

✓
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.

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

—
VOLUME IV.
—

NEW YORK:
ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,
530 BROADWAY.
1858.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856.

By ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern
District of New York.

JOHN MITCHELL MASON, D. D.*

1792—1829.

JOHN MITCHELL MASON was born in the city of New York, March 19, 1770. He was a son of the Rev. John Mason, D. D., who emigrated from Scotland to this country in 1761, and took the pastoral charge of the Scotch Presbyterian Church in Cedar Street, New York, where he laboured with great fidelity and success, until his death in 1792. One of the noblest tributes which a son ever paid to the memory of a father, is to be found in the Address which Dr. Mason (the son) delivered before the Presbytery, relative to the resignation of his pastoral charge;—a tribute which no one can read without feeling a sentiment of veneration for the parent, and of admiration for the intellectual greatness and filial sensibilities of the son.

Young Mason is said to have been characterized, in his childhood, by a freedom from every thing vicious, an unusual sprightliness of temper, and a strong relish for study. It was obvious, in the earliest development of his powers, that he possessed an intellect of no common order; and the rapid improvement and brilliant exhibitions of the boy gave no equivocal presage of the pre-eminent greatness of the man. His father, who was distinguished for his classical attainments, mainly conducted his education, up to the time of his admission to College; and it was during this period that he laid the foundation of those habits of intellectual discipline, for which he was subsequently so much distinguished. In May, 1789, he was graduated at Columbia College in his native city, at the age of a little more than nineteen. After having alluded to his diligent application, it is hardly necessary to add that, with such powers as he possessed, he held a distinguished rank in point of scholarship. His comprehensive, brilliant, versatile mind gave him the power of attaining the highest rank in any department of learning to which he applied himself; while he is said to have been actually most distinguished for his familiarity with the classics, and with metaphysical science.

The foundation of his religious character seems to have been laid, at a very early period, in the blessing of God on a course of faithful parental efforts. His mind was imbued with a knowledge of the great truths of the Gospel, as soon as its faculties were sufficiently developed to admit of comprehending them; and these truths seem to have become very early, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, the commanding principles of his conduct. He once incidentally remarked that, at the age of ten, he used sometimes to go into the garret, taking with him Ralph Erskine's work, entitled "Faith's Plea upon God's word," and, as he read it, to weep in view of his sins, and humbly supplicate God's mercy. At seventeen, his religious views and feelings were so matured and settled, that he made a public profession of religion, and was received to the communion of the church of which his father was pastor.

* Memoir prefixed to his work.—McElroy's Fun. Serm.—Snodgrass' do.—MS. from Rev. J. H. M. Knox.

From the time of his leaving College, and probably at an earlier period, his views seem to have been directed towards the Christian ministry. His course of preparation for the sacred office was begun and continued for a while under the direction of his father; and it was during this period that he became so familiar with the original languages of the Bible, especially the Greek;—a circumstance which he afterwards turned to great account in his expository labours. But, after having passed a year under his father's instruction, he crossed the ocean in 1791, with a view to complete his theological course at the University of Edinburgh. Here he was honoured with the respect and friendship of many distinguished men, among whom were Doctors Hunter and Erskine, who rendered him marked attentions, and continued his cordial friends through life. Here also he became associated, as a student, with several individuals with whom he formed an enduring intimacy, and who have since risen to the highest respectability and usefulness.

One of the most important advantages which he seems to have derived from his connection with the University, was the admirable facility which he acquired at extemporaneous speaking. He possessed an original talent for this, in no common degree; and here he had an opportunity to cultivate it, which, at that time, he could scarcely have enjoyed in an equal degree anywhere else. Connected with the University there was a Theological Society, composed of students, which held its meetings every week, for the purpose of mutual improvement; and the exercises of this Society consisted chiefly in extemporaneous debate. In these exercises Mr. Mason had a prominent share; and no doubt this was an important part of the instrumentality by which he ultimately attained a rank among the first extemporaneous preachers of the age.

