, making humble confession of their sins, individual and social; second, by carrying their Christianity into every act of their lives, political or otherwise; by carrying 'Christian conscience, enlightened by God's Word,' into political duty as had not been done hitherto; obeying the law of God rather than the unrighteous behests of party; choosing out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and placing such to be rulers over them." Wrestling along this line, he breaks out:

"Now, I say to you in all faithfulness, that the reckless and incapable men whom you have weakly trusted with power or influence, have already led us far on towards similar calamities. They have bandied violent words, those cheap weapons of petulant feebleness; they have justified aggression; they have misrepresented our tempers and principles; answered, alas! by equal misrepresentations and violence in other quarters, until multitudes of honest men, who sincerely suppose themselves as patriotic as you think yourselves, are really persuaded that in resisting your claims they are but rearing a necessary bulwark against lawless and arrogant aggressions. Four years ago an instance of unjust

and wicked insolence was avenged on the floor of the Senate of the United States by an act of ill-judged violence. And now, not so much that rash and sinful act of retaliation, but the insane, wicked and insulting justification, abhorred and condemned by almost all decent men in our section, is this day carrying myriads of votes of men who, if not thus outraged, might have remained calm and just towards us, for the cause whose triumph you deprecate. Thus the miserable game goes on until at last blood breaks out, and the exhausted combatants are taught in the end that they are contending mainly for a misunderstanding of each other." "Last," he says, "every Christian must study the things that make for peace. All must resolve that they must demand of others nothing more than their necessary rights, and that in the tone of moderation and forbearance. Yea, that they will generously forego all except what duty forbids them to forego, rather than have strife with brethren."

This sermon was printed, and extensively circulated through many channels in both sections. The author was subsequently mortified to find that in certain quarters the sermon was used "with the design of encouraging aggression, by the hope that Southern Christians would constrain their section to be acquiescent under any aggression whatever." It was printed at the unanimous request of the male part of the author's congregation, and may be, therefore, assumed to have been fairly representative of their opinions. A few months after, nearly every one of these persons (who was not beyond military age) was in arms.

Dr. Dabney does not seem to have looked on his own later efforts in the direction of pacification as likely to be very fruitful. He writes to his mother, on the 28th of December, 1860:

"I feel sick at heart at the state of the country. I have been attempting, in my feeble way, to preach peace, and to rouse Christians to their duty in staying the tide of passion and violence. I have received many letters from men in the North, chiefly ministers, such as Drs. Hodge, Sprague, Plumer, etc., giving the strongest assurance of moderate intentions on the part of all the better people, assuring me, in the most solemn terms, that the present congressmen from the Northern States do not represent the feelings of the people there; and that if the South would unite calmness with firmness in demanding the arrest of the Abolition agitation, they would succeed. *I fully believe this; I know it.* But the people will not believe it. The very Christians seem to have lost their senses with excitement, fear and passion; and everything seems hurrying to civil war. Dr. Plumer says in his letter that he is

too desperate to make another attempt, having failed in his most solemn and earnest appeals to the people to pause; and that he confidently expects to see civil war of the most dreadful kind in a few months. I had been more hopeful before this, believing that surely the people could not be so forsaken of God and their own senses, as to go to cutting each others' throats for no possible benefit. But when such men at the North as he and Dr. Prime say so, I begin to think that they know the temper of the Northern people best, and, therefore, see the danger. They still say that three-fourths of the people there are for peace; but we seem to be given up of God, and the violent ones have it all their own way. As for South Carolina, the little impudent vixen has gone beyond all patience. She is as great a pest as the Abolitionists. And if I could have my way, they might whip her to her heart's content, so they would only do it by sea, and not pester us."

Notwithstanding his fears, he continued his efforts. In January, 1861, he prepared a paper entitled, "A Pacific Appeal to Christians." It was "an address to the clergy and laity of the Christian churches of the country," a vigorous and splendid appeal for moderation, calmness and Christian patience, on the part of both sections:

"The great sectional questions which divide the opinions of the North and the South seem at length to have reached their crisis. One State has formally retracted its allegiance to the Union, others are preparing to follow, and a tempest of excitement shakes the nation. We are in the midst of a revolution, only bloodless as yet. . . .

"All Southern Christians would deplore an unnecessary rupture of the Federal Union bequeathed to us by our heroic sires, as marring their glorious work, and showing ourselves unworthy of their inheritance; as bringing the gorgeous promise of the 'Empire Republic' to an early and ignominious close; as plunging the country into the inevitable evils of financial distress, and but too probably into the horrors of frequent wars; as inaugurating on this hitherto peaceful continent the jealous political system of Europe, with its balance of power, its enormous standing armies, its crushing taxation, and, ultimately, its despotic governments; as covering the claims of American Christianity and republicanism with failure and disgrace before the world; as destroying our national weight and glory, and thus our personal security abroad; as disappointing the hopes of self-government throughout the nations, and justifying the claims of tyranny; as bringing innumerable confusions, disruptions and disaster upon the churches of Christ, and as arresting the beneficent labors of one-third of the missionaries and teachers, and drying up a similar portion of the charities which now carry life to the perishing souls of the heathen. Surely he who would risk even the possibility of a result so dire, unless impelled to do it

by causes absolute and inexorable, hath not the heart of a Christian, nor even of a man. Do these causes, then, exist? . . .

"May not patience and serious discussion in the presence of interests so solemn and tremendous dissipate those misconceptions? Is there not still ground to hope that if the Southern people would carefully avoid complicating their righteous cause by any undue haste, or by impinging upon existing laws, or even prejudices, more than the absolute necessities of self-defence require; if the great issue were carried back from embittered party leaders to the body of the citizens, disencumbered of all other questions of a change of administration and of public wealth which were recently mixed with it; if the North were asked whether she would yield to us a generous and fair construction of our equal rights, and in the future punctually observe it, or whether she would force us to an unwilling but necessary self-defence outside the Union, the answer would be one which would restore peace to an anxious country?

"Now, we would humbly urge upon you, dear brethren of the South, whether it is not due to our country, to our race, to our God, and due especially to the noble men who are entreating us to give them one more opportunity to achieve our rights and peace for us by the weapons of argument, that we should withhold the irreparable step as long as there is a spark of hope? And to our brethren of the North and South alike, we would say, when that final step is so solemn and may be so awful, should not every honorable means for avoiding its necessity be exhausted by the good man before he takes it? . . .

"Let us, then, all study moderation of political sentiment, of resentments and of language. Let us keep a watch before the door of our lips, lest some needless word issue forth to exasperate what is already too angry. Let us see to it that we do not initiate the sin, nor share the guilt of those who have perverted the sacred influences of Christianity to sanctify their malignant feelings. Let the Sabbath, with its sacred calm, be reserved more jealously than ever for topics truly divine, in order that its recurring sanctities may aid in tempering the excitement of the people. For this is the wise ordinance of him who 'made the Sabbath for man,' that this weekly breach in the current of our secular cares, and the sobering and elevating contrast of heavenly contemplations might prevent the flow of earthly passions from becoming morbid and chafing the soul into frenzy. It is usually found that wherever the excitements of our weekly debates are allowed to intrude into the sanctuary, the pulpit and the Sabbath, a feverish exasperation of popular feeling results. . . .

"Is disunion, is civil war, before us—a civil war whose atrocities may appall the world? The wisest hearts admit the fear. Let each man, then, place himself now, before it is too late, in the midst of the possible horrors of that fratricidal war; let him bring before his mind a country ravaged; its fields, late smiling with plenty, stained by battle

and the carnage of fellow-citizens and brethren of a common Christianity; its cities sacked or deserted; its peaceful homes desolated, and its order displaced by fierce anarchy; and let him ask himself whether, as he stands amidst the ruins, he will be able to take heaven to witness that none of its guilt is in his skirts. Let each man remember that he must answer at the judgment seat of Christ for his conduct as a citizen, and see to it that when he meets there the ghosts of all that shall be slain, of all the wives that shall be widowed, of all the children that shall be consigned to orphanage and destitution, of all the hoary parents that shall be bereaved of their sons in this quarrel, and of all the ignorant damned through our neglect, while we were waging the work of mutual destruction, he shall be able to appeal to the Searcher of Hearts that none of it was his doing; that every whit of this mountainous aggregate of guilt belongs to his adversaries, and not to himself; that he had exhausted every righteous expedient and exerted every lawful power to avoid it. If, brethren, you can do this, it will be well with you, however ill it may be with our miserable country. But if not, who can estimate that guilt! But, blessed be God, all is not yet lost."<sup>2</sup> . . .

<sup>2</sup> To this "Appeal" were appended the following signatures:

SAMUEL B. WILSON, D. D., Professor and President Union Theological Seminary, Virginia.

JOHN M. P. ATKINSON, D. D., President Hampden-Sidney College.

B. M. SMITH, D. D., Professor Union Theological Seminary, Virginia.

ROBERT L. DABNEY, D. D., Professor Union Theological Seminary, Virginia.

REV. T. E. PECK, D. D., Professor Union Theological Seminary, Virginia.

REV. HENRY SNYDER, Professor Hampden-Sidney College.

REV. WILLIAM BROWN, D. D., Editor of *Central Presbyterian*.

REV. GEORGE D. ARMSTRONG, D. D., Presbyterian Church, Norfolk, Va.

REV. JACOB D. MITCHELL, D. D., Second Presbyterian Church, Lynchburg, Va.

REV. JAMES C. CLOPTON, Pastor of African Church, Lynchburg, Va.

REV. JOSIAH CLIFT, Methodist Protestant Church, Lynchburg, Va.

JAMES B. RAMSEY, D. D., First Presbyterian Church, Lynchburg, Va.

DRURY LACY, D. D., late President Davidson College, North Carolina.

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA.

W. H. MCGUFFEY, Professor of Moral Philosophy.

JOHN B. MINOR, Professor of Common and Statute Law.

H. HOWARD, M. D., Professor of Medicine.

S. MAUPIN, M. D., Professor of Chemistry.

M. SCHELE DE VERE, Professor of Modern Languages.



In March, 1861, this paper appeared in the *Central Presbyterian*. It met with no proper response. Within a few weeks, Mr. Lincoln's usurpations had converted all the signers into staunch war men.

Other productions looking to pacification had come from his pen in this period. He felt keenly his responsibilities as a minister in regard to the great crisis. He had nothing to say of politics while acting in his ministerial capacity, but he held up the great virtues which were likely to be forgotten in the mad excitement of the time. He endeavored to be a "brake" on the movement for war. He condemned those preachers who turned their sermons into political speeches. He commended

LEXINGTON, VA., *January 14, 1861.*

We, the undersigned, cordially concur in the general tone of sentiment and feeling expressed in the foregoing paper :

REV. WILLIAM N. PENDLETON, D. D., Rector of Grace Church, Episcopal.

REV. F. C. TEBBS, Methodist Episcopal Church.

REV. WILLIAM S. WHITE, D. D., Presbyterian Church.

REV. GEORGE JUNKIN, D. D.,

PROF. J. L. CAMPBELL,

PROF. A. L. NELSON,

PROF. C. J. HARRIS,

PROF. JAMES J. WHITE,

JOHN T. L. PRESTON, Virginia Military Institute.

T. J. JACKSON, Professor, Virginia Military Institute.

} *Faculty of Washington College,  
Virginia.*

RANDOLPH MACON COLLEGE, VIRGINIA.

While we love the Union, and deplore the calamities which so seriously threaten our country, and while we truly appreciate the truly Christian forbearance and sentiments of justice embodied in the foregoing address, we must be allowed to say that we believe that nothing short of the decisive measures now before the people of the Southern States will cause many of our intelligent and calculating, but tardy, yet doubtless true, friends at the North to *realize the fact* that we are in earnest in asserting our rights under the Constitution and our beliefs on the moral aspects of the questions involved. And if these remedies fail to save the Union, we are still willing to take them as the least of impending evils, with a firm persuasion that we are not responsible for the ultimate results.

WM. A. SMITH, D. D., President of Randolph-Macon College.

PH. W. ARCHER, Presiding Elder of Randolph-Macon College.

GEORGE H. RAY, Chaplain of Randolph-Macon College.

the faithfulness of Dr. Thornwell for having stood up in the very capital of South Carolina, on their fast day, and telling the people, in a sermon without a word of secession in it (although, to his grief, Thornwell was early a secessionist), of their sins of violence, swearing, bragging, and neglect of duty to their black people.

His work of attempted pacification was much commended by noble men North and South. As specimens of the letters of commendation received, two may be presented, one from each section:

“UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, *January 14, 1861.*

“MY DEAR SIR: When, some weeks ago, I read your sermon<sup>3</sup> in the *Intelligencer*, I meant to have written to you to express my earnest sympathy, approval and delight, but the pressure of other matters put it out of my mind. The address to Southern Christians sent from your Seminary to Dr. McGuffey, to be signed by Christians here, in which I think I see your *hand-prints*, reminds me of what I and the country owe you for the sermon, and constrains me to thank you, with a full heart, for the powerful appeals both papers make to the disciples of our blessed Lord.

“Wild and frantic as our countrymen have become, I cannot but hope for a good impression, even now, from such an address to our believing brethren. Christians have a fearful responsibility for the present exasperation, which very few of my acquaintances seem to realize. Forgetful that the “wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God,” they are so far from exercising, by exhortation or example, any wholesome restraint upon the passions of their neighbors and associates, that they are amongst the foremost, frequently, in kindling resentment for real, and often for fancied, grievances by inflammatory representations. They act as if they thought that malignity and revenge, if only cherished toward a people, were admissible sentiments, and that Christ’s benediction upon the ‘peace-makers’ was either antiquated, or, at all events, was limited in practice to the discords of individuals.

“If at this moment every true believer would come out from the world, and, in the spirit of his divine Master, would exercise only half the forbearance and patience which he enjoins, and would at the same time ‘lift up holy hands, without doubting,’ ere a moon had waxed and waned we should emerge from the well-nigh hopeless gloom which now surrounds us, and be on the way to a just and peaceful settlement of this terrible strife.

“The interests of Virginia and of the other border States plead so overwhelmingly for an adjustment that I cannot despair. I would not have this beloved and revered Commonwealth sacrifice aught of true

<sup>3</sup> This was the sermon of November, 1860, on Psalm cxxii. 9.

honor, nor purchase an ignominious peace at the expense of self-respect. We must protect and defend our institutions and property: but surely, *surely* it is not the *best*, much less the *only*, way to do that to plunge into the volcanic crater of civil war before we have exhausted every constitutional and peaceful resource! My head and heart sicken at the thought of what seems to me almost the *possessed* madness of many of *our* people, and of whole communities in the cotton States. To welcome disunion with guns and bonfires and illuminations! To hasten to 'cry [battle(?)],' without even proposing terms of arrangement!

"I particularly approved the animadversion in the address on political preaching. In most cases a political preacher is a demagogue, and when he is not, the example is pernicious. Can we conceive of Paul as the author of such a sermon? Surely it is but for a minister, like Paul, to know nothing amongst his flock 'but Jesus Christ and him crucified'!

"Pray, my dear sir, let not your pen be idle. During the interval before the convention is chosen much may be done to rouse the Christian heart of Virginia to its sober, religious duty, and not a little during the deliberations of the Assembly, and the subsequent deliberations of the people upon its action. The result will depend, under God, mainly on Christian men—the view they take and the course they pursue. I don't mean as to the merits of whatever controversy may arise, but in respect of the spirit and temper with which the crisis shall be met.

"With sincere regard, I am, truly yours,

"JOHN B. MINOR."

"Rev. Dr. Dabney:

"NEW YORK, 15 April, 1861.

"MY DEAR SIR: YOUR letter of the 12th reached me to-day. It will be a matter of interest to me to suggest and to press the publication of your letters at the North. If you have an extra copy of them to spare, I would thank you to send it to me, that I may read and submit it.

"*Inter Arma leges silent*, and I fear that the day is past when truth or reason will be heard.

"We are in the midst of war! And, I fear, a bitter, implacable war, to be handed down to generations yet to come. Fanaticism has begotten it, and there is no fury out of hell more fearful and more hateful than the spirit of religious hate. God help us and bring us out.

"While you were writing to me, the guns were sounding the death-knell of our Union and happiness.

"Of course, the border States will go with the cotton States. The worst of wars—interstate—will come, and social, civil and national ruin.

"Can we do nothing, even now, to stay the curse? Would it be practicable for private individuals to invoke the interposition of some foreign power, like France, to mediate between the North and South?

"The North will be a unit for war. Money by millions, men by hundreds of thousands, are ready.

"But, come what may, let us keep the unity of the spirit; let us enjoy the communion of saints. And, whether we have one country or two, I shall ever be your friend and brother,

"S. I. PRIME."

Though averse to talking politics promiscuously, Dr. Dabney entertained decided, as well as profound, views on most questions of statecraft. His views on affairs imminent in 1861, are set forth in a letter to Dr. Moses D. Hoge, of Richmond, Va.:

"January 4, 1861.

"DEAR BROTHER HOGE: I employ a part of the leisure of this fast-day afternoon, to answer your kind letters, reciprocate your affectionate wishes for me and mine, and explain my views somewhat on public affairs. It is from God that all domestic security has proceeded, in more quiet times, though at such times our unthankfulness causes us more to overlook his good hand; and his power and goodness must be our defence now, to cover us and our feeble households 'under his feathers.'

"My conviction has all along been that we ministers, when acting ministerially, publicly, or any way representatively of God's people as such, should seem to have no politics. Many reasons urge this. One of the most potent is, that else their moral power (and, through their fault, the moral power of the church) to act as peace-makers and mediators, will be lost. I thought, too, that I saw very plainly that there was plenty of excitement and passion; that our people were abundantly touchy and wakeful concerning aggression, and that there were plenty of politicians to make the fire burn hot enough without my help to blow it. Hence, my public and professional action has been only that of a pacificator; and that only on Christian (not political) grounds and views. I believe that in this humble attempt I have done, and am doing, a *little* good, which my God will not forget, although it may, alas! seem for the present to be swallowed up in the overmuch evil. 'The day will reveal it.'

"But I have my politics personally, and at the polls act on them. They are about these: I voted for Breckinridge, fully expecting to be beaten; and, therefore, preferring to be beaten with the standard-bearer most theoretically correct. But if I had seen that Bell, or even Douglass, had a chance to beat Lincoln, I could have voted for either. I have considered the state of Northern aggression as *very ominous* for many years (as you know, having stronger views of this four years ago than most of our people). But I do not think that Lincoln's election makes them at all more ominous than they were before. I believe that we should have effectually check-mated his administration, and

have given the Free Soil party a "thundering" defeat in 1864. Hence, I considered Lincoln's election no proper *casus belli*, least of all for immediate separate secession, which could never be the right way under any circumstances. Hence, I regard the conduct of South Carolina as unjustifiable towards the United States at large, and towards her Southern sisters, as treacherous, wicked, insolent and mischievous. She has, in my view, *worsted* the common cause, forfeited the righteous strength of our position, and aggravated our difficulties of position a hundredfold. Yet regard to our own rights unfortunately compels us to shield her from the chastisement which she most condignly deserves. But, even in shielding her, we must see to it, as we believe in and fear a righteous God, that we do no iniquity as she has done. For instance: the power of a federal government to fight an independent State back into the Union is one thing; the right of that government to hold its own property, fairly paid for and ceded (the forts), is another thing. Take South Carolina's own theory, that she is now a *foreign nation* to the United States, and rightfully so; how can it be the duty of the President, or of Congress, sworn to uphold the laws, to surrender the soil and property of the United States to a foreign nation insolently and threateningly demanding them; and, with a sauciness almost infinite, saying to the United States, 'You shall not take any additional measures to defend your own property; if you do, we will fight.' Hence, if I were king in Virginia, I would say to the President, 'You are *entitled*, as head of the United States, to hold the forts; to strengthen your garrisons; to do anything defensive in them you choose, till they lawfully change owners by equal purchase. If you are assailed, beat them off; and their blow be on their own heads.' But if an attempt were made to subdue South Carolina herself, *without first offering to her such a redress of her federal grievances as would be satisfactory to the moderate, just majority of her Southern sisters*, I would say, 'Hands off!' 'At your peril!'

"Now, you may say, this is all theoretically right; but it is all out of date at this crisis; the crisis is too dangerous to admit of ethical niceties; we must 'go it blind,' and stand or fall with South Carolina. I reply, it is never too late or too dangerous to do *right*. Verily, there is a God who judgeth in the earth. How can we appeal to him in the beginning of what may be a great and arduous contest, when we signalize its opening by a wrong? Besides, if we are to do anything prosperously or wise, we *must* clear ourselves before the great mass of the Union-loving, God-fearing men of the North, of this wanton breach of Federal compacts, and disregard of vested rights, which South Carolina is trying to commit.

"But I greatly fear the temper of our people is no longer considerate enough to place themselves thoroughly in the right in this matter. In view, then, of the *actual* state of affairs, justifiable or unjustifiable, I would say that the Legislature of Virginia ought, *on the first day* it

meets, to call a State Convention. It ought also to take immediate steps for a concert of the Southern States, to be well knit as soon as their several State Conventions can elect commissioners; to present a united front to the North, for two objects—to demand firmly our rights *within the Union*, and to limit any Federal or Northern collision with South Carolina within the limits I have defined above. This congress of commissioners should also have a sort of alternative power given them, to be used only on condition that an extra session of Congress passes a force bill under Lincoln; and, in that event, to declare our allegiance to the Federal Union *suspended* till such measures are relinquished; and to organize adequate means of self-defence. And this alternative power they should use promptly, in that event. Meantime, each State Legislature should diligently provide for self-defence.

“I have thought, ever since the secession movement began in South Carolina, that the idea of a *tertium quid*, or central Confederacy as a *temporary arrangement*, might be useful. But this on two conditions: that any attempts or diplomatic overtures to construct it should not for a moment supersede, but only proceed abreast with our preparations for the dernier resort; and that the border slave States should utterly refuse to enter it, except on a basis liberal enough to them to *assure* their interests unquestionably, and, moreover, to disgust New England, and prevent her accession to it for awhile.

“Once more: we should all remember that America is one in race, in geography, in language, in material interests. Even if we angrily divide, there will be powerful interests drawing us together again, after the wire-edge of our spite is worn off. Every good man, even after separation seems inevitable, should try to act with a view to the speediest reunion.”

It is clear from his letters that he remained stoutly opposed to secession until Mr. Lincoln's unlawful and fatal call for volunteers to coerce South Carolina and the other seceding States. He was in wide correspondence with leading ministers in both sections. He saw them drifting away from him in politics. Thornwell had written:

“THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, November 24, 1860.

“MY DEAR BROTHER: I sympathize most cordially with you in the profound interest which you take in the present condition of public affairs. It is a time of blasphemy and rebuke; a time in which our only hope is in the merciful providence of God. I have reflected as maturely and as prayerfully upon the duty of the South in the present crisis as I am capable of reflecting upon any subject. My opinions have been calmly, solemnly and dispassionately formed. I am sorry that I cannot concur with you in your contemplated scheme of an *address to the Southern States*. The effect of such a measure would be to delay the

secession of the South, and, as that is inevitable, the sooner it is brought about the better. It is impossible to live any longer, with security and self-respect, in the present Union. The election of Lincoln is the straw that has broken the camel's back; and if we submit to it, we are degraded beyond the possibility of recovery. It is a virtual abrogation of the Constitution, and a proclamation to all the world that the slaveholding States are to be treated as conquered provinces. That unceasing efforts will be made to excite insurrections among us, to render our property, our homes, our lives insecure; that agitators will pass in various disguises and under various pretexts through the country, stirring up the slaves to arson and murder; that a feverish state of feeling will be produced among ourselves, likely to terminate in the remorseless extinction of the negro race, are results as certain as the moral causes which have long been at work in this direction, and which have acquired a new impulse from the recent triumph of the Republican party. We owe it to our negroes to protect them from their friends, as well as to ourselves, to protect our own dignity.

"In several respects the government needs a reconstruction. It cannot work as it now stands. An issue must, therefore, be made; and I see not how it can be done without secession. Conventions will end in nothing, until some decisive step is taken. My judgment, therefore, is clear, that the time has come when each State should act independently and for itself. When the separation has been effected, then let the States that are one in principle and interests unite and form a new government.

"I am not insensible to the dangers of the crisis. I feel our need of prayer, of divine guidance and protection. But to me the greatest danger is that of submission to Lincoln's election. I wish the people of Virginia could see their way clear to hoist the standard of Southern rights, and to lead us in this most necessary revolution.

"I have just preached a fast-day sermon. It will soon be published, and you may look for a copy.

"Present my most cordial remembrances to Peck.

"Most sincerely,

"J. H. THORNWELL."

Dabney was aboard the noble ship, *Our Rights within the Union*. It was being deserted daily. He remained aboard till unrighteous war had been instituted by the North. When Mr. Lincoln commenced his war of coercion against the States, Dr. Dabney wrote one more remonstrance to the Northern Christians, entitled, "Letter to the Rev. S. I. Prime, on the State of the Country." He had professed all along to be a staunch friend to justice and the South. Dr. Dabney asked him to print the letter in the *New York Observer*, of which he was

an editor. He found this inexpedient. The letter was published in the Richmond papers in April, 1861, and widely in the South. An association of gentlemen subsequently published it in pamphlet form, under the conviction that it would prove serviceable to religion and patriotism, and feeling that it spoke for them, as well as for the author. In this paper, the writer changes his tone, from one of solemn and affectionate entreaty to one of stern defiance. It was a vindication of Virginia's right to go to war against the Federal Government at Washington. Constitutional Union men accepted it as their defence for turning into war men.

This famous letter was written during the Spring Meeting of West Hanover Presbytery, at Amherst Courthouse, in a chamber at Mr. John Robertson's whose guest Dr. Dabney was at the time. It was thrown off in a single *impromptu* effort, but it was nevertheless the outcome of indefinite pondering. As defining his position, and that of such men as Lee, and Jackson, and Jefferson Davis, and Alexander Stephens, *et id omne genus*, constitutional Union men, it deserves reproduction here:

*"Rev. S. I. Prime, D. D.:*

*April 20, 1861.*

"REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER: I took occasion, as you will remember, in lifting up my feeble voice to my fellow-Christians on behalf of what was once our country, to point out the infamy which would attach to the Christianity of America if, after all its boasts of numbers, power, influence and spirituality, it were found impotent to save the land from fratricidal war. You have informed your readers more than once that you feared it was now too late to reason. Then, I wish, through you, to lay this final testimony before the Christians of the North, on behalf of myself and my brethren in Virginia, that the guilt lies not at our door. This mountainous aggregate of enormous crime, of a ruined Constitution, of cities sacked, of reeking battle-fields, of scattered churches, of widowed wives and orphaned children, of souls plunged into hell; we roll it from us, taking the Judge to witness, before whom you and we will stand, that the blood is not upon our heads. When the danger first rose threatening in the horizon, our cry was, 'Christians to the rescue.' And nobly did the Christians of Virginia rally to the call. Did you not see their influence in the patriotic efforts of this old Commonwealth to stand in the breach between the angry elements? Yes, it was the Christians of Virginia, combined with her other citizens, who caused her to endure wrongs, until endurance ceased to be a virtue; to hold out the olive branch, even after it had been spurned again and again; to study modes of compromise and conciliation until the very verge of dishonor was touched; to refuse



to despair of the republic, after almost all else had surrendered all hope, and to decline all acts of self-defence, even, which might precipitate collision, until the cloud had risen over her very head, and its lightnings were about to burst. So long-suffering, so reluctant to behold the ruin of that Union to which she contributed so much, has Virginia been, that many of her sons were disgusted by her delays, and driven to fury and despair by the lowering storm and the taunts of her enemies. And those enemies (woe to them for their folly) mistook this generous long-suffering, this magnanimous struggle for peace, as evidence of cowardice! They said the "Old Mother of States and Statesmen" was decrepit; that her genius was turned to dotage; that her breasts were dry of that milk which suckled her Henrys and her Washingtons. They thought her little more than a cowering beldame, whom a timely threat would reduce to utter submissiveness. And thus they dared to stretch over her head the minatory rod of correction! But no sooner was the perilous experiment applied than a result was revealed, as unexpected and startling as that caused by the touch of Ithuriel's spear. This patient, peaceful, seemingly hesitating paralytic flamed up at the insolent touch like a pyramid of fire, and Virginia stands forth in her immortal youth, the 'unterrified Commonwealth' of other days, a Minerva radiant with the terrible glories of policy and war, wielding that sword which has ever flashed before the eyes of aggressors, the '*Sic semper tyrannis.*' Yes, the point of farthest endurance has been passed at length. All her demands for constitutional redress have been refused; her magnanimous, her too generous concessions of right, have been met by the insolent demand for unconditional surrender of honor and dignity; her forbearance has been abused to collect armaments and equip fortresses on her border and on her own soil for her intimidation; the infamous alternative has been forced upon her either to brave the oppressor's rod or to aid him in the destruction of her sisters and her children, because they are contending nobly, if too rashly, for rights common to them and to her; and, to crown all, the Constitution of the United States has been rent in fragments by the effort to muster new forces, and wage war without authority of law, and to coerce sovereign States into adhesion, in the utter absence of all powers or intentions of the Federal compact to that effect. Hence, there is now but one mind and one heart in Virginia; and from the Ohio to the Atlantic, from the sturdy mountaineers, and her chivalrous lowlanders alike, there is flung back in high disdain the gauntlet of deathless resistance. In one week the whole State has been converted into a camp.

"Now once more, before the Titanic strife begins, we ask the conservative freemen of the North, For what good end is this strife? We do not reason with malignant fanatics, with the mob whose coarse and brutal nature is frenzied with sectional hatred. But we ask, Where is the great conservative party, which polled as many votes against Abra-

ham Lincoln as the whole South? Where are the good men who, a few weeks ago even, held out the olive branch to us, and assured us that, if we would hold our hands, the aggressive party should be brought to reason? Where is that Albany Convention, which pledged itself against war? If it is too late to reason, even with you, we will at least lay down our last testimony against you before our countrymen, the church, and the righteous heavens.

"Consider, then, that this appeal to arms, in such a cause, is as dangerous to your rights as to ours. Let it be carried out, and whatever may have befallen us, it will leave you with a consolidated federal government, with State sovereignty extinguished, with the constitution in ruins, and with your rights and safety a prey to a frightful combination of radicalism and military despotism; for what thoughtful man does not perceive that the premises of the anti-slavery fanatic are just those of the agrarian? The cause of peace was then as much your cause as ours; and if war is thrust upon us, you should be found on our side, contending for the supremacy of law and constitutional safeguards, with a courage worthy of the heroes of Saratoga and Trenton.

"How horrible is this war to be, of a whole North against a whole South! Not to dwell on all its incidents of shame and misery, let us ask, Who are to fight it out to its bitter issue? Not the tongue-valiant brawlers, who have inflamed the feud, by their prating lies about the 'barbarism of slavery'; these pitiful miscreants are already hiding their cowardly persons from the storm, and its brunt must be borne by the honest, the misguided, the patriotic men of the North, who, in a moment of madness, have been thrust into this false position.

"How iniquitous is its real object—the conquest and subjugation of free and equal States! We have vainly boasted of the right of freemen to choose their own form of government. This right the North now declares the South shall not enjoy. The very tyrants of the Old World are surrendering the unrighteous claim to thrust institutions on an unwilling people. Even grasping England, which once endeavored to ruin the Colonies she could not retain, stands ready to concede to her *dependencies* a separate existence, when they determine it is best for their welfare; but the North undertakes to compel its *equals* to abide under a government which they judge ruinous to their rights! Thus this free, Christian, Republican North urges on the war, while even despotic Europe cries, Shame on the fratricidal strife, and turns with sickening disgust and loathing, from the bloody spectacle!

"Let it not be replied that it is South Carolina which has first gone to war with you, and that Virginia has made herself *particeps criminis*, by refusing to permit her righteous chastisement. This is what clamoring demagogues say; but before an enlightened posterity, as before impartial spectators, it is false; and here let us distinctly understand the ground the conservative North means to occupy, as to the independ-

ence of the States in their reserved rights. If you do indeed construe the federal compact so that a ruthless majority may perpetrate unconstitutional wrong, may trample on the sacred authority of the Supreme Court, and may pervert all the powers of the Federal Government, instituted for the equal good of all, to the depression of a class of rights as much recognized by the Constitution as any other, and the minority have no remedy except submission; if you mean that sovereign States, the creators by their free act of these federal authorities, are to be the helpless slaves, in the last resort, of their own servant; if you mean that one party is to keep or break the compact as his arrogance, caprice or interest may dictate, and the other is to be held bound by it at the point of the sword; if you mean that a sovereign State is not to be the judge of its own wrong and its own redress, when all constitutional appeals have failed, then we say that it is high time that we understood each other. Then was this much-lauded federal compact a monstrous fraud, a horrid trap, and we do well to free ourselves and our children from it at the expense of all the horrors of another revolutionary war. The conservative party in the North declared, with us, that the platform of the Black Republican party was unconstitutional. On this their opposition to it was based. They proclaimed it in their speeches, they wrote it on their banners, they fired it from their cannon, they voted it at the polls, that the Chicago platform was unconstitutional; and now that this platform has been fixed on the ruins of the Constitution, and its elected exponent has declared, from the steps of the Capitol, that the last barrier, the Supreme Court, is to be prostrated to the will of a majority; now that the Conservative party of the North has demonstrated itself (as it does this day, by its succumbing to this fiendish war-frenzy) impotent to protect us, themselves, or the Constitution (the Constitution overthrown according to their own avowals), are we to be held offenders because we attempted peacefully to exercise the last remaining remedy, and to pluck our liberties and the principles of this Constitution from the vandal hands which were rending them all, by a quiet secession? Nay, verily! Of all men in the world, the conservative men of the North cannot condemn that act, for they have *declared* the Constitution broken, and they have *proved themselves* incompetent to restore it; and least of all should Virginia be condemned for this act, because she magnanimously forebore it till forbearance was almost her ruin, and until repeated aggressions had left no alternative. Yet, more, Virginia cannot be condemned, because, in the ordinance of 1788, in which she first accepted this Constitution, she *expressly reserved* to herself the right to sever its bonds, whenever she judged they were used injuriously to her covenanted rights. It was on this condition she was received into the family of States, and her reception on this condition was a concession of it by her partners. From that condition she has never for one hour receded. (Witness the spirit of the Resolutions of 1798, 1799.) And now, shall she be called a covenant-breaker

because she judges that the time has come to exercise her right expressly reserved? Nay, verily.

"If, then, we have the right of peacefully severing our connection with the former confederation, and the attempt has been made by force to obstruct that right, *they who attempted the obstruction are the first aggressors.* The first act of war was committed by the government of Washington against South Carolina, when fortresses intended lawfully, only for her protection, were armed for her subjugation. That act of war was repeated when armed preparations were twice made to reinforce these means of her oppression. It was repeated when she was formally notified that these means of her oppression would be strengthened, 'peaceably if they could be, forcibly if they must.' And then, at last, after a magnanimous forbearance, little expected of her ardent nature, she proceeded to what was an act of *strict self-defence*—the reduction of Fort Sumter.

"But it is replied: the seceding States have committed the intolerable wrongs of seizing federal ships, posts, property, and money, by violence! And whose fault is this? Had the right of self-protection outside the Federal Constitution been peacefully allowed us, after our rights had been trampled in the mire within it, not one dollar's worth would have been seized. All would yet be accounted for, to the last shoe-latchet, if the North would hold its hand. The South has not seceded because it wished to commit a robbery. As for the forts within their borders, the only legitimate right the United States could have for them was to protect those States. When we relinquish all claims on that protection, what desire can the Federal Government have to retain them save as instruments of oppression? But you say they were forcibly seized! And why, except that the South was well assured (have not events proved the fear well grounded) that a purpose existed to employ them for her ruin? My neighbor and equal presumes to obstruct me in the prosecution of my rights, and brandishes a dirk before my face; when I wrench it from his hand to save my own life, shall he then accuse me of unlawfully stealing his dirk? Yet such is the insulting nonsense which has been everywhere vented to make the South an offender for acts of self-defence, which the malignant intentions disclosed by the government of Washington have justified more and more every day.

"But it is exclaimed, 'The South has fired upon the flag of the Union!' Did this flag of the Union wave in the *cause of right* when it was unfurled as the signal of oppression? Spain fired upon the flag of France when Napoleon laid his iniquitous grasp upon her soil and crown. Did this justify the righteous and God-fearing Frenchman in seeking to destroy Spain? Let the aggressor amend his wrong before he demands a penalty of the innocent party who has only exercised the right of self-defence.

"It is urged again: if the Union is not maintained, the interests of the North in the navigation of the Gulf and the Mississippi, in the comi-

ties of international intercourse, in the moneys expended in the Southern States for fortifications, may be jeopardized. I reply, it will be time enough to begin to fight when those interests are infringed. May I murder my neighbor because I suspect that he may defraud me in the division of a common property, which is about to be made, and because I find him now more in my power? Shall not God avenge for such iniquity as this?

“But it is said, in fine, ‘If the right of secession is allowed, then our government is only a rope of sand.’ I reply, demonstratively, that the government of which Virginia has been a member has always had this condition in it as to her—for her right to go out of it whenever she judged herself injured by it was expressly reserved and conceded from the first. Her reception on those terms was a concession of it. If you say that the people of the North are not aware of this, then the only reply we deign to give is, that it is no one’s fault but yours that you have allowed yourself to be misled by rulers ignorant of the fundamental points in the history of the government. Now, my argument (and it is invincible) is this: that the connection of Virginia with the Federal Government, although containing always the right of secession for an infringement of the compact, has been anything else, for eighty years, than a rope of sand. It has bound her in a firm loyalty to that government. It has been a bond which nothing but the most ruthless and murderous despotism could relax; a bond which retained its strength, even when it was binding the State to her incipient dishonor and destruction. Surely it is a strange and disgraceful fact that men who call themselves *freemen and Christians* should assume the position that no force is a real force except that which is cemented by an inexorable physical power! Do they mean that with them honor, covenants, oaths, enlightened self-interest, affections, are only a rope of sand? Shame on the utterance of such an argument. Do they confess themselves so ignorant that they do not know that the physical power of even the most iron despotisms reposes on moral forces? Even a Presbyterian divine has been found to declare that if our federal compact has in it any admission of a right of secession, it is but a *simulacrum* of a government. Whereas, all history teaches us that if the basis of moral forces be withdrawn from beneath, the most rigid despotism becomes but a *simulacrum*, and dissolves at the touch of resistance. How much more, then, must all republican government be founded on moral forces, on the consent, the common interests, and the affections of the governed. While these remain, the government is strong and efficient for good; when they are gone, it is impotent for good, and exists only for evil. As long as the purposes and compacts of the federal institutions were tolerably observed by the North, that government knit us together with moral bands indeed; yet they were stronger than hooks of steel. The North has severed them by aggression, and they cannot be cemented by blood.

“Why, then, shall war be urged on? No man is blind enough to believe that it can reconstruct the Federal Union on equitable terms. It is waged for revenge, for the gratification of sectional hate, to solace mortified pride, to satiate the lust of conquest. From these fiendish passions let every good man withdraw his countenance. It is a war which the Constitution confers no power to wage, even were the secession of the South for no sufficient cause. The debates of the fathers who framed it show that this power was expressly withheld—even the Federalist, Hamilton, concurring strenuously. This war has no justification in righteousness, in any reasonable hope of good results, in constitutional law. It is the pure impulse of bad passions. Will the good men of the North concur in it?

“I desire through you, my dear brother, to lay down this last protest on that altar where the peace of the land is so soon to be sacrificed. I claim to be heard. If the reign of terror exercised by the mobs of your cities has indeed made it dangerous for you to lay before your fellow-Christians the deprecatory cry of one who, like me, has labored only for peace, then tell those mobs that not you, but I, am responsible for whatever in these lines is obnoxious to their malignant minds, and bid them seek their revenge of me (not of you) at that frontier where we shall meet them, the northernmost verge of the sacred soil of Virginia. And if you find that the voice of justice and reason is no longer permitted to be heard in the North, that the friends of the Constitution cannot lift their hands there with safety in its defence, then we invite you, and all true men, to come to this sunny land, and help us here to construct and defend another temple, where constitutional liberty may abide secure and untarnished. For you we have open arms and warm hearts; for our enemies, resistance to the death.

“Yours in the bonds of the gospel,

“R. L. DABNEY.”

A few years before the war, Dr. Dabney had been exceedingly doubtful as to the results of this struggle; he had said that no man could tell which section would come out victorious, and that the consequences to both sections would be most appalling; but he was now caught in the current of the prevailing enthusiasm. He wrote, on the 25th of April, 1861:

“There are many things which make me hope that it may be the will of a good Providence that we shall be spared the sufferings and crimes of a great war, or at least of defeat. I can hardly think that the Northern people will not come to their senses when they see the unexampled unanimity of our people and their towering spirit. There was no such unity of spirit, either in the first or second British war. Our generals embrace nearly all the military talent of the country, except old Scott, who must be in his dotage. Our cousins to the Southwest

will rally to our defence with a zeal which will leave us nothing to do, if we pleased, but to make bread and meat to feed them, while they fight our battles. I verily believe that, instead of lacking for defenders, we shall have more than we can support or employ to advantage.

"Day before yesterday three Prince Edward companies were in high preparations for leaving. They started yesterday morning. The day before, a fine rifle company, the Prospect Greys, a few miles above this, held a meeting to drill and to raise a subscription to buy uniforms and blankets for the poorer members. I was requested to go up and make them an address, which I did. When I got there the company was in the church, with their full equipment, and a house full of their neighbors, wives, sisters and children. There was most intense feeling. I gave them various good advices, seeking rather to quiet than to agitate their feelings; and then made an appeal to people for aid, as did a Methodist minister who was there. The people then raised about seven hundred dollars in cash, and handed it to their captain; and also promised full assistance to the dependent wives and children left behind. So we dismissed them with prayers, among universal tears and sobs. This company is composed of middle-class men; most of them Presbyterians or Methodists, and a few gentlemen. They are a stalwart set of fellows, sun-burned, raw-boned and bearded; but they all wept like children. They will fight none the less for that. Our little county will soon have five large companies in the field. Such a people cannot be conquered."

During these years, Dr. Dabney continued his contributions and editorials in the *Central Presbyterian*. Amongst them appeared, in June and July, of 1859, his review of Theodosia Ernest, in which he demolished the arguments for immersion. In the *Philadelphia Presbyterian*, issues December 3, 1859, to January 8, 1860, he reviewed Thornwell's "Defence of the Revised Book of Discipline," which had appeared in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*. He published in the *North Carolina Presbyterian*, in September and October, 1860, five articles on "Theory of the Eldership." The students of Hampden-Sidney College published, in 1860, a notable sermon of his on "The Sin of the Tempter" (Heb. ii. 15). All his work in this period was very strong. He was coming into the full command of his powers.

During these two years his devotion to his mother and sister was as marked as ever. He is interested in everything which was of interest to them. The following homely, gossipy sheet is characteristic:

“AUGUST 15, 1860.

“MY DEAR MOTHER: I fear my promise to write to you more frequently is not in a very likely way to be redeemed. I find myself very busy since getting home, preaching, doing up my neglected pastoral visiting, repairing Seminary rooms, and studying a very little. Either I am growing lazier, so as to be more easily distracted by interruptions, or my occupations grow more distracting. I see that what with unavoidable drawbacks of the Presbytery, etc., I shall not get through my year's visiting before the session begins; and people would have me, if I would listen to them, to spend every Sabbath and every week day, too, between now and the beginning, preaching away from home. The most of these applications I repel with a firmness (rudeness, you will say, perhaps) like that with which I met yours.

“As to our own affairs, we have had very abundant and refreshing rains since I saw you, and the crops begin to look quite green and fresh; but our garden has done poorly as yet, because everything had to take a fresh start. No peas, no butter-beans, no melons, and very few tomatoes. We shall float in abundance now in about a week. Lavinia and the children are all quite well, the first-named especially. Little Sammy had last week the most furious rash, or breaking out of heat I ever saw, which has been of great advantage to him. Since it came out, he has improved regularly, and I hope will not be much more troubled now till cool weather secures him. He has begun to walk a little, and to behave a little better at night, his squalling being diminished from about six hours per night to an average of three, and his feeds from five or seven to one or two. This desirable beginning has been brought about chiefly by the agency of three or four little whippings, which I gave him, to the great indignation of his mother and mammy. I shall, I think, renew the treatment in a few days, and break up his night feeding, and consequently his night crying altogether. It makes me mad to think of a little imp's being permitted to inflict so much inconvenience and torment on himself and a whole house, just by foolish indulgence; but I assure you that in whipping him I hardly escaped a whipping myself. Charley and Tom are decidedly improved, in both health and morals, by their return home.

“You will have heard of Mrs. Wharey's loss in the death of Mary Curry. She died in Clarksville, Mecklenburg county, Va., whither she had come to visit her sister (Anne Rice, now Mrs. Hill), and died the day after her arrival there. The explanation is that her spinal disease had proceeded to so frightful an extent that her nervous system was disorganized, and her brain diseased, so that the slightest excitement knocked her over. Mrs. Wharey bears it very well. Anne is also supposed to be in a consumption. Thomas has had a fever, but is getting well, and his friends hope his constitution will be better than before. I believe our neighbors are all well. Lavinia is quite pleased with her new-old carriage, and professes manfully that its small price is no ob-



jection. Last Sunday I preached in Farmville, and she went down with me and Charley. Tell Betty she might then have witnessed the rare sight of the old codger sitting in his own carriage, drawn by his own horses, driven by his own nigger, and beside his own wife, with nothing to do with his great brown hands, but play gentleman—a very unnatural occupation.

“Our new church has not yet begun to rise; still making bricks.

“Love to all, and charge Betty to write often and fully.

“Affectionately yours,

R. L. DABNEY.”

## CHAPTER XIII.

### IN THE WAR-TIME.

(May, 1861—May, 1865.)

HIS APPRECIATION OF THE BLUNDER IN THE SOUTHERN MODE OF PROCEDURE.—FOUR MONTHS AS CHAPLAIN OF THE EIGHTEENTH VIRGINIA VOLUNTEERS, COLONEL WITHERS.—ACQUAINTANCE WITH GENERAL JACKSON RENEWED.—ORGANIZATION OF THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.—SEMINARY SESSION OF 1861-'62.—DISSATISFIED WITH THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR.—MRS. STONEWALL JACKSON HIS GUEST IN SPRING OF 1862.—TENDERED OFFICE OF CHIEF OF STAFF TO GENERAL JACKSON.—SERVICE ON JACKSON'S STAFF.—RESIGNATION SEPTEMBER, 1862.—SLOW RECOVERY.—DEATH OF "TOMMY."—SEMINARY SESSION, 1862-'63.—LITERARY LABORS DURING THIS SESSION: DEFENCE OF VIRGINIA, *et al.*—CORRESPONDENCE DURING THIS AND THE FOLLOWING MONTHS.—WRITING LIFE OF STONEWALL JACKSON, 1863-'64.—SEMINARY SESSION, 1863-'64.—INCIDENTAL OCCUPATIONS IN LATE SUMMER OF 1864.—FEELINGS WITH WHICH HE NOW WATCHED THE WAR.—SEES HIS LABORS IN BEHALF OF THE SYNOD OF THE SOUTH WITH HIS CHURCH SUCCEED.—SEMINARY SESSION, 1864-'65.—LOOKING OUT FOR MEAT.—MISSIONARY TO THE ARMY, 1865.—THE SURRENDER.—QUERIES.

IT has already been made clear that Dr. Dabney was a constitutional Union man, as long as, in his judgment, honor permitted. He heartily disapproved of the Free Soil and Abolition movements, as insulting and dangerous to the rights of the South; but he did not regard them as furnishing a *casus belli*. When, however, Mr. Lincoln proceeded to usurp power to coerce sovereign States, he at once ceased to be a Union man. Resistance to the usurpation became a sacred duty. The South had a good and righteous cause.

Nevertheless, it was wholly unprepared. In Dr. Dabney's view, our statesmen botched things badly: they were too much under the influence of the popular will, of tricksters and puppets, rather than wise leaders of foresight and prudence; they ought to have been armed to the teeth for defence, before throwing down the gauntlet of war. Dr. Dabney was accustomed to say, in his later days:

"Our fathers should have made their stand against Free Soil in 1820, instead of joining the wretched Missouri Compromise; we were strong then, and should have settled the point for good and all. Again, when our enemies came near electing their man in 1856, we should have taken warning, and spent the interval of Mr. Buchanan's weak, pacific administration in arming effectually. Neglecting this, we should have remained quiet when Lincoln went in, and employed the respite at last in arming thoroughly."

But things were otherwise; and Dr. Dabney, though disapproving of the management of the affairs of his State and section, and though he had as long as possible been a Union man, was proud to be one of the sturdiest patriots and servants of his State and the Confederacy.

During the vacation of the summer of 1861, he served as chaplain. Nearly all the young men of the College Church, of which he was one of the pastors, had volunteered at once. Dr. Dabney told his session that Dr. Smith, the other pastor, could do the work at home, and that he would get a chaplaincy, and endeavor to watch over their young men in the army. He then believed that nearly all of the Prince Edward men, except the cavalry, were going into the Eighteenth Virginia Volunteers, Mr. Robert E. Withers, Colonel. He got a State commission, and followed the regiment to the camp near Manassas Junction. He seems to have reached the camp on Saturday, the 11th of June. On the 13th of June, he wrote to the *Central Presbyterian*:

"Yesterday was the day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, appointed by the President of the Confederate States for our success in defending our liberties. Its observance was marked by the authorities in command, by the omission of the customary morning drill, and the invitation to all the regiments to attend divine service in their respective quarters. Can the happy frequenters of our peaceful sanctuaries frame to themselves the picture of such a scene of worship? Overhead there is no roof besides the azure of the heavens. The place of worship is nothing, but an oblong area between two rows of tents, and the pulpit a rude box to elevate the minister a step from the earth, with a rough board before him, draped with nothing richer than a soldier's blanket. On either hand are clusters of glittering arms stacked, soldiers reclining on their pallets, and the open doors of tents, filled with their occupants. The signal of divine worship is the rattle of the drum, the soldier's substitute for the bell, and they come from every side to the meeting-place, some singly, some by twos and threes, some marching in companies with

measured tread; rough-bearded men, bronzed and weather-beaten, and almost unrecognizable as the trim gentlemen who, a month or two ago, would have been seen at similar occasions, going in holiday attire to their churches. Some bring camp-stools in their hands, some stand, some are seated on logs of wood, and some on mother earth.

"But see, the man of God has risen, and stretched forth his hands in prayer. Instantly every head is reverently uncovered, and bowed in prayer, while Jehovah of hosts is implored to bless our bleeding country, to crown our arms with success, and to protect the beloved ones at home. Then follows an old, familiar psalm. There are no strains of woman's sweeter melody to mingle with the stern melody of the men, but the wind sighing through the pine trees around us is the accompaniment, not unfitting, to the hundreds of manly voices, which roll the hymn to the heavens. Then follows the sermon, short and informal, but swallowed with solemn and eager faces. It is evident that many hearts are busy with thoughts of home, of the peaceful sanctuaries where, in happier times, they were wont to worship, and of the wives and sisters, who, at the very hour, sadly passing to the house of God, lead perhaps the tottering feet of their little ones, to join in prayers for fathers, husbands, and brothers far away. Not a few tears are wiped from those bronzed and bearded faces; but they are not unmanly tears; our enemies will find, to their cost, that the love for homes and households, by which the fountains have been opened, will make every one of these men as a lion in the day of battle.

"It has been customary to speak of camps as schools of temptation and evil. And there is too much in them to pain the Christian's heart and to try the graces. But our camps are places of much prayer, and afford many shining examples of Christian consistency. Let the people of God abound in prayer for the bodies and souls of our citizen-soldiers. 'The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' Now is the time for the people of God to besiege the throne of grace and prove the efficacy of this agency. For assuredly we are in a great strait. But God can easily deliver us; and to this end the prayer of the humblest, the most infirm, or the most aged saint, may avail just as much as the arm of the robust warrior—yea, more. Let Christians arise and conquer in this war by the power of prayer."

On the day following, he wrote to his mother, setting forth his motives in being chaplain, and lamenting that the volunteers from Prince Edward were more scattered than he had expected, so that it was impossible to look after as many of them as he had hoped to be able to do. He was, for the time, boarding with an old gentleman by the name of Weir, who lived about a mile from the camp. He looked, however, to securing a tent at an early date, and then living amongst the soldiers. He had

arranged to tent with Dr. Walton, of Cumberland, a Presbyterian elder, and "a very lovely gentleman and Christian." He tells his mother that he proposes to make himself very snug and comfortable tenting. He says he has seen and conversed with "our commander, General Beauregard," that "he is a small, homely man, very genteel in person, and straight and muscular"; and that men seem to have great confidence in his capacity and courage.<sup>1</sup>

Within a few days he succeeded in establishing himself under canvas with his friend, Dr. Walton. He continued his work as chaplain for about four months, laboring with great acceptance, ability and success. On the 28th of June, 1861, he wrote to Dr. Moses D. Hoge that he had found the religious sentiment as great as he had ever known it in any community not in actual revival; that the men seemed kind, and pleased to have a chaplain, and that he preached with as much freedom and satisfaction as he had ever felt anywhere. He was blessed with the sight of men won to Christ through his ministry, and with saints edified. To name two conspicuous instances: His Colonel, Mr. Withers, dated his conversion to a Thanksgiving sermon, which his chaplain preached, on Thursday night, after the battle of Manassas, and "Stonewall" Jackson, as he came to be known after this battle, took high delight in his preaching, so far as he was able to hear it during this summer.

He seems to have formed the purpose, when entering upon his chaplaincy, of confining himself to his duties as such. This was, perhaps, due in part to his desire to relieve his home folks of uneasiness about him. On July 12, 1861, he wrote to his sister Betty, from Fairfax Courthouse:

"I hope you all are not permitting any apprehensions for my safety to distress you. I am not so romantic in my ideas as to think of mixing up secular and sacred callings. If our regiment were actively engaged in battle, I should expect to give my assistance to the surgeons in ministering to the wounded, a place harrowing indeed to the sympathies, but exposed to little danger under any circumstances, either of being killed or taken. My health has been pretty good lately, except a cold. I take good care of myself, I assure you."

Writing to this beloved sister again, on the 19th of July, and hoping to relieve her anxiety, and that of his venerable mother, who was sick at the time, he says:

<sup>1</sup> See letter to his mother of June 14, 1861.

“I assure you, I am a *non-combatant*, and intend to remain so. I have persisted in refusing to get any uniform or side arms. I shall make it my business to attend upon the wounded in time of action, if our regiment goes into one, at the same place and under the same circumstances with the surgeons. You know it is the rarest thing in the world to hear of a surgeon attacked; in civilized warfare they and their benevolent work are considered as sacred.”

The week following the 16th of July, 1861, was a stirring one, through which we may attend him by the aid of an excerpt from the letter just quoted, and a letter written July 22, 1861. They are as follows :

“Before this reaches you, you will have heard rumors of a pitched battle here. I will try to make you understand it. About twelve regiments, including ours, were up at Fairfax Court-house, or thereabouts, about twelve miles from Alexandria and seven from the enemy. They had breastworks built, etc., as if they were going to fight there; but it was all a sham. The real line of battle adopted by General Beauregard was all the time this Bull’s Run, a *large* creek, about four miles east of Manassas, and the dividing line between Fairfax and Prince William counties. (Get your map.) Before day, the 17th, we received orders to strike tents, load up baggage-wagons, get breakfast, and prepare for battle as the enemy was approaching in force. About half-past eight o’clock the line of battle was complete. But a half hour after the troops were ordered to retreat, which they did in perfect order, bringing away all baggage, sick, etc., and all the artillery but one piece, which, covering the retreat, was lost by the horses taking a balky fit—so they say. Our regiment made a forced march of eleven miles, dinnerless and tired. I walked the far larger part of the way, lending my horse to fainting soldiers, one of whom I undoubtedly saved from captivity or death. A part of the army made a feint of stopping to resist at Centreville, a little hamlet about half way; and staid there till after midnight. But on the morning of yesterday, the 18th, all the army were ranked on this side of Bull Run, occupying it, at patches, for a space, I should suppose, of eight miles. Our regiment is the right of the left wing. The centre was on the big road, where it crosses from Manassas to Fairfax Court-house. The right wing was lower down, towards where the creek merges into Occoquan river. The enemy yesterday, about 11 o’clock, advanced in great force against the centre, and fought for about three hours (also, it is said, at an earlier hour, against our right wing). But the main battle was at the centre. The whole left wing, including our regiment, was totally unengaged, and had nothing to do but to watch and listen. We had a view of the battle-field at about a mile and a half distance; could see the puffs of smoke mount up from opposing cannon, and see the bayonets of the

enemy gleam as their columns advanced (very steadily) and retired (very rapidly). The cannonading was frequent and heavy; and at times, what is far more terrible, the roll of whole brigades of infantry pouring in their fire. The enemy was completely repulsed, seemingly with heavy loss. I hear our dead estimated at from four to thirteen, and our wounded from forty to sixty. Among the latter are Colonel Moore, First Virginia; Major Carter Harrison, Seventeenth Virginia (Colonel Garland's). To-day we are all lying still again, and know not what is before us.

"Direct as before, to Tudor Hall, Prince William county, care of Colonel Withers, Eighteenth Regiment Virginia Volunteers.

"Yours affectionately, with best love to mamma,

"R. L. D."

"MANASSAS JUNCTION, *July 22, 1861.*

"MY DEAREST BETTY: Your welcome letter of the 17th reached me this morning. I am very much pleased to hear that mamma is better, and I hope the news I can give her will do much to relieve her anxiety, which seems to be her main disease. The great battle was fought, our regiment was briefly but splendidly engaged, and I have kept my promise of acting as a non-combatant and keeping out of harm's way. I wrote you of the battle of the 18th, at Mitchell's Ford, on Bull's Run, with which our regiment had nothing to do, except as spectators. Friday and Saturday passed quietly, only we were receiving very large accessions of force; and as most of the troops at Winchester and Aquia creek were brought to help us, it is supposed that Patterson's army, threatening Winchester, has all retired and marched this way, north of the Potomac. But Sunday morning (what a day for such a horrid scene!) the enemy came sure enough, and in great force, and against our left wing, where our regiment was posted. He passed across the country, and across Bull's Run by a higher and more circuitous road, so that to meet him our line of battle had to be changed to a line at right angles to the creek, instead of along parallel to it. From sunrise till nine o'clock the enemy were just feeling their way, by a few cannon-shot and riflemen. But about nine the horror began, and lasted till about five P. M. For eight hours the field was contested with a fury we hardly expected the Yankees to exhibit. But it is explained by their reliance on their supposed superiority in artillery and numbers, and their immense reserves. Three or four of these hours were to me hours of anguished suspense; for I saw the fight was stern and hard, I knew that they had a great superiority of force, and did not know how overwhelming it might be; and the very fate of the State seemed to hang suspended on the accidental disorders which might occur among our impetuous, but inexperienced troops. But about three, the terrible fire of the enemy's artillery seemed to slacken. Indeed, the

famous batteries of Sprague and Sherman had been captured by our men, though the latter was recaptured. Just then the brigade to which our regiment belonged was brought up, ours in the front, held the enemy at bay, recaptured Sherman's guns, and turned two or three against the column of the enemy. This was their last effort, and they then began to retreat; when artillery, infantry and cavalry pursued all the way to Centreville, capturing hundreds of prisoners, forty-two cannon, all the enemy had, and their baggage train and ambulances. A prisoner whom our regiment took very early in the day said that General Scott was in Centreville the day before. And it is reported that he was in the rear of his army during the fight, and that his barouche was captured. I hardly believe this. Our regiment had only four men killed, so far as we know, and about fifteen wounded, of whom I fear two will die. But in other regiments there was, I fear, great loss. I felt it my duty to ride over the part of the field where our regiment fought, to make sure that there were none who needed aid; and such sights of horror I never saw. The Yankee corpses seemed much more numerous; indeed, it was hard to go more than ten to twenty yards without seeing one. I have very little doubt our loss is heavy, and the Yankee heavier. I fear Peyton Harrison, brother of Dabney, was killed. Our troops displayed almost universal gallantry, but too much confusion and excitement. The Virginia regiments exhibited all the heroism which any Southern regiments could, with a great deal more steadiness. Colonel Jackson was one of the heroes of the day.

"Tell mamma that, according to the terms of the Governor's second proclamation, Frank is clearly exempt from military duty, and should, *by all means*, stay at home. Don't you be afraid of McClelland. He is very much of a braggart. If he penetrates the Valley, his army will be destroyed or captured. Here, the talk is of an advance to Arlington Heights. We have gained a great victory. Tell mamma not to be uneasy about me, for I do not intend to expose my life to danger: I do not consider it my duty. Give my best love to all at home, and Mr. and Mrs. Payne and Johnson. I hope I may be able to get to see you in a few weeks. Best love to mamma. May God bless you and keep you.

"Your affectionate brother,

R. L. D.

"Continue to direct to Tudor Hall, Prince William county, Va., care of Colonel Withers, Eighteenth Regiment, Virginia Volunteers."

His carefulness to avoid danger did not prevent his riding as an orderly for his colonel during the battle of Manassas, a fact which he does not acquaint his home folks with. His labors as chaplain were much increased by a fever that became prevalent in camp during the August following. Concerning these labors, and the cause of the fever, he wrote:



"August 29, 1861.

"MY DEAREST WIFE: I just seize a moment to write you a line this morning to let you know that I am well. I am about to start to Manassas with the ambulance, to see Mr. Abram Carrington off to Richmond to be sick. He is taking this fever, I think, which is prevailing here, and is going to have a spell. I found it prevailing when I came to the regiment, and now about every second man is down with it. A few of the first cases were malignant, and two or three are dead, but since that it has become manageable, and I don't think there is a great deal of danger. The regiment broke up from here this morning (a miserably damp, drizzly day) to go near Alexandria, where some fighting is expected. Only about 300 go; the rest are sick, or at home, or *'possuming*. We send sixteen to hospital this morning, and leave private houses all about the neighborhood full of sick people. All this is more the result of wretched mismanagement, indolence, and filth than of actual hardship; and now the most of the men are as completely hyped and dispirited as a set of trifling negroes, when an epidemic breaks out among them. The more call for neatness, the filthier they become. However, the weather is execrable. I think I must have had a touch of the same fever at Manassas week before last. Since then I have been able to do more, and have had better health, than at any time in camp. I am now taking a grain of quinine daily as a precaution. Some may think that this epidemic in the regiment ought to induce me to postpone my return home, and stick by the men till they get through their troubles; but the fact is that when they get sick, they scatter completely out of my power, and there is less of a charge to keep me here than if they were generally well.

"I wrote you a long letter Tuesday, which I hope you have gotten. I hope I shall soon be at home, my best beloved, and that a good Providence will allow us to enjoy the happiness of each other's society. Love to all.

Your own,  
R. L. D."

Dr. Dabney had proposed to serve but four months on this occasion. The Seminary Directors had ordered that the Seminary should be kept open. When the time approached for him to return to the Seminary, his brother, Capt. C. W. Dabney, remonstrated. On August 24th he wrote:

"Can't you compromise by waiting till the active campaign is over—say, two months later? I fear the effect of any considerate person's returning from the army to civil life. Our efforts are so unnatural and so overstrained, but still so needful, that I fear any relaxation in any quarter. We have indications here of this tendency. I will not acknowledge it myself, even to the extent of entering some more appropriate branch of the public service."

But there were imperative reasons for his return to his home and to the Seminary. One of these was that he was destined to a long attack of camp fever, and needed the home nursing. The other he sets forth in a letter to his brother, under date of October 31st. He writes:

"Whether you and I can agree or not, as to the propriety of keeping up the Colleges and Seminaries, my own course was settled by considerations too decisive for any one to dispute them. The governors of this Seminary, who employ me would in no wise consent to close it during the war. They very justly see reasons of peculiar force for keeping it open at this time. It would have been utterly useless for me to ask them for a furlough for a year. The only terms on which I could get away would be by just resigning my place, and letting them elect another professor; but to sacrifice an eligible place for a life-time, for an army chaplaincy of one or two years, would be a bad bargain in every sense. I do not think that the country has much to complain of, however, as to our keeping young men out of the ranks. Of the thirty-nine students we had last year, fully twenty went into the army. Only three of these are here now (three of McClellan's prisoners of war). This is pretty well for young divines. The Presbyterian has often been called the Church Militant. We now have about twenty students here."

During this summer, Dr. Dabney had renewed his acquaintance with the great Jackson. They had known each other before, but so slight was their acquaintance that, upon their meeting about the time of the battle of Manassas, General Jackson did not recognize Mr. Dabney; but their intercourse during that summer was the beginning of a friendship that led to some singular and distinguished results.

It is necessary to recall, at this place, certain events in the history of the Presbyterian churches in the United States of America. The Northern majority in the Old School General Assembly, sitting in Philadelphia in May, 1861, had passed their Spring Resolutions. The New School Assembly, still more rabid, had already driven out their Southern members in 1857. These had formed themselves into the United Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. The New School Church, North, had invaded the rights of Southern Christians in a manner more intolerable than the Old School. The Spring Resolutions of the Old School undertook to decide for all members of that church, North, South, East, and West, the legal and political questions by which the country

was divided, and to give to the Federal Government at Washington the active allegiance of them all, at the cost of overt treason on the part of the Southerners to their several State governments, the States having the original, and more immediate claim to allegiance. This Dr. Dabney pronounced to be "of the essence of popery."

As the Presbyteries which formed the United Synod of the South had done in the summer of 1857, so did the Old School Presbyteries in the Confederate States of America in the summer of 1861. They declared their independence of the Assembly in the United States of America, condemning its usurping acts. In the fall the Synods began to take similar action. The Synod of Virginia met in October, in the Second Church, of Petersburg. Dr. Dabney, the retiring Moderator, preached the opening sermon, and organized the new house. He kept every particle of politics out of his sermon, and preached in a most spiritual tone on the topic, "The necessity of deep personal piety to a minister's usefulness." But it was inevitable that the Synod should consider its church relations. The records of the Presbyteries submitted to this Synod showed that all of them had severed their connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and had appointed commissioners to organize a General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America, on the basis of the Confession of Faith and Discipline. A strong committee was appointed to draft terms of action. Dr. Dabney was made its chairman. The report of this committee, which was adopted, resolved, "That we do heartily sanction and approved" this action of the Presbyteries, on the ground that the Philadelphia Assembly, in requiring us "to strengthen, uphold and encourage the Federal Government," was "unjust, harsh and unconstitutional," on the ground that the Spring Resolutions violated the Confession of Faith, Chap. XXXI., Sec. 4; and on the ground that they were actually under another *de facto* government. It resolved, further, that the commissioners elected should go to Augusta, Ga., and there, on the 4th day of December, 1861, take part in the organization of the new Assembly, and, while leaving the mode of procedure in organizing the Assembly to the commissioners there to be gathered, outlined a noble plan of organization, looking toward energy and economy and efficiency of administration. The paper is redolent of high consecration, humble piety, and

earnest desire for the glory of God in the edification of saints and the ingathering of multitudes into the fold.<sup>2</sup>

He was not to serve the church by going to the constituting Assembly at Augusta. He had the feeling in Petersburg that he was somehow not himself. He could not get his mind to work quite clearly. He was not satisfied with his own draft of the enactment. He could not get it "straight." A few weeks later he knew why. He went home to suffer, and after a few weeks, to take his bed, of camp fever. This prevented his going to Georgia to take part in the organization of the church.

The session of the Seminary 1861-'62 was not of the most satisfactory sort. The students were few, only twenty. Men's hearts were in the war. Many kinds of business pressed on the professor; there were many inevitable interruptions and distractions; but he did vigorous work, so far as the times and circumstances allowed. No man more vigorous. Late in the winter of 1861-'62, Congress passed the conscript law, and thus swept all the students into the army, and emptied the Seminary. Meanwhile he had taken up his pastoral work in the College Church.

Upon his return home in the fall, he had found himself much immersed in business. It was already becoming difficult to secure the comforts and necessities of family life; but he was a "shifty" man, and did the best he could. Because he could have the work done more cheaply there, he wrote to his mother, in Louisa, please to have some little "brogue shoes" made for his children, "Charley's about as stout as Frank's, Tom's about like Bob's, and Sam's like Janey's. I send measures which are the exact length of the foot. Their feet, especially Charley's, are pretty good chunks, and *high* in the *instep*. A child's shoes should always be made full large. Tell Frank, if he can get them, some chance will offer to send them to Synod at Petersburg whence I can bring them; or else, Mrs. Eliazbeth Brown (*Central Presbyterian*) will send them up."

He was concerned not only for his own immediate family, but for those of his mother and his brothers in Louisa and Hanover counties. He and his mother and his brothers, largely under his inspiration, rented, about the beginning of 1862, a large body of land in Henry county, Va., and went into farming extensively. His idea was to get the surplus slaves from the

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<sup>2</sup> See *Minutes of Synod of Virginia*, 1861, pp. 285, 286.

several sources in a safe section, and to produce crops there for their support, in case of their having to refugee, otherwise to raise these crops for sale that they might have a more comfortable support in their several homes. They were fortunate in securing an excellent overseer, and made some very large crops. The plan of refugeeing was not carried out. The moneys thus raised went the way of most Southern moneys of the time. He gave to this enterprise not a little of his spare time and thought.

During the course of this Seminary session, he wrote a letter to a young friend and student on how the first year after marriage should be spent, which is at once so pleasing and so characteristic that it is worthy of the reader's perusal:

"October 10, 1861.

"MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND: Your letter of the 7th (you said September 7th, but, I suppose, meant October 7th) reached me in due course. The compliment you pay me by asking my advice in the circumstances I feel very sensibly. I hope that I shall never cease to value very highly the affectionate confidence of the young, and that my heart will never become so old and ossified as not to feel the liveliest sympathies with the tender and delicate affection, from the consummation of which you are expecting so much happiness. My advice is based wholly on my views of what is for your own good.

"First, as to duty: taking, as a postulate to start from, that God has shown it to be your duty to preach his gospel, and that your conscience shows you that you will be happiest in this calling; then, I say, it is every way best *to save time*, as a matter of *duty to perishing* souls, of professional *advancement*, of mental cultivation and *progress*, and of pecuniary *economy*, *it is best you should not lose a year*. (Weigh each of these points.) Especially, as it is now decided that you marry this fall, your professional education should be pushed on *at once*, before family cares and interruptions accumulate on you. And remember, that if you make your first married year a holiday, you will be none the less eating and spending money (perhaps more so than if at work), while the commencement of your professional *earnings* is postponed one year.

"Next, as to your enjoyment and happiness: I have been a young man engaged and a bridegroom married. I have experienced what you now experience, the anticipations and earnest longings for the realization of hope, sometimes rapturous and sometimes agitating. I have also experienced what you have not yet experienced—the life of the husband after marriage. Now, understand me; what I have to say is not prompted at all by that sneering, cold feeling which many elderly people assume towards young lovers. Those sneers are as repulsive to me now as when I was a young lover. I regard the rich affections

of two young hearts, united by chaste and virtuous aspirations, as no proper object for contemptuous badinage; but, on the contrary, a sacred and precious thing. Would to God all old people could preserve throughout the tenderness of those affections. They are a loan from God, to be jealously cherished; and to be made mutually as abiding and sweet as this rude world will permit. But I am certain that you will be, on the whole, far happier to go to work at once. (If you are to begin this session, it is far best you should not lose a day more, for your class-mates that will be, are advancing ahead of you.) I believe that the interval of suspense between now and your marriage will pass more easily, by just bending your mind at once to work; that the effort will be an invaluable discipline to you, and that the calm consciousness of having done your duty herein will greatly elevate and purify your happiness afterwards. As to the enjoyment of a honeymoon, young people usually make, or permit their friends to make, a great mistake in having a confused and crowded round of parties and bustle. You will find all this a terrible infliction and affliction. The mind craves comparative solitude, quietude and regularity. All this garish light of parties and crowds is grating. And to have steady occupation will increase, instead of detracting from, the joys of the society you love. As ballast steadies the bark before the gay, spanking breeze, so regular occupation will steady and promote the happiness of your honeymoon. It may be made less noisy, but it will be more abiding and satisfying. The way to enjoy creature bliss is to have it *seasoned* with the calm joys of a good conscience and the assurance of God's favor.

"With love to your father.

"Truly your friend,

R. L. DABNEY."

This is the letter of a clear-sighted, profound, earnest, and happily married man. It is a sweet letter, and it is a great letter, the letter of a husband who was a lover, a philosopher, and a man of God.

The Lord's hand lay heavy on him in afflictions in this winter of 1861-'62. During the latter part of November, and the months of December and January, he had his first spell of camp fever. This was no slight affliction under the circumstances, but it was as nothing in comparison with the loss of his sister Betty. During the winter of 1860-'61 she had begun to show symptoms of bronchitis. "The sorrows of the war pressed hard upon her gentle heart. The disease strengthened its hold in the autumn of 1861, and she was confined to her room, and then to her bed." He writes to her on December 22nd:

"MY DEAREST SISTER: While all but Sammy Brown and I have gone to church, I avail myself of the quiet hour to make the first experiment

of my convalescence in writing to you. As you see, my hand is still far from being steady; but I will try to make it legible; and when it ceases to be I will stop. To whom should I write first after my partial recovery, but to my best beloved sister, especially as you are now passing under affliction and experiencing what I have so lately felt, the languor of the sick-room, and the hope deferred which maketh the heart sick. You cannot tell how much I have been affected and moved by your sickness. A large part of every prayer I try to offer is for you. Shall I tell you what I pray for? First, that you may possess a sustaining faith, and that 'the joy of the Lord may be your strength'; and that patience may have its perfect work in you. Second, that for the sake of mamma, and of all of us, rather than for your own sake, your disease may be speedily rebuked and your health firmly restored. For you have lived so entirely for others, and I feel such strong confidence in the mercy and faithfulness of your Saviour, that he will enable you to triumph in every circumstance and condition, that I feel as if you were personally less concerned in the issues of life and death to yourself than we are. Yet I know life is dear to every human being. Instinct alone would determine this, without affection and reason. And I feel a strong trust that you will be given to our prayers. There are many praying for you, many of whom, I know, are dear to God our Saviour.

"Prayer is answered by means; and one means is the best medical skill. I took the liberty of writing to Dr. John Staige Davis, professor in the University, to inquire if he could visit you. I enclose his answer. If you feel strong enough for the journey, I am perfectly clear that you ought to go, with sister Anne for a nurse. Take a room at Miss Terrell's, and get him to give you a thorough examination. My reasons are that he has made throat diseases a special study. When Prof. John Minor was apparently dying with one, he went with him to New York to see the celebrated Dr. Green, mastered his method, and continued his practice on Minor, until, from having one foot in the grave, he became a fat, hearty man like Napoleon Kean. I believe Davis has more skill than any man in the South in these diseases; and he is a gentleman, without a particle of the charlatan about him. His methods go right to the seat of the disease. It requires so much dexterity to use them that the most of regular physicians, being utterly unable to do so themselves, disbelieve that it is done; but there is no doubt about it. Another means of health is peace of mind. You should study this; and dismiss every cause of gnawing anxiety, and thoroughly conquer and explode everything that is preying on your feelings. There is but one sure *panacea* for the cares of anxious hearts; it is that inculcated by Paul in Phil. iv. 6 and 7.

"As for myself, I am now down stairs, sitting up all day, or nearly so; gaining some strength, and with all my symptoms much improved, except the quickened pulse and slight nervousness at night. This sticks

to me; but it is in reality no new thing; I have had it more or less for months—perhaps I might say years, off and on. I have attempted no regular occupation yet. Writing this has fatigued me a good deal, and I must stop. I was greatly obliged to Frank for his visit, and to all of you for sparing him. It was a great cordial to me. Best love to mamma. I have lost so much time from my classes that, if able to teach, I must go to work diligently. Do get Frank to write every mail and let us know how you are.

“Your affectionate brother,

“R. L. DABNEY.”

By February, 1862, he was sufficiently recovered to visit her. On the 22nd of February, while they were inaugurating Jefferson Davis, in Richmond, as President of the Confederacy, she died in his arms. She had become a woman of remarkable graces of body, mind, and character. Her brother Robert had done much to mould her character. She was at once sister and daughter to him; and he almost idolized her. In the following paper he presents, with awful realism, the circumstances of her death, and celebrates the merits of her life and character: <sup>3</sup>

“Yesterday, February 22, 1862, my best beloved sister, Betty, died in my arms. I have concluded that it will be well to write down, while they are fresh in my memory, some memoranda of her last days, to refresh my own memory in after years, should it please God to prolong my days, and to aid in ripening my thoughts for the grave, where I must before long join her. Her constitution from youth showed a slight scrofulous tendency, and more than once we were alarmed by bronchial and pulmonary symptoms. But in the fall of 1860-'61 her health became more seriously impaired. In the spring of 1861 this cruel war came on, in which she took as keen an interest as her patriotism, honor and virtue indicated. She was constant in labors beyond her strength for the soldiers in the army, both for the volunteers of her country and for more intimate friends. I saw her twice during the months of August and September, but hurriedly; I saw that she looked fatigued and wasted; but her uncomplaining spirit, her generous self-devotion, and her joy in recent triumphs, made her conceal her real weakness from me; and my eyes were strongly holden that I did not suspect the alarming truth. She was then in full activity, performing all her accustomed duties with spirit, yet really unable and fitter for a sick couch. In November, being then confined myself with a lingering camp fever, I was notified that she had been compelled by a severe cough to submit to confinement in her room and medical treatment.

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<sup>3</sup> This paper was put away with title-deeds and most carefully preserved for years.



As soon as I got well enough, which was only about February, I began to plan a short visit to her; but her own cheerful messages, the lack of candor in my relatives, themselves deceived as to her real state, and the wretched weather, with close occupation, still made me delay till seven days ago. I had, meantime, grown thoroughly alarmed about her hopeless condition of health, and although still ignorant how near she was to the grave, had made up my mind that we should, in all human likelihood, have to give her up. Last Monday I started to visit her, *via* Richmond, in a heavy sleet. In that city I learned that my aunt, Jane D. Winston, would be on the morning train with me, with the corpse of her only son, Richard, who died last Sunday of pneumonia. Thereupon I at once changed my plan so far as to go to this funeral on the way, and spend Tuesday night with my afflicted aunt. Wednesday morning I started again, on a horse borrowed of her, coming by my brother William's; but, in consequence of the wretched roads, weather and fatigue, I did not reach mamma's till Thursday before dinner. When my mother met me I perceived from her emotion that the end was nearer than I had supposed, and she told me that I had been written to, to come at once, if possible, a day or two before.

"After going to prepare my poor sister for meeting me, she took me into the little chamber where she had spent the gloomy winter. Although successively prepared to expect the worst, I was shocked at her appearance and decay. Her strength was greatly wasted, her face and frame emaciated, her cheeks hollow, her complexion wan, and her face stamped with that peculiar and most touching expression of anxiety which always accompanies impeded respiration. Only her lovely eyes were themselves, large, beaming through their tender dew, with delight and love, and at once laughing and weeping with joy. Her hair, too, was as silky as ever, and as glossy. Knowing that vivid emotion of any kind was likely to provoke a fit of labored breathing, I met her as calmly and cheerfully as was consistent with affection. Her voice especially, once so musical, was completely gone to a husky whisper, and this uttered with painful effort. As soon as I greeted her my heart smote me dolefully with these words, 'Sweet sister, farewell; you are lost to us for this world.' The last ray of hope was quenched. Yet how lovely and loving, how bright was the affection with which she greeted me. She said, after the usual inquiries, 'I suppose you find me much changed.' I replied, 'Your eyes, at least, are still the same;' when she answered, 'Ah! they are changed, too; they weep too much for my pains.' Her distress was from a most acutely sore throat, which rendered coughing an agony, and the intense pain with which all food and medicines were swallowed. Much of her emaciation was from the cause that the effort of eating was such torture that enough nourishment could not be taken, nor in sufficient comfort, to sustain nature. Every night she was feverish, and liable to fearful paroxysms of difficult respiration; and her rest was purchased only at the expense of an

opiate. Yet Thursday afternoon and evening were passed by us, I constantly in her room, in much cheerful conversation, in which her amiable wit still shone out. Friday morning, mamma told me that her night had been bad—worse than usual; yet she greeted me with a smile; and her temper was cheerful and patient as ever. The whole of the day Friday I also spent in her room, except so much as was necessarily devoted to the offices of her nurses. I read to her, sung for her 'Jerusalem, My Happy Home,' etc. Availing myself of a private hour, I communed with her fully touching her spiritual state. What little she was able to say was all calm, and marked by her characteristic humility and diffidence of herself. She said that her belief in the plan of salvation, and in the faithfulness and sufficiency of Christ, to all who truly trust in him, was complete; and so was her purpose fixed to cleave to him in faith to the end; but sometimes she was troubled with some doubts whether she exercised a real trust because her hope was devoid of much of the joy and brightness of which she had heard in some experiences and biographies. I explained to her that the best saints have always found the assurance of hope only by looking away from themselves to Christ. I unfolded the manner in which a humble hope usually acts. She then said, with great firmness and quietness, 'I can meet death in dependence on the Saviour: I am not afraid to do it;' and added that it was not death itself she feared, but its incidents; especially as she had suffered so much from impeded breathing, and expected to have her life ended from that immediate cause. I replied that, if it pleased God to disappoint our hopes of her ultimate recovery, she must trust a faithful Saviour to conquer this bodily anguish too.

"After this her intercourse, as far as pain would allow, was affectionate, bright and as self-forgetful as ever. When bed-time approached she seemed no worse, having sat up on a chair and eaten her usual supper of milk and mush. I bade her good-night, saying I hoped she would have more quiet rest. But in this we were all disappointed. Our sister Anne was fortunately one of her nurses that night, along with the excellent and tender Miss Sally Shelton. Her night was sleepless and disturbed by difficulty of breathing. About 3:30 o'clock Saturday morning she asked for me, and in a few moments I was by her side. I found her suffering much, propped up on pillows, laboring for respiration. The only change I then noticed was in her eyes. The cheerful sparkle and light of love were gone; the great, dewy, black orbs, shaded by her long, drooping lashes, shed a beam of inexpressible sadness, bordering on despair; and this look, which I shall never forget, but cannot describe, they wore to the last conscious moment. I stood by her till the gray dawn came sadly on, between six and seven o'clock, administering such remedies for her breathing as we could devise; and she seemed to find some partial alleviation, and even caught one or two moments of sleep. I then left her to rest till breakfast-time; when I was again called, as her distress had returned. Yet, with her usual

self-forgetfulness, she insisted on my taking breakfast. I went and swallowed a few mouthfuls and returned. The fearful paroxysms of short breathing returned with increased frequency. The cruel labor bathed her poor frame in perspiration; and her fluttering pulse was only kept from sinking by wine and water. Finding that she suffered more from an uneasy position, I got on the bed behind her, and raised her on my bosom, sustaining her head in my hand. (The poor soul had said, some nights before I came, when she supposed herself dying from loss of breath, that she 'lacked only one thing—to have brother Robert support her in his arms till she was gone.') And this position she kept for two hours (hours of agony, which wrung my heart so that it was too uneasy a pillow for her head), till all was over. In the slight intervals of her pain I repeated to her some of the most precious gospel promises. She prompted me when I paused, saying, 'Yes, tell me of the Saviour and heaven.' At another time she said, 'Can't you tell me of my meeting with the angels?' About this time she said, 'Perhaps I think too much about the material beauties of heaven. Is this a sin?' 'No, my darling; no,' I replied, 'it is natural to you.' She was indeed a soul exquisitely strung to every beauty of nature and art, and her nature could not have been true to itself, had not it thrilled with the anticipations of that bright world. About this stage of her sufferings also she said, 'Read me, "Sweet Fields Beyond the Swelling Flood."' Her tender nurse, Sally Shelton, got the hymn-book and read it to her. Then, seeming to catch a glimpse of the dreary and miserable weather which prevailed abroad, through the window opposite to her, she said, 'Oh! I want to see that world of sunlight, where the Lamb is the light.' I then repeated for her that blessed passage from the Revelation to which she alluded, and she nodded her satisfaction. By this time two physicians had arrived, and were making vain efforts to relieve her respiration. To Dr. Kean, her regular physician, she said, 'O Doctor, how long will this last? Oh! I am so long dying; I have so much strength.' He replied, 'My dear Miss Betty, it is impossible for me to tell.' She then said to me, 'Pray that I may go quickly. Oh! I can't stand it any more.' I replied, 'My precious darling, we are all praying for you every moment a better prayer than this, that your Saviour will enable you to sustain it without rebelling. This is probably the last trial of your faith; if you submit meekly to this, the triumph and glory will then follow, and you will rest from suffering forever.' I also pointed her to the example of Christ's suffering on the cross, saying, 'He suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps.' After a little she said, 'It is only the outward suffering that troubles me.' I said, inquiringly, 'Beloved, then all is peace within your soul?' She nodded, yes.

"About this time she seemed to conclude that the last moments were rapidly approaching, for she began, with little intervals of panting, to call first for mamma, to take leave of her, with a request for a for-

giveness for all filial short-comings, and then for her other relatives in the house, with messages to absent relatives and friends. To mamma she said, 'I always wanted to die before you; I didn't want you to die and leave me here; and now I am going; and you will soon join me.' 'Yes, my darling,' she answered, almost broken-hearted, 'I shan't be long behind you.' And this parting was strictly in accordance with their life together, the most touching instance of maternal and filial tenderness and unselfish devotion I have ever beheld. Each seemed to live only in the other. To brother Frank she said, 'Forgive me for all the trouble and worry I have caused you,' and 'Give my love to the dear children, and raise them so that I may see them in heaven.' About this time I noticed the first appearance of failure in any faculty; her eyes being either closed or sightless, she seemed to forget that she had taken leave of some, and called for them a second time. But still she was rational. She did not forget to send her love to my wife and little children.

"About this time, her strength rapidly declining, her bodily anguish seemed to become uncontrollable, and she began to beseech the physicians for some anodyne, saying, 'O Doctor, give me something to make me insensible,' repeating her request with a pathos and urgency that was enough to tear a heart of stone. Dr. Kean replied, with great feeling, 'My dear Miss Betty, I cannot. Life is God's gift, and I dare not do anything to abridge it. That is not my office.' She replied by new solicitations. The Doctor tried to explain to her that laudanum, even, the most active anodyne at hand, would not have the desired effect under an hour, and that meantime it would greatly aggravate her difficulty of respiration by hurrying the circulation, adding, again, that he dared not sin by abridging that life which God alone was entitled to take. She replied, 'Oh! give it to me, not to shorten life, but to make me insensible to my sufferings. Aunt Betsy was allowed to take it for this when she was dying; why may not I?' Hereupon the Doctor, in order to quiet her anxiety, gave her a dose of elixir of opium, insufficient to have any marked effect. She immediately noticed the pious artifice, and said, 'Oh! give me more; give me *laudanum*, not that.' I said to her, 'Darling one, when your Saviour's anguish was such that his sweat was as great drops of blood, still he said, even while he prayed that the cup might pass from him, "Nevertheless, Father, not my will, but thine, be done." Can't you say that?' 'I do say that,' she said, with great emphasis. About this time, I think it was, she said to me, 'I don't suffer so much now.' It was only her strength and sensibility that was declining, not her sufferings. I had noticed, for more than half an hour, the steady approaches of the destroyer, although—both hands being engaged, one in sustaining her body and the other her head—I could not feel her pulse. But the sweat which the toil of respiration brought to her brow had become cold, her lips were purpling, and her arms began now to indicate a slight muscular spasm. Dr. Kean felt her pulse again, and whispered to me that there

was no pulsation at the wrist. He had scarcely made this communication, when another slight spasm passed through the muscles of her arms, and her eyes were at once introverted in their orbits. I said to mamma, 'Well, my mother, our precious one is at rest from all sorrow now,' whereupon she threw herself forward, embracing the lifeless form in my arms, with uncontrollable grief. But, although still drawing a few and slight inspirations, the beloved sufferer had passed beyond the apprehension of the wailings which broke from us all. 'The silver cord was loosened, the golden bowl was broken, the pitcher was broken at the fountain.' After a few minutes the doctor assured me that life was wholly extinct. I then tenderly resigned her form, which lay like the graceful willow, wilted and bruised, and placed her beloved head on the pillow, that her eyes might be decently closed. Of how much genius and grace of intellect, of how much wit, of how much taste, of what angelic love and disinterestedness, of what heavenly devotion and faith, had that beautiful form been the temple! Impressive as are the ravages of the despoiler, Death, and powerful as is the temptation which his ruins present us in the hour of our desolation to feel as if all were lost forever, can we believe that all these glories of a gifted and gracious soul were exhaled and dissipated in that hour, like an essence or a vapor? Reason and faith both forbid it. I believe (and yet it is hard to believe under the benumbing stroke of death) that angels carried it to Abraham's bosom. I believe that, instead of being dissipated or destroyed, it is now more fully developed, and has entered into its appropriate activities and enjoyments. Blessed, lovely spirit! Henceforth my best and clearest conceptions of heaven shall be of a society formed of such loving spirits as thou wast on earth, crowned by the presence of the Saviour, whose loveliness they only reflect. Surely this ought to be to me the best argument that heaven is a blessed place, that my sister always shed cheerful joy and blessing wherever she went. Her coming to my house was as though we 'entertained an angel.' Peace and light and love seemed to enter it with her, brightening every face, from that of the mistress, who loved her as her own sisters, and of my boys, down to the dusky countenances of the servants. Best beloved sister, you will not return to me, but I shall go to you.

"One great consolation (and yet it is a dreary one) under that intolerable loss is, that she is now safely housed from that storm of war which is lowering on the horizon over our Commonwealth, and threatening soon to burst on us. It was a harrowing thought to me that her sickness should be harrassed by the inroads, perhaps the visits, of a brutal enemy, and her place of refuge broken up in her helpless condition. Such was her patriotism, such her love for the honor of Virginia, such her sensitive sympathy with the sufferings even of strangers, that the losses, distresses, banishments, and perhaps deaths, which are now impending over her friends, would have harrowed her loving soul beyond endurance. But, thank God, she has reached the haven before the tempest burst, where—

“The storm that wrecks the wintry sky  
No more disturbs her deep repose  
Than summer evening’s latest sigh,  
That shuts the rose.’

“As for our dear mother, her peace and submission present a lovely specimen of the triumph of grace. After a few bursts of sorrow and tenderness she became composed, and seemingly even cheerful. ‘What hath God wrought?’ Almost blind, crippled, seventy-eight years old, she has lost not only her beloved and constant companion, but her eyes, her hands, her feet. Yet there is not a word of murmuring. I well know what sustains her; it is the thought of the shortness of the separation. But that is not consolation to us; for what shall we do without her, in this wilderness world? What without her love, her prayers and her counsels?

“I ascertained that my sister had worked all the year 1861 for our soldiers, and that her last task was to spin the yarn for a web of flannel for them, and, as soon as it was woven, aid in making it up. But, although she seemed resolved not to take her bed till she finished this work, her strength gave out before it was done. It was finished by my mother. One of her last acts, also, was to anticipate a half-year of her own income (of which she had a small one independent of others), and expend the whole in providing for the soldiers.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Dr. Dabney was accustomed to tell the following, as illustrative of the power which this beloved sister exerted over those who came in contact with her: His uncle, Francis Dabney, after following his profession of the law in Louisiana, had returned to Louisa county, with a small property. He was already growing old at the time of his return. He was a man of some parts, but satirical in disposition. He had never been married. He became intensely attached to his niece, Betty, as did every one who came under her influence. Mr. Robert L. Dabney, on one of his visits to his mother, learned that his Uncle Frank had made a profession of Christianity. As his uncle had previously been somewhat skeptical, and as he had himself on a former visit loaned the old gentleman some books with a view of relieving him of his skepticism, he was inclined to take some credit to himself for the change. In a conversation with the uncle, shortly afterward, he felt cautiously about to see if he had been the helpful agent. The sharp old man soon saw the drift, and told him plainly that Betty’s life and character had been the means by which the change of views and heart had been brought about. He said he knew human nature and its fundamental corruption; and that his observation of her character had shown him one so *ennobled* that it was impossible for him to ascribe its graces to human causes, that he had been compelled to refer it to supernatural grace as its cause; that her character was a demonstration of the facts and working of divine power in human history.

