

“The Dead of the Synod of Georgia.”

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NECROLOGY:

OR

MEMORIALS OF DECEASED MINISTERS,

WHO HAVE DIED DURING THE FIRST  
TWENTY YEARS AFTER ITS  
ORGANIZATION.

PREPARED IN OBEDIENCE TO THE ORDER OF THE SYNOD.

WITH A

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

BY

JOHN S. WILSON, D. D.,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ATLANTA, GEORGIA.

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*The memory of the just is blessed.*—Prov. x: 7.

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## REV. THOMAS GOULDING, D. D.

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For the following commemorative notice of the Rev. Dr. Goulding we are principally indebted to the papers of the Rev. Dr. Talmage and the Hon. Joseph H. Lumpkin, found in Sprague's Annals of the American Pulpit. Having enjoyed a somewhat intimate acquaintance with him for thirteen or fourteen years as a co-presbyter, we can cordially endorse what they have said of his excellence as a man and a minister. For many years he lived in almost daily expectation of death. He felt he had the sentence of death within him, and that at any moment he might be called from earth. We remember well an observation he made to us the last interview we had with him: speaking of some expected event, he calmly remarked, "*I shall go up yonder some of these days suddenly*"—lifting his hand and turning his eye heavenward. He lived more habitually in expectation of his departure than almost any man we ever knew. He kept his lamp trimmed and his light burning in readiness for the coming of the bridegroom. His disease, an affection of the heart, he regarded as hereditary, his mother, we think, having died of it.

The following letter is from the Rev. Samuel K. Talmage, addressed to Dr. Sprague, and dated,

OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, January 23, 1849.

*My Dear Sir*—I cheerfully comply with your request, that I should furnish you with a brief notice of the life, and some estimate of the character of my ever venerated friend, the late Rev. Dr. Thomas Goulding.

Thomas Goulding was born in Midway, Liberty county, Ga., March 14, 1786. At the time of his death, he was the oldest of fifteen Presbyterian ministers from one Church, occupying usefully and honorably various and important responsible stations in the South. He was the first native licentiate of the Presbyterian Church in Georgia.

It might be profitable to enquire why the one Church of Midway, Liberty county, has furnished more Presbyterian ministers for the State

of Georgia than all the other ninety-two counties united. The influence of one little colony of Puritans that made its way thither, through a scene of trials and disasters, from Dorchester, Mass., who can describe? Heaven's register will unfold many a page which earth's historians fail to write. What the Christian Church does for the State, the world will never fully know.

At the age of sixteen, young Goulding was sent to Wolcott, Conn., where he received the principal part of his academic education. He prosecuted the study of the law in New Haven, in the office of Judge Daggett. He was married to Ann Holbrook, in Southington, Conn., in November, 1806. In April, 1810, he became connected with the Church in his native place, (Midway,) and soon felt it to be his duty to devote himself to the work of the Christian ministry.

Towards the close of the year 1811 he was received as a candidate, under the care of the Harmony Presbytery,\* and was licensed to preach the gospel in December, 1813. A few months after his licensure, he commenced preaching as stated supply at White Bluff, and was ordained and installed pastor of that Church January 1st, 1816. Here he labored faithfully, acceptably and successfully for about six years, during which time the warmest reciprocal attachments were formed between himself and his flock. In 1822 he resigned his charge, and removed to Lexington, Oglethorpe county. Here he remained for eight years, during which he exerted an influence over some of the first minds in the State, which is now telling and will forever tell on the best interests of men. Many a community is now reaping rich spiritual blessings, the source of which—unknown to themselves—is in the honored instrumentality of this faithful man of God. On the establishment of the Theological Seminary by the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia, he was elected by the Synod its first, and for a time, its only Professor.

He was honored with the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of North Carolina in 1829.

For one year he instructed a Theological class at Lexington in connection with his pastoral labors, and was transferred by direction of the Synod to Columbia, South Carolina, the present site of the Seminary.

After serving the Church laboriously in the department of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government for several years, in connection with others associated with him, he resigned his chair as Professor, and was called to his late charge in Columbus, Ga., in January, 1835. For thirteen years and a half he was the laborious and faithful pastor of that Church. He found it comparatively weak, and by his persevering fidelity raised it to influence and strength.

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\* Harmony Presbytery included all the seaboard of Georgia at that period, and until 1821, when the Presbytery of Georgia was set off.