Towards the close of the year 1792, his course in the University was suddenly arrested by his receiving the afflictive intelligence of the death of his father, together with an invitation to take the pastoral charge of the church with which his father was connected. Considering that it was the church in the bosom of which he had been born and educated, and that he was now but little more than twenty-two years of age, this might have seemed, at first view, a hazardous experiment; but the knowledge which they had of his talents and piety, and their conviction that he was destined to eminent usefulness, led them unhesitatingly to direct their eyes towards him as their spiritual guide. The event proved that their confidence was not misplaced. In compliance with their wishes, he returned immediately to this country; was licensed to preach in November, 1792; and, after preaching for them a few months, was installed in April, 1793, as their Pastor. In this relation he continued, growing in favour and usefulness, for seventeen years. On the 13th of May succeeding his installation, he was married to Anna, the only child of Abraham Lefferts of the city of New York,—who survived him several years.

One important service which he rendered to the Church, especially to the denomination with which he was connected, a little before the close of the century, was the publication of his “Letters on Frequent Communion.” Up to that period, it had been the practice of the Associate Reformed Church in this country, to celebrate the Communion but once, or at most twice, a year; and to precede it by a day of Fasting, and follow it by a day of Thanksgiving. The “Letters” now referred to were addressed to the

churches of that denomination, and were designed to bring them to a more frequent celebration of the ordinance, and to lead them to view it more in what the writer regarded its scriptural simplicity. This pamphlet was extensively circulated, and produced a powerful, and to a great extent the desired, effect; for it was followed, on the part of most of the churches, by a gradual, and ultimately an almost entire, relinquishment of the ancient practice, and by a practical adoption of the views which the "Letters" were designed to recommend.

As Mr. Mason had known by experience the advantages of a thorough theological education, he was exceedingly desirous not only that the standard of qualification for the ministry in this country should be elevated, but that young men destined to the sacred office should enjoy better opportunities for theological improvement. This led him, about the beginning of the present century, to project the plan of a Theological Seminary, to be established by the authority, and subject to the direction, of the Associate Reformed Church. This plan he succeeded in carrying into effect in 1804; and the result was the establishment of an institution, which soon attained a high degree of respectability. Of this institution he was himself the very life and soul,—he was appointed its first Professor, and continued to discharge the duties of the office with almost unparalleled ability, in connection with his various other official duties, until, by the gradual decay of his constitution, he was admonished to retire.

To aid in the accomplishment of this favourite object,—the establishment of a Theological Seminary, he again visited Great Britain for the purpose of procuring a library; and he succeeded in obtaining about three thousand volumes. During this visit, he made an impression of intellectual greatness which few other men have ever made;—an impression in respect to which, in some cases at least, I am myself a witness that, after the lapse of nearly half a century, it remained as vivid as ever. Some of the most eminent clergymen and statesmen of England, rendered the highest tribute to his genius and eloquence; assigning him a high rank among the very first preachers of the age. It was during this visit that he preached in Edinburgh, before a Society for the relief of the destitute sick, his famous Sermon, entitled "Living Faith;" and in London, before the London Missionary Society, his Sermon, entitled "Messiah's Throne;" both of which have been several times printed, and are justly reckoned among his finest efforts.

The degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by the University of Pennsylvania in 1804.

In the year 1806, his fertile and active mind projected the plan of the Christian's Magazine; a periodical which he conducted for several years, furnishing not a small part of the matter which it contained from his own resources. In this work his versatile mind had full scope. Though it partakes, in no small degree, of a polemic character, it shows that he was equally at home in almost every species of composition, and almost every department of learning.

In 1810, owing to the small size of the building in which Dr. Mason preached, as well as to various other circumstances, he formed the purpose of establishing a new congregation; and in view of this, asked and obtained leave of his Presbytery to resign his pastoral charge. On this occasion he delivered the Speech already referred to, stating the grounds of his request,

and urging it with a force of argument and eloquence, which perhaps he himself never surpassed. I have been assured by more than one competent witness, who heard it delivered, that its effect upon the audience was entirely overpowering.