Soon after his return to his own home, out of a desire to comfort his venerable mother, upon whom this great affliction had fallen with special heaviness, he wrote :

*“March 22, 1862.*

“MY DEAR MOTHER: The morning I left you, I reached the depot at Bumpass' in good time for the cars, and very comfortably. Thence I went to Richmond without incident, and spent the night at Dr. Hoge's, where Rev. Mr. Brown and lady board. I there heard, with great sorrow, of the death of my young friend, Rev. Dabney C. Harrison, who was killed on the Saturday of the terrible fight at Fort Donelson. He had, as you know, become captain of a company raised about the Old Church, in Hanover, and belonged to Col. William Stuart's regiment, in Floyd's Brigade. His father, Peyton Harrison, was in Richmond when the news of his death came; and an hour after he also heard of that of Miss Nanny Harrison, who died of pneumonia, at Brandon, below Richmond. He had not before even heard of her sickness. Surely, he is greatly afflicted! There is no solace to a benevolent mind in knowing that others are suffering with it. But there is much consolation in the fact that the path of sorrow and bereavement along which we travel is the same one along which God's people have travelled usually. For thus we have an answer and medicine for that feeling which is too apt to arise under great sorrows, that surely God must be our enemy, seeing he seems to have such a peculiar controversy with us. It is in refutation of this feeling that the Apostle Peter says, 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.' He would remind us that for God's own children to suffer, even though it be severely, is no novel thing. 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.' This road of bereavement is the one along which all the Bible saints travelled, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, David, and, above all, our Saviour. Yet they got safely home, and so may we. Mr. Harrison's is a peculiar case; he has now lost his two noblest sons in this war. At the same time comes the death of his most amiable daughter, Nanny. Yet, I understand, he bears it in the most Christian manner. I have been much humbled and comforted, at the same time, to remember how much the most eminent saints whom I have known and loved were afflicted; both my grandmother, Aunt Betsy, my venerable brethren, Gilkeson and Van Lear, in Augusta, etc. When I look on with envy upon their calm and heavenly old age, and their peaceful death-beds, I am compelled to remember that they were thus ripened for a more blessed world, chiefly by the long schooling of affliction; and I feel that if I may gain such an advantage likewise, at such a cost, it does not become me to repine. It will be labor well spent. I reached home safely to dinner Thursday, and, by the blessing of God, found all well, better than when I left.

Tommy, whom I left a little unwell, was the first to meet me at the gate. The people everywhere seemed very much sobered and grieved by the reverses of our armies; but, after the first shock, resolved and firm; and now I think their spirits rise with every day. The most judicious men I see think that it will do great good, by awakening the people to their danger and stimulating energy. My chief trust is in God; I know that a great deal of prayer is going up, and my hope is in his mercy.

"A great many of Betty's friends and acquaintances here have inquired after her, and with great feeling. Among these I may mention Miss Lydia Martin, and good old Mrs. Anderson. Lavinia said that when she told Miss Lydia she was gone, she wept bitterly. I have not yet seen Mrs. Wharey or Mrs. Rice, my whole time having been occupied since I came by company or religious meetings. Old Mrs. Rice is still living, and by no means well; but as I have not yet seen her, I do not know very well what her real condition is. Lavinia seems to have felt our loss very keenly, and evidently does not know how to make any distinction between it and that of an own sister. I never knew anybody in my life that inspired such universal respect and admiration as Betty, wherever she was really known. She had more sense than anybody I ever saw; more refined wit, and usually a better judgment. I feel an inexpressible pride that it was my privilege, in part, to form such a character, crowned, as it was, by that which is far nobler than talents, pure affections and true piety. I look upon her as in some sense my handiwork. But she was far more yours. You gave her birth; you taught and moulded her tenderer years; you formed her heart and morals; and were more with her than any other human being. And now Christ has crowned and perfected the work by setting the seal of heavenly glory upon it! How inexpressible is the honor and blessedness of being the natural and spiritual mother of an angel. Whatever other losses or bereavements you may meet, this treasure is now laid up safely in heaven, and cannot be taken away.

"Lavinia sends her best love, and begs that you will remember you have a daughter in her. When you come to see us, I hope you will find her more than ever so. The children send love. Give our best love to Frank and Louisa, and to sisters Mary and Anne, etc. Tell Frank I was so tired, and the night so rainy in Richmond, that I could find out nothing about his exemption. He should, by all means, apply at the earliest day, and have this thing settled.

"As ever, affectionately yours,

"R. L. DABNEY."

Dr. Dabney was far from satisfied at this time with the way in which our armies were managed. He was particularly displeased with the want of care in the management of camps, with their filth, and displeased, too, that so little aggressiveness was



shown, either in the way of preparation or attack. On the 6th of March, 1862, he writes to his friend Guthrie, of Tinkling-Spring:

"I have been for many months excessively uneasy about this spring's campaign, seeing that the enemy were laboriously making immense preparations, and that our people were by no means awake to them. The matter of Roanoke Island I regard as of no great importance; but the losses in Tennessee are most serious, and much to be lamented. I hope they will have the effect of rousing the people of the Gulf States to do more. They have been lying too much on their oars, trusting to Virginia to do for them, and bear the main brunt. One thing is certain, failure will be worse for us than death. . . . I hear some reports that the government is going to give up a large part of our State to the enemy; but rumors are contradictory, and I believe nothing till we see. The people must take the war into their own hands, and do as our forefathers did in the Revolution, just turn out with their guns and fight the enemy wherever they venture out from the main body, cut off their wagons with their supplies, etc., till they are worn out of the country."

His friend, Dr. Moses D. Hoge, wrote him, on the 27th of March, 1862, in a way which, however pathetic a part of it may appear to readers of after years, must have given him temporary comfort. Dr. Hoge wrote:

"Since I last wrote you, our public affairs look more encouraging. A few days since, I had a very interesting conversation with Commander Minor, of the navy. He is, in fact, the chief of that department, the executive head, though Mallory is the Secretary. He says the country and the whole world will be soon astonished to learn what we have accomplished in the way of naval preparations, while a general impression has prevailed that nothing has been doing. He thinks the building of the *Virginia* has introduced a new era in naval history, and that henceforth the splendid wooden three-deckers, which have made such a show and cost so much money, will be so much worthless lumber. Maury has written a letter, stating, as his opinion, that one such ship as the *Virginia* could go up the Thames and lay the city of London under contribution, and, if it chose, burn the city, without the possibility of receiving any damage in so doing. Commander Minor says one of the best rifled cannon in the world is on the *Virginia*—an eleven-inch gun, that carries a ball four and a quarter miles. In the engagement in Hampton Roads a singular *adventure* happened to that gun. The man whose business it was to put in the charge (twelve pounds of powder) was wounded or called away just after he had rammed it down, and another took his place, and, not knowing what had been

done, thrust down its throat another charge of twelve pounds, and then put in the ball. It was a line shot, raking the *Congress* from stem to stern, and causing the most frightful smashing and slaughter, and yet the gun was not injured in the least by the double charge. The French Consul here was so delighted with the execution that he asked permission of the department to make a drawing of the gun to send to his Emperor, which was readily granted, and now the whole account, with the drawing of the *Thunderer*, is on its way to France. Speaking of the Consul reminds me of another thing Minor told me. He says the reason why these foreign Consuls have been allowed to remain is that they are intense secessionists, and that it is only through them that newspapers and correct accounts of our affairs can be transmitted to Europe.

"Commander Minor thinks the blockade will be raised at New Orleans in a few days. We have there two gun-boats ready for launching, equal in size to the *Virginia*, and fifteen others, of smaller dimensions, almost ready. About two hundred tons of salt-petre have come in, and another cargo has been purchased, and is on the way. I am intimately acquainted with the gentleman who went abroad to make the purchase, and if any man can manage to get the ship in, he can. This, with the large arrival of arms lately received, puts us on a better footing than we have hitherto been. Do not talk about it, but we have in the United States Congress and House of Representatives about twelve *friends*—hearty Secessionists, who are working for us, though they sometimes make speeches against us. One of them has recently written to a gentleman in this city that there are signs of a reaction against the war at the North, notwithstanding the seeming union there, and the fury with which the crusade against us is conducted. The attempt to collect that hundred and fifty million dollars (the tax-gatherers commence their rounds the 15th of next month) will be to the North, and especially to the Northwest, the *experimentum Crucis*.

"I have all along differed from those who think this will be a long war, and I venture the prediction that it will be over by the 1st of January, 1863. *Make a memorandum of this*, and see if I do not prove the son of a prophet.

"As soon as we drive the enemy from our territory, and, in fact, as soon as we break his lines sufficiently to enable us to make the attempt, I want our armies to invade the United States.

"We may be glad to consent to a peace without that, but I greatly hope we will be able to invade some portion of the enemy's country before the war is ended; partly because it will be *retributive justice*. It will be *right* that he should taste of the cup which he has pressed to our lips; but I am the more anxious for it because of its moral influence in all future time. It will forever show the United States that we are not to be wantonly provoked; that we can inflict blows as well as parry them. I want the war so to end that the Confederacy shall be a terror

to the United States, for when peace is declared, unless this is the case, with such an extended border as ours, and with so many conflicting interests to *keep* adjusted, there will be perpetual infractions of our rights on the part of so mean and perfidious a people.

"And so I am in favor of fighting on, year after year (in case the North does not make overtures for peace, and there is no foreign intervention by the 1st of January), until the North is scourged and scarred so as to retain the marks for generations. And in all this I hope there is not a particle of revenge or wicked hate.

"My memorial to the Committee on Naval Affairs has been most favorably received. Mr. Miles wrote me a polite note, a few days since, stating that the committee had recommended to Congress that chaplains should have the assimilated rank of captains, eighty-five dollars per month. Several of the first men in Congress have promised me to advocate its passage when it comes up for discussion. I wanted to get your views on the subject before the Committee on Military Affairs reported their bill. They acted, however, sooner than I expected, though just as I wished them to. I have sent to Mr. Miles your letter, and it will have the effect, I doubt not, of stimulating the committee and friends of the bill to active efforts to secure its passage. I will have it read during the debate.

"There is one other thing which gratifies me. There is a plan projected for filling the portion of Virginia lately evacuated, with guerilla bands. I have persistently advocated this policy since last April; and although it is opposed by West Point, I more and more believe that it is the very best arm of service which can be employed to make the life of invaders a torment and a terror, and to prevent the passage of his provision and other trains through the country.

"My work in camp just now is exceedingly interesting, owing to the large number of men there, *in transitu*, to be sure, but fresh regiments coming to take the places of those going south. I preach three times every Sabbath, once in the open air. I am thankful that it agrees with my health.

Very truly yours,

M. D. HOGE."

Whatever mistakes he might have made, had he been the government himself, his mistakes would not have numbered amongst them inaction or careless sloth. Had Dr. Dabney been the President of the Confederacy, as one bereaved wife, whose husband had fallen in the war, wished, he would have made Titanic exertions to push it with effective, sweeping vigor. This cannot be doubted. There is evidence that as early as this he approved of the propriety of Dr. Hoge's plan of guerilla warfare, wherever opportunity offered.

He felt that his own services should be chiefly in behalf of the spiritual interests of his compatriots. Circumstances, how-

ever, were conspiring as early as January, 1862, when he was not yet out of the clutches of his first spell of camp fever, to turn him into a combatant. This is shown by the following from Gen. Stonewall Jackson:

My address is 'ARMY NORTHERN VIRGINIA,'  
"SECOND CORPS.  
"January 15, 1862.

*"Rev. R. L. Dabney, D. D.*

"DEAR SIR: I saw a letter to-day from you offering to try the field again as chaplain in Cabell's Artillery Battalion. Lieutenant Smith resigned his position as aide, and I am somewhat compromised to Mr. Rodes, brother of the General. I have no position at this time at my disposal, but I have had a strong desire to have you with me ever since I knew you. The Rev. Mr. Lacy, you know, is at my headquarters, but this winter has gone to Orange Courthouse, where he is devoting himself to the hospitals. . . .

"Congress may make some laws changing the staff, and if it should, I would like very much to be able to offer you anything you would accept.

"It would hardly interfere with religious services you might wish to perform on Sundays and at the same time, by your counsel and experience, it would aid the service and myself materially. I would have written on this subject before, had I supposed you wished to try the field again. I can do nothing more than lay the state of things before you. I think Mr. Rodes would be temporary.

In the spring of 1862, Mrs. Jackson, the wife of the soon-to-be world-famous "Stonewall Jackson," had come from Winchester to sojourn in the house of Dr. Dabney, at Hampden-Sidney, which was supposed to be a place relatively safe from the incursions of the Yankees. Naturally, she turned the mind of her husband to more thought of his friend Dabney. The General wrote again:

"NEAR MOUNT JACKSON, *March 29, 1862.*

"MY DEAR DOCTOR: Mrs. Jackson writes that you appear desirous of taking the field. Should you do so, I hope that you will come to this military district. If you come as a chaplain, I will take special pains to see that neither you nor your family shall have cause for regret. But if you desire strictly military duty, and you can secure a commission, I will give you a corresponding position. If you cannot get such a commission as you desire, and would be willing to take a position on my staff as aide-de-camp, I will try and secure it for you, with the understanding that you will remain with me until the war terminates;

unless Mr. ———, one of my aides, who was taken prisoner at the battle near Winchester, returns and gives a satisfactory account of his being absent from me at the time of his capture. I do not mean by this to cast any reflection upon his loyalty to the South, but during the engagement I had cautioned him against leaving, or being absent from me longer than was necessary for the transmission of orders. Whilst I am greatly attached to him, yet examples must be made of staff officers as well as others when they disregard orders.

"Should you come in any other capacity than that of chaplain, you will generally, except on Sabbath, have to lay aside your holy calling, as no officer can attend to his own duties and those of chaplain.

"Your suggestion respecting partisan warfare would, if followed out, be productive of great service; but the difficulty consists in finding sufficient patriotic *nerve* in men to join in such service.

"Please let me hear from you.

"I am thankful to God for sending so many of his children into this army, and my prayer is, that he will continue to send them, and that he will bless them and those with whom they cast in their lot.

"I desire granting the furloughs you requested.

"Very truly your friend,

"*Dr. R. L. Dabney.*"

T. J. JACKSON.

Within ten days after writing this letter the post of Adjutant-General became vacant on his staff. Jackson was under the necessity of casting about for a suitable head of his staff. He was a great incarnation of the genius of war, and, like other military geniuses of the first order, he possessed a remarkable insight into the character of men, and he saw in this minister of the gospel and professor in a Theological Seminary the materials, although in somewhat unformed condition, for a capital chief of staff, and tendered him the place in the following words:

"NEAR MOUNT JACKSON, *April 8, 1862.*

"MY DEAR DOCTOR: The extra session of our Legislature will prevent Mr. J. D. Armstrong, of the Virginia Senate, from joining me as my Adjutant-General. If the position would be acceptable to you, please take the accompanying recommendation to Richmond, get the appointment, and join me at once; provided you can make your arrangements to remain with me for the remainder of the war. Your rank will be that of major. Your duties will require early rising and industry.

"Please let me hear from you at once.

"Very truly your friend,

"*Rev. Dr. R. L. Dabney.*

T. J. JACKSON.

"Your duties would be such that you would not have an opportunity of preaching, except on the Sabbath."

Meanwhile, on the 26th of March, Gen. D. H. Hill had written Dr. Dabney :

"It seems to me that you could do more good as a chaplain than in any other capacity. I am now in command of a division, and would be exceedingly gratified to have you attached to my command. Such a thing as a division chaplain is not recognized; but if you had the appointment of a chaplain without designating the regiment, you would find plenty of work to do in the division. Our regimental chaplains, as a general thing, are as trifling as the regimental surgeons, which is the strongest denunciation I can use."

Mrs. Jackson urged Dr. Dabney to accept the position offered by her husband. Men and women believed him possessed of a many-sided capacity. He remembered his high calling, and was indisposed to the thought of combining the duties of chaplain and staff officer. He consulted his friend, Dr. J. M. P. Atkinson, President of Hampden Sidney-College. Dr. Atkinson advised him not to reject the offer summarily. So he visited General Jackson, at Swift Run Gap, about the middle of April, 1862. He went without horse, uniform or arms. His chief "purpose was to show to General Jackson how unfit" he was for the post offered, "and to get a chaplaincy again"; but Jackson was master; he overruled all objections, allowed the would-be chaplain two days to Halleck's *Articles of War*—"a thin octavo volume"—and put him into office.

Having accepted the post, and thrown himself into the discharge of its duties, he gave this explanation of his course to his mother, viz.:

"You will be surprised to hear from me at this place, as I am surprised at being here myself. General Jackson (Stonewall) sent me a proposal to join him last week, as Adjutant-General of his army, with liberty of preaching on Sundays; and, somewhat to my surprise, all my most judicious friends advised me to accept the place. They said (including several of the directors of the Seminary and all the elders of the church) that they knew the Seminary would be closed temporarily, and that I would neither be able nor willing to lie about home doing next to nothing, with the country in this terrible state, and so many in our camps without preaching; and that, such being the case, I had better go at once where I had so eligible an offer. Jackson needed an adjutant at once, and made it a condition that I should come at once or not at all. Next to leaving my beloved family, my greatest grief in doing so was that I could not be at home to watch over your comfort in these troublous times. But from what brother William wrote me,

he will be at home in a few days. And, I thought, my best way to show love for you was to get between you and our enemies."<sup>5</sup>

On the 6th of May, 1862, after Jackson had made his memorable circuit over the Blue Ridge by Brown's Gap, and thence to Staunton, and a junction with the forces of Gen. Edward Johnson, Dr. Dabney again writes to his mother, with the purpose of assuring her as to his comfort:

"The adjutant is pretty much the General's *secretary*; and as he must be near the General's person, he necessarily shares his comforts. I always eat at the same table, and most frequently sleep in the same room. On one occasion I was in a good feather bed, and he on his military pallet. In general, I may say that he treats me with the greatest kindness and consideration; and while he is exact and exacting in an official point of view to all under him, personally he is almost embarrassingly kind. The bargain is that I shall do his army work in the week, and be at liberty to preach to the soldiers on Sundays. I have now been in camp two Sundays. The first I preached twice to noble congregations. The second, the whole army was marching, and neither I nor any chaplain could preach at all."

When Dr. Dabney became head of Jackson's staff, "he had sense enough," he tells us, "to know how little he knew," and to confess his ignorance frankly to the more experienced officers of the corps "whom he had to direct." While the staff had been headless by the mortal wounding of its head, Major Jackson, its duties had been performed by the young *aides*, some of whom seem to have been very conceited, self-sufficient fellows. When Dr. Dabney had served a week, Colonel Grigsby, of the Stonewall Brigade, a somewhat profane and eccentric gentleman, had business at headquarters. Upon his return to his own quarters, his officers came around him to ask the news. Amongst other questions came, "What about the new Adjutant?" The Colonel replied, "I concluded that old Jack must be a fatalist sure enough, when he put in an Ironside Presbyterian parson as his chief of staff, but I have bright hopes of headquarters, seeing they are no longer omniscient." After some weeks' further service, he paid the Parson-Adjutant-General a higher compliment, viz., "Our parson is not afraid of Yankee bullets, and I tell you he preaches like hell."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Letter dated April 24, 1862, Headquarters Army of the Valley.

<sup>6</sup> This heterodox remark gives occasion to say that Dr. Dabney, during this summer with Jackson, continued his work as a Christian

Having joined General Jackson at his post, in the western mouth of Swift Run Gap, and taken charge of the staff, Dr. Dabney accompanied him through the marches and battles of his splendid Valley Campaign of April, May and June, 1862, to McDowel, Franklin, in Pendleton county, Front Royal, Winchester; back on the retreat to Harrisonburg and Port Republic.

The following letter gives some account of the battles about Port Republic:

"NEAR MT. MERIDIAN, AUGUSTA, *June 12, 1862.*

"MY DEAREST WIFE: The only thing I did last Monday night, after the excessive fatigues of a day of battle, was to write you a short note by express, telling you of my safety. I hope you got this. Meantime, you have seen the bungling reports which reached Richmond by telegraph. I suppose that nothing will interest you so much as some detail of General Jackson's movements. The Wednesday after the victory at Winchester, I was taken with disordered bowels, the consequence of the water and fatigue, and was on the sick list at Rev. Mr. Graham's. While General Jackson was gone (very imprudently, as I think), fighting the Yankees at Harper's Ferry, he got news that Shields was advancing on the Valley from the East, and Fremont from the West, to get behind and destroy him with superior forces. I was then lying by in Winchester, and was sent up to Woodstock, and then to Ruffner's, near Harrisonburg in an ambulance. At Ruffner's I had a delightful rest of a few days, and was very kindly treated. Meantime, Jackson was very busy retreating, and bringing away his stores and prisoners captured. He had a hard tug to get off with them, but did it pretty safely. Meantime, Shields came up through the Page County Valley, and Fremont through the main road, Jackson retreating before them till he got to Port Republic. There he was attacked on Sunday by both of them, Shields' force coming up the river on the *pines* side, and actually crossing into Port Republic across the mouth of South River, and Fremont attacking the main army about four miles this side of Harrisonburg. If that army was defeated, the only exit was through the long narrow bridge into Port Republic. At one time, the enemy's cavalry and artillery had actually gotten possession of this bridge; so you see, our situation was squally; but they were very soon driven out of Port Republic, and then easily kept out by artillery, and a gallant charge of Col. Fulkerson's Regiment. Meantime, the main battle between Fremont and General Ewell opened fiercely about four miles off, on the Harrisonburg road, and General Jackson sent up a good deal of

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minister as opportunity offered. He preached often, and great sermons, if men of Jackson's command can be trusted; and he was indefatigable in looking after the sick, particularly the Scotch-Irish boys of the Valley.



his force to help. The battle raged till about four o'clock, when Ewell whipped the Yankees with great slaughter, he, fortunately, losing but few in comparison. That night all slept on their arms. Monday morning early, General Jackson moved his own force, and a large part of Ewell's (leaving two brigades to watch Fremont across both rivers) and attacked Shields furiously down at old General Lewis' (next the pines). The brigades left to watch Fremont cautiously retired, and as soon as they got across, they burned the long bridge, leaving Fremont completely baulked, and came down to help us to pursue Shields, who had by this time been beaten. The troops of Shields were better than those of Fremont, and the fighting fiercer than the day before. Consequently, our loss was heavier, some four hundred killed and wounded. From Shields we took, the two days, eight cannon, and lost one to them. The prisoners we took are about five hundred, including several officers. We pursued Shields some ten miles, killing and capturing and driving them; but the men were too much exhausted to pursue very effectively. Indeed, Jackson's *great* fault is that he marches and works his men with such disregard of their physical endurance. His victories are as fatal to his own armies as to his enemies. The former he kills, the latter he works nearly to death. With all the rigidity of his character, I think him a *poor disciplinarian*. He is in too much of a hurry to attend to the physical needs of his soldiers.<sup>7</sup>

But this letter says nothing of a part which Dr. Dabney had in saving Jackson's ammunition trains at this time. He, in fact, seems to have saved them. The Rev. Dr. G. B. Strickler is authority for the story that Dr. Dabney jokingly informed General Jackson, the evening following, that he had fought a regular battle, and had employed all parts of the service—infantry, cavalry, and artillery. He then recounted the exploit which is related on pages 411 and 412 of his *Life of General Stonewall Jackson*, but with the suppression of his own name. The reader of that work will recall that, on the 7th of June, Jackson had posted General Ewell in a very advantageous position, about five miles back on the road leading to Harrisonburg,

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<sup>7</sup> Dr. Dabney, soon after, withdrew the criticism which he here pronounces. At this time, with his intense conscientiousness and love of law and order, he did not realize that breakdown inevitably accompanies all continued military operations. He did not understand how cruel was the situation in which Jackson was, and how he was forced, by strategical and political considerations, to drive so hard the undrilled, and as yet poorly officered, country boys, who had been gathered to constitute his army. All this he came to understand thoroughly a few months later, as the reader of his great biography of Jackson knows.

that he had posted the other division of his army on the heights, on the northwest bank of the Shenandoah. With the one division he would hold Fremont in check, with the other he would, by means of the artillery, keep Shields' men out of Port Republic until Monday, when he proposed to whip Shields, and then pay his respects to Fremont. He had, with his staff, crossed the long bridge over the Shenandoah into Port Republic. He had also brought all his trains across the bridge, whence they might be withdrawn either to the mountain or to Staunton. Two companies of cavalry were detached to watch the approach of General Shields, of which one was sent to reconnoitre, and the other was stationed as a picket guard upon the road to Lewiston.

Says Dr. Dabney:

"The morning of June 8th, which was the Sabbath, dawned with all the graceful brightness appropriate to the Christian's sacred rest, and General Jackson, who never infringed its sanctity by his own choice, was preparing himself and his wearied men to spend it in devotion; but soon after the sun surmounted the eastern mountain, the pickets next the army of Shields, came rushing to the headquarters in the village in confusion, with the Federal cavalry and a section of artillery close upon their heels. So feeble was the resistance they offered, the advance of the enemy dashed across the ford of the South River almost as soon as they, and occupied the streets. The General had barely time to mount and gallop towards the bridge, with a part of his staff, when the way was closed; two others of his suit, attempting to follow him a few minutes after, were captured in the street, and one or two, perceiving the hopelessness of the attempt, remained with the handful of troops thus cut off. But out of this accident, to them so involuntary, Providence ordained that a result should follow essential to the safety of the army. As the captured Confederate officers stood beside the commander of the Federal advance, some of his troopers returned to him, and pointed out the long train of wagons hurrying away, apparently without armed escort, and the hearts of the Confederates sank within them, for they knew that this was Jackson's ordnance train, containing the reserve ammunition of the whole army, and that all its other baggage was equally at the mercy of the enemy; but as the eager Federals reached the head of the village, they were met by a volley of musketry, which sent them scampering back, and when they returned to the charge, two pieces of artillery opened upon them, to the equal surprise and delight of their anxious captives, and speedily cleared the streets with showers of canister. The explanation was that one of the officers separated from the General's suite, seeing the impossibility of joining him, had addressed himself to rallying a handful

of picket guards, and with these, and a section of new artillerists from the reserves, had boldly attacked the enemy. Thus the trains were saved, and a diversion made until the General could bring forward more substantial succors." <sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See Dabney's *Life of General Stonewall Jackson*, pp. 411, 412. In Parnell's *Unpublished History of the Civil War* is a fuller account of this service on the part of Major Dabney. Parnell says:

"In consequence of the bad conduct of Jackson's cavalry, the Federal irruption into Port Republic was a complete surprise. Jackson, with a part of his staff, by galloping at full speed, just did have time to escape over the bridge and join his army on the other side before the enemy's cavalry entered the place. Two of his staff, trying to follow him, were captured; a third (Major Dabney), seeing the way of escape closed, retreated in the opposite direction. On the way he overtook Captain Moore, with about fifteen riflemen, who had been posted as a picket guard at the confluence of the South River with the Shenandoah (its south fork), and were retreating in good order. Major Dabney placed Captain Moore and his men in a field behind a board fence, just above the corner where the Staunton Turnpike turns at right angles towards the South, so as to command the turnpike before it reached that corner. He directed them to lie down flat and fire through the lowest crack of the fence at the enemy if he should appear on their front. This road makes two turns at right angles; the first westward, at the southern end of the main street of the village, and the next southward, in front of Moore's riflemen. Between these two corners there was an interval of about two hundred yards, in which the turnpike was perfectly straight, affording excellent range for a close rifle fire. Major Dabney then overtook and halted Carrington's battery, which, being newly raised and organized, and consequently ill-equipped and badly trained, was retreating southward along the turnpike in a gallop. Finding that Carrington had canister cartridges for two guns, and sufficient cannon primers, but no lanyards, Dabney ran two pieces back across a meadow in the rear of the interval between the two corners above mentioned, until he reached a position near the first corner at the southern end of the main street of the village. Here he posted the two guns so as to rake the street at close quarters, using whip lashes for lanyards.

"But before Major Dabney had reached this position, the Federal cavalry, in full chase after Jackson's trains, had turned this corner, and come within range of Moore's riflemen, at the next corner; but Moore had, with one volley, driven them back into the town. About the time Dabney got the guns in position, twenty-five horsemen came up, the remnant of the Confederate cavalry that had been sent over South River. These had been on picket duty, but not on the direct road to Lewiston, and had, therefore, not been met and stampeded by Carroll. At Dabney's command, they halted, and dismounting, took a position in support of the guns. Soon afterwards, the head of the Federal column

It is needless to say that Dabney was the officer of whom he writes as doing this service, without naming him.'

From Port Republic he accompanied General Jackson, whose Valley campaign, just closed, had made him immortal, to the neighborhood of Richmond, to assist General Lee. Of all these movements in which he aided his great leader, he has given an able, remarkably accurate and vivid account in his biography of that leader. At Gaines' Mill he again did an essential service, and this time without getting any credit for it, till Henderson wrote his great "*Stonewall Jackson.*"<sup>9</sup> In that battle, Jackson had, against Major Dabney's earnest protest, entrusted the orders for putting to action his whole reserves to a member of his staff, whom Dabney regarded as incompetent to its execution. This man so botched the instructions as to keep all the reserves out of action, instead of putting them in. Major Dabney went after them, on his own motion, corrected his mistake, and sent in six of the best brigades; he got them in late in the afternoon, when the day seemed almost lost to his generals, saved the day, and turned it into a splendid victory. He did not wish to report his fellow for incompetency, made no report, and consequently Jackson wrote his official report of that battle without ever knowing just how he won it.<sup>10</sup>

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emerged from the dust on the street in front. Carrington's guns at once opened on them a brisk fire, to which the enemy, with the gun posted at the corner where the Lewiston road enters the street, replied with spirit, but their firing was not accurate, except the first shot, which was a shell remarkably well aimed; but the Confederates, perceiving from its *buzz* that it meant mischief, 'squatted in the grass like partridges,' and the shell, bursting four yards in front of them (considered the most dangerous distance for an explosion), its fragments *ricocheted* harmlessly over their heads. The enemy then made two successive cavalry charges, but they were repulsed each time with loss. The contest was now carried on with artillery alone until Jackson retook the bridge, and cleared the town of the enemy. This diversion, in which Jackson did not lose a man, saved Jackson's trains, and gave him time to form his troops and recapture the place."

For Dr. Dabney's letter, describing this action, to D. H. Pannill, Esq., see Appendix.

<sup>9</sup> In the Baltimore *Southern Magazine* of William Hand Brown, 1871. Dr. Dabney records this service under the title, "What I Saw of the Battle of Chickahominy," an anonymous article.

<sup>10</sup> There is a reference, in his *Life of General Stonewall Jackson*, page 418, to this service, in the following sentence: "But another officer

This military life must have been a very trying one to Dr. Dabney from the start. It is known to the reader that, industrious and hugely energetic as Dr. Dabney had always been, he had also always inclined to late rising in the morning; but when he entered the military family of Jackson, he entered a new sphere. His master moved early, and when he rose from the table his servant cleared it off. Nor was any late comer served even with coffee and bread. Funny stories are told of Major Dabney's effort to secure something after a nap slightly too long on one morning. His efforts were in vain, tradition says, and he acquired the habits of an early riser while in that family. Dr. Hunter McGuire, Jackson's Chief Surgeon, is authority for another story of an incident in the initiation of Major Dabney. He used to tell that, during the first days of Dabney's service as Chief-of-Staff, the Doctor wore the black Prince Albert coat to which he had been accustomed, a beaver hat, and the usual dress of a Presbyterian clergyman, and that he also carried an umbrella of a dull brown or bluish color; that one day, when Jackson was on the march, his men began to guy his Chief-of-Staff, crying, "Come out from under that umbrella!" "Come out! I know you are under there; I see your feet a-shaking!" "'Fraid you are going to get your beegum spoiled?" "'Fraid you will get wet?"; that Jackson was riding along with his head down, and for a time paid no heed; but that, after a while his attention was attracted; that he looked around, and asked him what the men meant; and that he replied that they were guying Major Dabney about his umbrella and his dress; that Jackson looked annoyed for an instant, and then, giving word, "Gentlemen, let us ride!" dashed off through an adjacent wood as hard as his horse could go for half a mile, his staff following him, of course; that he then headed for the road and his column without a word; but that meanwhile Major Dabney's umbrella had been reduced to tatters by the boughs and branches of the trees, and his beaver hat knocked into a most unbecoming and hopeless shape; that a member of the staff at once loaned him a cap, and that in a day or two he appeared in a rather ill-fitting uniform.

But Dr. Dabney not only suffered inconveniences in his new

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of the staff, comprehending better the General's true intentions, and the urgency of the occasion, corrected the error, and at length moved the remaining brigades into action." There is a reference to it, in Henson's *Stonewall Jackson*, Vol. II., p. 42, in a single sentence also.

life; he saw, after a few months, that physically he was wholly unfit for such campaigning as Jackson's. Jackson postponed his own comfort, and required his men of all ranks to postpone theirs, with what to Major Dabney seemed an "absolute, not to say needless, rigidity." Dr. Dabney believed that the sacrifice of comfort and health was, in part, needless, and he gives this instance:

"Jackson launched himself and us into the weeks of campaign around Richmond, stripped not only of every comfort, but of the very means of existence, ordering everything to the rear, his own and our baggage-wagon, tents, pallets, blankets, cooking utensils, food, and so forth, leaving us for one week without any change of raiment or food even; except as we might take our chances to pick up, beg or steal something. Let me give one instance: my sole chance for supper Sunday evening after the great battle of Cold Harbor, after a dinnerless day of hard work, was this: a comrade whispered to me, 'Come and bivouac in the next corn-row to mine, because I have something nice for supper, enough for you and me, but not enough for three.' The treat proved to be some raw whiskey in a bottle, and about a pint of sliced beef tongue. The tongue was absolutely raw! I could not drink the coarse raw whiskey. Jackson had left me orders to march the corps, at break of day, in pursuit of McClellan. I came with it to Savage Station, about an hour and a half by sun next morning, breakfastless. It had rained on me in the corn-row during the night. While drying myself by a camp-fire, I saw in the leaves a big fat Irish potato. This I put into the fire immediately, my sole chance for a breakfast. Before it was half roasted Jackson called to me, 'Major, we will ride.' Midday brought the beginning of the battle of White Oak Swamp. My show for a dinner there was the following: about one and a half Yankee crackers, which I found lying in the grass. These I helped out by sopping the pieces in some streaks of molasses which had been spilled in a good's box, while under artillery fire, watching and directing one of Jackson's batteries."

Still half sick when he joined Jackson, he naturally broke down under such severe conditions of life.

General Jackson was as kind as he was exacting. He saw soon after the hard day just referred to, that Major Dabney was a sick man, and insisted on his taking a sick leave from Harrison's landing. Dr. Dabney "had not asked it," but when it was offered, he went home to have another, and, this time a long and terrible spell of camp fever, which brought him "near to death's door." After this came a tedious relapse, followed by long prostration. These attacks, together with the pronounced judgment of Chief-Surgeon Walton, that he would never be

fit for the service, and would certainly die if he should go back, induced him to send in his resignation toward the end of August. Jackson was loth to permit it. Dr. Samuel B. Morrison, of the Rockbridge Baths, wrote in 1866:

"I remember to have had a conversation with General Jackson during the second battle of Manassas. I had gone to him with a request from General Ewell that General Early be promoted and put in command of Ewell's Division. General Jackson was lying under the shade of a tree on an oil-cloth, on his face, his head resting on his arm, asleep. I had some conversation with Major Preston. He told me not to wake the General, but to stay for dinner, when I could see him. The General very soon awoke, and I delivered General Ewell's message. He gave me no answer whether or not he would recommend General Early. He then asked me aside, and inquired if I had heard recently from you. He said, 'Major Dabney wishes to resign on account of his health; I hope that after a while he can remain in the field.' I told him that I had conversed with you on the subject, and that you had told me that you feared you would have to give up your position, as experience had proven to you that active service so exhausted and prostrated you as to render you unfit for any duty. The General then told me he would have to approve your resignation, but that he did it with the greatest reluctance, for that he considered you the most efficient officer he knew, he was very much pleased with you as an adjutant, and knew of no one that could fill your place."<sup>11</sup>

His resignation seems to have been accepted in September, but with genuine reluctance. So ended his official, formal connection with the Confederate army. He had been an officer remarkable for his intelligent, energetic and exact execution of his General's orders. Lieut.-Col. G. F. R. Henderson has paid Major Dabney a high tribute in remarking of the untoward delay of Jackson's columns on the day before the battle of Cedar Run: <sup>12</sup> "The absence of Major Dabney, struck down by sickness, is a possible explanation of the faulty orders." He frequently refers to the soldierly services of Dr. Dabney in his great work, and always with respect.

His recovery was slow, and his afflictions in his own person were accompanied by afflictions in his family. While he was lying sick in the relapse, the diphtheria attacked his children. The contagion entered his family from some unknown source. Charles William, Thomas Price and Samuel Brown, all had it,

<sup>11</sup> Letter to Dr. Dabney from Samuel B. Morrison, dated March 20, 1866.

<sup>12</sup> Henderson's *Stonewall Jackson*, Vol. II., p. 109.

and Thomas Price died. Dr. Dabney was wont to speak of this little fellow as one of the brightest, and sometimes as the brightest of his sons. He died on the 8th day after taking the disease, and after very great suffering; but in spite of these ills, by the 13th of November, 1862, the stricken father was once more feeling that he was well enough to attempt something in the Lord's vineyard, and that he ought to be about his work.

The Seminary session of 1862-'63 was most slimly attended. He wrote to his mother, "There are only two students in the Seminary, and they, I think, seem very little encouraged to study, so that I shall have very little to interest me in my regular duties here." Like his neighbors, he found some other things to think about. In this same letter he says:

"Yesterday, I went out to a sale to see about getting some supplies. A pork hog sold for sixty-one dollars. True, it was a very fine one, and would make about two hundred and forty pounds of pork. They talk of asking thirty dollars a hundred about here for pork. I bought ten barrels of corn, at eight dollars and sixty cents a barrel. The times are awful."

By December the 31st, two other students had appeared at the Seminary. On that day he wrote: "We have four students, one of whom is Mr. Chauncey Brooks, of Louisville. He is a first-rate man."

Dr. Dabney took up again, with returning health, his pastoral and ministerial labors at the College Church. On the death of Dr. James H. Thornwell, he became convener of the Assembly's Committee on the Revision of the Form of Government and Book of Discipline, but owing to the exigencies of the times, he advised that there should be no meeting for work that year.

His pen was not inactive during this session: a very able little book was written, the *Defense of Virginia and the South*.

While lying at home, crippled by ill-health, and having little teaching to do, he conceived the plan of fighting for the Confederacy with his pen. His object was "to rebut the slanders of the Yankees against our institutions," and to give this rebuttal currency at home and abroad. He believed that moral support was as necessary to the Confederacy as military support. Securing a copy of his articles on slavery, published in the *Enquirer*, he revised, recast, and enlarged them. He thus made



the volume named *Defense of Virginia and the South*. The manuscript was approved by men of distinction and parts. He submitted it to the government through Mr. John Randolph Tucker, Secretary Seddon, and Senator Hunter, who had all approved it highly. The government determined to have it published in London by our commissioners there, with a view to its circulation in Europe, and to use so much of the secret service money therefor as might be needed. It was to be subsequently republished in the United States. Accordingly, the manuscript was sent through the blockade to the commissioners in London. But Mr. Mason submitted the manuscript to Dr. A. T. Bledsoe, who was in London at the time to prepare to write a book on the Constitutional History of the United States. He seems to have objected that something in Dabney's book was illogical or indiscreet. He had a book out entitled *Liberty and Slavery*, on the same general subject. Dr. Dabney was under the impression that our commissioners, being intimidated by the general Abolition sentiment of Europe, lacked the nerve to print it; that they at first temporized, therefore, and then were disobedient to the government at Richmond. They never printed it—"a most mistaken policy," in the judgment of the author. "Our failure to meet the Abolition charges squarely was viewed as a confession of our own guilt." That Dr. Dabney had met these charges squarely and ably and successfully was the judgment, not only of himself, but of many who were well qualified to judge. In March, 1865, Senator Hunter, Vice-President Stephens and Judge John A. Campbell, on their way to the famous Hampton Roads Conference, stopped in Petersburg. Dr. T. A. Prior called on these gentlemen while there. Mr. Hunter was an old college-mate of Dr. Prior's. They talked freely. Mr. Hunter mentioned to Dr. Prior his deep regret that Dabney's book had not been published in Europe, and condemned the policy of the commissioners in not bringing it out.<sup>13</sup> And in this connection he remarked that since the death of Mr. Calhoun, he had met with no other mind which dealt with public questions with a luminous power so like that statesman's.

After the Confederacy had fallen, "not less by the slanderers of the South than by the swords of its enemies," the work was brought out. This was in 1867. E. J. Hale, Esq., was the pub-

<sup>13</sup> Letter of T. A. Prior to Dr. R. L. Dabney, D. D.

lisher; one edition was published and sold. It was received with high appreciation by able men, North as well as South. Then it was covered with the deluge of press output in praise of the victorious section, and the principles which prevailed in that section. The author saw the truths he had established discarded, and the slanders and sophistries he had refuted received by the world as truths of an indisputable character, and often by degenerate sons of the South, as well as by the multitudes of the North.

During these and the following months, Dr. Dabney was, of course, writing and receiving letters—letters that help to bring back the conditions of the time in a vivid way.

Amongst the letters received, were at least two from Stonewall Jackson. The latter of these has suffered mutilation. So far as preserved, they are as follows:

“HEADQUARTERS SECOND CORPS, A. N. VA., Dec. 5, 1862.

“MY DEAR DOCTOR: Long have I been desiring to write to you, but up to this time have been prevented. I much regret that your health would not permit you to remain longer in service with the army in the field, but I am very thankful to God for having permitted me to have the privilege of being blessed with your Christian and military labors as long as he did; and my hope is that your health is improving, and that it will soon be what it was before you joined me. Whilst we were near Winchester, it pleased our ever-merciful Heavenly Father to visit my command with the rich out-pouring of his spirit. There were probably more than a hundred inquiring the way of life in my old brigade. It appears to me that we may look for growing piety and many conversions in the army, *for it is the subject of prayer*. If so many prayers were offered for the blessing of God upon any other organization would we not expect the Answerer of prayer to hear the petitions, and send a blessing?

“Many of our soldiers are bare-foot. It is gratifying to see that many are enlisted in behalf of our suffering soldiers. It appears to me that if we go into winter quarters unusual efforts should be made for the spiritual improvement of the army.

“Please remember me kindly to Mrs. Dabney, and thank her for the present she sent me.

“Your much-attached friend,

T. J. JACKSON.”

“P. S.—I have just received a report from Major-General D. H. Hill, who, through God’s blessing, has succeeded in driving off four Federal gun-boats from Port Royal, on the Rappahannock. The work was handsomely done. Three of the boats were the *Pawnee*, *Anacosta*, and *Live Yankee*.

"CAROLINE COUNTY, VA., *January 1, 1863.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND: Your last letter came safe to hand, and I am much gratified to see that your prayer-meeting for the army is still continued. Dr. White writes that in Lexington they continue to meet every Wednesday afternoon for the same purpose. I have more confidence in such organizations than of military ones being the means of leading to an early peace, though both are necessary.

"I do not feel at liberty to offer the adjutant-generalship to Mr. Armstrong. Colonel Faulkner has been recommended. He was with me last winter, and I regard him as a very valuable officer. Should anything prevent his getting the appointment, there are two other persons whom I would feel it my duty to offer the position to before offering it again to my much-esteemed friend, Mr. Armstrong.

"I hope that you will come with the supplies you speak of; we would all be glad to see you again at headquarters, and hear you preach.

"I am much obliged to you and Mrs. Dabney for your great kindness respecting the visit from Mrs. Jackson and myself, but if practicable, it is better for those in the army to continue at their posts as long as the war continues. If all our absentees were present, it appears to me that, with the blessing of Providence upon our efforts during the coming campaign—<sup>14</sup> . . .

The war was becoming constantly more cruel. In many quarters, non-combatants were having new experiences. The conditions in many parts of Virginia, toward which Dr. Dabney's heart went out in an especial manner, were very ugly. His brother Francis writes:

"LOUISA, *May 23, 1863.*

"DEAR BROTHER ROBERT: Ma got a letter yesterday from sister Lavinia, written a week ago, asking to be informed how we fared in the late Yankee raid in this county. As nothing else has been talked of here since, I may as well jump into my account of it at once.

"The morning of Sunday, May 3rd, the first thing I knew of Yankees, they were coming in at the 'old stone' gate. We then tried to hide some silver and valuable papers, and to run the horses, not to Henry county, but to a piece of pines. I deemed it best to dodge them, too; and I had just got our horses out of sight of the stable (having left old 'Jim'), when I heard a gun fire at my stable. Thinks I, old Jim, you've gone home this time, sure; but no, one of old Abe's Dutch cavalymen had shot a fine young horse that was tired down, and took old Jim. After the raid, I found old Jim two or three miles from here. The Yank had given him to a negro, so I got him back. Well, the devils came on to the house, scared the women and children, asked for the horses and some food, but did not

<sup>14</sup> The rest of the letter is lost.

come into ma's house at all during their stay. They searched about here Sunday and Monday, and would not have found our horses then if they had not been shown. One of ma's negroes, Pompey by name, showed them where my horses were. They took seven from us; we lost nothing else, though. This party's headquarters were at Thompson's 'Four Corners,' as they call it in their account of the feat, and it seems we were a little too far off for them to haul corn from here, for the short time they stayed. If they had stayed a few days longer, they would have used everything in the world we have. Persons living on that side of the river lost everything; all the corn, bacon, flour, fowls, hogs, etc. I have neither time nor paper to tell you of all that our kind friends lost. They were worse at Mr. Payne's and Cousin Mary Kean's than anywhere else. They destroyed a good deal at Mr. Payne's; took all his bacon, and everything out of the mill. They ransacked sister Anne's house; every drawer and repository of trinkets or valuables; stole Mr. Woodworth's clothes and his money, two hundred and seventy-five dollars, and sister Anne's wearing clothes. They must have given the ladies' apparel to the negroes, for these grim sons of Mars could not have wanted it for their own use. At such a time as that the negroes are an element of weakness with us, for it was simply impossible to hide anything. Some would tell everything. I would have run our horses off somewhere, but the misfortune was that as late as Sunday morning I did not know which way to start. The Yankees seemed to be all around us. Since they went away, I have heard of several places where I could have hid my horses. But it would have required an omniscient mind to have known it then. Ma was much flustered on Sunday morning, but she soon got composed; and I mentioned that none of them came in our house. None of our negroes went with the Yankees, not even Pompey. A good many went from these parts. Mr. Payne's John led the Yankees about his house, and then went off with them, and three of Cousin M. Kean's. The raiders say they got five hundred negroes that trip. By Tuesday evening they got certain news of their defeat at Petersburg; and they got in a great hurry to leave these parts. They killed two hundred and twenty horses and mules at Thompson's Four Corners, and as many more at Yanceyville, where there was another large camp. They burnt their wagons and the bridge at South Anna, and left in the night, Tuesday night, without saying good-bye. In their haste they threw away overcoats, caps, guns, etc. General Stoneman was to come on here, and be ready to cut off General Lee's retreat, whether he fell back towards Richmond, or to the James at some other point. That is a mighty pretty tale sister Lavinia tells about the Prince Edward gentlemen coming down to the High Bridge to meet the Yankees with their fowling-pieces. But these Yanks along here had something of heavier metal than partridge guns, in the shape of ten or twelve pieces of cannon, against which shot-guns would have made a poor show. The

Yankees carried off a great number of horses from Louisa, Goochland and Hanover. Brother William did not lose his. He has lent me two Confederate horses, rather poor, and I have borrowed two others at times. I have not bought any horses yet. I have almost finished planting corn. Some land has got too hard now. The planting of corn in this region is a gloomy business; we know not who may reap. But I suppose we must plant in faith. I think ma's health is declining somewhat. She has had a cough for three or four weeks, and sore throat. She wants to see you very much. . . .

"Yours, etc.,

GEO. F. DABNEY.

In connection with the foregoing glimpse of conditions in the suffering South, it is worth while to read the following representation of conditions North, in the same year, by a sympathizer with the South:

"NEW YORK, *November 9, 1863.*

"MY DEAR DABNEY: Your good, long epistle of September 19th came to hand about the first of last month. You cannot tell what a prize I considered it, and how fully it tallied with my own vision of the horrible condition in which we are engulfed. I valued it, first, because it was from an old friend; second, because it gave, in a masterly manner, so true, but dark a picture of the times, and so glorious a vision of God's work of power in the Confederate army, and third, because it gave tidings of my vanished boy. May God bless him, and make him a blessing.

"If your picture of our condition was true in September, it would require an additional quantity of black paint to fetch it up to the present state of matters. The elections in the great States are over, and in all, furloughed soldiers and greenbacks have ruled the day. The Lincolnites have it all their own way. The apathy of the masses is perfectly wonderful. In this city the luxury and extravagance never has been equalled. The whole city is one vast 'Vanity Fair,' and one would think that no such thing as 'war's desolations' existed in the wide world. There is a heartlessness in the entire community that makes one shudder. God has given them over to 'strong delusions'; and it matters not a whit, to the gay throngs in the streets, that civil liberty is crushed here, and but a few miles away the work of slaughter is going on, and souls innumerable are being sent to the bar of God, unshriven and unblesed.

"We have read and talked in other days of the heartlessness and frivolity of Atheistic France in her bloody revelries, but she never equalled us. Her page in history will be bright and unsullied alongside the fearful one which shall recount the true state of our community now.

"The view you gave me of our conditions as subjected by the bayonets of the vast army of Lincoln is most true. Its potency is already

developed. It is now nothing more nor less than a gigantic machine and moves only as directed by the hand at the lever.

"And as in the despotism of the Old World, so here military life has become one of the professions, and the most popular one. Men look to it as the best opening for their sons, and young men pant for the time when they can don shoulder-straps, and enjoy the 'devil-may-care' life of the camp. Promotions have been abundant and rapid, and the glare of such advancement has bewitched the popular mind.

"The whole community seems led captive by Satan at his will. That constitutional liberty is gone is self-evident, that the great majority of the people don't care a fig about it is ditto.

"Your strictures on the Democratic party are entirely just. The party had step by step become a party of hypocrisy. They retained the name for its popularity, and as a pass-word to office and profits. Its great principles had long been forgotten and ignored. This is the key to the wonderful facility with which the party clamored for war, and tried to oust the Black Republicans from the front seats in the chariot of Mars; and look at the list of the professed Democrats who were foremost in taking up the sword, from Staunton, Secretary of War, to Brute Butler, a Breckinridge Democrat, par excellence, and McClelland, Grant, etc., etc., etc. How often has this fact been thrown in my teeth, to be as often repelled by my asserting that no man could be a Democrat who took place or fought in an Abolition war. 'They went out from us because they were not of us.'

"The only hope of constitutional liberty is with you; here it is gone totally, irrevocably.

"Therefore, stand up like men, don't flag, don't be discouraged. When and what the end will be, God knows, and he only. Ours is duty; issues are his.

"I had a very pleasant letter a few days since from Dr. M. D. Hoge, dated at Bermuda, on the eve of his leaving for Wilmington and Richmond. I see by the papers a kind Providence carried him through. I shall send this under cover to Mr. William P. Campbell, St. George, Bermuda, who will kindly forward any letters or other matter either way. Can't you send me a copy of the last minutes of your General Assembly? I have not met with any of the minutes of the Assembly, South. Any package of that sort (religious papers, pamphlets, etc.) sent by way of Wilmington to Bermuda to Mr. Campbell's care, would reach me.

"I am unloosing my roots preparatory to a move, if God shall spare my life and open the way. If I must live under a despot, let me have an old-fashioned, legitimate one—a Bourbon, a Hapsburg, or a Bonaparte—not a shoddy, mushroom thing, of rail-splitting antecedents.

"Remember me kindly to all my friends. May God's blessing rest on you all, and crown your efforts for home and liberty with abundant blessings.

Yours in Christ,

F. M. NEVIN."

On the 10th of May, 1863, the immortal "Stonewall Jackson" had died of the wounds received in his last great flank movement. Mrs. Jackson employed Dr. Dabney to write her husband's biography. The remaining part of the year 1863, and the most of 1864, and the early part of 1865, were spent in the collection of materials, and the writing of this work. The subject was splendid and noble. It is a rare thing when a man has such a life to write. Many regarded Jackson as very fortunate, also, in the character of his biographer. The interest which Dr. Dabney's undertaking the life of Jackson excited in the public mind is indicated by the following letter to Dr. McGuffey, of the University of Virginia:

"UNIVERSITY, July 6, 1863.

"MY DEAR SIR: You were kind enough yesterday to promise me your assistance with Dr. Dabney, and I avail myself of it at once to mention the following simple facts.

"The life of a man so great and so good as General Jackson was, written by a friend and comrade of kindred spirit, cannot fail to produce a double result on foreign nations. His brilliant success as a soldier, his high-toned character, and unsurpassed self-abnegation, must win the esteem of the worldly-minded, and raise our people in their estimation through him, whom we may present as a type of our men, and as the honored and beloved of a nation.

"The combination of these rare gifts and powers with true piety, probably unsurpassed in history, must needs win the affection of all believers, and may serve as a great example and encouragement to the weak and wavering.

"Both these purposes are particularly needed in Northern Germany, where I propose to publish a German translation of Dr. Dabney's work, if I can obtain his consent. The State Department will forward the manuscript; it will be placed, in Berlin, in the hands of pious friends of mine, who, I have reason to hope, will see to its being well published. Dr. Dabney will, of course, be entitled to such a share of the profits as he may claim. To avoid being anticipated, through Northern channels, it would be important for me to obtain his leave to translate the work as it progresses under his hand, so that it may be brought out there and here as nearly simultaneously as can be.

"Whatever you can do to aid me in carrying out this plan, which I think is not without a prospect of public usefulness, will be most gratefully acknowledged by

"Your humble friend and servant,

"M. SCHELE DE VÈRE."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> So far as our information goes, this interesting project was never furthered.

It got abroad in the North that Dabney was writing the life of Jackson, and more than one Democrat itched to get his fingers on to the work. His friend Niven wrote, "By the way, I see it stated that you are preparing his biography. Put me down for ten copies."

The correspondence, which has been preserved, is sufficient to show that Dr. Dabney used great exertions to get the materials. He visited Mrs. Jackson, in North Carolina, to find out all he could from her, and get everything in her possession which he supposed would be of use to him. He visited Lee's army, after its return from Gettysburg, to learn what he could from those who had taken part in Jackson's campaigns. He got access to the records in Richmond; he learned what he could by correspondence. He finished his work a little before the surrender at Appomattox. It was first published by Nesbit & Co., in London, and again, in 1867, by Blelock & Co., in New York.

It was a great biography. Several lives have now been written of this illustrious leader of armies. The greatest in the eyes of merely military men is, perhaps, that by Lieut.-Col. G. F. R. Henderson, of England. As an essay on military tactics and strategy, the work of Colonel Henderson does outrank that of Dr. Dabney, but even here the superiority of Henderson over Dabney seems to be largely due to Dabney's greater brevity. In treating of the civil questions between the two sections, in explaining the character of Jackson's patriotism, and in portraying Jackson's religious character and life, Dabney gives superior evidence of mastery of the subject. Those who read and compare these two works are to remember that Henderson had Dabney's work to peruse, improve upon, and add to, as he was able, and to elaborate, and that while the English professor of Military Art and History never made other than a fair and generous use of Dabney's work, Dabney had no such help as Henderson found in his labors. Colonel Henderson himself speaks of Dabney's *Life of Jackson* in the following praiseful and praiseworthy terms:

"Several biographies have already been published, and that written by the late Rev. R. L. Dabney, D. D., some time major in the Confederate army, and Jackson's chief of staff for several months, is so complete and powerful that the need of a successor is not at once apparent. This work, however, was brought out before the war had ceased, and, notwithstanding his intimate relations with his hero, it



was impossible for the author to attain that fulness and precision of statement which the study of the official records can alone ensure. Nor was Dr. Dabney a witness of all the events he so vigorously described. It is only fitting, however, that I should acknowledge the debt I owe to a soldier and writer of such conspicuous ability. Not only have I quoted freely from his pages, but he was good enough, at my request, to write exhaustive memoranda on disputed points."

Dr. Dabney's characteristic modesty appears in this work. Though so close a personal friend of Jackson, and such an efficient member of his military family, he says nothing of himself.

After the battle of Gettysburg, in the summer of 1863, Dr. Dabney was greatly agitated over the prospects of the Confederacy. He felt that the time had come when the people of the South must make great sacrifices if they were to maintain their independence, and he felt that our public men in the lead of affairs should insist on the people's making these sacrifices. He could not make known his views through the press, owing to the delicate questions involved, but he tried in other ways to reach the ears of those in supreme power. Thus we find him at Orange Courthouse, in August, 1863, talking in the ears of those whom he thinks influential with President Davis and General Lee. He had gone thither to see his old mess-mates of the Second Corps, and talk over the campaigns and battles of Stonewall Jackson. While he was there a grand review of A. P. Hill's Corps was held a few miles east of the courthouse. It brought to witness it many prominent men. While the vast column is filing by General Lee, we hear Dr. Dabney talking with one, at least, of those close both to Mr. Davis and to General Lee, very earnestly of what he thinks the country ought to do. He intimates, at the outset, that what he has to say cannot very well be "said out loud." He has somewhat to say also about his being too humble a person to suggest to those at the helm what should be done. He is courteously asked, however, what suggestions he would like to have made. Whereupon he says: First, our leaders should recognize the unpleasant truth that without efficient aid from abroad we shall finally be overthrown. Second, to get that aid we must pay for it. Pay what? *Gradual emancipation.* He reviewed the attitude of England and France towards us. He showed, by Napoleon's Mexican enterprise, and by the intimations of Lords Palmerston

and Campbell, that those governments were not insensible to the advantages of dismembering their great democratic rival, the United States, and securing the advantages of commercial treaties with a great free-trading South. He showed that both cabinets had their hands tied by the fanatical anti-slavery feeling of their people. He showed that Mr. Lincoln had at last been "keen enough" to strengthen their shackles by his emancipation proclamation, making the war an Abolition war. He argued that only one move could save the South from ruin, and checkmate Lincoln. That was to offer a treaty with large commercial advantages, and a pledge of future gradual emancipation, separately to England and France (so as to stir up their mutual jealousy about it). He said the South had the choice of emancipating, by their own act, gradually, prudently, and thus having liberty without the negroes, or continuing the fight on the present plan until it should be exhausted, and lose the negroes and liberty too. He said that the latter course would be followed by negro domination. He expressed his fears that there would not be found a readiness for this sacrifice until the time had come that the sacrifice would do no good. He thought that it would then be made. However, he wished that the best men might at once be put to work to prepare the minds of the Virginia people for the sacrifice, that soon a convention should be called, and should make a tender to the Confederate President and Senate of a power to emancipate, for this diplomatic purpose, and that in this way Virginia should lead the other Southern States to confer the same power, by their own several sovereign action.

This seed-sowing, however, seems to have borne no fruit. The Seminary session of 1863-'64 was a lonely one. There were only three students. They did not distinguish themselves in study. The congregations at the College had been thinned and saddened, too. It must have been a solace for such a man as Dr. Dabney to have the *Life of Stonewall Jackson* to reproduce at this time.

It is in accord with his many-sidedness that he could turn aside from these great labors to others of the humblest sort. In the late summer of 1864, Mrs. Dabney fell into poor health. He sent her off to the springs, and himself assumed her duties while she was absent. He writes on the 30th of August, 1864, "For the last three weeks I have been with the children at home, acting the part of an old hen, keeping house, drying fruit,

making molasses, etc., etc., etc. Of course, there is very little studying and writing going on."

He was watching the war, during all these months, with ever-deepening sympathies for his suffering fellow-patriots. When he had heard from Louisa in January, 1864, that some of his own people were no longer able to shoe their slaves, nor to buy harness for the few poor horses left them by the thievish invaders, nor to keep their horses in working order, he comprehended it all and felt it as much as the sufferers themselves. As brave friends fell, he felt that they were falling for him and his family. He had foreseen the possibility of it all as few had, but he felt the woes of his country also as few could, and a consequent vast indignation against her invaders.

On June 9, 1864, he writes to Mr. Hugh Guthrie, of Tinkling Spring:

"MY DEAR FRIEND: We were greatly shocked this morning to hear, through a note from Mrs. Brown, that your nephew, B. Craig, had fallen in battle last Friday; and that Newton, his brother, brought her communication as he passed by Farmville on his way with the sad burden of his body. I suppose that to-day you are engaged at dear old Tinkling Spring in committing his body to the grave. I wish I could be there to give a warmer assurance of my sympathy with you, and his mother, and other relatives. Every time I hear of the fall of a friend among our valuable young men I feel a shock of grief and indignation. I feel that there is a sense in which they have died for me, and in my stead, for my defence, and that of my home and little ones, and that their sufferings and blood are the price of my safety. How can we sympathize enough with the friends and homes they loved and have left behind them?"

His most conspicuous service, in these years, for the church and kingdom of Christ was his effort to unite the Synod of the South with the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America, an effort crowned with blessed success. In 1838, a split had occurred between the Old and New School wings of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. In 1857, the Southern contingent of the New School body had withdrawn from its Assembly in the North, because the Cleveland Assembly of that body, in 1857, had "adopted a paper, touching the subject of slavery, that was regarded by some of the members of the Assembly as contrary to Scripture, and violation of the Constitution of the Church, in that it virtually made slave-

holding a cause for discipline by the church courts."<sup>16</sup> The aggrieved members secured a convention in Richmond, Va., during the August following, which, despairing of the cessation of the agitation of the slavery question in the New School body, abhorring being disciplined for something made an offence neither by the standards nor the Bible, deprecating the Assembly's high-handed and unconstitutional measures in condemning a lower judicatory or individuals for any cause, without bringing the offenders before the Assembly in the way prescribed in the Constitution, "resolved to recommend the Presbyteries which were opposed to the slavery agitation in the highest judicatories of the church to appoint" delegates to meet at Knoxville, Tenn., on the third Thursday in May, 1858, to organize a General Synod, under the name of "The United Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." This Synod, on its organization in 1858, made an overture to the Old School Assembly for reception into its fold; but that body was not disposed, in the year 1858, to receive the overture favorably. But by 1863, the Old School Church of the South, called at the time "The Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America," was inclined to the Union. It no longer entertained doubts as to the doctrinal soundness of the New School of the South. Indeed, it had long been known that few of the New School men of the South were ever advocates of the distinctive New School doctrines; that they had gone with the New School party, at the split of 1838, largely because of friendship for New School men, because of the peculiar ecclesiastical moves of the Old School men, 1837-'38, and because of the extreme and unjustifiable representations made of the New School party by such men as Drs. Plumer and Breckinridge, and that the supposed wrongs of the New School party had considerably swelled their seceding ranks. Between 1861 and 1863, mutual confidence of the two bodies in one another grew, and the desire for union was enkindled into a strong flame. In response to an overture to take the proper steps "to bring about a union between the Old and New School Presbyterians in the Confederate States," the Assembly, sitting in Columbia, S. C., in 1863, appointed a committee to confer on the subject of union with any committee that should be appointed by the United Synod, with the view

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<sup>16</sup> Alexander's *Digest*, p. 494.

of ascertaining whether a union could be formed upon any basis that "should be satisfactory to both parties," and "should offer reasonable grounds of hope for permanent harmony and coöperation." The Assembly appointed an able committee for the purpose described, and made Dr. Dabney its chairman. Similar measures were taken in the Synod of the South. The chairman of its able committee was the Rev. Dr. Joseph C. Stiles.

In July, 1863, the committees of the bodies met in Lynchburg, Va., in the lecture-room of Dr. Ramsey's church. After prayer, the two committees were informally resolved into one interlocutory committee. For a little while there was a constrained silence. Then Dr. Dabney arose, with "shoulders shrugged up" and "both hands in his breeches pockets, trying to look as much like a clod-hopper," says Dr. McGuffey,<sup>17</sup> "as he could." He began, "Well, brethren, as nobody seems ready, I would like to try to talk a little." "He then went on," continues Dr. McGuffey, "and made the most adroit speech possible, and one of the best I ever heard." It is certain that he did not go to this conference without special preparation. His address captivated the representatives of the Synod of the South.

Dr. Stiles arose with great solemnity and began thus, "Dr. Dabney's views are marked by entire fairness, and if the spirit of magnificent equity which breathes through them prevails in this joint committee, the breach between us is healed," and more to the same purpose.

A friendly discussion followed. The two committees concurred in recommending to the Southern Assembly and the United Synod a plan of union embracing two great features, viz.: First, a brief doctrinal declaration, clearing up the supposed differences of doctrine on the essential points of Calvinistic and Covenant theology. Second, a statement of a plan for consolidating the Synods and Presbyteries, and such congregations as might desire it, without disturbing any property rights, pastoral relations, or ministerial standing in the United Presbyteries. Dr. Dabney wrote the doctrinal articles; rather, he went to the conference with an entire basis written out. The doctrinal part of it, after some revision of one paragraph, he presented as his draft. Its Calvinism was thoroughgoing and strong, but in a certain quarter no small opposition was made to

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<sup>17</sup> Dr. McGuffey, of the University of Virginia, and Dr. Ramsey, of Lynchburg, had been admitted as spectators.

it as containing heretical clauses. In the *Southern Presbyterian* hot war was waged against these supposed errors, but the columns of the paper were thrown open to Dr. Dabney, and he ably and adequately vindicated the articles as free from error.

The discussion in the Assembly of 1864, over the proposed *basis of union* deserves to rank with the foremost debates in the history of our church. Dr. Adger led the opposition. He was assisted by the already distinguished and eloquent Dr. B. M. Palmer. They were opposed by Dr. Dabney, supported by Drs. Hoge, Kirkpatrick and others. Dr. Dabney spoke for three hours, and won for himself a name far above his previous reputation as a theological debater. The two hours which he spent in defence of the doctrinal statement drew forth for him the most enthusiastic admiration of the body. But after the discussion the Assembly decided to omit the doctrinal propositions from the terms of union, explaining its action as follows:

“Believing that the approval of these propositions by the committees of conference, and extensively among both bodies, has served a valuable purpose, by presenting satisfactory evidence of such harmony and soundness of doctrinal views as may ground an honorable union, the Assembly does yet judge that it is most prudent to unite on the basis of our existing standards only, inasmuch as no actual necessity for other declarations of belief in order to a happy union now exists.”

This was satisfactory to Dr. Dabney, his paper having really accomplished its chief purpose. After some further, but unessential modifications of the terms of union proposed by the committees, the vote was taken, with the result that there were 53 *for* to 7 *against*, Drs. Adger and Palmer carrying but five votes in addition to their own.

As is often the case in such movements, Dr. Dabney had reasons for desiring the union of the two bodies which he did not like to use publicly. He knew that if the two churches did not unite, that the Synod of the South would soon establish a seminary for the instruction of their young ministers, and that Dr. A. H. H. Boyd, of Winchester, would, owing to his pre-eminence of scholarship and mental power, be put into that seminary as a professor, and that Dr. Boyd would infect with his own views many of his pupils. He knew that in case of the union of the two churches no such seminary would be established, and that the ministry of the United Church would be taught in Old School seminaries; and that the two or three

men of unsound views would soon pass away. Indeed, Dr. Boyd was then sick, never to recover, so the issue proved. He had stontly withstood the movement for union in 1861; but by 1863, having discovered that he was theologically in the very smallest minority in his own body, he was ready to write, as he did, that he saw no reason why the bodies should not come together; he was candid in declaring that he did hold the New School theology, in regard particularly to the extent of the atonement, but he expressed the judgment that it would be impracticable and improper for him, under the circumstances, to try to prevent union. These and kindred facts<sup>18</sup> Dr. Dabney could not use in debate.

Though he could not use these reasons in debate, the union, as has already appeared, was effected. That it was a wise movement, cannot be doubted. With the death of Dr. Boyd, only two exponents of the New School doctrines remained. The Presbytery of one of these brethren found it necessary to say "Don't" to him on one occasion. He heeded, and no trouble came. The other man's semi-Pelagianism was of the heart, and was also controlled. The two bodies, with these exceptions, were one doctrinally, and, covering the same territory, ought to have united.

In July, 1864, his indignation at certain wrongs perpetrated against his countrymen, and his sense of the supineness of the action of the Confederate Government, inspired two letters for the Richmond *Examiner*. These letters would be worthy of a place here, as showing his attention to several problems which vexed the public men of the time, were they not so intense.

One of them reads, in part, as follows:

"It is stated that General —— declared, on his late expedition up the Danville railroad, that he had nowhere seen a people so tame and subjugated as those in that district. He said that they would neither assist him nor defend their own homes and property.

"The apathy of our people cannot be justified; for a brave man, whatever the fatal disadvantages might be, under which the blunders of his government laid him, would rather fight under them, with a generous disdain of living as the unresisting victim of such oppressions.

<sup>18</sup> The plan of union carried with it the giving of the endowment of the proposed Seminary at Charlottesville, Va., to Hampden-Sidney College, and the Marysville College, in Tennessee, to the Synod of Nashville. It gave Old School men everywhere control of education.

But their conduct ought to be largely excused; and it may be shown that the chief blame rests, not upon them, but their rulers.

"First, our home population are left without arms, ammunition and organization. Their own State has made them powerless. The House of Delegates, although twice called together, and solemnly urged to this, have refused to enable the people to resist, and left them helpless before their enemies, assigning this reason, that if a law was passed to arm them, the quixotic ambition of our Governor would call them all into the field. As though the Governor was not, more than themselves, the representative of the will of the people! Events have shown whether our Governor's apprehension of the dangers and necessities of the times were a fantastic notion or a just and sober foresight.

"Second. Our home population are aware that the policy of the Confederate Government leaves them unprotected in every attempt to defend their own homes even from the most ruthless outrages. If overpowered in the performance of these duties, the enemy will treat them as outlaws and murderers, and the Confederate Government will surely acquiesce therein. General —— condemns the people of the Southside because they did not join him as scouts and skirmishers; and yet they knew that if they aided him in these capacities, and were captured, the government whose commission he bears will decline to move one joint of its little finger to avenge them when they are murdered in cold blood as 'bushwhackers.' They know that at this very time the best, truest and noblest of the home people in the Valley are hunted like wolves on their own mountains, for the generous attempt to serve the Confederate Government in just these modes, and there is no vengeance, no defence. When General —— fights, he has the shield of the government over his head; when he is captured, that government protects him in his prison with all its power, and with the whole force of retaliatory threats. But our home people know that when they fight, they do it with a halter around their necks, and when they are captured, will be butchered like dogs, without defence or retaliation. Is this thought likely to encourage the patriotism of a people? Yet, in spite of this shameful desertion of their own government, many of these men did rally, half armed, one-quarter armed, without ammunition, without legalized leaders, and harass the flanks of the enemy.

"But third. It must be confessed that many of the people at home did display a reprehensible apathy and timidity. Yet the people of Virginia were once a gallant people! Are not these cowering fugitives of the same breed and blood with the brave soldiers of the Confederate armies? Whence the difference? The answer reveals a danger created by the feeble policy of our rulers, more appalling than all the devastations of these raids, and the outrages of the brutes who make them. The spirit of the people is *toned down*, the very capacity for a generous moral indignation is exhausted, by the long experience of outrages



unavenged. When man's sensibilities are thus excited, if he is permitted to react, if resentment and resistance have their legitimate active play, the sentiments continue manly and heroic; but if the assaults are repeated and increased in enormity, and no successful reaction is assigned to the sufferer, no just vengeance is tasted, the suffering cowers the spirits which it first inflamed. Just indignation and active resentment give place to helpless terror. The enervated victim, instead of fighting the successful wrong-doer, feels towards him as he does towards a hail-storm or thunderbolt. This fearful process is now rapidly progressing in the spirits of the people. The government, by its non-retaliatory and defensive system, is permitting the person at Washington to educate the Southern people into Oriental slaves. A little more such suffering unavenged, and their hearts, once so heroic, will be tamed for the yoke. The only remedy is to give the people *just vengeance*. They must be permitted and encouraged to react against their aggressors, with an active resistance as fiery and intense as their wrongs are aggravated.

O for one year of rulers who should be statesmen, and not merely politicians; who comprehended the springs of human nature, and not merely the springs of a gun-lock; who knew not only the red-tape of a military bureau, but the red blood in the hearts of a smothering, gasping nation!

SOUTH SIDE."<sup>19</sup>

The session of 1864-1865 was one with next to no students. Dr. Dabney felt impelled to serve as a missionary in the army during several of these months. He had to take measures involving much trouble, also, as well as outlay, for bread and meat for his family. The following brief letter, written at the time, is eloquent of his consecration to his ministry to the soldiers, and of his own and his country's need:

"NEWMARKET, *December 12, 1864.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND: Your letter reached me Saturday, and I have at once procured from the Adjutant of General Early the accompanying 'protection,' which I hope will be sufficient.

"I came to the army week before last, to assist the chaplains for a while, in preaching to the soldiers. For five or six days I had quite a good opportunity, and preached every day; but this change of weather, and the snow, has stopped my operations. Yesterday I was able to preach to a very small congregation in the Methodist Church, in Newmarket. None of the troops are within two miles. Unless the weather

<sup>19</sup> This letter bears no date, but seems to have been written in July, 1864. We have not ascertained whether these letters were actually published in the *Examiner*. Though search was made through the issues of July and August, 1864, they were not found.

changes greatly. I shall have to return home (where I long to be to see after my poor little ones). You need not be surprised, therefore, if I am at Tinkling Spring next Sunday.

"Mrs. Dabney writes me word that all prospect of laying in any supply of meat for next year (even at the high prices) is impossible in our region. She asked me to make some effort in our old neighborhood to get a little pork. My plan was to have it salted down, or even cured, if we could not get it home earlier, where it was killed. On my road up, I saw Mr. Martin Coiner, who told me he could spare about three hundred pounds, if the army men did not get after him and impress it, at ten dollars per hundred in specie. I have no specie, but I suppose that after some little delay I might buy some in Richmond. If you have it in your power to speak to Mr. Coiner, or any one else, to secure me a little, I would be much obliged to you. It is but little I can afford to buy.

"Remember me affectionately to Mrs. Guthrie. I hope Brown Patterson is well.

"Affectionately your friend,

R. L. DABNEY."

"H. G. GUTHRIE, ESQ.

On the 9th of January, 1865, he writes from Hampden-Sidney, whither he had gone back:

"The children are very stout and hearty, and are busy at their books. I have been doing my best to get them shod, and make the other preparations for their comfort, in view of another trip to the army preaching. I shall go this time to Petersburg, and probably lodge in town mostly, as the soldiers are close about it."

In the spring of 1865, he is found preaching in Tabb Street Church, in Petersburg, while back at Hampden Sidney his hospitable home shelters wounded and broken-down soldiers. Mr. S. B. Dabney says:

"My childish recollections of the close of the war include associations with wounded soldiers whom father sent from the hospital to live with us, and to enjoy the country air, and be free from infection. These men were usually, I believe, from the South, they assisted mother as they could, and were uniformly courteous and kind, thankfully sharing with us our poor food. One had been shot through the mouth, and was unable to eat solids. I remember his taking us boys on a cherry picking expedition for mother. Another had been shot through the leg, and went on crutches; but he still managed to take us bathing, and taught us how to snare 'old hares.' I remember that they would lie on their blankets under the big trees by father's study window. I suspect that they tried to repay father and mother by acting as day nurses for us little fellows."

He came away from Petersburg with the retreating army; hid himself in Buckingham, after Appomattox, to escape being carried off to a Northern prison. When he came back to Hampden-Sidney, he found his wife and children safe, but his home pillaged.

The fall of the Confederacy was epochal in Dr. Dabney's life. Under the old order he had grown up; by it he had been, as a most impressible personality, mightily moulded. He loved its activities, habits and modes of thought. Under it he had already won a large and noble success in life. He was passionately attached to it, for the truth and justice and benevolence which, he believed, underlay and informed it all. The "order" which succeeded in the Black Belt in Virginia, in 1865, and on into the seventies, he loathed with all the strength of an honest man whose very life it was to love the good and hate the wrong, as he saw it. To be governed and to know that his beloved country was governed by aliens, was as the bitterness of death. To be governed by the semi-civilized freedmen, which his prophetic soul saw was to follow on the cessation of the government by the army of invaders, was worse. And he exhorted his friends, sanguine of better things, to hold on to the military rule as long as possible. To suffer all the horrors of reconstruction, and he looked for such a destruction from the day of the surrender, was almost maddening. Nor could he forget at what awful cost this change had been brought about. The most valued and distinguished of his near-by friends and neighbors, such as Col. John T. Thornton, Mr. Samuel C. Anderson and Abram C. Venable, Esq., had fallen as victims. The whole South had suffered in like manner. Nor could he shut his eyes to social and physical consequences of the political revolution. The returned soldiers would be restless, inclined to emigrate; the white population, in many quarters, cowed utterly, afraid of the grown up black children let loose, the prey of the crews of native "scallawags" and imported carpet-baggers, who would come to filch away the small remnants of wealth yet remaining in the hands of a poor and exhausted people. Universal suffrage, which he had always hated and fought, is coming, he sees. And slaves, of an inferior race, under the leadership of the vilest men, are to have the power of voting, till, in the words of another strong man, "that dirty chimney shall be burnt out." The seats of power once graced by Virginia's noblest sons are to be trampled through by these.

They are to dispense justice! In this hour of awful stress some of Virginia's sons will go over to the oppressors. If Virginia is ever redeemed, will not her better sons have learned political indirection in the meantime? He cannot be indirect. Shall this herd of Gadarene swine trample him in the mire, and his country? Such visions and questions he carried with him night and day at this time. Long afterwards, in happier days, he poured forth, in rough but vigorous verse, the feelings which were now burnt into his prophetic soul by the present and impending degradation of his country:

“How conquerors, ruthless in their pride of power  
Should trample thy fair neck, whose queenly foot  
Found rightful place upon the oppressor's head;  
Cunning and malice rule the dismal hour  
Of thine eclipse, and fraud and force uproot  
Each right implanted by thy fathers dead!  
How doltish serfs and alien thieves should foul  
Thy seats of power once by the sages graced,  
While all thy noblest, fairest, wisest rank,  
In want obscure, hounded by slanderous howl,  
And worst, how some thy sons whom thou hadst placed  
'Neath thy free banner, in the honored rank  
Of thy defenders, wooed by filthy greed,  
Should aid, oh! shame, their mother's chain to draw.

Yea, woeful mother, weep! there is no herb, rue, nor balsam,  
that can buy  
Health for thy deadly hurt.”

The years succeeding the war were awful ones in the Black Belt. One who has never lived in such a region can hardly conceive it. The roads were full of vagrant negroes, and the court-greens, where Randolph and Henry had addressed audiences of freeholders, now resounded with the empty babble of negroes and the base harangues of their leaders, hounding them on against the whites. “Universal change and unrest were the order of the day. The bottom rail was on top, while ‘old master’ stumbled over the clods, and his soldier son drove broken-down army horses to the plow, and planned emigration and how to take care of the old folks. Friction between the races was universal.” There was no furious retaliatory violence in Virginia, as further South; the people were more quiet, but the irritation was not less deep. It could not have been otherwise. Thievery and disregard of property rights were ever

provoking it; fences were burned, corn-houses broken open, the very gardens and sweet potato patches were appropriated by the new sovereigns, by night. As the former masters had not yet learned to withhold the whip from the back of an impudent negro, they were constantly being dragged before the courts. The negroes were leaving the white churches, of which they had been members, and setting up their own churches, which were often sad travesties on the gospel idea of a church. Along with this moral decay, the country suffered, in consequence, physical decay. Fences were rotting, buildings of all sorts rotting down for want of paint, often being burned by the hand of the careless or of the incendiary. The artificial drainage of the bottom lands could not be kept clear; the little live stock of the country, already deteriorated in the years of the war, suffering further deterioration. All this was clear to Dabney's mind on the day of surrender. He was a man who had to see, and had to feel as he saw. It was a critical and *terrible* time for him. We shall see him much tempted to leave the country, but held here by duty—duty to his old mother, who had by issue of war been reduced from comparative affluence to the narrow edge of poverty; duty to his friends, to his church, and to God. He knew that the hand of God was in the history of his times as in that of all times; but he knew, also, that God's agents in history have often been most unworthy; that he maketh the wrath of man to praise him, and bringeth good out of evil. He thought of the invaders of the South as he had always thought of them; he thought of her subjugators and new sovereigns according to the truth. Henceforth, for long years, he is to be a grimmer man, with less in the world to love. The iron had entered his soul.

There is no measuring his sense of chagrin and indignation, degradation and woe, at the issue. His spirit was unconquerable. He believed that infidelity, usurpation and oppression had triumphed. Hardly a month had passed, however, before he began to seek how he might vindicate the honor of the South further before the bar of reason, and to acquit himself as a husband, a father, and a man of God. This new beginning expressed itself in the following letter:

“UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, VA., May 19, 1865.

“MY DEAR FRIEND: Watchman, what of the night? Will the Yankees permit Sterling & Campbell to publish the *Life of Jackson* ungargled? or persecute author or publisher for its plain speaking?

"Can you inform me about the proposal of *amnesty* made by our new rulers? Who are permitted to receive it? On what terms? How far does it extend; whether to protection of property from confiscation, and of all species of property? Chiefest: is it candid, truthful and honest for a Virginian, who submits to Yankee rule only as a necessity, to be endured no longer than he can help, to accept it on such terms as they offer?

"Can you find out, without mentioning names, on what terms the new masters would permit a Confederate to leave the country, with the purpose of obtaining a permanent home for himself and earning a living for his family, in some country whose government was less distasteful to him than theirs? Let him be a Confederate who had, at the close of the war, no connection, official, with General or State government or army of the Confederacy, and never had any with the United States—a citizen merely. How much plundering, stealing, confiscation, secret espionage, baggage-searching, oath-swearing, etc., would they exact in such a case?

"All the above is confidential.

"I learned with pleasure of Colonel Lamar's safety. If he is still with you, awaiting the clearing away of the fog, I should greatly rejoice to have him spend some time with me. Say so to him.

"You will be better able than I to surmise the fate of the Seminary endowment. Present income is out of the question. The alternatives are to disband the Faculty for the time, or keep afloat one year by an assessment on the churches. The latter, I surmise, the churches will not do.

"Meantime, I must work or starve. I would greatly prefer to labor in the gospel rather than in the corn-field, if God and the church will let me. My private income, small before, is now at an end.

"Communicate your views on church and Seminary matters. Did you see Stuart Robinson's letter to Dr. Brown? Is not he a ——?

"Truly yours,

"R. L. DABNEY.

"*Rev. Dr. Hoge.*"

## NOTE.

Dr. Dabney published, in the *Central Presbyterian* of February 12, 1863, the following poem, written some time after the death of his little "Tom." As thoroughly characteristic, and excellent in style and taste, it deserves reproduction here:

### TRIED, BUT COMFORTED.

Five summers bright our noble boy  
Was lent us for our household joy;  
Then came the fated, wintry hour  
Of death, and blighted our sweet flower.

They told me, "Weep not, for thy gem  
Is fixed in Christ's own diadem;  
His speedy feet the race have run,  
The foe have 'scaped, the goal have won."

I chode the murmurs of my breast  
With this dear thought; and then addressed  
My steps to wait upon the Lord  
And with his saints to hear his Word.

Then, thus I heard their anthem flow:  
"Praise him, all creatures here below;  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

But how, I said, can this sad heart,  
In joyful praises bear its part?  
It hath no joy; it naught can do  
But mourn its loss and tell its woe.

And then I thought, What if thy lost  
Is now among that heavenly host,  
And with the angel choir doth sing,  
"Glory to thee, Eternal King?"

But is not this a hope too sweet?  
Faith is too weak the joy to meet;  
Oh! might my bursting heart but see  
If true the blissful thought can be!

Oh! that for once mine ear might hear  
That tiny voice, so high, so clear,  
Singing Emmanuel's name among  
Those louder strains, that mightier throng.

Oh! that but once mine eyes could see  
That smile which here was wont to be  
The sunshine of my heart, made bright  
With Jesus' love, with Heaven's light.

Then would my burdened heart, I know,  
With none but tears of joy o'erflow—  
But ah! when faith would strain her eyes  
For that blest vision, there arise

The shadows of my deary home;  
'Twixt Heaven and my heart there come  
That dying bed, that corpse, that bier;  
And when I strive that song to hear,

Sad memory echoes but the wail  
My love to soothe could naught avail;  
I only hear his anguished cry,  
I only see his glazing eye.

But yet be still, tumultuous heart,  
And bravely bear thy destined part,  
Yet will I say, stay there, my son;  
And to my Lord, Thy will be done.

'Tis not for sight and sense to know  
Those scenes of glory here below;  
But be it ours to walk by faith,  
And credit what our Saviour saith.

Let patience work till we be meet  
To dwell in bliss at Jesus' feet;  
Then death, once dreaded, friendly come,  
And bear us to our lost one's home.

Then shall that glorious hour repay  
The woes of all that dreary way,  
And I shall hear forever more  
My seraph boy his God adore.

Yea, he shall teach this voice to raise,  
As angels taught him, Heaven's lays;  
And I, who once his steps did lead,  
Shall follow him to Christ, our Head.



Within the next year he published, also, a funeral sermon commemorative of the death of Lieut. Abram C. Carrington, in the *Central Presbyterian*; a similar sermon commemorative of Gen. T. J. Jackson, which had been preached by request in the First Church, Richmond, in a pamphlet; and a memorial of Lieut.-Col. John T. Thornton, in a tract form by the Presbyterian Publishing Committee. Of these, the works on Jackson and Colonel Thornton were particularly fine.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *PERIOD OF DESIRE TO EMIGRATE.*

(May, 1865—May, 1869.)

A NEW START IN LIFE.—THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY DURING THIS PERIOD.—DR. DABNEY'S FEARS FOR THE FUTURE OF STATE AND CHURCH.—HIS DESIRE TO EMIGRATE, AND AGITATION OF THE SUBJECT.—HENCE, HIS GIRL-SCHOOL.—PROSPECTS OF THE SEMINARY AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS PERIOD.—PLANS FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE SESSION 1865-'66.—IMPROVED CONDITION OF THE SEMINARY AFTER 1866.—DETERIORATION OF ITS ENVIRONMENT.—DR. DABNEY'S THOUGHT OF LEAVING THE SEMINARY FOR A PASTORATE.—SEVERE LABORS FOR THE INSTITUTION, NEVERTHELESS.—HIS LABORS AS PASTOR IN THE COLLEGE CHURCH.—HIS LITERARY LABORS IN THIS PERIOD, AND ECCLESIASTICAL SERVICES.—QUITS KEEPING HOUSE IN 1866.—THE STAY OF HIS MOTHER'S FAMILY AND MANY OTHERS.—HIS CARE FOR HIS MOTHER.—THE IRON IN HIS SOUL.—TOO HOPELESS OF HIS COUNTRY AND CHURCH.—GREAT EXPONENT OF THE OLD SOUTH OF THE PERIOD.—SAVED BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND HIS OWN SIMPLE AND GREAT MANHOOD FOR FURTHER SERVICE.

**D**R. DABNEY had served the Confederacy with all his might, with his purse as well as with his pen and sword. He had put the proceeds of the sale of his farm near Tinkling Spring into Confederate bonds. Mrs. Dabney had disposed of her gold watch and other valuables with patriotic intent of similar character. At the close of the war, they had to show for their property these bonds and some bank-stock, then "only fit for thumb-papers or lamp-lighters." His six slaves, along with his mother's twenty-seven, and the millions of his compatriots', had been given their freedom. He did have, however, somewhere in Alabama, twenty bales of cotton, for which he was to get a small sum. In addition, he had left him his carriage-hoises and two cows. His family, like most others in Virginia, in those awful later months of the war, had for some time been subsisting on coarse food. One of his sons, born in 1859, says that for some years in his early boyhood he thought of cake as necessarily dark. His mother had, indeed, a little granulated sugar; but she kept it for state occasions

and for the sick; the sweetening which her children, servants and the family generally enjoyed was with sorghum molasses. So that this little fellow's impression of cake was of something always colored by sorghum. His knowledge of coffee was equally defective. But Dr. Dabney's energies had always kept his family in plenty of wholesome food. He could write to his mother on the 18th of June, 1865, "I now write to let you know that we are well, and getting on *somehow*, on bread and milk, well enough as far as that goes."

As there appeared no prospect of current salary as professor in the Seminary, he had rented some land, in April, from his neighbor, Mr. Worsham. Upon this and his own little fields he pitched a large crop of corn, and raised a good garden. With the aid of two negroes—a man and a woman—he cultivated his corn himself;<sup>1</sup> and he performed this manual labor under a sense of national calamity, oppression and degradation, which few men were capable of feeling. He foresaw all the horrors of reconstruction from the start, as we have seen.

The people of the South, and especially the people of Virginia, thought that they had been left more peeled than any people ever were at the close of the war, "without slaves, without money, without fences, with little live stock, little corn and no meat;" but they found out, by 1870, that the tyranny of reconstruction could make them far poorer than the most sweeping war-time plundering. For some time after the surrender at Appomattox, Virginia was under Federal military control as "District No. 1"; but on December 3, 1867, a convention, elected by "the people," under an act of the United States Congress, met and framed a new Constitution, which prohibited slavery, and accepted the results of the war. This Constitution was ratified by a "popular vote" on July 6, 1869, at which time members of a General Assembly and State officers were also elected. The Governor chosen was inaugurated September 29, 1869; on the 5th of October the General Assembly met and ratified the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution of the United States. On the 26th of January, 1870, Virginia was readmitted to representation in Congress, and released from military control. This period was necessary to open the eyes

<sup>1</sup> There is some ground for thinking that Mr. Edward Lane, afterwards the Rev. Dr. Edward Lane, missionary to Brazil, helped him in the cultivation of this crop.

of many Virginians to the fullness of the calamity and disaster with which the issue of the war was freighted. It was more oppressive to the very soul of no man than to that of the professor, pastor, farmer, at Hampden-Sidney, who had so stoutly opposed the war before its coming, and so valiantly fought in it against the oppressors of his country once it had come. He writes of the conditions to his friend, Dr. M. D. Hoge, on the 2nd of January, 1867:

"I see all my anticipations more rapidly verified than I expected; and especially the worst of them, the emasculation of the spirit and honor of our people. In submitting to final defeat, they did what the South of 1861 had pronounced absolutely impossible. In submitting to Yankee and negro domination in 1867, they did what even the beaten South of 1865 loudly pronounced impossible and less tolerable than universal annihilation; and I fear there is nothing to which they will not ultimately submit, until we become as many-colored and as mean as the Mexicans.

"I have one advantage, amidst present monstrosities and outrages, over the people around me, that I am not taken by surprise. I knew that people who relied on free negro labor would all break; I knew that negro suffrage was coming; I knew that the exhaustion of 1865 was actual riches and abundance compared with that of later years; I knew that Southern property would become absolutely unsalable, and the people utterly miserable and poor. But others did not think so; they thought that the defeated condition was not so very intolerable after all—*i. e.*, that the cause in which our martyr patriots died was not at all an essential one, and that our convictions of 1861 were simply pet, and not common-sense, and not principle, etc. They are disappointed: I am not."

On the 27th of January, 1868, he writes to the Rev. A. C. Hopkins:

"The people hereabouts are dreadfully doleful at the prospects of negro rule. As for me, I am in the happy category of the Irishman's addition to Matthew v.: 'Blessed are they that have expected nothing; for verily I say unto you, they are not disappointed.' I always knew what was coming, and am not the least surprised. The devil is apparently triumphant."

On the 23rd of January, 1869, he writes to Dr. Hoge again:

"I have asked myself very inquisitively, Are we really escaping a single one of those horrors which far-seeing Southern patriots delineated as the probable or possible fruits of Northern ascendancy and

forcible abolition; the anticipation of which made us all feel, in 1860, that, really and literally, death was better than submission? For the life of us, I don't see a single point in which the prophecy fails. People say, But it is not so bad as we fancied. The only difference I can see is, that we did not realize then how rapidly we should be degraded to the level of our oppressions. That is all! Not very consoling, *that*, to my mind."

His section of Virginia was particularly affected by the results of the war. His opinions were not, however, formed on the basis of what was going on in a narrow area. He saw that the South's civic virtue was in danger of being fatally weakened, and even destroyed. The political indirection coming into vogue in many States, which he regarded as "Yankeeism," he abhorred from the depths of a soul intensely honest. For the better people in the South to come into power by stuffing ballot-boxes, and counting in their candidates, was to become "Yankeeized," to become subject in spirit to the spirit of "New England." This was intolerable. It was only better than bestial negro rule. He had little hope with regard to State or church, as the following, amongst many other letters of the period, shows:

"UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, *February 15, 1868.*

"MY DEAR MOTHER: This is the afternoon of the Sabbath day, but I do not think I can spend it in a better way than writing to you. It is the first hour of really mild and pleasant weather, which we have had for many weeks. The air is pleasant, and the sun is shining cheerfully; but to me everything looks as gloomy as if it were clothed in the pall of death. The past disasters and murders which our people have suffered, and the present oppressions, with worse prospects in the future, fill me with melancholy, whenever I think of them (and they are never long absent from my mind). I think it a most enviable thing to be as old as you are, with the work of life mainly done, my children all long ago raised, and able to take care of their own destiny, and no remaining worldly interest by which the destroyers of our country can much harass you. Nearly all *your* treasure is laid up where moth and rust cannot corrupt, and where thieves do not dig through and steal; and 'where your treasure is, there your heart is also.' It may be said that my treasure ought to be there too. I hope that I have an inheritance there, and this hope is an anchor to my soul; but it is impossible for me to avoid many anxious cares, and pangs of distress for the ruins around me. It seems to me that these feelings are very much necessitated by my very duties; if I do my duties, I must have these affections through which I suffer, or else be an angel, or a devil, instead of a man.

