WOMAN—HER TRUE MISSION AND EDUCATION.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE BAPTIST FEMALE COLLEGE

OF

GREENVILLE, S. C.

AT THE

COMMENCEMENT, JULY 23, 1858.

BY

REV. J. M. C. BREAKER.

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G. E. ELFORD, BOOK AND JOB PRINTER.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

Greenville, S. C., July 20, 1859.

REV. J. M. C. BREAKER:

Dear Brother—The undersigned were appointed a Committee by the Board of Trustees of Furman University, to solicit for publication a copy of your Address, delivered before the Baptist Female College of Greenville, on Commencement Day. Compliance with the above request will greatly oblige them. Very sincerely yours,

H. A. DUNCAN,
J. G. LANDRUM,
W. P. HILL,

Committee.

REV. AND DEARE BRETHREN:

Rev. and Dear Brethren—Though my Address was intended only for the occasion which called it forth, if its publication shall tend to the advancement of the interests it seeks to promote, I shall be satisfied.

Very respectfully, your brother in Christ,

J. M. C. BREAKER.
ADDRESS.

It is scarcely possible for me, Young Ladies and Brethren, to feel only an ordinary interest on the present occasion; for, as I look out upon the many fair and happy faces that now greet me, I cannot but recall the time, when, on a similar occasion, I had the honor to minister at this altar of festive enjoyment. Within the eleven years that have passed since then, what changes do I behold! changes both sad and pleasing. How few of that numerous company are present now; and that few how changed! Some in their tender bloom, and others in maturer years, have drooped and fallen amid the blighting frosts of life's untimely winter, or been transplanted in undying verdure into the heavenly paradise; while those who remain, have ripened into womanhood, and have, ere now, exchanged the mirth and day-dreams of the girl and maiden for the sober realities and varied experiences of the wife and mother. And this beautiful mountain nursery, too—the scene to me of some of the fondest memories which the heart holds dear—has felt no less the hand of time in the new and attractive features which it has assumed. But most of all am I struck with the fact, that the young and ten-
der plant, then in early bloom, has now grown up to the maturity of this noble, intellectual forester, with its expanding boughs decked with the beauty and loveliness of more than a hundred fair and fragrant flowerets—watched, and guarded, and cultured by the strong, the gifted, the loving and the pure.

Noble work this, ye guardians of the best interests of the best beings that God ever made! And I heartily congratulate you on the abundant success which has already crowned your efforts. I, too, have toiled in this lovely field; and I can truly say, that it was to me a "labor of love," from which nothing but a stern sense of duty could ever have withdrawn me.

And herein is suggested and illustrated that peculiar influence of woman which gives occasion and importance to the means employed for her culture. I hesitate not to say it, that the influence which woman is suited to exert over the happiness and destinies of our race, is second only to that of Deity himself! You have an intimation of this in the significant fact, that we are indebted to her both for our ruin and our deliverance. She has been in turn, as all history tells us, the richest blessing and the direst curse that has ever fallen upon man. Her gentle influence steals over his heart like the steady winds of heaven, either bearing the ocean-bark of his destiny onward to its peaceful haven, or forcing it from its proper course, and dashing it upon the hidden rocks which lie in its way.
Fortunately, this mighty power, unlike the wind, is, in some degree, under our control. We may increase or diminish its quantity, and determine also its direction. To do this, is the proper aim of education. The influence of a truly educated woman is wholly different, both in kind and degree, from that of an uneducated one. It is the design of female education to prepare woman to fulfill the high and peculiar mission which God and nature have assigned her. How it is to do this, will depend first on knowing what that mission is.

To a certain extent, the mission of woman is the same with that of man. She, in common with the stronger sex, was sent into this world to glorify God, and to prepare for the next. This is the great problem of human life; and unless the gifts and faculties we possess, and the time which God has allotted us, are sacredly devoted to the solution of this problem, our whole life is a failure, and the purposes of our existence are frustrated forever! This is true of every human being. But then, in addition to, or rather in pursuance of, this leading aim of life, there is a special mission appropriate to woman, plainly distinguishable from that of man.