During the interval that elapsed between Dr. Mason's resignation of his pastoral charge, and the completion of the new Church in Murray Street, which was built under his direction, the infant congregation to which he ministered, held their meetings for public worship in the Presbyterian Church in Cedar Street; and never, it is said, did his transcendent pulpit talents shine more brightly than during this period. But though this arrangement was exceedingly pleasant to him, it was an occasion of some subsequent annoyance, as he suffered it to bring him into more intimate relations with Dr. Romeyn's Church than were thought by some of his brethren to consist with his obligations to his own denomination;—not only joining with them in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, but using what, with the Associate Reformed Church, was an unauthorized version of the Psalms. At the meeting of Synod in Philadelphia in the spring of 1811, the alleged delinquency came up as matter of formal investigation; and, though it resulted in a very conciliatory resolution on the part of the Synod, their doings in the case were the subject of severe animadversion, especially by many of the ministers and churches at the West. It was this circumstance that suggested to Dr. Mason the idea of writing his work on Catholic Communion, which appeared about four years after, and which produced no little sensation on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the summer of 1812, the Murray Street Church was ready for occupancy, and was henceforth the place of his stated ministrations, until his increasing infirmities obliged him finally to relinquish the active duties of the ministry.

The duties of Dr. Mason as Professor of Theology, and as minister of a large congregation, in connection with the numerous demands which were made upon his time by other public engagements, and in the ordinary intercourse of society, were enough, and more than enough, even for his gigantic constitution; but, in addition to this accumulation of labour, he accepted, in the summer of 1811, the office of Provost of Columbia College. This with him was much more than a mere nominal concern; for he was really the acting head of the institution; and, by the splendour of his talents and the energy of his efforts, he gave to it a character which it had never had before. The amount of labour which he performed for several years, after accepting this appointment, would seem scarcely credible. During five days of each week, he was in the constant habit of attending to his classes in College, from twelve o'clock until half past one; and to his theological students, from two until half past three; besides devoting part of every Saturday to hearing and criticising their discourses. In addition to this, he made his preparation for two public services on each Sabbath; and though his preaching, so far as language was concerned, was, to a great extent, extemporaneous, yet, it was always full of weighty instruction, and often the result of much intellectual labour.

But Dr. Mason, during these years, was exhausting his strength more rapidly than either he or his friends imagined; for, while he was seen moving majestically forward under this mighty burden of responsibility and intellectual toil, in the enjoyment of vigorous health, it seemed to be

almost forgotten that any shock could be severe enough to undermine his constitution. But time soon put this delusion to flight. In 1816, his health had become so far impaired by his excessive labours, that he found it necessary to resign the office he had assumed in connection with the College, and resolved to try the effect of a voyage to Europe. On the Sabbath previous to his departure, he preached a Farewell Sermon on the text—“ Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” The parting with his family is said to have been a most striking example of the tenderness of natural affection, united with the sublimity of Christian faith.

At this time, Dr. Mason visited the Continent, and travelled extensively in France, Italy, and Switzerland. The journey was a source of constant delight to him, not only as bringing relief from the cares under which his constitution had begun to sink, but as carrying him into a field of most interesting observation. His familiarity with the classical as well as religious associations of the countries through which he travelled, and the cordiality with which he was every where greeted by the wise and good, as one of the most distinguished characters of the age, gave him an advantage which few travellers in foreign countries have ever enjoyed.

From the Continent he passed over to England, where he arrived just in season to attend the anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society,—an institution which he regarded as among the brightest ornaments of the British Church. On this occasion he delivered an Address which did justice alike to his powers and his feelings, and which was received with most enthusiastic applause. During this visit, he had an opportunity to revive many of the friendships of other days, and to hold delightful communion with some of the purest and brightest spirits of the age.

In the autumn of 1817, Dr. Mason returned to this country, and met his congregation, for the first time, apparently in a much improved state of health, on the 2d of November,—the day after his arrival. On the evening of that day, he preached to an immense congregation from the text,—“ My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me and to finish his work;” and I can truly say (for I happened to be present on the occasion) that I never heard him preach with equal force or effect. It is much to be regretted that this sermon is not included in his published works; and still more, that no trace of it is known to exist, except in the minds of some who heard it.