For instance, I have long given my labors enthusiastically for our beloved church, and especially for this agency of its growth, which is specially committed to me, the Seminary. Now, when I see the church undergoing, in most of her members, such cruel sufferings, and the Seminary destined to destruction, I cannot but feel sad. The labors of my life seem to be like marks made on a sand beach for the rising tide to wash away, save as I may have been instrumental in saving some souls. *That* work, thank God, cannot be undone by the malice of men or devils. When I look at my little dependent children, and consider what a world they have to go through, I sometimes think that it is better with those that 'are not.' If they find the world as I have found it, it will be a wilderness indeed, with plenty of wild beasts in it. It is true that I have a great advantage over most people here, that the evidently approaching ruin of the country is no surprise to me. I always foreknew it, and do not see it a particle more clearly now than when General Lee surrendered. I see the people around me now very blue, almost thunder-struck; and not a few, who the year of General Lee's surrender, told me that I was committing a great sin by looking on the dark side, are now, like rats, trying to run away from the sinking ship. . . .

"Your affectionate son,

R. L. DABNEY."

In his letter to Dr. Hoge, of January 2, 1867, he had already expressed his fear that the Northern Church would swallow up the Southern Presbyterian Church, that its independence would "be lost after a time (partly betrayed by its own men, and partly overpowered by the Yankees)," and that in "thirty years" there would be "no such thing as a separate Southern Church." He had said:

"I feel that, except as I may be the part instrument in gathering some souls into the church above, every effort I make here is like making marks on the sand beach below high-water mark. All will certainly be obliterated. Nor do I believe there is any other country on earth, where the prospect would not be better for Virginia society and Virginia Christianity's making a permanent impress for good."

With these views as to the Church and State, it was natural that he should have desired to leave this country far behind him. As a matter of fact, he entertained the idea of emigration seriously from 1865 to the close of the period we are now studying. The places which he studied as possible future homes for himself and other like-minded Southerners lie in three continents, in Australia, in South America, and in Europe. He entertained the possibility of a vast emigration, that of a people so numerous that they could make in any place their own

society and control it. He studied certain quarters with reference to their homing such a multitude. He studied others as suitable possibilities in case only a few should emigrate. The following excerpts from letters set forth these, and many kindred thoughts, tentative plans and purposes, which possessed him during these years, as well as the reasons for his desiring to emigrate.

He writes to his brother, August 7, 1865:

"I have said nothing of the prospect of my leaving the country, on mother's account, and I have felt that we could not be too cautious, out of regard to her feelings, in observing a strict silence about it. It is very natural for an old person like her to say, 'My children are waiting for me to die, to leave; I am in their way, and have lived too long.'

"To my present view, the least *tolerable* part of the United States would be a good neighborhood in the Valley of Virginia; fewer free negroes to blight it; industrial pursuits less dependent on regular and large supplies of farm labor; a sturdy and honest population, who, I hear, behave nobly under present disasters; but I have no idea of removing to settle again *anywhere* under Yankee despotism. I have a volume which I should like to say to you touching our general prospects. You know my views, however. The real motive with me for seeking a new country is not the petulant feeling of pride galled by defeat, nor any reference to future hard times, heavy taxation, vexatious restraints of despotism, etc., etc. It is a regard to the moral well-being of myself and children. To me, with my irreconcilable sense of wrong, and moral indignation, acquiescence, subserviency, suppression of the liberty of speaking and printing on our outraged rights, is inevitable moral degradation. To my children, life under a mean, brutal despotism must be a gradual school of lax principle and degraded aims. If history teaches anything, it teaches that the subjects of such governments always become a mean people. Witness the Romans, Neapolitans, Russians, Chinese. I feel it to be the highest duty I owe to my children not to let them enter on a man's career under any but a government of laws."

To Dr. M. D. Hoge he wrote, on the 16th of August, 1865:

"Your letter presented exactly my feelings about the question of remaining in America. I do not see what reasonable ground of hope there is, which appears probable to the mere human understanding. (With God all things are possible.) When we said, during the war, that we were contending for everything which makes the heritage of a free, Christian people dear to them, I, for one, believed what I said, and as I see we are whipped, I must regard all this as lost. I cannot so soon unlearn the deliberate and solemn convictions on which I staked my life upon the field of battle, and now avow, *virtually*, that when we made

those strenuous declarations concerning the stake of the war, we were all demagoguizing. I, for one, was not. But everything I have seen since convinces me more, that I was not mistaken. It appears to me that there are only two prospects for the South. Parts of it will continue under the present paralysis, until they sink permanently into the condition of Jamaica (of these, I fear Southside Virginia will be one.) Other parts, as Northern Virginia and the Valley, will again see material prosperity; but only by being completely Yankeeized. There is our whole prospect.

"Again, people do not enough allow for the poisonous moral effects of an oppressive government. What, with this blight (so visible now in society and church) and the killing and banishing of the most of our better spirits, I fear the independence, the honor, the hospitality, the integrity, the everything which constituted Southern character, is gone forever. The Yankees said they would either conquer the South, or exterminate it. They *have done* the latter, literally. You know that in every community, everything which is morally characteristic of it proceeds from a small minority. (In your church there are about twenty-five men and women whose extinction all together would virtually extinguish the church.) Now of that ruling class in the South the most have been literally murdered by the Yankees, and a good many banished. A few—Generals Lee, Gordon, Hill, etc., Drs. Hoge, Palmer, etc.—remain alive, but powerless and fettered. The Yankees have literally killed that which made the South the South.

"From all I see, the only chance to save any of the true Christianity of the South is to transplant it as quick as possible. People say, 'What is then to become of this land, if you take away the only salt left?' I reply, 'What if this salt should lose its savor?' Consult history. Did ever an evangelical and pure church exist long under a mean, despotic government—except as it lived habitually in the fires of persecution? If the latter is to be the condition of our existence in this State, I, for one, prefer to avail myself of our Saviour's precept and permission, 'When they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another.'

"Now, if only a few Confederates are going to preserve their principle and rights by leaving the country, they had better go to such a community as they would be willing to have their children absorbed by. If only a few go to Brazil, for instance, before I go with them, I must ask, 'Am I willing for my children to be Brazilians after I am dead?' The few should choose, then, a free Protestant state. It is important that living be, moreover, cheap. These conditions might be met by Holland, Berne, or Lausanne, Frankfort-on-the-Main, etc. (by Great Britain, if living were not so dear). But if so many Confederates go as to make their own community, and absorb, instead of being absorbed, then all is different. We need not be so anxious about the order and stability of the government to which we go, because we will be strong enough to take care of ourselves, and *make* an unstable state stable.



On the other hand, we want a wide, new country, that invites immigration, with rich, virgin land cheap. See this: if ten or twenty thousand Confederate families were once seated in such a land, and had made a crop, poverty would no longer be an obstacle to any of those left behind. If I had to go *now*, without an estate, to the Hague, for instance, without one line of connection between me and the people there, or a single acquaintance, or a common language, I should probably suffer destitution. But if there were on the La Plata or in New Zealand such a Confederate colony as I have described, what would I fear on landing there with health and one-half dollar in my pocket? I would find land, bread and meat cheap, all forms of useful labor in demand, and well paid. I would meet Virginians there, several of the extensive clan of my blood relations, sundry old army comrades, sundry brother preachers, and any number of Presbyterians. I would find employment; I would be useful, and in five years would own a better home than I shall ever have in Virginia.

"The thing, then, is this: before our gallant young Confederates scatter themselves from Vancouver's Island to Australia (as, alas! they will do—are doing), a selection might be wisely made, and a settlement begun under potent auspices, by such of us as have a little property left. We need a *head*, to centralize emigration; to bargain for us with some government securing us a charter of religious and civic rights, and some privilege in getting cheap homesteads. I believe that if one of our leading statesmen or generals (*e. g.*, General Lee) would do this, he would be accomplishing the best work now possible for the Confederate people and church. If a settlement were well begun, in a wide country, under a good climate, there would occur a perfect *exodus* of all that remains worth saving in the South. Then let the Yankees keep the blighted soil, with the miserable free negroes, and despotize as they please. If you consider that mere domestic interest actually did move some five millions of people from Virginia and Carolina across a tedious, expensive and laborious land journey, to the Valley of the Mississippi, is it Utopian to expect as many more to go, moved by domestic interests and political disgusts conjoined? Our people are an emigrating people anyhow, with feeble local attachments, mobile and adventurous.

"I understand General Lee sets his face against all this. (Well, West Point knows mathematics and tactics, but not history, human nature and statesmanship, as witness Jeff. Davis & Co.) There is Breckinridge, popular, able, an exile already—can he be communicated with? I wish some one would do so; lay these ideas before him. He should associate Daddy Price, who, I understand, has gone to Rio, and a few such (men who have been farmers as well as generals), select his place, bargain for rights and homesteads, and then fill the Confederate States, Nassau, Bermuda, Canada, with his *prospectus*, through clandestine channels, if necessary. . . .

"I suppose many people would regard these speculations as showing

a cracked, fantastical spirit, excited by mortified pride, etc. I have two solaces. One is to remember 'William the Silent,' the Washington of the Netherlands, the most cool, deliberate, astute, far-seeing of statesmen, and most holy patriot and Christian; that this was precisely his plan. If the Hollanders were overthrown by Spain, his advice was that they should make a universal exodus to Batavia, in Java, and leave to the conquerors only the conquered *dirt* of what had been their country. The other is to note that the most generous, honorable, and Christian of my acquaintances sympathize most with me in this matter.

"Isn't it a little queer that I should be lectured on the great crime of deserting the interests of Southern Christianity, I, who have devoted my life to Virginia, and persistently refused the most brilliant allurements to the Fifth Avenue, New York, or to Princeton, for my dear love to our old mother? These plans—perhaps dreams—of emigration are prompted by the same fidelity, because I fear that the only way to save Virginia is to take her out of Virginia. My ambition never has been to leave Virginia to go to the Yankees, and now it is to take Virginia, along with myself, away from that race."

The following letter shows that there were not a few who sympathized with him fully in the desire to emigrate. He writes:

"March 13, 1866.

"DEAR BROTHER: Since my last was written to you, I have written again briefly, enclosing a very interesting letter from General Stevens. This I hope you have gotten. A day or two ago, I got a letter of sixteen pages from Maury (written on government stationery, with a broad mourning stripe; I suppose for King Leopold, the Empress Carlotta's father.) He mentions having sent me a copy of a letter to another inquirer, giving statistical and geographical information, which I have not yet received. If it comes to hand, I will send it to you. Commodore Maury's letter to me is all addressed to the one point, the prospects of Maximilian's government. I had, in my letter to him, pointed out that an assurance of stability of political institutions, especially as against the Yankee, was the capital point with us. He begins by saying that I can tell better than he whether the Yankees are likely to assail Maximilian, but that they should desire to do so was very likely, inasmuch as Maximilian seems, as to them, '*apparently*, in the condition of the lamb in the fable.' He then adds, 'Mind, I say, *apparently* in the condition of the lamb in the fable.' 'But he would seem a very shallow man who should expect the Yankees to succeed, as did the wolf with the lamb,' etc. In another place he uses about this language, that he does not speak 'by the card,' but that his residence in Europe convinced him that there was an understanding between France, Spain and England, to which Austria had later acceded, that Maximilian was to be held up, and that the interference of the United States in Mexican affairs would

be the occasion of an European coalition to maintain the balance of power. Maury's whole letter is intended, obviously, to reassure us, without saying out loud, that Maximilian is to be supported. His letter is interesting, but extravagant. He declares himself an enthusiastic applauder of Mexican prospects, of Maximilian, and especially the Empress.

"I seem to be becoming, unintentionally, a centre of correspondence about emigration ideas for our acquaintances. Among the most zealous and determined are Lanty Minor, and Cousin Maria, daughter of Blair Dabney, and widow of W. C. Carrington. It seems to me nearly every person of any standing or intelligence I meet with is inclined to emigration, and only needs an inviting *outlet* to determine him. It seems to me that the programme for *you* should be this, to go South next fall on a tour of exploration, and thus escape the trying climate. You will then be able to act intelligently, and the ensuing year make final arrangements. Meantime, I must plod on here, and endeavor to earn something to move on."

Amongst his correspondents on the subject of emigration was Gen. Jubal A. Early; and it is curious to note that both he and, at one time, Commodore Maury, favored New Zealand as their land of Canaan, on the ground, as General Early puts it, that it was "far away from Yankees and negroes."

This purpose of emigration, if the way should open, was a very serious one with Dr. Dabney. He wrote to various quarters of the globe; and he received letters in reply. Some of these were full of sympathy and encouragement; others were not. Many of them were informing, at least; and he was after information. He had had some notion of traveling all the way to New York just to talk with Dr. Patrick Fairbairn, of Glasgow, Scotland, about Australia and New Zealand, and other parts of the British dominions; and there are considerable letters among his remains from Dr. Fairbairn. The one from New York is as follows:

"NEW YORK, 136 W. 25TH ST., June 19, 1867.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR: I have been intending for some time to address a few lines to you on the subject of Dr. Leyburn's communication to me, but incessant bustle and locomotion have hitherto prevented me. Of course, a very few lines might have done, if I had merely thought of informing you of my probable arrival in New York at a certain time, and my readiness to see you there, and give you any information in my power respecting the Presbyterian interests in Australia; but I did not think it would be proper for you to come so far as this for anything it would be possible for me to impart to you on the

subject. The Presbyterian Churches in Victoria and in New South Wales are composed of parties who belonged, not only to the Free Church of Scotland, but also to the Established Church, and the United Presbyterian Church. So that, though partaking largely of a Free Church element, and holding by Free Church principles, they are independent, and have the exclusive direction of their own affairs. The Free Church is often applied to for probationers to go out and supply vacant places, but those who go can receive from us no special destination; they can only be recommended, and, in certain cases, I believe, indeed, very commonly, their travelling expenses paid. It appears to me that, except in circumstances of a very peculiar and urgent nature, it would not be advisable for any one of good ministerial standing, and approaching, or past, middle life, to adventure into such a field, however strong the recommendation that might be given him. Australia is more a field for the young, the elastic, the enterprising, for those whose constitutions are still fresh and vigorous, whose spirits are buoyant, and who can with comparative ease adapt themselves to a new state of society, and a still comparatively rude order of things. In such cities as Melbourne and Sydney there is good society, and there are churches which any one might well deem it an honor and a privilege to fill; but there are not many such in connection with the Presbyterian Church, and one might have to wait for a considerable period before any proper opening occurred. I do not doubt that a situation of some sort might, without much uncertainty, be calculated on by any respectable minister within a reasonable time, but it is a chance, I think, if it might be one that might be felt altogether agreeable for a person who had labored for years in another country, and in a different sphere.

"I am so imperfectly acquainted with the circumstances, present and prospective, in which you stand, that I am scarcely in a condition to offer any positive advice; but my leaning is in favor of a continuance at home, if such a thing be not absolutely impracticable. My conviction is that party feeling on both sides will soon subside here, that a settled and comparatively agreeable state of things will emerge in the South, far sooner than those who have lived through the late great conflict can suppose, and that the work to be done in this vast country is so great, so important, so urgent, that no one should leave it who can possibly abide in it. Such is my conviction, but should you feel a change desirable or necessary, and still incline toward Australia, I believe your best plan would be to enter in correspondence with one of the leading ministers there, for example, with Dr. Cairns, of Melbourne, who, I am sure, would give you all needful information, and be of more service than I or any Free Church minister in Scotland can be. I sail from here on the 22nd instant, and must ask you to excuse this brief letter. For weeks I have had no time, almost, to write anything. I am, reverend and dear sir,

"Yours very truly,

P. FAIRBAIRN."

God had a great work for him to do in this country. He was not to emigrate; and toward the end of 1868 he pretty much ceased to talk or write of emigration.

His desire to emigrate had been one motive to his teaching a girls' school during the autumn, winter and spring, 1865-'66. He hoped thus to save some money on which to move. Another reason for his teaching this school was that he might secure a support for his family at Hampden-Sidney while teaching in the Seminary. He supposed that there would be no salary from the institution. He made his arrangements with a view to twenty scholars, and six boarders in his own house. The following card appeared in certain Richmond papers in the summer of 1865:

"The decrease of students and total loss of income, which have befallen Union Theological Seminary, require me to adopt some other means of securing useful occupation and subsistence. I, therefore, propose to open in my house, on September 1, 1865, a private seminary for young ladies. A few boarders will be taken in my own family, and others can find homes in excellent families in the village around me. The best instruction will be given in the sciences, ancient and modern languages, and English rudiments, together with vocal and instrumental music. As the number of pupils will be limited, I propose to give all the instruction in all these branches, except instrumental music, myself, in order to guarantee thoroughness and finish of training, and an accurate pronunciation, as well as knowledge, of the French and Italian languages. A long and varied experience in teaching, with the purpose of care and diligence in advancing my pupils, is offered as the warrant of this promise.

"I propose to furnish boarding and tuition, including every item of expense whatever, except instrumental music, for the scholastic year of ten months, for two hundred and fifty dollars, in specie. From country gentlemen, all family supplies will be received at market value, and from them or others, the Federal paper currency will be received at current rates at the time of payment. A quarter's payment will be expected in advance. The best instruction in instrumental music will be furnished such pupils as desire it, at the bare cost of the instructor's fees. The advantages of the place in quiet, salubrity of climate, moral society, and access to public worship are well known.

"Address Rev. R. L. DABNEY, D. D., Hampden-Sidney, Prince Edward county, Va."

The school was a successful enterprise in almost every way. He had eight house boarders and eleven day scholars. He is remembered by at least one of those pupils to this day, as

“seated in his hard, wooden arm-chair, on one side of the fire-place in his study, his hands often occupied with some mechanical work, while he strove with the dull brains of careless girls.”

“He was as much interested in us and our welfare of body, mind and soul as if he had no more important work. In 1865, it was not easy to find an abundant supply of provisions anywhere, I suppose, and Mr. Lane, who lived with Cousin Robert then, was sent with his wagon into the mountains to buy butter, cheese, sorghum, etc., for his family larder. I think Dr. Dabney greatly enjoyed the sorghum; you probably know his fondness for sweets.

“The school numbered about twenty, Charley the only boy. Dr. Dabney spent the morning hours with his school, and went to his lectures in the Seminary in the afternoon. He gave both time and thought to his less congenial work, and prepared, himself, rather an elaborate set of rules for the pronunciation of French.

“The boarders were made comfortable, and we were quite happy. I wonder now that we had so much liberty. I think, on the whole, we were a very orderly set of girls, in spite of his severe criticism to Dr. Smith. No one was guilty of serious misbehavior, but I have no doubt we were restrained by a wholesome fear, even a lecture from Dr. Dabney being something awful to encounter. I do not remember more than one or two of these. I expect he had more watchfulness over us than we knew; it is not probable that much escaped his eye. I wish I had been more conscious of the real tenderness and kindness which was beneath the stern exterior.”<sup>2</sup>

With Mrs. Dabney's aid, he saved from his school “one thousand dollars in greenbacks.” This school was a boon to the people of Prince Edward. But, after a year, Dr. Dabney discontinued the girls' school, and devoted himself wholly to the Seminary and congregation. The good Presbyterians in Baltimore who sympathized with the South had come to the aid of the Seminary, and Copperheads in New York had added to the sum. So that, unexpectedly, the professors drew their salaries.

The prospects of the Seminary had seemed dark indeed in the summer of 1865. No revenues were in sight. During the war, the Board had invested \$46,000 of funds in Confederate State bonds. These were a total loss; and so were the investments in bank stock. The State securities held by the institu-

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<sup>2</sup> Letter from Miss Charlotte Price, 242 Olney Road, Norfolk, May 13, 1901.

tion, Virginia and North Carolina bonds, were indeed to be ultimately productive; but they yielded nothing "in that first year of stunning collapse." The Seminary was absolutely without one cent of income. The members of the Faculty had very little food for their own families; but they advertised, inviting students to come back and resume their studies, whether they had any money or not. They proposed to teach them *gratis*, and beg rations for them. With his usual energy, Dr. Dabney urged, by personal correspondence, individual students to return. For instance, he writes to Mr. George L. Leyburn, of Bedford county, Va., who was thinking of teaching for a year or two to get means with which to complete his theological education:

"UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, VA., July 10, 1865.

"Mr. George L. Leyburn.

"MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND: Our Seminary will open for its regular course the second Monday of September next, and, *Deo volente*, all the Faculty will be at their posts. There is little prospect of getting remunerative schools just now, and you ought not to consume time. I am sorry that all the scholarships for young men are just now barren, as the State stock pays no dividends. I have devised a plan to get on *without money* (as the professors will have to teach without salaries). Let the students go on *borrowed text-books* (from the pastors), and wear old clothes or homespun. (Plenty here to keep you company, for instance, I shall, perforce.) Let the churches contribute in provisions, and the young men live on rations as during the war. (Only, I hope, better.) There is plenty of room in the Seminary for storage and cooking, as well as lodging. If they do not wish to cook, it can always be done out. Surely the Bedford<sup>3</sup> churches can furnish one man's rations, viz., 240 pounds of flour, 120 pounds of bacon, a bushel of dried fruit, one ditto peas or beans, 5 gallons of molasses, 50 pounds of sugar, 10 pounds of coffee, 10 pounds of rice, etc., etc. Mention this to Hooper and Penick,<sup>4</sup> and whisper to them that you can superintend the transportation. Then you really have nothing else to pay for, save wood and washing. Wait on yourselves, as I did. Rooms furnished, library, and tuition are gratuitous to all.

"Let us show the rascally Yankees that they cannot starve us into measures.

"With love to your father,

"Yours fraternally,

R. L. DABNEY.

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<sup>3</sup> The "Bedford" mentioned is Bedford county, Va.

<sup>4</sup> "Hooper and Penick" were two Presbyterian pastors in that county, Rev. T. W. Hooper, at Liberty (now Bedford City), and Rev. P. T. Penick, at the Old Peaks Church.

"It is desirable that you should have the following: Good Lexicons, Latin, Greek, Hebrew; Hebrew Grammar, Nordheimer's or Gesenius, if you can; Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament; Murdoch's Mosheim's Church History; Kurtz' Manual (one volume, 12mo) Sacred History; Dick, Hill, and Turretin, Theologies; Alexander's Moral Science; Chalmer's Natural Theology; as many of Calvin's and Addison Alexander's Commentaries as you can; Hodge on Romans; Sampson on Hebrews; Horne's Introduction.

"Get what you can, and do not be discouraged if you fail to get many."

Not a few students took Dr. Dabney's advice, and went to the Seminary in 1865 with "borrowed books," in "old clothes," though most of them wore Confederate uniforms with the buttons covered with black. It was unlawful to wear "Rebel" buttons. They went, too, depending on the churches for provisions. Their wants, however, were to be otherwise supplied. God's people, under his gracious promptings, were generous. The enrollment for the year was twenty-four students.

At the meeting of the Board of Directors in 1866, they issued an address to the Christian public, stating that it was desirable to raise \$100,000 for the Seminary as soon as possible. "To effect this," they declared, "it is proposed to appeal to the benevolent both North and South. The institution welcomes to its advantages all who seek instruction in the Word of God as interpreted and set forth in the time-honored standards of the Presbyterian Church. . . . All ultraisms in doctrine, and all subjects connected with political government, and questions that engender strife, are carefully discarded from the topics of discussion and instruction in the Seminary." The measures thus set on foot resulted in an addition of ninety thousand dollars to the endowment in the course of the next ten years thereafter.

While another honored member of the Faculty was the chief agent in raising this addition to the endowment, Dr. Dabney's influence in building it up is undoubted, and was considerable. Several men can be named as having contributed largely because he was there.

Though Dr. Dabney was no longer uneasy about his support, he never was thoroughly satisfied with the Seminary's material side thereafter. Its environment changed, and came to please him less and less. In a letter to Dr. Hoge, dated January 2, 1867, from which quotations have already been made, he asks:



"What is to become of this College and Seminary? Can literary institutions flourish in an 'Israel Hill'? This is a grave question for their friends. Either the negro must move, or the College and Seminary must move. But enough of this. I will say goodnight, and close with the hope that your dreams may not be of negro jurymen, magistrates, and governors."

The country about Hampden-Sidney, which had once been justly famous for the intelligence, cultivation and refinement of its white population, began to lose largely from the very best of its population. We shall have occasion to note other grounds of dissatisfaction more particularly in the sequel.

He seems to have entertained the thought of leaving the Seminary for a pastorate, as a possible alternative to emigration, or to continuing at the Seminary. On April 7, 1868, he wrote to his mother:

"Lavinia and the children will spend the summer again in the Valley. Things are so dark here that I think it very doubtful whether they will ever return to Prince Edward. Matters are going precisely as I always anticipated, to make this part of the country more uninhabitable to decent white people. I see a great many others now waking, up, as though out of a dream, to their doleful situation. They do not know what to do. I have the advantage, at least, of not being surprised."

The following letter from the venerable Dr. William S. White shows that Dr. Dabney had, that spring, already begun the agitation of his release from the Seminary. It also shows that the church in Virginia and North Carolina was not willing to let him go.

"GLADE SPRING, *March 4, 1868.*

"MY DEAR BROTHER: Your letter, 27th ultimo, reached me on yesterday. Your sermon came several days earlier. For both, I thank you. I and my wife, and Henry and his, have read your sermon with lively interest, and with heart-felt approbation. I sold seven copies of your *Defence of Virginia* at Christiansburg, and three here. Ten were all I had. This book, though enthusiastically admired now by many, will not be fully appreciated until you and I are dead. My grand-children, of which we now have twenty, will live, when men and women, under its salutary influence. The truth will prevail.

"And now I am troubled, and know not what to say. Your letter is the hardest to answer I ever received. I cannot say, *Go*, nor can I say, *Stay*; and yet one or the other I must say. Well, suppose I strike the middle ground, and say, *Wait* until the meeting of the Board or until Providence may open up some path for you to walk in. None of your

many friends have allowed themselves to think of your leaving the Seminary. They regard, as I do, your continuance there as essential to its well-being; but if Cuffy, as cudgel in the paw of the Yankee, is to kill it, why, of course, make your escape.

"Excepting the shedding of blood, the war which has raged since 1865, is worse than that which ended then. Now, as you fought so bravely in the first, can't you fight as bravely in the second war of independence? I have little or no confidence in any party at the North, political or religious; but I have boundless confidence in the Yankee's love of money. It seems to me that all he cares for Cuffy is to make him tributary to the election of a president, and when that matter is settled, no matter how, he will be dropped. If our people can but hold on to their lands, though pinched severely, the Yankee will be obliged, *for the sake of gain*, to let the white race make the material for their manufactories and shops. They are too cute not to know that the negro cannot be relied on for this, and as to their laboring classes getting possession of our soil, they will find two difficulties, (1) There will for a long time to come be too many darkies for their comfort, as they despise them, and (2) the Yankee laborers, having the characteristic cunning and shrewdness of their race, will become manufacturers, and thus become competitors, and not helpers of New England.

"But be this as it may, let us fight on. Be as brave and self-denying now as we were in the first war. As sure as there is a God of truth, the truth must ultimately prevail. 'The wolf' is really upon us, but let us not on that account 'flee.'

"Still, I am not prepared to say that, with your convictions and feelings, you ought to remain just where you are. If you *must* leave the Seminary, then I will do my utmost to get you to Lexington. My wife and I would rejoice to see you and yours in that parsonage, and to sit under your ministry. I would rejoice to cooperate with you in any way—not official—except preaching. I have written cautiously and confidentially to learn how the land lies since they *foolishly* called Leftwich, and he *wisely* declined the call; but one or two men there, over whom I have no influence, control everything.

"Mrs. White reads all you publish with cordial approbation and delight, and loves you every whit as much as Lavinia does me.

"I am looking out now for something to do. If I could find a church able and willing to give me and my wife our board and clothes, I would gladly take it. As soon as I hear from Lexington, you shall hear from me again. Mrs. White and Henry join me in warm love to you and Mrs. Dabney.

"Very truly and affectionately,

WM. S. WHITE."

It would have been an irreparable loss to the Seminary and to the church at large for Dr. Dabney to have left the Seminary

in 1868. The Board and his friends did well to hold him there. It had always been his way to work at every task as if it were his God-appointed line of effort for life. Hence, in spite of his agitation of the question of leaving the Seminary, he had remitted no whit of his efforts in the institution's behalf. He studied and taught theology in these years in a tremendous way. His lectures on the subject were taking the shape in which they were afterwards published. He was putting his impress on the vast majority of students as no other teacher in the institution. His course was the great course in the Seminary in these days, as throughout most of his days as teacher in the Seminary. This must be said, in spite of all deference to his very able colleagues. The major voice of the students of the time demand some such statement as this. His incidental labors for the students were also large at this time. He was the specially trusted friend and councilor of most of them. It was a time of phenomenal poverty amongst them. He was ready to aid them according to his ability. In 1865-'66 some of them boarded at his house. He helped them through the Seminary in a financial way; and he followed them with his prayers and counsels when they left the walls of the Seminary, especially those who went out as missionaries or undertook other unusual labors.

Though written a few months after the end of this period, the following letter to the Rev. Edward Lane, missionary to Brazil, shows us the delightfully frank and genial way in which he wrote to some of his pupils then in the field:

"SEMINARY, *December 16, 1869.*

"DEAR BROTHER LANE: I have been delaying for two or three weeks writing to you under my usual stress of some laziness and a good deal of company and many duties. Things are getting on in the Seminary very steadily, thirty-three students, seventeen juniors, and all the usual routine of lectures, conferences, rhetorical, junior essays, Wednesday night preachings, etc., which, with my pastoral duties, keep me pretty much on a dog-trot all the week. We have this winter two boarders, a youth named Martin, from New Providence Church, Rockbridge, and one of my own nephews, John, the son of my elder brother, Charles William Dabney. This last is a noble fellow, talented, pious, manly, courteous and respectful, having in addition to the assiduous training and schooling of his father (an old-fashioned Virginian), the hardy education of the cornfield. I think his influence is very good upon my Charley. The latter is sophomore in all but Greek, in which he is still

freshman, and is getting on pretty well. Samuel is still a pupil of his mamma's, is improving in his learning a good deal, and is a very piously disposed and gentlemanly little fellow. Lewis, the monkey missionary, is rather in a transition state; having arrived at the dignity of breeches and jacket, his mamma seems rather to have waked up to the fact that he was big enough to stand the switch, and consequently his back right often comes to grief, from his propensity to tell fibs and be impudent. He wears frequently a very grave face, as though somehow this world was turning up a very different one from what he had flattered himself. I think the question whether he can get his own consent to come fully under the yoke of authority is still under debate in his mind; but it is very clear to him that the switch is too bad to stand, whereon his mind undergoes a good deal of perplexity. In addition to my other engagements, I have undertaken this session the study of German, Professor Blair having a class. It is a queer thing, isn't it? that a man so near the grave as I am should be learning another lingo, when I shall so soon be done with all of them; but I thought I had been ignorant of German long enough. Dr. Peck and several divinity students are also studying it. There is a trifling, lying wag of a College student, who attends, as I believe, for no other reason than to pick up hints for quizzing about the 'new College students,' Peck, Dabney, etc. Blair is an exceedingly exact teacher, and three times a week I have to expend several hours upon this business.

"In September, Mrs. Dabney got a fall through the timbers of the back porch, then undergoing repairs, which hurt her very much. She was fast in bed for ten days, and then partly so for two months or more. She has been gradually mending since, and is now well enough, by care, to attend to her duties. She has gone to Farmville to-day, shopping, with Sam and Ellen (who is still her right-hand man). We have modified our whole backyard, moving up the kitchen (endwise) to the rear of the dining-room, within eight feet, and connecting it with a sort of closed porch. The arrangement is very comfortable.

"I suppose you will have heard of the election of Henry Alexander as second biblical professor. After a good deal of hesitation, he has consented to accept. Dr. Smith seems to have assumed the place of a sort of dry-nurse to him, in his orphanage, and has engaged old Mrs. Margaret Venable (with Miss Mag) to rent the house and garden and board Alexander. They are moving in to-day, and occupying the house Mr. Peck lived in, as his family has moved to Dr. Wilson's.

"Thus I have run gossiping on, until I have consumed my time and my paper. I shall write to Nash also. My German bell is ringing, so *Einen Guten Abend, mein Bruder.*

"Dein frierlich,

R. L. DABNEY."

It is a matter of fact that his affection for them was returned, often with interest. Our early missionaries consulted him

on every topic, as their letters, and especially Mr. Lane's, show.

His labors as pastor of the College Church through all these years were unremitting. His preaching was not less able than it had been. It was perhaps more severely didactic. He did an unusual amount of pastoral visiting, availing himself of odd moments and lulls in his labor of study and writing. No people could have had a pastor who sympathized more with them on account of the tide of calamities that had overtaken them in the war and in consequence of the war.

During this period his literary labors were also heavy. As results, we shall find, issued in the early seventies, his *Sacred Rhetoric* and the first print of his *Theology*. He put through the press in New York his books on Jackson and the *Defense of Virginia and the South*, in these years, too; and he contributed to various newspapers, periodicals and reviews. Of his more notable contributions to the current publications, may be named his "To Major-General Howard," which appeared in the *New York Weekly News*, October 21, 1865; his "The Crimes of Philanthropy," which appeared in *The Land We Love*, December, 1866; his "Reply of R. L. Dabney, D. D., to the Letter of Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, Criticising Dr. Dabney's Narrative of the First Battle of Manassas," which was written June 21, 1867, and appeared in the *Richmond Dispatch*; his "Ecclesiastical Equality of Negroes," which was published as a pamphlet in 1868; his "Duty of the Hour," which was delivered before the students of Davidson College, in June, 1868; his "The Partisanship of the *Spectator*" (London), published in the *Baltimore Eclectic*, in November, 1868; his "Positivism in England," which was published in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* for April, 1869, and a "Memorial on Theological Education," to the Assembly of 1869, etc., etc. In this period came from his pen an exquisite bit, entitled "The Matron of the Virginia that Was." It was published in the *Central Presbyterian*, November 20, 27 and December 4, 1867. When congratulated on it by Dr. Hoge, Dr. Dabney replied that there was no difficulty in its production to one who, like himself, was blessed with one of them in his own mother; that he had only to hold up what he had seen in his own early home, and paint from recollection. It was in reality a tribute to his mother.

In his "To Major-General Howard," he tells the North what

it is naturally obliged to do for the negroes just emancipated; tells why this obligation is on the North; and tells the difficulties in the way of this duty. It is a powerful piece of reasoning and writing. It is as if the spirit of the down-trodden, but unconquered, South had arisen, and, in the majesty of right, were giving the law to the seeming conquerors. His "The Crimes of Philanthropy" is a scorching but perfectly just, review of the current infidel humanitarianism. His "Reply to Gen. Joseph E. Johnston" is a pulverizing performance of high order.<sup>5</sup> The pamphlet entitled *Ecclesiastical Equality of Negroes* is the reproduction of a speech delivered in the Synod of Virginia in 1867, in which he let himself loose. Dr. Dabney once gave the following account of it:

"The crotchet of ecclesiastical amalgamation with the negroes began to find advocates in our church upon the fall of the Confederacy. Among those in Virginia were Drs. J. T. Leftwich and A. W. Pitzer, who drew even such men as Drs. Atkinson and Peck to their side; the latter two influenced more by the spirit of romantic magnanimity and self-sacrifice than by sound logic. The argument was that since the negro was now free, and going soon to be a citizen, we must also give the equal ecclesiastical rights in our church, despite our dislike of his

<sup>5</sup> On seeing Dr. Dabney's reply to General Johnston, Dr. Hunter McGuire wrote:

"RICHMOND, VA., June 21, 1867.

"MY DEAR MAJOR: I am sure that every one interested in the history of the late war will thank you for the dignified and exceedingly able reply which you have made to General Johnston's letter, criticising your account of the First Manassas battle. In my anxiety to see the misrepresentations contained in General Johnston's letter, corrected, I was presumptuous enough to write to you and ask permission to answer it myself, but before mailing my letter, I concluded that you would probably attend to it yourself, and that a reply from you would be more thorough and conclusive, and come with much greater force than anything which an obscure person like myself could say." . . .

[After going into the discussion of the subject at some length, and in an able way, Dr. McGuire continues.]

"I intended simply to thank you for your answer to Johnston, and as a friend to congratulate you upon the masterly, complete and manly way in which you have done it, and you must pardon me for letting my interest in the subject lead me to write so long and hasty a letter. I hope to be able to go to house-keeping next month, and whenever you happen to be here, I hope you will stay with me. I may be obliged to give you no better than a soldier's fare, but I can always insure you a hearty welcome. Yours very truly, HUNTER MCGUIRE."

race and color. They quoted the Apostle's declaration, that in Christ all are one, Greek and Barbarian, male and female, bond and free. Of course, they drew a *non sequitur*, but it was hard to make them see it. Our Synod was sitting in Charleston, Jefferson county, W. Va. One morning I was walking and conferring with Dr. J. Leighton Wilson, and in my absence a resolution in favor of this amalgamation was actually passed through the Synod hurriedly. When I got to the church the Rev. Walker Gilmer told me of it, and said that he and other alumni of mine wanted me to get the thing reconsidered, and speak on it. It was all a shocking surprise to me. I told them that if they could get the thing fairly on the floor again, I would speak on it. This was done after a good deal of opposition, much through the influence of old Dr. Converse. Leftwich then took the floor, with a very neat and eloquent, but inconsequential speech. I then got the floor, and spoke about three-quarters of an hour. My speech was almost impromptu, but it was, of course, the result of previous thought, which I rapidly threw into logical order and connection while Leftwich was speaking, by a supreme act of mental concentration. . . . This was one of two occasions in which I fully let myself loose in forensic debate. I was outraged and about desperate. I knew that this negro amalgamation would ruin our church. I felt that it was a moment of life and death for the church. I resolved, therefore, to fight like a man striking for life or death, to drop every restraint, and to give full swing to every force of argument, emotion, will, and utterance."

The speech made a powerful impression, and probably began the turning of the tide for the whole church. It sounded the key-note which regulated the subsequent legislation of the Assembly, providing ultimately for a separate but affiliated African organization. A leading elder of the Synod pronounced the speech to be the finest that he had ever heard from any man, on any subject. Diligent attempts were made to sustain the debate on the opposite side. Dr. John Leyburn and Major Thomas J. Kirkpatrick were two of the most "anxious speakers" on the other side. While they were speaking, Dr. William Brown sidled up to Dr. Dabney and whispered, "You will wish to reply, and I will manoeuvre to get the floor for you again." But Dr. Dabney said: "No; I have shot my bolt, and I think it will stick of itself. I think I may say to these gentlemen what a brawny Scotch fishwoman said to her boy after she let him down off her knees from a sound spanking, 'Weel, me little man, ye may squirm and ye may squeak, and ye may rub, but ye'll na rub that spanking off ye vera sune.'" He took no further part in the debate. The Synod

rescinded the objectionable resolution, and recommended the plan proposed by him to the Assembly.<sup>6</sup>

When Dr. B. M. Palmer read a copy of this speech, he wrote:

"It is exceedingly gratifying to peruse so strong a defence of opinions held by myself and articulately and publicly announced by me some three years ago, and which, as you have doubtless seen, were briefly, but suggestively thrown out in my Washington and Lee address. There prevails in all parts of our church a sickly religious sentiment, which would have wrought immense damage if it had not been held in check by an infinitely wise and gracious Providence. The air of piety which this sentiment appears to breathe so far commanded my respect as to lead me to ponder long and carefully my own conclusions, which were averse to it. Reflection, however, only deepened my own convictions, and I have been long prepared to plant myself firmly on the ground which you have more rapidly and intuitively taken."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Dr. A. C. Hopkins, the pastor of the church in which the Synod sat, has given the following account of this speech:

"Before that Synod came the question of ordaining negro ministers to serve in our church. The minutes of that Synod will show the forms in which that question came up. There were present one hundred members, and a very large crowd of deeply interested visitors. The state of public affairs, both civil and military, had made feelings very sensitive and warm, and the knowledge that the question of negro ordination was to come before Synod, kindled these feelings to a glow. In anticipation of this question, Dr. Dabney expressed privately his reluctance to discuss it. In the earlier stages of the question before the Synod, he maintained silence.

"But the time and the occasion arrived. He got the floor and began. It was like the breaking of the dam above Johnstown, and at Austin. He began by repudiating all responsibility for the necessity that was laid upon him, and soon launched out upon his argument from Scriptures, from primary judgments, and from history, growing more impetuous as he proceeded. He loved and esteemed the brethren who, it was known, were opposed to him, but conscience, judgment and feeling urged him on in fierce eloquence to combat their opinions, and to condemn and deplore the consequences of admitting negroes as ministers in our church courts. His voice trembled with emotion, his frame shook, his eyes snapped fire, and his arms flew vigorously in all directions. His audience was held in the agony of suppressed emotion. It was difficult to judge which were more stifled by suppression, those who agreed with him or those who differed from him. Some of the visitors were fairly alarmed. When he finished, we felt as men feel when a tornado has just swept by them. We drew a long breath to relieve the lungs."

<sup>7</sup> Letter December 30, 1872, to Rev. R. L. Dabney.



Thenceforth things moved toward the establishment of an independent African Presbyterian Church. There have been counter movements, it is true; but the movement for a separate negro church has prevailed.

His "Duty of the Hour" is a strong and noble oration, in which he exhorts his hearers against the deterioration of the spirit of honor, rectitude and conscience. "A brave people may, for a time, be overpowered by brute force, and be neither dishonored nor destroyed. Its life is not in the outward organization of its institutions. It may be stripped of these, and clothe itself in some diverse garb, in which it may resume its growth. But if the spirit of independence and honor be lost among the people, this is the death of the common weal; a death on which there awaits no resurrection. Dread, then, this degradation of spirit worse than defeat, than subjugation, than poverty, than hardship, than prison, than death." His review of "Positivism in England" is masterful and comprehensive in its breadth of treatment, clearly and powerfully written, so that "every sentence can be felt as well as understood."

It called forth the following letter from Dr. Kirkpatrick, then Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy in Washington and Lee:

"LEXINGTON, VA., June 14, 1873.

*The Rev. R. L. Dabney, D. D.*

"MY DEAR SIR: The *Southern Review* of April, 1869, contained an article entitled "Positivism in England," of which, I have learned from the most credible sources, you are the author. I read it with a degree of satisfaction I have rarely found in the perusal of any similar discussion, and I have reason to know that I was not singular in my very high estimate of its ability and value. Indeed, I have been informed by a gentleman who was connected with the *Review* at the time the article appeared, that it attracted unusual attention in different parts of the country, and that a very general desire was manifested, by men who think as well as read, to ascertain the name and *locale* of the writer. Some appeared not a little incredulous when told that he is, by birth, education and residence, a Southern man.

"I have often had occasion to regret that the article in the *Review* has not been published in a form conveniently accessible to all who take an interest in the subjects of which it treats. I have wished, time after time, to put it into the hands of the members of my classes in the institution with which I am connected. Many persons to whom I have mentioned it have expressed a similar desire, and more than once I have been on the point of writing to you, suggesting the propriety of your publishing it in a separate volume, either with or without enlarge-

ment or other change, as you might think best. I am sure such a step would do much good in several respects, and I cannot think it would impose on you any pecuniary loss. The work would be timely—nothing could be more so: it is much needed. 'Positivism,' as a form of speculative philosophy, is infecting the minds of thousands in our country, of many even in the South, who have not sufficient acquaintance with psychology or with ethics to perceive the groundlessness of its assumptions, or its dangerous tendencies. It is vain to expect that such persons will undertake any refutation of the errors in question, that comes in the shape of a ponderous volume, alarming them, in advance of any attempt to read it, by the multitude of the topics it discusses, and the array of learned citations with which its pages bristle. They contracted the poison from the magazines and reviews; what they need is the corrective presented in a resumé, like your article, to which I have referred—brief, clear, incisive, and forcible, written in a style that makes every sentence felt as well as understood.

"May I beg you, my dear sir, to give this suggestion a serious consideration, I know that your time is much occupied with your official duties. Still, I hope it will admit of the labor which this service, if you should think it best to undertake it, would involve.

"I am, very truly yours,

J. L. KIRKPATRICK."

His "Memorial on Theological Education" contemplates important changes in the process of theological education, embracing changes in the existing relations of theological seminaries to the Assembly, changes in the methods of imparting instruction by the professors, in the recognition of grades of proficiency among the students by the faculty giving instruction, in the organization and powers of the directory of the seminary, and as to the subject of natural sciences. The Assembly of 1869 resolved that the memorial be referred to the faculty and directors of each seminary, and that they report to the next Assembly. The report received more or less attention in each Assembly till 1872, when the matter was dropped without the desired ecclesiastical action. It is a very able paper, and ought to be read by the whole church from time to time, and pondered deeply by those busied in theological education.

During this period he had done his full average of writing for the *Central Presbyterian*, sometimes over his own name, and sometimes furnishing editorials.

Dr. Dabney felt the social changes incident upon the issues of the war keenly in his domestic life. He had been a very kind but an exacting master. The service of free negroes he found very unsatisfactory. This was part cause of his giving

up housekeeping, and boarding his family, in the latter part of 1866. He thus writes to his mother of the change, on the 29th of December, 1866:

"I believe many of my friends think I am crazy in doing this, but I am very sure that it is best under the circumstances; for a family with children to board is far from the most desirable way, and if things were as they used to be, I should never have thought of it at all; but keeping house here, with free negroes, a constant round of company and troublesome neighbors, is intolerable slavery, both to Lavinia and myself. I never had as much trouble and vexation in all my life besides about domestic matters as I have had in the last two years; but the trouble and drudgery are not the chief personal considerations with me. It is the terrible consumption of my time, in the mere work of a hostler, day laborer, and house servant, which I begrudge. I have almost ceased to study, and in a few years more I should be a mere drone in the ministry, if I should go on as I have. Another motive with me was precautionary necessity. My salary will by no means support my establishment, with the worthlessness, wastefulness, and stealings of the negroes. These things, and the desire to make an opportunity for Lavinia to spend the vacation away from this place, determined me to try it for a year or two. I have rented the whole place for a year to Mrs. J. T. Thornton (widow of Col. John T. Thornton) for four hundred dollars. I reserve two rooms, and eat with her, paying her \$110 per month board. Large as this seems, it will be a decided economy to me. I have a sofa bedstead (a most convenient thing), which is a sofa by day and a bed by night, in the study, where Charley sleeps. Charles Johnson [his nephew] will have a sleeping place fixed up in the Seminary, for the present. Lavinia and I occupy a room upstairs, the one over the chamber."

From this time on we shall find him and his family, now keeping house and now boarding. It ought to be said that, in boarding, he always made provision for guests, paying a price large enough to have a guest or two all the time, if he chose. In spite of the exclamation about company, in the letter just quoted, he was one of the most hospitable of men, especially in regard to the students.

Throughout these years he was the stay of his mother's family. The times in the South were awful. When any of his brothers or sisters fell into financial straits, he not only came to their aid with excellent advice, given in a most kindly and unirritating manner, but with material aid. They had leaned on him, in a way, from the time he was a boy of thirteen, and they found him a solid staff of comfort and support in these trying years. Letters to him from nearly every member

of his family, in this period, pronounce and prove him to have been one of the best of brothers.

Standing in such a relation to his brothers and sisters, he devoted himself also in special assiduity to the care of his aged and venerated mother. A considerable part of the first greenbacks he got after the war went to the purchase of various suitable articles of apparel for her, which were called for by her age. He continued his watch over her health, her financial affairs, and her happiness. His letters to her show an homage the like to which they show for hardly any mortal besides.

Poor as he was during this period, he helped many of his less fortunate neighbors to their feet, lending his aid always in a way adapted to the individual case. He thus bound them to him as with hooks of steel.

At the close of this period, in May, 1869, there can be no question that Dr. Dabney was mentally greater than he had ever been before. Nor should there be question that he had improved morally. Some have supposed that he had become soured and embittered by the issue of the war, and that he had really changed for the worse, from a moral point of view. It is true that the iron had entered into his soul as it had into that of few men. He saw and realized as few did, or could do, what had happened to his country as first consequence of subjugation. He never forgot the awful sufferings through which his State and the Confederacy had passed. He never forgot the ruthlessness of the invaders. He never forgot the justice of his cause, and his section's. He never forgot the injury inflicted on the South, in waging war upon her, in wrenching away millions of her property, in drenching her soil with her best blood. He never failed to see the awful consequences of subjugation in the declining civic integrity, in the growth of political trickery and indirection. In all this he did well. It is really to his honor to have been able to see the truth as clearly as he did, and to have stood with such singular resolution for his convictions. It is another proof of the greatness of his mind and character.

Nevertheless, it must be said that he was too hopeless of his country and his church. The church did not move to the bad as rapidly as he said it would. It did not debouch itself into the Northern Assembly, according to his predictions, in thirty years. God was better to it than he hoped. Nor is the South as much like Mexico as he feared it would speedily become.

His predictions have been justified but in part. In the providence of the King of kings, other forces have been brought into play on our country, which have helped the South to rid itself of the incubus of negro control; and integrity at the polls and honest citizenship is reasserting itself in quarters where it gave little promise of revival thirty years ago. Dr. Dabney, in this chapter, reminds us somewhat of Martin Luther in his later life. They were both heroes of faith; but they each failed at times to look confidently enough on the Lord as a factor in the present life of the world. They saw that devils and men were working to bring things to the bad. Had Dr. Dabney brought out, along with all his powerful representations of the way things looked to him, of the evils brought upon the country by war and reconstruction, the view that even our war may have been but a step in God's lifting the world, the state and the church to higher perfection, it would have been but a suitable recognition of the finiteness of every human mind's grasp, and would have given the needed ray of hope to his brethren and fellow-citizens, and himself.

Notwithstanding this criticism, he was in these years one of the grandest, if not the grandest, of the exponents of that which was best in the old South. He had eyes to see, a mind to comprehend, a power to love the good and hate the evil. He could reach worthy convictions, and he could die for them, and he was ready to do it. "A grand man!" even those who differ with him ought to say.

Had he been less a Christian, he would never have lived in the South after her surrender longer than sufficed for escape. But he was saved to it by the grace of God; and that grace, working through his simple and great manhood, was to do much for the church and the state for about three decades longer.

It is pleasant to know that he could relax for a few weeks during this sombre period, and we shall take leave of him in this chapter, as he writes from the Rockbridge Alum as follows:

"ALUM SPRINGS, *Monday, August 10, 1868.*

"MY DEAREST WIFE: I proceed now, according to my promise, to write to you, not that I have anything much to say, except the gossip of the Springs, which is the lightest of material. First, I am and have been very well; I drink the water some, and gargle with it very pertinaciously, and I think it is doing my throat some good. I never have much appetite while here, for my mouth is so puckered up that I can hardly taste what I eat; but the fare is very good.

"The company here is not large, and contains very few of my acquaintances. Leander McCormick is here with his family, and Mrs. Shields, now a widow, who, I think, was Caroline Adams, who is attached to ——— McCormick. I got introduced to the set, chiefly that I might see whether Miss ——— would allude to the very intimate intercourse between their family and you last spring in New York. She mentioned the subject immediately, with very polite *empressement*, and said how much disappointed her aunt and she had been to miss you when they called at the hotel for you. I understood her to say that they called the second day. I waived the matter very courteously, and so it ended. She is the Miss *Squallerini* of the ladies' parlor at present. I had the honor of singing bass to her last night in a few sacred melodies. She sings sacred melodies better than secular, because her great affectation is then curbed. My other acquaintances are young Tom Price, and his pretty little wife; Henry Baskerville, Esq. (two years older than I am, with his new wife, just the age and looks of Aggy Watkins), Mrs. Guthrie and her party, and Mrs. Dold and Pet Brooks. Finding, that the Red Sulphur did not suit them, they came here Saturday. Pet is improving some, and would improve if she would stay here. Mrs. Guthrie is again laid up (with cold, as I hear), and I have not seen her for forty-eight hours. I fear she is getting no profit here. There are a number of Southern people here, nearly all of whom know me by reputation. I preached yesterday morning, by invitation of William Frazier, in the ball-room, to a tolerably large and very respectful audience; my sermon on the internal evidences, the one I preached at the University. I let myself loose pretty much, and made the fashionables, who were composing themselves for a genteel doze, wake up, whether they would or not. This morning several Presbyterians have made acquaintance with me; one an elder named Atchison, from Galveston, and one an elder named Moore, from Snow Hill, Maryland. He says he lives twenty miles from Salisbury, that Dr. Todevine there married his aunt (or wife's aunt), and that he knows Flournoy very well. He also wants a Virginia preacher for Snow Hill. How would Hitner do?

"I am spending my time loafing a good deal, studying some and sleeping a plenty. This morning (having been tempted by the quiet to read very late), I did not get up until almost eight o'clock. What think you of that? I propose to carry out my programme for returning to Tinkling Spring Friday. If Mrs. Guthrie is better, she will go also; if not, I think Mr. Guthrie had better come out and see about her himself. I do not like her cough. I hope you and the dear children are well, and enjoying yourselves. The climate here is delightful, warm when the sun shines, but cool in the evenings and mornings. Tell Charley I shall expect him to know all about that first book of geometry when I return, and to be sure to fatten Bob, and to keep his saddle and harness out of the dirt.

"Believe me, affectionately yours,

R. L. DABNEY."

## CHAPTER XV.

### *SETTLED IN VIRGINIA AS TEACHER, WRITER, MAN AND PASTOR.*

(June, 1869—1874.)

PURCHASING A HOME FOR HIS FAMILY.—PICTURE OF HIS LIFE AT THE TIME.—LABORS AS TEACHER.—INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS.—LABORS AS WRITER.—HIS SACRED RHETORIC.—SYLLABUS AND NOTES OF THE COURSE OF SYSTEMATIC AND POLEMIC THEOLOGY.—REVIEW ARTICLES ON RELIGIOUS THEMES.—CONTROVERSY WITH DR. WOODROW.—POLITICAL WRITINGS.—ECCLESIASTICAL SERVICES.—MODERATOR OF THE ASSEMBLY, 1870.—GREAT SPEECH AGAINST FUSION WITH NORTHERN CHURCH.—REFUTATION OF DR. VAN DYKE'S ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY THE FUSION OF THE NEW AND OLD SCHOOL, NORTH.—FRIENDLY TOWARD THE MOVEMENT FOR CLOSER RELATIONS BETWEEN THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH AND THE SOUTHERN CHURCH.—LABORS INCIDENTAL TO HIS POSITION AS TEACHER AND WRITER.—FOR DESERVING OBJECTS OF BENEVOLENCE.—THE ADVISER AND STAY OF HIS MOTHER'S FAMILY.—LOSS OF HIS MOTHER.—WORK FOR HAMPDEN-SIDNEY COLLEGE.—DISCONTINUANCE OF HIS RELATIONS AS PASTOR OF THE COLLEGE CHURCH.—HIS HOME LIFE.—HAPPINESS IN HIS SONS.

IT has been seen that for years after the war Dr. Dabney seriously meditated emigration to some other country. He seems to have given up this idea, in the main, about 1869. He is heard still later expressing the hope that his sons may emigrate, and that even he himself may be buried in a foreign country; but the desire to move away ceased to have much influence upon his conduct. He had found out that he could still enjoy the liberty of free speech. He had made his volume on Jackson, and that in defence of Virginia and the South, tests of this. In 1869 he began the purchase of a property in Amherst county, Va, by buying "Red Hill," a farm of two hundred acres, and having on it a good old mansion house.

He was moved to the purchase of a home by two considerations: his health was imperfect, and he naturally desired a home for his wife and children in case of his death; and he was on the hunt for a safe investment for his little savings. More particularly, he seemed to be threatened at the time with



ROBERT LEWIS DABNEY, D. D., LL. D.

From a photograph taken in 1872.





a derangement of the heart's action, and was, therefore, nervous about himself, and about the circumstances of his family in case of his being taken away. He tells us, too, that about this time he had received two impressive object-lessons on the subject of families left unprovided. One of these was that of his aged and venerated colleague, who had died in 1868; his family was soon deprived of its comfortable house on the campus. The other was Mrs. Samuel C. Anderson. The old gentleman had died insolvent, and left her penniless as well as childless. As Dr. Dabney was paying her a pastoral visit, she, though on a sick bed, took occasion to say to him, "My son, get your wife a home; you see my condition." These lessons were not lost on him. Mindful that a trusted physician had pronounced his life uncertain, he felt obliged to act.

The question was, "Where shall I buy?" He knew that in the Valley of Virginia "the really fine lands were held at fancy prices." He did not desire to own the mean lands of the valley. He knew, indeed, that really fine homes in Eastern Virginia could be bought for a mere song; but he did not want them, "because the country was becoming malarious and was fatally negro-ridden." In his judgment, the Piedmont country offered his best chance: "salubrious, admirably watered, with portions of red land just as valuable as the best of the Valley, moderate in price, and rapidly becoming the white man's country." After some examination, he settled upon "Red Hill" at five thousand two hundred and fifty dollars. He had saved about four thousand dollars out of the wreck of the war and the proceeds of the *Life of Jackson*, and other earnings. He added to the "Red Hill" four successive purchases, until, in 1884, he had about this "noble home" nearly seven hundred acres of land. The estate had cost him, in purchase-money, about eight thousand dollars, and he expended on the estate, in the way of buildings and enclosures, something like two thousand dollars more. This place became, after 1874, the usual summer retreat of his family, as long as he remained in Virginia; and had he remained in the State to the day of his death, it would probably have proven no bad investment. After his removal to Texas, he could not give it the supervision which was possible when closer by, and, consequently, it afforded less satisfaction and pleasure.

But this is to anticipate. During the years 1869 to 1874, he was getting out of the purchase all the pleasure that comes

of additional exertion on the part of the strong and energetic. This new direction, in which he could lay himself out, received only a small modicum of his time and thought. His hands were now very full of work. He gives, in a letter to the Rev. Messrs. Lane and Morton, of Brazil, who had asked a special service at his hands—the raising of money for the school building in Campinas—the following account of his life :

“The suggestion that I should undertake to raise a few thousand dollars for the building, and so forth, I take in good part, and would be very glad to be able to do it. Tied here as I am during the session, I can do nothing save by correspondence, and not much of that, for the care of a considerable pastoral charge and the duties in the Seminary, with the enhanced weight of correspondence and miscellaneous business growing out of our present number of students, leave me scarcely time for letter-writing; and letters effect but little. In vacation, when one might think I should have much leisure, the charge again interferes much. That is my time for pastoral visiting. Then my private affairs and family, wholly neglected during session, and my relatives, many of them in destitute circumstances; the demands of our crippled Presbytery for missionary labor, leave me very little chance, again, to go from home; and the city people are then off rustivating. To show that I do not postpone public duties to my private interests, let me relate the history of my personal care of my estate in Amherst for the year 1871. My last previous attention to it had been in May, 1870, after this fashion: Leave James River at dawn and walk to my house, five miles across the Tobacco Row Mountains, to breakfast. Spend one day in walking over a part of the estate with my tenant. Spend this night till eleven o'clock in business settlements and instructions. Up at 2:30 o'clock A. M., and ride and walk thirteen miles to take the morning train for West Hanover Presbytery. Well, this year I promised myself a fortnight in Amherst, which was applied after this fashion: Go direct to the Courthouse, fifteen miles away from my place, and preach one week there for Teese. Go to my place and spend one night, leaving before I went upon the plantation at all, to go to Teese's Elon Church, to begin a meeting for him there. Preach two days for him at Elon until Wailes came. Returned to my place Friday, at three o'clock P. M., drenched in two thunder showers; snack, ride over the crops, spend the evening to eleven o'clock in business with the tenant, and up at 2:30 A. M., Saturday morning, to ride the thirteen miles to morning train, so as to reach home in Prince Edward Saturday evening. So the amount of attention for one twelve months was from three to eleven P. M.”

In the sequel it will appear that he did find time to assist these brethren; but of that in due time.

During this period he was living a life of intense effort, preserving the customs of his youth and early manhood. "Almost every day," says one of his sons, "had its share of hard physical labor, in which we, his sons, participated. This consisted of working on a little farm, or in the garden, or building fences, or carpenter's work, or doing something of the hundred and one jobs to which he could turn his hand with equal facility." He was exceedingly economical of his time; and "when he set to anything, he drove hard without wasting time over preliminaries." This was his method in manual labor, as in everything else. "He did not have a particle of false shame about these things." While the gentlemen of the community were taking constitutional strolls, dressed in their best, he might be seen, fittingly dressed, at work in his garden or otherwise.

Most of his more pressing correspondence was done before breakfast. The forenoons he devoted to his professional labors, economizing the intervals between lectures by work in his study or at the Seminary. The afternoons he put in in his study until he felt the need of exercise, and then he went to some hard physical labor. For some time, at Hampden-Sidney, he had a regular carpenter's work-bench, at which he often labored. After supper he worked steadily until about eleven o'clock, and then usually retired. He did not like to work continuously for more than about three hours on the stretch. When he worked, he worked. After three hours, he needed rest or change of employment. The aggregate amount of time which he put in, in twenty-four hours, was large. He read little in these years for entertainment. His studies took his time. He did not take a daily newspaper, feeling that it would be a waste of time to read it. At considerable intervals he might take up a novel, and then sit up all night to read it through, though it is believed that he rarely did this, and that perhaps he did not at this time average one novel a year, so intense was his effort in studies proper to his calling.

During this period the Seminary prospered greatly. The endowment was growing; and especially the student body. The number ran up from thirty-five in 1869 to seventy-seven in 1874-'5. This increase of students added materially to the labors of the professors, and stimulated them to higher endeavor. Dr. Dabney was reading extensively, thinking intensely, and producing for his classes lectures at once profound and comprehensive. He may have had, as he supposed, less

of freshness and enthusiasm in his work; but he had a growing mastery of it. His knowledge had become wide in the sphere of theology, and was growing daily. His power of illustration of the abstract, and vivification of the dry by the splendid insight, and vigor of representation were increasing. His own interest in the study was absorbing, nor did his students notice any relaxation in manner. Certainly his ideals for them became no lower. He made the opening address of the session 1869-'70. His subject was "Retirement." He began with the thought that often eminent servants of God have been prepared for their work by a season of seclusion, instancing Elijah, John the Baptist, Moses, the twelve disciples, Paul; and affirmed that the church was wise in appointing for those who were to be her teachers a period of comparative seclusion from the world's bustle. Arguing this affirmation, he gave as reasons:

"1. That it was needed for mental improvement. In the actual ministry they would find its duties multiform and exacting, and have little command of their time. Hence the importance of systematic, unbroken study, which should lay a broad foundation of methodized and practical *knowledge*, which should drill the faculties to action, making regular and vigorous action habitual and easy. Very few become scholars after leaving the Seminary. Now is your time. Away, then, with the notion that this precious season of training ought to be broken up by premature outdoor labors. Do not *polish* the sword while forging it. He who impatiently breaks away from self-training to outer work is putting harvest in place of seed-time. Contrast the picture of the patience of the disciples with Christ, during a time of great seeming urgency.

"2. That God appoints his servants seclusion with a view to founding a solid and well-regulated piety. Opportunity is needed to form habits of prayer, to cultivate right principles and aspirations, to confirm the self-devoted purpose, to learn self-government, to wean ourselves from the world, and become spiritually minded before the distractions of a public ministry overwhelm us. Is not eminent piety very necessary in a minister? Care of others' souls will leave little time unbroken for care of your own.

"Perpetual solitude tends to produce morbid and exaggerated character. Partial solitude is necessary to growth of a vigorous and healthy soul. He who lives all his time in the presence of others becomes a prey to conventionalities. Current example becomes his sole guide, instead of independent thought and conscience. Hence the man of mere society is unheroic, without individuality, commonplace, weak, trivial even in his virtues, and truckling to the *vox populi*.

"Especially, seclusion must be had for quiet self-acquaintance. The retirement before the active life should be a season of constant self-

examination and self-communion. Nowhere are unconscious carnal motives so loathsome as in a minister, to God and to good men. Hence, the demand for thorough examination. The minister's work presents peculiar temptations to conceit, vanity, ambition, spiritual pride, self-indulgence, selfishness under masks. Ministers are in great danger of coxcombry. Hence need for peculiar caution in probing self. In the bustle of an active ministry, there will not be much time for this. Many enter the ministry without it, whence defects and foibles, unseen by themselves, glaring to men of the world, which mar all earlier labors. Two results from this: The more favored of God are whipped out of their conceit by hard knocks (painful and mortifying experiences), at the cost of usefulness of their prime. The meaner succumb and sink into clerical drones. To avoid these lamentable results let self-acquaintance and self-discipline be cultivated now. The church allows you three years of seclusion in which to do it.

"3. The teachers and rulers of the church need knowledge of human nature. This can only be had by solitude. Paradox: Men talk of *knowledge of human nature* gained in the busy haunts of society. So there is—a knowledge of the shallow conventionalities, of the current tricks and baseness, which mask the real springs of action, and explain the surface traffic of men. But those who are the physicians of bodies retire into the dissecting-room, to study the anatomy of the patients' forms. So must the physicians of the soul; but whose soul shall he dissect? *His own.* The diversion of constant society is usually successful in enabling a man to hide from self the morbid secrets of a ruined nature. The process of self-anatomy is terrible to man's self-love. It is cruel to his self-indulgence, to be excluded from all that is external and thrown inward upon *himself*; but it must be done. He who would cure the disease of sin must know it. Where else can he probe it to its core, save in his own self-consciousness? It requires a stern hand to hold the probe where it is searching the practitioner's own nerves. The taste may be bitter, but it is necessary. It may provoke many an hour of almost despairing gloom. It may lead the teacher of souls through deep experiences, of doubt, fear and anguish; but it is by these he learns his healing arts. It is in the self-consuming of solitude that he learns, in the utter beggary and spiritual hunger of a soul thrown on its own resources, what are the wants and diseases of our nature, and what its true glory; but he who would be faithful to this severe task must separate himself from the distractions of society; he wants no other eye to pry into his researches; he must study in solitude.

"This is the higher and grander *knowledge of human nature*, which is gained in the solitary inspection of nature laid bare in one's own heart, and in the graphic and infallible delineations of sacred Scripture. It is here that the masters of human emotion and thought have learned the skill of the true *vates*, the poet-prophet, by which they have moved

the hearts of the children of men, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. Thus learned Dante in the solitude of exile. Thus learned Milton, blind, proscribed and poor, lost in that profoundest of all deserts, the solitude of mighty thronging London, to thrill the hearts of the ages with the epic harmonies of Eden. Thus did Bunyan learn, in the dungeon of Bedford, to body forth in allegory, the unutterable experiences of all Christians, in such wise that as long as the church endures, God's people will delight to see their inner selves mirrored in the Pilgrims Christian and Hopeful. Thus did Luther find out in his solitary musings and his soul conflicts, in the monastery of Erfurt, where his masterhand might find the keys of the human heart, in the great truths of the freedom of conscience and justification by faith alone, by teaching which he opened up a new life for Europe. Monastic life, with all its perversions, produced not a little of the moral heroism in the middle ages, and it was because of its religious solitudes. We would not restore monasticism; we would avail ourselves of its advantages, without its extravagances and errors.

"While the improvement of a Seminary course does not involve the neglect of the body, it does not consist with large social pleasures. It involves diligence in study, punctuality in secret and social devotions, much solitary communion, wise improvement of the delightful opportunities for Christian communion with kindred spirits."

Thus, in rough outline, ran the course of this opening address. Dr. G. B. Strickler, who was in the Seminary as a student at the time, says Dr. Dabney used regularly to preach away from the institution a certain percentage of the new students; that he made them feel that they were not, after all, called. He set the ideals so high, made the life of the true candidate and minister so high and strenuous. What an influence such a man exerts! How he elevates the men who do stay and respond to his teaching and example!

His relations to his students were in every way highly approvable. Says Dr. R. P. Kerr, who entered the institution in the autumn of 1871:

"He was always a father to his students, gentle, courteous and very considerate in our short-comings. I shall never forget a debate we had in the old chapel on the 'Divine Right of Slavery.' It was at the fortnightly 'Rhetorical,' in which the Faculty and students discussed great questions. In the debate in question, Dr. Dabney presided, and, according to the rules, could take no part until the end, when he made the closing address. I spoke, together with three or four others, in the negatives. When Dr. Dabney's turn came he uttered a tremendous speech on the affirmative, and said some pretty severe things about the

fellows who had spoken on the other side. It was a subject, as every one knows, upon which he had very strong opinions and feelings, and we were not surprised that he was warm in the argument. Two days afterwards he called the young men of the opposition apart, and said, 'Young gentlemen, I do not wish to take back any arguments I used in the debate. The positions taken then I have defended with my tongue, my pen and my sword, but I was unnecessarily severe in dealing with you, and I wanted to tell you so.' We were delighted, and not a little relieved, and wanted to hug a man who, holding the exalted position he did, could speak like that to four or five boys in his senior class; and we agreed that it was but one more proof of Dr. Dabney's true greatness."<sup>1</sup>

His labors as a writer in this period were great. Many of his lectures were reduced to proper form and published. His *Sacred Rhetoric*, lectures on the preparation and delivery of sermons, were reduced to their final cast and put through the press under the ægis of our Presbyterian Committee of Publication. This is an exceedingly well-written book. Dr. Thomas E. Peck used to pronounce it the finest of Dr. Dabney's productions, when viewed from a merely literary standpoint; and would point to pages standing in favorable comparison with the pages of the masters of literary expression. But the chief feature of the book is its strength. There is not a weak lecture in it; there is not a trifling nor a silly page. He has been charged with taking too narrow a gauge, and framing a rather Procrustean bed on which to make sermons. The latter part of the charge may be safely taken as unfounded, and proceeding from superficial study. His course of lectures might have been profitably extended, it is true. On the other hand, his time was limited, and he had gathered into these twenty-four lectures everything really essential to a good course. This volume was published in 1870.

In 1871, the *Syllabus and Notes of the Course of Systematic and Polemic Theology* was first published. This book was the result of more research and profound reflection than any other Dr. Dabney ever produced. He never seemed to value it at its real worth, perhaps because it was prepared by degrees, and grew from year to year. It will be hard to name any similar work marked by such profound insight into theology and psychology, and yet so humble and reverent in tone. It was

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<sup>1</sup> Letter of February 16, 1901, to Dr. C. W. Dabney.



not, indeed, written with much attention to the demands of elegant and ornate diction; nor was he trying to make himself clear to men who cannot or will not think. The lectures of which the work is made up had grown, year after year, into more and more elaborate briefs. They contained, in condensed form, the substance of what he delivered in the class-room. They were as compact as they could well be made, rammed full of fact and thought, very powerfully and pungently expressed, and supposed in the hearer the power of making considerable single strides in reasoning. In its origin, the book was one of notes for himself to lecture from. Hence, as he was possessed of great strength and ability to reason rapidly and surely without going consciously through a series of short steps, it supposes in its reader similar ability. There are pages over which many men must toil somewhat to understand him, because they must supply for themselves steps in the reasoning processes—correct reasoning processes though they be—a step or so which he has omitted. A subsequent edition of the work, which was much fuller, was less objectionable on this score. But of that later.

The first edition was put forth under the following circumstances. In the year 1871, Dr. Dabney found that the students had copies of his written lectures almost as complete as his own, produced by the combined efforts of the best note-takers amongst previous students, and that these copies were being multiplied by transcription and supplied to the classes. He perceived that while he was delivering his lectures his students were reading ahead of him from manuscript books containing almost the words he was about to utter. He, therefore, determined to make some change in the plan of teaching. Accordingly, one day he brought to the senior class a bundle containing his whole course of lectures on theology, and presented it to them. In a few days he received a message from the class, asking whether the lectures were theirs to do what they pleased with them. He answered, "Yes; completely yours. Burn them if you choose." They then said that their preference was to multiply them for their own use and that of subsequent classes by printing them in weekly sheets or pamphlets. He gave his consent. They appointed Mr. E. C. Gordon (now the Rev. Dr. E. C. Gordon, of Lexington, Mo.) as editor, and a thousand copies were gradually printed by Dr. E. T. Baird, of Richmond, Va. These, collected into an octavo paper-

covered volume, constituted the first edition of the *Theology*. To pay for the paper and the printing, the students relied upon a voluntary contribution of the class and the sale of numerous copies to junior fellow-students, and to ministers and others. As the end of the session approached, Dr. Dabney ascertained that they still owed the printer between two hundred and three hundred dollars. He told them that he would pay that sum himself, as he did not wish them to disband and leave the Seminary in debt. They accepted his proposition, and handed over to him a number of unsold copies.

For convenience, it may be said further here of this work, that during the next few years he rewrote large parts of it and added much new matter, and secured a more worthy form of it. The volume brought him wide reputation. In the judgment of many of the ablest theologians, North or South, it is the "profoundest work on theology" produced in our country. He is in this work, as in life, a moderate but thorough-going Calvinist; had no sympathy with the distinction between supra and sub-lapsarian; had little respect for the quarrel between the advocates of immediate and mediate imputation; was not willing to be counted a traducianist or a creationist, though indicating without the slightest hesitation the relative strength of the two positions, and arguing for and objecting against one or the other with tremendous force and along original lines. He is particularly fine in *Natural Theology*, in dealing with the feelings and the active and practical powers. He discussed the will with something which approaches absolute mastery.

Though this great work has had a considerable sale, it never brought anything considerable in the way of financial benefit to Dr. Dabney.

During these years he contributed a great mass of matter to the reviews and periodicals, some on religious themes and matters connected with the interpretation of the Scriptures, and some on political and sociological topics. Amongst the papers on religious topics were, in 1870, an able article headed, "What is Christian Union?"<sup>2</sup> in 1870, in the *Southern Presbyterian*

<sup>2</sup> This article was published in the *Central Presbyterian*, May 11th and 18th, 1870. Dr. Dabney seems to have written somewhat less for the *Central* in this period. He wrote several papers for the *Christian Intelligencer*, which were interesting reading, *e. g.*, "Description of Negro Worship in Richmond and Lynchburg, Ante and Post Bellum," December, 1872; "Description of Negro Theology," January, 1873, *et al.*

*Review*, an article entitled "Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek," a production which was misunderstood and harshly criticised; but which was, nevertheless, a most able and vigorous criticism of the canons of modern Textual Criticism. This paper does not commit Dr. Dabney in favor of certain readings of the *textus receptus*, as has been supposed, but leaves the way open for him to do so if he will. In the same year he prepared a sermon on 2 Tim. i. 3, and Titus i. 9, which he preached before the General Assembly, which met in Huntsville, Ala., in 1871. This was subsequently published under the caption, "Broad Churchism," a masterly argument wherefore our Southern Church should insist on strict subscription to our standards on the part of all presbyters. In the year 1872, and in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, appeared his "Theology of the Plymouth Brethren"; and, in the *South-western Presbyterian*, his "Theology of the Plymouth Brethren" (a reply to strictures by "M. N." on the foregoing article). In the first of these he discusses the peculiar views of these brethren as to the nature of saving faith, their efforts to rid religious experience of all doubt and anxiety, their theory of prayer, and their pre-millennialism, and refutes them utterly, as will appear to most of his readers. His critic in the *South-western Presbyterian* was met, without the slightest indulgence in personalities, but with an absolute exposure of the weakness and groundlessness of the criticism. In 1873, he published, in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* again, a noble paper, entitled "The Moral Effects of a Free Justification," a paper called forth by the Socinian and Latitudinarian affinities betrayed by Mr. James Anthony Froude in some of his writings, and by the writings of William Ellery Channing, D. D., and J. H. Moehler, D. D. In April, 1873, there appeared, in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, his masterly review of Hodge's Theology. In this long paper, after expressing noble commendation of Dr. Hodge's great work as a whole, he took issue with him on two points of doctrine and their corollaries, viz., the specific seat of original sin, and the doctrine of imputation. Dr. Hodge teaches that the ultimate seat and source of depravity is in the intellect; that we are to place the rudimentary element of the sinful nature in the blinded understanding misleading the spontaneity, and thus qualifying the soul, as a whole, morally evil. Dr. Dabney, on the other hand, finds the seat of sin rudimentally in the perverted *habitus* of the will, causatively

corrupting and blinding the understanding, and thus qualifying the soul, as a whole, morally evil. Dr. Dabney is thus able to give an account of regeneration which squares with the scriptural representations of the work better than Dr. Hodge's, which makes regeneration illumination. He can also give a juster account of the nature of saving faith than Dr. Hodge can consistently do. He can show more accurately the relation between faith and repentance. This part of his critique is marked by a mastery of the subject beyond that shown by Dr. Hodge. The other point, Dr. Hodge's doctrine of the immediate imputation of Adam's sin to us, he also discusses with a vast ingenuity, philosophical and theological acumen and profundity. Dr. Hodge advocates the theory that "in the order of causation, the imputation of the guilt of Adam's first sin on men precedes, transferring that guilt upon them conceived as at first otherwise innocent and guiltless; whereby a privative moral corruption of soul is by God visited on Adam's children as the penalty of that imputed guilt, and, in the first instance, of it alone." Dr. Dabney raises tremendous objections both to "mediate" and to "immediate" imputation as taught by their advocates, though he holds to imputation. He maintains that the distinction is unphilosophical, unbiblical, and one that should never have been made. He teaches that previous to a sinner's condemnation in Adam, "he has no existence personally, not for one moment, not even in the metaphysical order of thought, for he has no actual existence at all. He enters existence corrupted, as he enters it guilty. He enters it guilty, as he enters it corrupted. This is the character of the federal union between him and Adam: that Adam's conduct should determine for his posterity precisely this result, namely, that their personal existence should absolutely begin in that moral estate and under that legal relation which Adam procured for himself; that the two elements of this result should be mutually involved and coetaneous, as they were personally in Adam."

During this period occurred Dr. Dabney's controversy with Dr. Woodrow. The origin of this affair seems to be very imperfectly understood by Dr. Dabney's friends, while his detractors seem to have an almost total misapprehension as to the manner of its rise. They apparently look upon him as having made, throughout years a series of unprovoked attacks on Dr. Woodrow. Some of them suppose that Dr. Dabney was moved by a sort of petty jealousy against Columbia Semi-

nary. But the whole view is wrong. We have found no evidence that he was ever moved by any jealousy against Columbia Seminary. Jealousy was a quality that Dr. Dabney seemed ever singularly free from, except in regard to matters of principle. Nor can it be successfully made out that he had ever attacked Dr. Woodrow up to the time of Dr. Woodrow's outburst against him, save in so far as he attacked certain principles which Dr. Woodrow seems to have held as early as 1873. Dr. Dabney certainly had decided views on the subject of theological education, on what should be taught in theological seminaries and what should not be taught in them, on the manner of the control of the theological schools by the church, their relation to the Assembly, and so forth. He had also decided views as to the unreliability of many of the conclusions of certain schools of physical science, and particularly of certain schools of geologists. It was also true of him that he liked to publish his views. He would have done this had there been no Dr. Woodrow, and had the relations of any other seminary than Columbia to the General Assembly presented the occasion for that expression of views. As early as 1861, he had published in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* a paper entitled, "Geology and the Bible." It was only in this year that Dr. Woodrow was put into the Perkins professorship. This article Dr. Dabney had planned to write as early as 1855. In that year, Dr. Stuart Robinson had urged his friend Dabney "to pitch into Hitchcock and company," and give them a "scutching"; his friend Vaughan had heard of this, and written Dabney that it might be well to publish his views on geology "in the way of queries, as difficulties, rather than as fixed and positive conclusions," since many great Christian men held "the modern views so decidedly." Vaughan writes:

"I would rather see you so express yourself as to give you a chance to modify your views hereafter if you should see reason to do so, not to commit yourself absolutely. There is no necessity for this. The science is in an unsettled state, and you can give your views hypothetically, or in the form of points to be settled, or as objections to evidence on various features of the scheme."<sup>3</sup>

In a letter dated one week later than the foregoing (February 14, 1855), Mr. Vaughan explains why he had offered these suggestions. He writes:

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<sup>3</sup> Letter of C. R. Vaughan, dated February 7, 1855.

"It was just precisely the fact that you were getting such advice [to chastise the geologists] and from my own knowledge of the intense, and even sarcastic, vehemence with which your mind hunts an absurdity, that I was afraid you might go too far, and have reason hereafter to regret it. That is the source and origin of the impertinence, my dear fellow. If anybody is to blame, it is I, and I only. I did not mean to impeach the correctness of your views; on the contrary, such is my confidence in your judgment, it would take a good deal of researching of the grounds of my own opinions, even if I had any on this subject, before I should condemn any position you might take."

During the years 1856 to 1861, Dr. Dabney probably gave considerable thought and study to the "results" of geological study. He prepared this article, so far as we can find, without the slightest reference to Dr. Woodrow. In this paper, "Geology and the Bible," he makes a protest "against the arrogant and offensive spirit in which geologists" have often "met clerical criticisms of their reasonings, and against the jealous and uneasy temper of many interpreters of the Christian Scriptures in regard to the affirmations of geologists; he expounds the degree of authority which we are to claim for the Bible upon these questions of physics which lie along the path of its topics; he points out with an imperious hand grounds for a "reasonable mistrust of the perfections of geological demonstrations"; particularly, he raises the question, "How far must the logical value of the inferences of natural science from natural appearances be modified by the admitted fact of a *creation*?" and argues strongly to the conclusion that "if there is any authentic testimony that God did, from the first, create an earth fitted for the habitation of man, no sound inference drawn from natural analogies is of any force to rebut the testimony." This last position continued to be his contention to the end of his life. It was adopted without the slightest reference to any institution or to any man in the Southern Presbyterian Church.

It is an interesting fact that Dr. Dabney states in this paper, as a commonplace, a teaching which some have been wont to regard as taught our church by another. At one time it was no infrequent thing to hear that it was a great merit of a certain worthy gentleman to have taught the Southern Church that the Bible, in speaking of physical occurrences, uses popular and not scientific language. Dr. Dabney thought, as early as 1861, that this was a commonplace amongst tolerably informed theologians. He writes in the article now under consideration:

“When revelation says anything concerning material nature, it is only what is made necessary to the comprehension of theological fact or doctrine. And in its observance of this distinction the Bible is eminently a practical book, saying nothing whatever for mere curiosity, and stopping at just what is essential to religious truth. Hence, we ought to understand that when the Scriptures use popular language to describe physical occurrences or facts, all they mean is to state the apparent phenomena as they would seem to the popular eye to occur. They never intended to give us the non-apparent scientific mechanism of those facts or occurrences; for this is not essential to their practical object, and is left to the philosopher. Hence, when natural science comes and teaches us that the true *rationale* of apparent phenomena is different from that which seems to be suggested by the terms of the Scripture and of popular language, there is no real contradiction between science and the Bible or between science and the popular phraseology. For instance, the exposition of such passages which led the doctors of Salamanca to condemn Columbus' geography as unscriptural, and the inquisition and Turretin to argue against the astronomy of Galileo, as infidel, was mistaken. The former argued against Columbus that the Psalms speak of the heavens as spread out like a canopy, and the earth as immovable and extended. Turretin argues most methodically that the Copernican scheme of the heavens cannot be true, because the Scriptures speak of the earth as 'established that it cannot be moved,' of the sun as 'going forth to his circuit in the heavens'; and of the sun and moon as 'setting,' 'rising,' 'standing still at Joshua's command.' We now clearly see that all this was exegetical folly. And, now that we know that it is the earth that moves and not the sun, we no more dream of charging the Bible with error of language than we do the astronomer himself, when he says, perhaps on the very pages of his almanac, 'sun rises,' 'sun sets,' 'sun enters Capricorn,' etc.; for such really are the apparent motions of these bodies; and had the Bible departed from the established popular phraseology, it would have been unintelligible and absurd to all nations which had not yet developed the Copernican astronomy.”

Thus fully did Dr. Dabney set forth, as a commonplace, in 1861, the fact that the Bible speaks of physical occurrences in phenomenal language. But this by the way.

In 1866, Dr. Dabney published in the *Central Presbyterian* a series of articles on the general subject of Theological Education. In the first of these articles he discusses the subject of the proper relation of the seminaries to the General Assembly; in the second, the proper organization of a school of divinity; in the third, the standard of attainment which the Assembly should require in all her divinity schools; in the fourth, the

impracticability of combining the theoretical and practical training, and the propriety of lengthening the seminary sessions; and in the fifth, the proper relations to be established between Hampden-Sidney College and Union Theological Seminary, and the footing on which divinity students should study those sciences (as geology) which affect the question of inspiration. Dr. Dabney was not satisfied with the conditions actually existing and described in any one of these articles. He wrote in hopes of improving those conditions. He was making no attack on Columbia Seminary,<sup>1</sup> in disapproving her immediate connection with the Assembly, any more than he was making an attack on his own Seminary when he was condemning the form of organization obtaining in that school, or when condemning the relations obtaining between that institution and Hampden-Sidney College. Nor was he attacking Dr. Woodrow, the Columbia professor, when animadverting on the teaching of physical science in a seminary. He had given profound thought to the subject of theological education; he had espoused certain principles as true of it; he was pushing those principles, the truth as he saw things. He pushed them, in spite of the fact that they would rub some men the wrong way, but not at all in order to rub them thus.

In 1869 he rewrote his views and presented them, as we have seen, as a memorial to the Assembly's Committee on Seminaries. It may not have been an unnatural thing in friends of the Columbia Seminary and of Dr. Woodrow to see in the memorial an attack on them; but it is only fair to Dr. Dabney to say that it was not intended by him as such. He was merely advocating lines of action in theological education on which Columbia, at that time, and Dr. Woodrow were not moving, and on which his own Seminary also was not squarely moving.

He preached a sermon in the Synod of Virginia, October 20, 1881, from Colossians ii. 8, entitled, "A Caution against Anti-Christian Science." In this sermon his purpose was to caution Christians against the teachings of Huxley, Tyndale, Darwin, *et id omne genus*, in their infidel bearings. He showed that the attitude of many physicists toward revelation was threatening; that the Bible, when cautiously and candidly interpreted by its own light, must be held inspired; and that when so

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<sup>1</sup> We are glad that no such ground of difference between noble old Columbia and Union Seminaries exists to-day.



interpreted it cannot be discredited by the conclusions of the geologist. Here, again, Dr. Woodrow's friends supposed that Dr. Dabney was attacking him. This, however, was far from the case. In a letter, dated September 26, 1884, to the Rev. Dr. G. B. Strickler, Dr. Dabney writes :

"I happened to preach an *extempore* sermon in Synod in Lynchburg, against pronounced evolutionists. This some elders printed, I no more thinking of any attack on Woodrow than on the prophet Ezra ; nor, I can say with truth, was he once in my mind in the delivery (the sermon had no preparation hardly) or printing of the sermon ; nor did it contain one word to suggest any such attack. Dr. Woodrow then avowed just as strong a dislike to evolution as I did ; yet for some unaccountable reason, he chose to consider himself assailed, and wrote an attack on me, the most absurd possible travesty of my sermon, combined with the most distinctly rationalistic positions, and any amount of personal abuse."

Meanwhile, Dr. Dabney had published, also, the first edition of his *Syllabus and Notes of the Course on Systematic and Polemic Theology* ; and in these lectures had expressed, incidentally, his views on current physical philosophy. It may be said, in general, that it was his purpose in all these discussions of physical science, not so much to support positively any cosmogonic theory, but to keep the field open for the reception of anything God may have said on the subject ; and that against pseudo-physical science his criticism was as just as it was trenchant and powerful ; but that he was so careless as sometimes to give occasion to adversaries to say that he was condemning physical science generally.

Dr. Woodrow published, in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* for July, 1873, a paper headed, "An Examination of Certain Recent Assaults on Physical Science." This paper is marked by a frequently expressed fear that Dr. Dabney's writings about physical science would lead men who know anything of the subject to infidelity, and by a most acute and caustic criticism. He pounces upon every careless statement and every hasty generalization. He does not in this paper impress all his readers as adequately meeting Dr. Dabney on the main point at issue. He does impress some of his readers as desirous of flaying Dabney alive, as putting forth his vindication of physical science enwrapped in the flames of long pent-up but now burst-forth indignation.

Dabney had been apprised of the coming forth of Woodrow's paper in the *Review*; and they had had some correspondence on the subject. When the article appeared, some weeks passed without Dabney's having read it. Nothing was more foreign to him than controversy when it became personal. As long as men confined themselves to principles, he was ready for battle; but when they began to bandy epithets and to deal in caricature, he was for withdrawing. He thought he had been careful of the honor and reputation of all his brethren in the ministry, and amongst them of Dr. Woodrow's. Some weeks had passed after the publication of Woodrow's article when his old friend, Vaughan, paid Dabney a visit, and in the course of the visit asked Dabney if he had read Woodrow's article. "No," said Dabney, "I have not. Woodrow has supposed that I have been attacking him, and he has plunged into me, misrepresenting me, I know; and I have not read it, because I have not wished to get mad. I have concluded not to say anything in reply, and not even to read the article. Vaughan laughed, and replied that he was not surprised; but when about to leave he said: "Dabney, old fellow, you must read Woodrow's article and answer it. You can do it; and you owe it to yourself and to your friends and the truth. You will find the serpent-trail of rationalism there; and you ought to point it out. The article is plausible; it will do damage; it must be answered."

In the October issue of the *Southern Presbyterian Review* 1873, Dr. Dabney's reply appeared. He had taken his friend Vaughan's advice. He seems to have found the trail of the rationalism. His reply was a very "moderate paper" in tone, for him; and some of those who sympathized with Woodrow took the moderation of tone for a semi-cowed state of mind on the part of the writer. Dr. Dabney believed, however, that he had vindicated himself in the main points; he made no reply to Dr. Woodrow's second assault, entitled, "A Further Examination of Certain Recent Assaults on Physical Science," feeling that it was already answered; and when Dr. Woodrow's developed views began to trouble the whole church, in the eighties, Dr. Dabney felt that the church was at length feeling what he had discovered in Woodrow's first assault upon him. He wrote to Dr. Strickler in 1884, in the letter already quoted: "The positions taken by Woodrow in his attack on me in 1873 were rationalistic. The church ought to have seen it then, and to have taken the alarm. I did my duty and exposed those posi-

tions; but most seemed to think it was but one of the 'Dabney crotchets'; nobody took the alarm."

The chief contention of Dr. Dabney in this controversy is most satisfactorily set forth in his letter to Dr. Woodrow just prior to the appearance of the first of Dr. Woodrow's articles. The essential portions of this letter are as follows:

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR: Your courtesy in advising me of your article deserves a thankful acknowledgment. I beg leave to tax your kindness with a few remarks before you finally commit your manuscript to the press. The few words which passed between us in Richmond showed me that I had not been so fortunate as to convey the real extent and meaning of my views to you. This misconception I will make one more effort to remove, in order to save you and the public from discussions aside from the real point. . . .

"I conceive that there is but one single point between you and me, which is either worthy or capable of being made a subject of scientific discussion. It is this: I hold that to those *who honestly admit a Creator anywhere in the past, the a posteriori argument from naturalness of properties to a natural*—as opposed to a creative or supernatural—*origin of the structures examined, can NO LONGER BE UNIVERSALLY VALID.* That is, really, the only point I care for. Now let me appeal to your candor to disencumber it of misapprehensions and supposed monstrous cololaries, and where is the mighty mischief?

"But you may say, Dr. Dabney is understood as holding the above in such a sense as to involve the assumption that all save the '*pleistocene*' fossils are shams; that is, that the older fossil remains of animal life never were alive, but that God, in creating the world, created them just as they are, probably for the purpose of 'humberging' the geologists. Now I have never said nor implied any such thing, and do not believe it. *Search and see.* You may return to the charge with this inferential argument, that the doctrine means this, or else it has no point to it. *It does not mean it,* in my hands, and I will show you what point I think it has. Let the ugly bugaboo, I pray you, be laid.

"Again, you will find, if you will search my notes and sermon, that I have not committed myself for or against any hypothesis held by truly devout Christian geologists. I have not said that I rejected, or that I adopted, the older scheme of a pre-Adamite earth, as held by Drs. Chalmers, Hodge, Hitchcock, etc. I have not committed myself for or against the hypotheses of Cardinal Wiseman and Dr. Gerald Molloy, of Maynooth. No man can quote me as for or against the 'uniformitarian' scheme of Sir Charles Lyell, as compared with the opposite scheme of Hugh Miller. As to the other propositions advanced in my notes and sermon, I presume they can hardly be made the subjects of scientific debate between us, even if of difference. We shall hardly dispute whether sham-science, disparaging Moses, is, or is not, whole-

some reading for the children of the church. We shall hardly differ about the propriety of carrying that solemn conscience into physical speculation which sinners usually feel when they come to die. It can hardly be made a point for scientific inquiry, whether your larger or my smaller admiration for the fascinating art of the mineralogist is the more just.

