Ben Broussard Graduation Charge, May 2004

In 1831, two men from opposite sides of the Atlantic went to sea, the Englishman as the head naturalist aboard the HMS Beagle, and the American as the sailing master aboard the USS Falmouth. Both men were very observant, an important attribute for being a scientist, and the observations made and data recorded by these men during their voyages would have a tremendous impact on the rest of their lives, not to mention the rest of the world. As young men, both took God's word very seriously. The Englishman said that during his time at Cambridge University that he "did not in the least doubt the strict and literal truth of every word in the Bible". The American, whose grandfather was a pastor and taught two future presidents, studied the Psalms so well as a child that even later in life he could quote them chapter and verse. However, upon returning from their voyages, their paths began to diverge. The Englishman, while incredibly observant, was lacking in other essential scientific skills. Dissection disgusted him, he was very poor at drawing, and he deeply regretted the fact that he never took the time to learn mathematics very well. Perhaps if he had, he would have made some realistic theories about the differences that he saw between animals. Perhaps he may have even beaten Gregor Mendel as the founder of genetics. Instead, he set out on a mission to disprove the creation account as written in the book of Genesis, and attempted to prove "that the species had not been separately created". In his attempt to exchange the truth of God for the lie, he had to use a lie, and the lie was in the form of a theory he called natural selection. The theory, however, was not based on anything natural, because, even with 5-years of data collection, the Englishman had no evidence of natural selection. Therefore, he based the theory on observations about artificial selection and some faked data by a man named Thomas Malthus. In his book titled an "Essay on Population", Malthus made up a relationship between population and food supply and said that as a population grows it will not be able to keep up with food production and disease, wars, and famines will help stabilize population. The Englishman applied Malthus' make-believe theory and made it the foundation of his theory of natural selection, which basically said that only the strong will survive. He published his theory in a book in 1859, which sold only 3,800 copies in its first year. Many have been deceived by this theory of natural selection, but fortunately it looks like it may be on its way out. However, the destruction that it has caused has been enormous. As an example, Eric Harris wore a t-shirt emblazoned with the words "natural selection" on the day he helped murder a dozen students at Columbine High School in 1999. Countless millions have lost their lives in the name of natural selection, including the millions killed by Hitler and the millions more killed by abortion doctors.

Now, the American was different. Not only was he observant like the Englishman, he was an excellent writer, artist, and mathematician. More importantly, he did not exchange the truth of God for the lie, but instead trusted God's word so completely that he based his life's work on one verse, Psalm 8:8, where God talks about "paths in the sea". The American set out to find these paths, with his purpose being to make sailing safer and faster. The first ship to use his Sailing Directions and Wind and Current charts was able to shave over a month off of a trip that normally took almost four. After word got out about the incredible results achieved with the new charts, 5,000 copies were distributed in a matter of weeks. But the American had other concerns, too. He was concerned that

navy midshipmen were not receiving a good education. He used the pseudonym of Harry Bluff to write articles discussing flaws in the current naval system, and pushed for an academy equal to West Point. While another took the credit for starting the naval academy, his service to naval education is inscribed on the west wing of the main academic hall of the U. S. Naval Academy.

By now, I am sure you know who the Englishman is (Charles Darwin). You may not know who the American is, however. His name is Matthew Maury, considered by most as the founder of oceanography. What is my point in telling you this story? First, when I compare you to these two men, I thank God that you are more like Matthew Maury than Charles Darwin! You are a godly young man, and you are good at math and science. I have heard you are good at acting, and it is said that Maury's writing style was influenced heavily by Shakespeare. My other point is best summarized in Colossians 2:8 "Do not be deceived by hollow and deceptive philosophies that are based on the traditions of men rather than on Christ". You have been given an excellent, godly education. You are about to go to a place that is full of the traditions of men, some of them good, some of them bad. Don't be like Darwin and trade it all in for a lie. Be like Maury and leave a legacy of service to God, man, and America.