

**THREE LECTURES DELIVERED ON
THE GAY FOUNDATION OF THE
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY IN LOUISVILLE, KY.,
MARCH 24, 26, 27, 1896, PP. 8-116**

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W. R. L. SMITH

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1896.

*To the
venerable and beloved
DR. ROBERT RYLAND,
the contemporary and friend of Fuller, Jeter and Yates,
these lectures are affectionately
inscribed.*

cordial respect and unqualified admiration of teachers and fellow students.

Except in the elements of robust physical development, and thorough-edged intellect, this picture is the exact counterpart of the fortunes of the brave mountain boy of Virginia. Inherited culture, refinement, wealth and high social position poured out their copious gifts at the feet of the brilliant collegian, Richard Fuller, of Beaufort, South Carolina. In this lovely old seaboard town, half way between Charleston and Savannah, he was born April 22, 1804.

About the close of the Revolution of 1776, his parents, Thomas Fuller and Elizabeth Middleton were married, and at Beaufort established their home. From early colonial times, both of these had been honorable and distinguished names. The town is older than Charleston, its superior port having attracted some of the first settlers of the Carolinas. As early as 1562, French seamen anchored their vessels in the beautiful bay and named it, "Port Royal." The expanse of dimpling, crystal waters, laughing back to the blue heavens, girdled with ten thousand magnolias, water

oaks, and fragrant shrubs waving their green plumes in the sun, makes a scene of unexcelled natural loveliness. Either by the wilderness of mighty waters, rolling evermore, or in the wilderness of the mountains, does genius seem to find her congenial abode.

Ten children grew up like olive plants in this palatial home, five sons and five daughters, Richard being ninth in the succession. "Sheldon," was the name of the family's country residence, which was fifteen miles out of Beaufort on the mainland. Here they spent the happy winter months, and at the coming of warm weather with its attendant danger of malaria, they returned to the home by the sea.

Thomas Fuller, the wealthy planter, was a man of marked intelligence, and a valued member of the Episcopal Church, which for two generations had been the dominant religious and social organization of the community. In the winter of 1802 he became the subject of intense conviction of sin. The story of his experience, which he wrote in full for the guidance and comfort of others, is a most interesting bit of autobiography. Emerging from horrible

darkness into an unspeakable joy, he immediately united with the little Baptist Church, which had been organized in Beaufort just two years before. "It seemed impossible," said he, "that I should neglect baptism without some great disaster happening to me. I was baptized in the river with several negroes. This act has caused some estrangement between my friends and myself. Nevertheless, I shall ever have cause to rejoice that the blessed Lord my God has led me in this way." His wife was adorned with all those graces of mind and heart that make womanhood lovely. "Quick perception, sound judgment and energy of character," long standing characteristics of the Middleton family, were distinctly apparent in her. She made a profession of faith in Christ, the year following the baptism of her husband. With devoutness she responded to all his spiritual aspirations, and at her instance daily worship was instituted in the family. If the difficult task of building and maintaining a family altar is achieved, it must commonly arise from the resolute pertinacity of the mother.

It is said that, in mental gift, manner