Some there are who would degrade woman to the place of a mere domestic, entitled to no training but that which shall render her the more serviceable to her lordly companion. Others, claiming to be more
enlightened, see in her only a being of sensibility and refinement, delicate and frail, both in body and mind, and suited only, like the butterfly or the gay flower, to beguile the passing moment, and relieve somewhat the tedious hours of life. Others still, regard her as a being of commanding intellect, and capable of becoming the equal of man, not only in science and literature, but in the tumults of business, in the marts of trade, the courts of justice, and the halls of legislation. These views we deem erroneous; but, like most errors, they are exaggerations of truth.

Physiologically and mentally, man is the sterner and woman the gentler sex. Nature has plainly made them so:

"For contemplation, he and valor formed;
For softness, she and sweet attractive grace;
He for God only, she for God and him."

"This," says a distinguished living author and educator, "is as apparent in the sports of the child as in the pursuits of maturer age. The female mind is rather quiet and timid than fiery and daring, and rather admires than covets the great exploits of the other sex. To command a ship in its voyage round the world, or to explore the Arctic seas; to ascend the Alps, the Andes or the Himalaya mountains, and measure their heights; to fell the trees of the forest and build new cities; or to descend into the caverns of the earth and disembowel them of their treasures, are feats as
unnatural to woman as they are natural to man. She is better adapted to the countless little assiduities by which she administers to the every-day wants of others, than to those great and perilous undertakings which require a lion's strength and courage. No; rude savage nature is not to be subdued by her toils and exhausting fatigues. To her belong the gentler arts of quiet life and retirement, where she has power to soften and refine the heart of him who is accustomed to battle with the elements and the forces of external nature.*

The intellectual powers of woman are neither equal nor unequal to those of man. They are different; better adapting her to the special work assigned her, and disqualifying her for the work reserved to him. Her intellect partakes of the qualities of her sensitive nature. "It acts," as one has said, "rather through a chain of electricity than of reasoning. Its perceptions of truth come, as it were, by intuition. It is under the influence of a heart that has deep and unfathomable wells of feeling; and truth is felt in every pulse, rather than reasoned out and demonstrated."† Accordingly, she may surpass him in works of taste and sensibility, in moral tales, in the composition of letters, and in certain kinds of history; but in the abstruse sciences, and in the bolder flights of genius, she is

* Rev. Dr. Sears, in Bibliotheca Sacra, vol. 10, p. 488. † Rev. Dr. Sears.
generally inferior to him. The literary history of the two sexes, had we time to produce it, would fully sustain this remark. This all goes to point out their respective spheres and missions.

“When man,” says an eminent French writer, “goeth forth from his house and gives himself to his labor until the evening, he chooses outward activity for his task, public life for his domain, and the world for his theatre. What do I say? he presents himself in the sight of the angels, and places himself in affinity with the entire universe. He cannot carry too far the name and the image of that God whom he has a mission to represent, not only upon the earth, but before the whole creation. To resist the feeling which calls him to go forth, in order to shut himself up within the narrow circle of the domestic hearth, this would be, on his part, weakness, forgetfulness of himself, infidelity to his mission; nothing more remains but to put a spindle into his hands and a distaff at his feet.”

“But it is altogether different with woman—the heart is her theatre; the domestic life her sphere; the in-door activity her work; and the long hair with which the Apostle is pleased to see her covered, is an emblem of an entire existence, hidden and silent, in the bosom of which she accomplishes, most faithfully, and most honorably, the primary obligations of her sex. ‘Woman,’ says a great writer of the age, ‘is a flower which emits not its perfume except in the
shade.' To retire from notice, to remain quiet, to devote herself to her dependents, to keep the house, to govern her family. *this is her modest ambition.*

How much more sensible and true to nature this, than the prating of those pretended reformers, who falsely style themselves the advocates of woman's rights, and who would alter the entire structure of society in the realization of their absurd schemes? Did it ever occur to these persons that "the highest of woman's rights is the right to be a woman?" They wish to see her holding public offices and sharing equally with the other sex in the honors of political life. Did they ever calculate the effect of this? "How delightful it would be," says one, "to see either a spinster or a tender mother sitting the live-long day in courts of justice, listening to the details of crime and corruption of every form, hearing the sophistry, the wrangling, and the Billingsgate of pettifogging lawyers, and pronouncing, at last, the inexorable sentence! How refreshing it would be, in social intercourse, to enjoy the delicate conversation of such blushing ladies, those angels of charity and innocence to which the heart of man is in such willing bondage! And during a political campaign, when rival female candidates should, as the leaders of faction, harangue the multitude, how fine it would be, as Addison some-