“The only real point which remains, then, is my humble attempt to fix the ‘metes and bounds’ of physical *a posteriori* reasonings when they inosculate with the divine science. Obviously, atheistic physicists wholly neglect these metes and bounds. Obviously, again, many theistic physicists—as Hitchcock, *Religion of Geology*—dazzled by the fascination of facts and speculations, are overlooking these metes and bounds. Now, that inquiry may proceed in a healthy way, and the ground be prepared for safe hypothesis, it is all-important that a first principle be settled here. I offer my humble mite, by proving that, to the theistic reasoner—I have no debate here with atheists—the *proposition cannot hold universally true* that an analogous naturalness of properties in a structure proves an analogous natural origin. I do not care to put it in any stronger form than the above.

“But when cleared of misconceptions, this proposition, to the theist, becomes irresistible. ‘Geologists’—meaning, of course, the ones defined in the previous paragraph—refuse all limitations of analogical, *a posteriori* arguments, claiming that ‘like causes always produce like effects,’ which, say they, is the very corner-stone of all inductive science. But the real position they employ is the converse of this, viz., ‘Like effects always indicate like causes.’ Now, first, must I repeat the trite rule of logic, that the converse of a true position is not necessarily true? Secondly, the theist has *expressly admitted another cause*, namely, an infinite, personal Creator, confessedly competent to any effect he may choose to create. Hence the theist is compelled to allow that this converse will not hold universally here. Thirdly, a wise Creator, creating a structure to be the subject of natural laws, will, *of course*, create it with traits of naturalness. Hence, whenever the mineralogist meets with one of these created structures, he must be prepared to find in it every trait of naturalness, like other structures of the class which are originated naturally. Fourthly, to the theist this argument is perfect when applied to all vital organisms. The first of the species *must* have received from the supernatural, creative hand every trait of naturalness, else it could not have fulfilled the end for which it was made, viz., to be the parent of a species, to transmit to subsequent generations of organisms the specific nature. And, fifthly and lastly, to deny this would compel us still to assign a natural parent, *before the first created parent*, of each species of generated organism, which would involve us in a multitude of infinite *series*, without causes outside of themselves; but this notion science herself repudiates as a self-contradictory absurdity, . . . etc.

“*What use* is to be made of this conclusion, if admitted? First, to

save us from being betrayed into some theory of cosmogony virtually atheistic. Secondly, to make you and me, those who love geology, and those who are jealous of it, modest in constructing hypotheses; to remind us, when examining the things which disclose 'eternal power and Godhead,' how possibly we may have gotten into contact with the immediate *Hand* who 'giveth no account to any man of his matters.'

"Very faithfully yours, R. L. DABNEY."

The following paragraph, from Dr. Woodrow's article in the April number of the *Southern Presbyterian Review* for 1874, fairly, though briefly, sets forth the counter contention of the Perkins Professor:

"Here, then, is where we agree and where we differ. We agree in believing that which is called the 'only point cared for'; we differ as to its application, Dr. Dabney insisting that the *absence* of the supernatural must be proved (*Sermon*, p. 13; *Lectures*, p. 177) before the law of uniformity may be applied; we insisting that the *presence* of the supernatural must be proved before we are debarred from applying it. We maintain that the former principle leads inevitably to universal skepticism, and that the latter leads inevitably to the knowledge of the truth."

This is an extreme interpretation of Dr. Dabney's teaching, and a hazardous position for Dr. Woodrow to maintain.

The student of this controversy may well feel a want of entire sympathy for either contestant; but may, nevertheless, carry away the conviction that Dr. Dabney was not half as rash in his discussions of physical science as many have supposed; that his positions were relatively cautious indeed; and he must reach the conclusion that he was much the Christian gentleman in his reply to Dr. Woodrow. He is right in teaching that the prudent physical philosopher, the geologist, for instance, must remember that his conclusions as to the past must be modified by the possibility of extra-natural causes accounting for the phenomena; that he must say, "If no extra-natural causes were at work."

Dr. Dabney produced several articles during this period, also, of a more secular character. Amongst these were one entitled, "The United States as a Military Nation," which appeared in the *Southern Review*, Baltimore, October, 1869, and another, a lecture on "Stonewall Jackson," delivered in Baltimore in November, 1872.

The lecture on Jackson is a brilliant piece of work, descriptive of Jackson in the struggle with Fremont and Shields

around Port Republic. The style is quite unusual for Dabney. It has the flavor of Carlyle, and as if Carlyle were talking in stately blank verse. It is well worth reading as literature, in spite of the style.

In the early part of this period it was his happy destiny to perform distinguished ecclesiastical services. He was sent as a commissioner to the General Assembly which sat at Louisville in 1870.

On Thursday evening, May 19, 1870, he wrote from that city to Mrs. Dabney:

"MY DEAR BINNY: After a hard day's work I have retired to fulfil my promise of writing you a short letter. You will see from my handwriting how tired I am. The Assembly met this morning, and was opened with a long sermon by Dr. Robinson. After the organization, Dr. Bullock got up and nominated the Rev. R. L. Dabney, of Virginia, as Moderator. No other nomination was made, and Robinson put the question *viva voce*, and in a jiffy the election was over, and I was upon the platform. I made them a little speech, which was short and sweet (you see I had nothing to say, and am not good at talking under such circumstances). The Assembly soon adjourned, and after dinner I was busy making up committees. This is a very complicated job. I have gotten through it, and mean to take matters quite easily. To-morrow morning we expect to work in good earnest.

"Robinson has fattened a great deal, and is bald, and an old looking man." . . .

It was to this Assembly that the first delegates from the Northern Church came with their greetings and proposals to the church in the South. On Wednesday, the 27th of June, in a gossipy letter to Mrs. Dabney, Dr. Dabney writes:

"But the great event of the day has been the visitation of the Radical delegates from Philadelphia, Van Dyke at their head. They came into the Assembly this morning, Van Dyke, Dr. Backus, and a Yankee New School man named Dodge (Mr. William E. Dodge), dressed in an inch of their lives, with a —— set of resolutions from their Assembly, and our Assembly was so stupid as to let them orate *ad libitum*. Van Dyke let himself down completely; has gone over to them."

Dr. E. M. Green, now of Danville, Ky., was a member of this Assembly, and has given this portrayal of the situation, viz.:

"We had had no dealings with our Northern brethren, and they had just made the discovery that they loved us. They had been abusing us like pick-pockets, but the reunited Old and New School Church wanted to complete their glory by taking us in, and we heard, to our dismay, that Van Dyke, Backus and Dodge were on their way with the olive branch. I was in the room, Joseph R. Wilson, and J. Leighton Wilson, and, I think, Dr. Woodrow, when there was a knock at the door, and in came Dr. Dabney and Dr. William Brown. Dr. Dabney said, 'Brethren, I hear that the Northern delegation are here, and they will be presented to-morrow, and I want to confer with you. Of course, they will speak, and I must reply immediately. I will have no time to make up a speech after hearing them, and I do not want to forecast the action' of the Assembly in my speech. How can I manage the matter?' Dr. Joseph Wilson said, 'Dabney, can't you for once in your life make a speech without saying anything?' He replied, 'I shall try.' I had some curiosity to hear Dabney make a speech without saying anything, and really he came very near it. Van Dyke evidently thought he said nothing, for as Dr. Dabney proceeded and Van Dyke saw that nothing was to be gathered from his words as to how he felt or what he intended to do, his countenance fell till it became almost blank. The occasion was a thrilling one. Van Dyke was the first speaker. As he proceeded to explain that he had not come to say 'peccavi,' that Presbyterians never apologized, that if they wanted to they could not, for now they represented a new, reunited church, the former Old School Church was now no more, it was merged in a new body, and this new body could not apologize for what the now defunct old body had said and done, a very bad impression was made. 'Peccavi' was the very word we wanted to hear. An apology for all their abuse and vilification was strictly in order, but no, the church that did all this meanness was non-existent, and yet the fellows who had done the insulting seemed very much alive. Dr. Backus followed in a goody-goody speech, and then Mr. Dodge announced that he was still doing business at the old stand, and would be glad to see his old friends at such and such a place. Van Dyke's face was a study as Dabney rose to reply. He was eager and expectant, but the Doctor did not just melt in tenderness and love. He was cold, polite, dealt in generalities altogether, and closed without saying anything in particular."

Dr. Dabney wrote to his wife, on the night following this speech, in the letter already quoted:

"It was my duty to reply on behalf of the Assembly. My object was to be perfectly non-committal. My brethren say that I succeeded admirably. I spoke for about five minutes very fluently, grammatically and handsomely, without expressing one single definite idea, giving them, meantime, one or two sly digs under the fifth rib by innuendo.

The whole matter was then referred to a committee, which I selected, with Dr. Palmer at the head. I hope they will recommend an answer which will be firm and wise; but these fellows in Philadelphia are (so plausible) that I feel much solicitude.

On Thursday Dr. Palmer's committee reported, recommending that a committee be sent to confer ("not about union, which we declare shall never be"), but "about the law-suits chiefly; to tell them that they must retract their slanders explicitly, etc.; and that we would never be to them anything more than to any other separate denomination, unless they disavowed all their political platforms and turned out all the loose broad church men." So Dr. Dabney wrote his "dear Binney" on Friday evening, May 27th. And he added to this:

"Even this, which I think goes a heap too far, met with opposition! It was resolved to hold a private interlocutory meeting at night to discuss the report. There were some very fishy developments by old Dr. ———, Dr. ———, and one or two others. Palmer spoke handsomely, but I thought timidly. Things were not going at all to my mind. I must explain that in an interlocutory meeting, which is a committee of the whole, the Moderator does not preside, but calls some member to act as chairman, and for the time, becomes a mere member, so I was on the floor."

He had called Dr. J. J. Bullock to the chair. But, although he was on the floor, he was not in a hurry to speak. Many of the speeches he heard sickened him. "The adroit Yankees seemed (he says) to have cowed all our men by the insinuated threat that if they did not come in smoothly the whole Christian world would say it was because we were in the sulks at being whipped in a secular war, which would leave our church more clearly on a political basis than we charged theirs with being. So the tone of many of these speeches was that we had no right to consult any feelings, but must act upon the dry logic of the fact that both churches, though they have been killing each other for four years, professed to hold the same Confession." The early speeches, however, Dr. Palmer's excepted, did not represent the mind of the body. They were really waiting to be voiced by a man in whose honesty all had the utmost confidence. The Assembly was waiting for Dabney. The night was wearing on. Some talked of adjournment. The hour of ten was already approaching. The venerable Dr. J. Leighton Wilson shoved himself near to Dabney and whispered,



"Dr. Dabney, you must speak. This debate is taking a fatal turn; these men are all entangling and committing themselves on the wrong side." Dabney whispered back, "No; I am Moderator, and I don't want to be thought intruding in this debate." Another speech occurred of the same sort. Dr. Wilson again whispered, in much agitation, "Dr. Dabney, you must speak, or these men will ruin the Southern Church." About the same time, the Rev. E. M. Green, who was sitting just in front of Dabney, noted the hour. It was five minutes past ten. Dabney "was breathing heavily; he was restless and nervous." Green leaned back and said, "Doctor, have you nothing to say?" "No," he replied; "if this body listens to such talk as we have been hearing, they don't want anything from me." Mr. Green said, "We have a right to hear from you, and all are waiting for you to speak." Dr. Green writes:

"He was on his feet in a moment. He began this way: 'Mr. Chairman, I feel as if I were talking to people across a river a mile wide. If you are pleased with such speeches as you have been listening to, it is useless for me to express my thoughts. I do not profess to be as good as some people; I hear brethren saying it is time to forgive. Mr. Chairman, I do not forgive. I do not try to forgive. What! forgive these people, who have invaded our country, burned our cities, destroyed our homes, slain our young men, and spread desolation and ruin over our land! No, I do not forgive them. But you say, "They have changed their feelings towards us, are kind." And why should they not be kind? Have we ever done anything to make them feel unkind to us? Have we ever harmed or wronged them? They are amiable and peaceful, are they? And is not the gorged tiger amiable and peaceful? When he has filled himself with the calf he has devoured, he lies down in a kind, good humor; but wait till he has digested his meal, and will he not be fierce again? Will he not be a tiger again? They have gorged themselves with everything they could take from us. They have gained everything they tried to get, they have conquered us, they have destroyed us. Why should they not be amiable and kind? Do you believe that the same old tiger nature is not in them? Just wrest from them anything they have taken from us, and see.'"<sup>5</sup>

Continues Dr. Green:

"In that way, he went on for an hour. I never heard such a philippic, I was frightened. I believed every word he said, but I thought I had never encountered before such a terrible man."

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<sup>5</sup> We understand Dr. Green, in this graphic passage, to be giving only the general impression which Dr. Dabney's words made upon him.

It is a pity that the speech was not reported, if such a thing had been possible. Writing of it long afterwards, Dr. Dabney said :

"I felt that I must just let myself loose. It was a fight for life or death. I began about thus: 'Mr. Chairman, I find myself so largely out of harmony with the views thus far expressed on this floor that I fear my effort must be in vain to bring my brethren into any sympathy with the views which govern me; but these views compel me to speak out for my church. Mr. Chairman, my Creator fashioned me a creature that thinks, and he impressed on my soul this inevitable law that my feelings must accompany my thoughts, as necessarily as the calorific ray accompanies the luminous in the sunbeam. Hence, when I am required to exclude all feeling, and decide the destiny of our beloved church upon calculation alone, an impossibility is demanded of me. It is a necessity of the nature given me by God that I must feel what I honestly think. It is my duty and my right to feel with every legitimate emotion of my heart in this great cause. I would not surrender this right if I could.' I then argued that the deep, instinctive recoil of the best and holiest in our communion from the embrace of the misguided men, who had murdered our sons and our country, was not unreasonable, not unchristian revenge, not malice, but a lawful and necessary moral sentiment. This sentiment does not ask for retaliation upon the wrong-doers, but leaves them to God and their own consciences, praying that they may receive from him that mercy which we need ourselves. The feeling only claims its right to protect, to cherish our own honest convictions, to preserve the independence providentially granted us from the spiritual which these men have so cruelly abused in the hour of trial.

"Our advocates had always shown tender-footedness and timidity in following out their argument against the Northern Assembly's usurpation of deciding secular questions by spiritual authority. They abstained carefully from raising and discussing the question *what sort* of secular authority the tyrannical church was seeking to enforce by its spiritual sanctions. Thus they seemed to admit that coercionism might be politically and religiously as righteous as States' Rights, by limiting their contention to the position that both questions were merely secular. Thus they deprived themselves of all the strength of the argument founded upon the unspeakable treacheries, barbarities and murders of Lincolnism. The cause of these feeble tactics was that the Yankees bullied and confused them with this sophism, 'Oh! men, if you raise these questions, you are guilty of the same error which you charge upon us, that of confounding the secular with the spiritual.' Even Thornwell betrays this timidity in his 'Address to All the Churches,' adopted by the Augusta Assembly of December, 1861. The sophism always appeared to me as shallow as impudent. The moment the Northern Assembly claimed the right to impose Lincolnism on our consciences by

their spiritual authority, they made Lincolnism a constituent part of their ecclesiastical system. Then, by most just argument *ad hominem* as against them, it became our right to discuss Lincolnism from the ecclesiastical and spiritual point of view. Yea, necessary so to do. How plain is this? If, for instance, it was competent to the Assembly of 1861 to decide spiritually that secession by a State is the sin of rebellion condemned by Paul and Peter, then it became the ecclesiastical and spiritual rights of us, the defendants, to debate that question, and to prove historically and legally that secession was not rebellion. Let me add here that one feature of the Spring's resolution of the Assembly of 1861 showed, in the most lurid light, the essential popery and tyranny of its action. The abolition majority took the freest scope to assert and argue that State secession was the sin of rebellion, thus making it a constituent part of their ecclesiastical and spiritual system; but as soon as our men proposed to accept this gauge of forensic battle, and to argue the negative, they were silenced by the threat of the lamp-post and halter; they were assured that if they dared to defend themselves, the godly Jacobins of Philadelphia would say, 'You are defiling the sacred courts of the Lord's house with your damnable treason, and you shall die instantly.' And a holy mob of Abolitionists would have dragged them right out of the church, and, for the greater glory of God, murdered their '*dear Southern brethren*' in the streets."

In his further account of this speech, Dr. Dabney shows that Dr. Green has correctly reported the gist of his argument and feelings; and that down to the end of his life he continued to approve the heroic work he did that night.

Rarely has there ever been seen in a deliberative body such a sudden wave of apparently reflux feeling and opinion. As Dabney took his seat, quivering with mental excitement, old Dr. Wilson sidled up and whispered, "Dr. Dabney, you have saved the Southern Church." Some of the men who had spoken on the wrong side that evening rose to retract and to thank Dr. Dabney for "the light" he had thrown on the subject. One of these in particular, a distinguished elder, made his retraction and rendered his thanks in terms so laudatory of the man who had spoken out the truth, as he saw it, with all his heart, that Dabney asked Dr. Wilson whether the man were not satirizing him. "No," said Dr. Wilson, "he is too true a gentleman; he is perfectly honest and candid; he means just what he says."

"The matter was settled then and there," writes Dr. Green. "The Committee of the Whole adjourned, but the minds of all were made up. There might be some difference of opinion as to the best way to proceed. But all were agreed that the tiger

was in those people. We wanted to have no more to do with them."

As a result of this meeting, the Assembly resolved to raise a conservative committee to make their answer. Dr. Palmer was again made chairman, and when his resolutions were adopted, Dr. Van Dyke said, "They have stripped every leaf from the olive branch, and made a rod of it to beat us with."<sup>6</sup>

It is only fair to say that Dr. Dabney had been informed of the probable necessity for such a fight some weeks beforehand, and not only through the public prints, but by private letters. His friend, Niven, an elder in Dr. Van Dyke's church, prior to the union of the Old and New School bodies, had written him of the situation in March, and, again on May 2nd, as follows:

"DEAR DR. DABNEY: I see by the Central that you are a commissioner to your General Assembly. Good. Now to my object in writing. The furor for union with the Southern General Assembly is increasing. The Presbytery of Nassau, and also of New York have overtured the General Assembly (North) to urge this measure. They are all deluded with the idea that a great many of your ministers and people are panting for this consummation. The movement will be made at an early day of the session, and probably a committee sent on to Louisville. This will be your time to turn the tables if your Assembly is only discreet and prudent. Now ponder your steps carefully, and you will catch these radicals in their own trap. Do not bluff them off too suddenly. Meet them kindly and in a Christian spirit, but refer the communication to a shrewd committee. Keep out fire-eaters, or they will spoil it all. Let

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<sup>6</sup> Dr. Green writes in the very interesting letter already so much quoted: "Yes, and that same Dr. Van Dyke said to us confidentially, 'This big reunited Old and New School affair won't hold together but a short time, and I want you Southern brethren to come over, for when the split comes, we can count on you.' Dr. Dabney (I think it was) said, 'We do not propose to join you just to have a fight.' When asked why he did not stand out and protest against a union which sacrificed principles, he said, 'The union was inevitable, it could not be stopped, and if I was obliged to take passage on the old ship, I proposed to walk the quarter deck.' Said Dr. Palmer, 'Van Dyke, the big, reunited church will not go to pieces as soon as you think. It will stand till you are dead; but you men who have sacrificed principle will not walk the quarter deck. You have sacrificed true principles, and without those, your moral power and influence are gone.'" (*Dr. Green's Letter*, dated July 1, 1901.)

that committee take up Dr. Palmer's pamphlet where all the base charges and vile epithets are piled upon your devoted heads, and in a condensed form review the whole case. Coming to this conclusion or something like it, viz.: 'If these solemn and authoritative charges against the Southern Church are true, she is unfit to fellowship with any church of Christ. If they are false, which the proposed action assumes, then retract the slander as publicly as it was made, and under as solemn sanction.' You will have them in this dilemma, and let them choose their own horse.

"When they have made their choice, then the Southern Assembly can say, in all dignity and self-respect, that they do not choose to betray the truth of God by going into such a variegated body as the Church, North, now is. Your own brain will be able to see what filling up will make this scheme perfect, and put the North utterly in fault before the Christian world.

"I had a long confab with Van Dyke a few days ago as to his course. I plainly denounced it as time-serving. He came near losing his temper, and I was a little excited, and possibly a little bitter in my remarks. I congratulated him on the eminence he had attained in the Allied Host. He retorted by saying he could not *prudently* do otherwise. I said, 'Then you conferred with flesh and blood and worldly wisdom pre-ailed, etc., etc.' I said in conclusion, 'You are in the *New Body; I am not.*' Poor man, I troubled him, but I could not do otherwise with a good conscience. I shant wonder if they send Van Dyke as their ambassador to Louisville, hoping that that will sugar the pill.

"In haste, Yours in Christ, T. M. NIVEN."

From the Assembly at Louisville, Dr. Dabney proceeded to Mississippi to look after some of his mother's land; and then he hies him back to his "Binney," to whom, from Louisville, he had "sent a picture of an old friend" she "used to like," to his family and to his work, a part of which was to break Dr. Van Dyke's bones with his pen. The Doctor, who had been so strong in his Old Schoolism, and who was now "the noisiest toad in his new puddle,"<sup>7</sup> had issued a pamphlet justifying the fusion of the Old and New School bodies, "for distribution primarily among his own congregation, for the purpose of keeping himself right in their eyes"; Mr. Niven had mailed a copy to his friend, Dabney. Dabney turned a white light on that pamphlet for an hour or so, and published what he saw in the *Christian Observer*.

Dr. B. M. Palmer lets us see how this piece of Dabney's work struck him in the following letter:

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<sup>7</sup> So Mr. Niven puts it.

"NEW ORLEANS, July 12, 1870.

"Rev. R. L. Dabney, D. D.

"REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER: I have just risen from the perusal of your letter to Dr. Van Dyke, in the *Christian Observer*; and with more warmth than my pen can easily express, I desire to return you my thanks for the same. It is absolutely destructive, and there is nothing left to be added to a discussion which seems to me exhaustive.

"I had just got hold of the pamphlet issued by Dr. Van Dyke, purporting to be a documentary history of the negotiations between the two Assemblies, and felt so provoked by the special pleading of his running commentary upon it that I had half resolved to do the exact thing which you have done—to pass the whole matter under review in a letter addressed directly to him. There is now no need of it, for you have covered the ground as completely as if the pamphlet had been the special subject of criticism. Some reply of this kind was called for, and, on several accounts, it comes better from you than from myself, to say nothing of its being far more ably done.

"Your letter is sufficiently moderate in tone, and I am glad that you have dropt nothing that any reasonable person can possibly object to. I do not know that you will find any special gratification in this expression from me, but it is a great pleasure to me to say that I regard the whole church as placed under heavy obligations to you for so timely a service. May God bless you, and long spare you to be a pillar in our Israel.

Yours most fraternally,  
B. M. PALMER."

He and Palmer were to continue throughout their lives to watch against and to fight fusion with the Northern Church.

While so hostile to union with the Northern Presbyterian Church, Dr. Dabney was not hostile to union with churches in the soundness of whose faith and polity he had full confidence. This he had shown in his efforts in behalf of union with the Synod of the South, already accomplished; and was now to show again. In 1871, a correspondence was begun between the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, popularly known as the Dutch Reformed Church, and the Southern Church. The correspondence developed mutual admiration, and resulted in the formal adoption of an elaborate plan for coöperation of these bodies in various forms of ecclesiastical work. Dr. Dabney favored this movement, and after inquiry as to the current conditions in that church, ecclesiastical, theological and political. Among the letters addressed to him at this time there is one of great interest from his friend, Niven, of New York, which gives a good sketch of the body in its main features.

Brought before his church thus prominently as teacher, writer

and ecclesiastic, it was inevitable, also, that he should be called on by many of those who had learned to look to him as a great power in the behalf of any cause that enlisted his sympathies, for incidental services of multitudinous kinds.

He had for the Campinas Mission the warmest interest. He naturally felt this interest. In a manuscript life of the Rev. Edward Lane, D. D., prepared by him, he gives the following account of the origin of our Brazil Mission, which had opened the way for the other Protestant missions in that country.

"A close Christian friendship had been growing up between Dr. Leighton Wilson and myself before the war, during his official visits to the South. This friendship was cemented in New York during the sessions of the Assembly in 1856. Soon afterwards I began to urge upon the Doctor my views concerning the special claims of the popish populations of America upon our help. Dr. Wilson was then associate secretary of the Assembly's Board of Foreign Missions. Its first secretary, the Hon. Walter Lowrie, had directed its views and efforts to Hindoostan, China, Africa, and the American Indians. We had not a single missionary in Mexico or South America. My arguments as laid before Dr. Wilson were, that as long as our forces were inadequate to the cultivation of the whole of the pagan field, it was both our wisdom and our duty to put in our first work where it promised to produce the largest and speediest fruits; that this was the way to accelerate that multiplying progression in our Christian forces by which alone we could ever overtake the whole of the enormous task of world-wide evangelization; that civilized populations, already imbued with partial theistic and gospel ideas, although dominated by an apostate form of Christianity, would yield much readier and larger fruits than mere pagans, who have to be taught everything, who had never heard even the names of Jehovah and Christ, whose very languages furnished no terms for even expressing the foundation concepts of regeneration, sanctification and redemption, whose religious ideas were a contrast and a contradiction to those of the Bible; finally, that the Apostle Paul had set us an instructive precedent in his foreign missionary labors, by going always first to the synagogue of the Jews of the dispersion. Though he found them embittered by prejudice and perverted from the truth, yet he did find them monotheists, with their Sabbaths, their sacraments, and their church government. They were still familiar with the great Bible conceptions of God, immortality and the judgment. His sanctified tactics were to work up first the half-prepared material before attacking the wholly unprepared. For these reasons, I suggested the Empire of Brazil, then under the stable and liberal government of Don Pedro, as the most hopeful field for experiment, and I pointed to the rapid success which the Scotch Portuguese missionary, Dr. Kalley, was winning in Rio de Janeiro.

"Dr. Wilson soon acceded to my views and pressed them upon his committee, but at first with small encouragement. They could see nothing except ultra paganism. He related that after a good deal of pertinacity, they consented that he might plant our mission in Brazil; but he added, humorously, that their consent was not from conviction, but from the species of weariness expressed by the American woman, who was so pertinaciously wooed by an Irish suitor that she said she had to marry him to get rid of him. Such was the beginning of the great Presbyterian mission in Brazil, which has become so fruitful that, by the joint labors of the Northern and Southern missions, there now exists a strong Synod.

"It can be understood, therefore, how Dr. Wilson, when he came to be director of our foreign missions, turned his eyes early to that field. It can also be surmised what would be the tenor of my counsels and advice to my young brethren in Union Seminary. Two of them soon became imbued with my ideas, and offered themselves to found another Brazilian mission."

He loved these two early missionaries, and particularly Mr. Lane. With him he kept up a steady correspondence; busied himself in helping to raise a special fund for Campinas School; went lecturing to raise the money; got others to make a similar effort. Dr. McNeilly, of Nashville, Tenn., has illustrated Dr. Dabney's labors of this sort by the following incident. He writes to Dr. C. W. Dabney, under date of March 21, 1901:

In 1870, or 1871, he and your mother made a visit to Nashville, and were entertained by Mrs. R. S. Hollins, who was a sister of Prof. Charles Martin. They were with me a part of the time. Your father was very much interested in the sending out of Mr. and Mrs. Lane and Mr. Morton, to Brazil. He had a conference with the leading members of the Presbyterian Church in the city, and he so powerfully presented the need of the Brazil mission that he secured a very handsome amount to send out the brethren to the work. I remember that at that time my church, Woodland Street, was quite small, only a little over one hundred members, and they gave over four hundred dollars. I think the amount altogether was over fifteen hundred dollars in Nashville. He then impressed me as one of the most *powerful* men I ever saw. He sat in the midst of the company of gentlemen, and in easy, familiar style talked for an hour, and his statement was so clear, his appeals to the conscience so earnest, that there was no resisting him."<sup>8</sup>

He also busied himself in trying to send a suitable teacher for the school. He approved the audacity of the Campinas

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<sup>8</sup> From Letter, March 21, 1901.



College enterprise as timely, and advised the missionaries there on many matters, with profound insight and far-reaching sagacity.

The poor about him had his thorough-going and helpful sympathies. A mile from his house there lived a worthy and in every way excellent widow of advanced age. Her husband had been a distinguished lawyer, but he had died penniless, involved in the ruin that had swept over his country. Dr. Dabney writes of her case to his friend, Niven, and asks him to get some rich man in New York to do something for her. Niven did not know where to find the man for the case; and hence he writes, on the 16th of December, 1872:

"So, after thinking and dreaming and praying over this particular case, I came to the conclusion that if I waited for help, the poor old lady might suffer and perhaps die; and finally, instead of sending a present contribution, I thought if I could manage a semi-annual payment, however small, it would help smooth the good old disciple's pathway to her grave, and to her house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where she shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, and where our cold and pinched contribution will never be desired or required. . . .

"I have but little; God, in great wisdom and mercy, thought it best for me, and I thank him for the mercy; but I will divide. The devil suggested that I was silly in making this hole in my little store, but God's grace enables me to turn my back on him. It is a trifle indeed, but forty dollars every six months will do a little for the comfort of our aged friend, especially if my good friend, Mrs. Dabney, is the quartermaster; and then when God shall call our aged mother home to glory, may it not assist some pious youth toward the pulpit to preach the glorious gospel of the blessed God? I know it is not a scholarship, as the word goes; but I do also know that seventy or eighty dollars per year would be a great help to many a young man striving in his poverty to gain a theological education. So you may call it what you please, only let it do the work I desire."

This is but one illustration of the way in which he served the poor in Prince Edward. He had written on Friday, May 17th, from Louisville, "Robinson has an appointment out for me to preach my perjury sermon to-night, and to take up a collection for the poor in Prince Edward;" and on May 31st, "I went up to Shelbyville Saturday evening, thirty miles; preached twice for Grasty; got nearly one hundred dollars for the poor additional." Nor did he stop with raising money for the desti-

tute about him; he bought necessities for them by the wholesale; sold for what they could pay, in cases where they could pay anything; and to those too poor to pay any price, he gave according to their need, reinvested the money thus acquired, and distributed again in like manner.

By the time the reconstruction period had passed he was the one member of his mother's family in really comfortable circumstances. He became more and more their adviser and stay. His letters show that he aided, by advice and sympathy, and in more substantial ways, every brother and sister of his in these years. They all consulted him in their greater perplexities, and he never failed them. To his mother he became more, rather than less, tender. This is shown in his unflagging and most respectful and reverent correspondence with her and about her. Here is a typical letter:

*"March 23, 1873.*

"MY DEAR MOTHER: I have concluded to devote a few moments of this quiet Sunday to sending you our love and our prayers and wishes. I hope you are enjoying as comfortable health as the years which you carry will allow, and are as free from annoyances and troubles as the condition of this evil world will allow. Every day, I suppose, is pretty much like a Sabbath to you. May this quiet of your old age be to you the foretaste of the everlasting rest, which remaineth to the people of God. I have often desired to hear you speak of your Christian hope and comfort in view of your release; but somehow, when present with you, I have felt myself restrained by my reverence for you, and the sacredness of the subject. I would suggest that it would be well to leave on record (through Sister Anne's pen) some testimony to our Saviour. It might, for instance, be greatly blessed to ——. He, I fear, is an unhappy man, with worldly hopes and pleasures effectually overclouded by the calamities of the country, and the failure of his health, and with no solid peace in Christ; but I know he has many serious thoughts, and his natural pride has to struggle hard to prevent his adopting that prayer of the publican, which is so proper for us all.

"There have been many alarms of fire this March: a quantity of woods and fences burned, and some houses. This morning the Seminary caught afire from a burning chimney, notwithstanding a slate roof, which we thought was a good one. Luckily, there are so many people about that the smoke was seen at once, and it was soon out. Had it happened between midnight and day, it would have swept all. I hope Sister Anne is very careful about fire. Give my best love to her, to Bob, who I hope is a great comfort to you; and to Sister Mary.

"Your affectionate son,

R. L. DABNEY."

This venerable and excellent woman had felt keenly the loss of her husband in her young womanhood, the loss of her most amiable and attractive daughter Betty in the first part of the war, the loss of her granddaughter, Miss Harriet Johnson, who had for years more nearly taken Betty's place as companion and nurse than any other could. The members of her family had suffered sorely in the war and reconstruction. Mrs. Dabney had been for years blind. But she retained the use of her mental faculties and much of her uncommon courage to the very last. She showed herself worthy of being the mother of a great man. On the 12th of May, 1873, she was gathered into the fold above.

Her children soon after read the following appreciative account of her life and virtues:

"This notice marks the rupture of another of the few remaining links which connect the present with the happy past. The subject of it was born September 26, 1784, almost in Revolutionary times; daughter of Capt. Thomas Price, of Hanover, and granddaughter of Elizabeth Randolph, of Wilton, she was reared in the midst of that society in which the men of 1776 were then moving in their prime. She sat upon the knee of John Marshall, her father's bosom friend, and searched for British relics where Cornwallis had recently encamped upon her own native fields. She sent forth her husband into the war of 1812, a young, unprotected wife, with her little babes around her. She lived to have her peaceful home burned, and her property plundered in the war of secession, when an aged widow, and to see the last revolution perfected. It may be almost said that the whole history of the American people was represented in her experience.

"The 6th of September, 1808, she was married to Charles Dabney, Esq., of Louisa, and removed with him soon after to his native neighborhood. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of this union, September 6, 1833, her husband was suddenly taken from her by death, in the prime of his days. He had become the darling of his people, their trusted counsellor and leader, in church and state, on the seat of justice and in private life; revered and beloved for his philanthropy, his integrity, and his piety. Nearly forty years his widow faithfully awaited her unending reunion, devoting herself exclusively to the rearing of his children, with a tenderness, wisdom and firmness rarely equalled, until at length she entered quietly into her rest when nearly eighty-nine years of age. During this long widowhood she was tried with almost every form of calamity, in addition to her first great bereavement: with pecuniary embarrassments long continued, with ill health, with the successive loss of beloved children and grandchildren, with military ravage, and finally with three years of total blindness. All were borne

with the courage of a Roman matron, combined with the true submission of the Christian. Her meetness to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light was at length perfected. Her last days, passed in peaceful retreat, shone with a cheerfulness, love, and assurance of hope, which completely defended every faculty, save the outward sight, from the customary decays of extreme age, and which have proved themselves to be the brightening dawn of heaven. She was at last tenderly released from the bonds of the decaying flesh, without the anxieties of anticipation, without a shadow of fear, and without feeling the stroke of the last enemy. Her's was a translation, and not a death. 'So he giveth his beloved sleep.'

"The deceased was one of the brightest types of that class of Virginia matrons, whose traits this journal has formerly endeavored to embalm, and which, we fear, will soon be known only in the recollections of descendants. Their eminence was in the spheres of the Christian, the wife, the mother, and the mistress. Home was their realm, disinterested, self-sacrificing love their sceptre, and the hearts of husband, children and servants their throne. They were educated exclusively in the privacy of home, and accomplished rather by association with cultivated and chivalrous seniors than by the arts of masters and tutors. Their religion was sound, rational, devout, but retiring; shrinking with sensitive reserve from parade, but disclosing its power in untiring devotion to duty; nurtured by the reading of the Scriptures and a few good books, and by a pulpit which was as yet content with the theology of the Westminster Assembly and the Thirty-nine Articles. This was the type of female character from which the inspired portrait of Proverbs xxxi. was drawn—'Their children rise up and call them blessed; their husbands also, they praise them.'"

In 1874 Dr. Dabney was forced by ill-health to resign his pastorship of the College Church. In April, 1873, he had the grippe severely while attending the Presbytery in Charlottesville. This developed his old bronchitis in an aggravated form. When his mother died, about the 10th of May, he was too sick to attend the funeral. He did not preach again till August. He did another year of pastoral work, but under protest of his constitution. He was now fifty-four years old, and felt it to be his "duty to husband his remaining strength for the service of the Seminary, which had the first claim on him." So he resigned his pastorate in the midsummer of 1874. The session and the people acquiesced reluctantly. From that time on, he never held a pastoral charge, but continued to do a great deal of preaching.

He had continued to do powerful preaching in this period.

This chapter has already presented evidence of this. Other notable sermons were one preached at the Farmville Presbyterian Church, on John iv. 28 and 29, 41 and 42, "The Bible its own Witness;" and one on "False Swearing," Jer. xxiii. 10: "By reason of swearing the land mourneth." The former of these was published, at the request of the young men of the Farmville Church.

In June, 1867, Dr. Dabney had been elected a trustee of Hampden-Sidney College. He served the College with zeal in this relation till January, 1873, when he resigned. In 1870 he led his Board in a characteristic effort to move the General Assembly of Virginia to entrust to it one-third of the fund arising from the three hundred thousand acres of the public lands of the United States given to the State for the promotion of agricultural education. He argued this course with great ability in a memorial adopted by the Board and sent to the General Assembly, and in a letter to John L. Marye, Esq., Lieutenant-Governor. He maintained that Virginia needed three agricultural schools, one for the Valley, one for the red lands of the Piedmont region, and one for the tobacco lands; that the funds were insufficient to maintain these several schools; that, therefore, the schools ought to be established as departments of already existing institutions; and that Hampden-Sidney, the only college in the Southside, a large area, one-third of the State in area and population, was certainly one of the colleges to have the new department. He argues from the character of Hampden-Sidney College, and from what was due to the Southside, with immense cogency. But nothing came of it. In June, 1873, after his resignation from the Board of Trustees, that body honored itself by conferring the degree of LL. D. upon him.

In his home life, he felt the burdens of housekeeping greatly under the new order of things. He wrote to his "Brother Lane," of Brazil, on the 26th of December, 1872:

"Mrs. Dabney is and has been very ailing of late; in bed, for instance, all day to-day. Has too many people to care for, is too much like Martha, 'cumbered about much serving,' has too much cooking to do, and too much company to entertain out of too small an income. I am thinking very seriously of breaking up *permanently*, and going finally to boarding, and I really believe that she (who always heretofore deprecated it) is now so seriously impressed with the overweight of her burden, and the prospect of the permanent ruin of her health, as even

to incline freely to it. I had begun a cottage building already (a commodious school-room) on my own land, in the coppice near where my horse block stood. My plan would be to enlarge it to three rooms, vacate my present house to a tenant, except the study, and spend my summers on my own land in Amherst, where I have a noble old mansion. What say you?"

But all worries to the contrary, nevertheless, he was very happy in his home, in his "Binney" and his three sons, whose development he watched with intense and pleasurable interest; and to his intimate friends he writes freely of his pleasure in them. Thus to his "Brother Lane," on June 15, 1872:

"Our Charley distinguished himself quite highly on completing his junior course in College, getting, at the last examination in philosophy, ninety-nine out of one hundred. He stood at the head of his class. Dr. Atkinson rarely marks any one so high. Sam is as good and thoughtful as ever, and even Lewis, I think, is getting somewhat better."

He was very proud of these fine fellows, far prouder than these words would indicate to a stranger. He was particularly proud of the youngster, of whom he speaks as "getting somewhat better."

Dr. J. H. McNeilly lets us see how he appeared to his guests in this very year, 1872:

"In 1872 and in 1873, I visited Hampden-Sidney, and was entertained by him. It was to me a feast to be near him. He asked a great many questions about Middle Tennessee, its crops, its geological structure, its social life; and I noticed that he took what I told him, and putting it through his own processes of thought, gave it back to me transmuted, so that I knew more about the State than I did before. His was one of the most inquisitive minds I ever met. He was constantly gaining information, and as he thought upon facts they had new and richer meanings. I remember in a conversation he asked me about a certain German materialist, who was lecturing then in some cities of the Mississippi Valley. He asked me what was the gist of the lecture. I told him that it was a denial of the existence of a soul or of any spiritual principle, that there can, therefore, be no life after this for man, as his mind is simply a product of physical organization, and when the organization returns to dust, is disintegrated, then mind ceases; that there is no God, no responsibility to God, no right and wrong; that man is to be guided by what he finds best for his comfort and happiness here.

"I then said, 'Doctor, suppose you had to meet such a man in argument before an audience, how could you answer him, seeing there is no

common ground for you to stand on?' He sat for a minute or two, as if studying it over, then he sprang up to his full height, buttoning his coat about him—and he was a magnificent specimen of manhood—with eyes flashing, he strode forward, as if on a rostrum, and said: 'I would call on the audience and say, "Let's kill this fellow! It cannot hurt him more than taking away a short time of his fleshly life. It cannot be wrong, for there is no such thing as wrong. By experience we have found that such ideas as his bring great trouble to the world, and produce much unhappiness; so, for our own comfort and peace, let us kill him, and so save ourselves all such trouble." Then I would say to him: "Of course, you are in no danger, we are not going to kill you; but your safety depends on that very spiritual sense of right which you sneer at."' I said, 'Doctor, that would certainly be the *argumentum ad hominem*.' 'Yes,' said he; 'but it is absolutely the only argument to which such cattle are amenable.'

"He showed me so much kindness, was so genuinely hospitable, made me feel so thoroughly at home, that I became deeply attached to him. The little glimpse of his family life vouchsafed to me then, showed a home in which Jesus Christ was an ever-present power. There was piety without sanctimony, devotion to Christ without ostentation."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### *LAST STADIUM OF HIS COURSE IN UNION SEMINARY.*

(1874—1883.)

PLANS TO LIGHTEN HIS LABORS.—NO SLACKENING OF MENTAL LABORS, NOR LITERARY PRODUCTIVENESS.—WORK IN HIS CHAIR AND OUTSIDE IN THE SEMINARY'S BEHALF, AND THE CONDITION OF THE INSTITUTION.—SECOND EDITION OF HIS "SYLLABUS."—"SENSUALISTIC PHILOSOPHY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY CONSIDERED."—WRITINGS AGAINST MOVEMENTS IN THE CHURCH: AGAINST FUSION WITH THE NORTHERN PRESBYTERIANS; AGAINST THE PAN-PRESBYTERIAN ALLIANCE MOVEMENT.—CONTROVERSY WITH DR. A. T. BLEDSOE AND "OTHER" PELAGIANS.—WRITINGS ON SUNDRY THEOLOGICAL SUBJECTS.—INDUCTIVE LOGIC.—CONTROVERSY WITH DR. WILLIAM H. RUFFNER OVER THE FREE SCHOOL SYSTEM IMPOSED BY THE UNDERWOOD CONSTITUTION.—WRITINGS ON POLITICAL TOPICS.—EDITORIAL WORK ON THE "SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW."—THOUGHT OF FOUNDING A REVIEW IN VIRGINIA.—ENDEAVOR TO REMOVE THE "SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW" TO RICHMOND, THEN TO CHARLESTON, S. C., AND TO INCREASE ITS CIRCULATION.—INTERESTED IN EVERYTHING.—CONSULTED ABOUT MANY MOVEMENTS AND QUESTIONS.—FEELS HIS PARTIAL ISOLATION, NEVERTHELESS.—HAPPINESS IN HIS OWN FAMILY, AND IN THE STUDENTS, AND IN NEIGHBORS.

WE have seen that in the summer of 1874, Dr. Dabney resigned his pastoral charge over the College Church, with a view to lightening his labors at a point where he was physically weakest. The strain of weekly preaching, in addition to his work in the lecture-room, was too much. The progress of his bronchial trouble imperatively demanded relief. The Seminary had the prior claim on him. That part of his work was indefinitely more important. It was right, as well as natural, that he should let go the pastoral work. This change did not mean that he was not still to do a great deal of preaching. He continued to preach, as his health permitted and opportunity offered, as long as he lived. We shall, however, never find him in a pastoral charge again.

While giving up this form of effort, he continued to do throughout these years the work of his chair with the mastery,



and the quickening and vivifying originality, which had ever marked his teaching. Not only so, he broadened and enriched his course, year after year, as the sessions passed. Though fifty-four years old at the beginning of this stadium, he still grew in knowledge, and perhaps in power. Nor did he, in any other decade of his life, as teacher in Union Seminary, have so many men on whom to make an impression. These nine sessions averaged each something over fifty-seven men. Two hundred new students entered the Seminary in these years. About forty-five, who had entered during the two preceding years, sat under his tuition, some of them one term, more than half of them two terms, also in this last period at Hampden-Sidney. Hence he took part in teaching at least one-third of all the students the institution had had, in the fifty-nine years of its existence, down to the close of his labors there, in this last term. During the first part of this stadium the number of students was very large, seventy-seven in the session 1874-'75, and seventy-four in that of 1875-'76. Then the number dropped to sixty-two, fifty-one, fifty-four, fifty-one, fifty, forty-five, and then fifty-six, in the successive sessions. The great numbers from 1874 to 1876 were due to the temporary closure of Columbia Seminary. There was no other Seminary within the bounds of the Southern Church then. Students from all quarters of our borders naturally turned to Union Seminary, in Virginia. Nor is it saying too much to affirm that Dabney's name did more than any other one name to draw attention to that institution. When Columbia opened again, the number of students naturally fell off; but Dr. Dabney believed that this was not the whole explanation. Fraternal relations had been established with the Northern Presbyterian Church, and to that "*faux pas*" he attributed the diminishing numbers in the Seminary. On September 14, 1876, he writes to Mrs. Dabney: "Very few students in the Seminary; not more than about fifty-five. This comes of your precious fraternal relations. They are going off to Princeton." On the 11th of February, 1877, he wrote to his friend, Lane, in Brazil: "Our Seminary will show only about sixty students, a falling off of about seventeen since year before last. What do you suppose is the largest cause of this? These 'fraternal relations,' so called. I feel much discouraged."

This decline in numbers was all the more painful to him because of the special exertion in which he had engaged recently to build up the interests of the Seminary. He had been ap-

pointed to bring the institution into more general notice. For instance, in the summer of 1875, he visited Kentucky with this end in view, and preached in Maysville, Paris, Millersburg, Lexington, Cynthiana, Harrodsburg, Danville, Richmond, and at other places. His chief desire in this extensive itinerary had been to make friends for the Seminary.

But not only did he thus labor assiduously for the Seminary in these years, his literary productiveness was in nowise slackened. Indeed, it may be questioned whether he was more productive in any other period of his life. A huge volume was rewritten and much enlarged; another volume, of considerable size and involving vast research, was put through the press; newspaper and review articles, on theological, Philosophical and political topics galore, were thrown, with astonishing rapidity, off that pen-point of ever-pulsing vitality, of which Moses D. Hoge had spoken so graciously when they were college youths together. Long series of articles appeared in several different weeklies, and occasionally in dailies, and on all sorts of themes. What an editor he would have made! Opinions he had on most subjects under the sun; and opinions, too, worth the reading, for the abounding energy and force with which they were presented, even when not to be accepted. A great Mississippi river of thought to pour through his pages from week to week to the public! He would have lent a new dignity to the word *editor* as it is read in these parts, as he did to the word *teacher*!

Naturally, during these years he improved, enlarged and matured his lectures on theology, published in the preceding period under the title of *Syllabus and Notes of the Course of Systematic and Polemic Theology*, etc. With much labor, he rewrote the whole book, vastly improving it. On the 18th of December, 1878, he wrote to his friend Lane:

"The only new thing with me is that I have just brought out a second edition of my theology. It is printed on contract by the Presbyterian Publishing Company, St. Louis, Mo. The corrections are innumerable, and the additions swell the book from six hundred and twenty-three to nine hundred and three pages."

The great reputation this book brought him for profundity and power has already been remarked upon in describing the first edition.

Prior to the publication of the second edition of his theology,

Dr. Dabney had brought out another notable book, his *The Sensualistic Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century Considered*. The first edition of this work was published by Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., in 1875. This volume was the result of a series of extra lectures, delivered to his students in the Seminary. By the "Sensualistic Philosophy," he means that theory "which resolves all the powers of the human spirit into the functions of the five senses, and modifications thereof." "It is the philosophy which finds all its rudiments in sensation. It not only denies to the spirit of man all innate ideas, but all innate powers of originating ideas, save those given us from our senses. It consequently attempts to account for every general and every abstract judgment, as an empirical result of our sensations, and consistently denies the validity of any *a priori* notions." Dr. Dabney's own philosophy, on the contrary, "holds that the human intelligence is not a bundle of organs, but a pure spirit; it asserts for man a reason, and not merely senses, and their modifications." In his criticism of the sensualistic schools, he makes the steady attempt to show that their type of philosophy "always involves tendencies to erroneous logic, vitiating even the physical sciences, which it is wont to claim as its peculiar clients; to universal skepticism; to idealism; to nihilism; to the obliterating of moral distinctions, and the destruction of moral responsibility; to materialism; to a denial of the supernatural; and thus to atheism." He does not charge that every sensualistic philosopher holds to all these results, or approves them; but that "they are all latent in the system, and that one or another of them is continually making itself patent in the outgrowth of this philosophy."

It has been common to criticise this arguing so much from the consequences of the system criticised; but it was ever his Master's way to judge of the tree by its fruits; and it is a perfectly legitimate method of judging. Even Dr. Dabney's adversaries admitted the searching, trenchant, and powerful character of his criticism. This great work is much more than a criticism of the false systems passed under review. It is an exposition and defence of the true philosophy as well; and its author is absolutely independent. If Hamilton, or any other giant, has taught somewhat amiss, Dabney takes issue. He swears in the words of no master. He for a long time, indeed until he wrote his *Practical Philosophy*, regarded this as his ablest work. Dr. B. M. Palmer said of it:

"A genuine book bears, always, the image and superscription of its author. It is, in the language of Milton, 'the pure extraction of the living intellect that breeds it'; and Dr. Dabney is just the last of men to fail to put the stamp of his own individuality upon his writings. All who are familiar with his mental attributes will find them breaking forth from every line and every page. In this age of mechanical authorship, where the water is simply emptied out of one bucket into another, it is no slight pleasure to get hold of a book that comes to us with thoughts directly from the mint in which they were coined. All of this author's characteristics are here. That wonderful subtlety of mind which penetrates the core of a subject, and distinguishes between the nicest refinements of thought, that incisiveness of expression which cuts the thoughts clean, even to its furthest edge; that firmness of grasp and positiveness of tone which belong only to those of the strongest convictions; that honesty of mind that leads to the embrace of what is held to be the truth, and a corresponding fearlessness in its defence, and that glow of indignation against the wickedness and impudence of error—all these make the book the impression of the man who wrote it. We think it was Adam Smith of whom the incident is told, that when a certain indifferentist, who always extenuated error, left the room, he exclaimed, 'I breathe more freely now that he is gone; he has no indignation in him.' Dr. Dabney is not constituted to be one of those neutrals. What he believes, he believes thoroughly, and his blows against falsehood go out straight from the shoulder."<sup>1</sup>

During these years several movements went on within his church with which Dr. Dabney had no sort of sympathy. He opposed them vehemently, on principle and from conviction. The nature of his opposition has been widely misunderstood, and he has been excoriated for it by many who were really incompetent to pass judgment on him. He saw very clearly what was involved in some of these steps. His critics would in many cases have entertained his view of the movements had they only been able to look at them with his power of insight. In receiving the harsh criticism at the hands of some of his friends, he only paid the penalty that the really great man must always pay when he happens to be in a minority, which is often the case. One of the movements of the time, which he withstood, was that toward fusion with the Northern Presbyterian Church. He opposed everything that prepared the way for fusion, everything that opened the way. He struggled against the establishment of so-called "fraternal relations" or correspondence by delegates. He wrote private letters against these

<sup>1</sup> *Southern Presbyterian Review*, Vol. XXVII., p. 491.

relations. He wrote unanswerable articles in the newspapers and reviews. He did not oppose fraternal relations, properly so called. Hear him:

“What are ‘fraternal relations’? *The relations existing between Christian brethren not in the same denomination*—as between us and the Lutherans, us and Southern Methodists, etc. These we have never withdrawn from the Northern Presbyterians. They consist in ministerial and Christian communion, Christian charities and hospitalities, recognition of their sacraments, and, in general, of their standing as a valid branch of the church catholic. Hence the reply we should have made to the demand, ‘Restore fraternal relations,’ ought constantly to have been, ‘*You have them already, unless you please to rupture them on your side!*’ And in restoring fraternal relations, in full form, to the Northern Presbyterians, without any amends or reparation, the moment they stopped cursing us, our Southern Assemblies showed a Christian forbearance and Christ-like spirit never surpassed on this earth; a spirit which I, for one, shall never hear disparaged without protest; a charity which, in any fair mind, would forever acquit them of the charge of spite in maintaining their righteous attitude on a wholly different point.”

*Correspondence by delegates*, however, was a very different matter. Of this he says:

“The other point, wrapped up under the foreign name of ‘fraternal relations,’ is the demand that we shall enter into a *special intercourse with the North, by annual delegates*. This is wholly another matter. It has a perfectly distinct historical meaning. The Old School Assemblies before the war maintained fraternal relations with every valid, however imperfect, branch of the visible church. It kept up the particular intercourse by annual delegates with very few—only the most orthodox Calvinistic Congregationalists, the Dutch Reformed and the secession churches. And the recognized meaning of the intercourse was this: *It testified to a special harmony of doctrine and ecclesiastical principles between that church and ours. It was a badge of virtual unity of principle*. Thus, for instance, when the New School Assembly seceded in 1838, our Old School Assembly, while recognizing her valid church character, and all the duties of fraternal charity toward her and her people, absolutely refused to keep up this special intercourse by delegates with her. To do so would have traversed our righteous and obligatory testimony against the partial errors of New Schoolism. It would have been a criminal self-contradiction, or else betrayal of the position of truth in debate between us and them. So now. This special intercourse by delegates, if not deceitful and dishonest, should mean virtual unity of principles.”

Since correspondence by delegates implied *virtual unity of principles*, he fought against this form of correspondence with the Northern Presbyterian Church because, *first*, this unity of principles *was wanting*. He says: ‘

“But the Northern Church chose to destroy that unity, both in doctrine and church order. By the Spring resolutions of 1861, she saw fit to introduce into her church government a principle of spiritual despotism essentially popish—the invasion of the right of members to follow their own consciences in questions wholly extra-scriptural and merely political. Thus defined by Dr. Hodge himself. This was dreadfully aggravated by the circumstances, which showed it an attempt to pervert the sacred powers of Christ’s church for dragooning free citizens into the support of what history will stigmatize as an aggressive, revolutionary partisan faction, with the most lawless and mischievous aims. This popish element of church order was signalized, moreover, by such mournful events as the persecution of the sainted McPheters, the virtual sanction of the invasion of their own St. Louis Presbytery by a provost marshal; the *ipso facto* orders, this invasion of the rights of the Synod of Kentucky; and this fundamental departure from Presbyterianism is jealousy retained and asserted by them to-day, as we shall see.

“Next came the corrupting of their doctrinal record, by their fusion with the New School. The amount of this mixture was that the Westminster Standards, while held as symbols of the amalgamated body, might be so explained in it as they had been actually explained in either body. The meaning of this is that any New Schoolism, which was countenanced or permitted in the New School body, should be entitled to tolerance in the mixed body. So Dr. Hatfield construed it at once, and the Fusion Assembly at once endorsed him by making him one of its most important officers. This has made the United Church responsible *for all the doctrinal errors* for which our wise fathers of 1838 separated themselves from the other branch, and for which they inexorably refused the special recognition of correspondence by delegates for thirty years. So that I now stand precisely where the Old School fathers—Miller, Alexander, Baxter, Hodge, Breckinridge, Plumer, Thornwell—stood on this matter. It was of this surrender of doctrinal purity that Dr. Hodge said, ‘If the truth be lost, all is lost.’ ‘But,’ you will say, ‘Dr. Hodge stayed with them.’ Yes, inconsistently he did; he felt that he had nowhere else to go; but we are in possession of a precious and blessed independence, given by the special favor of Providence. We *have* somewhere else to *stay* than in this ‘broad church.’ Does any one dream that Dr. Hodge would have left such a position as ours to go into a mixed body of which he intimated that, in losing pure truth, she had lost all? ‘But,’ it is said, ‘this mixed church has become marvellously Old School and orthodox. See how it disciplined Professor Swing and Mr. John Miller, and Mr. F. Moore,’ etc., etc. True, because these bold,

candid men compelled the result, by attacking propositions held as fundamental to their theology by New School men as by Old School men. That means nothing. Is there a Presbytery in that mixed church which will dare to do what a Presbytery in the Southern Church (Columbia Presbytery) has just done—mark the New School theory of effectual calling with judicial censure? They would as soon blow up the Assembly hall with dynamite! When I see pronounced New School men professors in their seminaries, when I see a known Socinian lecturing on doctrine by invitation of another, when I hear the prevalence of merely negative preaching in their churches, I cannot stultify myself by according them orthodoxy. No, their body exists by the toleration of doctrinal errors, which our fathers could not tolerate. Hence it cannot be righteous for us, under a pretext of fraternity, to make that special recognition of them which, if it means anything historically, means we avouch *unity of doctrinal and ecclesiastical principles.*"

Thus, for this twofold reason, he fought correspondence by delegates, viz.: the Northern Church had departed from spiritual liberty "by the popish usurpation of the Spring resolutions and their sequels," and she had connived "at New Schoolism." There was wanting the doctrinal and ecclesiastical similarity between the two churches historically indicated by such correspondence. Nor was this all.

He fought correspondence by delegates again because of the "fearful indictment of rebellion and treason unjustly hurled" by the Northern Church against the Southern. Their Assemblies have formally legislated against the Southern Church, heresy, schism and blasphemy, and against its most honored members, rebellion and treason. He looked for genuine repentance for these "malicious charges," and found it not. But he had too much principle to dare to overlook their obligation to set themselves right, and the obligation of the Southern Church to witness against these misdoings until they should be honestly repented of. Hear him again:

"Were there any secret sorrow for the libels, or rectification of the unpresbyterian theory of church power, no one would be further from sticking for a mere form of *amende*; but, while there may be, as we hope, a great softening of anger, *there is no change of theory and tyrannical principles*; and this is the saddest part of the history—the one most solemnly necessitating our continued testimony against their error of principle, that now, seventeen years after the end of the war, now amidst the calmness of assuaged passion, this powerful church stands to its obnoxious principles more unanimously than in May, 1861, when these principles compelled our separation. This I prove, first, by their

cautious, tenacious refusal of any disavowal when pointed to it; second, by their embodying in their own Church Digest, as a rule, the popish and tyrannical decision of the United States Supreme Court in the famous Walnut Street Church case. The amount of this decision was that all lay Christians shall, like lay papists in popish countries, hold their rights in ecclesiastical property at the mere will of a usurping ecclesiastical head authority, without any appeal to the courts of justice in this country. This ruling, so essentially popish that the very civil courts of the country have refused to conform to it, the Northern Assembly greedily embodied, and it stands to-day as their church law. Third, their recent Assembly of Springfield *unanimously declared* that the usurping principles of the Spring resolutions, and their successors, must stand. The usurping Assembly of 1861, whose action necessitated our protest, lacked sixty-six of being unanimous. Here, now, are the plain, stubborn facts. Let no man attempt to pooh-pooh them away. It is little short of moral obliquity to do this. Do we ourselves *adopt the tyrannies*, the virtual union of church and state enacted in the Spring resolutions? Do we now approve them? Or have we become simply fatigued with the duty of defending God's truth and the church's rights? There is no other explanation. Let no man say, 'Oh! this is raking up an antiquated dead issue. The Springfield Assembly unanimously assures us of their purpose to keep it alive! Let no one say, 'Oh! but the Confederacy is dead, and this doctrine, though tyrannical, can never again have a practical application.' I reply, first, who knows whether it cannot, except the Omniscient? All church history teaches us that it is not for man to say, 'This truth of God, henceforth has no more practical use.' It is profane; the church's only duty is to testify, and keep on testifying for all the truth God has given her.

"But again, there is no truth more likely to have a burning application again—not probably in the South, but in some other part of the United States—than the truth overthrown by the Spring resolutions. He is a shallow man indeed who deludes himself with the thought that political revolutions are completed and settled here, when everything shows that we have but passed the first act of the tragedy; that in seventeen years, two presidents have been violently murdered in time of peace, one forcible *coup d'etat* has been carried through, setting aside the elective will of the nation; chronic corruptions of suffrage and administration exist all the time, absolutely inconsistent with settled, constitutional government." . . .

Dr. Dabney points out that five separate charges had been made by the Northern against the Southern Church,—“disloyalty, treason, schism, heresy, blasphemy,”—and that the *quasi amende* made by the Northern Assembly, at Springfield, in 1881, extended to the last three, but did not extend to the



first two," and that the grievance of the libel remained, therefore, substantially unmitigated.

"It will be said, the charge of blasphemy, for instance, is and remains squarely retracted. Yes, but that was a part of their ruling which never did mean anything—which nobody believed to be true when uttered, which always was harmless to our reputation. Everybody knew that it was the mere foam on the angry lip. It was the charges of rebellion and treason, which had meaning and practicality in them, which really had (false) power to shade our good name; which endangered our necks and our estates and our franchises; which those Assemblies explained, without modifying, by the amiable recommendation to the Federal Government to hang us: and it is these charges which we are now informed, in the good year 1882, are not withdrawn. Let us state a little parallel. My Christian neighbor gets angry with me and publishes two charges on me: one, that I, being an officer of that institution, had embezzled a trust belonging to Union Seminary; the other, that I had, witch-like, ridden to Presbytery on a broomstick above the moon. I have been for years dealing with him precisely as our Saviour directs in Matthew xviii., but he has always refused any *amende*. At last he sends word that he is ready to join me in a general, square *retraxit* and reconciliation. After I have honestly shaken hands on this, he says, by way of explanation without modification, 'Now, mind, my *retraxit* is to be understood as extending only to that tale about the broomstick.' Well, this practically ruins it all, for the charge left against me was the damaging, and the only damaging one. Unfortunately, it has not been found impossible for a parson to embezzle trust funds, and the charge that I had done so is not intrinsically incredible, apart from my known reputation; but the charge of riding on a broomstick nobody had ever credited; it had always gone for nothing, and been understood as meaning nothing more than that my neighbor was 'blind-mad' when he said it. In just such a state their Springfield action leaves us; the charges of heresy and blasphemy never were, nor could be, credited. The men who made the charges were all along concurring with the rest of the Presbyterian world to which they made them in saying that 'Southern Presbyterians are well known to be the most conservative doctrinally, and most exemplary and strict, of the Presbyterian family of churches.' But it was their representation of us as rebellious, insubordinate factions, which had power of damaging our good name. It is these which are not expressly withdrawn. . . . The saddest part of the story is, the obvious motive which caused the Springfield Assembly to attach the fatal pendant to their *amende*.<sup>2</sup> It was very clear that the motive was secular and political; the fear to offend the political sentiments of their constituents at home by even seeming to surrender or modify the tyrannical and popish principle of

<sup>2</sup>"The fatal pendant" was the "Herrick Johnson *rider*."

the Spring resolutions; and now the *New York Observer* tells the plain truth, though by the use of those euphemisms which the *Observer* so well understands. In plain English, that Assembly passed the 'Herrick Johnson resolution' because it believed that the home people of their church still hold that deadly usurpation so passionately as to be indignant with even a seeming relaxation of it, even to gain the coveted reconciliation; and that Assembly passed it *unanimously!* This tells the sad story that politics still rule in that church; that really the principle is not healed at all; that the very central error which disrupted the church at first is still unanimously held in that Assembly; that the same reason exists for our maintaining our conscientious testimony, and our ecclesiastical independence. Well, it is sorrowful, but it is not our fault. The last way in the world to remedy this state of things is for us to waver in our right position, and thus sophisticate and mix truth with error."

Another of his reasons for opposing *correspondence by delegates* was "the tendency of this special intercourse to undermine the very existence of our church, and prepare the way for fusion with the Northern Presbyterians." He does not charge upon those who have advocated the intercourse that they had intended to lead to fusion, but says:

"Its logical result is fusion; so all the Northern papers have expounded it. I have shown that the historical usage and meaning of correspondence of delegates is a recognition of *virtual unity* of doctrinal and ecclesiastical principles. If this unity does not exist, the intercourse is dishonest. If it does, why not fuse? That is their argument. Grant the premise, and the inference will tell, even on reluctant minds. It is the premise which is erroneous and perilous, and should not have been granted."

He begged his readers to pause and remember what fusion meant. He declared:

"It means, then, in the first place, the division of our once happy and harmonious church; for let every man rest assured that there will be a large body of our eldership and membership, clear-eyed, self-respecting, loyal to Old School Presbyterianism, immovable, who are never going to be traded off to the corrupters of American Presbyterianism and slanderers of their father's virtues. (And this suggests the crowning argument against the Atlanta movement; that under pretense of ending contention with the errorists—whom it is our duty to contend with—it makes strife with our own brethren, with whom we should be at one, as we profess.)

"It means the unobstructed triumph, among American Presbyterians, of the virtually popish and tyrannical principle of the Spring resolutions,

and consequent usurpations, with the mischievous and inflaming applications it is likely to receive in future political collisions.

"It means that we surrender our tenure in all our church property to that new popish rule, devised by a radical Supreme Court, and greedily embodied in the Digest of the church.

"It means that we acquiesce in becoming doctrinally a 'broad church,' to the extent of tolerating, in the same communion, both the extremes of strict Calvinism and New Havenism, to such an extent as the two branches of the Northern Church tolerated either, between 1838 and 1869.

"It means that we surrender our New Book of Church Order, with all its improvements. . . .

"It means that we admit a 'rotary eldership,' thus surrendering our scriptural doctrine of the qualification and call of the ruling elder by the Holy Ghost, and his true ordination by his Presbytery, and placing ourselves at this half-way house of Congregationalism.

"It means the immediate collapse of our Seminaries and evangelistic agencies under the alien management of a great *omnibus* church. . . .

"It means, of course, that we must imitate the church which absorbs us in the ecclesiastical amalgamation with negroes, accepting negro presbyters to rule white churches and judge white ladies—a step which would seal the moral and doctrinal corruption of our church in the South, and be a direct step towards that final perdition of Southern society, domestic amalgamation; and the time would come in the South—yea, in the North also, as it found itself encumbered with this gangrened limb—a mulatto South, when all who had lent a hand, under the prompting of puling sentimentalism, to this result, would incur the reprobation of all the wise and good in terms as just, and as bitter, as those visited on Benedict Arnold. . . .

"Once more, fusion with the North would mean our betrayal of our righteous testimony against the rationalistic and skeptical features of modern Abolitionism—a testimony which is now faithfully sustained by our church alone in Protestant Christendom. This Abolitionism the Holy Spirit has expressly condemned in 1 Timothy vi. 1-5, characterizing it in the sternest language, as arrogant, perverse, mercenary, slanderous and false, and he has expressly legislated, 'From such, withdraw thyself.' Many, if not the majority, in that Assembly defiantly profess that Abolitionism; and the only legislation the Assembly itself has taken about them was to *denounce us* for protesting against it as Paul required us, as '*heretics and blasphemers.*' So that such fusion would be a flying in the face of God's express command."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The preceding quotations have been from an article entitled, "The Atlanta Assembly and Fraternal Relations." It appeared in the *South-western Presbyterian*, August 3, 1882. It is found in *Discussions*, Vol. II., pp. 503-524.

These and other arguments, of scarcely less weight, he made through years. They appear in his private letters, and in newspaper and review articles, varied in form according to the varying stages in the development of the thing he opposed. He had objected even to the action of the Louisville Assembly of 1870. This action, conservative as it was, was not so radical as he would have preferred. He would have had that Assembly say to the Northern, through its delegates, Messrs. Van Dyke, Backus and Dodge: We wish to say we have neither prosecution nor persecution to wage against your church for its past actions. That while we cannot but believe the amendment of whatever has been erroneous will do yourselves much honor—

“we recognize in full the duties of Christian forgiveness and charity, and the wrongfulness of any retaliatory measures on our part. Hence, we have no *demands* to make in order to the exercise of due Christian charity towards others. That the attitude we now hold, and purpose to hold, is best illustrated by the facts of our past, which facts are historically and literally these, viz.: that *we have all along been conceding, and now concede, to your churches everything which goes to make up real fraternal relations between the distinct branches of the catholic body of Christ, without stopping to ask whether the rights and courtesies have been equitably conceded to us, namely: full recognition of your church character as a part of the visible church; of your orders and sacraments; of your church rights, properties and endowments in every congregation or school voluntarily adhering; the offer of ministerial and Christian communion to your individual ministers and members among us, according to the merits of each personal case, and last, the offices of hospitality and mercy to all persons of yours who are in need or distress in our reach. So that we now and here do for you more, and more liberally, than you ask through your respected committee. Whereas you ask us to extend these fraternal relations on condition of certain difficult preliminaries, we say, You shall have them without any preliminary, as, in fact, you have them, on our part, all along.* That, in view of all the above, and of the fact that attempted explanations often result in inflaming old differences, we, acting in the interests of peace as sincerely as you, deem it wholly unnecessary to send commissioners for the proposed debates, inasmuch as we have all along granted what is proposed, so far as is consistent with our distinct independence as a denomination. For we must respectfully say that this independent attitude, assumed under conscientious conviction, we propose to maintain from the same sacred motives. . . . But we say, in fine, that as your overture refers to the discredit done religion by our ‘going to law before the unbelievers,’ we do cheerfully agree to appoint commissioners for the express and single purpose of taking all such

*controversies* from those about a house or manse, up to those for a Seminary endowment, *out of court*; by referring them to impartial and Christian arbiters, binding ourselves irrevocably to stand by the award, provided the other side does the same!"

He objected still more decidedly than he did to the moderate but conservative action of the Louisville Assembly, to the appointment, by the Assembly of 1874, of commissioners to the Baltimore Conference.

"Then, at least, we should have given the answer which we have described, and should have refused to send any commissioners save for the purpose of taking all property suits out of court. The worst blunder of all was the pledge given by our Assembly of 1875, at St. Louis, that we should enter into the annual exchange of complimentary delegates with the *omnibus* Assembly as soon as they should do one thing—retract their libels on us as schismatics, heretics and blasphemers, in 'a few plain words.' . . . This is a grave historical mistake, as appears from this thought. Historically, the meaning of this 'fraternal correspondence' is to express a special harmony of doctrine and order, and a special confidence and approval, singling out the beloved object even from among the rest of our brethren of the visible body of Christ."

This position he irrefutably argues.<sup>4</sup>

On this whole position Dr. Dabney expressed the substantial truth; he knew it; and nothing could keep him quiet on the subject. He knew that he was to be stigmatized as a "wrangler," though few men loved peace more. He knew he should be met with the cry of "Old war-horse!" He knew he should be held in ugly contrast to civilians and business men, who see no reason for any sort of separation between North and South. But he knew that those making this ugly contrast had overlooked the fact that business relations imply no sanction of, or responsibility for, the other party's moral or theological principles; and that our subjection to the same government with our business associates is the result of necessity, and does not involve the trampling of principle, on our part, into the dust. Hence, with a comprehension of the whole situation, and a just estimate of the baselessness of the detraction to which he was subject, he made his fight—a heroic fight for God's truth. Nor can it be doubted that he did much towards stop-

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<sup>4</sup> See article on "Fraternal Relation," in *Discussions*, Vol. II., pp. 479 and 480.

ping the tendency towards union, and its consequent subordination of the truth, for a time.

He had the satisfaction of knowing that his views were shared by such men as Thomas E. Peck, Benjamin M. Palmer, and many other of the very greatest and godliest men in the church. It must have been peculiarly gratifying to read some of the letters he received in this connection from the great New Orleans preacher. The closing words of a letter from him, dated October 21, 1876, are fitted to give both sorrow and joy:

“Another feature which should be brought out is that the reciprocity basis is one impossible for us to hold, and that it concedes the whole of our testimony against the political action of the Northern Church. On this point, and on one or two others, I take leave to send you a paper containing the proceedings of my own Presbytery at its recent meeting. I am not hopeful of the future. Our people lack tenacity in resistance, and give way so easily under the profession of sentiment. If we yield now, on the present footing of affairs, we will yield again, and we may be reduced to your illustration of Gideon’s men. Will you not try to be at the next Assembly? How much it would delight me to be thrown personally with you. My heart has been with you ever since the Assembly in Louisville. . . .

“Ever truly yours,

B. M. PALMER.”

Another movement which he opposed was that towards joining the Pan-Presbyterian Alliance. This project of a Pan-Alliance of the Presbyterians was ripened between 1874 and 1877, and its projectors volunteered an invitation to the Southern Presbyterians to enter. A majority in our Assemblies favored accepting the invitation. Dr. Dabney opposed our entering this Alliance. He did so for the following reasons, amongst others: First, it was notorious that, had slavery been in existence in our church at the time, the church would have been excluded, on that account, from the Alliance. But slavery had been abolished by force; the Southern Church had not changed her view as to the character of this relation. Material force had not washed that body free of “the black and damning stain” with which most of the churches in the Alliance had charged her. Second, he saw in the entering of the Alliance a step toward a “dishonest compromise” with the Northern Presbyterian Church, the thing he was fighting in his opposition to so-called “fraternal relations.” He believed that, having

charged that that church, in a critical moment, had "abandoned their covenanted constitution, usurped popish powers of perverting the spiritual authority of the church to override the secular rights and liberties of its members, thus assisted to precipitate upon us and our neighbors the horrors of invasion, rapine, bloodshed and subjugation," and that having charged upon it "a foul slander of our good name, which has been industriously published to the very churches with which we are asked to ally ourselves,—in joining the Alliance we "incontinently go across the water and *meet them in fraternal correspondence.*" Third, he saw that our church would only in rare cases be truly represented in the meetings of the Alliance; that there could be no adequate representation, on account of the great expense involved in attending the meetings; that generally only those ministers would go who were willing to take the trip at their own expense. Fourth, he believed that the church's money spent in defraying the expenses of the Alliance meetings would be indefinitely better expended in pushing our various church causes. Fifth, he knew that most of the churches in the Alliance were broad church as compared with ours, and that our joining the Alliance would make for broad churchism among us. Sixth, he saw that the movement tended to magnify outward unity. "The Protestant world will soon be educated to set inordinate store by that of which God makes least account—formal union, at the expense of that which he regards as of supreme value—doctrinal fidelity. He who does not see that the Evangelical Alliance has already begun to produce this disastrous result must be blind indeed. It is obviously the 'tidal wave' of modern sentiment, the '*zeit geist*' of our day, as truly as it was of the days of Leo the Great; and it is as vital to the life of Christianity now as it was then, that it be exposed and resisted." Seventh, his "crowning objection to our representation in this Alliance is that our own constitution forbids it." He held that, according to that constitution, our Assembly had "precisely as much right to appoint commissioners to such a body as to appoint a Grand Lama for Thibet." Is it said, "The Assembly only appointed a committee, with powers to appoint delegates?" "This evasion serves no purpose; for what the Assembly did by its committee, it did *per se*. . . . Now, either these councils are to be judicatories, exercising church power over the Assembly, or they are not. If they are, then representation in them is

substantially a new feature, outside of our constitution. That instrument calls our Assembly our supreme court. In it all appeals and references stop; from it emanate the highest instructions, under Christ. . . . But gentlemen will take the other horn of the dilemma; they say the councils of this Alliance are not to be church courts. Very well; then they are private and voluntary meetings of Christians. From this point of view, the Assembly has neither power nor business touching an appointment to them."

Here, again, Dr. Dabney's heroism of nature forbade that he should be deterred by epithets flung at him by those who favored the Alliance, such as "sore-head," etc. He felt not a little the personal criticisms which his brethren pronounced against him; and to one of the more prominent of them he wrote, with not a little impatience, on the 27th of July, 1876.

"But I do not mean to stand this charge of being a person unsafe in opinion by reason of petulant and blind passions. Self-respect says it is high time for me to disclaim the slander. And to defend myself from it, I simply point to *my history*. While my *brethren* have been thus slandering me, a political paper in the West was just enough to use these words: 'Dr. Dabney's mind is logical, and his turn that of a *debater*. But in the angry sense of the word, he has never been a polemic. While an open and bold asserter of his own views, his profound sense of justice and native courtesy have always prevented his giving a wound to his opponent's feelings; and his relations with all other denominations are of the kindest and most generous tone.' I have been a professional man thirty years, and have never had a *personal altercation!* I have been a teacher of men twenty-three years, and while permitting no disrespect from my pupils, *I have never had a 'tiff' with a student!* I have been in delicate relations with a faculty twenty-three years by no means homogeneous in sentiment, and have *never had a jar with a colleague!* How many can say this? Now, how does it become a man to charge *me* with being blinded by bad passions, whose life, like —— [his chief antagonist in the controversy], has been one continued quarrel? I intend to stand no more of this nonsense. True, I do not pretend to be devoid of the ethical and rational emotion of *moral indignation*. I try to feel it, under the guidance of truth, as vividly as I can. I believe, with Vinet, that love of the lovable *is truth*; hatred of the hateful *is truth*, and, if need be, wrath also."

Misrepresentations of his character and motives pained him; but they did not shut his mouth when he saw the cause of truth and of God in peril. He was unshakable in fidelity to his convictions, and absolutely outspoken.



In the General Assembly of 1878, he offered an elaborate and able paper, in which he would have had the body frankly and fully state its own past and present attitude on the subject of the relation of slavery, and the past attitude of the other bodies in the Alliance, and also on the subject of the spirituality of the church, and then inquire whether ministers and elders of the Southern Church, the views of the church being known, would be welcome in the Alliance. This was laid on the table. But he had the satisfaction of seeing go up to the Assembly of 1879 an overture from Central Texas Presbytery, asking the Assembly to say whether the action of the last Assembly, in tabling without discussion a paper offered by Dr. Dabney on the subject of the relations of our church to "the General Presbyterian Council," is "to be understood as actually or virtually surrendering our former position, or yielding up any or all the testimony made by us touching the matters contained in said paper." The committee recommended the adoption of the following minute, viz.:

"The action of our Assembly in sending delegates to the 'General Presbyterian Council,' and in tabling the paper alluded to in the overture of the Presbytery of Central Texas, is *not* to be understood as implying any change in our position upon questions of difference between ourselves and other bodies, or any surrender of our testimony."<sup>5</sup>

When Dr. Dabney saw this, he wrote on his copy of the tabled paper, "The General Assembly of 1879 adopted the substance of this when they sent commissioners to the Alliance." He had not been able to hold the church to the course which he believed to be the proper one on grounds of reason, conscience and the Bible; but his faithful and able efforts had been the occasion of her committing herself once more to the testimony which, for a time, God had made it easy for her to give, and which she was now in danger of ceasing to give, as he saw things.

The Pan-Presbyterian Alliance was established. Some good has come of it. Perhaps, some of the evils which Dr. Dabney foresaw, also. More of them may come. The great business of the church is to witness for the truth, and in God's way, and thus to gather in and build up the elect. To attempt aught besides, or to attempt this in another way than his way, is for

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<sup>5</sup>*Minutes of the General Assembly, 1879, p. 19.*

the church to come short. The Alliance is prohibited, in its constitution, from meddling with the peculiar views of any of its constituent churches. It is very "broad church." Our church may, in its own individual work, stand for its distinctive principles, as the Cumberland Presbyterians may for theirs, and the established churches for union of church and state. This very fact opens wide possibilities of both good and evil, the very evils Dr. Dabney so ably points out. It was a blessing to our body that it had in it a man who could compel close scrutiny of the Alliance, a man who would have our church be so frank, candid and honest. God forbid that the church should forget his example.

The Bledsoe controversy was another feature of the early part of this period. Albert Taylor Bledsoe was born at Frankfort, Ky., November 9, 1809; he died at Alexandria, Va., December 8, 1877. He graduated at the West Point Military Academy, 1830; became lieutenant, Seventh Infantry; in 1832 resigned; was made Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Kenyon College, Ohio, 1834; entered the ministry of the Episcopal Church, and was rector at Hamilton, Ohio, and Professor of Mathematics in Miami University, 1835-'36; left the ministry, owing to theological difficulties, and took up the practice of law at Springfield, Ill.; became Professor of Mathematics in the University of Mississippi, 1848, and in the University of Virginia, 1854. When the war between the sections broke out, he entered the Confederate service as a colonel, but was soon made Assistant Secretary of War. In 1863, he went to England to prepare a work on the Constitutional History of the United States. He returned to this country in 1866, and in 1867 began, at Baltimore, the publication of the *Southern Review*. In June, 1871, he became a Methodist, and preached occasionally in Methodist pulpits. In 1845 he had published, *An Examination of Edwards on the Will*; in 1853, *A Theodicy, or Vindication of the Divine Glory*. He subsequently published several other volumes, as well as wrote himself out with great fulness in his *Review*.

This sketch is enough to show that he was a man of a most active, acute and vigorous mind. He hated predestination and determinism. He had wrought this hatred into his *Examination of Edwards* and into his *Theodicy*. He wrought it into the pages of his magazine. It was a natural thing, therefore, that so active-minded and so easily able a defender of Cal-

vinism as Robert L. Dabney should take up the cudgels in support of the doctrines thus impugned. As far back as 1856, Dr. Dabney seems to have presented a somewhat displeasing view of Bledsoism to Bledsoe through the pages of the *Presbyterian Critic*, Baltimore. But the decisive work was done later. In 1876, Dabney published, in the pages of the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, an article entitled, "The Philosophy of Dr. Bledsoe." This was of the nature of a review of a half a dozen of Dr. Bledsoe's writings, published between 1871 and 1876, in some of which Dr. Dabney's teaching had been made the object of attack. Dabney's article of 1876 provoked a rejoinder from Bledsoe of a pretty savage sort; whereupon Dabney set himself, and in July, 1877, in a paper entitled, "The Philosophy of Volition"—a review, practically, of Bledsoe's entire publications on the subject—sent forth a masterpiece. Bledsoe was to die a few months after this publication appeared. But he could hardly have made a sufficient answer. It may be safely asserted that the article by Dabney on "The Philosophy of Volition"—his final reply to Bledsoe—is not surpassed by any similar essay in the English tongue for grasp and mastery.

While Dr. Bledsoe was too shrewd to adopt the old Arminian *formula*, that the will determines itself to choose; or the modern form of the heresy, that volition is an uncaused event in the world of spirit; while he admits the first principle, "Nothing arises without cause," he teaches: "The mind itself is simply the cause of its own volitions. Motives are, indeed, connected with volitions as their necessary occasions, but not as their efficient. The action of intelligence and sensibility, the presence of motives in the mind—all these, he admits, are the conditions *sine qua non* under which acts of choice take place; but still it is the mind itself, and that alone, which is the efficient or true cause of volition. And in this assertion he places the very being of our free agency and responsibility." This is Dabney's statement of Dr. Bledsoe's position; and it is an eminently fair statement of it. Dabney remarks further of it, as follows:

"Now this is more adroit than the old scheme demolished by Edwards, for it evades the most terrible points of Edwards' refutation. As Dr. Alexander has admitted, there is a sense in which, while the will, in its specific sense as the faculty of choice, is not self-determined, we intuitively know that *the soul is self-determined*, and that therein is

our free agency; but still the scheme of Dr. Bledsoe is the opposite of Dr. Alexander's, and is but the same Arminian philosophy in a new dress. When Dr. Bledsoe says that the mind is the true cause of all its own volitions, he means that this mind causes them contingently, and may be absolutely *in equilibrio* while causing them; he means that the mind does not regularly follow its own strongest judgment of the preferable when acting deliberately and intelligently; he means to deny the efficient certainty of whatever in mind produces volition; he means to apply his theory of the will to the very results in theology most characteristic of the semi-Pelagianism, or, even worse, of Pelagianism. It is to this philosophy he appeals to justify an omnipotent God in permitting sin, simply because he could not help any sinner's transgressing who chose to do so; to argue the necessity of synergism in regeneration; to deny the sinfulness of original concupiscence."

In his paper of 1876, Dr. Dabney did not deem it necessary to restate the impregnable argument by which the certain influence of prevalent motive has been so often established; he contented himself, rather, with pointing out omissions in Dr. Bledsoe's plausible theory—*e. g.*, "that of failure to perceive the essential difference between sensibility and desire, between the passive and conative powers of man's soul, and between the objective *inducement* and the subjective *motive*." Admitting, rather claiming, that objective inducement has no causative efficiency over volitions, Dr. Dabney passed to subjective motive, the conscious, active, spontaneous appetency; and pointed to our own consciousness to convince us that "deliberate volition always follows subjective motive; or that the choice will infallibly be according to the soul's own subjective, prevalent view and appetency." A stray sheep does not cause one man to purloin, nor another to restore it to its owner's field.

"But subjective concupiscence, *occasioned* by the sight of the animal, *caused* the one man to steal it; moral love for our neighbor as ourself *caused* the honest man to restore it. Let Dr. Bledsoe make full allowance for this distinction, and he will attain to what he has not reached, amidst all his studies—a clear understanding of the Calvinistic and Bible philosophy of the will; and here we can see in what sense Dr. Alexander could justly admit that while the faculty of will is not, the soul is self-determining. Motive, which is the uniform efficient of rational volition, is subjective. It is as truly a function of self-hood as volition itself. It is not an impression superimposed on the spirit from without; it is the soul's own intellection and appetency emitted from within.

"The reader is now, we trust, prepared for seeing how fatal is Dr.

Bledsoe's second omission in his analysis of free agency. He has left out the grand fact of *permanent, subjective disposition*—the *habitus* not *consuetudo*—of the Reformed theology. When we appreciate the flood of light which this fundamental fact of rational nature in that theology throws upon the main questions of free agency and morals, and when we see how usually great philosophers, as Dr. Bledsoe, overlook it, we are often amazed. He may rest assured it is the 'knot of the whole question.' Let this simple view be taken. Grant that the soul of man is self-determining. *Where then are we to seek the regulative law of its self-action?* No agent in all God's creation works lawlessly. "Order is heaven's first law." Every power in the universe has its regulative principle; is mind, the crowning being of God's handiwork, lawless and chaotic in its working? This regulative law of man's free agency is found in his disposition, his moral nature. Though one being detects another's disposition *a posteriori*, by deducing it from his observed volitions, yet in each spirit disposition is *a priori* to volition; for it is the original, regulative power which determines what subjective motives have place in the mind."<sup>0</sup>

The foregoing is sufficient to indicate the respective contentions in this debate. The issue of the debate has been stated. A word remains to be said as to the spirit with which these giants wrestled. Dr. Bledsoe seemed to feel that Dr. Dabney had criticised him without having given him a careful reading; that he had not cited him with accuracy; that he had charged his scheme of free agency as Pelagian in tendency, and had taxed it in other objectionable ways. These views are expressed in the *Southern Review* for January, 1877. He attributes to Dr. Dabney "imbecility" and "ignorance," etc. In his earlier articles, Dr. Dabney may have been somewhat careless in quoting page and word, and in drawing absurd corollaries from certain of Bledsoe's positions he may have given to the careless reader the impression that these propositions were from Bledsoe's own mouth; but if such be the case, he cites abundantly and with care in his final rejoinder, with the result of justifying his charges and betraying the abounding confusions of Bledsoe's teaching.

It is to be regretted that Dr. Bledsoe was not in good health, and hence was in no condition to attempt a reply to Dr. Dabney's last; but Dr. Dabney cannot be blamed with taking his great antagonist at a disadvantage. Bledsoe published his excoriating article in January, 1877. In the July issue of the

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<sup>0</sup> *Discussions*, Vol. III., pp 183-186.

*Southern Presbyterian Review*, Dabney came out with his Columbiad. Busy as he was with other things, that was quick work. Bledsoe died in December following. It is manifest, too, that of the two men, Dabney was always the more respectful and deferential in the treatment of his opponent in the debate.

Meanwhile, a secondary petty and annoying attack of Bledsoe on Dabney had begun, and was to be carried on by Bledsoe's friends after his death. Its origin had been as follows: In 1872, Dr. Dabney had, as has been seen, published a paper in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, on the "Theology of the Plymouth Brethren." In April, 1877, Dr. Bledsoe published in the *Southern Review* an article on the Plymouth Brethren, an attempted defence of what he believed to be a misrepresented people. In this paper, Dr. Dabney is charged by Dr. Bledsoe with an intention to deceive his readers by foisting certain words on a certain writer who had not used the words. He expresses the hope that Dabney will be able "in some way unknown to us, to acquit himself of the intention to deceive." He says: "Who does not blush for Dr. Dabney, and hang his head in shame. For our part, we would not be caught in the perpetration of such an act for ten thousand times ten thousand worlds. . . . Alas! for the pride and glory of Union Theological Seminary."<sup>7</sup>

Similar charges were made in the July and October issues. Dabney never heard of this charge against his honesty until November, and then as no copy of the *Southern Review* came to the Hampden-Sidney post-office, had to send off and borrow a copy.

The following letter shows whence and when he got one of the issues of the *Review* which contained the charge:

"FARMVILLE, VA., January 5, 1878.

"Rev. R. L. Dabney, D. D.

"DEAR BROTHER: Yours of January 1st was duly received. I send by Mr. Dunkum, with this, the number of the *Southern Review* you desired to see.

"As you know, the restless spirit which manifested itself in several fierce personal controversies, within two or three years past, is at rest in the sleep of the grave. Poor 'old Bled,' as some of us have been used to call him! I think, after all, and amidst all, he was a good man.

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<sup>7</sup> See these words quoted in *Central Presbyterian*, February 6, 1878.

If he has charged you wrongfully, I am sure it was not with malicious purpose to injure. For myself I have never allowed any of Bledsoe's statements to weaken my faith in the integrity and truth of the men he assailed. I paid little heed to this matter. If you made the mistake of charging one man with what another wrote or said, I felt sure it was an innocent mistake. If you think well, you can, of course, correct the error or false accusation; but I presume, as with myself, so with nearly all the readers of the *Southern Review*, the correction will be needless as far as your character and standing as a good and faithful man are concerned.

"If at any time I can serve you, please command my services.

"Yours very truly, PAUL WHITEHEAD."

The charge was foolishly made, and foolishly pressed. Dr. Dabney would have gained nothing by doing what was charged. What he really did was, substantially, to gather the real teachings of a certain Plymouth Brethren writer, and place them under quotation marks, and put them in a certain collocation with other quoted words, so that a careless or prejudiced reader *might* refer both passages under quotation marks to the same writer, but without intending to mislead any such reader. The question arises: Is it proper, when digesting a man's teachings into connected form, to use quotation marks? This was Dr. Dabney's chief, if not his only fault, if fault it be. It was certainly no sufficient ground for the persecution to which he was subjected for some months. Dr. Bledsoe had died on December 8, 1877, before it was practicable for Dr. Dabney to reply. He was mindful of the fact that Dr. Bledsoe was dead. In his first paper, he vindicated his own honesty in a frank, manly, straightforward way. His defence was purely defensive, consisting in a statement of facts without epithets or inference. A friend of Dr. Bledsoe's attempted a rejoinder a month or so later. The week following, Dr. Dabney replied, threshing the ground with his new assailant;<sup>8</sup> but the impression remains that it would have been better for him, while he is to be held as one of the most truthful and honest of men, and as having interpreted the books whose teachings he reduced accurately, to have been a little more careful in the use of quotation marks. True, the brilliant Prof. H. B. Smith used quotation marks in the same way, and it is often convenient, but an enemy may give the user trouble.

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<sup>8</sup> For these articles, see *Central Presbyterian*, February, 1878, April 3, 1878, and April 10, 1878.

During these years, Dr. Dabney found leisure and opportunity for the production of articles of great value on sundry other theological and evangelical themes. Thus in 1876 we have "Lay Preaching," a very kindly and respectful, but powerful indictment of lay preaching, even of the type of Mr. Moody's,<sup>9</sup> and "Prelacy a Blunder," a paper in which<sup>10</sup> he stalks around amongst papal and High Church Episcopal images, and demolishes them with the hammer of Thor:

"The prelatist supposes that the grace of Christ is applied to the soul, not as the Bible teaches, by the Holy Spirit, through the word rationally apprehended and embraced by faith, but by the Holy Spirit working miraculously, without the truth, but through a priestly and sacramental hand, just as when through a miracle-worker he casts out a demon, or heals a leper. In the eyes of a prelatist, ordination is not the confirming of a didactic and ruling ministration proceeding on the candidate's previous possession of natural and gracious qualifications, but it is a miracle wrought upon the candidate by the hand of an apostle, enabling him in turn to work certain other miracles. When the priest, clothed with this endowment, consecrates the Eucharist, he truly works a miracle, then there converting bread and wine into the real flesh and blood of Christ, and conveying by them supernatural and spiritual life into the souls of the persons into whose mouths he puts the elements. So, when he applies the water of baptism to infants, he works another miracle by it; he quickens the soul thereby which was born dead in sin. In a word, souls are brought into a state of salvation, not by a rational, scriptural and spiritual faith on the gospel, but by a miracle-working power deposited with the priest and dispensed by his sacramental forms; and the deposition of that power by the apostle-bishop is precisely a case like that of the communication of tongues and powers by the apostles' hands in the book of Acts."<sup>11</sup>

Having thus stated the meaning of prelacy, he proceeds to demolish the supposed scriptural grounds of prelacy. In this process, he draws a clear line between those gifts and powers of the Holy Ghost which enabled some men in the apostolic church to work miraculous signs, and the ministerial gifts and powers of scriptural clergymen. Removing the prelatist mistakes and errors touching the former, he does not leave one word or line of Scripture to support the theory of tactual succes-

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<sup>9</sup> In *Southern Presbyterian Review* for April, 1876. See *Discussions*, Vol. II., pp. 96 ff.

