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I.—LITERARY.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF UNION THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY.

BY PROF. W. W. MOORE.

I. THE BEGINNING, 1812-1823.

The Presbyterian Church in America was composed originally of emigrants from Great Britain and Ireland, and for a number of years the ministers of their various congregations were drawn from beyond the seas. As the church grew, however, and the population of the country increased, the supply thus obtained proved to be inadequate, and the necessity for a native ministry became more and more apparent. Academies and colleges were accordingly established from time to time during the eighteenth century at various places, such as Princeton, Lexington and Hampden-Sidney; and the candidates educated in these institutions received their theological training from the president of the college, when he chanced to be a minister (as was commonly the case), or from other approved divines here and there throughout the country. But not until 1812, the year of our second war with England, did the church establish an institution to be devoted exclusively to theological education. In that year Princeton Seminary was founded, with the Rev. Archibald Alexander (formerly President of Hampden-Sidney College) as its organizer and first professor. In the same memorable year the Synod of Virginia adopted the plan of a Seminary to be located within her bounds, inaugurated measures to raise funds for its sup-

FRANCIS S. SAMPSON, D. D.

Dr. Sampson was the son of Mr. Richard Sampson, an eminent and respected agriculturist in the neighborhood of Dover Hills, in the county of Goochland. He was born between the 1st and 5th of November, A. D. 1814. In 1830 he was placed at the school, and in the family of that man of God, Rev. Thornton Rogers, of Albemarle, who was his maternal uncle. Here he made a profession of religion, was baptized, and became a member of the Presbyterian church in Charlottesville, then in charge of Rev. Francis Bowman, on the 13th of Aug. 1831.

The 10th of September, of the same year, he entered the University of Virginia, and continued his studies there till July, 1836, taking a very extensive and thorough course of study, not only in the academic departments, but in the schools of junior law, anatomy and physiology, and securing the degree of M. A., which was then, as now, attained by very few.

Nov. 9, 1836, he entered Union Theological Seminary, Virginia. On the resignation of Prof. Ballantine, in the spring of 1838, he was made teacher of Hebrew, and from that time continued to perform other duties of the oriental department. He was licensed by East Hanover Presbytery in October, 1839, and ordained as an evangelist by the same Presbytery in October, 1841. In July, 1848, he took a journey to Europe, for the prosecution of his oriental studies, and returned in August, 1849, having spent the year chiefly at the Universities of Halle and Berlin. In October, 1848, he was elected professor of oriental literature and languages in the Seminary; but he had for many years performed the work of a full professor, though with the title and compensation of an assistant, and had long been esteemed as second to none of his colleagues in the value of his labors. About the time of his return from Germany he also received the honorary degree of D. D. from Hampden-Sidney College. He fell asleep Sabbath, the 9th of April, 1854, only thirty-nine years and five months old.

Thus brief and uneventful is the record of his life, which was passed almost wholly in the quiet shades of colleges. But the results of this life have not therefore been unimpor-

tant. The attempt will be made to draw the features of his character as a Christian and christian minister, a scholar and an instructor, in order that we may praise God for his grace manifested in him, and may receive the advantages of an example most modest, and yet illustrious.

In person, Dr. Sampson was a blonde, slender and agile in figure, scrupulously neat, tasteful and simple in dress. In mental faculties his spirit was eminently solid and symmetrical. His habits of thought and study equally methodical and thorough. He did not boast a remarkable verbal memory; but the results of his studies, always logically arranged in his mind, remained more permanently and fully his own than any man's we have ever known. His special studies were those of the linguist; but his knowledge of the sciences, of history, of philosophy, of systematic theology remained to the last as full and fresh as though these had continued his special subjects of study and teaching. His temper was profoundly modest and retiring; self-seeking and self-assertion seemed to have no place in his nature. No man was firmer or more inflexible in the courteous assertion of his convictions. His piety was, from the day of his youthful conversion, eminently decided, scriptural and profound. Holiness to the Lord was stamped upon all his conduct, as a citizen, a teacher and preacher, and as master, husband and father.

As a preacher, he was methodical, doctrinal, profoundly spiritual, elevated in style and fervent in manner. But next to his holy example, his value to Union Theological Seminary was in his unrivaled power as a teacher. His preparations were laborious and faithful. His admirable scholarship and mastery of his topics marked every recitation and lecture. His spirit in his class-room was animated and ardent; the most sluggish student could not resist its impulse. While he used the help of other scholars laboriously, his conclusions were most independent. Especially had he constructed his own system of Hebrew etymology; which while differing from all the grammars, was thoroughly scientific and simple. This threw a flood of light upon the declensions and paradigms of the language. It is ever to be regretted that he left no connected MS. setting forth the system, and that the only memorials of it are the imperfect notes of some of his pupils.

His premature death, just as the harvest time of his admirable mental culture was approaching, limited his authorship

to one posthumous volume; "Sampson on Hebrews." For this he had prepared a manuscript nearly complete, which, after his death, was made ready for the press by a surviving colleague.

Having set under the teaching of several of the most learned and able professors, who ever appeared on this side of the Atlantic, I am compelled by the truth to declare that Dr. Sampson's instructions were more valuable to me than those of any other living man.

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[This is the last article ever issued from the pen of Dr. Dabney, having been written upon the morning of his death.—Editor Magazine.]

