

ADDRESS

AT THE

FUNERAL

OF THE

Rev. Henry Augustus Boardman, D. D.,

BY THE

REV. PROF. A. A. HODGE, D. D.,

JUNE 21, 1880.

PHILADELPHIA:

1881.

PHILADELPHIA:

THE CHANDLER PRINTING HOUSE,

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Funeral Address.

THE sorrow which fills all our hearts to-day has not its ground in a mere sentiment. We weep not merely because our affections are wounded, and the tender and sacred associations of the past abruptly severed, or simply that one of the noble monuments of the good old times is removed from its place. But we have all in various ways experienced a terrible positive loss. Although our Father and Friend had lived well beyond the appointed period of human life, and had completed a well-rounded life-work, he had never for one moment ceased to be a positive beneficent power in the present, and we had fondly hoped that he would continue to be so in the near future also. No class of men in the entire community are fulfilling a more important function for the general good than the venerable Fathers in the beautiful Autumn of their days, enriched with all the wisdom which comes from a sanctified experience, armed with the sources of in-

fluence which have accumulated through all the years of a well spent past, and transfigured like the setting sun, with the coming glories of the heavenly world. This throne of beneficent power was, in a singularly perfect manner, occupied by our deceased Father and Friend. The pre-eminent gracefulness which had characterized even his early and middle life, adorned his old age to an unparalleled degree. Although his body was feeble, it yet bore no marks of extreme age, and although he lacked the vigor of his prime, his powers of expression, whether by pen or speech, had by no means sensibly declined, and his intellect and all the living forces of his soul were even more luminous than ever. He maintained unsevered all his old relations to the congregation, the Theological Seminary, and the church at large. In several of these spheres he was as active, and was as busily transacting important and delicate trusts, and was as much the object of general respect and confidence, as in any former period of his life. He filled a very large and important place in the present, and it is no disrespect to others to say that in no one of these trusts is there a man living who can adequately take the place rendered vacant by his death, how much less then is there any one who can take *his* place, and fill as he filled, to the satisfaction and advantage of all, the whole circle of trusts which depended upon him.

We therefore have reason, this day, to be filled with sorrow, because we have lost so much, and because, out of God, our loss is absolutely irreparable.

This is the plain matter of fact, and if through impatience with pain we strive to disguise it, or represent it to ourselves in another light, we shall shut out from our eyes the lesson intended by the providence, and so cut ourselves off from the compensating blessings it may possibly bring to us in the end. When God smites us he always intends that we shall feel the sting of the blow, and even the lingering heart-breaking ache of the irreparable loss. It is a fact, God has intentionally caused it to be a fact, that this family has lost its Father, and in all its future history his place will remain unfilled—this congregation has lost the great preacher whose long pastorate will always mark the heroic age of its history—the Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia has lost its most illustrious member, its venerable head and ornament. The Presbyterian Family of Churches in the United States have lost their most admirably qualified Chairman and spokesman to represent them before the assembled Presbyterians of the World in the General Presbyterian Council to be held in this City in the Autumn of this year, and Princeton Theological Seminary has lost its wise counselor, its influential and untiring friend. The Lord has

stricken us to the heart with his own hand. Let us not shrink from feeling all its crushing pain that his purpose in wounding us may be fully realized. It is God's wonderful prerogative to bring good out of evil, and gain out of loss, but the evil and loss remain always what they are in themselves.

But while we ought to recognize the fact that we have met with a great disaster, it is nevertheless our privilege to sorrow after a Godly sort. The same God who made our friend, and who endowed him so plenteously with the adornments of grace and the gifts of beneficent service, and who by His grace and providence has supported and directed him in his past usefulness has now removed him. This family, this congregation, this great Presbyterian denomination, our Princeton school of the Prophets are dearer to the Divine heart which has inflicted this blow, than they are to us. *Therefore we are not deserted.* We are not only to submit to the inevitable, but to kiss the rod in the assurance of the infallible wisdom and unselfish love which have directed it and given it its piercing sting. As the Romanistic believer interposes the crucifix and the ritual between his faith and Christ, and passionately clings to that system which professes to make divine realities matters of sight, so we Protestants, who share the same nature, put these beautiful