He was, for many years in succession, elected President of the Board of Trustees of Oglethorpe University, which office he held at the time of his death. He died, as was his oft expressed wish, "with his harness on." On the evening of the 26th of June, 1848, he attended his usual weekly lecture. He was in a state of great bodily debility when he left his house, and was attacked, whilst in the house of God, with a paroxysm from an affection of the heart, under which he had long been laboring. With great effort, he finished the service. The subject of his lecture was taken from the first four verses of the 63d Psalm—"O God, thou art my God," etc. It was a fitting theme for the veteran soldier of the cross to dwell upon, just as he had reached the portals of his Father's house. It was a suitable topic to present in his last address to his beloved parishioners. And happy were they who did not allow themselves to be detained from the service.

Within one short hour from his pronouncing the benediction upon his hearers, he was called, I doubt not, to hear the benediction pronounced upon his own spirit from the lips of the Saviour whom he loved, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

On retiring from the place of worship, he hastened to his chamber in a state of great exhaustion. He had scarcely reclined upon his couch, when a violent paroxysm of his disease seized him. He rose to lean upon the mantle, his accustomed source of relief, but relief came not; the usual remedies proved unavailing. In the intense agony which he suffered, he said to a friend, that he would be glad if it would please the good Lord soon to take him away, as his sufferings were very great. To a beloved son, who was overwhelmed at witnessing his agony, he administered a tender rebuke. He was presently heard, by one of his daughters, uttering the prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly." That prayer was heard: he ceased to breathe—his spirit was at rest.

The high estimation in which he was held was manifested at his death by many unequivocal signs. It was evinced in the deep sorrow that pervaded the whole city in which he lived, as the mournful intelligence spread through its habitations; in the thronged assemblage and flowing tears witnessed at the funeral rites; and in the strong expressions of regret with which the sad tidings were received among his large circle of friends and acquaintances abroad.

Dr. Goulding possessed a fine intellect and cultivated taste. His pulpit exercises were far above the ordinary standard, and especially when his bodily infirmities did not interfere with the free exercises of his physical and mental energies. He was a well read and polished scholar, and had gathered rich harvests in the fields of literature.

More engaging attributes still were the strength and tenderness of his sensibilities, and the sincerity and fervor of his piety. He was susceptible of strong friendships, for his feelings were of the most ardent



kind. There was also in his character a childlike simplicity, that won irresistibly upon his associates. If these attractive qualities had their corresponding infirmities, they were the natural result of his rare gifts, and he would have been the last man to claim exemption from the frailties of humanity. Conscious of his own integrity, he looked for honesty in others, and was liable to be imposed on by the crafty and designing; whilst, again, the strength of his attachments made him feel the want of reciprocity from others, whose colder natures could not yield the equivalent which the warm heart requires.

His favorite pursuit was the investigation of theological truth. The inspired volume was the book he loved best to study, and to hold up to the admiration of his fellow-men. He was well informed in, and thoroughly devoted to, the doctrines and polity of his own Church, and was an able advocate of both. But, as his own judgment was based on faithful investigation and honest conviction, so his heart was open to embrace all the real disciples of Christ. And so it is, that true piety evokes insensibly a corresponding tone of harmony from every other heart which the Spirit of God has strung to Christian unison. The genuine impulses of true religious experience outrun the slow deductions of argument, and bigotry itself is disarmed before the eloquence of love. The illuminations of the Spirit dissolve sophistries and overthrow prejudices which logic cannot demolish; and a heart overflowing with enlightened Christian charity sometimes creates to itself a benignant centre of attraction, where the most discordant materials are fused into homogeneous union, and caused to move in harmony.

It was his delight to expatiate on the doctrines of the cross, and proclaim them to his fellow-men. He was no reluctant hireling servant in the spiritual vineyard. He loved his covenanted work, and was ever ready, in season and out of season, in public and in private, to hold forth the claims and vindicate the honors of his gracious Master.

With all his natural and acquired endowments, he was modest and retiring, and shrunk from public observation. It was, doubtless, owing to this fact that he was not before the public so often and so prominently as many others. But whenever he was drawn out to some public service, all felt his power, and paid the tribute of profound respect to the originality of his thoughts, the energy of his manner, and the beauty and simplicity of his style.

Though, from bodily infirmity, his brethren were often, of late years, deprived of the pleasure of seeing him in our ecclesiastical convocations, his occasional presence was hailed with great satisfaction; and they sorrow now that they shall see his face no more.\*

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\* Dr. Goulding, by appointment of the General Assembly, opened the first session of the Synod of Georgia, that met in Macon on the 20th of November, 1845, with a sermon from Acts xx: 28, and was elected its first Moderator.