Dr. Mason now resumed his accustomed labours in connection with his pastoral charge, in the hope that his health was so far confirmed that he should be able to prosecute them without interruption. But it was not long before the painful conviction was forced upon him that his constitution had been effectually undermined by the labours of preceding years, and that his subsequent course must be one of gradual decline. In the summer and autumn of 1819, he experienced, in two instances, a slight paralytic affection, which, however, soon passed off, though it was an admonition to him and to his friends of an advancing process of decay. After the second attack, he reluctantly consented to suspend his public labours for six weeks; but, at the end of that period, he resumed them, and continued them without further interruption until February, 1820, when an affecting and mortuary incident occurred in his pulpit, which left no doubt that his work was drawing to a close. During the week which preceded the Sabbath on which the incident occurred, his family had noticed that he had not only lost his accustomed cheerfulness, but was in a state of great bodily depre-

sion. When the Sabbath came, he went to the house of God as usual, and commenced the service ; but, shortly after reading the portion of Scripture on which he intended to lecture, his recollection failed, his mind became confused, and, bursting into tears, he told the audience that such was the infirmity that had been induced by disease that he was unable to proceed ; upon which, he immediately offered a short prayer, gave out three verses of the fifty-sixth Psalm, and dismissed the congregation.

His people being now fully satisfied of his inability to sustain the burden of care and labour incident to his pastoral charge, and yet wishing, if possible, to retain him among them, that they might enjoy his counsels and sympathy, and do what they could to brighten the evening of his days, resolved to endeavour to procure an assistant minister. Repeated attempts to effect this, however, proved unsuccessful ; and, meanwhile, Dr. Mason, by entire cessation from active labour, had gathered so much strength that, on the first Sabbath of October, he again appeared in the pulpit. He commenced, at this time, an exposition of the First Epistle of Peter ; and it has been remarked by some who listened to him, as far as he went, that though these lectures exhibited comparatively little of the fire of his genius, and of that overpowering eloquence which had marked his earlier days, yet they breathed a spirit of more earnest piety and indicated a more simple-hearted devotedness to the cause of his Master, than most of the discourses which had borne a deeper impress of his original and powerful mind. But here again, his course was quickly interrupted by continued and increasing infirmity, and on the 25th of October, 1821, he finally resigned his pastoral charge.

Previous to this, he had been invited by the Trustees of Dickinson College, Carlisle, to the Presidency of that institution ; and as he thought the labour incident to the station would not be more than he could perform, and withal hoped that the change of climate might be favourable to his health, he determined to accept the appointment. Accordingly, he removed to Carlisle shortly after, and entered upon the duties of his new office ; but even those duties he was soon convinced required an amount of exertion to which his shattered constitution was quite inadequate. During his residence here, it pleased God to try him with severe affliction, in the death, first of a beloved daughter, and then of a promising son,—on both which occasions he discovered the keenest sensibility, qualified, however, by the actings of a sublime Christian faith.

Dr. Mason transferred his relation from the Associate Reformed Church to the Presbyterian Church, and became a member of the Presbytery of New York, in 1822,—being one of a considerable number that seceded from their original connection at that time.

In the autumn of 1824, Dr. Mason, having resigned his office as President of the College, returned to the city of New York, to pass the remainder of his days among the friends who had enjoyed the best opportunity to appreciate his talents and virtues. From this time he relinquished the idea of attempting any thing more as a public man ; and determined to seek that state of quietude in the bosom of an affectionate family, which his circumstances seemed loudly to demand. During a considerable part of the time until near the close of his life,—notwithstanding it was manifest that there was a gradual decline, he enjoyed comfortable bodily health, and was capable of a moderate degree of intellectual exertion. It was painful to all

who saw him, to perceive how that mighty mind was verging back towards the imbecility of childhood--nevertheless, up to the last day of his life, there were evidences of strength and majesty amidst all his weakness. There were times, even after his mind seemed little better than a wreck, when it would suddenly wake up from its habitual drowsiness, like a giant from his slumbers, and soar away into the higher regions of thought, as if it had been borne upward on the wings of an angel; and then, perhaps, in a single half-hour, there could scarcely be discerned a trace of intellectual existence. I have heard of instances in which clergymen who visited him, after the decay of his faculties, have started some query in respect to a difficult point in Theology, or the meaning of some obscure passage of Scripture; and his mind has instantly grasped the whole subject, and disentangled it from all difficulties, and thrown around it a flood of light, which could scarcely have emanated from any other intellect than his own. A striking instance of this momentary kindling of mind happened to fall under my own observation. Not long before his death, I had the melancholy pleasure to call upon him, charged with friendly salutations and messages from some of his friends in England. At first, he seemed to hear without any interest, and said not a word to indicate that he had any recollection of the persons whose names were mentioned to him. At length, when an allusion was made to Rowland Hill, his faculties instantly brightened into exercise, and the image of his old friend seemed, for a moment, to be before his mind: he then related a characteristic anecdote concerning him, with as much correctness and effect as he could have done at any period of his life; and, after remarking that he was afraid to go to England again, because he should be obliged to look for most of his friends in the burying-ground, he relapsed into the same state of mind from which he had been roused, and apparently took no longer any interest in the conversation.

