

Before the *Senatus Academicus* while the report of the Trustees of the Georgia University was under consideration.

*Mr. President.*—It is doubtless expected by the *Senatus Academicus*, that some member of the Board of Trustees will at large explain the objects of the Report just submitted to their consideration. I ask the indulgence and patient attention of this body, while I attempt that delicate task, and I would beg to commence the subject with a short history of the University, from its endowment to the present time. The objects of a work so vitally important, are best understood by reference to the sentiments which lie at its broad foundation, and these are to be found in the preamble to the charter of the University. These generous and noble motives, expressed in a language of rare composition and peculiar force, are known and felt but by few, because they are concealed in the rubbish of statutes entirely out of the field of literary taste and enquiry. It is the production of one of the ablest and most useful public servants of which Georgia can boast; it is none other than the venerable Abraham Baldwin. I ask the permission of the Board to read this preamble.

“As it is the distinguishing happiness of free governments that civil order should be the result of choice and not necessity, and the common wishes of the people become the laws of the land, their public prosperity, and even existence, very much depends upon suitably forming the minds and morals of their citizens. When the minds of the people in general are viciously disposed and unprincipled, and their conduct disorderly, a free government will be attended with greater confusions, and evils more horrid than the wild uncultivated state of nature: It can only be happy where the public principles and opinions are properly directed, and their manners regulated. This is an influence beyond the stretch of laws and punishments, and can be claimed only by religion and education. It should therefore be among the first objects of those who wish well to the national prosperity, to encourage and support the principles of religion and morality, and early to place the youth under the forming hand of society, that by instruction they may be moulded to the love of virtue and good order. Sending them abroad to other countries for their education will not answer these purposes, is too humiliating an acknowledgement of the ignorance or inferiority of our own, and will always be the cause of so great foreign attachments, that upon principles of policy it is inadmissible.

“This country, in the times of our common danger and distress, found such security in the principles and abilities which wise regulations had before established in the minds of our countrymen, that our present happiness, joined to the pleasing prospects, should conspire to make us feel ourselves under the strongest obligation to form the youth, the rising hope of our land, to render the like glorious and essential services to our country.”

It will be found, *Mr. President*, by the record just submitted, that in the year 1784, our forefathers, actuated by a spirit of benevolence unparalleled, for the infancy of the country, early felt the urgency of the claims of education upon a young but growing society, and impelled by a sense of duty, from the active influence of that spirit, hastened to make such provisions for the object, as might secure to the increasing population of the country, all those rich blessings that are ever flowing from intellectual illumination. It is peculiarly important to fix the attention strongly upon the zeal and generosity of those, on this interesting subject, who have gone before us—a people from whom we could expect but little, because they had but little to give; because they lived at a time when the country was almost a wilderness, and certainly a frontier on every side but one, and without the tenth part of the advantages which we enjoy, either from religion, refinement, wealth, or intelligence. For this purpose, I would first refer the Board to an act of the Legislature, passed in the same year with that of the charter granting to the University twenty thousand acres of land in each of the several counties, in a territory then but lately acquired from the Indians. A most noble and liberal donation, especially when it is considered to have sprung from an infant state, wanting almost every thing necessary to the physical and moral support of government. This land, from some unaccountable neglect, was never all surveyed and granted to the University. It was to have been allotted in five thousand acre tracts, and accordingly we received a grant for five thousand acres in the County of Hancock, the same in Greene, the same in Jackson, ten thousand in Oglethorpe, and the same in Franklin. This generous bounty, however, from the infancy of the country, from the great quantity of waste land, easily acquired from the state, by emigrants and others, under what was usually termed head rights, remained long unproductive, and indeed for many years produced but little more than paid for the improvement of the lands. Besides, this donation was most unfortunately impaired by causes entirely beyond the power of the trustees to control.—The state of Georgia had a dispute with our sister state, South Carolina, on the subject of territory, the latter claiming lands south of the Altamaha, and the former asserting boundary to the Keowee, the most northern branch of the Savannah river. This dispute, by a convention at Beaufort, resulted in a relinquishment on the part of South Carolina of her claim on the Altamaha, and a session on the part of Georgia of all the lands north of Tugalo river. By this arrangement the University lost ten thousand acres of its land, which happened to be situated between the Tugalo and Keowee rivers. Again, in the very act, which bestowed the lands on the College, there was a reserve of all the territory between the North and South forks of the Oconee river, for the term of one year, to be appropriated, as the