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ANNALS

OF THE

AMERICAN PULPIT;

OR

COMMEMORATIVE NOTICES

OF

DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN CLERGYMEN

OF

VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS,

FROM THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTRY TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIVE.

WITH HISTORICAL INTRODUCTIONS.

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BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

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VOLUME IV.
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By ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,

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District of New York.

Christ, having built this mighty earth, to die for the sinful creatures who creep on its surface." And at Chamouny he writes,—“Here, amid the sublimest of God’s works, I have communed with Him, and have endeavoured to reconsecrate myself to Him. O Lord, who by thy power settest fast the mountains, exert that power to make this poor, vile heart all thine own.” Such were the outpourings of his soul, while a wayfarer in Europe,—a pilgrim still to the Heavenly City.

He returned with but little improvement in health, to continue the struggle with his old infirmities. He died as he had lived, meek, patient, lowly, yet trustful,—counting himself nothing, and less than nothing, yet magnifying Christ, and resting calmly upon Him. I might fill pages with touching incidents of the closing scenes of his life. I will only give his last words. He was told that he was dying, and some inquiry was made as to the state of his mind. From some cause, perhaps from exhaustion, he did not at first reply. At length, however, calling his wife from the adjoining room, and throwing his arms around her neck, he exclaimed, “Triumph in Death! Triumph in Death!” She asked,—“Is it triumph in Jesus?” “Yes,” he answered, “in Jesus!”

Very respectfully and truly yours,

ASA D. SMITH.

ALBERT BALDWIN DOD, D. D.*

1828—1845.

ALBERT BALDWIN DOD, the son of Daniel and Nancy (Squier) Dod, was born in Mendham, N. J., March 24, 1805. His father was distinguished for mathematical taste and acquirements, and was by profession an engine builder. He was moreover a sort of universal genius,—was a profound and accurate theologian, wrote poetry, and could scarcely turn his hand to any thing in which he was not quickly at home. He resided at Elizabethtown, N. J., from 1812 to 1821, when he removed to the city of New York. On the 9th of May, 1823, he was killed by the explosion of the boiler on board the steamboat Patent, the machinery of which he had been employed to repair, and which, at the time of the explosion, was making an experimental trip on the East River.

The grandfather of Albert B. Dod, who originally resided in Virginia, but afterwards removed to New Jersey, was a man of a highly endowed and cultivated mind, and educated his numerous family himself, without ever sending them to school. Thaddeus Dod, his grandfather’s brother, was a graduate of the College of New Jersey in 1773, and was for many years an able minister of the Gospel, and an efficient friend of education, in Western Pennsylvania. In 1810 or 1811, Daniel Dod was invited to accept the Professorship of Mathematics in Rutgers College, but declined it. Charles Dod, the brother of Albert, was Professor of Mathematics and Modern Languages in Jefferson College from 1837 to 1839, when he resigned the place to become a Pastor. The family, for several generations, have been remarkable for both mathematical taste and talent.

* MS. from his family.

Albert was the second son of his parents, and was one of eight children,—five sons and three daughters. Of the sons, three became ministers, the others inherited or imbibed their father's taste for mechanics, and all keep up the reputation of the family for mathematics. Albert was like his father, not only in his mathematical taste, but in the versatility of his genius, and his quickness in mastering a difficult subject, amounting almost to intuition. From the time he knew how to read, he evinced a great fondness for books; and his brothers would often tell him that he ought to have been a girl, as he cared for nothing but to stay in the house and read. He was very affectionate in his spirit, and gentle in his manners, and always the favourite of the younger children. When his parents removed to Elizabethtown, he was seven years old; and from that time was kept constantly at school. He fitted for College at a classical school in the town, taught by a Mr. Smith. When he was fourteen, his teacher told his parents that it was useless for him to attend *his* school any longer, as he was in advance of his schoolfellows, and was prepared to enter the Sophomore class at Princeton. His parents, thinking that he was too young to commence a collegiate course, concluded to send him to Dr. Armstrong, who had resigned his pastoral charge, and was then teaching a classical school in the neighbouring town of Bloomfield. He remained there, however, but one term, and spent the winter of that year at home,—reading, and teaching the younger children of the family.

In the spring of 1821, being then fifteen years of age, he entered the Sophomore class in Princeton College, half advanced. He became hopefully pious the first year he was in College, and joined the Church in Princeton. He graduated in the autumn of 1822, being seventeen and a half years old.

The Hon. Samuel L. Southard and Mr. Dod's father had, from early life, been intimate friends. Mr. Southard, who was then Secretary of the Navy, attended the Commencement exercises, the year that Albert graduated, and immediately wrote to his father, congratulating him that he had a son of so much promise, and offering to advance him in the Navy, if he would consent to enter it. But the son had already chosen the ministry as his profession, and he wished to be engaged in teaching until he should be of suitable age to enter the Theological Seminary. When this was communicated to Mr. Southard, he immediately wrote back that application had just been made to him for a teacher, by a gentleman of his acquaintance near Fredericksburg, Va., and recommended that the son of his friend should accept the place. He did so, and went the same fall in which he was graduated, and remained there, in circumstances very agreeable to him, between three and four years.

On his return from Virginia, he remained at home a few months, and in the autumn of 1826, became a member of the Theological Seminary at Princeton. The next year, he accepted a Tutorship in Princeton College, still continuing his theological studies, as he had opportunity. He was licensed to preach, in the spring of 1828, by the Presbytery of New York; but retained his office as Tutor till 1829. In 1830, he was appointed to the Mathematical Professorship in the College,—a place that was eminently congenial with his tastes and habits. This appointment he accepted, and discharged the duties of the office with signal ability and fidelity. Here he continued till his death, which took place November 20, 1845. He died

of pleurisy, after an illness of a week, having, during the whole time, maintained the utmost serenity of spirit.