During this melancholy period of Dr. Mason's life, he habitually attended church when his health would permit, and would sometimes remark upon the services with much taste and judgment, though always with kindness, and often with high approbation. Though his residence was remote from the place of worship in which he had formerly officiated, yet that was the place to which his inclinations carried him; as he was surrounded there by his own people, and every thing was fitted to keep alive the most interesting associations. It is believed that he always declined any part in the public services of the sanctuary, after his return from Carlisle, with the single exception of administering baptism to an infant child of his successor. He, however, uniformly conducted the family devotions of his own house, up to the close of his life; and his prayers on these occasions, I have been informed, were scarcely in any respect different from what they had formerly been, except that they were characterized by more of the tenderness, and spirituality, and depth, of devotion. After having gradually sunk for several years under the power of disease, the hand of death was at length laid upon him, and he passed calmly to his rest on the 26th of December, 1829, in the sixtieth year of his age.

The following is a list of Dr. Mason's publications:—A Sermon preached in the city of New York on a day set apart for Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer, on account of a malignant and mortal fever prevailing in the city of Philadelphia, 1793. Mercy remembered in wrath; A National Thanksgiving Sermon, 1795. The Address of the New York Missionary Society,

1796. Hope for the Heathen: A Sermon preached before the New York Missionary Society, 1797. Letters on Frequent Communion, addressed particularly to the members of the Associate Reformed Church in North America, 1798. A Letter to the members of the Associate Reformed Synod, illustrating the Act of Synod, concerning a Synodical fund, 1798. An Oration on the death of Washington, 1800. The Warning Voice to Christians on the ensuing election of a President of the United States, 1800. Pardon of sin by the blood of Jesus: A Sermon preached in Philadelphia, 1801. Living Faith: A Sermon preached before the Society for the relief of the destitute sick in Edinburgh, 1801. Messiah's Throne: A Sermon before the London Missionary Society, 1802. An Oration commemorative of the late Major-General Alexander Hamilton, pronounced before the New York State Society of Cincinnati, 1804. A Letter to the members of the Associate Reformed Church relative to a Theological Seminary, 1805. Report relative to the course of instruction and discipline in Columbia College, 1810. Speech relative to the Resignation of his Pastoral charge, 1810. Christian mourning: A Sermon on the death of Mrs. Isabella Graham, 1814. The Address to the people of the United States, of the Convention of Delegates to form the American Bible Society, 1816. A Plea for Sacramental Communion on Catholic principles, (an octavo volume,) 1816. Speech before the London Bible Society, 1817. The Evangelical Ministry exemplified in the Apostle Paul: A Sermon preached in Murray Street Church on occasion of resigning the charge of his congregation, 1821. An Address delivered at the organization of Dickinson College, 1822. A Sermon on the text—"To the poor the Gospel is preached,"—published in the National Preacher, 1826. A Sermon on "Christian Assurance," published in the National Preacher, 1829.

Besides the above, Dr. Mason was the author of various Reports of the Synod, the New York Missionary Society, &c., which, though not always bearing his name, bear so strongly the impress of his mind that their origin cannot easily be mistaken. In 1832, a collection of his works, consisting partly of those that had been, and partly of those that had not been, printed before, was published, in four volumes, under the superintendence of his son, the Rev. Ebenezer Mason. In 1849, a second and more complete edition of his works appeared, which contains nearly every thing of importance that is known to have come from his pen. Most of his contributions to the Christian's Magazine, particularly his Essays on Lots, on Episcopacy, and on the Church of God, are contained in these volumes. In 1856, a Memoir of Dr. Mason's Life, with portions of his correspondence, was published by his son-in-law, the Rev. Jacob Van Vechten, D. D.