In person, Dr. Goulding was of medium stature, full habit, round contour of face, high forehead, with a countenance expressive of deep feeling and vigorous intellect. In his manners, there was a graceful simplicity, blended with a commanding dignity, that was exceedingly winning. His manner in the pulpit, whenever his health and spirits were good, was at once pleasing and impressive—its two prominent elements consisting in tenderness and earnestness.

He left a wife and nine children, having lost one in childhood. He lived to enjoy the satisfaction of seeing most of his children connected with the Church of Christ. One of his sons and two of his sons-in-law, are ministers of the gospel.

I am, dear sir, yours truly,

SAMUEL K. TALMAGE.

*From the Hon. Joseph H. Lumpkin, Chief Justice of the State of Georgia.*

ATHENS, GA., May 19, 1857.

*Dear Sir*—I regret that your letter finds me so oppressed with engagements, and withal in such imperfect health, that it is quite out of my power to comply with your request in any such way as will be satisfactory either to you or myself. I am unwilling, however, absolutely to decline it; and will, therefore, in a very hurried way, just hint at what seem to me to have been some of the most prominent features in Dr. Goulding's character. My opportunities for knowing him could scarcely have been better than they were. I received my first permanent religious impressions and joined the Church under his ministry, and was afterwards, for many years, a member of his session. I loved him as a man, and revered him as a pastor; and I would gladly do anything in my power to honor and perpetuate his memory.

Dr. Goulding's character was formed of a rare combination of intellectual and moral qualities, that fitted him to be at once eminently popular and eminently useful. His intellect was much above the ordinary standard, and it had been cultivated by diligent and long continued study. As a preacher, he was always sensible and instructive; and sometimes his pulpit efforts rose to a very high order of excellence. He was a thorough Calvinist of the Geneva school; nor could any considerations of policy induce him to relax, in public or private, one jot or tittle of his creed. The doctrine of justification by faith he regarded as an epitome of the Christian system—as embodying its life and power; and this in its connections undoubtedly formed the favorite theme of his ministrations. No one could sit under his ministry, with any degree of attention, without gaining very definite views of the system of doctrine which he held and inculcated, as well as a deep impression of the importance he attached to it. He was alike explicit and earnest.

It has been my privilege to listen to the most prominent divines both in the United States and Great Britain, and in one respect it has seemed

to me that Dr. Goulding has never been exceeded within my knowledge—I mean as a preacher of funeral sermons. To this service, which is acknowledged, I believe, to be one of the most difficult which a clergyman ever has to perform, he brought a degree of delicacy, discrimination and pathos, that commanded not only the attention, but the admiration of his hearers.

Though Dr. Goulding had in some respects a woman's heart, and was of tender and delicate sensibility, he was always firm to his convictions of what was true and right. In worldly matters he was the merest child. Conscious of entire sincerity himself, he seemed scarcely capable of suspecting the sincerity of others. A more unselfish man than he never lived. In all circumstances he showed himself a model gentleman, as well as a model Christian. He had an instinctive discernment of all the proprieties of life, and practiced them with most scrupulous care and consideration. In the social circle he was the most genial of companions. He had at his command a fund of anecdotes, many of which were connected with his own history, that were both amusing and instructive, and he knew how to turn them to the very best account.

That Dr. Goulding was an eminently pious man, no one I believe ever doubted, who knew him. And he assured me that if he was ever regenerated it was while he was asleep. Wearied with his burden of sin, and his fruitless search to find a Saviour, he sunk despairingly into a profound slumber, and awoke praising God for his great salvation. I state the fact without comment.

Regretting to send you so meagre a notice of my venerable friend and pastor, when my feelings would dictate a fuller and worthier tribute to his memory,

I am, sir, very truly, your obedient servant,

JOSEPH H. LUMPKIN.

### *The Synod of Georgia on the Death of Dr. Goulding.*

At a meeting of the Synod at Greensboro', Ga., November 27th, 1848, the following resolutions were adopted:

“WHEREAS, It has pleased Almighty God, during the past year, to remove by death the Rev. Thomas Goulding, D.D., an honored and beloved member of this body;

*Resolved,* That we recognize the hand of an inscrutable but All-wise Providence in this dispensation by which one of our most useful pastors has been taken from a beloved Church; a wise counsellor and a valuable member has been removed



from our Synod, and the Church at large deprived of one of her ablest and most faithful servants.

*Resolved,* That while we mourn the removal of our lamented father and brother from the scenes of his earthly labors, yet we rejoice in the blessed memory he has left behind, and in the confident assurance that he has entered upon that 'rest that remaineth for the people of God.'