old saints, glorified in the light of their closing day, between us and Christ, and cling to them as to that which makes Him and His saving power visible and tangible to us. We cannot bear to be driven out from the shelter of our accustomed prophets and apostles. But when God removes them one by one from our sight, we have no choice, we are under the necessity of walking by faith, alone with the invisible God. It is very hard at first. We must go with our church despoiled of its heads and ornaments; we must grope our way without the living voices of our old teachers and guides; we must work our own way to death without the cheering presence of the old saints. But doubtless it will be better in the end. Death is a step upward to a higher grade. Our old Father, and Pastor and Friend has been promoted, and his promotion has lifted us all up a step higher with himself. And now and always hereafter, we shall have another reason for looking beyond all created help directly to God, and for cultivating that spiritual sense which independently of all symbols, and of all created media, opens the soul directly to the life and radiance of the heavenly world.

His life was full of fruitful labors, as well as of distinguished honors, the wonderful story of which will hereafter be given to you by a competent hand. The whole will be appreciated as more wonderful because

of the pathetic fact that his work was accomplished under the condition of constant physical feebleness, and of frequent and protracted interruption because of severe illness.

The foundation for this was laid in a severe attack of sickness contracted on a necessary visit to the North only two weeks after his installation. This led to suspension of his ministry for several weeks, or months together. In 1847 he was for a year absent in Europe, and in later years these absences were more frequent. He has found refuge at the sea-shore, and in the invigorating climates of the North-west. These frequent relapses exhausted gradually the resources of an originally fine constitution, and left him at the last exceedingly feeble and liable to be prostrated by comparatively slight attacks of acute disease.

This long continued dispensation of pain and weakness with the blessing of divine grace contributed to perfect and to add new and higher excellences to the graces of nature. His Christian faith, and love, and hope bloomed years ago in singular beauty and fragrance, but in more recent years they have ripened to a perfection altogether heavenly. He waited for his change, his face shining with the slanting rays of the rising sun of an eternal day. Meanwhile he sought to labor while the earthly day lasted, On the middle day

of the week preceding his translation he wrote with great tenderness to a special friend, of a matter which it was very near to his heart to accomplish for the Church of God, in which letter with almost the spirit of prophecy, he alludes not only to this as being the last service he might render to the church, but also to the fact that but little time was left to him to accomplish any earthly work. In the end he suffered physical pain, but no apprehension of immediate death. His Heavenly Father ordered the manner of his departure with infinite tenderness. He slept in peace to awake in glory.

His almost peerless sweetness and loveliness in the social circle a large band of friends as well as his own children will never forget, nor allow to be forgotten in the next generation. His beautiful face was transparent to the radiations of a beautiful soul. His overflowing love, his quick and wide sympathy, his bright and inexhaustible humor, and his ready wit, and clear intelligence and perfect refinement made him a most delightful companion, and connected with his unswerving loyalty made him an inexpressibly precious friend.

I stand here to-day because I am the son of his life-long friend in Princeton. He addressed to my Father the exquisitely beautiful salutation, in the name of the

Board of Directors, on the semi-centennial anniversary of his Professorship. On his eightieth birth-day, Dr. Boardman signalized the event in the "*Presbyterian*" without signing his name. To this the older friend responded in a letter as yet unprinted:—

PRINCETON, *Jan. 15, 1878.*

MY DEAR DOCTOR:—

If you were in one room and Adelina Patti singing in another, the doors being opened, you would not need to ask who it was. So when I read the article in the last "*Presbyterian*," I was at no loss as to its author, I know only one man who has the goodness, the skill, the delicacy and refinement which it manifests, I would be a churl if I were not grateful for such a tribute.

We are looking forward to the pleasure of seeing you next week.

Your affectionate Friend,

CHARLES HODGE.

When our Father died his sons immediately applied to his friend to deliver the funeral address, and afterwards to write his permanent memoir. He was prevented only by the weakness of the flesh. And now alas it is left to me with my unskillful fingers to attempt to weave a chaplet for both their brows. They are together now, and have taken their places with the immortals:—

We know not
What holy joys are there,
What radiancy of glory
What light beyond compare.

There is the throne of David,
And there from care released,
The song of them that triumph,
The shout of them that feast.

And they who with their Leader
Have conquered in the fight,
Forever and forever, are clad in robes of light.