Dr. Mason was the father of seven children,—five sons and two daughters,—all of whom lived to maturity, and became members of the Church. Four of his sons were graduated at College. One entered the profession of the Law; two became clergymen; one died shortly after his graduation; and the one who was not graduated became a merchant. Both daughters were married to ministers—the elder, to the Rev. John Knox, D. D., of New York,—the younger, to the Rev. Jacob Van Vechten, D. D., of Schenectady. All his children are deceased (1856) except the eldest, the Hon. John L. Mason of New York.

Of Erskine Mason, the younger of the two sons who entered the ministry, there will be found a distinct sketch in this work.

EBENEZER MASON, the elder son, was born in the city of New York, June 15, 1800. Having pursued his elementary classical studies in the New York grammar school, he accompanied his father to Europe in 1816, and for about a year was a pupil in the High School in Edinburgh. Returning to the United States in 1817, he entered the Junior class, soon after, in the College of New Jersey, where he was graduated in 1820. He studied Theology for some time under the direction of his father, and, in 1823, became a student in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, where he completed his preparation for the ministry.

He was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of New York in 1824, and was subsequently ordained by the same Presbytery; and, having accepted a call from the Reformed Dutch Church of Brooklyn, L. I., was installed Pastor of that Church by the Classis of Long Island. In 1826, he was married to Sarah Locke, daughter of Silas E. Weir of Philadelphia.

He remained in Brooklyn about two years, and resigned his charge in 1828, on account of a difference of opinion between him and his church in regard to the proper subjects of Baptism,—he adhering to the strict side. In 1829 or 1830, he was engaged in establishing a Presbyterian Church in the Sixth Avenue, New York; but, though he succeeded in gathering a respectable and somewhat select congregation, the labours attendant on the enterprise, especially in connection with a revival of religion, proved too much for his health, and he was obliged to resign his charge. In 1836, he went with his family to Europe, and remained there,—chiefly among Mrs. Mason's relatives in Ireland, till 1840. After his return to the United States, he started a project for providing a place of worship for the accommodation of the Americans in Paris; and, in January, 1846, he crossed the ocean again, in the hope of establishing himself as a minister in the French metropolis. But this enterprise failed for want of the necessary pecuniary means, and after about two years he returned to this country. In 1848, he accepted a call from Blooming Grove, Orange County, N. Y., and immediately removed to that place, where he died suddenly in March, 1849, leaving a widow and five children.

Mr. Mason was uncommonly prepossessing in his personal appearance,—having a fine form, an expressive countenance, and uncommonly bland and graceful manners. His intellect was vigorous, discriminating and highly cultivated. His spirit was eminently genial and friendly, his powers of conversation remarkably good, and his presence was always felt to be an element of pleasure in every circle. As a preacher he was highly acceptable, especially to the more cultivated class of minds. While he held with due tenacity his own theological views, his Christian sympathies embraced all in whom he recognised the Saviour's image. His departure from the world was worthy to crown a truly Christian life.

FROM THE REV. ROBERT McCARTEE, D. D.

NEWBURGH, March 10, 1856.

Rev. and dear Sir: If you had asked me twenty years ago to give my recollections of Dr. Mason, I could have complied with your request in a manner much more satisfactory to you and to myself, than I can now. Dr. Mason, as you know, has been in his grave for a quarter of a century, and for years before his decease, he was so broken in mind and body, as to be almost shut out from intercourse with any except the members of his own family. Many incidents that

occurred during the period when I enjoyed daily converse with him, have passed from my memory, or are so imperfectly remembered that I should scarcely venture to record them. But Dr. Mason was a man endowed with such rare gifts that all who knew him intimately must have received impressions, which, however weakened by the lapse of time, can never be wholly lost. And yet, when I sit down to review my own impressions and to reduce them to order, so as to give to others something like a picture of the man whose memory is so dear to me, I am troubled with the fear that I shall quite fail to reproduce the noble image which rises to the view of my own mind.

Brought up in the congregation of which he was pastor, my reminiscences, I may say, go back to the days of my childhood; but these are necessarily somewhat dim. At a later period I was brought into close relations with him as a communicant in his church, as a theological pupil, as a fellow presbyter, and as a friend admitted to frequent and intimate fellowship with him in those private circles where he shone as brilliantly as he did on the arena of public life.