<sup>10</sup> See this in *Discussions*, Vol. II., pp. 218 ff.

<sup>11</sup> *Discussions*, Vol. II., p. 229.



sion and sacramental grace, and leaves it, as he says, "a mere dream-castle, with no basis except the corruptions of the uninspired and decadent ages of Christendom, the strength of blind and erroneous prescription, and the superabounding assertions of its advocates."

In 1879, we have "The Dancing Question," a learned, and very able polemic against promiscuous dancing in general, and the round dance in particular as a disciplinable offence according to the law of our church,<sup>12</sup> and "Endless Punishment," a dignified and noble review of Canon Farrar's *Eternal Hope*, and of the *Death of Death*, by an "Orthodox Layman." With peculiar gentleness, because of the awful subject, he brought out the "foolish, uncandid and mischievous" character of Farrar's book, shows that its arguments are weak and self-contradictory, its misrepresentations patent, and that it is suited to lulling impenitent men into false security by holding out the delusive hope of repentance after death. Nor did he deal with the other work in a less effective way. We have in this year also, "The Public Preaching of Women,"<sup>13</sup> a *masterly* discussion, in excellent tone. He shows that it is an "assault of infidelity on God's truth and kingdom," and that it ought to be withstood as any other assault. He published in this year, 1879, too, a sermon on "Parental Responsibilities," a paper of tremendous power. In 1880, we have "The Sabbath of the State," a very wise and thorough-going vindication of the duty of the state to have a Sabbath, the gist of his contention being as follows:

"If the Christian Sabbath were nothing but an ordinance of the spiritual kingdom and means of redemption, then the state should leave its enforcement, as it properly does that of the Christian worship and sacraments, to the persuasions of the church; but while the day is this, it is also another thing; the necessary support of that natural theism, domestic virtue, and popular morality, which are the foundations of the state. The state is from God, exists by his ordinance, holds its powers by delegation from him, and has no other basis for the righteousness it seeks to enforce between man and man than his will. On the basis of atheism, there can be no stable structure, either of ethics or government. Hence the state's right to exist includes her right to protect these essential conditions of her existence, and to enforce that outward observance of the Sabbath rest, which alone makes the inculcation of God's fear

<sup>12</sup> *Discussions*, Vol. II., pp. 560-593.

<sup>13</sup> Appeared in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* for October, 1879.

and of public and private virtue practicable, through those distinct, but friendly, coöperative agencies which God has ordained to keep men in his fear, the family and the church."

In the year 1880 appeared, also, his "The System of Alexander Campbell: An Examination of its Leading Points," a most drastic *exposé* and utter overthrow of that pretentious, but shallow and fallacious "no-creed" creed.<sup>14</sup> In 1881, we have "Vindictory Justice Essential to God," a powerful sermon on Romans ii. 6-11. It appeared as an article in the *Southern Pulpit*, April, 1881. In this year we have, also, "The Influence of the German University System on Theological Literature," a very instructive and generous exposition, accompanied by trenchant, but just criticism; and "The Revised Version of the New Testament," a relatively brief, but pregnant and effective criticism of various changes in text and translation. In 1882, he published, also in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, his "Refutation of Prof. W. Robertson Smith." He tells, in part, what he thinks of "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church," in the following paragraph:

"This book may be justly described as *thoroughly untrustworthy*. The careful reader can hardly trust the author in a single paragraph. Citations are warped, history misrepresented, other theologians' views adroitly travestied, half truths advanced for whole ones. All is dogmatic assertion. In the construing of Scripture statements, the author, as if he were the critical pope, discards expositions which do not suit his purpose, however well supported by critical learning and the greatest names, without giving reasons for his decrees. His readers have not a hint that the soundest biblical learning has rejected his views, and that on conclusive grounds. Everything which does not please him is absolutely uncritical; so much so as, in the majority of cases, to deserve no refutation, nor even mention. Must the well-informed reader explain this as a disingenuous and wilful *suppressio veri*, or as ignorance? It is more charitable to him to surmise that, with all his affectation of mastery of modern critical science, his knowledge is really shallow and one-sided, and that he has fallen under the blighting influence of his leaders. The charitable reader may think this judgment severe. If he afflicts himself, as we have done, with a careful study of his book, he will conclude that the verdict is just, even forbearing. He will reach the same conclusion if he will ponder our specific criticisms."

All those who hold, with Dr. Dabney, the essential inerrancy of the Scriptures, must admit the truth of his view of Smith's

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<sup>14</sup> This fine article is found in *Discussions*, Vol. I., pp. 315 ff.

work, and that he pulverizes it. In 1883, the church was stirred by certain brethren, who plead for a ministry without any classical acquirements. A bright young brother had published in our *Review* two awakening essays entitled, "An Inquiry into the Aggressiveness of Presbyterianism." In answer to the positions taken in these essays and other signs of restlessness in the church, Dr. Dabney came out, in the April number of the *Review*, with, "A Thoroughly Educated Ministry," a paper whose positions have been abundantly justified by the subsequent history of the church. This is no time to grow lax on the subject of ministerial education.

The note accompanying the manuscript, when sent to the editor of the *Review*, is characteristic of the writer, and contains a historic touch worth preserving:

"January 27, 1883.

"*The Rev. J. B. Adger, D. D.*

"DEAR BROTHER: You will find herewith an attempt at a manuscript on the duty of educating our ministry thoroughly. The discussion is exciting much attention, and it is a surprise to me to see men like the editor of the *Central Presbyterian*, the Elder ———, Dr. ———, and Rev. ——— seemingly giving in to this wild-fire. These are days of innovation. It really seems as though the fact that none of our forefathers have been fools enough to try a plan is a keen inducement now to adopt it. The principle at the bottom of this spirit of innovation is mostly *conceit*. Prudent people say, 'That plan when tried before was found to be obstructed by this or that obstacle or bad consequences.' Oh! that makes no difference to us; the former experimenters were not *smart* like us. We shall be cute enough to prevent the obstructive consequences, and get the good without the evil. In a word, the well-tried experience of former men does not profit us, because those old fellows were not smart enough to experiment for such smart people as we are.

"I do not know how the manuscript will strike you. I have tried to avoid everything like harshness or sarcasm in dealing with young ———. As his article was anonymous, I wish mine to appear anonymously also.

"I hope that you keep well this hard weather. We have had a gloomy and severe month here. I keep within doors.

"Yours faithfully,

R. L. DABNEY."

The writings that we have thus described since speaking of the Bledsoe controversy, would alone compose a stout volume of proximately four hundred octavo pages; and, in the absence of any other writings whatever on his part, would of them-

selves demonstrate the author's vast range of theological learning and extraordinary abilities as a thinker and writer. But the revision and republication of his *Theology*, the publication of his *Sensualistic Philosophy*, his fight against the tendency toward the fusion of the churches, his fight with Dr. Bledsoe, *et al.*, and these sundry writings, and others not noticed, on theological topics, and his professorial work, all together, could not sate his tireless energies. He is interested in the secular world, also, and devotes to it time and thought.

In the year 1883, there appeared, in the January, July and October issues of the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, a discussion of "Inductive Logic." The first of these articles appeared under the caption, "What is Inductive Demonstration?" The second, under that of "The Nature of Physical Causes, and their Induction." The third bore the title, "The Metaphysical and Theological Application of Induction and Analogy." In these articles, which together cover more than one hundred octavo pages, Dr. Dabney makes a substantial contribution to the light on this important subject. It is hardly too much to say that for the first time amongst British and American writers he lifts the process clear of confusion, and proves the real inductive process to be a department of syllogistic reasoning. Through a review, he brings out the facts that—First. "Sometimes the mere collocation of resembling cases has been called induction." Second. "Sometimes the name has been given to the mere tentative inference from some of the observed instances to the all, including the unobserved." Third. "Sometimes it has been used to describe what is in reality no *process* of argument at all, but the mere formulating in a single proposition of a class of observed facts, as when having seen by inspection a given predication true of each and every individual separately, we predicate it of the class." He then shows that inductive demonstration is another and a higher thing. "It is the valid inference of the law of nature from observed instances of sequence, by applying to them a universal, necessary judgment, as premise, the intuition of cause for every effect. It has often been said, as by Grote's *Aristotle*, for instance, that induction is a different process from syllogism, and is, in fact, preliminary thereto; that induction prepares the propositions from which syllogism reasons. This is true of that induction, abusively so called," the induction spoken of further back under first and third. It is not true inductive demonstration. It has,

indeed, usually been assumed that induction is a different species of reasoning from deduction. But the actions numbered first and third above are not argumentative processes at all. They do not lead to new truths. They merely formulate in general terms or general propositions, individual perceptions or individual judgments, already attained. "True induction, or inductive demonstration, is simply one department of syllogistic reasoning, and is as truly deductive as the rest of syllogism, giving us, namely, those deductions which flow from the combination of the universal and necessary intuition of cause, with observed facts of sequence."<sup>15</sup>

In addition to the true service done to the physical sciences in this discussion, Dr. Dabney gives happy, if incidental, aid to a sound philosophy and an orthodox theology.<sup>16</sup>

During these years Dr. Dabney gave no little time to the consideration of the common school system as imposed by the Underwood Constitution on the State of Virginia. He published numerous articles on the subject. In 1876, a long article on "The Negro and the Common School," in the columns of the *Planter and Farmer*. He opposed the common school education of the negro, according to the method employed in Virginia, on the grounds that the negro does not need it to fit him to exercise the "right of suffrage," since the negro will soon be stripped of that "right"; that the education would not lift the negro to competence to vote, if voting were allowed him; that the common school education will make the negro worse, pave the way to idling and inefficiency in manual labor, and immorality. He argued strongly that if, contrary to his contention, the negro should be lifted up by his education, then amalgamation of the races would follow—a still more awful curse to the whole country. He suggested as remedies for the dire conditions which he had depicted, resort to "impartial suffrage," that is, to a restriction of the right of suffrage very much such as the Constitutional Convention sitting in Richmond in this year (1902) has, at length, been trying to give, and to a reform of the school system, or the annihilation of the

<sup>15</sup> *Discussions*, Vol. III., p. 428.

<sup>16</sup> Dr. Dabney seems to have been invited to make the annual address before the Victoria Institute, or Philosophical Society of Great Britain, on the 30th of June, 1884. He had read, at the time, an address on "*Inductive Logic*," for which the thanks of the body were tendered him, the Earl of Shaftsbury presiding.

Underwood system, and the establishment of one similar to that in vogue in Virginia prior to 1861. His idea was not to provide for the education of all negro children, but for the aspiring ones, who should be unable to educate themselves, by having a negro literary fund.

“Let two separate literary funds then be created, one for whites and one for blacks, each separate, and each replenished from the taxation of its own class. Let ‘each tub stand upon its own bottom.’ Instead of the State undertaking to be a universal creator and sustainer of schools, let it invite parents to create, sustain and govern their own schools under the assistance and guidance of an inexpensive and (mainly) unsalaried board, and then render such help to those parents who are unable to help themselves, as the very limited school tax will permit. And let the existence of some aspiration in parents or children be the uniform condition of the aid; for without this condition, it is infallibly thrown away. One man may take a horse to water, but a hundred can’t make him drink.”<sup>27</sup>

This paper excited much comment in the current press. The advocates of the common school system championed their cause. The protagonist of these champions was Dr. William H. Ruffner, the State Superintendent of the Common Schools; and to Dr. Ruffner, Dr. Dabney replied in a series of fine articles in the Richmond *Enquirer*. In the first of these, while declaring, “*I am an advocate for the State’s providing, if necessary, all the aid for children’s schooling which is really desirable and will be really utilized by them—that is, upon the old Virginia plan,*” he maintains that the promise of universal education by the Underwood system is delusive and mischievous; that the State—American State—is incompetent to give an education of a desirable moral character, and that it would be impossible to *educate* all men, were the State fit by nature for the work. We cannot make “silk purses of sow’s ears.” He predicts that the effort to give a common education will lead to compulsory education. In the next paper, he maintains that the State educational system involves the ideas of the levellers, which is impracticable and dangerous; that the little education which it may succeed in giving will prove dangerous. In the next paper he shows that, according to this system, the children of the decent must become companions of the children of the vile, and thus be corrupted; and that demagogues can use this system

<sup>27</sup> *Discussions*, Vol. IV., p. 190.

to give currency to their views and ensnare the people. In the next paper, he argues powerfully that the public schools, in States wherein the American theory of separation of church and state obtains, cannot teach the Bible, that no good morals can be taught without the Bible, and that there can be no proper or desirable education without the instillation of good morals. A little later, he published two papers in Libby's *Princeton Review*, in which many of these notions were more elaborately argued. And in January, 1879, he came out again in the *Southern Planter*, with an article under the caption, "Free Schools," in which he belabored the Underwood system like a Titian, and held in admired contrast the old Virginia plan, and even the plan adopted in Georgia after the war.

Dr. Dabney believed that in the ordering of Providence the *duty of education rests with the parent*; and that neither state nor church is to usurp it; but that "both are to enlighten, encourage and assist the parent in his inalienable task." In support of his view that the direction of the education of children is neither a civic nor an ecclesiastic function, he argued as follows:

"First, we read in Holy Writ that God ordained the family by the union of one woman to one man, in one flesh, for life, for the declared end of 'seeking a godly seed.' Does not this imply that he looks to parents, in whom the family is founded, as the responsible agents of this result? He has also, in the fifth commandment, connected the child proximately, not with either presbytery or magistrate, but with the parents, which, of course, confers on them the adequate and prior authority. This argument appears again in the very order of the historical genesis of the family and state, as well as of the visible church. The family was first. Parents, at the outset, were the only social heads existing. The right rearing of children by them was in order to the right creation of the other two institutes. It thus appears that naturally the parents' authority over their children could not have come by deputation from either state or visible church, any more than the water in a fountain by derivation from its reservoir below. Second, the dispensation of Divine Providence in the course of nature shows where the power and duty of educating are deposited. That ordering is that the *parents* decide in what *status* the child shall begin his adult career. The son inherits the fortune, the social position, the responsibility, or the ill-fame of his father. Third, God has provided for the parents social and moral influences so unique, so extensive, that no earthly power, nor all others together, can substitute them in fashioning the child's character. The home example, armed with the venerable authority of the father and the mother, repeated amidst the constant intimacies of

the fireside, seconded by filial reverence, ought to have the most potent plastic force over character. And this unique power God has guarded by an affection, the strongest, most deathless, and most unselfish, which remains in the breast of fallen man. Until the magistrate can feel a love, and be nerved by it to a self-denying care and toil equal to that of the father and mother, he can show no pretext for assuming any parental function."

He held that the State had no more right to invade the parental sphere than the parent to invade theirs. "The right distribution of all duties and power between the three circles would be the complete solution of that problem of good government which has never yet been solved with full success." His ideal of the solution of the educational problem was as follows, viz.:

"Let us suppose that both state and church recognize the parent as the educating power; that they assume towards him an auxiliary instead of a dominating attitude; that the state shall encourage individual and voluntary efforts, by holding the impartial shield of legal protection over all property which may be devoted to education; that it shall encourage all private efforts; and that in its eleemosynary character it shall aid those whose property and misfortunes disable them from properly rearing their own children. Thus the insoluble problems touching religion in state schools would be solved, because the state was not the responsible creator of the schools, but the parents. Our educational system might present less mechanical symmetry; but it would be more flexible, more practical, and more useful."

These writings were informing and powerful. Few readers, perhaps, would agree with the author in every position which he takes here; but some very thoughtful men at the time gave the most emphatic endorsement, not only on his general views on the proper educating power and the relations of church and state thereto, but of his condemnation of the Underwood system. They are commended by some very thoughtful men of to-day. These papers are worthy of the study of statesmen and ecclesiastics, and of all good citizens and good Christians. While he does not demonstrate the truth of his every position, he shakes the torch of truth around with effect vastly illuminating.

It should be said that he made this fight without expecting any speedy adoption of his views. He was not a man "to abate one jot of heart or hope" because the world was not jogging



his way. He *enjoyed* uttering his testimony against the current common school system as "infidel in tendency," "disorganizing," and "Yankeeish."

Dr. Dabney found time during these years for the study of other political topics. Amongst his literary remains of the period is a historical paper touching the origin of the war between the sections. It was published in the *Southern Historical Society Papers*. It is deeply interesting, and is presented in the form of a memoir of a narrative received of Col. John B. Baldwin, of Staunton, Va. It gives the account of Colonel Baldwin's interview with Mr. Lincoln, when sent on his private mission from the Virginia Secession Convention to Mr. Lincoln, in April, 1861. "It is a valuable contribution to the history of the origin of the war." Another strong paper from this period is found in a clipping, apparently of the *New York World*, on "Repudiation in Virginia," in which the political and social situation in Virginia, and the causes which had led to it, are boldly and graphically sketched. It must have made very hot reading for such Readjusters as chanced upon it. Still another production was his grand and awful address on the "New South."

The history of the framing and delivery of this speech is worth hearing, and we have it substantially in Dr. Dabney's own words:

"I had been spending parts of May and June, 1882, in a laborious preaching tour in Southern and Western North Carolina. I reached home the Saturday before College commencement, pretty well broken down. I had a missionary appointment for the next day down at Brown's Church, in Cumberland county, fifteen miles off. But Saturday afternoon a committee of the Philanthropic Society came rushing over to beg me to deliver the main commencement address on Wednesday. I was an old Phip. It was their year to choose the speaker. They had struck too high, selecting first one and then another big politician, who temporized and then refused. So here they were, without any speaker at all, and the Union men, who had succeeded grandly the previous year, flouting them for their failure. I said to them, 'Were I not a good-natured old man, I should view it thus: that you really do not think me fit to represent you, if you could get anybody else. You wish to do with me as the housekeeper does when company comes, and she has a skimpy dinner; she trots out her cold souse, not because it is much eating, but it covers a place on the naked board. Well, I will be your cold souse, provided your president will sanction your selection.' They said, 'Of course he will, gladly. What is the use of such a proviso?'

I said to them, 'Perhaps not so much of course as you think. You think, very rightly, that there ought to be no doubt of the acceptance of a man who has lived here twenty-nine years, who has given his services and his money to the College, who has twice acted successfully as its temporary president; but we shall see what we shall see.' Well, Monday forenoon, here came Dr. Atkinson, with hot but embarrassed zeal, to tell me that before he could give his consent he must know what my topic and its treatment were to be. I, being a cantankerous, bitter old man, did not ask him whether he had made such a demand of Speaker Thomas S. Bocoock, Ran. Tucker or Judge W. M. Treadway, before allowing them to speak. I told him very good-naturedly my topic and treatment. Whereupon he said I might speak. I suppose he thought, or some fool told him, that I would discuss the Yankee Assembly, with its *mutatis mutandis*, resolutions and the Herrick Johnson rider. Of course, I had taste and judgment enough not to drag in so alien a subject upon a college commencement platform. Having now but parts of two days, I attempted to write nothing. The speech was *extempore*, none of its verbal dress thought out and nothing written, except some heads on one sheet of note-paper. Wednesday came, and they gave me the fag end of the afternoon, with a tired and listless audience. When I rose, Dr. ——— rose in his place, far forward, and stalked down the aisle with an air of ostentatious protest. Being a cantankerous, hard old man, I never asked nor hinted the slightest amends from him for this public slight. As soon as I began, I waked up my audience and held them to the end. This was my speech on 'The New South.' When I closed, a large part of the audience was in tears. One after another of the grave Trustees came and took my hand, and wrung it, while the tears were running down their cheeks; some sobbed aloud, unable to control their feelings. I afterwards wrote the speech out, at Charley's request, and he had it nicely printed, in Raleigh. When John Randolph Tucker received a copy, he wrote me a kind letter of thanks. He said that there were two writings which would always hold the transcendant place with him for true insight and for power of expression. One was Thornwell's 'Dying Appeal to the Confederates'; the other, this 'New South.'"

There were still other writings of a character more or less political in this period. Throughout this entire period, up to 1882, Dr. Dabney was co-editor with Dr. John B. Adger, of Columbia, S. C., of the *Southern Presbyterian Review*. He gave himself to this form of labor with his customary zeal and efficiency. This work necessitated much extra correspondence. We find him writing in many directions, soliciting articles for the different departments of the *Review*, reading and editing manuscripts, making suggestions to the authors, and so forth.

He maintained, in connection with his work, a very interesting correspondence with Dr. Adger. He was a man who could rarely confine himself, in a letter to a friend, to mere details of business. Hence these letters abound in references and sketches of contemporary movements. The following specimens are offered in illustration of the correspondence :

"February 10, 1881.

"REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER: I have at last recovered Dr. Miller's paper on Endless Punishment. I asked him to modify it, and he has done so partially. Still I dislike, first, his statement as to God's punitive justice, on page 2; second, his statement as to inability; third, his statement that God extends mercy to *all he can*. I believe Dr. Miller's meaning in these places is correct; that, as to the last, for instance, if I asked whether he meant to deny that God's omnipotence could have converted a Judas consistently with a Judas' free agency, Dr. Miller would say emphatically he did not mean to deny it—that he was no Pelagian; but what he meant was, mercy's not being extended to all in hell was due, not to any stint in God's mercy, which, like all his attributes, is infinite, but to reasons known to his holiness and wisdom *properly* limiting mercy from those souls.

"But such is Dr. Miller's bent for verbal paradox and antithesis that he is very likely to be misunderstood.

"Now, I send on the manuscript, because you may still be in need of it to fill the January number (I exceedingly regret your embarrassment about this). If so, it may be used, with advertisement to the reader, that ours is a 'free journal.' Again, I think it would be well to annotate these ambiguous places, claiming the orthodox sense for Dr. Miller, and very distinctly disclaiming a heterodox one for ourselves. Supposing that you may need 'copy' I send it on, and leave the use to your own judgment. I shall try to do my part for the April number. I have already done a good deal of work on an article for it. I did not suppose there was any chance to get it ready for the January number. After my return from Europe in October, my leeway had to be made up, and I could not write sooner.

"Sincerely your brother,

"R. L. DABNEY."

"*The Rev. Dr. J. B. Adger.*"

"February 2, 1882.

"*The Rev. J. B. Adger, D. D.*

"DEAR BROTHER: I send by this mail some 'copy' for the next number of the *Review*. One is a printed piece from the *Presbyterian Review*, the one now supported by Shedd and Hodge, etc., by the Rev. Dr. Vaughan, an old and valued contributor of our own. I thought so well of the article that I send it to you, in order, if we are scant of matter for the April number, we may use it. I have not mentioned the

matter to Dr. Vaughan, and shall not until you express your opinion of it. The next is a *book notice* of Dr. Austin Phelps' work on Homiletics. Please publish this *anonymously*. The next is Mr. Hawes' article on Jesus' baptism, which I send back emended. I think it is a pretty fair article.

"The next is a review of Mr. Davis' *History of the Confederacy*. This, if published at all, I also wish to go in *anonymously*. It has been a perplexing task to me. On the one hand, everything convinced me that our journal *ought to contain* a full notice of the work, from Mr. Davis position, from its own ability and weight, from the importance of the subject. On the other hand, it was almost impossible for *me* to notice it candidly and honestly, without expressing a fulness of sympathy with the author, which would communicate to my article a complexion *too political*, and too partisan for a theological Review. Your own eye will detect the expedients I have resorted to, one main one being to let Mr. Davis speak for himself. The other, to put the gravamen of my own remarks chiefly on the moral and religious results; still another, to avoid making any charge of demoralization by subjugation, myself, against the South, but to let the Yankees make it, and only speak of it as hypothetical. If you conclude that it is not prudent to publish all of it, I shall not be surprised nor offended. I felt so much doubt myself as to re-write the most, and after *toning it down* as much as I could, it was not much less sharp in spirit (though not in letter).

"I was greatly in hope that the January number would appear *on time*, as we had sent in our copy so early; but I have not seen it yet. I feel particularly annoyed, especially by this delay of my article on Robertson Smith, in view of its being so completely forestalled by Dr. W. H. Green's in Hodge's *Review*, which was pre-announced, and then was punctually out on January 1st. Our editors are noticing that, quoting it, praising it. After so long a time, mine will come creeping out, and will wear the appearance of being a plagiarism of his, though probably written first, and certainly written in absolute independence of him. This is very annoying and unlucky. A more prompt issue of our numbers is essential to the success of the journal.

"Your last interesting letter did not reach me until two days ago. I handed it promptly to Dr. Peck, who informs me he has written or will write to you.

"I cannot but feel much sympathy with you as to the proposed comment on the International Sunday-school Lessons. In the first place, I feel towards the whole plan, very much as a Yankee humbug. I cannot see, for the life of me, why a Presbyterian pastor should make his Sunday-school study a given passage this Sunday, because other schools happen to have that passage that Sunday; or why he should delegate his discretion as to what the particular state of his school most needs to a self-constituted committee, away off yonder, especially

a committee who make a point of displaying their arrogance in ignoring our church. I am absolutely out of sympathy with the whole thing. Again, the assumption which underlies these journalistic expositions is very farcical and absurd, as though there *were no commentaries* on Scripture adequate to prepare a Sunday-school teacher and class. The work strikes me as wholly superfluous, substituting hasty, shallow, ephemeral commentaries for the solid and thorough ones existing in books. However, this is the fashion of the hour, and I feel that protest is vain. Our people and ministers are determined to be in fashion in the matter, and 'being in Rome, do as the Romans do.'

"I think your point is well taken, that the Assembly selected Dr. Hazen for a business agent, and not for a commentator; but from what I hear of him in Richmond, I suppose he is as competent as most others. They say his sermons there are regarded as very orthodox and scholarly. I do not see that anything can be done, but that valuable service which you have performed as to Dr. Brown; watch the series, and if error is printed, denounce it. I foresee that if action is sought in our Assemblies, the answer will be, Dr. Hazen is as much responsible to his Presbytery for printing error as were the brethren who did the work before him, Drs. Brown, Palmer, etc. This reply will satisfy the Assembly, and nothing will result, I think from remonstrance.

"Faithfully and sincerely yours,

R. L. DABNEY.

"P. S.—Dr. Peck will have, for April number, a memorial article on Stuart Robinson. Good, of course."

In 1874, Dr. Dabney canvassed the matter of establishing a Review in Virginia. He sought a man of ability to edit and publish the Review. He conferred with Mr. (J. C.) Southall<sup>15</sup> amongst others, and for a time seems to have entertained the hope of establishing such an organ for the maintenance of the truth as seen from the point of view of conservatives in the spheres of theology, mental and moral philosophy, the physical sciences and sociology. In 1875, he made an effort to purchase, or have purchased, from Dr. Woodrow, of Columbia, the *Southern Presbyterian Review*. The transaction could not be effected. Accordingly, we find him and Dr. Adger conferring as to whether the *Review* cannot be removed to Richmond, Charleston, S. C., or elsewhere, and an effort made to greatly increase its circulation. It seems probable that he and Dr. Adger would have attempted a much more elaborate *Review*, if

<sup>15</sup> Dr. Dabney, in a letter in which he alludes to a conversation with "Mr. Southall" about the matter, does not give the initials; but it may be safely inferred that Mr. J. C. Southall was the man.

they could have found a suitable business editor, who would have embarked in the enterprise with the necessary capital and push.

The reader has remarked often already the universality of Dr. Dabney's interests. His letters on matters of business are variegated with frequent comments on current history. For instance, we read in his letter to Dr. Adger, November 7, 1876:

"We have all noted, with great sympathy and indignation, the invasion of your State. It is a burning wrong. Retribution will surely come in due time, and in fearful form. I fear we may all have to suffer much before the deliverance comes. This has been an important day. The election has, I hope, passed off quietly. By to-morrow we shall begin to know something of the returns. I have no sanguine hopes."

The following letter from his friend, Mr. Niven, of New York, shows that Dabney had been doing some vigorous painting of the political conditions, and that he, perhaps, had penetrated deeper into the real situation than his correspondent:

"NEW YORK, December 18, 1876.

"*Rev. Dr. Dabney.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND: Yours of the 12th instant has been before me for several days, as I wanted time to think over its contents. I sent you two daily papers to show the public pulse on the subjects you speak of, as looked at here. My feelings were very akin to yours when these *thimble-riggers* began to show their game. But I am now disposed to be more patient, as impetuosity on our part is evidently what the Radicals desire. I had a letter from a prominent member of Congress from this State a few days ago, assuring me that the Democrats of the House of Representatives are a unit and understand their position. Their watch-word, 'Prudent but firm,' asking nothing wrong, and submitting to nothing but right. Their committees are at work, and their reports will be the entrenchments from which they propose to fight, and in such a way as to carry the popular verdict with them. I think we may trust them. Wade Hampton's course in South Carolina gives the key-note to the contest, and is receiving and is worthy of all commendation. If the rascals could provoke an armed outbreak, they would be delighted.

"I think you misjudge Tilden. He never was a war Democrat, albeit his friends had to handle that subject very gingerly during the campaign. The Republican papers openly and continuously charged him with his anti-war proclivities, and tried hard to hurt him in the canvass. In the condition of the Northern sentiment, this matter had to be blinked as best they could. But I know from personal converse with the man that he was *anti-war* and *pro-slavery*. It was the second year

of the war, I think, that I had occasion to spend several hours at his private rooms in reference to some legal advice. After that was over, he said, 'I want to talk with you about the past and present of the country. I followed,' he said, 'Van Buren's lead as to his "free soil" notions. You remained an Old Hunker. In looking back, I see clearly that you were right and we were wrong. We followed Van Buren into a heresy to avenge what he thought a personal wrong, and that miserable movement was the first step towards this dreadful civil war.' And then going to his book-case, he brought out several volumes and laid them on the table. Said he, 'This wretched business has set me to investigating the negro. I believe I have done it thoroughly, as far as books can give me light, and I am free to say that the negro is not, and never was, fit for any place but such as he occupied in servitude.' He did not take any active part in politics during the war, seeing how hopeless it was, and just turned aside to his legal profession, where all his time and labor were required. He is cool, careful and prudent, but firm and determined, and, I think, just the man for the times. But, then, the question will obtrude itself to my mind, What are God's intentions in all this? Have we not run the race of all republics? Is not history repeating itself? Starting in life poor, frugal and reasonably virtuous, we have become rich, luxurious, unprincipled, infidel. And God's judgments have come down upon us. The young giant of 1776 is dying of decrepitude, decay and self-abuse in 1876. God's judgments are right. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. And the nation or people that sin so flagrantly, and against so much light, must die.

"Yours truly,

T. M. NIVEN.

"P. S.—I have covered but small part of your thoughts, but must renew my effort to examine your views in the future."

On February 11, 1877, he writes to his friend Lane in Brazil:

"Our people are just now profoundly discouraged about politics. Mr. Tilden was undoubtedly elected by a popular majority of 240,000 and an electoral majority of ten. You have seen by the papers the rascalities of the scalawag returning-boards, in South Carolina, Louisiana and Florida. After these flagrant villainies were proved, our leaders in Washington were weak enough to surrender the power of Congress over the question, and go into a sort of compromise, referring all the count to a court of fifteen referees, in which five Supreme Court judges had the real casting vote. It has proved a regular 'sell.' They are obviously going to cheat the man in who was not elected."

Scanning narrowly the political movements of the country, he pondered the whole life of his church still more intently.

His letters are full of criticism of the current ecclesiastical movements. For instance, we have, under date of March 2, 1881, in a letter to the Rev. A. C. Hopkins, of Charleston, W. Va., a half dozen suggested reforms and retrenchments in the matter of the conduct of the church's causes. He argued that the Tuscaloosa Institute for blacks ought never to have been started; that the Assembly ought immediately to disencumber itself of the relief fund; that not a dollar ought to be spent on a secretary of education, but that scholarships in the seminaries ought to be founded and in sufficient numbers instead; that the publication mill was too big for the grist, and so forth. He says, further:

"I do not think Dr. Leighton Wilson ought to be touched, as long as he has faculties to work. He is always worth his salary. But when he retires, *one able and well-salaried secretary* (say Dr. McIlwaine) ought to direct both branches of Home and Foreign Missions. *Do not make him treasurer.* I believe fully in Dr. Girardeau's conclusions. The treasurer ought to be a *suitable deacon*, and relieve the secretary of all *money-keeping and money-paying* duties (not of all *money-seeking*, for the appeals for money to the churches would have to emanate from the secretary). Then I would give the secretary enough clerical help, and mostly women clerks. This secretary should edit the executive journal (*Foreign and Domestic Missionary*, etc., whose columns should present *all* the interests of all the five causes), and the agent of publication should have it printed by contract and circulate it."<sup>19</sup>

He declares that twelve thousand five hundred dollars are too much to spend for administering a total of eighty-eight thousand dollars; that such an administration is not marked by good economy.

But not only does the work of the church in its greater aspects rivet his attention, but an Assembly's failure to give an

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<sup>19</sup> The matter of retrenchment and reform came up through an overture to the Assembly of 1879. That body appointed an *ad interim* committee to report on the subject to the next Assembly. There were brought to that Assembly a majority and a minority report; much discussion ensued. The Assembly sent abstracts of the two reports to each minister and session of the church. The matter was before the Assembly of 1881, was again debated, and the five executive committees continued as they were. Dr. Dabney reviewed, in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, this Assembly. The article may now be found in his *Discussions*, Vol. II., pp. 61-81.



*in these* deliverance against current sins, and the consequent relaxation of sessions.

His interests were individual and particular, as well as general. There are not a few letters of this period whose aim was to stir up some congregation or benevolent Christian to the helping of a poor, but excellent youth through College or the Seminary.

Naturally, he was consulted about many movements and questions during this decade of his labors in Union Theological Seminary. He received his share of requests for advice touching men for pastors, for the churches had their difficulties then, too, about getting pastors to suit. He is consulted about how to treat young converts, about the relation of scriptural knowledge to salvation, about the several kinds of labors which missionaries should attempt, about the best way to raise money for missions, about accepting calls to churches, about interpretation of certain Bible phrases, and so forth. In response to many of these letters of inquiry he wrote at length, and often put forth thoughts of vast value. Thus he wrote, in reply to his friend Lane, at Campinas, in Brazil, who had been advising with him as to whether a special effort to raise money for the Campinas College could not be made, deprecating the fact that the committee at the time did not approve of local effort to support individual missionaries. He says, December 18, 1878:

"By choking off this local special effort, they only reach this result, that the committee has no adequate power to stir the zeal of the whole church, and they forbid other people to help them locally to do it. So that it is not stirred at all. The yellow fever contributions are going to be felt this year in our church contributions; but another thing which is felt a hundred times as much is luxury and worldly conformity. The theory of our preachers is heretical about the principle on which rich people spend money. I preach what I know is the truth, and am only laughed at by people and preachers. The fact is that instead of telling rich Christians that it is a sin to use God's money in superfluous luxuries of dwellings, equipage, furniture, dress, diet, when God's cause is languishing, the preachers like to see all the poms, so that they may 'go snacks' in the luxurious indulgences."

Here he would seem to have had the plans for giving to the people of our churches a heart interest in missions, which are being pursued now. He would have stirred individual churches and groups of churches to the support of a given missionary or mission.

To the Rev. G. B. Strickler, pondering whether he should go to Louisville, Ky., in 1880, he wrote:

"October 29, 1880.

"DEAR BROTHER STRICKLER: I should grieve with the Tinkling Spring people much at their bereavement should you go to Louisville; but I fully recognize the fact that the wants of the church must, almost inevitably, call for your removal some day to a wider and more laborious field. You will remember the views I expressed to you, in connection with your call to Charlottesville; that the above fact would have to be recognized some day, but that Charlottesville did not present a field superior to Tinkling Spring so as to justify that removal; and I predicted that in due time the door would open to a field of sufficient importance.

"You will say, then: 'Well, the foreseen conditions of removal exist in the Louisville Church (preëminent importance of the charge, liberal support, field abundantly wide for your energies, etc., etc.). So Dr. Dabney implies that the time has come for me to make the one removal he foreshadowed as desirable in my case.'

"I reply, probably.

"But before you decide on removal, I would advise you to weigh these points. The house in Louisville, I understand, is very big, and has bad acoustic properties. It may be that this will cause you to regret the undertaking after you remove. Similar is the house of the First Church, Nashville. Dr. Moore told his people there on his death-bed that this house killed him; but you have no pulmonary tendencies, and have a strong voice. I only advise you to look into that thing.

"Second. Louisville is not a healthy city. The suburbs are *agucish*, and the air of the centre sultry. The streets are paved with a soft limestone, which makes a bad dust. I hope your health has become entirely robust; but if your liver is still 'touchy' you had best look before you leap.

"Should these points, on intelligent inspection, cause serious doubts as to the success and prosperity of the change, then it becomes a point worth weighing, whether the unity and affection of your present charge is not more valuable, for the time, than this brilliant, but 'risquey' enterprise.

"Third. I would advise, as in all other cases, that you look before you leap, as to the question of acceptance. I think it is much better that this question of acceptance (not only whether you 'strike the fancy' of that particular people, but also whether they are going to strike your fancy) be tested by yourself, before you finally decide.

"Hence, on the whole, my advice would be, to by no means reject the overture summarily; but to so respond as to secure the opportunity to visit and inspect the field, and to preach for the people frequently enough to test your adaptation to them, and theirs for you. I, for one, have no doubt of your ability, experience and attractiveness to secure

the solid favor and confidence of that, or any other field. Certainly, if you give them the opportunity to know you, and they refuse it, I shall think them very silly; but it is best that these matters be not taken for granted.

"I should wish, as your brother and friend, that if you make this move, you do it with the full expectation of making the pastorship of the Second Church of Louisville your final and life-work. Hence, the move ought to be made on mature, satisfactory, and very serious grounds.

"Remember us very affectionately to Mr. and Mrs. Guthrie and your good lady. Yours faithfully, R. L. DABNEY."

Notwithstanding it is clear that Dr. Dabney was consulted in these years by *many*, and thus received just honor, he yet felt that he was in isolation; that in many matters on which he should have been consulted, and concerning which his services should have been called into requisition, he was ignored.

He expresses this conviction as to his isolation frequently in this period, and it is a fact that he had come to be looked upon as extreme. He never yielded, either in his convictions or in the expression of his convictions, to mere circumstances. He was absolutely loyal to the principles which he held as a result of convictions. It was, therefore, inevitable that he should be misunderstood and depreciated in the transition, accommodation, period following on 1865.

He was happy, however, in the affection of some of the most devoted of friends, and in the place which he held in his own home. His devoted wife gave him a fulness of affection which few men could inspire in any woman, and few women could feel. To her huge and loving admiration it was owing that he was not soured in temper by his relative isolation. Her affection for him was a great cure-all for every wound, an invigorating tonic, a health-giving food. He had three sons, loyal and affectionate fellows, full already of promise, in whom he took vast pleasure. He appeared stern to them, at the time, but he was very proud of them. He said often that the two brightest of his children had died very young, but he writes to Mrs. Dabney, on one of his tours, that he had seen no such fine-looking fellows anywhere as their children, and his letters to his intimate friends are so full of references to his boys that one could easily prepare from them alone considerable sketches of the boyhood of each of them. He was happy also in the affection of his other sons—his students—most of whom both revered

and loved him. Why should they not love him? One of them writes:

"In the class-room he was as gentle as a woman, as considerate as a loving friend. In his home, to us students, he was the charming host, where the difference between student and professor faded away, and we were lifted into the place of his guests, and treated with the same courtly consideration with which he would have treated eminent members of the pulpit or bar."<sup>20</sup>

Throughout his professional life, at Hampden-Sidney, Dr. Dabney's plan for cultivating the social acquaintance of the students was to invite them, a few at a time, to take tea with his family. On such occasions he and his excellent wife were very genial, put their guests at their ease, and contrived to make them spend "delightful and profitable evenings."

Dr. Hopkins says:

"They taught us that Dr. and Mrs. Dabney were friends on whose sympathy and counsel we could depend. There was, however, one drawback to the pleasure of some of these evenings. The Doctor's thirst for knowledge was so keen that he would fire question after question at young men who came from parts of the country with which he was not familiar, till he pumped from the student all the knowledge he had, or made him confess his want of observation. 'What sort of soil, red or gray; water-courses and supply; crops, acreage of such, and quantity produced.' In the end, however, he generally gave more information than he got."

This picture which Dr. Hopkins gives us, true of his student days, which were just prior to the war, was repeated throughout Dr. Dabney's connection with Union Seminary. He was usually thoroughly happy in his relations with his students. Not only so; he had many singularly attached neighbors. They came to him specially when in trouble, old and young, men and women. He had been pastor there for years, he had been with them in trial, he had always been a man, *sincere, earnest, intense and strong—no sham—a man*. They laughed at his peculiarities, but in the day of trouble ran to him, as to a strong tower. A girl of the neighborhood—she may be a professor's daughter—has a love affair. She does not know

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<sup>20</sup> Dr. W. C. Campbell, of Roanoke, Va., in a letter to Dr. Charles W. Dabney, dated February 20, 1901. Dr. Campbell was a student in the Seminary, 1876-'79.

“what to do.” Behold her walking on the *Via Sacra* with Dr. Dabney. She has caught him as he was returning from class. She is telling the whole story. The tears are running down her cheeks. She is not ready to marry; “he says I have given him encouragement.” Dr. Dabney thinks so too. He says so; but he takes a wise, broad and just view of the whole situation, having probed the girl’s very heart meanwhile; and gives her kind and wholesome advice. She goes away, the fog gone from her mind. She has received a moral tonic. She is going to be true to the best that is in her. He proceeds to his study, and to grim battle there with the infidel, the agnostic.

Isolation or no isolation, the man is happy who serves, as Dr. Dabney, his community, the church, and the state, in this period.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### *LAST STADIUM OF HIS COURSE IN UNION SEMINARY.*

*(Continued.)*

(1874—1883).

TRIP TO EUROPE.—CORRESPONDENCE.—DECLINING HEALTH.—ELECTION TO THE CHAIR OF MENTAL AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS.—WIDESPREAD REGRET AT THE SEVERANCE OF HIS RELATIONS WITH THE SEMINARY.—HE LEAVES HAMPDEN-SIDNEY AND VIRGINIA FOR TEXAS.

HIS eldest living son, Charles William Dabney, now President Charles W. Dabney, of the University of Tennessee, finished his scientific course at the University of Virginia during 1877. He was soon elected Professor of Chemistry and Geology in Emory and Henry College, and served there one year. He then became desirous of continuing his studies in Europe. The mother interceded for the son. The father told him that he had spent as much upon his education as justice to his other sons would allow, having carried him four years at Hampden-Sidney and three very expensive years at the University of Virginia; but he offered to raise the money for him, provided he were willing to receive it as an advance upon his patrimony, and thus be spending his own money. The son consented, and so went, in August, 1878, to the University of Goettingen. There he studied two years, working chiefly upon chemistry and mineralogy, and, in August, 1880, took his degree of Doctor of Philosophy. While thus engaged, Charles W. Dabney urged his father to take a European tour. Accordingly, Dr. Dabney, in the sixty-first year of his age, spent the months of May to October, inclusive, 1880, in seeing somewhat of Europe. He went and returned by the Anchor Line of ocean steamers, plying between New York and Glasgow. His itinerary gave him two days in Glasgow, and thence carried him to Edinburgh, where the two General Assemblies were just closing; then to Liverpool, by way of Abbotsford, Carlisle, West Yorkshire and Lancaster. At Liverpool he spent a few

days, having his first sciatica, and renewing his acquaintance with his cousin, Mr. Overton M. Price. Thence he passed to queer old Chester, for a day; thence to Leamington, in Warwickshire, and Stratford-upon-Avon, for four or five days; and thence to London. In London he stayed for about three weeks, living at boarding-houses in the Strand, Cecil and York streets, looking after the sights and buildings, amongst others the House of Commons. He was too solitary to enjoy this stay. The few gentlemen to whom he had letters of introduction were out of town, and he missed American friends in London at the same time. Professor Basil L. Gildersleeve and Dr. Moses D. Hoge were both in London, Dr. Gildersleeve a guest of the Athenæum Club; but Dr. Dabney knew nothing of it until too late. He has said of this part of his tour, as of most of the rest, that it gave little enjoyment at the time; it was too lonely; but that he felt then that he could say, "*Hæc olim meminisse juvabit.*" "I gathered, usually amidst languor and weariness, a multitude of new impressions and pictures which have been useful and pleasant to me since. My experience is, that touring alone is a sorry business." After about three weeks in London, he went, by way of Harwich, to Antwerp, where he spent a day, thence to Brussels, Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne, Bonn. At Bonn he spent the Sabbath, solitary, in ignorance that young Francis P. Venable, now President Venable of the University of North Carolina, was there, and would have made his stay pleasant. On Monday, he went up the Rhine by steamer as far as Mayence, and by rail to Frankfort-on-the-Main; on Tuesday to old Cassel, and so to Goettingen, where Charles met him and took him to his lodgings.

He stayed with his son about a fortnight; but found him very busy studying for his final examinations. So he concluded to put in the interval making a German tour alone. He went, by way of Magdeburg, to Berlin, where he stayed about ten days; thence to Dresden to see the famous works of art there, to Leipsic, to Weimar, to Erfurt, to Eisenach, and, at length, to the Liebenstein Springs. He had spent above a week in Leipsic, and more time was consumed at Liebenstein, studying as he was able, not only works of art and monuments of the past, but the conditions of current German life. Thence he went to Cassel to see the palace and pictures, and back once more, on August 6th, to Goettingen, to see his son win his

spurs, or comfort him if he failed. A few days later the young man had packed off his heavier belongings to America, and the two Drs. Dabney, father and son, started South to Wurtzburg and to Ratisbon, on the Danube, where they viewed old Ludwig's Walhalla. Thence they went to Munich for several days' sojourn. Thence to Lake Constance and down the Rhine to Schaffhausen. Then they went to Zurich, ascended the Rhigi, went to Lucerne. There they parted for a little, Dr. Charles making a pedestrian tour across the Alps to Interlachen and the Bernese Oberland and on to Geneva. Dr. Dabney took diligence from Altorf ("Tell's Place") up the Reuss, across the St. Gothard Pass and down to Locarno, on Lago Maggiore. There he spent a "silent Sabbath amidst the papists." Thence he proceeded by steamer and rail into the plain of Lombardy, where the "Indian corn and everything reminded him of Eastern Virginia," the crap grass suggesting the Chickahominy flats near Richmond. He spent four days very pleasantly in Milan, being the guest of Rev. David Turino, the Waldensian pastor, and his English wife. Thence he returned to Geneva by rail, going by way of Turin, the Mt. Cenis tunnel, Aix-les-bains and the Rhone Valley. Rejoining his son at that point, they made a trip to Chamounix to see Mt. Blanc. Thence they went to Paris, where they stayed ten days; thence to London for another ten days; then by way of Windsor Castle, Eton School, to Oxford; thence back to Edinburgh, to Glasgow, and the steamer which brought them safely home.

Dr. Dabney was always remarkable for observation. He noted the topography of the countries through which he passed, the native growths, the crops produced, the manufactures, the climatic conditions, the customs of the people of all classes, so far as he had the opportunity to remark them, the peculiarities of manner, and particularly the social, political and religious conditions. Of all these things he wrote. He kept no journal, but wrote for the religious papers at home on the religious and sociological conditions of the countries he visited, a dozen long articles, and poured himself out on a vast variety of topics, large and small, to his wife, his brother William, and others. His letters do not show that he had completely comprehended everything on which his inquisitive eyes had fallen; but there is not a dull, a stupid, nor an uninforming letter amongst them. A few extracts from his letters will best show with what eyes he looked upon things.



On the 27th of May, 1880, he wrote from the Waverly Hotel, Edinburgh, to Mrs. Dabney:

"Yesterday, after I wrote to you, I went out with my old friend, Mr. Peterkin, and Major Robertson, and bought myself a nice black overcoat, a sack, with a little slit in the tail, a new shiny stove-pipe hat, a silk umbrella (these things being the signatures of a gentleman in this conventional country), a nice pair of gloves. . . . My overcoat cost me ten dollars. It is a '*real elegant*' overcoat, of smooth, soft, black, ribbed cloth, a little like what they call 'diagonal cloth,' but softer. Prices here are very queer things. Black cashmere and broadcloth clothes are surprisingly cheap. . . . Underwear is fully as dear as in our country. So the silk hat. The gloves, nicest kind, were three shillings, about seventy-five cents. . . .

"Having some leisure this morning, I went to the Free Church Assembly Hall about eleven o'clock. It is the queerest, lowest, ugliest, most barn-like affair you ever saw, outside. I could not get in. All the doors were jealously guarded by beadles or police. They said that no one could go in without a sixpence ticket, and that it was no use for me to get a ticket, because there was not an inch of room. The Assembly was hearing an appeal about the heresy of Prof. Robertson Smith, and all the world and his cousins were agog to hear. I asked the men if this selling tickets was a new thing only taken up because of this excitement? They said, No; it was always so. This is queer, isn't it? I sent out this afternoon to buy me a ticket for to-morrow; but the sexton said all were sold already. This morning I went into the Established Church Assembly, sitting in the cathedral just opposite—no fee there—and got a seat in the gallery. There was a prosy debate about missions in Hindoostan, home missions in the Highlands, etc. There was only one tolerable speech, the rest miserable, and mostly inaudible. Plenty of black surplices; the Moderator in a gown and bands, with a 'staked and ridered' shirt (ruffled), lace ruffles at his wrists and a purple scarf across his neck and shoulders. He sat on a low platform, under the pulpit; but *in the pulpit*, over his head, under a richly carved sounding-board, was the sight of sights. The Queen's Lord High Commissioner, in his uniform and ribands, with the *mace*, the emblem of her Majesty's presence and power (a round pole, with a gilded and carved cone on top, about as big as a very large pineapple). The mace-bearer, a red-faced fellow, in gorgeous military uniform, and three pages, thusly: Grey flaxen wigs curled tight all over their heads, silk cocked hats, white and blue, with feathers in their hands, scarlet coats, white knee breeches, silk stockings, etc. They looked like little women. Strange that grown men can take pleasure in such things!"

From Edinburgh he wrote two very interesting letters to the *Christian Observer*, on the Scottish Assemblies. The Free

Church Assembly of that year was one of unusual interest. The case of Prof. W. Robertson Smith was before the Assembly for the first time, on appeal. The action of the Assembly on that occasion was weak. It admonished Professor Smith "for imprudence and lack of clearness in his utterances"; but left him in his chair. "Nor did Professor Smith's response really confess, or promise anything to reassure the orthodox. He confessed very frankly that he had not been perspicuous; he promised that in future he would be perspicuous. Whether the promise means that he will now assert his error more perspicuously, we are not informed." Thus wrote Dr. Dabney. He had already penetrated into the heart of the situation.

From Leamington, in early June of 1880, we have his impressions of English vegetation from trees to grass and flowers. Nowhere does he find the rich green. "It all looks to me like a potato sucker," he says, "growing in a shady cellar. The sun has not shined here one hour out of five." Of the houses of the region he says, "Most English country houses are ugly. The regular farm-houses still joining the manure yards, as in Yorkshire. The gentlemen's houses, of more pretensions, usually having a pretty grove beside (not around) them. They want all the sun they can get. But the houses are as graceless, the meanest red brick, as Reid's old factory in Farmville. But everything is overdone with peaked roofs and square windows."

Of the great mining region he wrote:

"Yesterday, between Wolverhampton and Birmingham, the railroad passed through a part of the 'black country.' This is the country which is spoiled, with iron and coal mines and furnaces, as a farming country. It is *horrid*. All the land, except here and there a patch of grass, potatoes or oats, is covered with black brick factories, furnaces, cottages, warehouses, and slag. The most of the surface not covered with the most wretched, grimy houses, is covered with hills of slag, and the rubbish slate, etc., of coal mines beneath. The houses are black, the waters are black, the smoke is black, the hills are slate-colored with splotches of black. The sky is slate-colored with streaks of black. Here live and toil over two millions! Do you believe such human beings can be really civilized? They say it is a fearfully rude population—*savages* that wear breeches, and are forced to do one sort of thing rapidly, in the way of swinging a pick or hammer. How can a man be civilized who never sees the sun, never has a clean face, or especially a woman? But on this toiling, imbruted mass, rests England's power and riches."

From London, Dr. Dabney wrote for the *Observer* a letter headed "The Tabernacle and the Abbey," in which he contrasted the impressions made by Charles Spurgeon, in the simple Puritan mode of worship, and in his work, and the worship of Westminster Abbey, and its influence. It deserves reproduction in pamphlet form. In the Tabernacle he saw "a visible, mighty energy for good." Of the service in the Abbey he writes:

"So far as the audible voice is ordained by God as an instrument of worship and instruction, this service might have as well been, like the popish, in a dead language. A few drew edification from their psalters. A few evidently mistook the mere æsthetic impression of ecclesiastical architecture and 'man-millinery,' and the pealing echoes of harmonic sounds for spiritual edification. To the most it was evidently but a ceremony, decent and dreary; and this is what Westminster Abbey is doing to save souls, with her immense real estate, her princely revenues, her battalions of deans, canons, priests, deacons, organists and choristers. The Sabbath began with me happily, cheerfully, devoutly; it ended with a chill, like that of the crypt-corridors, surrounding the scene of the ghostly pantomime."<sup>1</sup>

To the *Central Presbyterian* he wrote, soon after passing from London to Goettingen, giving his impressions of London and Great Britain—a letter characterized by his wonderful power of penetration into the heart of things.

"Is this monster city to go on until it fills the whole Island? There must inevitably arise some check from some whither. Now, let me pause and consider what will be implied in the stricture of that check, when it begins to draw. What a fearful aggregate of human disappointment, misery and death must result from that depressing cause, whatever it is to be, powerful enough to check the mighty tide of human beings which insists so obstinately in flowing into London! . . . The city, when it once ceases to grow larger, must begin to grow smaller. But the collapse of such a large mass is terrible to imagine. How many human hearts among the four or five millions must be crushed when that collapse begins!

"Indeed, to my mind, the continued happiness of Great Britain, as a whole, seems to be in a very critical condition. Her greatness, population and wealth are out of proportion to her area. Hitherto, the free institutions, arts and aims of Great Britain have made almost the whole world tributary to her, either by commerce or subjugation. Hence has

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<sup>1</sup> *Christian Observer*, November 28, 1880.

resulted this most artificial structure of British wealth and population at home. It begins to present the aspect of an inverted pyramid, poised hitherto with apparent steadiness upon its apex, by the surprising skill of its artificers; and yet, by the very mass of its body towering so stupendously above, and swelling so rapidly, suggesting a sentiment of terror at the thought of the time when this unstable equilibrium is to end. If the inverted pyramid falls, 'great will be the fall thereof.' Meantime, many things concur to foreshadow the approaching end of these artificial conditions of abnormal greatness. France, Austria, Germany, the United States, and even Italy and Russia, are gradually learning from Britain the freedom and arts by which they rival her commercial ascendancy and interfere with her dominion over trade. Her own colonies, growing too great and too democratic to remain dependencies, are bound to her by commercial ties looser and looser; and even begin to wield against the mother country that protective policy which she disclaims for herself. There is, then, the eating cancer nearer home of Irish poverty and discontent. The surely approaching disestablishment of the Anglican Church, when it comes, implies at once virtual revolution; for with it goes one of the estates of the realm, the Lord's spiritual. And if the experience of 1640-'44 can teach anything, we must conclude that, not many years after the bishops leave the House of Lords, that house itself will be closed. The leaders of both parties have learned that fatal Yankee secret of endeavoring to manufacture more support for themselves among the voters, by extending suffrage, and thus bringing in new batches of voters, who, they suppose, will be grateful and faithful to them for conferring the new franchise. Lords Derby and Beaconsfield, 'Conservatives' as they are, make this bid for continuance in power. Mr. Gladstone, that 'canny Scot,' steals their thunder, and then proposes to confirm his lease of power by manufacturing a vast new batch of voters out of the huge masses lying still nearer the pauper line. Thus Britain drifts surely toward universal suffrage, under the same perilous influences which have fixed it in America. When universal suffrage has come; when the church, that 'bulwark of the throne,' is gone; when all the wholesome checks of distributed powers are lost in the sole supremacy of the House of Commons, how long will the throne stand? When the dynasty of Hanover is gone, what centre of unity will there be for the vast colonial branches of the empire? Will the great oligarchy of the Indian Empire, will the great democracies of Australia and Canada, consent to be ruled by the democracy of England?

"These questions make the thoughtful surmise that, although the conservative forces of the British Constitution and people have hitherto made change very slow, and have postponed startling novelties for centuries, yet the time is now beginning to approach when great and perilous changes will occur. Propheying is a dangerous business for those who are not inspired. It may be that Providence will raise up another

Chatham at the critical time, to guide the necessary modifications with a wise and mighty hand. Or, it may be that while the political tricksters are fighting their small warfare for place with each other, the cataclysm may come and upturn everything. But one thing seems clear, British prosperity is an artificial structure. It has grown out of proportion. Britain now produces but little over half her own bread. The pile is too lofty to be secure.”<sup>2</sup>

During his weeks in Germany, he wrote, for the *Observer*, on the causes of the theological vagaries which obtain in that country, and subsequently on the “Inwardness of German Theology,” instructive and exceedingly able, if somewhat one-sided, articles; and, for the *Central Presbyterian*, on “The Sabbath in Germany,” an article of great practical value; and on other subjects. Meantime he was writing frequently and fully to Mrs. Dabney and certain of his friends. From Leipsic he had written to Mrs. Dabney, under date of July 22nd, a letter from which the following excerpt is taken:

“The etiquette in Germany is for the newcomer to make the first call. I went with Mr. Gregory, who has become a German, and called on five of the theological professors. All received me civilly, some warmly. One, Herr Geheimrath, Professor Lechler, returned my call. He seems to know something about America. Most of them know little, and of the South absolutely nothing. The greatest of their theological professors here, Herr Oberrath, Delitsch, confessed to me that he had never seen Hodge’s *Theology*. Their contempt for the scholarship of other nations is absurd and most blamable. If they would consider other people’s writings some, perhaps they would not be so everlastingly running after new-fangled crotchets and heresies. They are like Job’s fools: ‘Surely we are the people; and wisdom will die with us.’ The next biggest man here is Luthardt. I called on him, too. . . . [Here we have a characteristic description of the personal appearance of Luthardt, his wife and daughters, in which they are represented as *not* handsome.]

“I thought I would amuse and please him by telling him how familiar we were with German lexicons, etc., in Virginia. He swallowed it all gravely, and said, ‘Ya; Sherman ist de schoolmistress of the worldt.’

“Day before yesterday, I went to a theological disputation to be held in Latin. On one side was a young Dr. Schedeman, who wanted to become a Privat-Doctent., *i. e.*, tutor in the University. On the other was the theological faculty. He stood and they sat. But they did not have much advantage of him in that; for the seat was a shelf, the meanest I ever saw. They picked at him, on the points of an essay

<sup>2</sup> *Central Presbyterian*, Wednesday, July 21, 1880.

he had written in Latin and already had printed, for about three hours. They objected and criticised in Latin, and he replied in Latin, rather lamely. They did most of the talking. At the end the poor fellow was so tired he looked almost like fainting. They say it is a usage which has come down from the middle ages, and which they cannot depart from, because it is so venerable. It was very much a serious farce. They are certainly familiar with Latin.

"I went, yesterday afternoon, to a place which would have interested you much. Saxony, you know, is one of the countries most famous in the world for fine-wooled merino sheep. The King of Saxony, to promote manufacturing, now has a sort of exhibition of woollens open here. There are two pavilions, very large, one roofed with glass, the other with tin. The latter has steam engines in it, and all kinds of machinery for spinning and weaving, in actual motion. The glass house exhibits the products; everything that can be made from wool, from a saddle-blanket to the most beautiful snow-white or peach-colored merino, or from a baby's knit sacque to a hank of colored worsted. There were many carpets and rugs; some plain, many more beautiful than you almost ever see in America; every variety of cloths and cashmeres for men, from orange and scarlet to black. Tweeds, pilot cloths, beaver cloths, heavy and thin. More beautiful merino shirts and chemises than you ever dreamed of. It was hard to believe it was not fine, glossy knit silk. Woolen plushes, as rich and soft as Lyons velvet. Ladies' wraps and shawls; some the softest, most beautiful things you can imagine, as much before the cashmeres as you can think. The most beautiful part was the ladies' dress goods, all pure wool, every shade from black, blue-black, olive-green, grass-green, sea-green, old-gold, blue, sky-blue, purple, crimson, scarlet, peach-blossom, ashes of roses, orange, yellow, peach-colored, straw-colored, snow-white—and all so beautifully fixed that they shaded off in color like a beautiful picture. Were I a lady, I should value a dress of that exquisite merino more than the finest silk that ever came out of France. Nothing like it was ever seen in America, certainly not by me. Not a piece of cotton-warp alpaca did I see. It seemed to me that had a piece, such as you ladies wear, been put in there, the managers would have taken it on the end of a stick, like a soiled newspaper, and pitched it out of doors. The only place I saw anything of that sort was in the festooning of the stair railing, that may have been about such stuff. By the way, the German calicoes are much better than the Yankee, and the colors and figures much more tasteful. One of these German women, in her morning-dress of calico, neatly trimmed, looks as dressy as if she had on a figured Japan silk."

On the 6th of August he was back at Göttingen, his touring in Germany done for the most part. On the night following that day he wrote:

"MY DEAREST WIFE: I reached here this afternoon, and found Charley well. He was dressed up in his fancy dyke, swallow-tailed coat, white kid gloves and stove-pipe hat, and was about to go to his examination at five o'clock. The old fellow was quite nervous; and I could not help being so by sympathy. However, he came back about half-past eight o'clock in high feather, saying that he was certainly Doctor of Philosophy, with next to the highest grade. I do not set overmuch store on parchment honors; but I confessed I was greatly pleased at his pleasure. Several of his companions came in to congratulate him. A German student went in with him. They were examined, orally, about three hours. The two were then bowed out into an adjoining room, where they waited ten minutes, very much like horse-thieves waiting while the jury is making up their verdict. Then the University beadle came in and carried them back into the Faculty room, where the Dean of the Faculty rose up and made them a formal speech in Latin, telling them that they were accepted. Charley seems quite well, and sends his love to all. He has gone to bed very tired.

"I have written you quite regularly from each place where I stopped—Berlin, Dresden, Leipsic, Eisenach, Liebenstein Springs. Wednesday morning I left there and came to Cassel, the capital of what was the Dutchy of Hesse, whence old George the Third hired the Hessian troops to fight against us in the Revolutionary war. Bismarck has now swallowed it down, and it is a part of Prussia. Cassel is partly an old, crooked, bad-smelling German town, and partly a nice new city, with a picture gallery and many nice buildings. The chief object with sightseers, however, is the palace and park of Wilhelmshohe (William's Hill), which occupy the whole side of a right smart mountain. The palace is near the foot. The grounds extend up to the top, where there is a great structure, in the shape of an octagon, of hewn stone, of no use in the world except for show, with a statue of Hercules on top. There are two or three artificial water-falls and a fountain. But as they only play on Sundays, I did not see any of this. I put up at a nice clean tavern, where, among other refreshments, I got a nice warm bath.

"I shall now press Charley all I can in his packing up, and start towards Switzerland as soon as I can. My idea is to stop a little at Munich, on account of the fine galleries of pictures and statues there, and then go into Switzerland, to see something of nature's grander pictures; then to Paris; then to London, to give Charley some view of that big city, and then home. But I shall, of course, be disposed to consult his wishes some in the plan."

As was to have been expected, Dr. Dabney wasted neither time nor paper in the description of the phenomena which travellers had dilated on in our prints for generations; but a trip through the St. Gothard pass provoked him to a bit of

descriptive writing worthy a place on these pages. He thus wrote, on August 26th, to the editor of the *Christian Observer*:

"REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER: I promised not to abuse the patience of your readers by giving descriptions of European scenery described a thousand times by others, and, in these days of tourists, even seen for themselves by many of your patrons. Hence I have said very little about places and scenes, as I have been so much in the beaten track of European travel; but I propose to depart for once from this rule.

"I have just completed a journey, which, I surmise, no reader of yours has made. Leaving Zurich last Thursday by railroad we came to Zug. Thence we took a little lake steamer on the Lake of Zug to the foot of Mount Rhigi, and thence ascended that strange mountain by that strange, steep, startling railroad, whose trains come so near looking as though they would next climb a tree; but it is not so much of Mount Rhigi, with its hotels perched on its peak in the clouds, and its feet girdled by its four lakes, and its wonderful horizon, including a hundred and fifty miles of the snowy Alps, that I propose to speak; for to Mount Rhigi everybody goes who goes to the Alps, and near as its hotels and their lawns are to the clouds, they were as familiarly and populously furnished with London and New York cockneys as any other of the tourists' haunts.

"It is of the sequel of this trip I would speak. Descending the steep southern slope of Rhigi, I reached that wild, irregular lake of sky-blue waters, which Englishmen call 'Lake of Lucerne,' but which genuine Swiss persist in calling the Vier-wald Statter lak (The Lake of the Four Forest Cantons"). It lies in the very heart of the Alps, surrounded by the wildest and most rugged of these mountains. Into its southwestern bay pours the river or torrent Reuss, which descends from the watershed of the great St. Gothard. It was by a graded road over this pass that I proposed to enter Northern Italy, and take a glimpse at her beautiful lakes and cities.

"Over this lake towers to the southeast Mt. Pilatus, that enormous pyramid of shivered granite, where popish tradition says the unjust judge of the Saviour ended his life by suicide; and over the southwest, Rutli, with its glaciers. Around this angle, amidst the vast, heaven-kissing precipices, cluster the richest traditions of Swiss patriotism.

"In these savage gorges, Swiss liberty held its last refuge. Here is the village of Altdorf, the home of Tell; where his authentic statue stands, as I saw. Near it is the Tell Chapel, and a few miles north, the cliff down which he escaped from the Austrian satrap to his boat.

"At seven o'clock yesterday the diligence set out, drawn sometimes by five, sometimes by six horses, along a paved road, ascending the valley of the Reuss. As we advanced, the meadows grew narrower, and then disappeared—the valley became a gorge. The gigantic mountains pressed us more closely, the turnpike, though perfectly smooth, found



no longer any field to traverse, but was excavated across precipices or through galleries in the faces of the cliffs. The river became a torrent, and sometimes almost a cascade. We left behind us, first, the forests, then the bushes, and at last even the grass, for there was now no earth to sustain even the grasses, but only splintered pinnacles and fields of granite, with the glaciers sweeping down within plain view of the pass. At length, where the naked rocks met the cold, grey clouds, we passed the summit between two little lakelets of snow-water enclosed in basins of solid rock, and we were south of the main Alp, and on the Italian slope, on the verge of another world.

"As we approached the dividing ridge, we saw the grey stones everywhere patched over with squares of brown. These were plugs of peat-moss, cut from the sour, cold patches of morass a little below (where nothing better than peat-moss could grow), and laid upon the rocks to dry. The poor mountaineers would then carry them a weary way down the mountains, to their chalets, for fuel; many of them, perhaps, on the backs of women! So do the prosaic and even squalid necessities of man intrude into the grandeurs of nature!

"Our last stage up the mountain had required six horses, so that our diligence looked very much as though it were following, in some hap-hazard manner, a drove of horses; but on our first stage down the Italian side, our team was reduced to two, and these had nothing to do but to guide the pole of the vehicle. Down a smooth descent of a half mile we glided from the hospice, when the visible end of the road seemed to shoot over into an abyss, awful in its vastness, immeasurable in its depth, for, although we looked down endless slopes of granite and dark green turf, the curvature of the mountain side forbade our seeing any bottom; but just as we seemed on the verge, the road turned back on itself by a sudden curve. Looking down, six or seven of these zigzags appeared, coiled like serpents, one beneath the other, and how many others were concealed in the gulf below we could not tell. At each approach to the outer curve of one of the infoldings, we graze the very verge, and at the critical moment sweep around again, looking over into depths where the breaking of one bolt in the brake of the vehicle, or the stumble of a horse, would have hurled diligence and passengers down, where their course would not have ended until the very iron of the wheels would have been in fine splinters. But fortunately the good horses did not stumble; and evidently they had no more desire to try the fearful leap than we had. So, at last, after our hearts had twenty times stood still with solemn awe, the bottom was reached at the little Italian town of Airolo, the southern mouth of the St. Gothard tunnel.

"But it must not be supposed that at Airolo one has done descending. Three stages still followed, in which the road passed through a series of profound and rugged gorges, following the Riviera, another rushing torrent, toward Lago Maggiore. At Biasca the cars are reached, and

forty miles of railroad, still through romantic mountains, place the traveller at Locarno, on the northern end of this grand mountain loch.

"In going towards the summit of Mt. Gothard Pass, I saw everywhere the works of the great railroad which is to connect Zurich with Milan through Mt. Gothard tunnel.

"This gigantic work rivals, in the dimensions of its audacity at least, the grandeurs of nature. When I say that it pierces the great watershed from Goschenen, on the north side, to Airolo, on the south, by one tunnel, already finished, of nine miles in length, I have mentioned but one of the obstacles it overcomes. Nearly every mile presents a miracle of engineering boldness, and of labor and expense. It passes, for instance, for miles along the eastern bay of the Four Cantons lake, by tunneling a path through the perpendicular granite cliff of a thousand feet height, which here pitches sheer down into the fathomless waters. Finding, then, a little respite in the narrow but level meadows of the Reuss, between Fluelen and Altdorf, it begins again to struggle with the gigantic obstacles of the pass, twenty-three miles, to the beginning of the main tunnel. It bridges the main torrent and its lateral affluents, times beyond counting—tunnels, side-spurs and crags too numerous to remember, fills enormous side-ravines, and shelters itself from avalanches, not only of snow, but rock, by solid vaulted arcades of cut stone. Unable, by any grade practicable for a train, to ascend to the level of the main tunnel at Groschenen, it resorts to a complicated system of zigzags, by which it advances and retreats through these enormous difficulties. On one mountain side, seamed with vast corrugations, I saw three tracks, the one above the other, and each presenting tunnels, bridges and gigantic embankments. Besides this enterprise of modern commerce the great works of the ancients are dwarfed into trivialities.

"A gifted lady in North Carolina has described its mountain regions under the title of 'The Land of the Sky.' This belongs more correctly to the pastoral regions of the 'Forest Cantons.' Let the reader conceive a land of the richest blue-grass fields of Central Kentucky, about five miles in length, but divided literally by mighty ledges of rock and crosswise by ragged ravines, dotted over with fruit and walnut trees, and the whole then apparently set up nearly upon its edge, so that the upper margin, far, far above, meets either the cloud, or the glacier, or the awful altitudes of the everlasting, naked granite. Then let him imagine the chalets sprinkled everywhere, up, up to the edge of the glacier, until they become specks amidst the verdure of the crags; and he has a picture in his mind of these Swiss pastures. Wherever there is any soil at all, it bears the richest sward.

"The steepness of the pastures is almost incredible. Its populousness is equally surprising. Wherever there is next the sky a lap of pasturage between the ledges which looks as large as a carpet, there is also a chalet. But the eye is so confounded by the vastness of the

scale, that what appears a patch would probably be found, on ascending, a large though rugged field. There is almost no tillage, and next to no grain. I passed, on the Rhigi, one wheat field six yards broad and fifteen long, with one or two of rye a little larger. The only wealth of the people is the rich, short grass, and the cattle and goats which it maintains, with the nuts of their trees. The flour for the bread they eat is carried, mostly on women's shoulders, up the steep and almost endless ascents from the valleys below.

"This feminine duty of burden-bearing received an authentic illustration the other day. A lady whom I met at Milan went last summer to a villa residence in Italian Switzerland. The hotel was 'two hours' up the steep mountain side. For her ascent a saddled donkey was provided. She, however, woman-like, asked how her trunk was to reach her. The hirer of the donkey answered, 'In either of two ways: by another donkey, at the cost of two and a half francs, or by a woman's back, at one franc.'

"The very name of Swiss chalet carries something romantic; rich, æsthetic ladies build their costly villas in the supposed shape of the chalet. But if my reader wishes to preserve his romance, he had better never approach the actual chalet. What is it? A log cabin, or stone basement which is half cow-stable and half sordid human habitation. The eaves project, and the shingles are kept in place by rows of great stones upon the roof. The hinder gable burrows into the overhanging declivity. The floor of the human stable is earth, as of the brute compartment; and the lofts of both are filled with hay. The wood-pile adorns one side of the door, and the dunghill the other. The inmates are as far from the reader's ideal of Damon and Phyllis as pack-bearing up steep mountains, hard poverty, dirty quarters, and sallow, smoke-dried faces can make them. I speak of the common chalets of the peasantry. Some of the well-to-do yeomen, especially in Protestant cantons, have cottages in chalet form which are almost tasteful homes.

"Another thing to be understood is, that there are by no means as many families as chalets on the mountain. One family owns several, and inhabits them in turns at different seasons of the year. This frequent removal of their *penates* is the method adopted by them to meet the difficulties of transportation on their steep lands without roads. To collect all the forage for the cows, or all the fuel for their long winter, at any one point of the farm, would be an almost impossible labor. Hence, several chalets are built, some higher and some lower, and the portion of fuel and hay nearest to each is stored in it. The family then shoulders its household goods, and, driving its cows, goes to one chalet, which it and the cows then inhabit until the supplies there stored are consumed, when all remove to another. As the mountain (of hay, etc.) cannot come to Mohammed, Mohammed goes to the mountain.

"My awakening at Locarno this morning has shown me a new world.

I am, politically, still in Switzerland, in the Italian canton of Ticino; but, geographically, in Italy—sunny, warm, gracious Italy, with its Virginian sun; its blue lake set around with mountains, usually soft and vine-clad, yet still opening back, here and there, vistas to the rugged grandeurs of the Alps; with its grapes, melons and peaches; its valleys covered with Indian corn, the snap-beans running on the tall stalks, and the peasants even curing the ‘crap-grass hay’ plucked from among the rows. Piedmont Italy is, in climate, precisely Piedmont Virginia. It will not be long, I trust, before our sunny mountain slopes will also be vine-clad, and studded with gleaming homes, peeping out from vineyards and orchards and chestnut groves, instead of waving in the fruitless, primeval forest.

“But never may the day arrive when our Southern land shall be blighted with the religion whose curse upon Italy met me as soon as I opened my eyes on her sunlight. The first object which met my sight was a profusion of floral decorations and triumphal arches, scattered over the town, but all now sere and yellow. After a little search, a great placard, still affixed to the wall, gave me the explanation. August 13th, 14th and 15th had been the fourth anniversary of *Madonna del Sasso* (‘My Lady of the Crag’), a local idol of Locarno, who, they say, four years ago, made a miraculous appearance to the priests of her fane, a church built above the town on a rock promontory of the mountain, and who has since been working many miracles. So a Romish archbishop came to celebrate this fourth year of her divine reign over the Locarnese by a three days’ festival, with sermons, masses, processions, fire-works, and military music, and Pope Leo XIII. sent her a golden crown, which was then placed formally on her head. The whole devout population was climbing the hill to her temple by many hundred stone steps. I climbed after them. The interior of her sanctuary was blazing with pictures, curtains, crimson and gilding. Beside the high altar, on a species of throne, was seated a wax doll of life size, dressed in blue silk, and crowned with gold, holding a wax infant on her bosom. The old women, after most solemn genuflections, were going up to this image, kneeling and kissing her toe. Each one’s countenance seemed to say, as she came away, ‘Now is my soul’s business settled favorably for this world and the next, for have I not kissed the holy wax toe?’ In a little chapel beneath the church is a perpetual representation of the miraculous appearance. Six wax dolls, as large as life, impersonate the descending virgin and the five priests who (they say) saw her. Are not these dolls proof enough to the popish mind? Surely. So I found myself in a very pious population, after a fashion. The afternoon of the Sabbath was spent by the people witnessing a long shooting match of the militia in front of my hotel!”

From Geneva, he wrote chiefly of the Evangelical Society of Geneva, its past and current history. From France, of the

state of religion in that country, treating with an insight, which has been largely vindicated by subsequent events, Pere Hyacinth's movement, the McAll Mission, and discontent with popery, and the reason why the Reformed Church in France does not separate from the State. Having made clear, in regard to this last subject, that State aid is inevitably followed by the incubus of rationalism in many of the pulpits, he raises the question, "Why do they not give up the money, and thus throw off this wretched incubus?" He answers:

"I believe that this is just what they ought to do. My sympathies and convictions have ever been with the Free Presbyterian Church of France, and the little, but faithful handful represented by the Rev. Frederick Monod; but yet the difficulties in the way of the disestablishment of the Reformed Church are such that they decided even such men as Adolph Monod, the distinguished relative of the leader of the Free Church, and M. Guizot himself, who remained the earnest advocate of the state establishment. The arguments which seem to have decided them to cling to this golden *incubus* are such as these: That their laity, so long benumbed by formalism, and accustomed to lean on the state treasury for parochial support, would be utterly unwilling to assume the burdens on their own shoulders, and would resent the action of their brethren in calling them thereto; and especially that the Reformed Church cannot afford to relinquish this advantage of its state support, leaving its great rival, the Popish Church, in the enjoyment of it. The argument is, 'If the Romanists are to have this capital advantage, we must hold our share of it also.'

"Here again the American Christian would ask: 'Why, then, do they not rise to the true and consistent position, and demand the disestablishment of all the churches, Reformed and Popish? Let the government do what a free republic ought to do—disconnect itself from all churches, and leave all to take care of themselves.'

"This leads us to the heart of this question. All French statesmen, of all schools, feel that they dare not leave the Romish Church free to take care of itself and to shape its own career. From the days of the First Consul to those of Gambetta and Grevy there has never been a ruler in France who was willing to risk such a policy. All have felt that their relation to the Papal Church was like that of one who has a vicious dog by the ears. It is laborious to hold him, but he dares not let him go, for fear of being torn to pieces by him. The common expression of the friends of free government in France is that if government were to dissolve its connection with the Papal Church, and leave it free, as it is in the United States, to raise its own revenues, and shape its own policy, popery would in ten years infallibly overthrow any free, constitutional administration which France could have. Popery, enjoying the large constituency it has among the French people, and instinctive

enemy as it is of constitutional freedom, must be controlled by the government, or it would destroy it; but the quietest, easiest and, indeed, only way to control popery is for the civil government to keep its thumb always upon the salaries of its priests. This is the only bridle in their mouths.

"If all churches are disestablished, then all must be left, on republican principles, to raise their own revenues by voluntary contributions of the people who choose to adhere to them; but as soon as this liberty is granted, the priests will begin to work on the superstition of their people with indulgences, masses, extreme unctions, miracle-working relics, and all the known machinery of extortion, so that in ten years the Papal Church would be so rich no government could resist its powers and arts. This, then, is the difficulty. M. Guizot says, 'We Presbyterians will not agree to be disestablished, unless you disestablish, at the same time, our rival, the Papal Church.' But the government answers, 'The latter we dare not do, because if we do not keep popery dependent on us, popery will infallibly destroy us.'

"Here was the policy of that most far-seeing genius, the First Napoleon. Historians have often asked, 'Why did he make the Concordat with the Pope when First Consul, reëstablishing popery in France, when it lay apparently prostrated after the tempest of the Revolution? He was no lover of popery! Surely his love of power would not incline him to readmit the Pope to so much influence in France!' The answer is: Napoleon knew that on the principle of the Revolution, by virtue of which he ruled, he could not object to every Frenchman's being of whatever religion he pleased. He knew that, in fact, the majority of Frenchmen were still the same. The alliance between the Republic and popery is unnatural, illogical, logically monstrous? Yes; but the Republic does not dare sunder the alliance, because popery would speedily use its liberty to destroy the Republic.

"This history is instructive for us. Most people would declare that a union of church and state is so utterly alien to the principles of the American Constitution that it will be forever impossible, and especially would such union be impossible with a hierarchal and despotic church. They are short-sighted. The time may come much sooner than they think when American politicians also will feel shut up to this inconsistent resort of entering into alliance with popery in order to keep popery from destroying them. American popery is to-day diligently using its freedom among us to heap up money, to acquire land in mortmain, to arm itself with all the corporate powers of wealth, in ways which French statesmanship would never dream of allowing to any denomination. It will be no strange thing if, after a time, the American Republic shall find it must wed the Scarlet Woman or else fight her, and judge the former the safer course."

An outstanding feature of Dr. Dabney was ever his intense energy. The following excerpt, from a long and very inter-

esting letter to his brother William, will prove further that he carried this energy with him on this tour :

“EISENACH, WEST SAXONY, July 30, 1880.

“MY DEAR BROTHER: The fact that I have been in Europe two months, and have not yet written to you, does not imply that you and yours have not been constantly and affectionately in my mind. One gets to be a terrible procrastinator and loafer on a tour like mine. He comes to his room tired from sight-seeing. He is constantly on the move, packing and unpacking. Hence, it has been as much as I could find time to do, to write to my home people, and a little for my newspaper friends. I may add, also, that what writing time I have snatched has been monopolized in a very queer way. Going to Berlin, I was recommended to a boarding-house kept by the widow of a literary man. Her son, a university graduate, was the only person in the house who spoke English. Hence, of course, an acquaintance. I found he was making his living by translating English, and especially American, books for some German publishers. Thus he had come to know *a little* (most Germans, no matter how learned, know infinitely less about Americans than about the Pelægiens or Aryans) about us. What does he do, but put in my hands the American edition of that book, which we have seen advertised at home, *Fools' Errand*, in which a French Canadian, Colonel Tourgee, who played carpet-bagger in North Carolina, tries to blacken us since the war, as Mrs. Stowe did before. The young man asked me to read it, and give him my impressions. I did so. The book is a pack of lies and very vulnerable. He then told me his object; which was to translate the book and print it in German with a critique from the Southern ‘*standpoint*,’ and thus give both sides of the reconstruction picture. He asked me if I would write it. I assented, and went to work, in scraps of time. Of course, I have not a single document or book of reference; but I am, fortunately, very familiar with the main facts. I adopt this plan: to charge the accuser with *bad faith*, in that he puts his indictment in the form of a fiction, with no responsible name, concealing the place, date and actors of the outrages, etc., he professes to state; thus screening himself from detection in detail. But I give rebutting facts (which show his narration generally improbable and specifically false) under my own name. Giving place and names for all particular facts, and making myself responsible to substantiate them, if attacked. I shall make about one hundred and thirty MS. pages such as this. I do not know that the translator will publish them. I will try him.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> From some remarks made in an elaborate review of the literature of Southerners in vindication of the South's course, and offered to the London *Quarterly Review* in 1882, we infer that the manuscript referred to in this letter was never published.

Returning safely, and enriched with multitudinous impressions, he plunged once more, about the middle of October, into his Seminary work.

During these years (1874-'83) his correspondence was heavy, as may be gathered easily from the preceding pages. But, in addition to what has been referred to, and that with the members of his mother's family to which he was still devoted, new correspondents sprang up—some, his old students, who wrote for advice on some point or other; some persons who had read his books, or review or newspaper publications. He received prized letters from his friends, Turino, of Milan, and Lotze, of Göttingen; and from others whose acquaintance he had made in the course of his European tour. One of the pleasantest letters which he received during this period was from the Rev. John W. Davis, of China, now Dr. John W. Davis. That letter begins as follows:

"SOOCHOW, January 28, 1876.

"Rev. R. L. Dabney, D. D.

"MY DEAR FRIEND: I have many times thought of writing to you, and recently circumstances have made me think of you daily. I have been reading your Life of Jackson. My appetite for such mental food was keenly whetted by my poring for two or three months over Mencius, and I can truly say that I never enjoyed, in my life, any uninspired book as much as I did that biography. When I saw what a noble Christian character was gradually developed in its pages, I prayed that this book might do me good. I was encouraged to do this, for I knew that this book was the *child of many prayers*. It has come home to me as a long fascinating sermon from my beloved teacher, and I feel that it *has* done me good. As I hung over its closing pages, I resolved that I would read the book once a year as long as I live. If I do not, it will be because the picture of Jackson has been so vividly and indelibly impressed upon my mind that I shall not need to look at it again. I enjoyed Dr. Hoge's masterly oration very much, but do not feel much regret at not being in Richmond when it was delivered. I do not care to have a crowd around me when I think of our Southern hero. I would rather be alone in my wee study (feet, 7 x 13), where I can in quiet dwell on the elements of character which made Jackson a great man.

"If you had never preached a sermon or taught a class you would have reason to thank God for sparing you to complete that one book, and send it forth to do good where your voice will never be heard."

However a correspondence was begun, Dr. Dabney's was likely to turn out the more lively and energetic side. His



energy was so vast there could be no triviality on his side. There might be fun; there was often humor, sometimes very grim indeed; there was always wit. There could be no emptiness. There was fulness of thought and feeling.

We come now to a step of which he has left a pretty full account—his leaving Union Theological Seminary to accept the Chair of Mental and Moral Philosophy in the University of Texas. He wrote of this in 1895, substantially as follows:

“This period was marked by one of the strangest and saddest revolutions of my troubled life—my migration from Virginia to Texas. The main cause of this was a grand and final breakdown of my health,<sup>4</sup> under which my wise physician, Dr. J. D. Eggleston, of Hampden-Sidney, prescribed removal to a warmer climate, as the only thing to rescue me from the grave. Candor requires me to premise a few other points. The introduction of railways and the fall of the Confederacy left the Seminary in an undesirable location, no longer on a great thoroughfare as when Dr. Rice placed it near Hampden-Sidney College, but isolated and in the middle of the ‘black belt,’ and with the excellent society of country gentlemen, once so congenial a society for it, doomed to extirpation by the conquerors; but I saw that its removal to some more hopeful place was utterly impracticable. So nothing remained but to try to improve the conditions of our College village. A few years of subjugation showed me two drifts. One was that of genteel country families to urban life; our conquerors had made their country homes and life too hard and repulsive to be endured. Existing towns were receiving large accessions, and new ones were springing up. Another drift that intimately concerned us was that of the negroes to the neighborhood of the Seminary and College. Agriculture in the surrounding country was nearly ruined; the mixture of job work, loafing and chances to pilfer around us suited the negro exactly. The lands around

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<sup>4</sup>“That Dr. Dabney’s loyalty to the Seminary at Hampden-Sidney had not failed is evident, certainly to us who most loved and prized him, from the fact that when Dr. McGuffey died, he was urged from the highest quarter, to become a candidate for the chair of Philosophy in the University. The society, the position and salary, we can easily believe, were extremely alluring to him. He was assured that there would be no serious difficulty in the way of his election; but he declined positively to allow his name to be brought before the Board of Visitors; he believed that he had been called of God to his post at the Seminary, and must not allow himself to entertain any motives of personal preference, or ambition or gain. As he wrote on this subject, ‘I am an enlisted soldier, and must stand on my post, and do my best for the church until I know that God has given me an honorable discharge.’” (*Dr. H. M. White in the Central Presbyterian, January 19, 1898.*)

the institution were poor, exhausted, unfenced, and nearly unsalable. Most of the owners were insolvent, and they and their creditors were willing to sell to anybody. The manifest destiny of the nearest farms was to be subdivided and sold in fee-simple to negroes, so that College and Seminary were to be closely hugged by an annular negro town of the most sordid quality. I was then a trustee of Hampden-Sidney College. I made the most powerful appeal I could to both bodies of trustees, to those of the College as an equal member, to those of the Seminary as a servant, humbly and urgently petitioning. I showed them that they had to choose between a resident's town of the very best white people in Virginia, and a town of negroes; that if they sat still, the latter would inevitably come of itself. I asked them whether they thought that the atmosphere of this negro town would be favorable to the muses. I showed them how easily and certainly they could get the precious white man's town. Other places were rapidly drawing the very people we wanted, though they lacked our attractions. Land-holders all over the country, whose homes had become repulsive to them as residences, wanted homes which would give them religious, educational and social advantages. The Hill offered these in a transcendent degree. It was objected that the College and Seminary had not surplus money with which to make a land speculation. I replied that very little was needed; the whole work could be done with a little cash and some use of credit by prudent combination. The College owned a hundred acres, the Seminary forty-eight acres. I owned one hundred acres, and offered to put it into such a combination without charging anybody a cent. Dr. Atkinson owned one hundred and forty acres, and was ready to put his into the combination. I urged the formation of a simple improvement company, with the College and Seminary as leading members, and that it secure the adhesion of all adjacent land-holders who were solvent, taking of these pledges: First, not to sell an inch of these lands to any negro or pauperized white man; second, to concur in the sale of building lots on the parts most adjacent to the institutions, each proprietor fixing his own price. Next, the association must prepare itself to purchase, as a last resort, such adjacent lands of insolvent or unfriendly proprietors as would otherwise be sold to negroes or untrustworthy whites, the object being to secure, not ownership, but control of all the adjacent lands in danger of occupancy by this ringtown of negroes. I was assured that this could be done with the use of one thousand dollars cash, and some credit. Liberal measures should be at once adopted to attract such families as we desired. If necessary College and Seminary should give away good alternate building lots, and invite the private members to do the same, until there is enough of a village to create its own succession. This succession would then propagate itself. Thenceforward, the plan, instead of costing money, would bring a good deal of money to the College and Seminary and private members. I suggested, instead of sale, ground rents on long terms, because this would

retain in the hands of the two Boards perpetual power to prevent the after sale of any lot to a negro, or mean white person, or its abuse for a liquor shop, or the like.

"I found but one supporter in either Board, Dr. Atkinson. Both refused to consider my plan, and that contemptuously. Like Mr. Calhoun, I was in advance of my age; and so was dubbed a visionary. The two Boards would do nothing, the negro town came and enveloped the two institutions. I was justified by events. In 1895 the authorities of the two institutions are anxious to get a white village. It is too late. They have gotten about a half a dozen dwellings. In 1875 they might have gotten two hundred. Hampden-Sidney would long ago have been connected with Farmville by electric cars, and would have had its own water, gas and electric plants. The removal of the Seminary would never have been agitated. Well! I did not utter a murmuring word, and worked on for the Seminary as hard as ever; but no mortal man could avoid some discouragement from the conviction that he was giving his life to an enterprise with a heavy incubus."

He tells us again, in his own strong and elaborate way, that his influence with the Seminary Board had declined; that he had ceased to counsel; and that the control of the institution had passed to other hands, and that he was, therefore no longer quite so wedded to it.

He shows us, too, that he had been wounded deeply by the words of some of his colleagues in the Faculty, in a conference with the Board on the subject of fixing the day for the opening of the session about the middle of September, instead of the middle of August. Dr. Dabney advocated the later date, on the ground that the region around Hampden-Sidney had become malarious. Brethren in the Faculty somewhat bluntly intimated that his representations were grossly contrary to fact. It was never his habit to reply in such circumstances. He did not reply then. He believed that the facts were all on his side. In his talks before the Board he had had the students in mind, most of whom came from the up-country, and "had shown a tendency to malaria during the first weeks of the sessions." But he himself, his sons and several of his neighbors, had been sufferers from malaria for several years. Coming down from the up-country to his post in August, he had "every year felt the stealthy approach of the blood poison, one autumn dumb chills, another slight intermittent fever, another what Dr. Eggleston called catarrhal fever," which his Austin experience subsequently enabled him to identify as dangue fever, then an

agonizing sciatica, which Dr. Cabell told him "was nothing but a malarial symptom." His trip to Europe postponed the crash, but it was to come with a vengeance in 1882. He never held any grudge against these brethren. Far from it, he honored and loved them; but he was not able to forget what had been said. His own subsequent physical history kept it fresh. It seems to have had its small modicum of weight in his decision to leave the Seminary.

