

ADDRESSES,

DELIVERED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1851,

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE INAUGURATION

OF

REV. ROBERT L. STANTON,

As President of Oakland College, Miss.

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1852.

A CHARGE
TO THE PRESIDENT ELECT,
BY
REV. ZEBULON BUTLER, D. D.,
PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PORT GIBSON, MISS.

CHARGE.

As the organ of the Board of Directors, my brother, I am happy to express our high gratification in witnessing the unostentatious but interesting ceremonies of this occasion.

When, with faltering, but praying hearts, we at first resolved that this Institution of Learning should be established, no fancy pictured the scenes of this day on any unfolding vision in the first twenty years of its existence. In the first movement of 1830, it was only styled an experiment; and for years afterwards, its most sanguine friends dare not adventure the bestowment of any name more significant of durability. But now, on *this proud day*, we are free to aver that the experiment is ended, and the College is established; and the name of OAKLAND is never to perish, while Letters are cherished and our Republic endures. The hope, *then* confidently expressed, of the enduring and ever increasing prosperity of this infant school of learning, has been *matured* in our bosoms, my brother, by the great confidence we and the patrons of the College have in your capacity, attainments, and piety, and in the great zeal and disinterested devotion which have been accorded to you, by competent judges, and of which we have the most satisfying evidence since you have entered upon the discharge of your arduous and onerous duties.

The history of this Institution, mainly sustained by its truly generous, faithful, and to be honored Board of Trustees, though bare of exciting incident, is, I am sure, the *best* stimulant *you* could have in your honorable labors, and the surest evidence that you are engaged in an enterprize favored of Heaven, and approved of men.

I do not deem it within the range of my appointment, and it would not accord with my inclination, to attempt, in the detail, to excite or direct your mind in reference to your studies or duties in the important charge in which you have now been installed. *In you* our confidence is fully reposed; and of failure, we are not even sensible of an embryo fear. Yet, my brother, bear with me, while, as a Co-Presbyter and fellow laborer in the Gospel of Christ, I exhort you to engage in your appropriate work in this Seminary with the same sense of responsibility to God, and the Great Head of the Church, as if you had this day been installed as Pastor, and not President. Cherish and exhibit, I beseech you, the same sincere, pure and self-denying zeal, as if the sphere of your labors were Ceylon, or Siam, or Africa.

Let the Presidents in other Colleges strive for literary distinction, and be held to duty by the charm of wealth, or the world's coveted *otium cum dignitate*; be it ever your aim, to please our Master and glorify his name. In comparison with some other Institutions, you are not surrounded with equally imposing and massive edifices—the structures of wealth or regal munificence; you have not, as some others, access to a library of numberless worm-eaten volumes; there is not a costly apparatus, or well furnished museums and cabinets, to compare with some ancient Universities;—but the ground on which you tread, *is consecrated*; you are on foundations laid with tears and prayers; and on *this hill* “the Lord hath commanded his blessing, even life forevermore.”

This College is the child of Religion; and over its interests the Omnipotent Redeemer will ever keep a sleepless watch. To its members, you must exhibit, in doctrine, an unalloyed evangelism, without the mingling of sectarianism; and in practice, all the loveliness of Christian character, undimmed by worldliness, selfishness, intolerance, or ostentation.

I would, then, most earnestly entreat you, as a co-worker in the cause of Letters and Religion, to enter upon this noble enterprize in the spirit of untainted benevolence, and unflinching fortitude; and resolved on continuance, despite of toil, disappointment, opposition, poverty, sickness, or “any of the ills which flesh is heir to,” and to which virtue is exposed. You have a bright example in the life and character of your martyred predecessor, whose noble deeds we this day commemorate. He found not “the primrose path of dalliance,” but the constant fight of faith: and by his toils, his tears, and his *blood*, we hope he has achieved the conquest. And yours may be a work of comparative repose, in building up this Institution, in the sylvan shades of Mississippi. Yes, I am certain, you have been moved by the impulse of holy benevolence, and a willingness “to spend, and be spent” in the cause of Truth, and for the interests of our race.

Such being our views and sentiments, in the name of the Board of Directors and Trustees, I promise you our sympathies, our prayers, and our faithful coöperation, in your work of faith and labor of love; and if we prove, reciprocally, “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,” we are infallibly assured, that this Institution shall advance and improve, till it shall be the proudest monument and richest blessing of which Mississippi can boast.