*Rev. Dr. Monod.
where observes, to see a pretty bosom heaving with party rage, and a pair of stays ready to burst with sedition!"*

The poet of the Seasons has beautifully and graphically sketched the mission of woman, in its leading parts, where he says:

"To train the foliage o'er the snowy lawn;
To guide the pencil, turn the tuneful page;
To lend new flavor to the fruitful year,
And heighten nature's dainties; in their race
To rear the graces into second life;
To give society its highest taste;
Well-ordered home man's best delight to make;
And by submissive wisdom, modest skill,
With every gentle, care-eluding art,
To raise the virtues, animate the bliss,
And sweeten all the toils of human life;
This be the female dignity and praise!"

The great and God-like mission of woman, then, is, like an angel of mercy, as she is, to fill the world with pure and healthful influences, and to imbue the heart of man with the patience, serenity and innocence of her own gentle, trustful, loving spirit.

And the design of education is, to fit her in the highest degree for the possession and exertion of this influence. It needs no argument to show that education is essential in woman to the highest development of this influence, and, therefore, to the proper execution of her mission. She may exert this influence

* Rev. Dr. Sears.
in some degree without it, but much more will she do this with it. The fragrance of her charms may be emitted even in their wild and uncultured luxuriousness; but let them be subjected to the generous training of a skillful intellectual floriculture, and the improvement will be as visible and as sensibly felt as in the natural world.

And here permit me to say, Young Ladies, that the charms to which I allude do not consist in mere outward beauty or symmetry of person. Without denying the value and attractiveness of this gift of nature, it must still be held in subordination to those qualities which appertain to the soul. Beauty of person can never supply the place of beauty of soul, much less can it atone for deformity in this. A human being is physical, intellectual and moral; and the perfection of beauty in such a being must, therefore, include all these—must appertain to the person, the mind and the heart. Of the three, however, the first is decidedly inferior to the second and third. We may admire a handsome face, unassociated with intellectual and moral excellence, but it is both irrational and impossible to love it, when that fact is known—as much so as it is to love the cold and lifeless embodiment of this in marble or on canvas; but even where this outward beauty is wanting, we can truly love the possessor of the noble and lovely spirit which dwells within—yes, and under the influence of that love, be led
to invest the outward form with an ideal but none the less effective beauty; just as many of you will do as you return, at the completion of your studies, to your loved and unforgotten homes. It may be a simple and unadorned cottage that contains the loved and loving ones, whom you are eager again to embrace; but, however it may appear to others, as the home of your fond and earliest memories, and as the abode of your dearest possessions, it has, even in its simplicity and rudeness, a beauty and a loveliness in comparison with which the splendor of gorgeous palaces is as insipidity and dullness. It is the living, loving spirit within, that invests the outward form with a fascination unapproachable without it. And some of you may have witnessed a still more impressive illustration of this. The outward beauty of some loved one—it may be a fond mother—like the bright hues of summer, have faded from her once beautiful face, and the chilling wind of life's wintry cares and sorrows may have dimmed the lustre of her eye, but has that mother's face lost any of its beauty to you? You may call it less beautiful, but do you, can you, feel it to be so? No, no, no! Summer's heat and winter's chill may mar and furrow that lovely visage, but never, no never, not even when cold in death, will it lose its enchanting power, or fail to attract the quenchless ardor of your heart's devotion! Thus we see, in the language of another, that "the highest type of beauty is never
merely physical; it is the out-gleamings of internal virtues, of sweet graces of character:

"Ay, for the soul is better than its frame,
The spirit than its temple. What's the brow,
Or the eye's lustre, or the step of air,
Or color, but the beautiful links that chain
The mind from its rare element. It sleeps beneath
The outward semblance, and to common sight
Is an invisible and hidden thing."