"About 1882 another discouragement arose in connection with the future of the Seminary. Our Assembly of that year volunteered an overture to the Northern Assembly, sitting in Springfield, Ill., intended to bring about permanent 'fraternal relations,' with an annual interchange of embassies and compliments. Our men resolved that, abandoning no principle, they retracted all reproachful language against the others. This, of course, was a piece of inconsistency. We had steadily charged them, strictly *on principle*, with defection, usurpation and persecution. Certainly these charges contain reproach, accusation; and it was impossible for us to retract the reproach without abandoning the principle. But our Assembly promised, if the other would pass the same resolution, there should be reconciliation, and the perpetual interchange should begin. The Northern Assembly professed to pass the resolution, and telegraphed to Atlanta that they had done so. But they also passed another enactment, resolving that this did not withdraw any charge of treason or rebellion against us. Our Moderator, Dr. Smoot, received a private dispatch from Springfield, warning him to go slow because of this. Dr. Smoot gave this caution to our Assembly's committee; but nothing would check them; they went on to prepare their enactment that the reconciliation was now complete, and our embassy was appointed. After this was done, and the action of the Springfield Assembly had become known, the conviction was inevitable that intelligent men could have been betrayed into such weakness only by a hankering after an early fusion with the Yankees. Leading men in the church told us freely that this was so. The church seemed to me to be bent on committing suicide. This brought me to a fearful stand as to my own future in the Seminary: First, I knew that when it became a Yankee institution, under Yankee church government, the rebel and traitor Dabney would not be retained there as professor, but would be kicked out ignominiously on the approach of old age. Second, if I were tolerated, our Seminary would sink into a contemptible decline by our students going off to Northern seminaries, after their gaudy and meretricious baits. They had done so from Dr. Rice's death until the insolence of the Abolitionists had perforce stopped the stream, about 1855. Even the devoted and saintly Sampson had felt this slight so deeply, that in 1853, while begging me to come to his help, he was resolved to stand it only one more year; if the stream did not then

turn, he should in 1854 quit the Seminary forever. In that year he did quit—to go to heaven. These thoughts gave me a long season of the deepest and bitterest distress I ever felt, except the fall of the Confederacy and the bereavement of my children. I cared comparatively little for the ruin of my own position. Fortunately, I now had an independent home. The apparent infatuation and self-destruction of my own church were what wrung my heart; but I resolved again to take no step, to endure all things, and hope all things, until Providence should shut me up to suitable action.

“Finally came a complete break-down in health. At the middle of August, 1882, I came as usual from ‘Red Hill’ to the Seminary, leaving my family at the former place. About the end of September, I went to Lynchburg to spend the Sabbath preaching for Dr. W. L. Hall; over-exerted myself by a long horseback ride to ‘Red Hill’ and back to Lynchburg on Monday, suffered great fatigue in consequence Monday evening, and at the house of Major Thomas J. Kirkpatrick had, that night, a severe ague, followed by a high fever. Next morning, certain that I was destined to some hard sickness, I returned to my home at the Seminary (October 1st) with intermittent fever well established. Even that day I heard a recitation, but that was the end of work for many a long day. Thenceforward I took my bed, extremely ill, with none of my family to nurse me except Lewis, then a youth, assisted by the housekeeper. My wife reached me about Friday. The fever rapidly became congestive, with some delirium. A chronic catarrh of the nostrils had for some time set up a tendency to bleeding at the nose. This now probably saved my brain from destruction; for whenever I vomited, which was often and violently, there was considerable hemorrhage from the nose, partially relieving the congestion. I was treated with enormous doses of quinine and with condurango. These subdued the fever by Saturday night. I lay most of that night sleepless, perfectly free from pain, bathed in perspiration, weak and prostrate as a wet rag, but with my mind entirely calm and perfectly sane and conscious, too weak to be capable of appetite or of any emotion of either desire of life or fear of death, but quietly enjoying a negative pleasure of release from violent pain and burning fever. On Sabbath morning I was thought so much better that everybody went to church, leaving me to my wife’s care. I then had an experience of which I am as certain as I am of my existence, but which I cannot explain. As I lay on my bed, in this easy, calm and rational state I heard, for a considerable time, hymn after hymn of soft and sweet sacred music, coming apparently from the direction of Mrs. Sarah Boccock’s. There was some kind of soft instrument, accompanied by sweet female voices. I could never remember the tunes, though I had a faint impression that one was a very sweet hymn, new to me, which I had heard in Westminster Abbey, in London, in 1880. I called my wife to enjoy the sweet music with me, and asked her if it might not be some one of the girls of the neigh-

borhood singing thus for my enjoyment. She declared she heard nothing. I asked her to go to the back porch and watch Mrs. Boccock's house, and learn whether the music did not come thence. She went, watched, listened, and declared there was no music, that the house was closed, and all the family gone to church. After a time the music ceased, leaving me much pleased and refreshed. Such are the dry facts. What is the explanation? May it be that I had come so near death, the veil which separates us from the spirit world was a little lifted, so that I heard the sweet faint echoes of the heavenly choirs? Or, can it be that this strange music was the deceitful result of some morbid cerebral action in my own brain, now relaxing from its tension? I assert no opinion. I know the facts.

"Relations and friends wrote me kind letters congratulating me on my recovery. I sent back polite thanks, but sometimes added: 'I much doubt whether I am to be congratulated. I had gotten so close to the river of death that all the pain and trouble of crossing over were virtually done with. Friends, in their kindness, pulled me back to life so that I shall have all the trouble of the hard and rough descent to go over again'—a prediction that has been fulfilled three times—in 1885, in 1890, and in 1895, with awful suffering, and yet I have not crossed over. What next? I hope that next time God will grant me a quick and easy passage.

"During the rest of October I seemed to convalesce, though the violent medication resulted in a great disturbance of the kidney function, which for a time greatly alarmed my physician. About the first of November I suffered a painful relapse, with a cold, which developed into bronchitis, with some symptoms of pneumonia and pleurisy. Again I had a painful struggle for life. In January I resumed teaching my classes, and continued my work, without farther incident, to the end of the session. It now appeared that I was to become, like Dr. Atkinson, another instance of the tendency of malaria, long continued, to generate pulmonary disease. The Board, at its meeting, took no note of the danger through which I was passing, made no offer of succor. I myself had no plan, nor purpose formed, except just to stay on and fall at my post; but a few days afterwards, a strange providence happened. I was astonished and almost frightened by a telegram from Col. Ashbel Smith, President of the Regents of the projected Texas University, saying that I had been elected professor of Philosophy, with a salary of four thousand dollars a year. I barely knew that such an institution was on foot, was not a candidate, and did not know that my name was before them. A few days later I received the following letter:

"EVERGREEN, CEDAR BAYOU POST-OFFICE,

"HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS, May 9, 1883.

"*Rev. Dr. Dabney, D. D.*

"DEAR SIR: I had the honor to send to you from Austin a telegram apprising you of your appointment as Professor of Moral and Mental

Philosophy in the University of Texas. I did not remain in Austin long enough to receive an answer to my telegram. I trust that it will suit your convenience and wishes to accept the appointment.

"The following is the list of the gentlemen selected by the Regents of the University to be professors, so far as selection has yet been made.

"J. W. MALLET, Physics and Chemistry.

"M. W. HUMPHREYS, Latin and Greek Languages and Literature.

"LESLIE WAGGONER, English Language, Literature and History.

"H. TALLICHET, Modern Languages.

"W. LEROY BROWN, Mathematics.

"O. M. ROBERTS and JUDGE GOULD, Jurisprudence and Law.

"Yourself, ———.

"Of course, additional professors and assistants will be hereafter selected. In the additional selection the Regents desire the counsel and coöperation of the members of the Faculty already appointed, in order to secure the harmony among the professors indispensable to the success of the University.

"The University will be opened for instruction on the 15th of September next. Much work is before the Regents and the Faculty in organizing the several departments in detail, and in determining on what shall be the requirements for the admission of students into the University, and in drawing up a general statement for the information of the public.

"As it is scarcely practicable for most of the professors elected to visit Austin at this period of the scholastic year, the Board of Regents, by resolution, have requested me to invite the several professors to meet me at Nashville, Tenn., to confer on the several matters that may claim attention. Accordingly, I expect to arrive in Nashville on the 17th instant. I respectfully beg you will meet with us at that time. I propose to stop at the Maxwell House.

"Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"ASHBEL SMITH,

"*President Board of Regents, University of Texas.*

"The declared policy of the original Board of Regents was to use what revenues they had in procuring the best talent and experience, so that the students might pursue the essential studies of a well-rounded education under the direct influence of master minds. That Board was, in the main, a body of high and broad-minded gentlemen.

"This call raised very grave questions: as to church interests; as to family interests; and as to questions of health. I was unacquainted with the climate of Austin; whether it was far enough up the country and west to enjoy that immunity from fevers and that dry air so favorable to bronchitis. I was much perplexed.

"In a day or two, Dr. J. D. Eggleston called, evidently to talk about

this Texas removal. I saw that he was anxious to discuss it from the health point of view. So I asked him to speak out frankly. He then said clearly that if Austin proved a warmer, drier and non-malarial residence, I ought by all means to go, if I wished to live. He stated in the neighborhood that I was travelling precisely Dr. Atkinson's road to the grave, about two years behind him, if I remained there. Dr. Atkinson was then nearly dead. I went to the University of Virginia and consulted Dr. Mallet, who had been to Austin prospecting. At the end of May, I went to Austin myself, interviewed the Board, made many inquiries, and, after deep hesitation and much prayer, accepted the post, engaging to remove to Austin by September 15th, to begin the first session.

"The review of facts which I have given explain my motives, which were complex, the last and conclusive one being a natural desire to avoid death and finish the rearing of my sons. It so happened that the Directors of Union Theological Seminary held an adjourned meeting in Richmond in July. To them I tendered my resignation, supported by a letter from Dr. Eggleston. They simply accepted it at once, suggesting no dissuasions or alternatives, such as a furlough to rest, or a year's residence in the South. This review also shows that my decision was absolutely justified in the conscientious point of view. I had gone to the extreme in maintaining my loyalty to the Seminary, almost to the verge of indirect suicide. Only one decision was possible for a sensible and self-respecting man. I have never blamed myself for it. Indeed, the Seminary seemed to experience no check from my withdrawal—a circumstance well calculated to teach us how unimportant we are in the course of events, and to humble our egotism."

There was wide-spread regret at his leaving the Seminary. Many felt that the loss of him was irreparable. That the action of the Board of Trustees of the Seminary presented no alternative was due to the strength with which the health reason for his removing to Texas was urged. It is safe to say that a very large majority, if not the whole, of the Board looked upon his going with extreme regret. They made the following minute on the subject:

"In adopting the resolution accepting the resignation of Dr. Dabney, the Board of Trustees deem it suitable to place on record the following paper, as an expression of their views and feelings touching the matter referred to:

"The official connections of the Rev. Dr. Dabney with the Union Theological Seminary began in 1853, when he became Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Polity. In the year 1859 he was transferred to the Chair of Theology, which he continued to fill until it was made vacant by the action above mentioned. The term of service, therefore,



has extended over the long period of thirty years. We bear our emphatic testimony to the fidelity, prudence, zeal and efficiency with which he has uniformly labored to promote the great interests with which he was so largely entrusted; to the patient, gentle, considerate kindness of his intercourse with the students at all times, not only as an instructor, but as a friend, to comfort them in their sorrows, and help them in time of trouble—meeting, in return, their affectionate confidence and attachment; to the unfailing courtesy and brotherly kindness which have marked his intercourse with the other professors of the Seminary, as also with the Board of Trustees; and to the relations of perfect harmony which have subsisted between them all. To say, then, that his eminent abilities and ‘aptness to teach’ have challenged the admiration of the whole church, is simply to place here, on our records, a statement of that which is already settled in the minds of our people.

“From all this may be clearly seen how great is our estimate of the value of Dr. Dabney to the Seminary and to the church, and how deep is our sense of the loss they sustain by his departure.

“To terminate a relation which has been so happy and useful is felt by all to be extremely painful. Under other circumstances, the Board of Trustees would feel it to be their duty to interpose every possible influence which might dissuade from the severance of bonds so tender and strong. But the considerations presented, in the letter addressed to us by Dr. Dabney, are of a character so conclusive as to shut us up to the necessity of accepting the resignation which has been tendered.

“We desire to assure our beloved brother that, notwithstanding this formal separation, the ties of Christian confidence and affection, which have so long bound us together, must ever remain unbroken, and that into whatsoever field of labor he may be called to enter, he will be followed by the sympathies and prayers of the church, for his health, and for the covenant blessing of God upon himself and family, now and always.”<sup>5</sup>

That his Presbytery of West Hanover looked on his going from them with sorrow is shown by the following extract from the minutes of West Hanover:

“OLIVET, August 25, 1883.

“The committee appointed to respond to Dr. Dabney’s request to be excused for absence from this meeting of Presbytery, and also to be dismissed to the Presbytery of Central Texas, offered the following paper, which was adopted:

“Whereas, Rev R. L. Dabney, D. D., has been called by Providence to remove from the bounds of this Presbytery to another field of labor,

<sup>5</sup> Records of the Trustees of the Union Theological Seminary, in Prince Edward county, Va., from 1856 to —, pp. 120, 121.

we take this occasion to express our deep sorrow at losing his able counsels and personal influence; and in parting with him we feel that no words of ours are needed to commend one 'whose praise is in all the churches,' and whose life and teachings have left their deep impress on the character and ministry of nearly all the members of this Presbytery, as well as of many others. And—

"Whereas, Dr. Dabney has asked to be excused from attendance on this meeting of Presbytery, and also to be dismissed to the Presbytery of Central Texas; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, 1. That he be, and is hereby, excused from attendance on this meeting of Presbytery, with our profound regret that we cannot have him once more with us as a fellow-worker.

*Resolved*, 2. That he be dismissed to the Presbytery of Central Texas, with the fervent prayers that the blessing of God may go with him to his new field of labor, giving him speedy and complete restoration of health, and grace, mercy and peace, abundantly and continually."

Protests against his leaving Union Seminary for Texas came, indeed, from many quarters, as letters make clear.

His departure from Hampden-Sidney and from Virginia was attended by many burdensome details, and one untoward accident. He spent most of the summer in winding up his affairs in Prince Edward, and in removing his belongings, for the most part, to Red Hill, his estate in Amherst county. Just when they were about ready to leave Hampden-Sidney Mrs. Dabney suffered a bad fall. They had finished their packing, and were stopping for a day or two in a neighboring house. One evening after tea, she insisted on returning to their cottage to inspect. He was crippled with sciatica. She went alone, against his protest. While roaming around the deserted chambers in a reverie, she fell, sustaining severe injuries. She was soon carried tenderly to the other house, and given the most immediate possible medical attention. They were thus kept at Hampden-Sidney nearly a month longer than they had planned. Mrs. Dabney gradually improved, but went to Red Hill on two crutches, and to Austin in the fall with one. She had fallen into a pit about seven feet deep. Her husband regarded her ultimate recovery from this fearful fall as a special blessing of Providence on a sound constitution.

Dr. Dabney employed three weeks in the later summer in a last visit to the Red Sulphur Springs, whose cleansing and soothing waters he hoped would set him up for his labors in the coming session. At that place he was troubled, for the first

time, by gravel from the bladder, a thing which proved to have a dreadful meaning for him in subsequent years. Even then was beginning the formation of a calculus that was to bring excruciating suffering, and, in its train blindness. "The solids dissolved in this mineral water evidently united with the morbid elements produced by the heroic medication of the autumn previous."

In the opening of the next chapter, we shall find him in Austin, the beautiful little capital of the Empire State of the South.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### IN CONNECTION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS.

(1883—1894.)

AUSTIN: THE SOCIETY THERE AND DR. DABNEY'S FRIENDS.—THE KIND OF HOME HE ENJOYED THERE.—HIS GREAT WORK FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS: BY CLASS-ROOM WORK AND LIFE; BY HIS WRITINGS, PHILOSOPHICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL, LITERARY.—TESTIMONY OF MR. GREGORY AND OF MR. WOOLDRIDGE.—VIEW OF THE RELATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS TO THE DENOMINATIONAL COLLEGES OF THE STATE.—THE AUSTIN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND HIS POST THEREIN.—SERVICES IN THE BEHALF OF THE CHURCH AT LARGE.—OCCASIONAL PREACHING.—INCREASING PHYSICAL INFIRMITIES; SEVERE ILLNESS IN 1890; TOTAL BLINDNESS.—SEVERANCE FROM THE UNIVERSITY.—UNIVERSAL INTERESTS.—VOLUMINOUS CORRESPONDENCE.—SONS ALREADY PROMINENT AND SUCCESSFUL MEN.

DR. DABNEY'S going to Texas evoked many protests. At some of them he was much amused. For instance, many urged the "fearful *social sacrifice* of leaving old Virginia to go and live in a rough, boorish, heterogeneous, frontier place"; but he anticipated finding a good deal of the best of old Virginia in the Southwest, and in that anticipation he was not mistaken. Heterogeneity of population he did find in the great State of Texas, and in its elegant little capital of twelve thousand population. There true Southerners predominated, however, neither "Africanized" nor "Mahonized." The most distinguished of these received Dr. Dabney at once into their homes and hearts. He soon had a host of friends, who, having admired him for his abilities as a theologian and a philosopher, his fame as a patriot, and his virtues as a citizen, learned to love him for his many private excellencies. He never forgot his old Virginia friends. He continued to love the very red gullies in the barren fields of Prince Edward. Of Hampden-Sidney he wrote to Mrs. Judith Spencer, on November 30, 1884: "My interest in the old place will never decline. I can see every spot, every corner and every turn in the road just as clearly as if I was looking at them." But he was a man to make friends

with people of clean lives, high aspirations, and noble endeavor, wherever he found them, and though he found in Austin "Northwest Yankees, Downeast Yankees, Germans, Scotch, Swedes, red-skinned Mexicans, negroes, and mulattoes of all degrees, English, French, and an occasional Spaniard, wicked people, good people, a hotch-potch," he found many Southerners of the nobler sort. Amongst his friends in Austin may be named Judge A. S. Walker, Governor Lubock, ex-Governor Roberts, Judges Gould and Clarke, Judge Stayton, Dr. T. Wooten; in Galveston, Dr. Charles Trueheart, and his brother, Mr. Henry Trueheart, and Judge Pleasants; in Gonzales, Colonel Harwood, etc., etc. The ministers of his own communion were most all his friends as well as his admirers; there were special intimacies between him and particular men, however, *e. g.* Dr. A. S. King, of Waco; Rev. S. B. Campbell, of Lancaster; Mr. McMurray, of Laredo; Mr. William Red, Dr. W. S. Scott, of Galveston, were devoted to him.

During the year 1883 to 1884, Dr. Dabney purchased a good lot, well located, only two blocks from the University grounds, and erected a commodious and tasteful cottage, in which he lived as long as he remained in Austin, which was till 1895. He and Mrs. Dabney were very happy to begin house-keeping again, in a "new house, with new furniture, a new cook (a Swede), and with 'Uncle Warner,'" a venerable well-bred, intelligent and characterful old Virginia darkey, whom they had carried from Hampden-Sidney to Austin with them. Later on, when the second son, Samuel Brown Dabney, had joined them to pursue legal studies in the University of Texas, they built an addition designed to serve him as a study. For two or three years after the removal to Texas, their youngest son, Lewis, lived with them, pursuing first his academical, and later, legal studies, in the University. The father was happy in the companionship of his wife and his sons. They were young men of quite uncommon parts, and intelligence, social in their instincts, and drew to the house many of the brightest young men of the University. It is safe to say that it would have been hard to parallel that home for another equally remarkable for wit, intelligence, strenuous thinking, and vigorous and discriminating discussion of everything, "from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall," "also of beasts and of fowl, and of creeping things and of fishes," also of questions political, social, sociological and religious, also

of subjects lunar, stellar and cosmic, for these young men were used to, and in company with, one whose mind careered around over the universe. To this home there came from time to time also many of the godliest, the ablest and the best informed men of Austin and of Texas.

It had been Dr. Dabney's original plan to spend his summers in Virginia, and at Red Hill, in Amherst county. This plan he put into operation a few times, but the distance was great, increasing physical infirmities dictated that the summers should be spent elsewhere with a view to recuperation, and finally the project was altogether abandoned.

During the eleven years he was permitted to work in the University of Texas, he did much to give it reputation, and make it a power for good. His chair was to him a most congenial one, that of Mental and Moral Philosophy and Political Economy. In September, 1883, he began teaching his course, in temporary quarters in the old Capitol, removing to the University building in January, 1884. His first classes were better in numbers than in quality, as was to be expected in a new University, fed by schools of no higher grade than existed in Texas at that time. His classes never became relatively large. The community which supplied the students was, as yet, too crude, in spite of the presence of a few persons of large intelligence and culture.

But his numbers grew steadily to the end. The first year, he organized two classes, junior and senior—teaching to the junior psychology and logic, in the senior a history of philosophy, involving a critical review of psychology, practical ethics, natural theology, and political economy. The next year he added a course for graduates, in which the three departments of his chair were studied more fully. After about nine years, he separated political philosophy from his crowded sessional course, and made it a year's course by itself. In this latter department, he made himself acquainted with all the modern text-books and a large part of the better literature of a more general sort bearing on the subject, but he never found "any more recent text-book as good as the Frenchman, Say's." Dr. Dabney had been used, for thirty years, to teaching men of earnest purpose, most of them already degree men of good colleges and universities; he was himself a strenuous man; he despised a lazy fellow. Naturally, he made his course a heavy one. In addition to his lectures, he expected his students to

have mastered between lectures considerable stretches of assigned text-books. Those who had the courage to undertake his course, and the persistence to continue it, were immensely developed, and looked on him with vast admiration. He did real training, work that may properly be called University work, informing and deepening and broadening. It may be safely said that no one of his colleagues did more by the character of his teaching to give a just and solid reputation to the University. Some incidental proof of this will appear further on.

During these years he prepared the manuscript for his last great book, the *Practical Philosophy*. This book Dr. Dabney regarded as much the best one he ever wrote. Certainly he was better fitted to make a book on this subject than any other man within our bounds. His original talent for psychological insight, his keen power of analysis, his constructive genius, his unswerving adherence to the truth as he saw it, his almost absolute fearlessness of men, in saying what he thought, his caution against novelties until he had tried them by all possible criteria, his reverential and thorough devotion to God's psychology of man as given in the Scriptures, his exegetical ability to get at that psychology of man, his long years of active and powerful thinking on these subjects—all these things fitted him to produce a great book on this department of psychology. In this work, entitled *Practical Philosophy*, there are four books. In the first book, we have "The Psychology of the Feelings Discussed." In the second book, we have a discussion of the "Will." In the third book, we have a discussion of the various "Ethical Theories," which have prevailed more or less widely, the establishment of the true theory, and a discussion as to the extent of moral obligation. In the fourth book, we have "Applied Ethics." It thus appears that this book covers the most important part of Philosophy—the part most important for preachers, teachers, and all others who are to shape the common life. The author's method is much like that employed in his previous works. It was ever a trait of his to look at all the bearings of a teaching, to test it by its legitimate, logical consequences. He always believed that the tree may be known by its fruits. Like Sampson, too, he was ever somewhat indifferent to the kinds of weapons he used in offensive warfare, now the jaw-bone of an ass, and now the huge pillars of the temple. The book was worked up as lectures to his University classes,

and was delivered over and over to them. It was not published till 1896.

Meanwhile, a constant stream of articles appeared from its distinguished author, philosophical and other kinds. In 1884, there appeared in the July issue of the *Southern Presbyterian Review* an article of thirty pages entitled, "The Emotions." It was, first of all, a most trenchant review of President McCosh's work on "The Emotions." It set forth, in a thoroughly philosophical manner, the conditions under which feelings arise. It made, with perfect lucidity, the all-important distinction between the sensibilities and the appetencies, and showed that the latter rise in pairs. It gave a "tentative," but wonderfully fine classification of feelings. In December, 1885, he delivered a public lecture, before the University of Texas and the community of Austin, entitled, "Commendation of the Study of Philosophy."<sup>1</sup> He took up the grounds on which mental and moral philosophy are disparaged, viz., that the mind and its processes are not observed by the senses, and, therefore, we have no sufficient basis of facts on which to found a true science save of phenomena and their laws, and that the history of philosophy shows that it has never reached certainty. He effectually disposes of these objections, and nobly vindicates the scientific character and superior dignity and importance of his department. During the next year, he prepared a paper designed to show that the "teleological argument" is valid to prove the being of a personal and rational Creator. This paper, under the caption, "Final Cause," was read before the Victoria Institute, London, February 15, 1886, and was received with the greatest favor. One of his learned critics said of it, "There have been few papers read in this room to which I have listened with deeper interest, and I cannot but regard it as a most important contribution to the transactions of this society." Another said, "It seems to me to be the most lucid and closely reasoned essay upon the subject that I have read." As a matter of fact, this essay, of less than a score of pages, contains proximately the whole reasoning of Janet in his great book on "Final Cause," and a good deal more besides, and all more clearly and powerfully put than Janet puts it.<sup>2</sup> In the *Presbyterian Quarterly* for October, 1887, Dr. Dabney published an article headed

<sup>1</sup> This is found in the *Discussions*, Vol. IV., pp. 281 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See it in *Discussions*, Vol. III., pp. 476 ff.



"Spurious Religious Excitements," in which he recalled certain of the positions made in his psychology of the feelings published in the *Quarterly* in 1884, and applied particularly the distinction between the passive feelings and the spontaneous appetencies, showing that the emotions of taste, or the mental æsthetic, the involuntary emotion of self-blame, or remorse, the natural self-interested emotions of fear, hope, and desire of future security and enjoyment, and the emotion of instinctive sympathy, may all be powerfully excited in a purely carnal heart; that they often are so stirred, and those subject to them persuaded that they are subject to the gracious operations of God, with the result of subsequent infidelity. This paper ought to be read by most ministers once a year. In the July issue of the *Presbyterian Quarterly*, 1888, he published an article, "Anti-Biblical Theory of Rights." This was really a discussion of the *Jacobin Theory*, which had come, within the last sixty years, to be the prevailing theory in our own country, and its corollaries in the light of the Bible. The theory is that every individual is inalienably entitled to all the franchises and functions in society enjoyed by any other. The theory involves as corollaries: First, there can be no just imputation of the consequences of conduct from one human being to another in society; second, no adult person can be justly debarred from any privilege allowed to any other person in the order, or society, except for conviction of crime; third, all distinctions of "caste" are essentially and inevitably wicked and oppressive; fourth, of course, every adult is equally entitled to the franchise of voting and being voted for, and all restrictions here, except for the conviction of crime, are natural injustice; fifth, equal rights and suffrage ought to be conceded to women in every respect as to men. He shows that these corollaries are inevitable, and that they logically lead to the denial of the inspiration of the Scriptures, just as the main theory does, and then shows how the church should adjust itself to such an anti-Bible theory. The paper constitutes a terrific arraignment and solemn warning. During the later 'eighties it became the custom of the Faculty of the University of Texas to have at commencement a discourse from a member of the Faculty. Dr. Dabney was chosen to deliver such a discourse in 1889.<sup>3</sup> His subject was "Religion and Morality, the Indispensable Supports of Political Prosperity." Starting

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<sup>3</sup> It is found in *Discussions*, Vol. III., pp. 536 ff.

with a condemnation of expediency and selfishness, he laid stress upon the necessity of thorough honesty in all civic actions, particularly in our own country, on account of universal suffrage, and the prevalence of the spoils system as between political parties, and the subjugation of the free people of the South. The style of this oration is particularly fine, the tone noble, with passages of peculiar beauty and sublimity. It was nobly delivered, and produced profound visible effect on his audience. It reminded the hearer who had heard the "New South," as originally delivered, of that great effort, both in the general tone of it and in the effect produced. However, it does not equal in power the earlier production. In October, 1892, he published in the *Presbyterian Quarterly* a paper on the "Immortality of the Soul," which comes as near to being a philosophic demonstration as anything found on the subject in the English tongue, perhaps. In the course of these years he produced the very able papers on "Civic Ethics," "The Philosophy Regulative of Private Corporations," and that on "Monism." The two former of these should be widely read by legislators and statesmen; the last was read before the American Institute of Christian Philosophy, November 3, 1887, and should be read by every student in philosophy. The tone of all these papers may be fairly exhibited by citing the introductory words of the paper on "The Philosophy Regulative of Private Corporations":

"There is a discriminating conservatism which values and seeks to preserve the principle of old institutions, and which understands the conditions of their value. It seeks to save the kernel, even at the expense of the shell. There is also an unthinking conservatism, which by blind association of ideas, cleaves to the form of institutions once valuable, overlooking the conditions of their utility, and the principles which remain stable under changing forms, or even demands mutations of form in order to remain stable. This conservatism seeks to keep the shell at the expense of the kernel. Such is often the temper which moves the American people to regard industrial combination with excessive legislative favor."<sup>4</sup>

These papers are luminous with historical illustration, big with insight into current conditions, masterful in their reasoning, fitted to inform and to strengthen the intelligent student, however he may take issue on certain minor points. Other

<sup>4</sup> These several papers may be found in the *Discussions*, Vol. III.

philosophical writings flowed from his pen in this period, which need not be named. In 1887, he brought out the second and enlarged edition of his *The Sensualistic Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century Considered*, a valuable work, which received notice in a preceding chapter. By these philosophical writings, he did much to give honor to the University of Texas.

He added to this honor also by his sociological writings of the period. In the *Texas Review*, of 1891, appeared an article on "The Labor Union, the Strike, and the Commune." It is an instructive and powerful paper. Of the *strike* he teaches:

"If the equal rights of other laborers to accept the work and wages rejected are respected, strikes are futile. If these rights are obstructed by force, strikes are criminal conspiracies. And our point is that the latter is their logical tendency. Unfortunately, the frequency of these outrages as the sequels of strife, fully confirms the charge. In fine, only three modes are possible for adjusting the wages of labor and the interest of capital. One is to leave the adjustment under equitable laws, which shall hold laborer and property-holder equals, to the great law of supply and demand. The second is to have the government fix maximum and minimum prices by statutes. The third is to have these combinations of laborers and employers against each other; for if the one combine, of course the others will. The second plan is mischievous despotism. See its working in the French Revolution. The third splits society into warring factions, and tends to barbarism." . . .

"There appears, then, no remedy except in the firm and just administration of the laws, coupled with wise and equitable commercial and industrial legislation and the propagation of industry—economy and contentment amongst the people by means of Christian principles. There is no attitude for the government against strikes except the legal and righteous one. If operatives choose to form a society to forward their own interests, they have a right to do so, provided they do not infringe other people's. If the society chooses to quarrel with their own bread and butter by rejecting a certain work at certain wages, they have a right to do so. *But their recent employers have equal right to go into the labor market and hire others for that work at those wages, and all other laborers have equal right to that work if they are willing to accept the wages.*

"The moment the 'union' goes an inch beyond the withdrawal—the moment it begins to obstruct, terrorize, or beat or murder the employers and the new *employees*—it has become a criminal conspiracy; the State should put it down with as prompt and firm a hand as they would put down highway robbery."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See the *Discussions*, Vol. IV., pp. 294 ff.

He finds that our State governments are slack in the execution of their duty here, and asserts that it has already become clear to the thought of property, that when the hour of its forcible defence comes the militia of the State will be worthless, that they are too near the rioters; that the property-holder, in the hour of trial, will have learned to think of his State as the *cypher*, the Washington government as the only power. He fears, as the surest result of the approaching strife, "the complete practical extinction of State sovereignty, and the consolidation of the federation into one empire—that we shall have an empire governed by the bayonet." His detestation of some of the principles at the basis of labor unions equalled his hatred of some of those at the basis of most private corporations.

In January of 1892, he prepared an article on the "Depression of American Farming Interests," in which he showed that this depression is a fact; that all classes of Americans are vitally interested in this depression, and that a remedy ought to be sought and applied. With a view to prescribing the proper remedy he goes into an *exposé* of the causes of the depression, finding them to be, not in the limited supply of the currency in circulation, but in the overthrow of the old labor system of the South, the class legislation by means of which monopolies flourish so wantonly, enormous and adversely discriminating taxation, and the protective system of the United States. He proposes no "quack nostrums" to farmers as the remedies of their wrongs. What he does pronounce to be the remedies are "economical government, reduced taxation, the arrest and repeal of all class legislation, and a swift return to strictly revenue tariffs." He asks:

"Will the great producing classes see their true remedy, and combine in their strength to exact of our rulers its faithful application? I fear not. Impatience misleads many. The evil is chronic. Safe and wholesome remedies will only operate slowly. The money oligarchy has its hired advocates everywhere afield, who misdirect the views of the people. It is to be feared that the greatest obstacles to true reform lie here; the real remedies are simple and honest, but the political mind of America is largely dishonest."

Dr. Dabney's study of political economy and treatment of the subjects of that department before his classes led him to reflect profoundly on the subject of the proper kind of currency, and on the propriety of the double or single standard by which our

statesmen have been so long vexed. In the early part of the year 1893 he prepared a "hypothetical law" of Congress, providing for the coining of both silver and gold, but only as commodities. He seems to have contemplated the attempt at its publication in widely circulating secular periodicals, and in the event of failure of that, putting it in the hands of individual Congressmen already interested on the subject. The following letter to his son, President Charles W. Dabney, Ph. D., of the University of Tennessee, indicates his attitude on the main question, as well as his aims and hopes with regard to his paper:

"AUSTIN, March 24, 1893.

"DEAR CHARLEY: What have you done with my manuscript on coinage? Nothing, I reckon. My last suggestion to you was, that if the editorial Elohim would not accept it, you might try to get it before Mr. Carlisle, through his and your friend, Col. William Breckinridge. I am thoroughly in earnest in desiring to get these views under the attention of the powers that be; not from conceit, but from wisdom. *I know* these things: The present system, if continued, will send our currency to the devil. Second, Mr. Cleveland is handicapped by the folly and villainy of the major mass of his own party. Third, this corrupt mass is going to avenge itself on him for his anti-silver opinions by checkmating his tariff reform. Thus all the hope begotten by his election will be blasted. The Democratic party will be dissolved by its own putrescence. Fourth, Mr. Cleveland will never be able to collect support enough to apply the only other adequate remedy, viz., the single-standard law enacted by the Radicals in 1873. The party that enacted it carries too much odium. It follows from these four propositions that the only hope is to adopt a new expedient, neither 'single standard nor Bland law, just and simple enough to ascend clear above present partisan issues, and thus supersede and evacuate them. I have reflected maturely. The plan will have to be, in the main, the one I have outlined; and I do not think any financier can get very far away from my details without damaging the plan.

"Now, if the manuscript has already gone to Colonel Breckinridge, send this letter after it to explain it. If you have done nothing with the manuscript, then send it at once to the Hon. M. D. Harter, of Ohio, M. C., and send this letter along with it as an explanation. The motion which he made in Congress concerning the free coinage of silver shows that he appreciates the crisis and the only remedy. He proposes the free coinage of silver henceforth, the new coins not to pass as dollars, but as weights. This would give the country two different kinds of silver coin, which is not desirable.

"I hope you are all better. Faithfully yours,

"R. L. DABNEY."

The main ideas in his "hypothetical law," and in his elaborate and able argument for it, are found in the writings on the same subject of that profound political economist, Jean Baptiste Say, and have every appearance of correctness and solidity. In the *Houston Post* of March 1892 he had had an article entitled, "The Dollar of the Daddies," in which he had combatted the popular sophistries of the Silver Democrats in favor of their hobby, and supported the doctrine of the single standard. It is confidently believed that in these papers Dr. Dabney exhibits real statesmanship, of the type that John C. Calhoun would have recognized and approved as worthy of honor. In 1894, he produced an elaborate paper on the "Economic Effects of the Former Labor System of the Southern United States." The tone of this scholarly, elaborate and powerful paper, as well as its purpose, is fairly set forth in these opening words:

"The future must learn chiefly from the past. There is no truth better established in science than this: that every fact and every law may have future value from some useful application, perhaps wholly unforeseen. The wise scientific man, therefore, carefully stores up every authentic discovery, like the experienced householder, in the confidence that it will be useful at a future day, though now apparently useless. The circumstance that this fact formerly existed in conditions not likely to be ever again exactly renewed, does by no means show it valueless. It may prove a valuable guide under new and unexpected conditions.

"The labor system of the South before 1860 A. D. is a thing of the past. Nearly a generation has lived since it was abolished. It is time that the political emotions which once associated themselves with it were quieted. This seems a suitable season, therefore, after the smoke of contest has evaporated, and yet before the data and the witnesses for the investigation have perished, to ascertain its real economic effects."

This great paper was produced for, and appeared in, the fourth volume of his *Discussions*.

These papers added to the reputation of the University of Texas, as having in its chair of Political Economy a man of wide and comprehensive outlook, vast information, subtle and profound insight, and powerful abilities for the presentation and enforcement of his views; but a good deal in them ran counter to the popular political faiths of the Texas people.

Meanwhile, Dr. Dabney had not ceased to be a theologian. In the *Southern Presbyterian Review* for October, 1884, he had published a fine review of *The Doctrine of Original Sin*,

as *Revised and Taught by the Churches of the Reformation*, by the Rev. R. W. Landis, a paper which combines the merits of a review and an original discussion, and is one of the best of several treatments of the subject from his pen. About 1889 he prepared a pamphlet, of thirty-five octavo pages, entitled, *The Latest Infidelity: A Reply to Ingersoll's Positions*. Dr. Dabney regarded this as one of the most thoroughly thought out and careful of his productions. He received some current criticisms on the ground that he treated Ingersoll's views as if they were of greater influence than they were. Men said, Dr. Dabney is casting pearls before swine; but he never thought so, nor did the majority of his critics, perhaps. He sought, not indeed, to convince Ingersoll, but to protect the inconsiderate from accepting his views.

In 1894, he published in the *Presbyterian Quarterly* a paper on the "Attractions of Popery," in which he set in array the influences which Rome is now wielding throughout our country, some of which Protestants put into her hands by their own folly and unfaithfulness, and some of which she finds in the blindness and sinfulness of human nature. He shows that these latter are the errors and crimes of humanity, which the church of Christ should labor to repress and extirpate, whereas Rome caters to them, and fosters them in order to use them for her own aggrandizement. These weapons are potent, exactly adapted to the nature of fallen man, have always been successful, and will be successful in this country. Our republican constitutions will prove no adequate shield against them, nor will our scriptural ecclesiastical order. Our rationalistic culture, by weakening God's Word, is opening the way for Rome's victory. The only hope for Protestants is in the work of the Holy Ghost. These several contentions he powerfully supports.

During this period he wrote much besides; some papers of a distinctly ecclesiastical sort, as a famous broadside in the *Central Presbyterian*, in 1887, against Fraternal Relations, and his letter of a few years later against "Premature Licensure," and some of an evangelical sort, as his vigorous and earnest plea in behalf of Campinas College, in the *Central Presbyterian* of February 21, 1894, entitled "Shall the Campinas College Die?" He argues that it must not: First, on account of its founders and servants whose deaths have consecrated it, Lane, Boyle, Dabney; second, on account of the value of the school as an

evangelizing agency; third, because schools are as necessary to the success of our religion in Brazil as in America, and because of the proven efficiency of that school. He vigorously combats the reasons advanced for abandoning the school, especially the "novel views" that the church's commission to the heathen authorizes her to do nothing but preach revelation, administer the sacraments, and organize churches, and that if she teaches anything out of the pulpit, it must be Bible lessons only.

He also found time for some poetical work, a noble "Elegy on Jackson," in 1886; a poem on "Annihilation," in 1889; "The Texas Brigade at the Wilderness," in 1890; "The Death of Moses," in 1891.<sup>6</sup> Some have emptyly inferred that Dr. Dabney could not write poetry. If the art of poetry be the art of apprehending and interpreting ideas by the faculty of the imagination, the art of idealizing in thought and expression, then Dr. Dabney possessed the art. That he had the necessary constructive imagination, and the power of expressing himself in the concrete, simply and sensuously, there is no ground for doubt. He usually attempted poetical composition, too, only on subjects on which he felt very deeply. In consequence, most of his work of this sort had the ring of passion. As a sample of his poetry the following lines are presented:

"THE SAN MARCOS RIVER.

"Mysterious river! Whence thy hidden source?  
 The rain-drops from far distant field and fell,  
 Urging through countless paths their darkling course,  
 Combine their tiny gifts thy flood to swell.  
 What secrets hath thy subterranean stream  
 Beheld; as it hath bathed the deepest feet  
 Of everlasting hills, which never beam  
 Of sun or star or lightning's flash did greet?  
 Over what cliffs rushed thou in headlong fall  
 Into some gulf of Erebus so deep  
 Thy very foam was black as midnight's pall;  
 And massive roof of rock and mountain steep  
 Suppressed thy thunders, so that the quick ears  
 Of fauns recumbent on its lofty side  
 Heard not; and grass-blades laden with the tears  
 Of night dews, felt no quiver from thy tide?  
 Through days and weeks uncounted by the sun,  
 Thy waters in abysmal caves have lain

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<sup>6</sup> This poem was suggested by a sermon preached by Dr. S. A. King, of Waco, Texas, on "Moses' Death."



In slow lustration, ere they sought to run  
 Forth to the day, purged from earth's least stain.  
 Pallas-Athene of the rivers, thou!  
 Who leapest adult in thy glittering might  
 From yonder hoary mountain, Zeus' brow,  
 Whose cloven crags parted to give thee light.  
 Thou teachest us, wise virgin; as through caves,  
 Sad and tear-dropping, steal thy sobbing waves,  
 Then flash to-day; so Virtue's weeping night  
 Shall surely break into the dawn's delight.

"Emblem, thou, of maiden's love,  
 Buried deep in modest heart;  
 Growing there to secret strength,  
 Hiding, swelling, till at length  
 Its lord's caresses bid it start  
 To life and joy! Then forth it springs,  
 'Circling glad in radiant rings;  
 Bliss and fruitfulness it brings.  
 Naiad bright, so deckest thou  
 With wedding wreaths thy shining brow,  
 Trailing ever verdant bands  
 Of fern and lily; as the lands  
 Thou weddest with thy close embrace,  
 In thy laughing, seaward race.  
 Or dost thou tell us of a sterner theme?  
 How souls of heroes, like thy forceful stream,  
 Are bred and nursed in silence and the night.  
 Fed from the rills of secret prayer; their might  
 Recruited in grim strife with foes concealed;  
 Until in fearful hour the earthquake shock  
 O! war, or civic crisis, cleave the rock.  
 Then, startling foe and friend, they move revealed  
 In beauty terrible, as pure as strong;  
 But seek the ocean of eternity  
 (Too soon, alas!) to which their names belong.  
 O flood! though earth-born, thou dost seek the sky,  
 And this is thy prime lesson: on our tomb  
 Our resurrection waits; our souls shall fly  
 To heaven's sunlight from its blackest gloom.  
 This is the brightest, this the noblest hope,  
 To publish which thy secret caverns ope."

It may be safely said that he was not at his greatest in many of his verses. The reader often feels the need of metrical polish. It is possible that his metrical imagery has not at all

times that originality which we would expect in him, if poet at all, and which is a characteristic of the very great poet. He had never developed himself fairly in this sphere. These essays at poetry were the occupations of relatively idle hours. Thus he wrote to his son "Charley" on December 25, 1886:

"I send you a copy of a poem I wrote during the leisure of vacation, an elegy on Jackson. I look forward to publishing it. Do not know exactly when. I am in no hurry. I have submitted it to a few; among these, Dr. Vaughan, Thomas R. Price and Mrs. Jackson. There is a shadow of a project debating between us, to avail ourselves of the artist-help of her sister Laura, Mrs. Colonel Brown, to get up some pictorial illustrations, have them copied in colored lithograph, and publish a little edition, like that of Grey's *Elegy*; a nice little pamphlet. How does that strike you? This project does not clash at all with giving it prior magazine circulation. There is so much of the 'whipped dog' spirit in the South, I think it very probable no journal will dare to publish it. . . .

"You will find in this envelope another poem which is different. You will easily recognize the person satirized under the dramatic form. This poem is also the result of a vacation amusement. I have always regarded this man as the vilest, most malignant and brutal of our conquerors. He will go unwhipped of justice in this world. . . . I felt a kind of desire to try my hand on him after the fashion of Dante's excoriations of his political foes in the *Divina Commedia*."<sup>7</sup>

We have ourselves seen him, after his total loss of sight, sitting in his class-room at examination times, and while his students were writing their papers, employing his moments in scribbling on his blind man's tablet, now hymns, and now trifling doggerel.

A part of his leisure was spent on subjects whose developments he never completed. One of these papers, however, it is hoped, may yet be completed and published. It is entitled "A History of the Life and Ministry of the Rev. Edward Lane, D. D., of the Presbyterian Mission, Campinas, Brazil." It is a manuscript of about thirty thousand words. Dr. Lane's history was one of unique interest; he was a true man, a devoted Christian, and a most zealous and efficient missionary. The following letter indicates Dr. Dabney's estimate of the man,

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<sup>7</sup>This dream of a certain soldier is "positively blood-curdling." It is perhaps the most powerful piece of poetic work Dr. Dabney did. For reasons, it has not been published.

and the condition in which he turned over to Mrs. Lane the manuscript :

"Mrs. S. M. Lane.

"AUSTIN, TEXAS, April 14, 1894.

"MY DEAR SISTER: You will find enclosed a manuscript you asked me to construct. I will also send back, in another parcel, the letters and documents which you sent me, as I suppose they may be valued by you and the children.

"I am almost ashamed to send you the narrative in this shape. Doubtless it is very imperfect. You know I am blind, and have to use such amanuenses as I can catch up. There are, I believe, four hand-writings. You will probably find many *lapsus penna*, and perhaps some bad grammar, here and there. These you must correct for yourself. You will also find a number of blanks for dates, etc., which you can easily fill. I either had not the material to fill them, or by reason of my blindness, could not get the references straight. Very strangely, one of these gaps occurred at the end. Miss Charlotte Kemper, while sending a very valuable narrative, forgot to give the number of days of our friend's illness and the day of his death. These are what you will never forget. I could get no copy of the *Missionary Journal* later than 1890.

"Remember, my dear friend, that you are the real author, I the mere instrument, of this biography; therefore, put in anything you desire, and erase anything you do not like—do it unsparingly. For instance, a printed sketch of Mr. Lane, from a Sunday-school paper, says that an aunt crossed the ocean with him, who died soon after. He never mentioned this to me, nor is it in your narrative; if it is true, put it in. Again, none of the documents furnished me state when, or by what college, he received his degree of D. D. It happened after I came to Texas, and when my blindness prevented my keeping up with our church papers. But you will know. Insert the statement at the right place. . . . Faithfully yours, R. L. DABNEY."

During this period, Dr. Dabney's *Collected Discussions* were being brought out, the last volume not to get into print, however, till 1897. They were edited in four imposing volumes by his life-long friend and brother in affection, the Rev. C. R. Vaughan, D. D.<sup>8</sup> The spirit in which the editor undertook his

<sup>8</sup> These noble volumes do not contain Dr. Dabney's *Life of Jackson*, nor his *Defense of Virginia and the South*, nor his *Sacred Rhetoric*, nor his *Course of Systematic and Polemic Theology*, nor his *The Sensualistic Philosophy Considered*, nor his *Practical Philosophy*, nor other volumes of his, nor all of his important review articles; but they contain the more important of his contributions to reviews, periodicals and newspapers which seemed to his editor and himself to demand their publication in a more permanent form.

very considerable labors is well shown in his letter of January 6, 1885:

"N. P. MANSE, *January 6, 1885.*

"MY DEAR DABNEY: A happy New Year to you and yours! The blessing of the God of the covenant rest on you all this year and forever.

"Enclosed you will find the first communication between myself and the Committee of Publication anent the contemplated publication of your collected writings. I had exchanged one or two letters with Dr. Hazen before the meeting of the committee on the 1st instant. You will see something, I hope, to disabuse your sore heart of all suspicion that your church does not care anything about you. I would feel like knocking any other man except yourself who should dare to say that. The project is not only pleasing to the committee, but esteemed both interesting and important. I am delighted with the prospect, and will do all I can to raise the money by subscription and by grants for the stereotyping. I mean to get John Preston to sound old Mr. William Guthrie and other of your friends in Tinkling Spring. I am only waiting to hear details of cost from Hazen to go to work. The only thing I don't like in Hazen's suggestions is that of bringing out the volumes uniform with your *Theology*. I never liked the way in which that work was printed. The typing is nothing like so beautiful as either Thornwell's or Ramsay's volumes. You deserve the very best form in which the hand of art can bring out your thoughts. My idea is to get out *four* volumes, uniform with Thornwell's, with a first-rate steel engraving of my favorite wild beast set in the forefront of the first volume. Three volumes is the least I can accept, but four is what I want. The volumes ought not to be too large, not more than six hundred pages, and not much less. You can go to work and get out all your best articles, classified in order of topics, and send me a written list, and if this scheme should fail (as I have no idea it will), it will at least put me in condition to try somewhere else, either in your lifetime, or after your death, should I survive you. I mean to work this thing out some way, if God pleases. Go to work easily; don't push, or hurt yourself; but get ready. I am much mistaken if in twelve months or less the demand will not be made for the matter to be printed.

"How are you? How is the buttermilk serving you? I am anxious to know if my prescription is helping you. Backed as it was by Walker's judgment, I have been hopeful of your increased comfort, at least. Do let me hear once in a while. Love to Sister Dabney and Lewis. What is Sam doing this winter? We are all well; my baby is rosy and fat, and sweet as peaches. My back has been quiet until now; but in the last three days of damp weather begins to grumble. . . .

"Yours very truly and affectionately, C. R. V."

Dr. Vaughan bore the editorial burden, not only in name, but in fact. Nevertheless, the bringing out of these volumes entailed much labor on Dr. Dabney. He had not been careful to preserve copies of many of his writings, which had been published in pamphlet, newspaper, and review form. Much correspondence was involved in the effort to regain copies. Much correspondence was necessary between editor and author, as to which articles should be put into book form, and which into the several volumes. Some articles had to be revised, some re-written; some were worked up *de novo* for these *Discussions*; but the strenuous man loves work, and this extra toil was no burden, but joy to Dr. Dabney, and all these efforts increased his reputation, and reflected glory on the University with which he was connected.

As if these labors were not sufficient, about 1886-'87 he became very much interested in railway mechanism, tracks, cars, locomotives, etc., and his study of these things led him to invent a railway train-braking system and a new railway car. Both were patented.

That there was at least a partial appreciation of Dr. Dabney's great reputation and abilities by the University and people of Texas is made clear by the fact that during the session 1890-'91 his friends amongst the Faculty and students had his portrait painted by the French artist Guillaume, and presented it to the University in June, 1891. T. W. Gregory, Esq., a bright young lawyer of Austin, presented the portrait, in an appropriate address, from which the following extracts are made:

"Never, so long as this institution shall press forward on her high mission; never, even when her sons shall have gone forth to meet the world, conquering and to conquer, and borne her honored name to every section of this broad republic; never, even in her hours of grandest triumph, will there hang upon her classic walls a nobler example than this of stern adherence to duty and unswerving devotion to principle. . . .

"When the tempest of defeat and reconstruction swept over the South, bearing away every landmark of social status and political faith, he stood, with folded arms, amid the flotsam and jetsam of institutions which were knit into every fibre of his being, and ancestral traditions which were a part of his daily life.

"With a heart too great to break, and a courage too high to yield, he took up and bore the burden of his life through the new order which had come. For the last quarter of a century he has devoted himself to literary pursuits, to theology, to philosophy, and last, but

not least, to teaching Southern youth not to despise the cause for which their fathers died, not to forget the proud traditions of the past, not to repudiate the blood of patriots shed, and to study the constitutional question settled in this world by the late war; but, in his opinion, never to be ultimately decided on a basis of right and wrong until the great hereafter.

"In 1883, he left his native State to cast his fortunes with those of our great University, and here, among kindred hearts and kindred people, the maturest fruits of his manhood have ripened, his influence has broadened year by year, and he still remains a great example of those—

'Who have held to their faith, unseduced by the prize that the world  
 holds on high;  
 Who have dared for a high cause to suffer, resist, fight, if need be,  
 to die.'

"And when our people forget the example and precept of such as these; when they forget that from them have come down to us, pure and undefiled, the ancestral faith and devotion of our fathers; when they forget that to such as these we owe the heritage of principle and courage and chivalry, upon which must be built our future greatness; when we forget to prize the purity of motive, and honor the patriotic blood of those who fell at Shiloh and Malvern Hill, then 'may God forget us!' 'If this be treason, then make the most of it.' And now, in conclusion, to you, Regents of the University of Texas, and, through you, to the coming generation of Texas youth, I present this portrait of the teacher, pastor, author, philosopher, logician, historian, patriot, soldier, Christian."

In other portions of his address, Mr. Gregory ranked Dr. Dabney "among the brightest scholars of Europe and America."

Mr. A. P. Wooldridge, a prominent citizen of Austin, and a member of the Board of Regents of the University, was their appointee to receive the portrait for the University, which he did in a very handsome and eloquent manner. Mr. Wooldridge said:

"I am here for the Regents of the University of Texas, to accept of the donors this portrait of Dr. R. L. Dabney, and by this official act to place it amongst the most valued treasures of this institution. I am here to acknowledge the rare excellence of this picture as a work of art. I am also here to gratefully acknowledge the sentiments of affection and esteem prompting the generous givers of this gift. But I am especially here to declare for the Regents that in thus publicly approving the life, character and works of Dr. R. L. Dabney, his friends, and the

friends of the University, have done to him and the University of Texas a most admirable and most generous and befitting thing.

"Dr. Dabney's life and work in the University of Texas makes up a large and important part of its history. His life and his work elsewhere is the common property and the common pride of the whole South. His achievements here are peculiarly our own, and of this it is my especial province to speak.

"Dr. R. L. Dabney, then of the Union Theological Seminary, of Virginia, was elected Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy in the University of Texas, May 2, 1883. On June 4th of that year he visited Austin, and appeared before the Board of Regents. As what followed was unusual, and is strikingly characteristic of the man, I will quote from the proceedings of the Board of that date:

"Professor R. L. Dabney, Professor-elect of Moral and Mental Philosophy, was in attendance at this session of the board, and, upon invitation, freely gave his reasons for visiting Texas at this time, the substance of which was that he might not only see the people and the country where his future life was probably to be spent, but that the Regents, in turn, might see him, and from personal knowledge and acquaintance, determine the wisdom and propriety of their action in electing him to the Faculty of this University.

"After listening attentively to Dr. Dabney, the board declared itself entirely satisfied with its choice, and, by resolution, the express question was put to him, whether or not he would accept the professorship tendered. Dr. Dabney replied that he would advise the board of his conclusion on the next day. On the next day he formally accepted the Professorship of Mental and Moral Philosophy, submitting, at the same time, an outline course of study for his department.'

"The above is a substantial extract from the proceedings of the Board of Regents. The minutes, however, do not disclose all that occurred at this meeting. I was present, and distinctly remember more. Dr. Dabney said, 'I am now sixty-three years of age; I have been very sick; my physician says I cannot live in the climate of Virginia. If I come to you, it is as a sick man, partly to get well. I am not willing that you should engage me without knowing these facts, and without having an opportunity, after knowing them, to revoke your action, should you so desire.' Dr. Wooten spoke up cheerfully, 'We are satisfied with our choice, Doctor; this climate will make you well, and you have ten years of good work in you.' Thus began this illustrious man's connection with the University of Texas, a connection which has been from the beginning until now full of honor and advantage to this institution.

"One would not then have guessed Dr. Dabney to be a sick man, but needed so to be told. His presence was firm and erect, his bearing self-reliant, his glance clear and strong; but to-day he is weak and feeble, and altogether blind.

"Dr. Dabney's connection with this University has more than an ordinary significance. He came to this State in the most perfect maturity of his intellectual and moral manhood, most ripe in wisdom, knowledge, culture and experience, at the very height of his reputation and knowledge, and at the best of his ability; and of this richness of knowledge and influence he has given without stint to those about him; and the moral grandeur of his life and character were an example and a stimulus to the students from the start. Dr. Dabney's connection with the University at the outset perhaps contributed most to the prestige and stability of this then young institution. He was known as a great and good man to scholars, statesmen and divines throughout the world. As an intrepid patriot, a learned Christian philosopher, and as a great teacher, his name was an household word throughout the South, and the immediate recognition by the Faculty, the students, the pulpit and the press, of his high character and great abilities, fully established the board in the wisdom of its choice. Dr. Dabney not only brought to his work here his great character and abilities at their best, but by the wisdom and energy of his counsels, by his unwavering faith and confidence in the future of the institution, and, above all, by his intense loyalty to her cause, he contributed greatly in those early and dark days to her advancement and success.

"When first one and then another, and finally a third, of the great scholars who had come to the University at the beginning, left us, tired of strife and apprehensive of our permanence, Dr. Dabney knew neither weariness nor fear; but, with the courage and foresight almost of prescience, stood by the University, and confidently predicted that success which has so rapidly and completely come to us. His absolute faith and devotion to the University in those uncertain days, when some friends were falling off, are an example and inspiration to those who knew what he did.

"Dr. Dabney's work at the University has been his life's best work; and the acquirements of his long life of incessant study, of deep reflection, and large experience, has been freely bestowed upon those who would receive of him. His life here, while one of constant labor, has been quiet in form and manner, yet active and eventful in the good he has done. . . .

"Dr. Dabney is a man of intense Christian piety, a man of great self-reliance and of strong convictions in all things but in his own Christian graces; here he is humble, innocent and distrustful of himself. His loyalty to duty and conviction are inflexible, at times to apparent intolerance and prejudice; but those who judge him thus judge but with imperfect knowledge. The depth and luminousness of his own understanding makes clear to him things but imperfectly seen and known to others, and so at times he may seem gently impatient of their weaknesses.

"Dr. Dabney's mind and energy of will are strong, at times even



to imperiousness, and yet he is always just, kind and conscientious. He is a conservative man, and will never give up a good conclusion until sure of a better.

"His benevolence, while great, is quiet, unpretentious and practical. His mind is especially characterized by great common sense, a trait exhibited not only in his professional duties of governing his intercourse with men and affairs, but shown in the administration of his domestic and private matters.

"As all know, his scholarship in letters and science is varied and profound; but it is as a student, teacher and author of mental and moral science, especially of the school of Reed and Hamilton, upon which he has impressed his own individuality, that his work has been greatest and will longest endure. I am here, as I said, to acknowledge the artistic merit of this portrait. I am here to appreciate the generous motives of the donors; but, long after the freshness of this picture shall have faded, perhaps even when the motives of the givers shall not be known, the memory and character of the illustrious man whose noble countenance this canvas portrays will live in the minds and hearts of the ingenuous youth who shall come here to learn the immortal lesson his life and his works will forever teach."

It was the natural, the logical, and the inevitable thing for a man like Dr. Dabney, fully and consciously to theorize his position in the University of Texas, to the church whose Theological Seminary he had left the service of, and also the position of the University in relation to the denominational colleges of the State. This he did early, publishing his conclusions in the *Southwestern Presbyterian*, in 1884, under the form of the following letter to Dr. E. P. Palmer, who then resided at Sherman, Texas:<sup>9</sup>

*"To Dr. E. P. Palmer.*

"REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER: As many, and often crude, views are expressed concerning the relations between the University of Texas and the Christian denominations and colleges of the State, and as this was a subject incomplete in our brief conversation, I propose to say a few things upon it by letter.

"*First.* The University of Texas, because a State institution, is not a godless or an anti-Christian one. The Constitution and laws do, indeed, secure the fullest liberty of opinion, speech and conduct to all citizens

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<sup>9</sup> It is believed that this letter gives the right views for the settlement of the relations between the State universities generally and the denominational colleges within their several spheres. Hence it is presented entire.

on the subject of religion; prohibits all forms of religious establishments by civil law and State endowment; and secure to all persons otherwise qualified the right to hold office without any religious tests. But the Commonwealth does not make herself an 'agnostic' or an atheistic institution. *She founds herself upon theism*, and upon moral relations between man and the Supreme Being. This is made plain by the Bill of Rights, section 4, which, while prohibiting a religious test for office, or the exclusion of any one from office on account of his religious sentiments, adds, 'provided he acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being.' This necessarily implies that the acknowledgment of such Supreme Being is requisite to entitle any one to office. That is to say, Texas refuses to recognize the atheist as a fit organ of political society. The sixth section claims for all the citizens the right to worship God thus: 'All men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences.' In Article XVI., all legislators, and all officers of the State whatsoever, before assuming their functions, must swear (or affirm) to their faithful performance with a 'so help me God.' While an exception is provided for those who have a conscientious difficulty about *swearing*, yet the customary form of the obligation provided is the oath of God. The Penal Code, page 26, makes it a misdemeanor, punishable by fine and imprisonment, to disturb, or even annoy, any assemblage for divine worship of any sort. Finally, the same code protects Sunday from secular labor by forbidding its performance or enforcement on any servants or employees.

"The State, therefore, is itself theistic, and recognizes the religious responsibilities which are common to all his worshippers of every name. The State refuses to be herself agnostic or atheistic. The State University ought to be in this *exactly like the State which creates it*: officially attacking no religious denomination of the citizens, *yet respecting them all*, and rendering common service to them all. The University, like the State, can have no *ecclesiastical trait* of either kind, but must be separate and independent from all ecclesiastical institutions. But none the less, the University, like the State, should equitably respect the rights of all and labor for the common protection of all. Why should the University, because undenominational, be suspected of *unfriendliness* to the Christian religion? The Supreme Court of Texas must be also non-ecclesiastical. But who dreams of saying, when it sits in Austin, that therefore it is unfriendly to religion; when, very possibly, the worshipful judges presiding in it are themselves, in their personal relations, devout Christians; and in their official capacities protect all denominations of Christians (in common with all other legitimate interests) of the people of Texas? Nor can the justice of this comparison be broken by saying that the University is a *didactic agency*. So is a Supreme Court; it is an expounder of law, which is but the doctrine of moral rights and duties in a methodized form.

"It is, of course, conceivable that a Commonwealth might ground its existence on an agnostic or atheistic basis, and that its rules might then require all the organs of the State so to suppress all recognition of God and religious duty as to make their teaching practically hostile to all the religions of all the different classes of citizens. Happily, the statesmen of Texas have been too wise and equitable to take such a position. . . . Should such a dark day ever arrive, I, for one, would refuse to teach in such a university a day longer than I could properly leave it.

"The professors, I presume, then, all conclude that our official duty here is, while we can assert no particular ecclesiastical or theological system in teaching literature and science, so to teach these as to assist and protect all such in those common features which are precious to them all. Like the State, we are here to assail none, but equitably to aid all.

"The teachers in the University, however, like all other officers of the State, have their personal, private and religious spheres in society distinct from their official functions. Like other officers of the State, they claim their personal rights as heads of families and members of Christian society, to support the several forms of evangelical Christianity which they personally believe in. This right gives them a wide and legitimate influence. What the complexion of that influence will actually be may be learned from the fact that they are respectful believers in religious truth, all men of pure morals, and at least as large a portion of them consistent communicants in the churches as can be found in other collections of educated men. When the students see them in their places at church, giving of their means to support Christian institutions, setting a Christian example in their daily walk, asserting Christian truth in their daily conversation—surely the impression, as a whole, must be favorable to Christianity. The most zealous friend of Christianity, then, has no ground to fear an anti-Christian influence, or to regard the institution as *hostile* to their denomination.

"*Second.* While, then, no *rivalry* ought to be expressed, or can really exist, between the University and the other Christian denominational colleges of Texas, they ought to regard themselves as mutually consistent, and as interested in each other's welfare, *because they are all parts of one great system of education.* The completeness of the results requires the presence of all the parts.

"Thus, as to the religious aspects of the State University and the colleges, we have seen that it is no more un-Christian, or anti-Christian, than they are. But there are services to be rendered to Christianity and to Christian education of a peculiar kind which the State University cannot render. Let me illustrate by the state of religion in America. We have great catholic agencies, the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society, which are Christian, but neither Presbyterian, Methodist, nor Baptist, nor Episcopal. There is *room* in American

Christianity for them; they are needed. They do good; some forms of good which neither denomination could do. Yet they ought not to supplant the denominations. As human nature is constituted, the only way for the great church catholic to do its work prosperously is for each denomination of the church catholic to do its work vigorously. The whole must grow only by the growth of the parts. It is somewhat so in the work of Christian education. No denomination can afford to have all its youth taught by this undenominational University, or by a rival denomination, any more than it could afford to have all its pulpits filled by the directors of the Tract Society. The other denominations in Texas are pushing their colleges. Presbyterians must push theirs or be left far behind. It may be that some of these colleges are now finding a part of their impulse in a jealousy of the State University. While I regard this jealousy as wholly unfounded, yet I by no means regret the impulse which they are feeling. Let all the denominational colleges be as good and as well sustained as possible; all the better for us in the end. But you may be sure that the denomination which is left behind in this distinctive work of education will be left behind in its growth. As a Presbyterian, then, I would say that the existence of the University furnishes no motive for Texas Presbyterians to relax their efforts for their college, but the contrary, the strongest motive to renew them.

"In the educational aspects, the University and the colleges are really not rivals, but *complementary to each other*. Their prosperity will make both better in their respective spheres. The German idea of a University, as you know, differs much from the Scotch and the American. The German undertakes to teach none but college graduates, and no studies but post-graduate ones. They only profess to build the *superstructures* of complete education. But the Scotch and American universities, while undertaking to do that post-graduate work, are compelled by circumstances to provide also undergraduate instruction. They cannot avoid it. The scarcity of prepared material compels them to it, along with the pressure of youth in a new country to go into the business of life with the least possible delay. The strongest argument for this course is in the history of the Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore. They set out, quite with a flourish of trumpets, to be a 'true university'; to pursue only post-graduate instruction. But necessity compelled them before long to take undergraduates, and now they have their regular 'college,' with many more youths than can be found in the university classes proper. But just here, it may be supposed, appears the rivalry between this University and the colleges of Texas. It may be said: 'Leave the colleges to do all that undergraduate work. That is what they are prepared to do. When the University undertakes to do a part of it, she intrudes into the work of the colleges.'

"I reply, first, I hope that ultimately the tendency will be towards that result, more and more. And I freely say that usually it is better

and safer for an undergraduate to be studying his undergraduate course in a good college than in a university, whose methods of teaching must be, and should be, more suited to mature men than to youths, and where the temptations of a city are greater. Further reply is found in these facts: that the State is wide, and that there is room for all; that the colleges derive great good from the University in the shape of more thoroughly trained teachers; and above all, that the greater institution, by raising the standard of thorough training, and stimulating the ambition of the youth of the State, multiplies the material for all. Facts confirm this: when a great State University has been doing its best, and has been most largely attended, all the colleges have been better taught and more fully attended. As the University of Virginia grew, between 1840 and 1856, from two hundred and fifty students to six hundred, Hampden-Sidney, a denominational college, grew from forty-five to one hundred and thirty-five students.

“Every great Commonwealth should have *one* (at least) great institution of learning, in which the highest departments of science and literature are taught, and young men seeking instruction in *any* branch of study, needed for any of the demands of high civilization, may find the needed tuition. Such an institution should be a grand *entrepot* of science. The best argument to support this position is the *example* of all the great States of Europe and America, and especially of Germany. Now, as matters go, there is no agency in most of our States strong and rich enough to create and sustain such an institution except the Commonwealth itself. The State of New Jersey may be pointed to as an exception. There the College of Nassau Hall, at Princeton, established and fostered by the Presbyterians, has really reached the completeness of such an *entrepot*. But the condition of New Jersey is peculiar; she is a small State, has been a poor one, and lies between the two great cities of Philadelphia and New York, whose Presbyterian citizens have poured the wealth of three Commonwealths into this favorite college. The like thing cannot be done by any single Christian denomination in the South. If it were done, the other denominations would not be content to endure its supremacy. The best solution, at least so long as the Commonwealth is friendly and impartial, is that adopted here; to let the State found the great *entrepot* of education, and to let the denominations supply the colleges of the next grade. Thus the pyramid is completed.

“Of course, it is not claimed that this University of Texas possesses such preëminence now in its rudimental state. Nor can the State’s money and patronage alone constitute such supremacy. It has to be earned in the future by diligence, thorough teaching and gradual growth. Its friends only ask for it a chance to grow.

“There are two practical considerations, which would prompt me, as a Christian, to hold on to my denominational college, notwithstanding the prosperity of a State University, and to sustain my college with the

utmost tenacity. I have said that the two kinds of institutions are two essential parts of one system; we ought not to do without either. One reason is the *uncertainty* which must ever attend the political status of our Commonwealth. The regimen in this State is now such that enlightened Christians can sustain it heartily. But it is never impossible that a change may come. One possible direction is like that of the French Republic under Paul Bert. Anti-Christian influences may assume such ascendancy in the State, some day, that its rulers may insist on making the public education *agnostic*. But every Christian knows that such an education is *virtually anti-Christian*. To it Christians can give place by subjection, no, not for an hour. Should that contingency become actual, and catch us without efficient Christian schools of learning, Christian truth would experience a disastrous overthrow before this accomplished, godless learning, backed up by the resources of the State. Christianity must keep up its bulwarks. Said Washington, 'In peace prepare for war.' The perversion of a State University is also possible in another way: some one denomination, used as an electioneering tool by designing politicians, may usurp an undue control in the State institution. Such things *have* happened in America. Should they happen here, the only recourse for the injured denominations will be to fall back on their denominational colleges. True, the State University thus sectarianized, is always degraded in its scholarship and tone. But this only enhances the necessity of good denominational colleges.

"The other consideration regards the *rearing of candidates for the ministry*. *Each church must look for these chiefly to its own college*. Whether we can explain it or not, the stubborn facts prove this. The University of North Carolina yields to the Presbyterian Church, out of its hundreds of students, one or two students of divinity. The College of Davidson, a denominational college, out of its scores, a large number. The University of Virginia yields one or two *per annum*. The little denominational college of Hampden-Sidney, out of its fifty or sixty students, yields five or six annually. Washington and Lee University, since it has ceased to be denominational, sends fewer candidates than when it was a little Presbyterian college. If any Presbyterian doubts this, let him send to our theological seminaries and collect a series of their catalogues, giving the places of education of the candidates. The revelation will be startling. This result *is not caused* by any hostility or lukewarmness of the professors in these universities; they are usually noble Christian laymen. Nor is it due to a non-attendance of Christian students. Such young men are there in large numbers, and they are usually active in diffusing a Christian influence. But the *fact remains*, and it should guide us, whether explicable or not. A part of the explanation may be, that the learned professors and the literary heads of these institutions are laymen, and have achieved their fame in secular careers; but these men are the inspiring models of all

the brighter pupils. Or, it may be, that while the *Christian* atmosphere is not lacking, the *denominational* impulse is so much less felt. However this may be, this formidable fact remains. If any denomination lets its colleges go down, its churches will in time die out for lack of pastors; or they may be supplied by an alien ministry. Would *that* be good for Texas Presbyterianism? One may say that, as I have claimed for the State University ultimately a literary eminency, this relegation of the education of our pastors to the denominational college must result in giving the church pastors of culture inferior to that of the secular professions. Such result does not follow. For, first, many of our best candidates, after fixing a stable religious character and aim, will avail themselves of the fuller advantages of the University. But, second, our Seminary course of study is itself a long, a diversified, and a noble culture. The young man who graduates as B. A. in a respectable Christian college, and then takes his three years' course in one of our Seminaries, is truly as highly educated a man as any M. A. of any university. He may not have gone so deeply as that M. A. into the niceties of Latin, philology and prosody, or the shadowy regions of the calculus. But in his three years' study of exegesis, history and theology, he has gotten a far nobler and broader culture.

"The sum of the matter is that in building up the Presbyterian College of Texas, you are, I believe, second to none in our church. Every minister and layman in our church ought to help you with heart, tongue and hand. I wish that instead of earning my daily bread by my own industry, I had the means of one of your great cattle kings or bankers, that I might put it to the noblest of uses, by laying the corner-stone of the endowment you need.

"Faithfully yours,

R. L. DABNEY."

Dr. Dabney had been in Texas less than six months, when he saw that the Synod of Texas could never overtake its work without a Texas theological school for the training of its ministers. Every Presbytery was cruelly embarrassed in finding supplies for the vacancies in its bounds from the older Synods; and for their large, rough, new mission fields it was simply impossible to command supplies. The Texas Presbyteries furnished some candidates, but "most of these men went to the eastern seminaries to fit themselves, and while there married and settled in the older States." So true was this that, up to the year 1895, Dr. Dabney could recall but one candidate, who, having pursued his course in an eastern Seminary, had come back to accept licensure and work in a Texas Presbytery. He looked over the State in 1884, he found no Presbyterian school of learning for males, except Austin College, at Sherman, then insolvent and in a state of suspended animation. The only

glimpses of hope for doing anything was that presented in Austin, by the presence of himself and Dr. R. K. Smoot and the University of Texas. In the spring of 1884, at the close of a week-day prayer-meeting, he asked Dr. Smoot for an interview with him. It was at once granted, and they sat for a long time on the marble steps of Dr. Smoot's church, in the mild moonlight, while Dr. Dabney unfolded his plan, which was, in substance, this: This new State University offers free tuition to all Texans. A Texan, twenty-one years of age, being a citizen and sovereign, is released from the University obligation to take any one of the baccalaureate courses, and is entitled to take any partial course preparing himself for his special calling. The citizen who proposes to be an architect, surveyor, druggist, physician, lawyer, has a right to pursue the limited special studies he desires. Why not also the citizen proposing to preach the gospel? For while church and state are separate in Texas, certainly Christianity and Christians are not delegatized. Our candidates, therefore, can take such University studies as they need in this University, without cost to the church, not only under-graduate studies, but those specially related to divinity, as Greek, history, philosophy, and natural theology. The Faculty was then a Christian body. The professor of Greek was a Presbyterian Christian. There was good ground to hope that the University, like other respectable State institutions, would soon establish a school of Semitic languages, and thus teach, also, Hebrew. Dr. Dabney was himself professor of Philosophy and Natural Theology, a Presbyterian and a theologian. There was a fair chance that his successor might be of the same faith. Thus our candidates would get an important segment of their training, without cost to the church. Dr. Dabney declared that they could "legally and fairly realize Sampson's riddle, that for Christianity 'out of the eater should come forth meat, and out of the strong should come forth sweetness.'" He proposed to teach *gratis* his course in theology, and that Dr. Smoot should, in like manner, teach a course of ecclesiastical history and government, and that he would procure from Union Seminary a senior student, or graduate, who, for the sake of a small salary, would teach their students Hebrew and New Testament Greek for a time, and thus prolong his own scholastic opportunities, and take his chance to secure a Texas settlement in the ministry. Dr. Dabney's thought was to try a succession of such young men of his own selection,



until he "got hold of the right one, who had in him the makings of a great biblical professor." To him they would hold fast, and on him, ultimately, throw the main weight of the school. He hoped that by the time they had the man, they should also have an endowment to sustain him, and that, for the present, Central Texas Presbytery should pledge itself to raise six hundred dollars *per annum* to pay this young teacher, the only teacher to be paid anything. Dr. Smoot acquiesced promptly and cordially in this plan.

To secure due church authority, they offered their enterprise to Central Texas Presbytery. This body adopted it willingly, and for a year or so sustained it with zeal. They commissioned Dr. Dabney as their teacher of theology, and Dr. Smoot as teacher of church history and polity. Dr. Smoot was made the executive head of the school, it being thought unwise to make Dr. Dabney the head, lest friends of the University should suppose that his energies were too much divided. In Dr. Dabney's eyes the charter of the institution was a bad one, and "always obnoxious to a good part of the Presbytery, and thoroughly so to the rest of the Synod, who refused to do anything for us except 'to damn us with faint praise.'" The Synod of Texas had not yet decided that Austin was the best place for the theological school. Some of the brethren held that the Synod's school of theology should be established at Sherman, where the Presbyterian College is. For these reasons, as well as on account of lack of approbation of the management of the school at Austin, the Synod was hardly more than tolerant; but "Dr. Smoot obtained some good subscriptions; Dr. Dabney obtained much more from Baltimore, Virginia and Kentucky. A fine lot was bought on Nueces Street, not far from the University grounds, and a neat library and lecture-room built on its rear, which he fondly hoped might be the beginning of a handsome mass of Seminary buildings. An excellent little library of twelve hundred volumes, five hundred of them being Dr. Dabney's gift, and the cream of his private library, was installed. A fund of four thousand one hundred dollars was collected, and invested as the beginning of an endowment. In 1888-'89, the number of students reached twelve, in 1889-'90 thirteen, two more students than Union Seminary, in Virginia, had when Dr. Dabney was elected to a professorship there. From about 1891, the school dragged. It was suspended in 1895, to be resumed under happier auspices, we trust, but under

no greater teacher or grander man, we suppose, in this year, 1902.

Dr. Dabney continued to think that his plan was well conceived and entirely feasible. He wrote in 1895:

"With reasonable unity, it ought to have been by this time well established, and not only a great blessing to the Synod, but to the University. It was, in fact, a carrying out of Mr. Jefferson's sagacious plans for the University of Virginia. Nor have my labors been thrown away. This little school has given the church twenty-seven licentiatees, in spite of the follies and neglects of the Synod and the Presbytery itself. And while the Synod has gotten one of its old licentiatees back from the old seminaries in twelve years, twenty or more of ours are now laboring in this Synod. Nor will this school finally die. It may be removed, but the reasons for such a school are so urgent that it must inevitably be reopened somewhere, and the property and library will again be utilized."<sup>30</sup>

Having taught theology for so long a time, his work for his class in this school was light, a sort of diversion, a means of relief and luxuriation rather than a burden. Such also was his labor towards building up the financial basis of the school. The prospects of its service to the church gave him an agreeable topic of conversation with friends at the springs, and to write letters on. If he occasionally laid himself out in a letter of thirty-five pages (he did this once), it was no tax, but relief for his boiling activities of mind and heart.

His services in the behalf of the church at large continued to be very considerable throughout this period. His life and work, as already shown, were a tower of strength to his denomination. On the appointment of committees of conference, with a view to union, by the two Synods of Texas (Northern and Southern), in 1893, at the instigation of certain brethren of the Northern body, he was made chairman of the committee appointed by the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. These committees did nothing towards union. His work as chairman was done with all his old energy, and thoroughness and skill.

He was much consulted about matters in which the whole

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<sup>30</sup>This prophecy is in process of fulfilment now. The Seminary is being reestablished, not on the same lot, indeed, but in more ample grounds, in the same city, and under the auspices of the whole Synod. Was Dr. Dabney's part in the founding of the present Seminary a small one?

church was concerned. During the Diet of Augsburg, in 1530, Luther's presence, back a few miles at Coburg, gave constant courage and inspiration to his friends in the city, where the court sat. So Dr. Dabney's letters were not without their powerful effect to prevent an effort to amend certain sections of the Confession of Faith in 1886, and following years. He writes to the Rev. Uncas McCluer:

"We have no safe course but just to work along, as well as we can, until all this geologic froth is blown away by time, as it will be; meanwhile, we might let men of tender consciences at their ordination, record their own preferred view of creation. As for evolution, it is infidelity. No advocate of it, be he McCosh, . . . or whoever he may be, is going to stop finally where Woodrow does. They will go on to infidelity if they live long enough. The next Assembly is going to be a very difficult one and critical one. Do, pray, send your most firm and prudent men. See that a good elder goes. . . . The Assembly ought to squelch this plan at once this year."<sup>11</sup>

On this subject and on fusion, strong men, such as Dr. G. W. Finley and Dr. G. B. Strickler, were fully informed of his views, and while always independent disciples of his, betrayed more or less of his great handiwork upon them.

Dr. E. M. Green, of Danville, Ky., consulted him in the winter of 1893 on the subject of our stipendiary system of ministerial education. There was much newspaper discussion of the subject in the early 'nineties. Dr. Green is opposed to the whole genius of the system. He writes:

"Alexander H. Stephens, who was a member of the Washington (Ga.) Church, of which I was pastor, told me that he had educated about sixty young men, but, *on principle*, never gave one of them a dollar. They had manhood and self-respect, and repaid without interest the money advanced; and he had it to lend to others, and so kept his money going. Governor Brown, of Georgia, followed the same plan. So do the Binghamms."

In answer to Dr. Green's letters, Dr. Dabney wrote two, from which the following portions are taken:

"AUSTIN, TEXAS, *February 28, 1893.*

"REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER: The erroneous system of our Assembly has so filled the ministry with its beneficiaries, prejudiced in favor of the ladder by which they climbed up, that I suppose a healthy change is hopeless. But if you will consult my collected writings, Vol. II., page 68, V., you will there find my matured views expressed

<sup>11</sup> March 2, 1886.

in the most responsible form. They are only strengthened by my later experience. It may interest you to learn how and when I received the testimony of Dr. Addison Alexander there referred to. In June, 1856, I visited him in Princeton. He declared himself thoroughly dissatisfied with the Assembly's Board of Education, by the light of experience. He wished the whole plan abolished. I said to him, 'Of course you do not wish to deprive deserving young men of assistance in getting an education?' He replied, 'No, by no means.' He then suggested the plan of scholarships which I have outlined in my Memorial. He said, the detestable point about our plan was conditioning the aid upon the student's *indigence*, instead of his merit. That this was an insult to any right-minded young man's self-respect, exerting a degrading influence on him. I said to him, 'Well, Doctor, on your plan, the richest young man in the college, happening to be the most diligent and successful student, would get the prize, and thus it would go to the very man who did not need it, and would be missed by the very man who did need it; which would be a virtual waste of the money.' He replied, with great animation, 'Let it turn out so, sir. I don't care if the successful competitor is as rich as Van Renselaer, if he wins it fairly, let him take it. Sir, this will be a small price for the church to pay in order to get rid of this wretched and contemptible feature of selecting a fellow to receive a prize, not because he is worthy, but because he is poor. But, then, the Van Rensalaer, having won the honor as he deserves, would be very likely to transfer the money prize, as his personal gift, to some other who deserved and needed it.' Ever since that conversation I have remained convinced that he was right.

"Suppose the church should once found enough of the scholarships, then let them combine Mr. Stephen's wise principle, making it a loan to be repaid out of the first earnings. The churches will be rid forever of this annual incubus of the education collections, and the expenses of that committee might be abolished." . . .

"AUSTIN, TEXAS, *March 19, 1893.*

"REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER: I think three things are requisite to make the debate in hand effective and practical. The first is, you should get hard and biting facts to lay before the public. For instance: the General Assembly has passed a great quantity of good and strict rules; which are continually broken. As, that the church money shall be given only to those too poor to educate themselves. That the Presbyteries shall be very careful in accepting candidates, and that no man shall get aid until thus accepted. That no student shall receive double aid, once from the Assembly's committee and again from a scholarship, or a church sewing society, etc. Get actual cases which can be proved. First, where young fellows on the Assembly's committee whose parents, professing Presbyterians, own a great deal more property than the good women who give to the Assembly's fund; and the only cause of the

young man's lack of money is that species of meanness in him and his daddy which concurs in this plan for saving the family money by putting him on the pauper fund. Show, second, that Presbyteries do take young men whom they cannot heartily endorse in spite of the Assembly's strict rules; by adopting, for instance, young fellows whom their own pastors and church sessions have not heartily and squarely endorsed in secret meeting of Presbytery. Prove, third, that there are cases in which young men take the Assembly's appropriation and then a scholarship in the Seminary, or a donation from some good ladies, and say nothing about it! I believe Dr. —— could verify such cases, and that he has the nerve to do it.

"We must squarely avow the proposition that God raises up many of our best ministers from honest families of small or no wealth. We squarely admit that such young men deserve help. We assert that if the Assembly would withdraw its bad plan, no really deserving young man would fail to get it. There is nothing which appeals so warmly and so infallibly to individual Christian generosity as the godly aspiration of a really deserving young man to educate himself for the highest usefulness. The wisdom of the church is to rely mainly upon these individual benefactions; because individual patrons who are spending their own money on a young man will do, what we see no rules will make the Presbyteries do, in dispensing other people's money, ascertain first that the young man is really of high promise and in pious earnest.

"The cases under head first, compared with this natural plan, show that our present lamentable, slack twistedness in helping is the direct result of a vital fault in our system, which will never be corrected by the Assembly's passing strict rules. Nature is stronger than rules.

"A better plan should be offered to the church as a substitute. I would advise the one outlined by Dr. Addison Alexander. The annual income of the Assembly's Committee of Education should be thrown into the form of *scholarships* to be bestowed, without any regard for the riches or poverty of the winners, upon those who stood highest for Christian character and scholarship in strict competitive examinations. Some of these should be in our church colleges; more of them in our seminaries. They should hold for one year, unless again won by merit at the succeeding annual examination. These examinations should be strict, and the scholarships to be won, if at all, only by number-one young men! I should desire and expect, the first few years, a pretty heavy percentage of the kind of fellows our committee now pensions to be *cut off*. The consequence would be that the Assembly's committee would pay out only a part, probably a small part, at first of its annual income. The rest could be used to endow permanent scholarships. Liberal men of wealth, like Mr. W. Guthrie, should be invited to endow others. The happy result would be that in ten years there would be enough endowed ones for all the worthy winners; and the churches would be wholly and finally relieved of this irksome collection.

"But wouldn't this honest, common-sense plan reduce the *numbers* in our theological seminaries? Whereat the good directors and professors would squirm! Ah! yes; and there is the pinch. They call us Calvinists; but instead of really holding John Calvin's motto, '*Esse quam videri,*' we are too much tinctured with the Yankee gospel, '*Vive la humbug.*' Yes, there is the pinch." . . .

During these years, Dr. Dabney did a good deal of preaching. He was a man whom the very thoughtful and intelligent liked to hear. So not only at Austin, in the chapel and lecture-room, once it was built, did he preach, but on his trips over the country. For example, in 1886, he was in Baltimore to have his eyes examined. He preached. A very intelligent listener has written of his impressions of the preacher and his sermon:

"In the early part of 1886 I went on a Sabbath morning to the Franklin Square Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, as I was accustomed to do, being then a student in the Johns Hopkins University. For some cause I was quite late, and was disappointed at seeing a stranger in the pulpit with Dr. Lefebvre, whom I had expected to hear. There was no introduction of the stranger after my entrance, and there was no one near me to tell me his name. His appearance did not much impress me, and my first conjecture was that some elderly brother had come in on Dr. Lefevre, and courtesy had been constrained into putting him up to preach. Then when announcement was made, or when I recalled that on next Sabbath the Lord's Supper was to be administered, I conjectured that the pastor had invited some fellow-Presbyter, personally liked by him, to preach during the week preceding, the pastor of some small country charge.

"The stranger read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and his subject was 'The Vicarious Atonement.' The method was to state and refute the false or incomplete theories of the atonement, and then to establish the true theory. The discourse lasted an hour or more. I was soon listening with profound interest. I abandoned my previous conjecture concerning the identity of the speaker. When he had been speaking perhaps half an hour, stating with the clearness of light false theories, and crushing them to powder under resistless logic, I came to the conclusion that he must be Dr. Dabney. I had never seen him or his picture, but had heard his students talk of his teaching, and was familiar with his writings; and I saw in the giant reasoner, aflame with scorn of error and of subterfuge, yet bowing with meekness at the cross, one so like our great Dabney, that Dabney it must be. And so it turned out to be.

"Since that day I have understood his great influence upon his pupils. Such a teacher is a rare gift to any church.

"Oxford, Ala., March 9, 1901."

"F. P. RAMSAY.

Meanwhile, during these years, Dr. Dabney's physical infirmities had increased to a most painful degree. The reader will recall that he had begun to suffer from the formation of urinary calculi in the summer of 1883. The pain and disturbance beginning in that year grew steadily, his health otherwise improving with his removal to Texas. Prominent physicians in Austin and elsewhere pronounced his trouble *cystitis*, and that after probing. During the summer of 1884, his family being at Red Hill, in Amherst, Va., he went first to the Amherst Buffalo Springs, and then to the famous Lithia Springs of Mecklenburg county, Va. There was no amendment. This, he thought, should open the eyes of his physicians, as it excited his own suspicions. They continued to say "*cystitis*." He returned to Austin in September, 1884, in much and constant suffering. His physician still said "*cystitis*," and treated him for this all the ensuing session, "with many nauseous, saline doses, of which belladonna was always an ingredient." The treatment was in vain. In June, 1885, he determined that he "would seek the best counsel known to him." He went straight from Austin to Richmond, Va., and put himself under the care of an old comrade. "He was very kind; he also said 'cystitis,' and when I urged him to use the sound and ascertain the presence or absence of calculus, he said, 'No, it is useless, I can tell by your countenance that there is none.' So he prescribed more phosphate and alkali, I suspect with some belladonna." Dr. Dabney again tried the Amherst Buffalo, but grew worse all the time. Late in the summer he went to a mountain resort to let another physician try the case. He said he could tell nothing till he used the sound. Doing so, he immediately discovered a large, rough calculus. He said it must come out or destroy the sufferer. The patient accordingly underwent the operation of lithotripsy, much in the fashion at the time—an operation attended, in his case, by awful sufferings, and followed by most serious consequences. These consequences he describes as follows:

"Soon after I got through with it, the leading surgeons began to notice that lithotripsy was followed in too many cases by hypertrophy of the prostate glands, resulting from the bruising, a permanent and incurable evil. It was precisely so in my case. The evil grew gradually for five years, causing increasing anguish, at times beyond description. Now, indeed, this constriction caused me 'cystitis' in good earnest. This became worse and worse, until in January, 1890, it

brought me to death's door. One of the physicians gave me over to die at once. In the old *States* my death was reported, and my obituaries written and published."

During this sickness, Dr. Dabney was much comforted by the devotion shown him by his friends throughout the church, and by the members of his own family. Numerous and most appreciative letters showered in upon him. The Rev. Dr. Wm. Brown, himself blind already for five years at the time, writes, on February 3, 1890, to his brother in blindness, "whose sufferings, in fact, have been among the very greatest the human frame can endure :

"I trust, my dear brother, that in the midst of all your trials you are sustained by the consolation of him who said to his servant ages ago, 'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.' I am sure that you will be remembered most affectionately in the prayers of brethren and Christians who have known and loved you, not for your sake alone, but for Christ's sake; and for the great and good work which you have been enabled to perform for the sake of his church."

On the same day, Dr. C. R. Vaughan wrote :

"N. P. MANSE, *February 3, 1890.*

"DEAR DABNEY: Yours of the 28th, just received, relieved a tension of feeling which has held me painfully ever since Mrs. Dabney's last. I dreaded to hear, and then to hear you are in any degree better was an inexpressible comfort. It melted me to hear of your prayers for faith and dying grace. The stress of such constant and severe bodily pain is enough of itself to try you; and the tempter is sure to use it to affect your hope. Pray on, dear old soldier, of course; but listen to me awhile. I want to give you a morsel of honey out of one of my dead lions, though, in fact, there is a large herd of them still living, and they roar on me often till I am sick with fears. You want more faith. Do you remember, in the stress of your trial, how faith comes? Let me remind you, although you know it. You know we are sanctified through the *truth*. Sanctification is just the growth of the particular graces of the spirit, of which faith is one. Just here is where Christians make a great mistake. When they want more faith, or want to know whether the faith they have is the right sort of faith, instead of looking at the *things* to be believed, they turn their eyes inward and scrutinize their *faith*. They want to see something in their faith to trust in, something that will *certify* their faith. Of course, self-examination is all right, but not when it practically substitutes *faith* for our Lord, grace and righteousness. Even a great theological thinker is as apt to make that mistake when he has come into the practical stress of this awful world



as a common Christian. Now, suppose a traveller comes to a bridge, and he is in doubt about trusting himself to it. What does he do to breed confidence in the bridge? He looks at the bridge; he gets down and examines it. He don't stand at the bridge-head and turn his thoughts curiously in on his own mind to see if he has confidence in the bridge. If his examination of the bridge gives him a certain amount of confidence, and yet he wants more, how does he make his faith grow? Why, in the same way; he still continues to examine the bridge. Now, my dear old man, let your faith take care of itself for awhile, and you just think of what you are allowed to trust in. Think of the Master's *power*, think of his *love*; think how he is *interested* in the soul that searches for him, and will not be comforted until he finds him. Think of what he has done, his work. That blood of his is mightier than all the sins of all the sinners that ever lived. Don't you think it will master *yours*? Think of his great righteousness; will it not avail for all you hope to gain? That great work is enough; it needs not to be supplemented; it meets every demand. It warrants you to come into the King's very presence, assured of welcome, because you can come in the name of the King's Son. That work of Christ is like a bankrupt for ten thousand dollars allowed to draw on the revenues of an empire to pay out. Think of the Master when you want your faith to grow.

"Now, dear old friend, I have done to you just what I would want you to do to me if I were lying in your place. The great theologian, after all, is just like any other one of God's children, and the simple gospel talked simply to him is just as essential to his comfort as it is to a milk-maid or to a plow-boy. May God give you grace, not to lay too much stress on your faith, but to grasp the great ground of confidence, Christ, and all his work and all his personal fitness to be a sinner's refuge. Faith is only an eye to see him. I have been praying that God would quiet your pains as you advance, and enable you to see the gladness of the gospel at every step. Good-bye. God be with you as he will. Think of the Bridge!

"Your brother,

C. R. V."

The *North Carolina Presbyterian* of February 19, 1890, on the rumor of his death, published a two-column article headed, "Death of Dr. R. L. Dabney." The article was from the facile pen of Dr. P. H. Hoge, then of Wilmington. While containing the spice of dissent from his great teacher on one point, the paper is a most appreciative one. In speaking of Dabney, as teacher and preacher, this paper says:

"To a greater extent than any man we have ever known, he had the faculty of imparting knowledge. His vast funds of information, digested by his philosophical and original intellect, gave him an inexhaustible store of illustration, upon which he drew *ad libitum*, so that

there was not a subject, no matter how profound or abstruse, that he could not present in the light of every-day affairs. At the same time, he had the equally important faculty of drawing out the knowledge of each student, and having found out what he already knew, of building on that foundation the structure of the new truth he wished to impart. But teaching has a moral side, as well as an intellectual, and we wish to bear testimony to the fact, which will be recognized as true by all his students, that there could never have been any teacher more considerate to ignorance, more patient with dullness, more kindly in correction, and more gentle in reproof, than was this great man. Those who knew him only in the arena of polemical debate could have no conception of the fatherly tenderness of the man, that made his students feel sure of personal sympathy and friendly counsel in every trouble or perplexity that they brought to him.