Professor Dod was invited to take charge of several different congregations; but uniformly declined from a conviction that his usefulness could not be promoted by leaving the College. He, however, preached a great deal; and his labours were frequently put in requisition to supply destitute pulpits in both New York and Philadelphia. He published nothing except a few articles in the *Biblical Repertory*. One of those articles on Transcendentalism, was printed in a separate pamphlet, and attracted great attention.

He was married, in April 1830, to Caroline S., daughter of the late Hon. Samuel Bayard, of Princeton. They had nine children, seven of whom survived him.

The degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by the University of North Carolina in 1844, and by the University of New York, in 1845.

I had the pleasure of an acquaintance with Professor Dod during the last two or three years of his life, and was always much impressed with his vivacity of manner, his pertinent and pithy remarks, the utter absence of every thing like ostentation, and his uncommonly obliging and generous spirit. I have rarely met with a person who has seemed to take so much pleasure as he did in rendering others happy.

FROM THE REV. CHARLES HODGE, D. D.,

PROFESSOR IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT PRINCETON.

PRINCETON, February 21, 1855.

Rev. and dear Sir: The Rev. Albert B. Dod was appointed Professor of Mathematics in the College of New Jersey, in April, 1830, and from that time, until the day of his death, in November, 1845, I was in the habit of intimate and constant intercourse with him.

He was rather above the ordinary standard in height; somewhat inclined to stoop; rather square shouldered; but active and graceful in his movements and carriage. His head was unusually large; his forehead broad, but not high; his eyebrows massive and projecting; his eyes hazel, brilliant and deep seated; his countenance intellectual and pleasing. His disposition was very cheerful and amiable, which rendered him, with his extraordinary conversational powers, peculiarly agreeable as a companion. His reputation as a talker threatened, at one time, to eclipse his fame in higher departments. But this was only the sparkling of a really deep and rapidly moving stream.

He had a taste for literature and the fine arts, and considerable fertility of imagination, and was, I think, disposed to estimate these gifts at a higher value than his more solid mental qualities. To me it always appeared that his understanding, his power of clear and quick discernment, of analysis and lucid statement, and of logical deduction, was the leading power of his mind, to which his reputation and usefulness were mainly due.

It was this that gave him his success and power as a teacher. There was nothing he could not make plain. Provided his pupils had the requisite preliminary knowledge, he rendered the most abstruse departments of Mathematics so clear, that his students became enthusiastic in their admiration of himself, and in their love for the science. It was his delight to unfold the *rationale* of all the processes of his department, and to elevate his pupils to the study of the philosophy of every subject which he taught. He was, therefore, most successful with

the more intelligent class of students; with the dull, as he had no fellow-feeling, he was prone to have too little patience. This mastery of his subject, and this superiority of intellect, made him exceedingly popular as an instructor. When, on one occasion, he attended the annual examination of the Cadets at West Point, as a visitor, he evinced so clearly these powers of mind, that the Cadets and Professors united in an application to the Government for his appointment as Chaplain and Professor of Moral Philosophy. This incident shows how striking was the exhibition of talent, which any suitable occasion was certain to call forth.

To this clearness and discrimination of mind is also to be referred his fondness for metaphysics, and his skill in the discussion of subjects connected with that department. Those of his writings which excited general attention, are on topics of this character. Reference may be made to the able articles in the Princeton Review, proceeding from his pen, in illustration and confirmation of his peculiar talents for philosophical discussion. His mind was always on the alert, and teeming with thoughts and suggestions. It was a common thing for him, when he entered my study, to say,—“I was thinking, as I came along, of such or such a question,”—announcing some problem in mental or moral science. Indeed I do not know that I ever was acquainted with a man, who so constantly suggested important topics of conversation, or kept the minds of his friends more on the stretch. His consciousness of power in debate, no doubt, contributed to the formation of this habit; for the pleasure of discussion was in his case so great, that he would often start paradoxical opinions, either for the sake of surprising his hearers, or exercising his skill in defending them.

The talent to which I have referred was conspicuously displayed in all public assemblies. Had his life been spared, I doubt not he would soon have established for himself the reputation of one of the ablest debaters in our Church.

His best and most effective sermons are distinguished by the same character of mind. He undervalued, at least at one part of his life, emotional preaching. He did not seem to estimate aright how great and how permanent a good was effected by any preacher who calls into lively exercise the devotional feelings of his audience. Professor Dod aimed rather to lodge in the understanding some fundamental principle of truth or duty, which should become part of the governing convictions of the mind. He was accustomed to say that if he could make his hearers see that they are responsible for their faith, or that expediency is not the rule of right, or that things unseen are more real and powerful than the things that are seen, or some such general truth, he would do them far greater service than by any excitement of their feelings. His sermons were generally constructed on that principle; and many of them are of permanent value. His voice was melodious, and his delivery free and untrammelled by his notes, which were generally written out in full. Though his preaching, in the later years of his life, was generally addressed more to the understanding than to the affections, yet he had great emotional power, and could, when roused himself, control in an uncommon degree the feelings of his audience.

Professor Dod has now been dead more than nine years. I have not yet ceased to mourn for his departure as a personal loss. I regarded him as one of the most gifted men of our Church. His having chosen an academical instead of a pastoral career kept him in a measure aloof from our Ecclesiastical Courts, and turned his attention rather to Science than to Theology. But I have a strong conviction that he had in him rich stores of undeveloped resources, which, had it pleased God to prolong his life, would have rendered him one of the most eminent and useful ministers of our Church.

Very truly your friend,

CHARLES HODGE.