"When these moral and intellectual elements exist within a woman's soul, they will give such a sweet radiance to her life, such an expression to her countenance, that whatever may be her physical configurations, she will be lovely in the eyes of all, and most so in the eyes of those who know her best. Ah! she has what will make her beautiful when her dark hair shall be white with the snows of many winters—when the brightness of her eye shall be dimmed with tearful sorrows, the rose of her cheek faded and the symmetry of her form gone."* Of such a woman, we may well say with Mr. Bancroft, "Her presence in this briery world is as a lily among thorns."

It is easy to see now what constitutes true female education. As it is the inner graces of mind and heart that chiefly give her her wondrous influence, her education must consist chiefly in the cultivation of these, and not so much in attentions to the lighter

* Rev. Dr. Baldwin.
accomplishments of person and manners. There is no reason why female education should be materially diverse from that of the other sex. The intellectual and moral powers of the one are substantially the same with those of the other, and are quite as susceptible of cultivation. Besides, if woman, as God and nature designed her, is to be the companion of man, she must be similarly educated, or that companionship will be of a very limited and inferior character, and her chief mission, which is to influence the heart and life of the sterner sex, will prove a failure; for whatever may be the effect of first impressions, arising from personal and outward attractions, no woman whose education consists only or chiefly in these, can long command the respect, or influence the conduct, of an educated man. If she is fitted to shine only in the circles of fashion and gayety, at places of amusement, and in the repartee, the small-talk and the chit-chat of the drawing-room or the soiree, her influence will be felt only at those places and periods. She may there reign with queenly attraction and power, but her reign will be as transient as it is valueless. She may there achieve numerous conquests, and by the subtle spell of her charms compel even genius and learning to do homage at her shrine—yes, and to sue with acceptance for her hand; but it will be only to entail disappointment, sorrow and disgust upon him, and wretchedness upon herself.
Do not misunderstand me. I do not object to the outward graces, but only to their undue prominence and culture, to the exclusion of the more solid acquisitions of the heart and intellect. They are necessary, indispensably necessary, to the savor and effectiveness of true female excellence; but they are necessary only as the adornments of this—only as the flower is to the tree which it beautifies.

The true value of education in woman, is to be determined by its adaptedness to render her the charm and magnet of home. This, this is her special sphere—her throne, her dominion, her empire; and this, under God, is the source of all that is great and good in the character and achievements of mortals. The love of home is the almost certain and invariable companion of virtue and happiness in any bosom, while the absence of this, or a dislike of home, or a preference for other places, is an equally invariable concomitant of vice and misery. A being without a home—a restless, homeless wanderer—a fashionable, pleasure-seeking—but-never-finding vagrant of the wide, wide world, is little less than the exact counterpart of the first sad "fugitive and vagabond in the earth."

"He that is weary of his village plain,
May rove the Edens of the world in vain;
'Tis not, the star-crowned cliff, or cataract's flow,
The softer foliage or the greener glow,
The lake of sapphire or the sparkling cave,
The brighter sunset or the broader wave,
Can warm his heart whom every breeze has blown
To every shore, forgetful of his own."
Let all who desire the virtue and happiness of others, particularly of the young, seek by every proper means to fill them with the love of home. Let this be made to them the most attractive spot on earth. Let it first be invested with charms, and then let them be trained to feel and enjoy them —yes, at almost any price. Here, and here only, will they be shielded from the snares of the tempter and the poisonous influence of precocious depravity. Here they will acquire those tastes and principles which will render them deaf to the voice of temptation, and invulnerable to the shafts of vice. Oh, could the rising generation be universally imbued with this heaven-like love of home, the dark deluge of sin, which now covers so large a portion of the moral world, would soon be assuaged, and a regenerated earth would again "rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Chiefly to woman belongs the high, the momentous duty, of awakening and fixing this essential passion of the soul. This is her work. There can be no such thing as home without her. She is its very life and spirit, whether as daughter, sister, wife or mother. Her voice is its melody—her smile, its sun-light—her sympathy, its solace—her gentle ministry, its sweetness—her presence, its glory. Under her magic influence, the father forgets the cares and turmoils of the day—the brother turns away from his books and sports—the husband reposes amid his wearisome
toils—and lisping voices resound with gleeful melody. Happy, thrice happy, the possessor of this wondrous power! Yes,

“Happy; happier far than thou
With the laurel on thy brow;
She that makes the humblest hearth
Lovely but to one on earth.”