"We have left ourselves no space to speak of Dr. Dabney as a preacher; but such a man could only have been a *great* preacher, and a great preacher he was. In heart-searching power, in terrible denunciation of sin, in grand presentation of great themes, he was unsurpassed, while few could approach him in the melting tenderness with which he presented a Saviour's love. Like the sun, he was all light and heat and power."

When Dr. Dabney heard this estimate, and that in the *South-western Presbyterian*, read to him, he said, "There should have been more of censure and less of praise." About the time these notices reached him, Mrs. Dabney received the following letter:

"CHARLESTON, S. C., 64 RUTLEDGE STREET, February 24, 1890.

"MY DEAR MRS. DABNEY: Ever since I read the notice of your dear husband's death, my heart has been impatient to pour out its feeble libation of sympathy, and lay its humble tribute upon the grave of the great and honored servant of God. I knew him chiefly through the enthusiastic admiration of his pupils and the printed page, which so wonderfully transcribes the scholar and the theologian, and so feebly reproduces the living personality, the grand, noble-hearted man. I shall always regard it as one of the most fortunate events of my life that we were providentially thrown together a few weeks at 'Cold Sulphur Springs,' Virginia. Some one has said that men will cross the ocean to view a mountain, or a waterfall, a venerable ruin, or a masterpiece of art, but 'the grandeur of the human spirit excelleth them all.' I was deeply impressed with the truth of this remark, as I sat at the feet of this intellectual giant as he poured forth the torrent of his learning and eloquence, and as, in his blindness, infirmities of age, and physical weakness, he reminded me of a hoary temple, whose strong pillars were shattered, whose lofty arches were sprung, and upon whose stately dome the moss was gathering. I would have travelled a long distance to have

seen this master spirit, and felt the touch of his magnetic personality, and the throbbing of his great human heart. Having known him only through his controversial writings, I was prepared to meet a stern and rugged warrior, an austere man, devoid of human sensibility. But when I felt the warm pressure of his hand, looked into his kindly, benignant face, and heard his cordial greeting, I was assured that his heart was as great as his intellect; that if, with clenched hand, he could smite falsehood to the earth, he extended a warm, open palm to all mankind, and his heart was a fountain of generous and tender sympathies for every object of human compassion. You will remember our morning walks and reading together, when it was both a profit and pleasure to me to minister to him in his infirmity. It was during these free and friendly interviews that he opened to me both his mind and his heart, so that I knew not which I ought to admire most, the scholar or the man, and I felt when we parted that he had won my love, as well as my admiration. I was particularly impressed with the versatility of his genius, and his marvellous familiarity with all subjects upon which we touched in our conversation. When we visited the deserted foundry, he explained to me every part of the complex machinery, and the process of manufacturing iron, including the minutest details. Sitting together on a log, near a running brook, he called the trees and the flowers by name, and talked familiarly of the habits of insects, birds and animals. When the conversation turned upon the state of his health, one could readily have imagined that he was listening to a learned physician. Sometimes he would pause by the wayside, and moving his cane over a section of exposed strata, stand an hour, discoursing on geology, and giving the evolutionists some hard blows, but evincing a very wide range of reading and profound study. We reviewed together the whole history of the war, which could hardly be written without embracing many a thrilling chapter from his own personal experience. This led to a discussion of the relation of our country to other nations, when his prodigious memory opened like a library, from which the Doctor read whatever he wanted, recalling historic incidents and dates with amazing promptness and accuracy. All these learned discussions were enlivened with interesting and amusing anecdotes, of which his memory seemed to hold most tenaciously every detail. His fund of wit and humor was apparently infinite. It remains only to add that which impressed me most of all: through the whole body of his discourse ran the throbbing veins of vital piety, deep reverence for the infinite God, ardent love for the Redeemer, loyal devotion to the church, and a profound sorrow on account of increasing indifference to 'sound doctrine,' and prevailing worldliness.

"But my pen is running away with me, and I must hasten to the chamber of bereavement, and sit with you long enough beneath the shadow of death to mingle my tears with yours. I have been thinking of the great loss the church has sustained; but many noble champions

of truth remain, while in the loneliness of widowhood, and in the solitude of your grief, you must go alone the remainder of your journey. May the Master, whom your beloved husband so faithfully served, and who so strengthened and comforted him in his declining days, keep you company on your lonely journey, and the light of heaven shine brighter and brighter on your pathway. You will live much in the past; but if the sun of your life has set, the sky is full of bright and precious memories. I shall look with eagerness for a full account of the last hours of Dr. Dabney. Mrs. Brackett joins me in these expressions of love and sympathy.

"Your sincere friend,

G. R. BRACKETT."

A little later, Dr. William S. Lacy, of Norfolk, wrote:

"68 BOUSH STREET, NORFOLK, VA., February 21, 1890.

"Rev. Robert L. Dabney, D. D., Austin, Texas.

"MY DEAR AND HONORED PRECEPTOR: I cannot tell how grieved and saddened I was to read of your failing health and growing weakness and infirmity, and, indeed, to read the announcement of your demise in the *North Carolina Presbyterian* of Wednesday last. And when I saw the *Central* this morning, and the statement that a dispatch from Austin of last Saturday reported that you were a little stronger, I was greatly relieved. I hasten at once to fill a long-cherished purpose of writing to you, not of course asking or hoping for any response, but to acknowledge a life-long obligation to you, and to assure you of my warm affection and profound sympathy for you in these severe and aggravated sufferings you are called to bear.

"I am the more anxious to say this to you, because my last *communication* from you was, owing to circumstances peculiarly embarrassing, overlooked and unacknowledged by me. It was with reference to the choice of your devoted friend (and one whom I greatly esteem) as Professor in Union Seminary, the Rev. Dr. Vaughan. May I say at this late day, that your letters reached me during a severe and protracted attack of cystitis, followed by painful abscess; that I was barely able to attend the meeting of the Board; that my cousin, Matt Lacy, and my personal friend, Dr. Latimer, were both pressed upon me (though neither kinship nor friendship should have swayed my action), and that I did what I could for Dr. Vaughan until I saw he was not the choice of the Board. But that, more than all, I was not aware I had not answered your letters (coming during my sickness) until so long afterwards I was then ashamed to write.

"With great sorrow have I noted the encroachments of painful and fettering infirmities, and wondered at the dealings of Providence in so hindering one who had been and could still have been so largely useful. It seemed so strange that one to whom eyesight meant so much, should become impaired in vision. That the mental vision was unimpaired,

'The Latest Infidelity' attests. And you may be sure among the students who look to you as their father, their leader, many and fervent have been the prayers that you may be sustained under such afflictions, and that your venerable life may be spared to the church and to our country.

"I hardly know how to express myself as I begin to speak of personal obligations. I went to the Seminary merely a youth, with something, I hope, of a right and noble purpose, but with such crude views, such undisciplined mind, such inchoate ideas of what a minister should be or do or say or know. This is tardy acknowledgment, but I want to thank you again and again, for many a word that encouraged, for many a prayer that helped, for many an evidence of kindly regard and sympathetic aid, as well as for the strong and luminous and stimulating instruction given. No one knows better than I how poorly I have improved my opportunities, and I may have been a disappointment to some, and this is no time for regrets or excuses. But for clear views of truth, convictions more or less positive, and a system of theological belief, robust, reasonable and warm with life, I am altogether indebted to you. Your volume on Theology is my *vade mecum*, and what you have said on any theme has been to me the word of a master. After all, I am not saying what I wanted to; it is not admiration I feel, Dr. Dabney, but personal attachment. My father has entered into rest (oh! how he loved and honored and admired you!), and while ties of blood have bound me, perhaps, more closely to others, for you I feel a son's devotion and regard. And with all my heart I pray that you may be spared to us, that you may be delivered from great suffering and sustained under it, and at the last—at the last—that must come to us all some time, underneath you may be the *Everlasting Arms*.

"Very sincerely and affectionately yours,

"WM. S. LACY."

His sons had gathered in Austin in January, with minds full of the overshadowing probability of his death, and to the devoted nursing of the eldest, President Charles W. Dabney, of the University of Tennessee, the prolongation of his life was probably as much due as to the skill of his physicians. He threw himself, with all his vast energy and special knowledge of the physical, into the task of saving his father's life, and restoring him to at least partial health.

During this three months of extreme illness the physicians had made a large use of opium, or its derivative alkaloids, in treating him, and when able to resume his work again, he found himself in the nascent clutches of the opium habit. Here was an occasion for the exhibition of character. Many men, old as he, would have said: "I am old; I cannot live long.

Providence has made it possible for me to live measurably free from pain, and thus to do my work. My work may be made even more brilliant by the judicious use of this drug." He had, as a matter of fact, according to the testimony of his nurses, when under the influence of this drug, given peculiarly brilliant expositions of some of David's Psalms. At times he had been determined to talk, and his nurses had not been able to restrain him. But Dr. Dabney knew every such argument was seductive. He resolutely set himself to quit the use of it, and, by the sheer might of his inexorable will, steadily reduced his doses, too fast the physician said, for a few weeks, and then stopped it altogether.

This grave illness taught him the absolute necessity of artificial cystic relief. To this he came down in good earnest to the partial relief of his sufferings. His health thenceforth to 1894, though "sorry enough," was really less uncomfortable than in the years 1883 to 1890.

The reader has been made acquainted with Dr. Dabney's long treatment with belladonna. In the summer of 1885, before the surgical operation for the calculus, he began to notice that he was becoming subject to astigmatism. During the weeks of the operation, in September and October, 1885, at the Rock-bridge Baths, he was kept under the influence of morphia and belladonna combined. When he began to go abroad, after convalescence, he found himself near-sighted and with more astigmatism. Thus he returned to his work in Austin. He doubtless inherited a tendency to cataract from his grandfather and from his mother, but his disease was not cataract, but glaucoma, "the very form which the abuse of belladonna tends to produce." Dr. Dabney attributed his blindness, "in part," to his "good doctors," and, in part, to the hard anguish consequent on his calculus, and the methods employed to relieve him of it.

In April, 1866, he was urged to submit to the operation of iridectomy. He went to Baltimore to get the services of the famous Dr. Chisholm. He "had no faith in it, but submitted," for this sole reason, "to prevent his wife and sons reproaching him" with the neglect of any possible escape from blindness, which he was now sure he was to be afflicted with. "Dr. Chisholm operated on both eyes, doing no good." Rev. Dr. Murkland, from whose and Mrs. Murkland's hands Dr. Dabney received great kindness during his stay in Baltimore, united

with the venerable Mr. Charles William Dabney, of Hanover, in urging his brother to go home, let specialists alone, and let Providence take its course.

From 1886 to 1889 his sight became dimmer and dimmer, until the light went out absolutely. On walking into his own brightly lighted parlor of an evening, he would often ask whether the light was on, and that, too, when facing the chandelier. Often when the sun was shining brightly, he would ask his companion of the day whether the sun shone, or whether it were cloudy; and in case of a somewhat surprised answer that "the light" of the "sun" was "brilliantly shining," he would quietly say, "The darkness and the light are the same to me." After 1889, he was absolutely sightless.

He dreaded the coming horror of darkness until the light had almost gone, and then his dread passed away. In September, 1887, still in the clutches of a severe attack of "cystitis," he wrote to his son, Dr. Charles W. Dabney:

"I find these attacks destroying my remnant of eyesight very steadily. My vision, I knew, had been slowly declining since I left Austin. In the last five days I have lost as much ground as in the previous three months. The prospect thus suggested is well calculated to test one's fortitude; of a hopeless blindness, making me not only useless, but a burden to my family, and continued apparently only for the suffering which its prolongation may involve. . . . If I have strength to reach Austin at all, I am going to work on there as long as it is in any way possible, and try to die in the harness."

Some months later, apparently picking up courage, once more he appealed to a specialist, in Atlanta, and was told that there was no hope for any, even the most partial, vision. That was one of the hours when the shadows lay heavy upon him. When he returned from the great doctor's office that day to the home of his friend, Dr. G. B. Strickler, he is said to have looked as if he had fought, with all the resources of his power, and been hopelessly beaten, like a brave soldier, who had spent himself to the utmost, but had been overcome and taken captive by his enemy, doomed. He went off alone on the piazza, and there for two hours fought another battle, with himself, for readjustment to God's providence. The fight was severe, but, by the arms of faith and prayer, by the invincible might of God's little ones, he won. He returned to the company cheerful and happy. He had recognized the inevitable, and the hand of

God in his affliction, and he had formed a new plan of action, and squared himself for the new course. That evening he would not suffer the little daughter of his friend Strickler to lead him about, as she had been doing during his stay. He kindly told her that he must learn to go about as a blind man. That night he would not permit his devoted wife to put away his clothing, but fixed some chairs, and placed his articles of clothing so that he could get them the next morning, in order, himself. Following out his plan further, he soon employed a private secretary to write at his dictation, and to read for him, that he might go on with his studies. He went to the more careful cultivation of his memory, treasured up tracts of Scripture, prepared for his classes so that he could go through his lectures, from start to finish, in an orderly manner, without aid of any sort; took care to prevent absent-mindedness and every weakening of his mental abilities. In case of his forgetting to mail letters in passing a post box, he would not allow a friend to carry them back for him. To the offer he would say, "No, I must not allow forgetfulness to grow, I must whip myself for this case by walking back to that box," and back he would go, feeling his way with a stick. He lived a brave, strong, beautiful life during these years of sense blindness.

He had his days and hours of heaviness, but he was uniformly cheerful in the presence of his friends. He has said of this period of his sufferings:

"It was while eyesight was finally fading out that my cystitis became most agonizing, say in the autumn of 1889. Sometimes in my midnight sufferings I said to myself, 'Here, then, am I locked in for life in a dungeon of Egyptian darkness, and now this wild-cat pain is shut in with me, to rend me in my helplessness.' But usually I maintained a calm fortitude, and waited upon God in prayer for an uncomplaining patience. Without the Christian's hope, such an existence would have been unendurable. But with it, I can honestly testify that my years of infirmity have been far from being years of unmixed sorrow, either by reason of present suffering or the pains of anticipation. I have known always that more or less of acute pain is to be my daily lot, until death ends it; but I have the humble assurance that death will end it, and that then the suffering of this present time shall not be worthy to be compared with the glory that shall follow. This hope, the devoted sympathy of my wife and sons, with cheerful Christian society, have made most of my days far from gloomy; and I always strive during the seasons of respite not to think of the pain that is to recur, but to be as cheerful and helpful as it is permitted me to be."



In 1890, as total loss of eyesight had fallen upon him, Dr. Dabney offered the absolute resignation of his professorship in the University of Texas. In this he was moved by the most disinterested feelings. The regents unanimously declined to accept it. They proposed a new contract, offering him half pay for half the amount of work he had been doing, or for any less portion which he might find convenient, provided he would relinquish half his salary for the payment of an adjunct. He accepted service on the new conditions, and continued in high favor at least to the end of the session of 1890-'91, as has been shown by the praises made him in June, 1891; but a change began, and continued to go on, in the Board of Regents and in the Faculty, until January 1, 1894, the Regents determined to ask him to resign at the close of the current session. The best explanation of this astounding fact is perhaps found in a statement in the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, in the fall of 1894, viz.:

"His orthodox and conservative views were not altogether in accord with the opinions of the reorganized Board, and notwithstanding a contract with the University, Dr. Dabney was asked to stand aside for a man with more advanced views. The public excuse was that Dr. Dabney, by reason of his age and blindness, could not do the work."

That there was nothing in the public excuse appears from the fact that the Board of Regents had perceived no abatement of mental power in Dr. Dabney in June, 1891;<sup>12</sup> that the articles from his pen in this year, 1894, show all his old-time vigor and power, and that his work in 1894 to 1895, and subsequent years, continued to show unabated mental powers. His physical health was very much better in 1894 than it had been in 1890. He was blind, indeed, in 1894, but not a whit more so than in 1890. His blindness was total and absolute then. It is reported, however, that an occasional sorry student would sometimes take advantage of the Doctor's blindness—answer to his name at roll-call, and then slip out without hearing the lecture. This mean trick might have been stopped by asking Dr. Dabney to have his secretary sit in the class-room during lectures. No other defect of his teaching, peculiar to these last four years, has been ascertained; but the average politician did not relish the profound, sane and safe teaching on political subjects for

<sup>12</sup> See Mr. A. P. Wooldridge's address, pp. 461-464, this chapter.

which he was so remarkable. Nor was his profound, common-sense philosophy—the philosophy of Reid and Hamilton improved—popular with those who thought no man could be a philosopher who did not hold the current fad of monism. Some seem to have imagined that Dr. Dabney was not a monist only because he had not studied the German monistic systems. As a matter of fact, he was a profound student of those systems. He taught them for the very purpose of their reputation.

Dr. Dabney was very indignant at this treatment, and took pains to publish his indignation abroad. In the same connection, he published various criticisms of the changes in the ideals, methods and standards employed in the University subsequent to 1891.

His correspondence continued to be voluminous throughout this period. This has been made clear by what was said of the way in which he had been consulted on subjects of general concern; but his correspondence inspired by the ties of friendship and affection was also large. His friendships did not wane with changing circumstance, if circumstance left the character of the friend untouched. Amongst his correspondents we still find his venerable brother, Mr. C. W. Dabney, of Hanover county, Va., and the venerable T. M. Niven; and amongst the letters to his brother is the following:

"AUSTIN, March 30, 1884.

"Chas. W. Dabney, Esq.

"DEAR BROTHER: I have been waiting to hear of ——'s death; but suppose he is still living. My chief concern for him, and for his cousin ——, since there seems to be no hope of his life, has been, that gospel grace might prepare him for the happy exchange. And although ——'s life had been, I suppose, a worldly and prayerless one, I hope that the example of such a Christian as —— and his wife may be sermons to him, which will now bear fruit. People talk about evangelical Christians being actuated by 'fanatical impulses,' 'led away by their feelings,' 'shallow and excitable,' etc. But, if I have any mind at all, my reason tells me that, in the estimation of sober, practical wisdom, this preparation for the future state is the most important of all interests, and the attainment of it the grandest of all acquisitions. *Supposing, that is, that we admit, I will not say a certainty, but even a probability of a hereafter, and a personal God, and a moral responsibility.* And if that estimate is not sober good sense, I must be an idiot. And if it is: I will not say that all the people who act in defiance or neglect of truth so clear, weighty and momentous are idiots, for their

keen good sense in all worldly affairs shows they are not; but *it must show*, that there is a radical and thorough *opposition of disposition* between this obvious duty and their own preferences. I have been reflecting over this thing for forty years, and this is the only account I can find for their going (for my once going) so obstinately against wisdom and good sense. Whither will that hostile disposition lead a man, if permitted to sway him, as, naturally, it does sway all? Not to make a deliberate covenant with perdition; for no man is willing to do that; but to dally, to procrastinate, to flatter one's self, until destiny springs her trap, and the man is caught; caught precisely as *he thought* he didn't intend to be caught; and yet, precisely as they are *all caught*, who listen to nature. 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me!'

"My wife often says, 'Husband, remember we are *old people* now.' She is right. I am sixty-four years old this month. The war and its consequences have made me older in spirit, about eighty-four. We have lived since 1861 at such a tremendous rate that I am at least as *time-worn* as the man who died at eighty-four in 1860. This century's experience, compressed into sixty-four years, has changed many of my views of life, and confirmed some others. I think that the *current and prevalent* (not universal) trait of the American mind, now ——— everywhere, is intellectual dishonesty. Men do not write and study and argue, with the square, honest purpose of seeking the *truth*, and when they find it, of bowing to it in thorough earnest, as the venerable and precious attribute of the Eternal; but with the sneaking purpose of *finding a pretext for the ends which they covet*. At bottom, they want to cheat themselves, and to cheat you; but having a sneaking semi-consciousness of this dishonesty, they are dreadfully afraid of examining their own motives, sounding their own hearts. And *this* is the explanation of all the *rush* and *stir* of the age. People are afraid to be alone; afraid to let their souls stand still and think, lest they should be made fully aware they are *living a lie*. Yet I never believed so strongly as I do now, that *truth is*; that it *can be attained* by honest seeking; and that it is more precious than rubies; and as inevitably as God is God, is bound to justify her true, honest servants and to confound her sycophants and enemies.

"The longer I live, the more I am sadly convinced of the quantity of *sham religion* among men. I have seen the 'great *Christian North*,' perpetrate the giant crime of the century, and turn around and brag. Cases of loud boasters of godliness proving themselves scoundrels seem to multiply faster than professed conversions multiply. But I never was as strongly convinced in my life of the existence and reality of true, gospel grace in actual Christians. I am as palpably certain of it as I am of the Peaks of Otter. For, when I *see* the principle tested by trial, it is so obviously contrasted with the average religion of the age that the genuineness of the one is as evident against the spuriousness of the

other as gold is against pinchbeck. In my mother, in Dr. Sampson, in General Jackson, in sister Betty, in Charles Dabney, in niece Betty, not to mention others, the principle *must have been*, and must now be, *true*. I shall be persuaded that there is no difference discernible, when I come to believe that there is no difference between ditch water and Rhine wine. And it never seemed so clear to me, as the abounding wickedness of the world now shows it, that the principle is of divine origin. I see so much of human nature that I *know* nature hasn't got that principle in it. I have a stronger conviction than ever of the worthlessness of many, perhaps most, of those excitements they call 'revivals'; and the more I learn of the psychology of the human soul, the easier it is for me to account for these temporary effects, misnamed *conversions*, on natural principles, without any more divine power than enters into a stampede of Texan cattle. But, at the same time, I am more and more convinced that the principle of disinterested duty which guides Betty Dabney, for instance, year after year, in shade and sunshine, came from above, somehow; most likely in the solemn, honest, continued heart-searchings of a retired home, and in quiet, secret prayer, for 'it cometh not with observation.' If there is such a thing, *I know I need it*; I know it is the biggest thing in this universe, and the best worth working for, even if I spend a whole life and die working for it.

"There never was so much prosperous wickedness as in this day. Society calling itself decent, and even religious, never was so venal and cowardly, in doing homage to prosperous wickedness. But I never felt so certain in my life that it was all a disgusting vain show; and that all of it is bound to come to utter grief; while those that fear God and keep his commandments will come out all right. And I never was so certain, although I have been for so many years separated by Providence and God's grace from the grosser sins of youth, that I cannot receive this justification on my own merits. 'For in me—that is, in my flesh—there dwelleth no good thing.' Having *not a single act*, nor a *single virtue* of my own, that is complete and pure enough in motive to pass muster for itself, I know I have *nothing* to offset a multitude of sins, for which I know I am responsible. My justification must be in the merit of my Surety. And so my religion is not, *do right in order to be reconciled to God*; but, be reconciled in free grace, *in order to do right*.

"Keep me advised of John's and Kate's movements. Love to all, not forgetting George. All join in love.

"Yours affectionately.

R. L. DABNEY."

He continued to write to the Hon. T. M. Niven. His letters to Mr. Niven have not been recovered; they were no doubt rich. Mr. Niven was a gentleman of the old school, a man of culture, a Christian of a noble, high type, albeit somewhat

pessimistic, perhaps. His letters of this period are fairly sampled by the following:

"HACKENSACK, N. J., *May 6, 1884.*

"MY ESTEEMED FRIEND: I am not able to accept all the statements as promulgated in the Apostles' Creed (so called). At least, that expression, 'He descended into hell,' has always seemed to me shocking and without scriptural authority, as the common mind and understanding conceives the meaning. But there is with me a hearty acquiescence and acceptance of 'I believe in the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.'

"So as, in the providence of God, we are parted far asunder, as to bodily presence, I said to myself, I will commune for a little with my old friend through the aid of the mail-bags.

"God is still sparing me, and I am sometimes tempted to ask, What for? My days of activity and service (poor as it was) are past. And now I seem almost in the way. But God knows why, and that hushes all cavils. Still I am only waiting. But that is a beautiful thought, 'They also serve that wait.' Infinite wisdom knows why, and that is enough. I will wait till my appointed time comes.

"My health is much better than it was six months ago, when I seemed to myself and family as very near the river's edge. I am not restored to full health by any means, but I am relatively in much better health. My nerves, as you will doubtless observe by my writing, have regained their steadiness in a measure, but my poor old eyes and ears are quite derelict. With all the help of artificial optics, I can't clearly see the lines on this paper, and write very much by guess. Still, I manage to read a good deal, for which I am thankful. I do not feel as deep an interest in sublunary things as formerly. To me they seem like dissolving views, and indeed to me the prospect is not pleasant. The church seems more and more debauched, and the tendencies are, to my dim eyes, in the wrong direction. The world seems to have captured her, and she is in bondage. 'The lusts of the flesh, and the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life,' which are not of the Father, seem to have possession. I know that God will take care of his own cause, essentially and finally, and he has permitted declensions and apostasies in the past over and over again under both dispensations. And is it not so now? The church is catering to the world, and the world is very patronizing to the church. Alas! alas! The offence of the cross has ceased. Albeit, it is a fashionable emblem on church steeples and on ladies' necks. But it is a sham cross. The crucifixion of the flesh, with its affections and lusts, is quite another matter, and is reckoned puritanical nonsense. And as to the State! Why, corruption, venality and quackery seem lords paramount, and it must be that we are very near the inevitable precipice and overthrow. And then, what next? God is holy, *just* as well as good, and the doom of the old world and the cities of the plain should be a warning, but it is not.

And, now, I hope you and your good wife and all are well. I commend you all to our covenant God in Christ.

"As ever yours, in the best of bonds,

T. M. NIVEN.

"P. S.—Drop me a letter when you can."

Dr. Dabney not only kept up a frequent correspondence with some, he corresponded more or less with a great number. Dr. Dabney, as the reader knows, had been a man interested in every department of human inquiry. He was, in his earlier life, famous for his love of geography, topography, and the natural history of every section of the earth's surface that he had the opportunity to behold with his own eyes, or through the eyes of others. He loved equally astronomy, and all the practical sciences, and the abstract sciences. His mind had taken such a comprehensive and sure hold of the main elements of the departments to which he was not supposed to be devoted that the specialists who had heard of something new in their own spheres were sure of intelligent and comprehending listening, and frequent remark on telling him of it. They knew he would be greatly obliged to them, too, for the impartation of any fact or truth of interest to them. Especially was he interested in everything human which bore on the moral and spiritual welfare of individuals or communities, civil or religious. This lively interest he carried through these years at the University unabated. He was a genuine lover of kindly gossip. He wished to know what was being done in every public gathering in his city. A young man who lived with him on terms of unusual intimacy was soon made aware that he could not attend a political meeting, nor a meeting of the Salvation Army people, nor a lecture on an educational topic, nor any sort of gathering, without being kindly quizzed until he should reproduce every essential feature of what had been said or done. Some old men lose interest in contemporary events; Dr. Dabney never seemed in these years even to slacken interest. He was a delightful companion to a wide-awake, curious, and growing young man. He sought from young men their youthful views, to inform himself, and, at the same time, to enable him to broaden, deepen or rectify their thought on what they had seen. The kind of use he would make of a young man's eyes is well illustrated in a letter from his youngest son, Lewis M. Dabney, Esq., dated August 6, 1887. This young gentleman had been up in the Pan Handle of Texas, travelled through the counties of Will-

barger, Hardeman, Childress and Donley. He describes the quality of the soil, the water supply, the products, the railway connection with the outside world, the character of the people by whom the country had been partly settled, and the openings for men of vigor and clearness of head, the condition of the crops, etc., etc. The letter is addressed to his mother, intended for both, and contains the promise, "When I see you all again, I will have a great deal to tell Pa about that country." We may safely take for granted that when they met again, "Pa" asked him "about that country," and on a great many other points on which Lewis touched in this letter of about two thousand words, devoted now to a sketching of the country he had just visited, and later to a rattling, half-cynical, wholly good-humored criticism of the doings of a certain ephemeral political party in Texas.

In 1894, when his connection with the University was broken, Dr. Dabney had the satisfaction of knowing that his sons were not only well established and successful in their professions, but already prominent, Dr. Charles William Dabney being the eminently successful President of the University of Tennessee, Mr. Samuel Brown Dabney enjoying the fruits of a large law practice in Victoria, Texas, and Mr. Lewis Meriweather Dabney holding already a position of great promise in Dallas, Texas. He went out toward these sons, and the two grandchildren then born to him, with great affection. He wrote, on December 6, 1889, to Mrs. C. W. Dabney:

"I think a great deal about my two little grandchildren, and most of all about the interest of their own immortal souls. Marguerite has now reached an age when she will be susceptible of religious impressions. Bless her, we ought to take for granted the existence of reason and conscience in little children, and appeal to them with some confidence. Now is the time especially to store her quick and retentive memory with the Bible history and the truths of redemption. I would give much to have her with me, as I could teach her anything, and amuse and instruct her. Oh! how I wish I had her to walk or ride with us. Now, she would be well taken care of here and have good health. I have seen very little of her since she has been old enough to reason and talk."

He was devoted also to the mother of these children.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### *LAST STROKES OF HIS LIFE'S WORK.*

(June, 1894—January, 1898.)

THE SUMMER OF 1894.—THE LECTURES IN LOUISVILLE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN THE AUTUMN OF 1894.—THE REST AT VICTORIA.—THE LAST TEACHING IN THE AUSTIN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY.—HIS CONTINUED INTEREST IN THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SCHOOL.—HIS LARGE VIEWS AS TO THE NEED OF MORE PRESBYTERIAN EDUCATION IN TEXAS.—LETTER FROM HIS OLD STUDENTS IN THE DALLAS ASSEMBLY, AND HIS REPLY THERETO.—THE SUMMER OF 1895.—REMINISCENT MOODS.—LETTER FROM THE SYNOD OF TEXAS OF 1895, AND HIS ANSWER.—THE AUTUMN, WINTER AND SPRING OF 1895-'96.—THE SUMMER OF 1896.—THE WINTER OF 1896-'97.—IN THE ASSEMBLY AT CHARLOTTE IN 1897.—SUMMERING IN NORTH CAROLINA.—LECTURES IN DAVIDSON COLLEGE AND AT COLUMBIA SEMINARY IN AUTUMN OF 1897.—AGAIN, IN VICTORIA, DECEMBER, 1897—JANUARY, 1898.—WRITINGS DURING THIS PERIOD.—LETTER TO HIS CHILDREN, TO BE READ AFTER HIS DEATH.

DR. and Mrs. Dabney spent a part of the summer of 1894 in Northwest Arkansas, in part to escape the burning summer heats of Middle Texas, and in part out of desire to build up by the use of the pure water to be had in that region. During that summer he seems to have been rather unusually unwell. He wrote but little. However, we find in the *Texas Presbyterian*, July 13, 1894, an article entitled "Incurable Misconceptions," bearing his mental marks. In it he opposes organic union with the Northern Presbyterians, on the ground that the Northern people cannot understand our character, our society, our negro population, our wants, and our interests. He finds the proofs scattered thick over history, and recites them.

In the autumn of this year, the "Faculty and Executive Committee of the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary urged upon Dr. Dabney to come to Louisville and deliver a course of lectures, eighteen in number, covering a period of six weeks, and embracing such portions of philosophy as have a special bearing on Christian theology. The points selected were, the principles of rational, intuitional psychology, and the



nature and judgments of conscience, and the errors of metaphysical skepticism."<sup>1</sup>

The Rev. T. D. Witherspoon, a most competent critic, gave the following account of this course of lectures in the *Central Presbyterian* of January 16, 1895:

"In the very inauguration of the work in connection with the proposed Seminary in Louisville, one of the plans was to secure a brief course of lectures from Dr. Dabney, similar to the ones he has just delivered. Correspondence was had with him, but his engagements were such that he did not feel that he could at that time accede to our request. As soon as we learned that his connection with the University of Texas had terminated, we made haste to renew our invitation, and were gratified in securing his promise to deliver a course of eighteen lectures, beginning with the first of November, and embracing three a week for six weeks upon the Rational Philosophy in its relations to Theology and upon Christian Ethics.

"The hour for these lectures was so fixed that no other Seminary duty conflicted, and thus Faculty and students all had the privilege of sitting three times a week, for six weeks, at the feet of this prince of teachers. The impressions of his visit and his teaching will never be effaced. His very presence amongst us has been an inspiration. Since the death of Dr. McGuffey, he has been recognized as the foremost thinker and teacher of our church in the domain of intellectual and moral science. There is probably no living teacher who has greater power of impressing his own individuality and personality upon his students, or of projecting his thoughts into their minds and hearts with that resistless force which is born of intense conviction and is suffused with the glow of a genuine fervor and enthusiasm.

"The course which had been mapped out for him was thorough enough and difficult enough to test his full powers, embracing a rapid and searching review of the various false systems of modern philosophy, Sensualistic, Idealistic and Skeptical, with an exposition and defence of the rational or true philosophy; also, an equally searching criticism of the various ethical schools, the Selfish, the Utilitarian, the Hedonistic, etc.

"Any one familiar with this course knows what demands it makes for powers of closest analysis, sharpest discrimination, most intense concentration of thought, and most prolific resources of illustration. It would be difficult to say in which of these Dr. Dabney most excelled. With the steady step of one familiar with the ground, and with the calm, self-possessed spirit of one conscious of his ability to meet and refute every opposing error, he made his way through all the intricacies of the

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from an unsigned article in the *Louisville Courier Journal*, December, 1894.

various systems of philosophy, exposing the ignorance and superficiality of the systems he condemned, subjecting their false principles at one moment to indignant denunciation, at another to withering sarcasm, and at another to the torture of some humorous illustration that convulsed his audience with laughter. His old students would have found little evidence, except in his white hairs, of the changes time has wrought upon him. There was no hesitation of speech, no confusion of thought, no inaccuracy of method, to suggest any decline of mental power. It is gratifying to be able to record that as a teacher his natural strength is not abated.

"The practical results of the course have been in every way satisfactory. More than twenty of the students have passed a thorough and rigid examination upon the course, the examination papers having been written by Dr. Dabney and the examination conducted by the Faculty. Besides these young men, fully as many more attended closely every lecture, and derived full benefit from them, although they did not submit to the final examination. As this course of lectures lies along the same lines, to some extent, with the treatise on the Practical Philosophy which Dr. Dabney is soon to publish, those of us who had the privilege of attending his lectures will look forward with all the more intensity of desire to the publication of the forthcoming volume, as one calculated to render most important and needed service in instructing our young people in the cardinal principles of sound ethics and conservative philosophy. May the Doctor's life be spared to give to the church many more fruits of ripe scholarship and consecrated learning."

While Dr. and Mrs. Dabney were in Louisville, they were generously entertained by many of their old friends and admirers. He richly repaid their hospitalities by high converse. At the solicitation of the Rev. J. S. Lyons, D. D., he, while there, repeated in the presence of a stenographer, who prepared a type-written copy of it, the following story:

"In the year 1883, I moved to Texas. After a time, I there formed the acquaintance of ex-Governor Stockdale, of Texas, an eminent lawyer, and an old citizen, and a personal friend of Gen. Robert E. Lee before the war between the States, when he was Col. R. E. Lee, commanding a regiment of dragoons guarding the Texas frontier against the Comanches.

"In the latter months of his life, and only a short while before his death, Governor Stockdale (who was, by the way, a native of Southern Kentucky) gave me the following narrative:

"He was at the White Sulphur Springs, Virginia, in the summer of 1870, in the autumn of which year General Lee died. Here the two old friends met for the last time.

"General Rosecrans, of the Northern army, was at the Springs, showing much attention to his former adversaries, and acting the unanimous conqueror. He had been a war Democrat, and now a member of the Federal Congress, was acting again with the Northern Democratic party.

"There was quite a galaxy of distinguished ex-Confederates at the Springs also—lieutenant-generals, major-generals, senators, etc.

"One day Rosecrans approached General Lee, so: he said that everybody in the North knew General Lee was a representative Southerner, and everybody had perfect confidence in his truthfulness; and if he (Rosecrans) could be authorized by General Lee to say, on behalf of the Southern people, that they were now glad to be back in the Union, and loyal to the old flag, that that statement would do a great deal of good in Congress; that he (Rosecrans) could use it to assuage the bitterness of feeling among the coercion leaders, and make the Federal Government much more lenient towards the conquered States.

"With his usual polite caution, General Lee replied that he did not think he had the right to speak for the Southern people; that he now held no office by their gift, except the very humble one of a teacher of youth; that he had not even the right of citizenship, and hence did not think he had a right to speak for the Southern people. But Rosecrans was quite urgent; thereupon, General Lee said that many distinguished ex-Confederates were now at the Springs, from various parts of the Southern States, and from these General Rosecrans could learn their impressions of Southern feelings and purposes.

"Rosecrans caught at this, saying that he was not acquainted with most of these gentlemen, and he wished General Lee to bring him acquainted with them, in order that he might get their views. General Lee consented to invite a number of them to meet General Rosecrans at his parlor, on Paradise Row. Consequently, the next morning a species of small levee was convened there by General Lee's invitation, and among them was ex-Governor Stockdale, of Texas.

"General Lee was very silent and very polite, greeting everybody with scrupulous courtesy and seeing them well-seated. He himself took the last seat in a plain chair by the open door.

"Rosecrans then began his catechism, asking each ex-Confederate the same questions he wished General Lee to answer.

"Governor Stockdale said to me that many of the replies struck him as entirely too sycophantic and insincere, and he surmised from General Lee's countenance that the old soldier felt the same way about them.

"Governor Stockdale related the story thus: Doctor, I was perhaps the smallest man of the assemblage, both in personal stature and in political importance, being only an ex-Governor, and I had fallen into the corner down at the end of the row of distinguished Confederates, so the question came to me last.

"Rosecrans said, in substance, 'Now, Governor Stockdale, let us hear how your gallant Texans feel toward the old government and the old flag?'

"I replied: 'General Rosecrans, since that day in June, 1865, when General Merritt with his soldiers drove me from the Government House, I have held no office in Texas, and have not been authorized by the people of Texas to represent them in anything; but I know them well, and I am sure that you may say this: the people of Texas will remain quiet, and not again resort to forceful resistance against the Federal Government, whatever may be the measures of that government.'

"General Rosecrans replied very unctuously, 'Ah! that is good news from our gallant Texas,' etc.

"Said Stockdale, I stopped him and said: 'But, General Rosecrans, candor requires me to explain the attitude of my people. The people of Texas have made up their minds to remain quiet under all aggressions and to have peace; but they have none of the spaniel in their composition. No, sir, they are not in the least like the dog that seeks to lick the hand of the man that kicked him; but it is because they are a very sensible, practical, common-sense people, and understand their position. They know that they resisted the Federal Government as long as any means of resistance was left, and that any attempt at resistance now must be in vain; and they have no means, and would only make bad worse. This is the view of the matter which is going to keep Texas quiet.'

"At this stage of the conference, General Lee rose from his chair; Rosecrans took the hint. He filed out, and the big Confederates, one behind the other, after him.

"Said Stockdale, I, being the little man in the farther corner, was the last to approach the door. General Lee had given a very polite good-morning to each man as he passed out; as I said to him, 'good-morning,' he gently closed the door before me, keeping the door-knob in his left hand, and said to me, as follows:

"'Governor Stockdale, before you leave, I wish to give you my thanks for brave, true words. You know, Governor, what my position is. Those people (his uniform term for the Yankees) choose, for what reason I know not, to hold me as a representative Southerner; hence, I know they watch my words, and if I should speak unadvisedly, what I say would be caught up by their speakers and newspapers, and magnified into a pretext for adding to the load of oppression they have placed upon our poor people; and God knows, Governor, that load is heavy enough now; but you can speak, for you are not under that restraint, and I want to thank you for your bold, candid words.'

"Again, said Governor Stockdale, I thought he would dismiss me; but he still held the door closed, and after a time he resumed and uttered these words: 'Governor, if I had foreseen the use those people designed to make of their victory, there would have been no surrender

at Appomattox Courthouse; no, sir, not by me.' Then, with rising color, throwing back his head like an old war-horse, he added these words, 'Had I foreseen these results of subjugation, I would have preferred to die at Appomattox with my brave men, my sword in this right hand.' He then dropped his head, and, with a sad look, added: 'This, of course, is for your ear only. My friend, good-morning;' and with that he opened the door and I took my leave.

"I said to Governor Stockdale, 'Sir, this narrative is of the greatest historical importance; don't you think so?' He replied, yes, he thought so, and had been advised by several friends to give it permanent historical form. I added my request that he would do so. Governor Stockdale replied that he was now an old man, an infirm man, with failing eyesight, heavily laden with the burdens of old age and infirmity, and supposed that he would never do anything more about it; but that he had given some facts to several old friends and intimates in DeWitt county, Texas, where he resided.

"I said to him: 'Governor, these are the reasons why I regard these incidents as of even grand historical importance. General Lee was no original secessionist; he was no politician; he was personally a man of great moderation and wisdom. In the months immediately following the war, he had struggled very hard to reconcile himself and his fellow-citizens to their defeat. He was also an eminent Christian; and in August, 1870, he well knew that he was a dying man, for his intimate friends were aware that he understood the symptoms of his decaying health, and knew that death was not far off. But now, after five years' experience of subjugation and reconstruction, this great martyr, this wise, grand old man, looking eternity in the face, forms this deliberate estimate of the illegality, the perjury and cruelty, the mischievousness of the reconstruction measures; that had he foreknown clearly that the results of submission would be such, he would have preferred to die with his face to the foe. Impartial history will surely form the same estimate concerning this conclusion of the unconstitutional war of coercion and of the subjugation of the Southern States by other States, pretending to be their equals.'"

Having completed his course of lectures in Louisville, Dr. with Mrs. Dabney, proceeded to Victoria, Texas, for a short rest, in the home of their son, Mr. Samuel B. Dabney, who had married, and possessed a handsome and commodious residence. The damp, raw air of the Ohio Valley was about to bring on an attack of the bronchial trouble, which had been the chief occasion of his leaving Virginia eleven years before. The winter climate of Victoria is very fine, soft and balmy, while not enervating. There, in the home of his excellent and affectionately devoted son and his amiable and beautiful wife, the

father sought and found the brief rest which he supposed would suffice to put his throat in good condition.

His restless energy of nature would not allow him to rest long. On the 30th of December, 1894, he and Mrs. Dabney returned to Austin, and reëstablished themselves in their cottage, that he might take up his work in the Theological School. They came back to Austin in the face of a "Norther." He renewed his cold. It now took the form of grippe, and, as is usually the case, found the subject's weakest part. Again he was brought to the brink of the grave, suffering, from time to time, great pain, and was only "rescued from a painful death by surgical means little less miserable." He said of this illness:

"Perhaps the most wretched part of this four months' experience was the nervous malaise, caused by my determined disuse of morphia. For twelve weeks it had been morphia daily or unbearable pain. The opium habit was fully set in me. I determined to break it; for I would rather be dead at once than live a wretched morphia drunkard. When I look back now to the nervous spasms and the insomnia of those weeks they make me shiver."

The number of theological students attending the Austin Theological School was now very small. Central Texas Presbytery did not see how, under the current circumstances, it was to carry the work further. It had no disposition to try to do it. The Synod wished to have a Theological School; but it had not come to be a unit on the place where, nor as to its ability to maintain such a school. Dr. Dabney was vastly distressed with what, to him, seemed blindness to their need and abilities, on the part of Texas Presbyterians, and their slowness; but he was ready to make every sacrifice of himself, having a huge, irrepressible desire to see that school pushed. He writes all this out in letters like this:

"AUSTIN, May 15, 1895.

*"Rev. S. B. Campbell, D. D.*

"DEAR BROTHER: I need your counsel, as chairman of the Synod's committee, upon the destinies of the School of Theology.

"You have heard of the decision and final withdrawal of Dr. Smoot and Mr. Tidball. Tidball was literally starved out by the failure of the Presbytery to fulfil its pledges. The school is thus left resting for professional support upon me alone, a bruised if not a broken reed. This puts its existence in extreme peril, unless something wise and prompt is done. Your committee, instead of sitting in council about the prosperity of a living institution, will have to hold a coroner's inquest

over a dead one. The question on which I wish to be advised is this: should I also resign? I am more than ready to do so; and shall certainly not obtrude myself as a theological teacher.

"There is a point of personal interest to me which becomes pressing; if there is no longer anything for me to do in Austin, my strong inclination and interest urge me to leave it and live with one of my children. The continued apathy of our Presbytery, and the procrastination of the Synod, concerning the future of the School of Theology, must prompt me at last to decide this question for myself; and my decision, of course, must be to get out from the place where I seem not to be wanted, and go to consult my own convenience. I am too old for dallying.

"I feel sure that the existing Trustees will always be found willing to transfer the School to the Synod, with its whole property, and unincumbered by any faculty, when the Synod wants it. Our judgment is still the same, that Austin will still be, in the long run, the best place for the permanent home of the School. But if the Synod will take it, not to choke it, but to nurse it generously, we are all cordially ready to yield our judgment about the location to the better judgment of the Synod. True, the old charter said Austin, but all charters are open to amendment, and no obstacle will be offered here even to this amendment, if the School is taken in good faith. We have a nice little property, worth some three thousand five hundred dollars, a precious nucleus of a library of twelve hundred choice volumes, and an invested endowment of four thousand one hundred dollars. All this the donors entrusted to us for the specific purpose of Presbyterian theological education in Texas. We are bound in honor and honesty to see that these gifts are not perverted. To this extent only it is our duty to be stiff; on every other point we are ready for modification.

"Let us suppose that henceforth measures for the life of the School shall proceed as briskly as possible, viz.: that the Synod shall come to know its own mind, at its very next meeting, and that mind shall be to move the School, and that the preparation for this be begun at once and pushed. Still, there must be an interval of a year or two before its new habitation and teachers are made ready for the School. Now, the burning question is, Shall it be during that interval in a state of suspended animation? Is there not extreme danger that this will turn out to be a state of death? Is it not far better that it be kept alive where it is as a nucleus; a living plant, if a small one, ready for successful transplanting and a prosperous after-growth? This burning question needs to be decided immediately, and the necessary steps pressed. The time is short; candidates are already choosing their places of study; in a few weeks all will have chosen under the belief that Austin is to be no place at all.

"May I request you to communicate these views to your committee?

"Our School has received scarcely anything from Texas; the little

which it has come almost wholly from other Synods, mainly through my agency. At the approaching end of this term (possibly its last), it will have given to the Synods twenty-seven licentiates. Meantime, during the twelve years I have been in the State, only three of your own candidates, as far as I now remember, whom you allowed to go to Seminaries across the rim, have returned to labor for your Synod.

"Faithfully yours,

R. L. DABNEY."

For convenience, it may be remarked, in this connection, that his eager desire for a well-established school of theology in Texas, and preferably in Austin, never abated. He writes to Dr. Campbell, chairman of the Synod's Committee of Theological Seminary, on the 30th of December, 1895, urging the putting of a suitable man, to raise the necessary endowment, in the field at once, meeting every supposed objection to such a course. What he wished to see was a seminary sufficiently endowed to maintain four able professors. He was no advocate of over-subdivision of the curriculum of a seminary, and the presence of many teachers. He remarks in this letter:

"Dr. Mallard will print in the *Southwestern Presbyterian* two articles from me on the general seminary policy of our church, and opposing centralization. Dr. Palmer will support me. I suppose young America will cry that we are 'two old fogies.' Well, we are advanced in our seventies. Forty years hence the church will be able to say, perhaps in deep sorrow, which were the wisest, the conclusions of the 'old fogies' or the 'young fogies.'"

Against those who were afraid that the effort to raise money for a Texas Theological School would be followed by cessation of the growth of the endowment of the Austin College, at Sherman, he wrote:

"There is plenty of wealth in the Presbyterian Church in Texas to push both enterprises successfully. What our people need is to be taught how 'to devise liberal things; and by liberal things they shall stand.' Nothing would so surely open the purses of able friends of the College as the example of large gifts from others to the new Seminary. I once heard Dr. William S. White reply thus to a minister who was complaining of too frequent calls on his people for contributions: 'All these good country ladies know that if they wish a cow to give a large bucket of milk, she must be milked frequently and regularly. Without that, she gives less and less, and, after awhile, dries up. Our congregations are like cows, drying up for want of good milking and good feeding.'"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Letter to Dr. S. B. Campbell, dated March 8, 1897.



He argues that they ought to have a seminary, even though it be impossible for the present to endow it adequately; that such an institution would be a plant set out in good soil, and bound to grow, and that from the start its students would labor, for the most part, in Texas, whereas, many, or most, of the Texas students, trained in trans-Mississippi institutions, tended to settle in the older States.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Dabney was elected a member of the Assembly of 1895, which sat in Dallas. On account of sickness, he could not attend.

His former students of Union and the Austin School of Theology were disappointed in not finding him there. They united in addressing to him the following letter:

"DALLAS, TEXAS, May 22, 1895.

"REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER: We, your old students, have been sadly disappointed in not meeting you in this General Assembly, and feel constrained to write to you this letter, expressing our affectionate regard for you, our deep and abiding interest in you, and our sincere sympathy with you in the affliction which has kept you from meeting with us at this time.

"Our minds revert to the time when we sat under your instructions, and then to our life-work as ministers of the gospel, and assure you of that which we know will be a pleasure to you, as a servant of our blessed Master, to hear, that we have found your instruction of incalculable help and benefit to us in preaching the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and we gladly embrace the opportunity of making this grateful acknowledgment of our obligation to you as our instructor.

"We would assure you that our interest in you is deep and abiding, that we hold you in highest esteem and warmest affection. Our hearts beat in tender sympathy with you, and in your affliction we are afflicted.

"Our earnest prayer is that you may verify in your experience the sweetness and fulness of God's promises to the aged. He has said, 'Even to hoar hairs will I carry you,' and 'at evening time it shall be light.' As you grow in grace, may your faith grow stronger and your hopes brighter, and your fellowship with the Master be closer and fuller of comfort day by day. We earnestly pray that God may spare you yet many years to your loved ones, and to the church of God, and may you still bring forth fruit in old age. It would afford us sincere pleasure.

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<sup>3</sup> Since 1897 this argument could not have been made with reference to Texas students in training at Union Seminary, in Virginia. The needs of the great Southwest have been distinctly recognized in this Seminary, and not only all Texas students, but the mind of many others determinedly pointed by the professors in that direction.

if it were possible, could we visit you in a body, and express to you, with our lips and with our presence, what we find it impossible to write with pen and ink. Though denied the pleasure of meeting with you in our Assembly here, we live in confident expectation of reunion and recognition in the general assembly and church of God.

"Please present our most kindly regards and affectionate remembrance to Mrs. Dabney.

"May the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your heart and mind through Jesus Christ."

To this, Dr. Dabney replied in the following letter addressed to the Rev. S. B. Campbell, D. D., of Lancaster, Texas:

"AUSTIN, TEXAS, *June 2, 1895.*

"REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER: Your letter reached me in due time, giving an account of your duties under the Synod's commission. The Rev. Mr. Red also brought the joint letter of my former pupils, to which your name is also appended, with many others. Its kind expression of sympathy and appreciation are exceedingly valuable to me. I wish I could thank each of the dear brethren individually; but I do not know how to make any due acknowledgments except through you. The kindness of the brethren causes them to judge my efforts for their good while they were my pupils too favorably; but I trust that, during these years of active labor, I was sincere in my imperfect efforts as a teacher. Now, I feel that my best reward is in the realization of my hope that all the faculty, training and learning of my dear younger brethren are now faithfully employed for the glory of my and their Redeemer, and the good of immortal souls.

"It is a great joy to me to see my old pupils filling so many important places in Sion. I thank them for their prayers in my behalf, which I trust will avail to this result, that I shall be sustained during the remaining trials which are destined to end a long and afflicted life. I cannot but surmise that my days of active labor are ended, and that henceforward there remains to me no other way of glorifying my Master except by patience and submission. I can only hope to win that form of the divine approval which Milton has expressed in this line of his sonnet:

"They also serve who only stand and wait."

"May all my former pupils be allotted a more peaceful and less afflicted life in which to do our Master's work, and win many souls for their hire!

"Faithfully yours in the gospel, R. L. DABNEY."

Dr. and Mrs. Dabney, with Miss Hally Morrison, Mrs. Dabney's excellent and devoted sister, had planned to spend a part

of the summer of 1895 in Boonsboro, Ark., in the house of a ministerial friend and brother, but God ordered otherwise. A part of the planning and of the disposal, with pathetic touches, is set forth in these two letters:

"507 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET, AUSTIN, TEXAS,  
June 24, 1895.

*"Rev. Uncas McCluer.*

"DEAR BROTHER: The picture you drew last summer of your Boonsboro was very enticing to me. You remember how last summer a sharp attack of sciatica at Dr. Davis' deprived me of the projected pleasure of a visit to you. Foreseeing that heat and mosquitoes may again drive us out of Austin this summer, my thoughts turn to you in Boonsboro again. Can we get comfortable, but clean and plain boarding in some of your families, where God is feared? Remember, we are old people, and cannot climb many steps. As for myself, the only requisites of diet I stickle for are some sweet and wholesome stale bread, good milk and butter, and one cup in twenty-four hours of good, pure coffee, free from the poisonous abomination of coffee grounds stewed over again.

"You were kind enough to indicate that your improvements in your home might by the summer of 1895 enable you to board us conveniently. If so, this would be altogether most pleasant to us. Our feelings stand just thus: on the one hand, we would wholly prefer to be your guests; on the other, we should be loath to impose our poor old shackling selves on Mrs. McCluer, to her inconvenience. Mrs. Dabney seems quite well. You have heard how I have had another long and terrible spell of illness. I think this has about done for me as a working man. I am not at all bed-ridden; I am clear from the cough and sciatica which harassed me last fall. Can walk a mile, and manage one fairly good meal a day, but my strength does not come back, and I suppose never will. I find that having nothing to do and being of no account to anybody is the hardest work I ever did in my life.

"I hope you are well. Love to Mrs. McCluer and your family.

"Faithfully yours, R. L. DABNEY."

"VICTORIA, August 12, 1895.

*"Rev. U. McCluer.*

"MY DEAR BROTHER: You will see from the date of this letter that we have moved permanently to the house of our son Samuel, in Victoria, but we are not one whit the less grateful to you and Mrs. McCluer for the great kindness of your invitation. I wish we were in your good house now, but we managed our movements so indiscreetly that it became simply impracticable for us to make our proposed journey to Arkansas. We delayed in Austin, like lunatics, so long that both Mrs. Dabney and I were prostrated by the fiery heats of Austin; both had quite severe attacks of sickness, and became unable to stand a long

journey. So the only remaining alternative was to take refuge here with our son, where the summers are milder, and his excellent airy house gives us every possible comfort.

"You are perfectly right in thinking Austin the last place on earth for me to choose as a home; but there is one fatal objection to Boonsboro for us. Both my wife and I have been for years afflicted with chronic bronchitis, and while your summer climate would suit us delightfully, we could not stand your winters. So, under the force of events, we have given up the idea of an independent home to live with one of our sons. We find ourselves both too infirm for independence. I have prayed much for providential guidance, and I trust have received it.

"Accept our best love for yourself and family. Believe me, as ever, affectionately your

"Brother in Christ,

R. L. DABNEY."

Dr. Dabney's work was not yet done, as we shall see; but it was natural that he should dwell upon the past now somewhat more than had been his wont. A letter from one whom he had known as a child, whose parents he had known and loved, was fitted to call forth the reminiscent mood—particularly a letter from his best-beloved neighborhood, Tinkling Spring, a people to whom he had gone out as having much in them of primal worth, steadfast, strong and true. On a soft October day, under such a spell, he wrote:

*"A. H. McCue, Esq.*

*"VICTORIA, TEXAS, October 4, 1895.*

"DEAR MR. MCCUE: I assure you that your kind letter has given great pleasure to a blind old man, whose earthly pleasures are necessarily shrunken to a small compass. I remember you perfectly, both as an infant and as a grown man, having seen you in your latter state upon my visits to Tinkling Spring, during and after the war. I need not say how warmly I remember your dear mother, whom I first knew as Miss Ellen Douglas. Your father's house was the first one I entered at my first visit in April, 1847, nearly fifty years ago. The picture is as fresh in my mind as though the event had happened last week. The Rev. William Richardson, of Waynesboro, rode over with me, on a spring afternoon. The vision is now before me of the green, smiling vale of the Long Meadow, of the hospitable brick mansion, and of the host who met us at the door, so gracious and stately in his manly beauty, with his welcome so kindly and warm. The first Mrs. McCue had deceased some months before. The menage was under the care of her daughters, Misses Elizabeth (afterwards Mrs. David Bell), Margaret (Mrs. Dorman), Sarah (Mrs. Dr. Alexander), and Evelina, who was afterwards swept away in her queenly beauty by typhoid fever. Of the sons, James

and William were there; the latter afterwards almost the image of his father. During my whole residence at Tinkling Spring, the affection and support of your parents never failed me. My service in Tinkling Spring was limited to six years and two months, but I there formed friendships which will ever remain among the warmest and most durable of my life. These friendships were grounded on the solid and sturdy traits of the Presbyterian Scotch, whom I then first came to know to much extent. It has been just forty-two years since I left there, years which carried me through many new, strange and intense experiences of arduous studies, civil war, conquest and subjugation, poverty and hard work, domestic bereavements, and last, my unexpected and strange migration to this distant and alien country. You know, I was driven hither mainly by the decree of the physicians to avoid premature death in Prince Edward. I have secured twelve years more of life by my removal, and made some valued friends, but I did not escape the affliction of impaired health, along with blindness, whose seeds had been all laid in Virginia. All the men of my generation at Tinkling Spring are gone—John, Franklin and Moses McCue, Mr. Freeman, McCluer, the Hamiltons, the Gutheries, David S. Bell, Galbreaths, Gilkersons, Van Lears, R. Moffett, Sr., Brooks, Davises, Alexanders, Longs, Abneys, McChesneys, Coiners, etc.; but it is always grateful to me to learn that I am affectionately remembered still by their children and grandchildren. How strange are the ways of Providence, how unforeseen by us purblind mortals! When I received my licensure in 1846, nothing was further from my dreams than a settlement and marriage in the Valley of Virginia. When I had proved my acceptance at Tinkling Spring, I expected nothing except to make that pastorate my life work; but the Synod called me to the Seminary. Then, to my own astonishment, and as if by magic, Providence transmuted me into a soldier, assisting the movements of great battles, and then their military historian. Then I was shot off like a comet to this strange and distant land, to assist in the founding of a great University. One more remove awaits me, the most certain and the least novel and surprising of all, that to the grave.

“You must give my and my wife’s most affectionate love to your mother and aunt, to George Finley and to my old friends, who remember me. Can you not employ the leisure, which some rainy day will give you, to write and tell me more about my old friends, Mr. Bell’s children, etc., etc.?”

“We have left Austin and come to reside with our son Samuel, at Victoria, in South Texas. My wife is reasonably well for her age, seventy-two years to-day week. After a long and terrible sickness the first half of the year, which began with gripe and came pretty near ending with death, I am just now surprisingly recovered, able again to preach. You know where my eldest son, Charles W. Dabney, is. My two other sons, Samuel and Lewis, are prosperous lawyers in Texas,

one in Victoria, the other in Dallas. Samuel married, with one child; Lewis about to be married to a Texas lady. Lewis, his mother's baby, six feet two inches high, weighing two hundred pounds, and said to be in figure just the match of Jim Corbett!

"Again, with best love for your mother,

"Faithfully yours,

R. L. DABNEY."

The Synod of Texas, sitting at Palestine, in the autumn of 1895, appointed the Rev. Samuel A. King, D. D., of Waco, to convey to Dr. Dabney its sentiments of sympathy and love. In pursuance of this commission, Dr. King wrote:

"WACO, TEXAS, *November 4, 1895.*

"*Rev. R. L. Dabney, D. D., Victoria, Texas.*

"DEAR DR. DABNEY: I was last week requested, by resolution of the Synod of Texas, to convey to you an expression of the sympathy and love of the members of that body. There were many demands on my time and thought when I reached home, and I have not found it practicable till to-day to undertake to write to you.

"I beg to assure you of the heartiness of the feeling toward you expressed by that resolution of the Synod. Many members of the body—as is the case in every Southern Synod—had been your students in the years gone by; and those who had not enjoyed that privilege hold you in high regard as one of the great masters in our Israel.

"Very many of those who attended the late meeting came to Palestine with the hope of seeing you there, and were disappointed when they learned that you could not come.

"I voice the sentiment of your many friends when I express the hope that you may be spared for many years to come, to bear fruit in old age, and to benefit, by your counsels and your prayers, the church you have served and love so well. We all sympathize deeply with you in the great affliction visited upon you in the loss of your sight, but are thankful for the grace given you to bear this great trial with such admirable fortitude, and so sweet a spirit of Christian resignation. I think that God sometimes puts supremest honor on his servants when he appoints to them the heated furnace of affliction, and then walks with them in the midst of the fires, and brings them forth without the smell of fire upon the garments of the soul.

"It is the wish and the prayer of the many friends who honor you for your work's sake, and who gratefully recognize the quantity and the quality of your abundant labors for the Master's cause and kingdom, that your declining years may be years of peacefulness and content, and that you may enjoy to the full those precious promises which you have been permitted to hold forth to others in their hour of need, and that you may realize the satisfying fulness of that glorious gospel which you have so ably preached and defended. May you find help and strength in

the companionship of him who will never leave nor forsake his own; and may you find comfort in the thought which cheered the heart of England's great blind bard—

“ ‘Who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state  
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;  
They also serve who only stand and wait.’

“With my personal regards to yourself and Mrs. Dabney, I am  
“Truly and fraternally yours, SAMUEL A. KING.”

To Dr. King's letter Dr. Dabney replied:

“VICTORIA, TEXAS, *November 8, 1895.*

*“Rev. Dr. Samuel A. King, Waco, Texas.*

“REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER: Yours of November 4th was handed me by Dr. Johnson. I have to thank you for the exceedingly kind expression which you have given of the message of the Synod. These assurances of their respect and Christian love, which I know to be sincere, are yet humbling to me, because they are so much beyond what I deserve; but it is very real and valuable recompense to me to enjoy these sentiments so generously expressed by my brethren. You console me with Milton's striking line—

“ ‘They also serve who only stand and wait.’

“I pray that God may accept my present position. In some respects it is a harder form of service than that of those who are running and working in the execution of their divine Master's will; but I endeavor to possess my soul in patience. I suppose the waiting angels found the best solace, for their inactivity, in the prospect of being soon employed again. I spent the early part of this year in much infirmity and pain. Since I removed to Victoria my health has improved very much. My estate is now as comfortable as it was last year. I preach, without any unusual fatigue, sermons which, I presume, are fully long enough for my hearers.

“I earnestly hope that your health is good, and your family restored to comfortable health.

“Were Synod still in session, I should endeavor to send them, through you, the warmest expression of my gratitude. With best wishes,  
“Faithfully yours,  
R. L. DABNEY.”

During the year 1895, Dr. Dabney published, through the Presbyterian Committee of Publication, Richmond, Va., his excellent little tract of eighty pages, on the “Five Points of Calvinism,” and contributed occasional articles to the news-

papers, notably one or two philippics against the effort to remove Union Theological Seminary from Hampden-Sidney to Richmond.

The autumn, winter and spring of 1895-'96 he spent in Victoria, living still in the home of his son. He preached frequently for Dr. Josephus Johnson, of Victoria, Dr. Johnson taking occasion of his presence to push evangelistic work in the outlying regions. He waged war, by private correspondence, against the removal of Union Theological Seminary. He plead for the retention of the Seminary in Southside Virginia, as needed to help the white people in their struggle to prevent their section's being Africanized. He made much of the great amount of money which had been laid out in buildings at Hampden-Sidney, and which would, in case of removal, have to be sacrificed in large part. He suggested that it would be bad faith to the donors of the funds so employed to sacrifice the buildings; and he contended that from Hampden-Sidney a more uncompromisingly moral and spiritual set of men could be sent out than from a Seminary located in a centre of worldliness; that living in such a godly neighborhood for three years, and properly taught, the young men would be made stronger than if living in a less helpful environment and equally well taught. It is a curious fact that all the while he was pleading for the establishment of the Texas Theological Seminary, in Austin, using much the same arguments used by those who favored the removal of Union Seminary to Richmond; but because his great big heart had gone out and fastened on Hampden-Sidney, where he had lived for the best part of his life, where he had done his noblest work, where he had laid three of his bright boys in the grave, where he had determined that his own bones should lie, he was necessarily inconsistent.

During these months he had his seasons of dejection. He writes, on May 3, 1896, to his son, Dr. Charles W. Dabney:

"Some, at least partial, employment I crave exceedingly. Without it an old man rusts out quick, in mind and body, and sinks into a dejection tending to discontent and dotage. Now, I know my bladder disease is incurable, and liable at any time to grow worse and kill me. Were I settled where I had some light employment, I know I might die in six months thereafter. I have been expecting to die every year since this disease fixed itself on me, especially last March, a year ago; but it seems I can't. I am now stronger and better than for three years; preached last Sunday for Brother Johnson, *twice*, good *long sermons*,



without the least injury. I have always thought that the sensible arrangement for me, after losing my professorship, would be to go to some city presenting social advantages, and an occasional call for services, pulpit and literary, where I could be of some use and keep off *dotage*."

He longed to be keeping house again, and on this he wrote: "Had I my eyes, this question would be soon settled. I would go to Red Hill, and live in my own noble house there, 'the world forgetting, by the world forgot,' spending the winters in some Southern city."

The latter months of the summer of 1896 were passed in Arkansas, at Boonsboro and Fayetteville. There Dr. Dabney preached several times for Dr. S. W. Davies.<sup>4</sup> There he prepared a manuscript on Theism, having Dr. Davies' help, and planned to write further on the doctrine of substitution. He published in the *Central Presbyterian* of September 2, 1896, a ringing article on the propriety of our churches giving a better support to the Assembly's cause of Home Missions. He condemned our doing so much less for this cause than for Synodical Missions, and showed that the genius of our church polity demands that in aggressive work the church be a unit. He concludes, pregnantly, as follows:

"We have deliberately preferred Presbyterianism to Independency. Our principle is this, that the power of the whole is, under Christ, over that of parts. So in our efforts for Christ, the strength of the whole ought to sustain each of the parts. Our ears have been familiar with some notable sophistries here, from those who sought to disintegrate the organized work of the Assembly's committee. It was asked, 'What is gained by sending the collections of a given Presbytery to Atlanta, and then sending it back to sustain the missions of that Presbytery? Does this double journey make the sum of money any larger?' Let me ask a parallel question, What is gained by sending the taxes collected in the border county of Breathitt to the State Treasury in Frankfort, Ky., and then sending them back to pay the cost of county government there? I answer, *Statehood is gained!* Should Kentucky act on this sophism she would cease to be a State; her unity and sovereignty would perish; she would be impotent to protect Breathitt or any other county from invasion or domestic insurrection. My old friend, Dr. John Leighton Wilson, was both saint and statesman. This was his theory of church action, to make the church a unit in the aggressive work, so that the

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<sup>4</sup> He fainted once, however, in Dr. Davies' pulpit while trying to preach.

strength of the whole should sustain the weakest part. But its resources must be unified in order to unify its work. This was the policy by which he victoriously led our church through the perils and struggles of its infancy, up to success and adult strength. We have modified it only to our disadvantage."

About the end of September, he and his good wife went to Dallas, and visited their son Lewis and his wife for a month, and then returned to Victoria, where they put in the winter pretty much as the preceding one, save that they kept house in a rented cottage, close to the home of their son, "good Samuel," as the father calls him in more than one letter. Some time was consumed in their removal and fresh start in housekeeping. They each had a case of grippe with relapses. The fires of the man's tireless energies did not even wane, however. He did occasional preaching; he contributed articles to the newspapers, taking an able hand in the current discussion of "Baptism for the Dead," as may be seen in the *Christian Observer* of February 3, 1897, and in that of the nature of the *gifts conferred at Pentecost*, as may be seen in the same paper, of March 31, 1897. Much more besides he was doing, as will soon appear.

To the Assembly of 1897, sitting in Charlotte, N. C., Dr. Dabney came, not only as a member of the body, but as the author of one of the great Memorial Addresses in connection with the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Westminster Confession of Faith. His presence there was greeted in a manner singularly reverential. Rarely has greater honor been shown a minister of our church by his brethren. Says Dr. S. A. King, who has just been elected to the chair of Theology in the Seminary, for whose founding Dabney prayed and labored so, at Austin, Texas:

"The Assembly at Charlotte had on its roll an unusual number of names of note, and, in addition, there were present others of great ability and prominence who had been chosen to take part in the Westminster Memorial Celebration. There had been no such gathering of noted men since the Assembly at Louisville in 1870. Among those brought together on this memorable occasion, in that historic Presbyterian city, Dr. Dabney was easily the most prominent and the most honored. Many who were there had been his students; he was the Gamaliel at whose feet they had sat. To all he was the Moses who had been the leader in 'times that tried men's souls.' There was an unspoken feeling that this would be the last meeting of that high court which he would attend, and that when the last adieus were said at the Assembly's close, the

most of those who were there would see his face no more. Such reverence for the man and deference to the wisdom of the leader are rarely witnessed. His every utterance was heard with profoundest interest, and his counsels received with the utmost deference and respect. He took an active part in the deliberations of that great Assembly, and served with his accustomed diligence as chairman of one of the leading committees. The most notable feature of that Assembly was the celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Westminster Assembly. A carefully-prepared programme had been arranged by an eminently competent committee, and eleven able and distinguished men had been chosen to discuss as many topics pertinent to the occasion. To Dr. Dabney had been assigned the subject of 'The Doctrinal Contents of the Confession.' He had prepared a paper, which was read, at his request, by a brother minister, and which, although coming in the midst of such a feast, was listened to with most profound attention. It was a masterly setting forth of the doctrinal contents of the Confession, and of the necessity and value of creeds. . . . While this was one of Dr. Dabney's latest public services to the church, it was one of his greatest. That address, with the other ten, is fittingly preserved in the Memorial Volume, and will go down to history as not only one of the masterpieces of its illustrious author, but as one of the most able and lucid presentations of the doctrinal contents of our Confession, and of the reasons for having and for upholding our creed. It will take an honored place in Presbyterian and Calvinistic classics. . . . I trust I will be pardoned for a feeling of pride that this greatest man of that notable Assembly was there as a commissioner from a Texas Presbytery."

Dr. R. Q. Mallard, in the *Southern Presbyterian*, referring to the two Memorial Addresses delivered by Dr. Henry Alexander White and Dr. Robert Price, writes:

"A most interesting and touching feature of the service was the presence on the platform and introductory prayer of Dr. Dabney. As he was led forward, in his blindness to the Moderator's table, feeling with tremulous hands for its support, it was a sight pathetic in the extreme. It may seem hardly proper to comment on a prayer, but this was so full and fitting, and carried us in such humble gratitude to the splendid past of Presbyterianism, and in such hopefulness and trust to the future, and so voiced the present feelings and longings of the great audience, that we cannot help noting it. The venerable leader's petition that we might be endued with the martyr spirit of the fathers must have produced searchings of the heart, and his prayer to be kept from vain-glory—in the light of subsequent two-fold story of our honored past—seemed almost gifted with the seer's sagacity, who foresaw the exaltation to be produced by the double narrative."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See editorial correspondence, *Southwestern Presbyterian*, May 27, 1897.

Dr. Dabney in this Assembly conceived it to be his duty to criticise the course of one of our Synods, and to defend Dr. Craig, the Assembly's Secretary of Home Missions, and in the same connection to protest against independency in general. Carrying out this conception of his duty, he made a most effective speech. Of this speech Dr. Mallard writes:

"Totally blind, weak in body, but full of intellectual vigor, courage and zeal, he was always listened to with profound respect and attention, as he is entitled to be. The lion was roused in him by what he boldly characterised as 'insubordination' in a Synod, viz., setting aside the Assembly's direction for Home Missions collection in favor of local interests—in defending the Secretary by an *argumentum ad hominem*—and arraignment of the present mode of supporting our candidates as unfair, because, through unreported private help given to some, marked by partiality. His crisp, logically arranged 'points,' characterized by his usual ardor, were flung out in strong, clear, deliberate tones, which rang through the spacious audience room."<sup>6</sup>

The kindness and honor shown him were very much appreciated. He writes, by the hand of his good wife, to his friend, Rev. Uncas McCluer:

"We can venture to be a little egotistical with such dear old friends. We had a pleasant time at the Assembly for such an old pair. It was a good Assembly, not only because a multitude of kind brethren gave such kind greetings to the blind old Doctor, but there was more dignity and less wrangling, and the Assembly kept to its business with industry. In Charlotte we also met many friends not ministerial, as Mrs. Stonewall Jackson, Mrs. Dupuy (Mary Sampson) and many others."

They paid a good many visits in North Carolina, and spent some months, the latter part of June, July, August and September, at Asheville. In the letter just quoted, Dr. Dabney continues:

"Mrs. Dabney paid a visit of a few days to Fayetteville, and met her sister, Mrs. Smith, who was then with her daughter, Mrs. McKelway. Among the old friends, we met the rich widow, Mrs. Mary McAden, daughter of Dr. Terry, of Prince Edward. We spent a delightful week at her fine country seat, near her great cotton mills. Then a week with Dr. and Mrs. Shearer, at Davidson College. Then one at Mooresville to see the Rev. James M. Wharey, a dear pupil and friend, and son of my father's pastor, and so we came here (to Ashe-

<sup>6</sup> See editorial correspondence, *Southwestern Presbyterian*, June 3, 1897.

ville) safely, where son Charley met us at the depot. Here he and his family were installed for the summer in a nice rented cottage. Another, smaller one ready furnished for us was near by theirs. This was about the 22d of June."<sup>7</sup>

At Asheville they hoped to have a charming summer. Man, however, proposes, but God disposes. The younger children of Dr. Charles Dabney sickened about the end of June. Their parents were burdened with care and nursing. This sickness proved to be tedious cases of typhoid fever. The days were made sad and anxious for the aged grandparents, also. They took the eldest grandchild, Marguerite, to their cottage. Catherine, the youngest was quite ill, but her case took the normal course, and she got well in due time. In Mary Moore's case there were repeated reinfections, and the disease went on its frightful way for twelve weeks. Her life was almost despaired of by nurses and physicians. "During it all," says Dr. Charles W. Dabney, "my father's solicitude was of course intense, but his faith never wavered. He would come several times a day and sit, in his blindness, either on the front porch or in the hall, and sometimes in the room by the bedside, ministering as he well knew how to do, to our distressed spirits. He told us of his own sorrow, and that of my mother, in the illness and death of his boys, and did more than any other mortal could to support us in the great trial. He was always a very deeply affectionate father, but it seems to me he drew closer to us during this great trial than ever before."

While they were in the course of this long agony, he dictated the following lines, so full of suppliant strength and beauty, and, in the end, of exalting gratitude:

"Our Lord had lent to us a blessed child,  
Of face and form most fair, of spirit mild,  
Yet bright and strong. Throughout ten happy years  
She grew into our hearts, 'mid joys and fears,  
And as she grew, 'twas ever yet more plain  
The spirit's grace had purged the natal stain  
Derived from us, from her infantile soul.  
The grace grew with her growth, to faith's control,  
Obedience, purity, and love's submiss.  
Which made her childhood's days a saintly bliss.  
But as the cloudless day preludes the storm.

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<sup>7</sup> Letter to Rev. Uncas McCluer, July 27, 1897.

So midst her bloom there fell upon her form  
 A creeping blight, so stealthy, sallow, slow,  
 Ere we had feared, the fever laid her low;  
 Then turned I, weeping, to my Lord in prayer:  
 O Thou, who never didst refuse to hear,  
 When on our earth, the guilty suppliant's voice,  
 But madest each petitioner rejoice,  
 E'en though by miracle, with succor swift,  
 Divine Physician, give us now this gift,  
 The life of our dear lamb! O come and heal  
 Our sufferer, nor spurn our sore appeal.  
 Then to my spirit came an answering word,  
 Not to the outward sense, but from the Lord,  
 To faith's clear vision: Knowest thou, old man,  
 What thou dost ask? Shall I extend the span  
 Of this dear life to four-score weary years,  
 And fill them, like thine own, with many tears,  
 And fleeting joys, and long enduring pains,  
 To stray and sin before temptation's strain,  
 And then with shame to duty's path,  
 To toil and lose, and bear the victor's wrath,  
 Helpless and slandered, while it drinks the gall  
 Of sore bereavements; then, as end of all,  
 Through darksome days and listless years to pine?  
 Which is the wiser love, or thine or mine,  
 Should I elect to lift her to my arms,  
 By briefest conflict, safe from earthly harms,  
 And for her teachers seraphim prefer  
 To thy poor schooling? But thou lovest her!  
 Is not my love more wise and strong,  
 As tears are cheaper than my blood divine,  
 Shed for her soul upon the dreadful tree?  
 Thou weapest! But I died on Calvary

That she might live.

Then, prone before the heavenly voice, I said,  
 Teach me, O Christ, to pray as thou hast prayed,  
 When in thy extremity of woe:  
 'Spare me, O Father, if it may be so,  
 That I this cup of bitter grief may shun.  
 If not, then let thy holy will be done,  
 Not mine.' We see that goodness infinite  
 Doth choose, and too boundless to permit  
 Aught but the best for us. Then fell great peace  
 Upon our troubled breasts, not by our cease  
 Of love parental,—this but deeper grew,—  
 But by the growth of love and faith more true.

Then, as with chastened hearts we watched and prayed,  
 New, blessed hope was born, the plague was stayed,  
 The ebbing tide of life stood still, then stole  
 Back to its channels. Lo! the sick was whole.  
 What thankfulness, O Father, can befit  
 Thy mercy so beyond our hope, so sweet?  
 Thy precious loan we consecrate anew,  
 By a new baptism. May our vows be true,  
 Our earthly schooling like to that above,  
 From which our prayers detain her, and our love,  
 For Heaven postponed, a compensation prove."

During this period the old, blind grandfather and his eldest grandchild, whom he had long been wishing to teach, were drawing close together. Marguerite was a bright, handsome, earnest, intelligent, high-spirited, wholesomely ambitious child, already a Christian. She lived with her grandfather during these days, read to him, sang to him, led him about town, carried him to Dr. Charles W. Dabney's cottage, took him back again. He had never had a daughter of his own. There is no estimating the happiness he found in this grandchild.<sup>8</sup>

While at Asheville in the summer of 1897, he published several newspaper articles, amongst them two on "Aesthetics as a Substitute for Christianity," in the *Southwestern Presbyterian*. They were not only timely but able.

From Asheville he went to Lenoir, N. C., to pay a visit to his friends the Rev. C. A. Munroe and his wife, the daughter of Col. Henry Stokes, of Prince Edward county, Va. While sojourning in this hospitable home, he learns that the chastening rod has fallen on his old friend and fellow-elder in the College Church, and writes to him:

"LENOIR, N. C., October 6, 1897.  
*Col. Henry Stokes.*

"MY DEAR OLD FRIEND: Here we are. Mrs. Dabney and I, in your Mary's house in Lenoir, N. C., receiving the greatest kindness, and en-

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<sup>8</sup> Margurite was to follow her grandfather to heaven when only seventeen. She died on the 27th of June, 1899. In her obituary we read: "Thoroughly devoted to her grandfather, Rev. Dr. Dabney, when he visited the family, she hung to him like his shadow. The whole of his last summer on earth was spent with his son Charles' family in Asheville, N. C., and Margurite fairly lived with him, and read and sang to him in his blindness. He used to say, when she sang the old-time hymns to him, that she had the voice of an angel."

joying a week of delightful rest, talking about you all and other old friends.

"It was here we first learned the particulars of your sickness, and of your partial restoration. All news of you and your family has been interesting to us. We feel at once much sorrow for your sickness, and a sacred pleasure at the sustaining grace which enables you to be patient, calm and cheerful under your confinement.

"The writing of this takes me back very tenderly to old times, before, during and after the war, when first we were so prosperous and hopeful; then so terribly pressed; then struggling up again during the years of reconstruction.

"Pictures come before me of my visit to the cottage over on the big hill, and good, kind Mrs. Stokes, and her string of boys (how rich you were in them), and Mary and Sally, and of preaching to your servants.

"There come before me scenes in the old church, the building of the new one, communion seasons and commencements, so closely associated with your face and figure; also, Messrs. Edmunds, Berkeley and Terry.

"Pardon my egotism for referring to the last of those commencement scenes, in which I had part, in June, 1882; when, at the end of my discourse on the 'New South,' I saw you going off the stage with tears in your eyes. Get Sally to read it to you now; it is in the fourth volume of my collected works.

"I am now seventy-seven and a half years old, and my wife just seventy-four. It is too plain to us who have reached such age that there is not much more time before us on this earth. I feel, as no doubt you do, that my chief business now is to be ready for the approaching change. There are some petitions which will come in every time I pray: 'Lord, choose the time and mode;' 'Lord, make me ready, come when it may;' 'Lord, increase my faith;' 'O Lord, give me dying grace in the dying hour;' 'O Lord, make my children and their children ready.'

"My main prayer for you is that you may be sustained and blessed in your sickness, and my secondary one, that you may be restored, and yet spared a great while to your family and church.

"We go from here to Davidson College, where I have a short course of lectures; then to Texas, as soon as the yellow fever is out of the way; but during this banishment, the Lord's people in North Carolina are taking good care of us.

"I am much broken in the last year, and as blind as a *brick-bat*, but I see much happiness; so may you. Best love to Mrs. Stokes, and all the children, also to old friends.

"Faithfully yours,

R. L. DABNEY."°

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° This letter was written by the hand of Mrs. Dabney; but he signed it in his irregular, blind hand, that his old friend might see it, we suppose.



From Lenoir he proceeded to Davidson College, according to his plan, to deliver his lectures on the Otts Foundation. His subject was, "The Penal Character of the Atonement of Christ Discussed in the Light of Recent Popular Heresies." The first of the lectures was delivered on Sunday, the 10th of October. A spectator and hearer writes:

"It was an inspiring sight and a striking testimony to the power of the human intellect to see this venerable servant of God, ripe in years and still riper in the vigor of his mind, in total blindness, and thus thrown entirely upon the resources of his intellect, unfold, step by step, with the confidence and ease and skill of a master, the doctrines of an heretical theology, which it is the purpose of these lectures to controvert."

The introductory lecture was followed by five others, and of these the same writer says:

"One who listens to more in the series of Dr. Dabney's lectures is but more confirmed in the impression made by the first in the series, which was that, though his natural sight has become darkened, his mental vision is as bright and keen as ever, and if the voice may have lost some of its old-time strength and fire, certainly his power of expression and of acute analysis, his logical force and ability to argue his thesis to an incontrovertible conclusion, abide with him as in the days of yore. It is an intellectual delight, and, at the same time, a severe exercise of one's reasoning faculties to follow him as with steady force and in absolute confidence, he states the false postulate of his opponents, and then proceeds to annihilate them by pricking their fallacies and unmasking the hollowness of their claims."<sup>10</sup>

From Davidson he went to Columbia Seminary after a short interval, on the invitation of the faculty, and there delivered again this course of lectures, having for its chief thesis, "Christ the Substitute and Sacrifice for Imputed Guilt." The course was received at Columbia with huge and generous appreciation, creditable alike to the lecturer and his auditors. They found "exquisite pleasure," too, in having Dr. Dabney in their homes. "He was uniformly fond of the society of his friends. His interest in life had not in the least abated. The interest, accuracy and minuteness of his information gave a charm to his conversation."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Dr. J. B. Shearer, in the *Central Presbyterian*, October 20, 1897.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. W. T. Hall, in the *Central Presbyterian*, November 17, 1897.

After the conclusion of the course in Columbia, the Faculty of the Seminary adopted the following minute, submitted by Dr. W. T. Hall, Professor of Theology :

"The Faculty would put on record the interesting fact that our Seminary has recently been honored by the presence of the Rev. Robert L. Dabney, D. D., LL. D. Beginning on the evening of the 6th of this month he discussed, in a series of seven lectures, before the Faculty and students and citizens of Columbia, 'Christ Our Substitute and Sacrifice for Imputed Guilt.' The discussions were characterized by Dr. Dabney's well-known clearness of statement, force of reasoning, energy of expression and aptness of illustration. As a result, our conceptions of fundamental religious truths have become clearer and our faith in them has been confirmed. We recognize gratefully the goodness of the Lord in sending his servant among us; and we also cherish a deep sense of obligation to Dr. Dabney for his able and faithful defence of the truth."<sup>12</sup>

During this autumn he had found time to write a brief, but instructive, historical and scriptural discussion of "The Oblation," which came out in the *Christian Observer* of November 24, 1897.

From Columbia he and Mrs. Dabney made their way back, by degrees, to Victoria, having stopped for a while in the latter part of November and first of December at Auburn, Ala., where they visited the family of his brother-in-law, Colonel Alexander Bondurant. At Victoria they began their life in their own cottage once more, not a life of idleness, but of reading, thinking, writing, and other work. He had water fixtures put into his newly built cottage. He had Uncle Warner measure off the yard, and told him where the young trees were to be set; and had much to say about making Mrs. Dabney comfortable. The last piece of literary work he did was the preparation of a brief sketch of the life of his teacher, colleague and friend, Dr. Francis S. Sampson. He did this on Monday, the 3rd day of January, 1896. On the evening of that day he was seized with an acute illness. After four hours, at 11 P. M., the heart and brain, that had moved for three-quarters of a century with such extraordinary momentum, ceased to act. Robert Lewis Dabney was dead.

During these years, subsequent to June, 1894, he had seen the fourth volume of his *Discussions* brought into print; and had in these three years prepared at least two of the discus-

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<sup>12</sup> See *Faculty Book*, Vol. IV., pp. 39-40.

sions brought out in that volume, viz.: "The Influence of False Philosophies Upon Character and Conduct," "The True Purpose of the Civil War." These are not long papers, but they bear the marks of Dr. Dabney's mental power and vigor.

During these three years he had seen his *Practical Philosophy* published; a book, which owing to the "energy of its diction," "the clearness of its style," the "vividness imparted by constant and live illustrations," proved as "fascinating as a romance." So he read in the *Southwestern Presbyterian*. He had, also, worked up the lectures delivered at Davidson College and Columbia Seminary in form for publication, although they were not actually published until about six months after his death, under the title of *Christ Our Penal Substitute*. This little book contains a masterly presentation of the Old School Presbyterian view of the atonement.

In addition he had published, in 1895, in the *Presbyterian Quarterly*, a very able paper under the caption of "Idealistic Monism," which was much more than a justification of himself for not being a philosopher of that school. If any of those in control of the University of Texas in 1894, disapproved of him as not being a monist, they had, once more, ample opportunity to learn why he was not a monist. He stalks about amongst the great representatives of this school and remorselessly shivers their idols, and shows why he does it: because they are falsehoods, and because they are followed by evil consequences. He appears, also, in excellent book notices in the same periodical, in the years 1896 and 1897, and in the latter year comes out with a rather short, but pregnant, paper on the "Decline of Ministerial Scholarship." Besides all these, he prepared "The Christology of the Angels," in stately blank verse. The poem is didactic, gives an account of the creation of the world, of the fall of Satan and the blighting influence of sin, of the earth's reduction to chaos, and remoulding, of the creation and fall of man, and of his redemption. It is a lofty piece of work, and evinces genius of a noble order. The style and tone are Miltonic, but the imagery is highly original. The poem is a proof that had Dr. Dabney chosen to give himself to distinctly literary effort, he could have made for himself a master's place in literature. The theology of the angels, even through blank verse, appears to be soundly Calvinistic. These words from the Apologia are worth reading for their tender beauty:

“Nor think it strange, ye kindly ministers,  
 If to these sightless balls, seeking in vain  
 The sunlight beam, some slender ray from heaven,  
 Unseen before amid the garish light,  
 Shall pierce, in mercy sent, or if the soul,  
 Left blank of images by sense impressed,  
 Shall see by faith and vision spiritual,  
 The heavenly city and the golden streets,  
 Where ye your worship pay.”

Letters speak of still other works planned in these last years. Fragments show some undertakings incomplete.

One writing of the period was intended specially for a very small body of readers, but it will be judged worthy of a place here by all who would know what Dr. Dabney counted the one great thing in life:

“TO MY DEAR SONS AND DAUGHTERS AND THEIR CHILDREN :

“I desire before I leave the world, as my best legacy to my family, my serious, solemn advice, to make choice of God for their God. He has been my father’s God, and the God of your mother’s predecessors. I solemnly charge you to make it your first care to seek after peace with God, and being reconciled, to make it your study to please God in *all things*.

“Wait diligently upon the means of grace, attending the worship of God in his house; study his Word, after secret prayer, especially family and the public ordinances.

“Beware of the mere form of these duties; but cry to the Lord for communion with him, so that you may worship him in spirit and in truth.

“Follow God fully, without turning aside. I have often devoted all of you to God, and there is nothing I have so much at heart as this: that you may indeed be the Lord’s; and if you turn aside from this way, I will have this as a witness against you in the day of the Lord.

“Be good to your mother, as you would have God’s blessing. She will need your comfort. Beware of religion that is most taken up with public matters.

“The sum of the gospel is Christ crucified. I commit my body to the dust, hoping and expecting the spirit will in due time quicken my mortal body. My spirit I commit to my Lord Jesus Christ; to him I have entrusted it long ago.

“Now, my dear boys, this is my last legacy, that we all meet where there is no more death, sorrow nor sin.

“Your devoted father,

R. L. DABNEY.

“Be kindly affectionate one to another.”

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.”

## CHAPTER XX.

### *DEATH, BURIAL, EULOGIES AND TRIBUTES.*

D R. and Mrs. Dabney had returned, as has been shown, to Victoria, in the early part of December, 1897. During that month he had not been very well; but was able to go about his premises; and, as if anticipating his death, had been active in fitting his place more to suit Mrs. Dabney's convenience. On Sunday, the 2nd of January, he had proposed to attend church, but suffered himself to be dissuaded, as the day was raw and chilly. On Monday, January 3rd, he arose, dressed and went to breakfast. After family worship he dictated for the *Union Seminary Magazine* a short biographical sketch of the Rev. Professor Francis S. Sampson, D. D., who had been his most honored and helpful teacher while a student in Union Seminary, later a colleague in the faculty of the same institution, and whose biography he had published. He spent the rest of the day in arranging some of his papers. He was suffering somewhat, but no uneasiness was felt by his family until about 9 o'clock p. m. The end was much nearer than they thought even then. He suffered sharp pain in the chest. The minutes ticked away. He showed less of restlessness. When Mrs. Dabney asked him whether he felt easier, he said, "A little easier; but the blessed rest is here." The mighty worker was weary of pain. Like his great military chief he yearned for rest from it. He had long prayed that when the release should come, it might come quickly; and it came as he had prayed. At ten minutes before 11 p. m. of that third day of January he was dead.

He had commanded his sons to bury his body in the little cemetery belonging to the Union Theological Seminary at Hampden-Sidney, Virginia. He had fought with tongue and pen for all the South, but specially for Virginia, his mother, who had made him peer of her noblest, most heroic, sons. He loved no other soil as hers. He loved old Hampden-Sidney, where he had poured himself out in manhood's prime, and turned multitudinous eyes upon the place because he had his

workshop there. He loved the homely little cemetery because there lay the dust of John Holt Rice, and George Baxter, and Samuel L. Graham, and Samuel B. Wilson, and James Fair Latimer, and Benjamin Smith, and Thomas E. Peck. He loved a particular spot in that cemetery because his great heart had broken once, twice, thrice at a child's grave. He would have his body sleep beside the bodies of his three little sons till the resurrection morning. So to Hampden-Sidney came his body, attended by his stalwart, dutiful sons. It reached Farmville on Friday morning of the 7th of January. For several days a gloom had pervaded the whole village, and especially the Faculty and students of the Seminary. They thought no honor too great to be paid to one who had done such service to his country, his church, and to that institution. A delegation of the students met the funeral cortege at Farmville and attended it to Hampden-Sidney. As the body lay in state at the church from eight until three o'clock, it was guarded by relays of students, each relay acting one hour.

The funeral service was in the College Church, at 3 P. M., Friday. A procession of professors and students of Union Theological Seminary and Hampden-Sidney College came with solemn tread and occupied a considerable portion of the building, a large congregation filling up the rest.

Amongst those from a distance to attend these last rites was the venerable Dr. Clement R. Vaughan, of Roanoke, for a time a successor of Dr. Dabney in the chair of Theology in the Seminary they both loved and so greatly honored. He had come to see what was left of his classmate, his life-long, admiring and admired friend, his "father-brother," laid away. He and one or two other peculiarly close friends appeared seated with the family at the funeral services.

Dr. Givens B. Strickler had been asked to serve as Master of the funeral services, and, also, to make an address appropriate to the occasion. He announced the hymn—

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me!"

and read a selection of appropriate Scriptures. The Rev. Professor C. C. Hersman, D. D., at his request, led the congregation in prayer. Dr. Strickler then delivered the following eulogy on his honored teacher:

“‘A prince and a great man has fallen in Israel.’ On such occasions it is proper to take account of our loss, that we may rightly estimate what the Lord gave, and what the Lord has taken away. That our departed friend and brother was, indeed, a prince and a great man in Israel—made so by God’s gifts of nature and grace—all would agree. That he was a great teacher, scores and hundreds of our ministers, who have enjoyed the privilege of his instruction, have always cordially testified. That he was a great theologian, his numerous works, left as an invaluable heritage to the church, make abundantly evident. That he was a great philosopher, his frequent and important contributions to the philosophical discussions of the last thirty years in our country clearly demonstrate. That he was a great preacher many present can bear witness from their own delightful experience, as for years they sat under his pulpit ministrations. That as the result of thirty years’ teaching in the Seminary, and of the contributions he has made to our religious and ethical and theological literature, he has left a deeper impression for good on our Southern ministry and Southern Church than any other man who has ever been connected with our denomination, few, I suppose, would question. That he was a great man in the excellence of his character, in conscientiousness, in integrity, in courage, in his supreme devotion to truth and to duty, and in zeal for the church and for God, none can doubt. That he was one of the most valuable gifts God has ever made to our church and our country all would admit. While, therefore, we to-day mourn over our loss (for God would not have us so lightly esteem so great a gift as not to be profoundly affected when it was withdrawn), we should mingle with our lamentations the most sincere thanksgiving to God that he ever made us so great a gift; that he preserved it to us so long, and that now our brother, after faithfully serving his generation until vital forces failed under the growing infirmities of advancing years, has gently fallen on sleep, and been received to his reward, and that those eyes, so long closed to the beauties of this world and to the faces and forms of earth by love and friendship, have been opened to the glories of the heavenly kingdom, and to behold the loved ones gone before, and the general assembly and church of the firstborn, and to see the King in his beauty. Let us, then, be profoundly grateful, while we are, at the same time, tenderly sorrowful.

“But it is not my purpose even to attempt to give you an adequate conception of Dr. Dabney’s life and character. I leave that for the more competent brethren, who will presently address you. I only wished, in introducing this part of the service, to avail myself of the privilege and opportunity of laying a little flower upon the bier of him to whom I am more indebted than to any other man, living or dead.”

Having thus spoken, Dr. Strickler introduced the Rev. Dr. Henry M. White, of Winchester, Va. Dr. White spoke of Dr. Dabney’s generosity in dealing with his fellow-men. In

particular he emphasized the fact that, though a controversialist all his life, Dr. Dabney never indulged in personalities, and never knowingly offended either a colleague or a brother minister during the whole of his long life. He dwelt eloquently on the Christian and the gentlemanly aspect of Dr. Dabney's life.

The last speaker was Dr. Moses D. Hoge. Dr. Hoge commenced by saying that it was not his purpose to attempt any portraiture of Dr. Dabney, or even an outline of the work he had undertaken and accomplished in the world, further than to remark—

“that a man was ordinarily regarded as having fulfilled the great end of life when he had been successful in any one department of useful labor, but that it had been the privilege of the man whose loss we mourn to-day to be distinguished, first, as an able and impressive expounder of the Word in the pulpit; second, as one of the strongest writers on philosophic, secular and theological themes; and, third, as one of the most successful of teachers in a Seminary devoted to the training of young men for the gospel ministry; that it was his rare lot not only to win distinction in each, but to combine and nobly employ all three of these great instrumentalities for wide and permanent usefulness.

“The loss of such a man makes a great void in the world, and all who appreciated his worth bemoan the bereavement and say, ‘How is the strong staff broken and the beautiful rod.’

“The Bible contains a record of the regnant men of the race—the kingly men of the world—not because of hereditary rank and power, but because of commanding influence through services rendered by which the intellectual and moral progress of mankind has been advanced.

“But outside of that inspired register, and continually adding to its length and numbers, are the men of distinguished influence, who in the providence of God are raised up from age to age. Some are endowed with such genius, and their natural capacities have been so strengthened and illumined by vast and varied learning, that they are compelled to occupy conspicuous positions. Their own modesty might induce them to seek private stations, but those who appreciate their worth and power will not consent, and insist that they shall not be allowed to abandon the high positions to which they have been elevated.

“Such men are the acknowledged leaders of the State; they are the lights and land-marks in the church; they are the grand pillars in the temple which God is rearing in the world to the glory of his grace. Among the gifts of God are the gifts of such men to the church and to the world; for they are the instruments by which society is moulded, and the moral and spiritual influence of mankind strengthened and ad-



vanced from age to age. When such men are snatched away we attempt to console ourselves by saying, 'The workmen die, but the work goes on.' It does go on in the sense that God cannot be thwarted in his purposes; that he is never at a loss for instruments to carry them on to completion. Moses and Aaron may drop out of the ranks on that magnificent march of the tribes to the Land of Promise, but Joshua is there at the river to conduct them on and to establish them in their inheritance. Then Samuel comes to lay the foundation of justice and order; then David, to give them an inspired liturgy and to frame a wise constitution of religious worship. One by one the lights in the golden candlestick are extinguished, but the temple still glows with the radiance of the glory of the Lord. The church still lifts up its voice, though tremulous and full of tears, and cries, 'Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations,' and is measurably comforted. But there is another sense in which it is true that when the workman dies the work does not go on as successfully and steadily as before. Indeed, the death of a single man often arrests that progress temporarily, and cripples, though it does not stop, the work.

"During the last decade great has been the loss of the church of eminent men. To say nothing of our own continent, I may look abroad and remark the blanks that have been made by the removal of such men as Christlieb, of Bohn; and Bersier, of Paris; Liddon, of England, and Spurgeon—of what country shall we call him? Let us say Spurgeon, of Christendom, for all claim him as their own.

"The places of such leaders may be occupied without being filled. And where are the champions who are ready to take up the weapons fallen from their hands and cheer on the church to renewed victories? We all know how the loss of one great statesman has sometimes defeated measures by which the progress and prosperity of a nation might have been promoted for generations. And who does not know that in a great crisis in national history, the death of a single distinguished leader has made the independence of that people impossible for all time? So, in the church, the work goes on haltingly, wearily, and is often temporarily crushed.

"It was so when the reformations which attempted to spring up often before Luther was born were put down, such as that of Arnold of Brescia, and that of Savonarola, and that of John Huss. It was so when Coligny and Conde fell. It was so when other reformers were put down; their fall was the signal of the decline of the great work they undertook.

"Among the lessons to be learned from the bereavements that make the world poorer and the church emptier is this: The need of earnest prayer to God that he would raise up and qualify men who can take the places of the departed and efficiently hasten the accomplishment of his great purpose of mercy and grace, by which this revolted world is to be brought back to its rightful allegiance—men who, if not inspired men,

like Moses and Isaiah, or like David, who composed the Psalms, which animated the sacramental army on its march to final victory; or like Paul, who girdled the earth with a zone of light and glory, and wrote the epistles, which have shaped the theological thought of the world; at least, like their successors, who, though uninspired, yet possessed the consecrated genius and learning to meet the great exigencies which are always arising in the history of the church. Who can say that such men are not needed now to combat great errors, and arrest the tide of secularism, false philanthropy, and assaults upon the inspiration of the Scriptures, which prevail even in the lands where Christianity is supposed to exist in its purest form? Let us beseech the Great Head of the church to bless it with more power in the pulpit, power with the pen, power in the professor's chair, the power of sanctified scholarship, the power of consecrated lives in every department of church work and Christian enterprise. The scholar is the product of slow growth, of patient toil, and a rare product, even after the most protracted toil. Every day we have new illustrations of the difficulty of finding men qualified for the high positions which death makes vacant by the removal of the great and good, although there never was a time, perhaps, when the church was fuller of men of average ability.

"Our Southern Church has been dignified and adorned by an illustrious triumvirate. Born amidst the throes of the greatest revolution in modern history, it needed the wisdom and experience of men qualified by nature and grace for the responsible task of giving to it symmetry and scriptural form, of conserving the principles embodied in the Westminster Standards, and of grafting upon them whatever might give these honored truths new applications and new efficiency. No church on this continent has been more favored of Heaven than our own, in having at its very organization three such men as Thornwell, Palmer, and Dabney, each fitted, by splendid genius and profound scholarship—alike consecrated to the noblest uses—to give direction to its future life, and to enrich it for all time by their published contributions to theological science.

"Two of this illustrious triumvirate have been called to a higher service. One still remains, every succeeding year to be crowned by fresh benedictions.

"In deploring such a loss as the one which makes us mourners this afternoon, we will not forget the most blessed of all consolations—heaven gains what we lose, and becomes richer and more attractive to us. True, the Lamb is the light thereof, but our departed ones stand disclosed in that light, and reflect it down to us. We love them all the more because they shine in the beauty of their Lord and ours. We remember our brother, beloved now in the rest and peace and blessedness of the true home. We remember those whom he has left behind for a while, and it comforts us to know that there is one hand gentle enough to wipe away the tears of bereavement, One who is the husband

of the widow and the father of the fatherless, One who is able to sanctify to us our deepest distress, and to bring us all by ways of his own choosing to the end of life's journey, and through the bright gate of paradise into the land of eternal light and glory."

At the conclusion of Dr. Hoge's address, the hymn

"Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep,"

was sung, and the funeral procession wended its way to the little cemetery of Union Theological Seminary. So they laid away the body of Robert L. Dabney amongst the bodies of a goodly number of sainted and able men, and beside the dust of his three little boys—

"Far off from busy toil of city life,  
Nor in the gloom of vast cathedral wall,  
In quiet church-yard, there they laid him down,  
Beneath the stars—the fittest tomb of all.

"His head laid softly in the lap of earth,  
He gently sleeps, a monarch of mankind;  
For noblest heroes in this living strife,  
Are ever these, the heroes of the mind.

"His mighty soul, clear-sighted, soared aloft,  
As clouds transcend the earth, and garnered there  
Rich trophies of great thoughts, a look beyond,  
An insight to the infinite, born of prayer.

"For do not mighty ones converse with God  
As friend with friend? They by his side recline,  
Drink in his words, gaze on his perfect face,  
And learn of him, the source of light divine.

"And shall we mourn a glorious warfare done,  
A race well run, a heavy cross laid by?  
We thank thee Lord, for such a monarch's life,  
His thoughts that live, though mortal man must die.

"Death to his soul is as the vessel's port,  
Where, tempest toss'd, it gladly hails for rest;  
The soul, long captive, bursts its prison bonds,  
To contemplate the bliss of spirits blest.

"Farewell, thou giant prince in Israel,  
 Defender of our faith, to whom was given,  
 In life, a glimpse beyond remotest stars;  
 Thy faith hath turned to perfect sight in heaven!"<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Dabney's death was widely noted and lamented by the papers and periodicals, religious and secular, in all sections of our own country. In Canada, and in Great Britain, also, it was remarked and deplored. Many just and beautiful tributes were paid to his memory.

Dr. B. M. Palmer wrote in the *Southwestern Presbyterian*:

"The recent death of Dr. Dabney distils the tear of sorrow from many a suffering heart. He was truly a prince in our Israel, a pillar of strength in the house of our God. How we shall miss him, who leaned upon him for defence in the great battle for truth in this sinful world! He was mentally and morally constituted a great polemic; with a massive intellect capable of searching into the foundations of truth, and with an intellectual as well as moral indignation against every form of falsehood. We find in these natural abilities the secret of his strong convictions, and the fearless utterance of them which distinguished him through life. A great writer of our own times has said that 'love of truth is honesty of reason, as love of virtue is honesty of heart.' It was this twofold honesty that made Dr. Dabney the Christian warrior that he was. Loving truth for herself, he sought her as one might seek to win his bride; and so his convictions went down into the substance of his whole being. His holy reverence for truth wrought in him a holy intolerance for error; and he fought for the one, and against the other, with a passionate earnestness which many mistook for bitterness of spirit.

"Yet with these sturdy qualities were united the gentler traits which, oftener than is generally supposed, are blended in the character of those who are truly great. All who were admitted into the repose of Dr. Dabney's inner life recognized those amiable virtues which endeared him to his pupils and to friends of every degree. The sweet simplicity of his character, and the genuine modesty which veiled while it did not conceal his greatness, made it easy for others to rejoice in his pre-eminence without the infusion of jealousy. It is only the loftier natures, which look upon their own achievements as being such, that others might have wrought as well."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These fine lines were written on The Burial of Dr. Dabney, by P. Josephine Baker, Baltimore, Md., and published in the *Central Presbyterian*, January 13, 1898.

<sup>2</sup> *Southwestern Presbyterian*, January 20, 1898.

The *Christian Observer*, of January 12, 1898, says:

"Dr. Dabney has been a man of great and distinguished power. His activity in the acquisition of knowledge was remarkable. . . . His powers of penetration were yet more remarkable. . . . Dr. Dabney's penetrative power enabled him to look further into the future than other men. Often, when we heard him telling how far the logical outcome of present facts and events would extend, we felt like saying, God forbid. But he has lived to see his prophecies fulfilled in many respects. . . . More than thirty years ago, Dr. Dabney foresaw the insinuation of infidel errors into the theological seminaries of the land—such errors as evolution and the destructive criticism of the Bible. Well do we remember his reiterated prayer that God would preserve the theological seminaries of his church from becoming fountain heads of error. We wondered then at his prayer; we do not wonder now."

The Rev. S. Taylor Martin wrote, in the *Southwestern Presbyterian*:

"The Commonwealth and the nation has sustained an irreparable loss in the withdrawal of a man whose philosophic mind, enriched by the history of nations, governments and constitutions, recognized the only statesmanship that can secure perpetuity and prosperity and peace, the statesmanship that is founded on truth and righteousness. The rapidly vanishing remnant of the old Confederacy mourns the loss of one of the ablest defenders of a cause as true and principles as just as any for which a sword was ever drawn or the sacrifice of human life ever made. The church of God, of all denominations, has lost the labors of a mighty champion, who with unswerving fidelity advanced and defended these fundamental truths, without which there could be no true church, no religion, no gospel of salvation, no glad tidings, no hope for lost and ruined man. All through the ranks of God's servants in the ministry there is a painful sense of loss of a faithful comrade and fellow-laborer, of a revered father in Israel. In many a quiet study in the manses of the Southern Church, as God's servants ponder their work and its difficulties and obstacles, as they look out upon the hosts of the enemy and see the danger to the flock, there is a feeling of overwhelming loss, of almost helpless dismay, and of the keenest personal bereavement, as they realize that their revered instructor, the faithful guide, the sympathizing friend, is no more; but there is mingled with their grief profound gratitude for the privilege of having enjoyed the instructions, the fellowship, the friendship of such a man.

"The versatility of Dr. Dabney's genius was one of his most striking characteristics. Had he occupied Calvin's position, he might have done Calvin's work. Had he been substituted for John Knox, he could have performed the part of Knox. If during the war, instead of being on the staff, he had been in the line and a leader of men, we know of no

man who, in our humble judgment, would have so nearly approximated the renowned career of Stonewall Jackson.

"His range of study was broad and his scholarship accurate; his discussions were characterized by absolute candor and frankness. There was no attempt to obscure the strong points of his adversary, nor was there any evasion of the objections to his own position. His modesty added a charm to his greatness. His pupils were his brethren; he seemed to ignore the difference between the planes on which his students and their teacher moved. There was doubtless less need for formality with the half dozen of us that constituted the *post-bellum* class. Certain is it when a student was reciting that the class-room was the arena in which was exhibited a free fight. It was 'give and take'; the student had to take, and he was at liberty to give with all his force. The Professor often played the roll of the objector. Probably the mental foundation for his excellence in every department of human activity was his extraordinary power of analysis. In dealing with the most intricate and complex subjects, he seemed to separate from it all its accidentals, and reveal its essence in its perspicuous nakedness.

"Dr. Dabney's ability as a profound theologian, his power as a preacher, his extraordinary gift as a teacher, his accurate analysis and keen acumen as a metaphysician are readily recognized, but there was one trait not observed by the multitude, but known by those in personal contact with him: that was his gentleness. He abhorred all meanness, all trickery, all that was false. When, with his native vigor, he denounced these traits, men would naturally count him severe. He lived in a period when, in the church, men were willing to barter away their independence, their professed convictions, for material advantage, or for a sentiment of unity that was a deceitful form, a hollow sham. He lived in a period when men who had won military renown, renounced the cause, the principles for which they professed to fight, took or sought office under the conquerors of their country, and supported an administration and a party that was persecuting a disarmed and honorable people, with a more cruel and relentless hatred than had characterized any period of open warfare. Dr. Dabney's clear analytic mind enabled him to see that the adoption of one set of principles during their prosperity, their renunciation in adversity, and the espousal of another set as much the contradictory of the former as light is of darkness, or life is of death, was an impeachment of personal integrity. Ostracism of such men was not due to difference of political convictions, but to the recognition of a lack of principle. He recognized the fact that war was not only a calamity, but a crime. That no man could vindicate his right to engage in war, except when it becomes his solemn duty to fight. He saw clearly that no matter how brilliant the achievements of such men, *their* warfare was *brigandage*, their capture of property *robbery*, their killing of men *murder*. Their proper category was that of deserters. In the face of all the menaces and oppressions

of the trying period of *destruction*, Dr. Dabney maintained his integrity. He spoke the truth. It hurt. Some thought him austere and harsh, but, with all his contempt for truculence and meanness, he was a man of profound and tender affection. It is the memory of his gentle sympathy, his affectionate friendship, that causes us to bow in grief, that fills our heart with sorrow, because we have lost not only the revered instructor and guide, not only the faithful friend and brother, but also another tender, loving father."

The *Presbyterian Banner*, Pittsburg, Pa., of January 12, 1898, says:

"Several times we have heard the late Rev. Archibald Alexander Hodge, D. D., say that he regarded Dr. Dabney as the best teacher of theology in the United States, if not in the world."

The *Philadelphia Presbyterian*, of January 12, 1898, says:

"Dr. Dabney was undoubtedly a great theologian—one of a generation of men which seems to have disappeared. He was an earnest and profound student of the questions which emerge in philosophy, and pass into theology. He was a sincere man, never professing the belief of a truth which he did not thoroughly understand, and for which he was not able to give an adequate reason. He was a strong Calvinist, ready always in its defence, and never afraid always to avow his sincere faith in its doctrines."

The *New York Evangelist*, in quoting from and commenting on Dr. Palmer's tribute to Dr. Dabney (see it on page 531 of this book), pronounced him "the foremost scholar and polemic of all the South," and said:

"He was without doubt one of our greatest writers and teachers, thoroughly at home in the fine drawn distinctions of scholastic theology."

Many similar notices of his death and tributes to his memory appeared at this time. One characteristic of these was their concession to him of extraordinary mental power, acuteness, profundity and vigor of activity, and equally extraordinary moral character—honesty of mind and heart; nor were the secular papers behind the religious in noting his death and paying tribute to his memory.

In the *Richmond Dispatch* of January 5, 1898, Dr. Moses D. Hoge is quoted as saying:

"He was the most versatile and accurate scholar in the South. As a theological teacher he had no superior in the United States. His *Life of Stonewall Jackson* is known to all the readers of history. His published works on philosophical, secular and religious subjects make several volumes, and will give him enduring fame."

In the *Richmond Times* of January 9, 1898, Col. L. S. Marye wrote:

"Dr. Dabney possessed a mind of the very highest order, and of the most far-reaching powers. It is the opinion of many sedate and competent judges that the present century has not produced a more vigorous and penetrating intellect, certainly on this side of the Atlantic. . . .

"But it was not alone for his great powers of mind that his memories will be cherished. In elevation of character, and in attributes of heart, he was equally to be admired and more tenderly to be loved. His was stalwart strength blended with ineffable sweetness. His fit symbol was the mighty monarch of the forest that towers high above its fellows, companionless in the azure concave, its imperial crown fanned and caressed by the sweet-breath and soft kisses of that pure atmosphere; and as the fall of such forest monarchs shakes the solid earth, and sends for countless leagues resounding tumult in the troubled air, so will the death of this great and good man excite an all prevailing sense of distress and bereavement throughout the Southern Assembly of the Presbyterian Church; nay, throughout the bounds of the South, without distinction of sect, for much of his life-long labor and service of heart and head was devoted to the defence and vindication of his beloved South. But it is, of course, in the ecclesiastical denomination in which he was the foremost figure and acknowledged leader that his death will be most keenly felt and deeply deplored. These his peculiar friends in the ties of ecclesiastical association feel the extinguishment of this great light, as we may imagine the seafaring dwellers on the coast of Cornwall felt when the mighty Eddystone light-house was swept away by the angry sea, and when that steady, far-reaching beacon went out in darkness and dismay.

"It is pleasant to know that Dr. Dabney's mental powers remained to the last unimpaired. There was no touch of decadence to be seen or felt in the working of the glorious machinery. Although he had for four years been totally blind, there was no abatement of his intellectual labors. . . .

"When a man like this is stricken down, it seems that in the eclipse and extinction of such powers and such erudition an irreparable loss has been suffered; and in a certain sense so it is; and yet in the benign arrangement of Providence, such men prepare others to take their places, and the cause of truth and learning is thus preserved and transmitted, even as in the Grecian games the swift runners of the



torch race, delivering the blazing brand from one to another, imitated the successive generation of mankind, who hand down the fire of knowledge which the crafty Prometheus stole from heaven. The year that Galileo died witnessed the birth of Sir Isaac Newton. The truth I am endeavoring to present is conspicuously illustrated in the case of Dr. Dabney. Year by year, for almost half a century, he sent forth from the Theological Seminary, at Hampden-Sidney, and from the University of Texas devoted bands of young men to enter the fields of Christian labor and of splendid scholarship. In the lives and labor of these his pupils, as well as in his many published volumes, the learning and acquisitions, which in one aspect are buried with him, are, in another sense, snatched from the grave, and endued with the power of endless life. In such instances we may truly say:

“Alike are life and death,  
Where life in death survives,  
And the uninterrupted breath  
Inspires a thousand lives;

“So when a great man dies,  
For years beyond our ken  
The light he leaves behind him lies  
Upon the paths of men.”

In the (Columbia, S. C.) *State*, of January 9, 1898, Mr. James Henry Rice, Jr., says:

“As Dr. Dabney sat in the pulpit of the First Presbyterian Church, the other day, and preached a sermon long to be remembered by those who heard it, his appearance was both venerable and patriarchal. As Dr. Joynes admirably expressed it, ‘He symbolized the union of a Christian apostle with old Homer.’ The towering figure (majestic though recumbent), the flowing locks and the sightless eyes of the speaker, and withal the fire and passion of his utterance, proved the justice and aptness of the characterization. That, in a few words, pictures the great Virginian as he was. The old heroic poetry lived in him, and found a vent in the beauty and worth of his long and illustrious life; and the deathless spirit of the Berserkers fired him to the last. He was a born gladiator, though he combated principalities and powers, and not foes of flesh and blood. Dabney never waited for evil to mass its forces; he fell on it with savage fury in its camp, tracked the beast to its lair, and there laid hold upon the dauntless courage of his kind.

“And there was that in him that cannot perish. The lesson of such a life deserves close reading and diligent consideration. In a material sense, he would have bettered his fortunes by a more temperate tone in dealing with the many questions which his intellect grappled. But it was the nature of the princely man to spurn anything that savored of a

compromise of principle. He fought long and hard, and died unconquered and not convinced of the efficiency of gunpowder and the bayonet to control reason or subvert truth."

Mr. Rice asks of the Old South, of which Dr. Dabney was an embodiment, whether it has "perished utterly," and answers:

"No bad cause ever had men like Lee and Jackson to fight its battles, nor intellects like Calhoun, Thornwell, Hammond, Bledsoe, Dabney and Laws to settle its problems. All these honest souls are the warrant that truth was there; and just so sure as truth itself is eternal, will the cause endure to the end—not, perhaps, in the form we knew it, for truth has many faces, but in its essence."

He cites an instance of "prophecy" on Dr. Dabney's part, *already fulfilled*. He pronounces Robert Lewis Dabney "the 'knightliest of the knightly band' of great Virginians, who have shed honor and renown upon their native State," and then concludes:

"What we intended to illustrate in the foregoing was the value of the life-force of such a man; it transcends in worth and importance all the systems of all the schools, and will lie on this generation like a benediction. On all departments his keen eye rested; on every abuse descended his malediction like a whip of scorpions. For over half a century he had borne himself in the heat of the battle, and had passed into the dim half-twilight of age a stern, splendid figure, with eternal youth in his heart and with the joy of hope on his lips. Remember, the old South made such as these. They were her jewels; they remain her monuments; they were nurtured on her bosom, and they depart with her blessing. They 'kept the faith of men and saints serene and pure and bright.' As Taine wrote of Shakespeare, 'Only this great age could have cradled such a child.'"

On Sunday afternoon, January 30, 1898, memorial services were held in the Opera House, at Sherman, Texas, by the Mildred Lee Camp of United Confederate Veterans, to commemorate the patriotism and virtues of Gen. L. S. Ross and Major R. L. Dabney, D. D.

After the address had been made in honor of General Ross, the Rev. Dr. Thornton R. Sampson, President of the Austin College, and a pupil of Dr. Dabney while he was professor in Union Theological Seminary, spoke, in part, as follows:

"Dr. Dabney was a born teacher, and he loved his work. It has been my privilege, as a student, to sit at the feet of some of the most distinguished scholars and teachers of America, Great Britain and the continent of Europe, such as McGuffey, Gildersleeve, Davidson, Delitsch and Luthardt; but Dabney was the peer of any, and in some respects the superior of them all. He always left his impress upon the mind of his students. One might differ with him in conclusions, but could never deny the force and aptness of his reasoning. His thorough mastery of the subject, his clearness and thorough analysis of it, his forceful, apt illustrations, and his sympathetic recognition of the students' difficulties, gave him most remarkable force as a teacher. No one who desired to learn could fail to make progress or get profit under his lucid, inspiring tuition.

"It is, however, chiefly of another striking side of Dr. Dabney's character that I wish to speak. Some who knew Dr. Dabney only through his publications, have formed the idea that he was a stern, severe man, lacking in sympathy and affection. It cannot be denied that some expressions, in a certain class of his articles, especially those concerning the civil war, have given just ground for such inference.

"But it should be stated, and it can be asserted with all positiveness, for it is a fact to which all who came in contact with him can testify, that such was not the case. He was a kind neighbor, a tender and most affectionate husband, an over-indulgent parent and a most faithful friend. In fact, he scarcely seemed, with all his acumen, to be able to see the faults of a friend, and his judgment possibly failed him oftener in speaking or writing of those whom he loved than at any other time."

Many resolutions and formal expressions of appreciation were offered, adopted, and sent to his family, by the institutions with which he had been connected, bodies of students, camps of Confederate Veterans, etc., attesting at once the widespread esteem for his character and admiration for his great parts, and sense of loss in his death. Scores and hundreds of letters of the same great character poured in on his widow and his sons.

More recent tributes have been paid to the same effect. Dr. S. A. King, of Waco, Texas, wrote on April 11, 1901:

"Dr. Dabney's greatness was known and recognized in all the English-speaking world. His geniality, his gentleness, his modesty, could be known only by those who had the privilege of personal acquaintance and intercourse."

The Rev. P. P. Flourney, Bethesda, Md., wrote, February 27, 1901:

"Dr. Dabney has been recognized, for a generation past, as in some respects the first preacher in the Presbyterian Church. There may have been others with oratorical gifts which he lacked, who were, *for the average audience*, more popular preachers; but as a preacher for preachers and educated thinkers of all professions, I think there can be no question that he stood without an equal. His position, too, as a theologian is unquestioned. He certainly stands among the first of all our country has produced, and, in the opinion of some, holds the first place. But it is as a philosopher that his intellectual powers appear to their greatest advantage. Indeed, his greatness as a theologian is due, in large part, to his powerful hold on the fundamental principles of philosophy."

The death of few men has been followed by such concessions of admiration on the part of those, in some grave matters, opposed to him, by such prevalent lamentation in his communion and section, the great Southland, by such genuine and general feelings of irreparable loss. Few have called forth more spontaneous and generous and noble expressions of regard for character, or esteem for talents.

Shortly after his death, his devoted widow erected over his grave, in the little cemetery of Hampden-Sidney, a simple, but massive monument of granite. The inscriptions on the two faces are, respectively: <sup>3</sup>

(1)

ROBERT LEWIS DABNEY, M. A., D. D., LL. D.,

BORN MARCH 5, 1820.

DIED JANUARY 3, 1898.

Minister of the Gospel, Professor of Theology in Union Seminary, and of Philosophy in the University of Texas, Major in the Confederate Army, and Chief of Staff to Stonewall Jackson.

*"Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."*

(2)

DABNEY.

In unshaken loyalty of devotion to his friends, his country, and his religion, firm in misfortune, ever active in earnest endeavor, he labored all his life for what he loved with a faith in good causes, that was ever one with his faith in God.

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<sup>3</sup> For copies of these inscriptions we are indebted to Dr. H. P. Lacy, of Hampden-Sidney.

The three sons left behind are each going on prosperously in his own chosen profession to-day. Their homes are blessed with children. Amongst them is one, restless, active, virile little fellow, called Robert Lewis Dabney. The devoted wife, whose vocation it had been for years to wait on her blind and physically infirm husband, felt, at first, that her vocation was gone. Ever used to going to him as a strong tower in time of trial, she mourned for him as she had not for little children even; but the Christian in her triumphed. She found other forms of service to do, and has lived not unhappily. She was left with a competence for her modest needs, including a comfortable cottage near her son Samuel's home, in Victoria, Texas. In this summer of 1902, she has reached the advanced age of seventy-eight and a half years. She has retained the full possession of all her faculties, but recently has sustained an injury to one of her lower limbs by a fall, and has been confined for some weeks to her bed. The youngest son, Lewis M., writes: "She has marvellous heroism and genuine religion to support her. I never saw any one, male or female, exceed her in either quality."

## CHAPTER XXI.

### *SUMMARY VIEW OF THE MAN AND HIS SERVICES.*

PRIMAL TRAITS.—ENERGY AND POWER OF HIS FACULTIES OF MIND AND HEART.—SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY.—CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.—SANCTIFIED COMMON-SENSE.—IN HIS SEVERAL FUNCTIONS: AS PREACHER.—TEACHER.—THEOLOGIAN.—PHILOSOPHER.—POLITICAL ECONOMIST.—STATESMAN.—PATRIOT.—FRIEND.—SERVANT OF GOD.—THE GREAT CONSERVATIVE.

### ENERGY AND POWER.

THE outstanding native trait of Robert Lewis Dabney was energy—energy of body, energy of mind, energy of the feelings, energy of will. This energy must have found large and peculiar expression in his child-life.<sup>1</sup> We have seen it in the excellence and quality of his work at Hampden-Sidney College, when as a student he attained the maximum grade for effort and for achievement. We have seen it in his quitting college to build his mother's mill-dam, get her farm into good shape, and her finances on a safe basis, and meanwhile to trudge four miles of a morning, and back in the afternoon, to teach school, and so make money to pay his way through the University. We have seen it in his many-sided and strenuous life as a university student, distinguishing himself in every study, taking the first place as a magazine writer, tutoring his brother, struggling with narrow means, supervising thence his mother's plantations, vastly interested in multitudinous topics, in all life, pouring himself out in diversified correspondence. We have seen it in the Latin Etymology, which he wrote the next year to teach his sister Betty the principles of that great classic tongue. We have seen it in his career as student at Union Theological Seminary, through which he passed in two sessions, doing not only all, but much more than most students did in

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. S. B. Dabney writes: "My mother tells me that my grandmother told her that when my father was a little fellow, he constantly sat with his own father and his friends, listening with intense eagerness to their conversation, which he would afterwards narrate to her. I think that early contact with these old Virginia gentlemen formed many of his ideas."

three sessions. We have seen it in the varied and Herculean labors of his Tinkling Spring life, his able preaching, his pastoral work, his school-keeping, his farming, his building a church, his building a home, "putting his own shoulder to nearly every stone in the walls," his vigorous writings on evangelical, ecclesiastical, philosophical and political subjects of the time, etc. We have seen it in his whole life as professor at Hampden-Sidney to 1874, during which time he was also pastor of the College Church. Not to go further, we have seen it in the huge mass of his writings; he has written far more than any other man, and perhaps more than any other two men, in the Southern Presbyterian Church. We have seen it in the universality of his information. He had a large knowledge of nature, a large knowledge of medicine,<sup>2</sup> a large knowledge of law, a large and profound knowledge of philosophy, a large and profound knowledge of politics, and genuine statesmanship of a high order, a large and profound knowledge of theology. We have seen it in the universality of his interests, for interest is energy of curiosity.

He not only was possessed of extraordinary energy, but of extraordinary power as well. The term *energy* is often used to include power of achievement; it rightly means much more than activity—the energy of Robert Lewis Dabney was effective in a *large* way, as seen in the above-mentioned and other achievements. A small steam engine may be kept in very constant motion. It may be made to drive many bracket saws; but it required a Corliss engine to move all the vast machinery of the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876. There are very many energetic little men in the world. They cut much bric-a-brac. Robert L. Dabney was an engine of power. He was intensely active, energetic, and his was no bracket saw. His work was to cut huge blocks of solid granite from the quarries of eternal truth, swing them with his derrick crane on to the ramparts of

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<sup>2</sup> While troubled by his failing eyesight, he visited a distinguished New York oculist, to consult with him about his eyes. He was announced as Dr. Dabney, of Austin, Texas. When he asked for his bill, the distinguished specialist said, "You know, Dr. Dabney, that we physicians never charge one another." Dr. Dabney replied that he was not a physician, but an humble minister of the gospel, then teaching Philosophy in the University of Texas. "Well, sir, you have shown a technical knowledge of your trouble and of the human organism so great that I was certain you were a learned physician," was the reply.

the citadel of conservatism, spike them into a solid whole with a Titan's hammer, and hurl thence, with more than catapultic force, huge boulders into the very camps of the enemies. It has been said by one who ought to know that Dr. George Baxter was, by natural endowments, the most talented man who ever served Union Theological Seminary in Virginia in a professorial capacity, that Dr. Dabney, though born a smaller man, grew long and grew till he became bigger than Baxter ever was; but it is clear that young Dabney was a youth of power, power as well as energy. His youthful work proves it.

It is hard to say to which of young Dabney's faculties these primal traits of energy and power attached in a degree pre-eminent above their attachment to others. We see energy and power in the working of his acquisitive faculties, energy and power in the working of his memory, energy and power in the faculty of reason, and of his constructive imagination. His powers of acquisition were of the highest order. According to his own analysis of these powers, made in his mature years, wonder and curiosity are native, and conspire to the active pursuit of truth. From a youth up, whenever he met a stranger or any one from a new, or distant, locality, his wonder and curiosity vented themselves in eager questions about soil, climate, religious, civil or social conditions, or other possible things.<sup>3</sup> He also made an effort, under the stress of this energy from within, to get an all-round view of the matters brought before him thus. He thought himself slow in getting this view, but his slowness was in making sure that he had heard all that was essential. The same thing was true of his use of his own senses for what was to be gotten from the world through their testimony. From a boy Robert L. Dabney was, as Mr. C. C. Taliaferro said of him in the Valley Campaign, and in his life at Hampden-Sidney, "*always looking about him.*" His energy and power of observation are evinced by his exhaustive knowledge of the topography of the Virginias and many neighboring States, by his ability to tell more about the country neighborhoods of most of the students who gathered at the Seminary from year to year than the students could severally of their own localities. It was, no doubt, on account of this power, in part, that the genius, Stonewall Jackson, chose him as chief of staff,

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<sup>3</sup> Compare Dr. J. B. Shearer, in the *Union Theological Seminary Magazine*, April, 1898.



and it served his general well on a more than one important field. It gave him, too, an admirable knowledge of geology, a great store of learning about botany, a remarkable knowledge of engineering, architecture, practical building and machinery. It gave him a large and solid knowledge of farming, gardening, stock-raising, fruit-growing, and rural affairs generally. It gave him a vast fund of information about individuals, and historical movements, and his vast acquisitions of theological and philosophical knowledge.

The energy and power of his memory were equally remarkable. He was able to reproduce at will from the vast stores which he had acquired. As his hearing became more acute with his loss of vision, so his memory was more vigorously exercised, and grew in power with his age; but throughout all his life he had been a wonder for his accuracy and strength of memory for the gist of an event, or a place, or a face, and even for the more important details. His memory was always of the philosophical order, too. In noting facts, it was ever his habit to see the underlying principles, and their more important relations, their whole meaning in their environment, so far as this was possible. His interest in the meaning of the fact had made the thing bite in upon the very fibre of his mind. He saw and heard with the intense and deliberate purpose of recalling to use, in future, in the illustration of principles, and in the explanation of circumstance. His memory brought forth, therefore, from his acquisitions that which was pertinent to the needs of the hour. It enriched and ennobled his conversation and all his elaborate work.

The energy and power of the man in reasoning was the thing that most impressed those who knew him only through his philosophical and theological writings. It expressed itself in the keenest analysis, the most acute and delicate discrimination, the perfect mental perception of the thing to be done. His mind would take up a false system, portray it in all its attractiveness, making his hearer think it must be true, remorselessly spot its errors, make them stand out vividly, and then mass arguments against them, and the system of which they were parts, and break it, as he would a bit of rotten sandstone with a sledge-hammer, into disconnected grains. This reasoning power was somewhat crude in its expression in his early days. The faculty needed training and development; but he was born with something unusually worthy of training. The man whose

paper on inductive logic excited the admiration of the Victoria Institute had been a boy with a bent toward reasoning. In his boyhood he had loved mathematics. In his University days pure mathematics had been his favorite study. He had betrayed in that, in his perfect grasp of the terms to be dealt with, and of the "simplicity of each step," the possession of a power which might be trained to make the nicest distinctions, with the result of a straight march to inevitable conclusions. Moreover, this delight in mathematics both proved the existence of and cultivated the persistent energy of reasoning; for who can succeed in mathematical problems, however fine his power of comprehension of a problem, unless, having formed a plan of solution, he will also persistently push the plan through to the conclusion? This, however, was only one of scores of ways in which the energy and power of his reasoning faculty spoke itself out. It is clear that when he was a youth of twenty he was not only a Calvinist in name, but in fact, that he knew *why* he was a Calvinist; that he knew he was a Democrat of the Calhoun stripe, and knew *why* he was a Democrat, and *why* he was of the Calhoun stripe; but he grew in reasoning power. He joyed in wrestling with the great problems before the church and the state. His very *gaudium certannius* kept him ever exercising this faculty. He wrote almost always to prove something. He was often a polemic, writing to prove the thing wrong which he opposed. He was always a teacher of positive truth, and endeavoring to show its susceptibility of proof positive and convincing, or, at least, its compatibility with reason, if the matter were something derived from revelation alone.

He was not less noted for the energy and power of his constructive imagination. This faculty appears to be almost wanting in some men. It is quite different from the fancy. He could, by a little cultivation, have displayed a luxurious and riotous fancy; but he cared little to develop that faculty. The power of reason and of earnest purpose were too strong in him. The faculty of constructive imagination is quite different, also, from that of the logical understanding. A man may have as logical a reason as Aristotle, and his power in logical reasoning may equal the Stagirites, and yet he may have no constructive imagination. This is the faculty which differentiates the extraordinary man from the ordinary strong man, the faculty which conditions real originality, which is the mark of genius. It is a power without which no man can be a real poet, it is the power

which the inventor and discoverer must possess, it is the power which the great literary artificers must possess, the power which the former of a great philosophical, or theological system must have. This faculty he had in large mould. He could project parts of his acquisitions into new relations, under the control of great, accurately grasped principles, with the certainty of definite, perceived results. We see this in his inventive genius in the sphere of mechanics. We see it in his poetic conceptions, and that whether he was perfectly at home in the laws of rhythm or not. We see it in his almost prophetic sagacity as to the outcome of certain social changes. We see, too, that he had creative skill, or interpretive skill of God's creation, in the construction of a philosophical, or a theological system. He presented truth, too, in bits, or in the whole system, as he taught in the class-room, in his own way.

The energy and power of his active feelings and will were fully as great as that of his intellectual faculties. He was from youth to age a man of passionate desires and affections and masterful will. His devotion to his family, to his friends, to his State, to his section, to principle, and to the Scriptures, and to their Divine Author, was like that of the Apostle John's to his brethren and to his Lord. He kept a powerful bit in his mouth that ugly desires might not gain expression, but when reason and conscience approved the course of his desires, he was not easily thwarted. See him stalking out of the school-room at Tinkling Spring, cutting half a dozen good, stout hickory withes, and, along with them, a cane of some tough growth, stout enough to knock a bull down, and stalking back. There is the glint of fire in his powerful black eye, there is determination written on every lineament of his grim face, in ever motion of his long form, in the heavy heel strokes on the ground. He has whipped a great disorderly lout, perhaps given him an unduly severe thrashing. Those youths have met no master before, and there is disorder almost to rebellion; but Mr. Dabney thought it was his duty to have order and to secure effort. Tradition says that the arm of this same man, even in the Theological Seminary, had, on a fellow-student's giving him a gratuitous insult, suddenly straightened from the shoulder, with the result that the offender was knocked to the ground. At times, to his friends even, there was something almost awful in his passion, as in his speech in the Synod of Virginia, at Charlestown, W. Va., and in his address in the interlocutory

meeting, at the Assembly of 1870, in Louisville. Men held their breath while the torrent rolled. It appalled them like the sweeping of the incoming waves of the Galveston storm, or the belching of Mount Pelee; yet the reason of it wrought in them respect for it. So also its perfect honesty and sincerity. He loved good, and hated what he regarded as evil *for cause*. He justified himself in this course. Read his article "*Laus Iracundiae*":

"Dr. Samuel Johnson is said to have exclaimed, 'I do love a good hater.' This representative specimen of the John Bull was taught by his sturdy good sense to pierce the hypocrisy of your model gentleman, who can always speak of those who have injured him or opposed him, with perfect composure. The literary dictator's knowledge of human nature taught him that when one is crossed, it is his instinct to be angry; so that the apparent absence of emotion is more correctly to be ascribed to deceit than to sanctity. Hence, the bluff, hearty man, who made no concealments of his antipathies, and who was wont to ease his mind by some good volleys of sound, candid hard names, is much more likely a man of truthful and honest impulses than the pretentious philosopher, who assumes to be above the sense of injury. We can imagine the old gentleman, in his lively way, defending his naughty opinion against the pious horror of some Miss Nancy in male or female attire: 'My dear madam, is not wrong the opposite of right; and is not injury the counterpart of beneficence? By the same impulse by which the well-constituted mind responds to truth and right with approbation, and to beneficence with gratitude, must it meet error or vice with reprobation, and injury with resentment. These contrasted emotions are but the two poles which respectfully attract and repel the same magnet, the human heart. If the pole of repulsion be but feebly shunned, we shall expect the pole of attraction to be languidly sought. Hatred tranquilly worded is no more to be confided in than love coldly expressed. By the same reason that one professes to be able to regard his enemy without resentment, I should suspect him of being capable of behaving to his friend without affection. Your languid hater must ever be a languid lover. Give me, then, by all means, a good, honest hater. Remember, my dear madam, that it was not anger simply which the Prince of Peace himself condemned, but being "angry with our brother without a cause." To be angry where there is a cause is inevitable nature. He, therefore, who affects to be above anger, makes me suspect that his virtue is not supernatural, but hypocritical. He who is angry may be guilty of injustice; he who is incapable of it must be equally incapable of generous ardor in his friendships. Better the generous foe than the snaky friend,' etc., etc."

He was driven impetuously, persistently, obstinately against all that he regarded as essentially nasty and evil. His whole life is *the proof* of the extraordinary energy and power of his affectional and volitive faculties. This argues, what his life also proves, that his capacity for suffering was immense. His suffering on the death of his little boys, and his sister Betty, on the fall of the Confederacy, on any great false step on the part of his church, was terrific. After the war, he was like Prometheus bound. Self-respect was to be maintained, righteousness pursued. That was all.

Few have been like him in tremendous necessity and capacity for work, for thinking, for feeling, and for suffering. Without thinking, he could not have existed. It was as necessary for him to feel as to think. His heart was a harp swept by all winds.

#### SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY.

Young Dabney had a high sense of responsibility. As a boy, he shouldered responsibility, and acquitting himself well, he became the practical head of his family when he was thirteen years of age. He felt early his responsibility, not only for the welfare of his family, but to make all he could of himself. The obligation to duty was always strong with him. While many of his desires would have led him into corresponding forms of life, they were generally made to wait on his obligation to duty. Upon his becoming a Christian, his sense of responsibility to God as paramount established itself, and he became a type, not of New England Puritanism, but of Puritanism of the noblest English age. If ever Puritan felt that God had put him into the world, given him a work to do for him, and expected the work to be done and the account rendered, Robert L. Dabney felt it. Thus is explained, in part, his energy of passion against what he saw to be wrong, though it were supported by all the world. He, at least, believed that he was about his Lord's business, and that business he would do, though opposed by all the powers of earth and hell. Seldom has a man of more unwavering and absolute faithfulness to his convictions of right and duty lived. One of his students, who knew him well, and was favored with his confidence, illustrates and confirms this, as follows:

"Sometimes he would ask me to come to his study, without intimating what he wished to see me about. When I went I found that he wanted to talk over some of the burning questions that then pressed

upon the people of the South, both in State and church. It was in such interviews that I learned to know him, and to see that back of all that some thought and called his harshness and prejudice, there was a great warm heart and a mind of extraordinary power grappling with such questions, not as speculations, but as matters of *personal duty*. 'What ought I to think, and say and do under these conditions?' seemed to be the burden of his soul. Sometimes at these interviews in his study, he would seem to forget my presence, and pace up and down, pouring out his thoughts and feelings in a torrent of burning words, until I would sit awed at the sight of such a struggle in such a soul."<sup>4</sup>

"What ought I to do?" The answer to this question explains the existence of most of the thundering philippics for which he has been so much criticised. He sees things clearly, and expresses himself accordingly. To the people who cannot see he seems mad with ugly fury. He is really acting under the stress of a stern sense of obligation.

Thus is explained his enormous labors and achievements, and thus, in part, his keen sense of stewardship. He felt obliged to husband well the means with which from time to time Providence rewarded his labors. His economy was on "a principle of Christian obligation, early adopted and carried out with characteristic steadiness." It moved him to be the "generous patron of every Christian interest, and the ready helper of kindred and friend in time of need"; but it left him nothing for expenditure which he could not justify at the bar of the great tribunal.

#### CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

His Christianity was the Christianity begotten with a definite system of truth, and it was constantly nourished and informed by the same grand system of truth. He was a Calvinist, and an intelligent Calvinist, from his youth on. He accepted the Bible as the absolute Word of God, as inspired, not only in matter, but in form. He accepted its whole humiliating portraiture of human sinfulness, its doctrine of the absolute necessity of salvation by grace, if salvation there be, its doctrine of predestination, its doctrine of vicarious atonement, of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, of justification through faith on the ground of our Redeemer's righteousness, of progress in sanctification, God's

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<sup>4</sup> Dr. G. W. Finley, Fishersville, Va., who entered as student of Union Theological Seminary in the fall of 1865.

grace coöperating with and giving efficiency to regenerate effort. This teaching of the Word of God he found verified in his own life. He saw, in this whole gracious scheme, the strongest possible inducement and motive to a holy life. Hence his view of the authority of God's law was peculiarly strong. "The law and the testimony" settled all duty with him. The ruling passion of his life was love to God and zeal for his glory. His hatred of false philosophies, of false views of sociology, of false theories of political rights, was largely due to their dishonoring God. Their vicious influences upon the true religious life of the church and people he was constantly showing. His was the Christianity of principle. He endeavored to discover from the Scriptures the divine teaching. He held what he held from the conviction that it was God's teaching. Walk in it he would, whether men would approve or whether they would disapprove. This reign of principle gave strength to his life. Hence the leaning of many of his brethren on him. Men believed in his faith. Many men who sat under him, in the early years of his professorial life, have given expression to their conviction that Dr. Dabney was then the most Godly man they had ever seen. Both the students of his earlier and of his later years unite in saying that he was like the Apostle John on the lovely side of his character. One of them says, "How he strove to be like his Master, who was meek and lowly in heart." One proof of his practical godliness is found in the fact that he was a man to whom people in trouble were wont to go in order to find help. They could do this, because, in spite of all his positiveness of character, he was meek and humble. He had compassion on the weak and ignorant. Coupled with this was a large generosity in judging of the characters of his fellow-men, a large, Christlike love for them. He was remarkably free from base affections, jealousy, envy, etc. He knew what slander was and despised it. Except for the purpose of subserving the interests of truth, he rarely related anything of any man that was discreditable to that man; and it may well be doubted whether any minister in the country showed day by day more genuine and considerate regard for his brethren in the ministry, and for men in general. He was far superior to many who criticised him in this respect. With age and blindness there came upon him a beautiful mellowed sweetness of character, and "his great heart dropped unction on any creature around him."

## SANCTIFIED COMMON-SENSE.

The student of Robert L. Dabney's life must be impressed with his large common-sense. It looms out in his whole life. He had large ideality, but he was never a visionary. He was always testing his theories by facts. His common-sense is made clear by his success in nearly every undertaking of his life, his undertakings being many. He was a good practical farmer, a good teacher, a good pastor, a capital member of a military staff. He was a skilful mechanic and furniture maker, and never made things for past time but to serve some useful end. He bound books well, drew maps and plans for buildings. He knew how to use everything, mental or physical, he possessed to some useful end. He was a profound philosophic thinker. He knew how to possess the unphilosophical of his philosophic notions, to state a concrete case embodying the principle, get the core of the matter vividly before the mind of the person to be instructed, and then, in the most direct and straightforward way, march through his exposition to certain inexorable conclusions. He did much corresponding with a gentleman, also unquestionably a man of philosophic bent. The contrast in their letters is strikingly sharp. Dabney's mode of discussion is as just stated. No intelligent reader can be in doubt of his meaning from the first sentence on. The gentleman referred to, however, goes to philosophizing about the reader knows not what until he is almost through the letter. The philosophy is "far-away." There was, again, never absent-mindedness about Dr. Dabney. He would never have cut a hole for the big cat to get through his door, and then cut another beside it for the little cat to get through; nor would he, as is related of a great historian, ever have proposed to trade his pig off for a smaller one, simply because his had gotten too large for the box he kept it in. If such absence of mind were a necessary characteristic of extraordinary men, he would be ruled out of the class, not only of the Sir Isaac Newtons, but of the Philip Schaffs. Indeed, he had no patience with this form of abstraction. His rule was, this one thing I do—the thing in hand at the time. No man shows common-sense in his conduct, always, absolutely; but it is an outstanding feature in this great man's life. He knew how to adapt means to a designed end. This inherited trait was developed and sanctified as he went about his Master's work. It gave immense increase of efficiency to his labors.



This man, thus highly endowed and developing under the influence of his environment, the God of all grace, and his own efforts, has appeared before the world in many important rôles, as preacher, teacher, theologian, philosopher, political economist, statesman, patriot, member of his family, friend, servant of God, the great conservative. He is worthy of the reader's taking another glimpse of him in these functions.

#### AS PREACHER.

He was a preëminent preacher to preachers, and to an audience of highly intelligent people of earnest purpose. He had the power of simplification and illustration in a rare degree; but he was not given sufficiently to the use of this power before the average audience. He saw so much in his text, so many important relations and bearings of the truth of it, and he was so habitually engaged in doing his thinking in concise form that he unconsciously put any but a very superior audience to paces which many could not hold. It was like a giant's endeavor to make little children step the distance of his own swinging strides. This was not so true of him in his younger days as it became in his prime. In the days of his pastorate at Tinkling Spring, and early days at Hampden-Sidney, he was more given to descriptive preaching than in his later days, not that he was not always didactic—and he used to capture his audience with these bursts of descriptive eloquence. In those days the *people* liked to hear him preach. They gave proof of it by crowding his audience rooms. The same thing was true of his preaching in the army. His preaching gripped the men of the line, many of whom, however, were as intelligent and vigorous in mind as their officers; but his long work as a teacher told on his preaching. It became the sort for men who could think, and were willing to do it. The great impression he made was of didactic power. He seemed to be clearing with huge instruments the highway of truth for men to walk in, with a threat of awful consequences if they did not walk in it, and a promise of glory if they should walk in it. The whole appearance and port of the man made for this impression: stalwart in form, he was about six feet in height, and in his mature years weighed about one hundred and ninety pounds, with an expansive and nobly shaped brow, powerful, deeply set dark eyes, a well shaped nose, expressive mouth and lips, a lower face speaking of the utmost

will power, standing with feet adjusted to give him the stablest equilibrium, this whole stalwart frame often quivering from the mighty soul fires within. His speech was the speech of a great teacher, rapid, but not too rapid for every word to be heard, his words chosen for their didactic power, the stream of this didactic eloquence colored by allusion, classic and other, spiced by illustration, sometimes homely, but always apt, sometimes witty, often without much more than feeble signs of suppressed feeling, sometimes aglow with heat, and sometimes white with intense passion. It is safe to say that after the death of Thornwell there was no minister in his communion who was counted his equal in ability as a preacher to his brethren. They liked to hear him, for one reason, because he gave them materials for from two to half a dozen sermons in one of his. He sometimes wrote his sermons and memorized them. This seems to have been his custom on very important occasions. He sometimes wrote and delivered from the manuscript, having thoroughly acquainted himself with it. He sometimes prepared careful briefs and spoke from them. He sometimes dashed off a brief, or a fully written sermon, and, with the bare outline of the subject firmly fixed in his mind, went into the pulpit, depending on the dress and lesser features coming in the delivery. These were often the most appreciated by the people. He always prepared. If pushed for time, he took subjects on which he had long pondered, and was red-hot.

#### AS TEACHER.

He was the greatest teacher that most of his pupils ever knew. Such, at any rate, was the judgment of two-thirds or three-fourths of the men that passed under him, this two-thirds or three-fourths embracing its fair proportion of strong and gifted students who have themselves become distinguished. He did more than any other man of his generation to impress the peculiar type of theology characteristic of the Southern Presbyterian Church between the years of 1865 and 1895 upon that church. He did more to arouse to fuller mental life, to develop to the utmost their independence and vigor of mind, to tone their characters up to rock-like firmness than any other teacher they had ever known. He had the essential faculty to successful teaching, of getting at the positions of his pupils, comprehending their difficulties, putting himself in their places. He was

certain of his ground, dogmatic in the good sense,<sup>5</sup> unmistakably clear and decided in the repudiation of error, being moved, after a sort, as he was who said, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up." The student always knew where Dabney stood, and whither he led. He believed, too, that "feeling is the temperature of thought," was not ashamed to be seen to feel for the truth; went out in his great heart with it. Hence the truth he taught burnt in on the student, made an indelible impression. He had that other rare faculty of the rare and exceptionally great teacher, of seeming to reproduce himself, in a measure, in his pupils. They say, "He not only gave to us his truth, but himself."<sup>6</sup> He begot in his men something akin to his own vigor and strength, his love of truth and God.

His method of teaching was his own, a combination of the use of the text-book, reading of collateral, securing students' own treatment of the subject, and giving his own treatment as a final summary treatment.

His method in the teaching of philosophy in the University, to which he gave a dozen years of his life, was similar, but with changes adapted to the smaller degree of education of the students he was teaching. He had to require less reading of collateral and less of the writing of essays on the subjects treated. The student was required to read assigned matter in one or more text-books, to hear his lecture on the same subject, and was then at a subsequent meeting of the class rigorously quizzed. His manner here was much the same as it had been in the Seminary, and he was universally esteemed by all his students of energy, talent and character, as making an impression on them of power such as no other man had made.

His men all felt free to ask questions and to state objections. He was peculiarly ready to receive blows, naturally. It was a part of his plan, in the treatment of a topic, to state the objections to his thesis in the strongest possible manner. He could

<sup>5</sup> He had a right to be; he had mastered his subject, had analyzed it clearly, had the salient elements set forth in terse, clear, vigorous language, and the aptest illustrations for every point.

<sup>6</sup> There is a strange transforming power in the vision of a great character. A great man transforms his friends by letting them look on him. This is a familiar fact of human experience, with an analogue in the kingdom of heaven, for it is said in God's Word that in the perfected kingdom "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Dr. Dabney showed himself to his pupils, as to friends, as he was.

state them usually not only more strongly than any man before him, but so strongly as to appall his friends as apparently destructive of his position. Another part of his plan, however, as was habitually discovered, was to reduce the objections to nullities. Thoroughness and power and impressiveness were great and constant features of his teaching. He did not always carry every student with him, but he made the impression on every man that he was a master who took position only for cause, a master of subtle, profound and vast powers, one who could reason, and one who knew the word of God.

#### AS A THEOLOGIAN.

Dr. Dabney won for himself a place amongst the few greatest theologians hitherto produced on the American continent. His place in theology may be roughly indicated as follows: He was a moderate, but thorough-going Calvinist, believing himself in thorough harmony with the doctrinal portion of the Westminster Standards, of which he was perhaps the most sympathetic and able expounder in his century. He is the most biblical of the great American theologians. His exposition and defence of the Westminster Standards is more of the nature of an exposition of the Scriptures bearing on the parts of the system. While he uses profound common-sense philosophy in illustration of the teaching of Scripture, and as a subsidiary support for those teachings, it is confidently believed that neither Shedd nor Thornwell, nor either the Hodges has relied so little on philosophy, or paid such high and constant deference to the Scriptures. Not that any one of these grand men did not regard the Word of the Lord as final, but that in practice no one of them made so much of the "thus saith the Lord," in comparison with his philosophical arguments. Not one of them was so profound a philosopher—no, not even Thornwell; but not one of them had such profound humility, or saw so clearly the infinite difference between the profoundest human speculation and the absolute teaching of God's Word.

Soon after his death we wrote of his humility and regard for the Word of God in his teaching, what fuller study of his life and work has more than confirmed, viz.:

"In a man of such mental power one might, at the first moment, expect an attempt at daring and rationalistic speculation—an attempt to solve the insoluble, or, in event of failure, to deny the inscrutable as to

fact. But no man of our acquaintance has recognized the limitations of the finite mind more steadily than Dr. Dabney. He stands in this respect in distinguished contrast to some other great and conservative men of the age. The venerable Dr. William G. T. Shedd, for example, appears to many of his readers just as confident when he is setting forth the results of his own philosophical speculations as when he has in the plain declarations of Scripture the immediate support of his teaching. Somewhat of the same confidence as to results reached by a long process of reasoning and a good deal of assumption is found in other of our great standard writers. If there is any of this in Dr. Dabney's works it occupies a relatively small space. How often does the reader of his work on Theology remark the author deploring 'over-refinements' and 'undue subtlety' on the part of theologians. He does not like the distinction between *mediate* and *immediate imputation*. He declares that the question between the supra-lapsarianism and the sub-lapsarianism 'never ought to have been raised'; that either answer is illogical. And when discussing the origin of the human soul, he will not commit himself either to the theory of creationism or to that of traducianism. He presents the arguments for each with great force. He presents the objections to each more strongly than we have found them stated elsewhere, and then says: 'With such difficulties besetting both sides, it will be best, perhaps, to leave the subject as an absolute mystery. What an opprobrium to the pride of human philosophy, that it should be unable to answer the very first and nearest question as to its own origin.' He planted himself on Scripture teaching as upon a rock. No man has shown a more devoted allegiance to the Word of God. He is ever going to 'the law and to the testimony.' Where the Bible asserts, he asserts with all positiveness. But in cases where the teaching of the Word is not clear, and where human speculation darts intrude, he at once throws out emphatic *carvats*. Until the results of philosophical speculation had been thoroughly tried he was distrustful. Like a few of the very greatest men, he had a true sense of the littleness in grasp and power of the greatest finite intelligence in the presence of the being and mystery of an infinite God and his ways."

Dabney's Theology marks him out as very much superior to Dr. Charles Hodge as a thinker of profundity and power, and a stimulator of thought. Hodge's great three-volume work is very valuable as a sort of encyclopedia of theological belief; but for exposition and vindication of the creed, which they held in common, for wrestling faithfully with hard points, for mastery of difficulties, Dabney is vastly superior. The three great American theologians of the century were Shedd, Thornwell, and Dabney. The two former excelled in their expression. Shedd commanded a style of classic purity and chaste elegance.

Thornwell commanded equal purity and equal elegance and fervid eloquence. Dabney's style, in his theology, while terse and powerful, is often raw, but, nevertheless, it has hands and feet, it moves and grapples. Of these three, Dabney's theological writings entitle him to the highest place. The scriptural basis from which he reasons is larger, the treatment of the more vexed and intricate questions is, to say the least, equally profound, and his modesty, humility, and readiness to acknowledge the large residuum of the inexplicable, more marked; his philosophy is clear of the realism of Augustine, which affects Shedd; it is of the great Scotch school, but rising high above the domination of Sir William Hamilton, who made too great an impression on Thornwell. It is not forgotten that Dr. Thornwell was cut down early in life, and that, had he had the chance for further development and the full exposition of his system, the comparison might result differently. What is maintained in this estimate is that Dabney's writings entitle him to the first place amongst the theological thinkers and writers of his century. Moreover, the peculiar genius of Dabney's exposition of the theology of the Christian Scriptures brings him into closer accord with the great Calvin himself, in several essential particulars, than any other modern American theologian is brought by his system. Calvin and Dabney are alike remarkable for never dodging hard problems, and for never slurring them over. Every student of Calvin knows this to be true of the great Genevan. Every student of Dabney, when wrestling with a difficulty in the Calvinistic system, pulls down Dabney with the confident expectation of seeing him resolutely grapple with that difficulty. He never dodged. It is singular, again, that certain distinctions that Calvin did not make, Dabney would not make, declaring them to be illogical; nor can it be charged that he was a blind disciple of Calvin here, for he argues in his own way against their illogical nature. Calvin did not, and probably would not, make the distinction between supralapsarian and sublapsarian. Beza, the immediate disciple of Calvin, made it. Dabney says, and argues, that it should never have been made. Calvin never made the distinction between *mediate* and *immediate* imputation, whatever partisans may claim. Dabney holds that the distinction is illogical, and should never have been made. This was one of two great points on which he criticised his friend, the venerable and honored Princeton theologian, the other point being as to the primal

seat of sin, and consequently the faculty of man primarily affected in regeneration. Again, Dabney was preëminently like Calvin in his humility of mind before God. In dealing with a mysterious and glorious truth, Calvin now and then gives expression to the thought that the sacred writers themselves wonder at and rejoice in it rather than explain it, and that it is not his to explain it. In like manner, Dabney is found acknowledging the limitations of the human mind to comprehend what is nevertheless to be accepted. Again, Calvin's system is eminently biblical. His philosophy, really that of "common-sense," was duly subordinated. There was vast difference between these men, difference in body and in the rate of development. Thornwell was much like Calvin in physique, and in his phenomenally early development, and in many noble features of his character; but the character of the *Institutes*, on the one hand, and Dabney's *Syllabus*, on the other, are being compared, in regard to certain great principles, giving form to these expositions of Scripture. The comparison results in the conclusion that the man who was given to Geneva and the world would have felt closer to Robert L. Dabney than to any great modern exponent of the system which goes by the great Genevan's name.

#### AS A PHILOSOPHER.

Many of Dr. Dabney's friends and admirers have claimed for him a nobler preëminence as a philosopher than as a theologian, and as such he seems to have been without a peer in America. Dr. Archibald Alexander, the father of Princeton Seminary, has been called the Emmanuel Kant of North America, and his little book on moral science, so clear that its depths are never remarked by the superficial, entitles him to noble rank as a great philosopher; but it does not appear that he was competent to do what Dabney did. He perceived and held certain truths in the sphere of morals. Dr. Dabney perceived and held these and other great truths in the same sphere, and he crushed the objections to these truths, and vindicated our knowledge of them, our right to hold them, as Dr. Alexander did not, and, perhaps, could not do. For sheer philosophic mental might, we suppose that old Jonathan Edwards was more nearly Dr. Dabney's equal. Even in this case, the greater caution of Dabney pulls the balance in his favor. However, it is to be remembered that Dabney stood on the shoulders of both Edwards and Archibald Alexander.

Dabney has described his philosophic position in a general way more than once, by declaring that he held the Scotch Philosophy of common-sense. He has thus declared himself, in accord with fact, as ontologically a theist, a Christian theist. He held that there is one substance uncreated, unconditioned, independent, eternal, spiritual, that is God; and that he, by the fiat of his will, brought into existence finite, created existences of two kinds, matter and spirit; that there are, therefore, subsequent to creation by the Absolute, three forms of existence. He held that God, while transcendent to, is immanent in creation. He condemned as unphilosophical Materialism, which teaches that there is no such thing as spirit, Idealism, both of the Berkleyan and modern German absolute types, which deny the existence of matter, or matter and substance; Pantheism, which represents thought and extension as attributes of one only existing substance; every form of Monism, materialistic or idealistic; and, as well, he condemns deism. He has condemned every form of atheism, avowed or implicit. In describing himself as belonging to the Scotch School, he has further taught that in the philosophy of the human mind he repudiates the fundamental tenets of the school of sensational philosophers (whom he prefers to call sensualistic philosophers), that "there is no notion in the human mind that has not originated in the senses." His "Sensualistic Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century Considered" is one of the greatest philosophic philippics ever penned. He holds up this philosophy, sensational philosophy as set forth by Hobbes, the "hard-mouthed," by Condilac, by Helevetius, by St. Lambert, by James Mill, by the school of positivism, by the physiological materialists, and by others, notably the great but wabbling Locke, to contempt. He teaches them with Des Cartes and Leibnitz and Wolf, Bishop Buller and Emmanuel Kant, and Richard Price and T. H. Reid, that there is something in the mind which does not originate in the senses, the mind itself with its power to know that class of truths known as *primary cognitions, innate ideas, first truths*; and in his chapter, in this work, on *the validity of a priori notions*, and in that on *the origin of the a priori notions*, he comes close to showing his as the master mind of the Scotch School. His consideration of Monism and Idealistic Monism, while not as elaborate as that of the Sensational Philosophy, is characterized by the same insight and power. It has become more and more fashionable in his day



to be a "monist"; but he not only saw no reasons for becoming one, he brought some unanswerable indictments against it. If it be undertaken to set forth Dr. Dabney's affinities with reference to the more distinguished representatives of the Scotch School, it must be said that he admired Reid more than Hamilton, as a thinker; that he usually found himself on the side of Reid in cases wherein Hamilton differs; that he regarded many of Hamilton's innovations as foreign to the very genius of the Common-sense system. Particularly, he did not agree with Hamilton in his doctrine of consciousness as the generic, universal or inclusive faculty. He made it, with Reid, a particular faculty. He would not say, "I am conscious of a tree;" but, with Reid, "I am conscious of the perception of a tree." His theory of perception was also more like Reid's, but much more fully wrought out and clarified of errors. He deplored in Hamilton his speculations concerning the relative validity of human cognitions, and his doctrine of "the unconditioned"; and he shows that the extravagances of Hamilton, where they are not the results of verbal ambiguities, are the fruits of a sensualistic heresy foisted into the bosom of a rational system.<sup>7</sup> The most elaborate piece of work in the sphere of Mental Philosophy by Dr. Dabney, after his "Sensualistic Philosophy Considered," was his Inductive Logic. This discussion has never received the circulation which its great merits warrant. In this work he made a distinct and important contribution to English literature on the subject—a contribution which does more to show what the true nature of inductive reasoning is, and to vindicate its validity, than any other one English writer whose works have obtained general circulation.

In the sphere of Practical Philosophy, Dr. Dabney ranked even higher. The Rev. A. R. Coker, D. D., a man of broad study and reading in this department, wrote of Dabney's *Practical Philosophy* on its publication:

"Dabney's name will abide because of several distinct additions to the philosophy of the ages as presented in this volume. *The Practical Philosophy* can take rank beside Kant's *Critique of the Practical Reason*.

Dabney will ever rank above Brown, McCosh, and a host of other writers, upon the Feelings, because of the simple and complete analysis and classification of the Feelings presented. All other classifications

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<sup>7</sup> See Chapter X. of the *Sensualistic Philosophy*, etc.

leave men in the haze; Dabney maps out the whole field with the hand of a master. His proof that the whole subject is covered by a dichotomy into passive sensibilities and active appetencies brings light into darkness, and gives us a clue by which to thread the labyrinth. The section of his book on the Classification of the Feelings is worth its weight in gold. McCosh's whole book on the Emotions is not worth this one chapter. In this chapter Dabney has placed the philosophic world under lasting obligations.

"Dabney is to be congratulated on his honest statement of the entire content of consciousness. He does not shut his eyes to the fact that among the appetencies is the desire of sinful self-will. The astute Kant recognized this fact; Dabney confirms and completes his analysis.

"Dabney's exposition of Free Agency is by far the most satisfactory I have ever seen. Edwards' masterly work on the will cannot equal our author's discussion, either in clearness or in full bringing to light of all the facts of consciousness which bear upon this supreme theme. Dabney solves the problem and easily unties this difficult knot.

"Let the scholar follow this discussion as it lays bare the fundamental unanalyzable fact of Disposition; the law of Spontaneity inherent in all disposition; the clear distinction between Motive and Inducement; the contrast between Active Appetency and Passive Sensibility; the causal tie between Motive and Volition; and he is a cold man indeed if he does not cry out 'Eureka!'

"It had for years been his mastery of philosophy which had, in the opinion of some observing men, given him his preëminence as a theologian. This had not been the sole factor in that preëminence, unless it was also the cause of his masterful understanding and use of the Word of God. But while relying mainly on the testimony of the Word, in every resort to reasoning, he recurred as closely as possible to the primary sources of conviction, self-consciousness and intuitions. This generally clothes his reasoning with invincible power. As a philosopher, this man was so preëminent that it is safe to say he will appear larger to men one hundred years from now than he did to his contemporaries."

#### AS A POLITICAL ECONOMIST.

Dr. Dabney may be justly regarded as a great layman in this science. He devoted to it only a small proportion of his time and efforts; but he carried his vast energies and his profound philosophic powers into the study, he carried the enormous treasures gathered from discerning reading, and eager, painstaking, penetrating, comprehending observation. He became an able teacher and writer in this department. The type of his political economy may be roughly indicated by saying that he

was an independent disciple of Jean Baptiste Say, the great French political economist, who was himself the same sort of disciple of the celebrated Adam Smith. These men, as political economists, had theories, but they were ever testing their theories by facts, and bringing the theories into harmony with the facts. They were great inductive reasoners. The common-sense philosophy underlay their theory of political economy. Dr. Dabney could not be anything else than a free-trader. He condemned "protection" as inexpedient, as fostering various agencies and combinations by which one part of a people robs another part; he condemned it as immoral, a robbery of one body of citizens to enrich another. He gave much study to currency and coinage questions, discerned the vast importance to the welfare of a people of a stable currency, and maintained the propriety, either of a single standard, or of turning gold and silver into commodities, doing away, in their use, with fictitious terms, such as cents, dollars, and so forth. He would have had the governments coin the gold and silver into convenient pieces, stamping each piece with a stamp which should certify the number of grains of the particular metal in the piece, and its degree of fineness. Men then would make sale for so many grains of gold or silver as they chose. If the day of payment were remote, and silver the commodity varying little in value, the seller could demand payment on the given day, in silver or in gold, at its market price, in terms of silver on that day. If gold were the unvarying commodity, it might be made the commodity of payment, and if silver were offered in payment the amount would be fixed in terms of gold on the day of payment. It would no doubt be very troublesome to make the change in any country from the fictitious denominations now in use to this use of the precious metals as commodities. But were the plan in operation, the problems connected with finance would be indefinitely simplified. The effort to maintain any given ratio, as sixteen to one, would be obviated; the relative values of the precious metals would take care of themselves. Gresham's law, by which the circulating medium of less value, drives the circulating medium of more value out of the country, could no longer work. His work in this department is characterized by the keenest analysis, broad comprehension of facts to be considered, and his usual trenchant criticism of opposing theories, and powerful reasoning in support of his own.

## AS A STATESMAN.

Interest in civil institutions was a part of the inheritance of a Virginia gentleman. Her great men had given themselves generally to the service of the State. It was inevitable that a youth with the mind of Robert L. Dabney, the traditions of his family, his advantages of training, should study the political institutions of European countries, and particularly of his own State, whatever his own precise calling. His keen interest as a boy as to the questions between Whig and Democrat has been noted. The volcanic political life of our country about the middle quarter of the century, occasioned his profound study of the great constitutional questions by which the country was rent. No man liked more to put his thinking on paper and through the press. Newspaper articles flew from his pen; he wrote a book, *Defense of Virginia and the South*, and through years subsequent to the war he continued to write in vindication of the Old South. It was a characteristic of Dr. Dabney's mind that he reasoned best where he felt most, while he was sometimes prevented getting the clearest view of the plain whence to reason by feeling. Fortunately, he had long familiarized himself with the genius of the Constitution of the United States and the rights of the individual States. He was in the circumstances most favorable to him, therefore, for the production of a great work in defence of the South, in the year 1862. He was in possession of the facts, had grasped them ere the conflict came; he was excited to write by the horrors of invasion. He naturally produced an able book, one which has often been pronounced "the ablest defence of Virginia and the South ever written." It will certainly entitle him, though a layman, here again, to rank along with Alexander H. Stephens and Jefferson Davis, who have written more elaborately, but not more ably, nor with greater grasp of fact essential to their respective discussions. Prior to the war he was an old-line Union Democrat. Of all the representatives of Jeffersonian Democracy, he had the greatest respect for Mr. John C. Calhoun, a good engraving of whose face he kept on his study walls. He read and studied Calhoun as one of the great masters on constitutional government. But he could never be a blind disciple. Independence marked his work in this sphere, as in all. He was for proving all things, and holding fast that which was true. He looked with intense dis-

pleasure on the centralization of power, and on every departure from the simplicity proper to republican forms of government; on the extension of suffrage to the vicious and incapable, and on the rule of the mere numerical majority. He hated the absolute democracy to which our country seemed for a time to tend, as "mobocracy," which would give way to an oligarchy of demagogues, consciousnessless plutocrats and tyrants. He perhaps understood the peculiar white-man's-burden of the South as well as any man in the whole South, and saw, on the issue of the war and reconstruction, many steps which the white man would be driven to take in carrying this burden, some of which he has now been driven, by hard necessity, to take, and more of which he will soon be forced to take. The true, practical statesman must know man, and particularly his own people. These Dabney knew.

#### AS A PATRIOT.

Love of country burned strongly in the bosom of Robert L. Dabney. He loved his own hearthstone, his county, his State, the country of the Constitution of the United States. He mourned the trampling of that Constitution into the mire under the influence of commercialism and greed by the dominant section. He hated abolitionism, but he was for the Union as long as to be so was consistent with honor, as long as he could be pro-Union, and not be a traitor to his native sovereign State; he recognized State sovereignty as imbedded in the Federal Constitution. His State was his sovereign under God. His love for his State, for the homes of friends and of his mother, and of his wife and little ones, was a great passion. He had such an irrepressible feeling of love for these and the whole country prior to the war that, minister of the gospel, pastor, teacher, everything that he was, busiest of men, he had time to study and work as a citizen for the good of all. He had been an example of good citizenship. When the war came, he poured out his vast energies with a passion of devotion. He sacrificed his property, his time, his services, often attended with imminent risk of his life, for he was not a member of the staff that shunned danger when service was to be done. He, in addition to his ordinary staff duties, was eyes and ears to his chief in battle, and ready to go where eyes and ears were needed. He was hands, too, and not above sighting cannon, as at Port Re-

public. He wrecked his health in this service. His sufferings at the humiliation and destruction, bloodshed and ruin of his fair land caused him sufferings second only to those with which he laid his three little sons in their graves. He would for years have left forever the devastated South; but it was clear that it was not because he had ceased to love her soil and her people. To his latest breath, he never ceased to love her, even in her degradation, and to talk, write, and labor for her elevation, for the preservation of all the good that was left, the elimination of the evil, and her material, but especially moral, advancement. If Bruce and Wallace were patriots, or Lee and Jackson, then Dabney was also, and worthy to be named in the same breath with them, for the energy of his patriotic passion and the intelligence of it, and the moral quality of it.

#### AS A FRIEND.

The Rev. J. B. Shearer, D. D., LL. D., has spoken of him as a friend as follows:

"Robert L. Dabney as a friend! Here the heart swells at the memory of such a friend, and then breaks into weeping at the loss. Dabney and Sampson loved each other like David and Jonathan. He poured out his great heart of love in the memorial he wrote of his friend. You cannot read it without measuring the depth and intensity of his love. He loved with all his heart. He did nothing by halves. It is not always understood that true love, whether it be of wife, or child, or friend, or God, is only measured by the heart's capacity. Loving one with all the heart lessens not the measure for others. And the heart's capacity for love is only enlarged by enlarging the circle of its bestowment. How wide was his circle of friends, and how large a heart he gave!"

This fine tribute is no more than just. He was a loving, loyal friend, with a generous regard for his friends that ennobled every one of them, and put them, while under his influence, to doing their best. His friendship was delightful to all classes, especially to the young, because of his perpetual youth. He never grew old.

Some old men, even old men of power and talents, seem to lose interest in movements contemporary to their old age. They were once interested in all the new isms, movements in church or state for good or evil, but it is no longer so. They are willing for young men to study the new departures, but they did their studying of the like thirty years ago. Dr. Dabney's

interest in the things about him, and in events in the great world at large never seemed to wane. He remained a learner as long as he lived. He sought new information with avidity. No wide-awake young man distanced him in this. He wished to know about every movement which was likely to affect, for weal or woe, the fortunes of any considerable number of people. Think of Dr. Dabney, when seventy years old and stone blind, calling on an apostle of the Christian Science, who chanced to be creating a great commotion among a certain class in Austin! Of course, he found nothing to approve in that mixture of allegorizing mysticism, rationalistic pantheism and infidelity; but he was enabled the better to do some quiet polemic work in a quarter where it was needed. Think of his sending a young friend not only to meetings of Salvation Army people, but to the performances of a peripatetic phrenologist that he might get a more trustworthy report than he could secure through other means. Other old men may say: "Oh! it is well enough for you young men to be interested in such movements. You have your battles to fight, but I have fought mine. I care nothing about these." Dr. Dabney never felt that way. He kept young to the last. He was, on this account, exceedingly attractive to young men. They found him ever putting himself on the same plane with them—ready to learn what interested them with all zest.

There are few men who, with his positiveness and unyielding adherence to his convictions, could make and hold so many friends in such delightful relations of enthusiastic regard. But love begets love, and he had a greatness of the faculty of pure love. His great big heart had, like Luther's, to go out powerfully on those about him who were worthy.

#### AS SERVANT OF GOD.

In all these phases of his life Dabney was somewhat more than preacher, teacher, theologian, philosopher, economist, statesman, patriot, friend: he was servant of God. That was his characteristic everywhere and always. He was the servant of that God who has revealed his will in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. That will he tried to make the law of his life. He was not a sinless man. His massive nature was qualified all through his long and vexed life with sin; but grace dominated. Recruits who knew him, in the war-time,

first as Major Dabney, marked his rough impatience with disorder, negligence, lagging, slowness in moving into line of battle, marked his voice, strident and hoarse with passion, in the heat of conflict, were surprised to see him on the following Sunday, perhaps, mount a log, announce a hymn, read the Scriptures, pray, and go to preaching. But they soon got to believing in him. They saw him, on every opportunity, ministering to the wounded and the sick, and in a hundred thoughtful ways doing good. They saw in him a rare honesty, simplicity and singleness of purpose. Throughout his life the sincerity and honesty of his faith in the God of the Christian Scriptures impressed itself upon friend and foe. Religion was never a sham with him. It was the business of his life. An intelligent woman recently said of Dr. Dabney's manner in some of his writings and addresses, "It was inevitable." He usually saw things according to the truth. He knew this. He loved the truth. To him it was the great thing in the world. He was so honest, so sincere, that it was inevitable that in the defence of what he believed to be true, what he had laid hold of with such affection, he should show a zeal that would seem rude to the lukewarm or the indifferent, or to those who did not agree with him that his view was true. The intensity of his loyalty to God made it inevitable. The key-note of his life is sounded in that paper to his sons :

"Follow God fully without turning aside. I have often devoted all of you to God, and there is nothing I have so much at heart as this, that you may indeed be the Lord's; and if you turn aside from this way, I will have this as a witness against you in the day of the Lord."

As a holy man, he deserves to be ranked with Augustine and Calvin, Owen and Baxter and Edwards.

#### THE GREAT CONSERVATIVE.

Conservatism was with Dr. Dabney a trait and a function of service. He was acquainted with the *dii majorum gentium*, the great master teachers and thinkers of the ages. He had mastered them. He knew that they were not fools; that, under the good hand of God, they had gotten hold of much truth; that they were in the great current of truth. He would not be swept out into little by-currents, eddies and whirlpools by the strongest winds and waves of the *zeit-geist*. He not only



would not be carried away himself, he would serve the church and men by holding them in the great channel of truth. He was accordingly a conservative teacher in theology, philosophy and statesmanship. He was always and everywhere applying the inspired precept, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." He was consequently at war with much in his age: with the atheistic and infidel theories of physical science which have so largely prevailed; with the various forms of evolution, anti-biblical in their essence; with false psychologies and false philosophies, whether pantheistic or materialistic; with Jacobinism and "Mobocracy," in politics; with Pelagianism in every form, and Unitarianism in every shade, in theology. He knew that man was never evolved from an ape; that there is a radical, fundamental and essential difference between a man's consciousness when suffering for sin and a dog's when chastised by his master for a fault in behavior. He knew that God created the world *ex nihilo*; for God has told us so in his Word. He knew that the several forms of sensualistic psychology were lies, at least in considerable part; that pantheism degrades and dishonors God, robs man of his personality, and is utterly false; that materialism and Herbert Spencerianism, agnosticism, are equally false. He knew that the Jacobinical assurance, "All men are of right free and equal," never has been true, and never will be true, and never can be true in the sense of its assertors, because God has not made men that way. Though Calvinism, pure and simple, had been on the wane in his day, he knew that Augustinism once waned, died and was buried for a thousand years, but was resurrected at the Reformation, because it was largely God's truth. He expected confidently in God's own time, the revindication of Calvinism. In short, satisfied as to the correctness of the Westminster system of doctrinal teaching, and satisfied as to the substantial truth of the common-sense philosophy of the Scotch school he has given the ablest, though not the simplest, defence and exposition of this theology, and has enlarged, deepened and ennobled the Scottish philosophy of common-sense—the only philosophy worth acceptance—and the philosophy of the Bible as well. He has never been ashamed of this philosophy or of the Westminster Theology. He has boldly and confidently maintained it, and has opposed everything in current history in opposition thereto.

His opposition to any change of the Westminster Confession

of Faith was almost absolute. He calls his friend, the Rev. Dr. G. W. Finley, to witness in a letter now in Dr. Finley's possession of his constant and unwavering opposition to any change of that great standard.

Dr. Dabney has received much criticism as ultra-conservative. Perhaps in some minor matters he was too antagonistic to change, but we confidently await the verdict of history on his conservatism. We do not believe that he was too conservative in most matters; and we feel sure that had he been less conservative, he would not have served the church in his generation so well. The church needed guidance by a man who could and would look before he leaped—before he abandoned the tried old for the untried new. Our age is so impressed with its own greatness, it is so intoxicated by its brilliant achievements in amassing material wealth and making physical discoveries that it esteems itself too highly. It tends to despise all that it has not itself discovered. It is too ready to receive the new because it is the new, and to throw away the old because it is old. Every age runs towards godlessness. Much of the new in our age is godless. Hence we are in danger of repudiating the best of our inheritance from the past. Hence, also our need of some good man with penetration and insight to discern between good and evil, with heroic boldness to warn us against an evil course, and with the thunderbolt of Thor to demolish the ramparts of error.

Dr. Dabney was a great man. We cannot tell just how great yet. One cannot see how great Mt. Blanc is while standing at its foot. One hundred years from now men will be able to see him better.

## APPENDIX.

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### DR. DABNEY'S LETTER TO D. H. PANNILL, ESQ., DESCRIPTIVE OF HIS SERVICES AT PORT REPUBLIC.

[This letter has come to our knowledge just as the book goes to press. It appeared in the *Times-Dispatch*, Richmond, August 30, 1903, too late for use in the body of the work. We were not aware of its existence before that time.]

"AUSTIN, January 14, 1891.

"D. H. Pannill, Esq.

"DEAR SIR: . . . . You are, indeed, engaged upon a most timely and important work, in composing a true history of the Army of Northern Virginia. I have heard the extract you send read with much satisfaction. I was myself at Cross Keys and Port Republic with General Jackson. I notice that Mr. Esten Cooke, in his *Surry of Eagle's Nest*, says that Colonel Sir Percy Wyndham pursued our rear with only a squadron (two companies). Of this I cannot speak as an eye-witness. Colonel Kane was colonel of the Yankee infantry regiment 'Pennsylvania Buck Tails,' which killed Ashby later in the afternoon. I believe your narrative of this part is very exact. You were also very wise in discarding the story about Jackson using a ruse in order to pass the Yankee cannon at the mouth of a bridge, or of pretending to be a Yankee officer, and ordering them to move. He had galloped over to the northwest side before that gun was placed there. The dash of the Yankees into Port Republic did not take place until after breakfast. The General rode to the top of the hill where the Third Brigade and Poague's Battery were bivouacked, and had the long roll beaten. As soon as Fulkerson's Regiment and one gun were ready, he started back with them to recover the bridge and the village. The sergeant of this gun is now in this city (William Morton Brown), and I heard him tell his story recently. Jackson, on returning, when he got in sight of the bridge, saw a cannon at its further mouth. Brown says he ordered his gun to unlimber and load, but not to fire at once, being apparently

in doubt whether the cannon might not be one of a reserve battery of his own. It seems as if to solve this doubt he waved his hand and shouted to the gunner twice, 'Fetch your gun over here.' They appeared to notice him at his second shout, and their reply was a cannon shot aimed at him, and Brown fired his cannon at them immediately, and Jackson ordered his infantry to fire and charge, as you narrate.

"You are right in supposing I was the staff officer who saved the baggage train. In my *Life of Jackson* I did not name myself or go into details, because I thought it would be in bad taste. The facts were these: I had lodged in a little tent in an orchard, about two hundred yards from the house (old Dr. Kemper's), where the General lodged, but had seen him about breakfast time, and he had told me that he did not intend to begin any fighting on the Sabbath day, and I should preach to the Stonewall Brigade. I had accordingly gone back to my tent, and was preparing a sermon, when I saw the servant hastily jerking up the tent pins. I asked him why, when he replied in about these words, 'Why, Major, don't you know the Yankees done come, and the General done started across the river, and he ordered me that all these tents and baggage must be packed and moved to the rear in five minutes?' I sprang up and told him to bridle and saddle my horse, while I belted on my arms. His answer was, 'Bless your heart, Major, I can't stop for that, the General's orders is too strict.' I equipped the horse myself, and started to follow the General. The southern end of the village street turns at right angles between the village and old Dr. Kemper's. When I came near that spot two staff officers—Dr. McGuire and Quartermaster Harman—galloped rapidly to the rear, each of them waving me back, and shouting to me that the Yankees were already in the street, and it was simply impossible for me to join the General. Indeed, two of our staff, trying to get to him a few minutes earlier, were already captured. Colonel Crutchfield, colonel of our artillery, was one, and he was in the street with the Yankee Colonel Carroll during the battle that followed; escaping that same day, he returned to us, and told us what he saw from the Yankee side, which was very instructive to me. The thought which flashed on my mind when I was stopped was that the bridge and our trains must be in immediate danger from these Yankees, and my duty was to rally whatever I could for their protection. So beginning to look around I first saw a captain

with about fifteen Confederate riflemen. He said he was Captain Moore, of the Second Virginia, who had been posted as picket at the forks of the river just below, and had been driven away by a greatly superior force. I asked him if his men were stampeded. He replied proudly, No; that he could control his men, who would be glad to have a few chances at the Yankees, and the faces of his men confirmed this. I told him it was a critical time, and we must do what we could to check the advance of the Yankees. 'Follow me, and I will show you an advantageous position, and you must stay there at all hazards until I bring you some supports.' This he promised to do.

"The Staunton road, issuing from the village, makes a second right angle near the old Kemper house, so that between this angle and the first one mentioned lies a straight line of turnpike of some hundred and seventy or two hundred yards, making a capital range for a close rifle fire. I quickly put Captain Moore and his men over in the field behind a big board fence, ordering them to lie down on their breasts and fire low through the lowest crack upon whatever enemy turned the other corner. Carrington's Battery had come to us the day before so ill-equipped and trained that Colonel Crutchfield had ordered them to stay for the present with the baggage train; they had bivouacked in this very field, and had now just gotten into column and were going south at a gallop. I raced after them, and ordered word to be passed on to their captain to halt the column and come to me. I then asked him what ammunition he had, and he said he had enough cannister cartridges for two guns. 'Have you friction primers, Captain?' 'Yes, but no lanyard strings.' I said the whip lashes will do for them; turn out these two guns and follow me. I started him back at a gallop through an old orchard, down into Dr. Kemper's front meadow. Meantime, I heard a sharp volley from Moore's riflemen; he told me afterwards that the head of a Yankee column of cavalry turned the lower corner of the turnpike, but his first volley sent them back. Knowing that my only chance was audacity, I ran my two guns across the meadow, so as to rake the main street at short range, and ordered the men to load with cannister. Just then Captain Myers, of Ashby's Cavalry, was passing by with a little company of about twenty-five. I ordered them to halt, form and support the guns. This he did. He was one of the cavalry pickets, but not being on the direct

road to Lewiston, had not been stampeded by Carroll, like the other cavalry picket. I then said to Carrington, 'I don't want to fire into friends; so as Jackson may have gotten some of his men into the street by this time, wait until I reconnoitre once more.' I rode forward to the head of the street behind an old shed; the road was so dusty that at first I saw nothing, but I watched it until I saw a blue column of Yankee cavalry unmistakably emerging from the dust in good cannister range; then galloped back and ordered Carrington to fire. The enemy replied by a shell, which was excellently aimed, I knew by the buzz, and shouted to my men, 'Down, men,' and all squatted like partridges in the grass. Sure enough, the shell burst about four yards ahead of them, apparently the very worst place for them; but, strange to say, all the fragments ricocheted over them, whereon I ordered them up to reload and fire; so we kept up this fire until we cleared the street and Jackson retook the bridge. The Yankee cannoneers did not fire so accurately after their first shot, and not one of my men was hurt. These young gentlemen were as green as grass, but as brave as lions, very excited and rather disorderly. Fortunately, they had not yet experienced enough to know in what imminent danger I ran them.

"Now Colonel Crutchfield was sitting all this time on his horse by Carroll, a prisoner. He told me that while Carroll was placing his section of artillery and forming his column, one of his scouts came back, and exclaimed with great exultation, 'Colonel, you have just got all Jackson's baggage trains.' Carroll asked where. 'Up yonder in sight, scarcely half a mile off.' Carroll immediately gave command to the captain of his leading squadron, 'Captain, go up quickly, attack the trains; give me a good account of them all.' Crutchfield said that after this his heart seemed to sink down to the bottom of his body, and he said to himself, 'Well, we are gone, and all my ammunition train with them, for the Yankee is right, and there is nothing between Colonel Carroll and them.' But when the cavalry advanced, to his amazement two cannon fired at them—he could see the cannister cutting up the dust at the horses' feet, and they came back in a panic. Crutchfield said to himself, 'Have these cannons dropped down from the sky? I thought I was chief of artillery to this army, and knew there were no cannon on this side ready to shoot.' He said Carroll was much enraged, cursed a great deal, and beat the men with the flat of

his sword, and reforming his column, they went up again, but the cannister sent them back a second time. While he was attempting to reform them the third time, Fulkerson came through the bridge at the lower end, and the whole business became uncontrollable, and ran for the South River by the cross streets. As soon as I was sure that Jackson had the bridge, I took Captain Myers' Company, and scoured the back street, hoping to catch some prisoners, but they were too quick for me. At the bottom of the town I met General Jackson and rejoined him, when my separate command ended. That night I told him something of it, and said jocularly, 'Yes, General, in that great battle all three arms of the service, infantry, artillery, cavalry, were duly employed,' at which he laughed like a school-boy.

"As I had no regular field command of the detachments employed, I did not think it incumbent to put in any official report. Hence nothing appears of it in Jackson's official report, compiled months afterwards from those of the field officers; but with less than seventy men, all told, I saved his army that time, for had that ammunition train been blown up by Carroll we should have gone up the spout.

"Faithfully yours,

R. L. DABNEY."

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