Young Ladies, be it your chief desire and your noblest effort, to prepare for this great and God-like work. Let all the powers of your heart and mind be tasked, and all the resources of learning and culture be laid under contribution for its best accomplishment. Deem it a hateful anomaly, a sinful perversion of your nature, to be more attractive abroad than at home—among strangers than among those who know and love you best. Here find ample range for the highest culture and the purest influence of which you are capable. A solemn and weighty responsibility is yours; to discharge which you need something more than the gifts of nature and the help of man. You owe it to religion—the religion of Jesus—that your sex now occupies the elevated and enviable position which ours so generally and cheerfully accords to it. Let that religion find in you its first and best supporters. For this, you are specially fitted. As one has truly said, “Female virtue and female charms naturally cluster around religion. A woman that is a sceptic is a sinner against nature. Morally, it is the same with both sexes; but this blight upon human character car-
ries with it a more obvious desolation when it falls upon woman."* Religious sentiment is in woman the all-adorning grace which imparts to every other grace its highest charm. Her beauty and attractiveness are sadly imperfect without religion.

Besides, in the uncertainty and dependence peculiar to her state, how unspeakably important that she know how to drink, and to drink deeply, at this fountain of spiritual comfort and support! and amid the memorials of her approaching dissolution, when all the adornments of beauty and the fascinations of person will be buried beneath the silent dust, to feel that

"Strong as the death it masters, is the hope
That onward looks to immortality:
Let the frame perish, so the soul survive,
Pure, spiritual and loving."

Some of you are soon to retire from these loved scenes of toil and pleasure, to sever the ties which friendship and grateful respect have formed, and to enter, ere long, upon the sober and solemn realities of life. God only knows the unrevealed future which awaits you—the parts you are respectively to perform in the great drama of human existence. But be that future what it may, let it be yours to honor the high position and to discharge the sacred trust which a gracious Heaven has assigned you. Live, and love, and labor for this. Let the wise and faithful counsels,

* Rev. Dr. Sears.
the careful training, and above all, the pious influence, which you have here received and felt, be embodied and perpetuated in your future life. Do not suppose that your education is now completed, and that you have nothing more to learn. It is in fact but just begun. The foundation has been laid, and now it is for you, under the varying providences and exigencies of life, to build up the immortal superstructure. That structure will not be completed till life's last hour has passed, and the din of labor has been hushed amid the silence and shadows of the tomb. Patient, gentle, trustful laborer! Loiter not, rest not from thy lovely toils. "Work while it is day, for the night cometh." Go forth in the strength of thy Saviour God, and amid the circling prayers and benedictions of loving, pious hearts; and till thy noble mission is completed, and life's toils and cares are ended, cease not to refresh thy weary spirit with Hope's cooling draught. Cease not to rejoice, that

"There is a place of sacred rest,
   Far, far beyond the skies,
Where beauty smiles eternally,
   And pleasure never dies:
My Father's house, my heavenly home,
   Where 'many mansions' stand,
Prepared by hands Divine for all
   Who seek the better land.

"In that pure home of tearless joy
   Earth's parted friends shall meet,
With smiles of love that never fade,
   And blessedness complete:
There, there adieu is sounds unknown,
   Death frowns not on that scene;
But life and glorious beauty shine
   Untroubled and serene."
The country is not ready for a change so great, and the people are unwilling to part with what they have, even though they may be in want. The constitution was not designed to provide for such extreme cases, and it is not the intention of the framers to allow it to be used for such purposes. The principles of liberty and equality must be maintained, and the government must be guided by these principles. It is the duty of the government to protect the rights of the people, and to ensure that they are not oppressed. It is the duty of the people to support their government, and to work towards the betterment of society. The constitution is the foundation of the government, and it must be respected and followed.