No mere verbal description can convey to those who never saw Dr. Mason, an adequate idea of what he was as a *preacher*. With reference to his manner of speaking, I may state that no one was ever less indebted to the tricks of oratory for his power over his audience. He was a man too true and real to resort to such arts, even if he had not been restrained by his profound sense of the solemn nature of the business which took him into the pulpit. His whole demeanour in the sacred desk plainly showed that he was himself conscious that he appeared there as an ambassador of Christ,—a steward of the mysteries of God. He was a man of a singularly noble presence,—one, to whom the eyes of a crowd would spontaneously be turned, if he had chanced to be in the midst of them, and the question were raised—“Who shall be our leader.” During his first visit to London, in 1802, as he was one day sauntering through St. James Park, a young lad, supposing from his air and manner that he was a military officer in undress, came up to him, and, touching his cap, said,—“Doesn’t your honour want a drummer?” The mistake was a natural one. Dr. Mason entering at once into the humour of the thing, replied,—“No, my boy, I am in search of *trumpeters*;”—one object of his mission to Britain at that time being to obtain a supply of ministers from Scotland for the destitute congregations of the Associate Reformed Church.

His commanding person, and the first few utterances of his majestic voice, capable as it was of the most varied intonations, could not fail, I think, to have fixed the attention and raised the expectations of an audience totally ignorant of his name and of his known talents as a preacher. Yet these were only the outward adornments of a nature susceptible of the tenderest and strongest emotions, and which had received the finest culture. Occasionally the subjects of his sermons were suggested by the events of the day, or by some great question that engaged the public mind; yet the ordinary strain of his preaching was evangelical, and this in an eminent degree. It was so in its topics and in their treatment. Christ crucified, in the manifold aspects and bearings of that central truth, constituted the very staple of his sermons. And while he expounded the principles embodied in his text, and defended them against gainsayers, like a master of theological science, he at the same time combined with his exegetic analysis and his close logic a holy unction which overspread the whole, “like the precious ointment that ran down to the skirts of Aaron’s garments,” and by the evident influence of the truth upon his own heart, he said to his hearers “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.” When in the full vigour of his powers, all his discourses derived a certain glow from his own ardent temper; but there was a class of subjects pertaining to what he deemed the very marrow of the Gospel, on which it was impossible for him to preach without exhibiting the deepest feeling. Such themes were invariably chosen by him on Communion occasions. On these seasons, I have often seen the tears

literally streaming down his cheeks; and yet, such was his wonderful self-command under circumstances which would have quite overpowered most men so as completely to choke their utterance, that his voice never faltered in the least.

Some preachers are great only on great occasions. They need some rousing question or some rare event to excite or to concentrate their energies. What Dr. Mason could do under excitements of this sort, his Orations on the death of Washington and of Hamilton, and his Sermon entitled "Messiah's Throne," sufficiently discover; but I think that he delivered discourses not less masterly and eloquent than the very best of his published ones, in the ordinary course of his ministry. One of these is deeply fixed in my memory. It was from the text, "For me to live is Christ,"—the subject of it being "Jesus the Charm of Life." At this distance of time I cannot undertake to give a minute analysis of the sermon; but I well remember that the address to the several classes of hearers was quite overpowering. He put the question—"Young man, what is to thee the Charm of life?" following it up with an appeal to the young in the highest degree appropriate, searching, tender, and which so wrought upon my own feelings that I actually experienced for the moment a physical pain of the heart.

There was another sermon of which I retain a distinct remembrance, and to which I advert partly because I regard it as one of Dr. Mason's greatest efforts, and partly because it serves to illustrate a feature of character for which he was distinguished above most men—I refer to his fearless disregard of consequences in the discharge of what he deemed a public duty. The Sermon was preached upon a Fast day, and at a time of extreme political excitement. Personal violence had been threatened in case he denounced, as he had before done, the proposed alliance with France. I myself remember to have heard a young lawyer and a violent partisan declare that "if the Doctor dared to repeat the thing, even the horns of the altar should not protect him, for he would himself be one of the first to pull him out of the pulpit." When the Fast day arrived, a large audience assembled, expecting to hear a sermon "to the times." The Doctor chose for his text Ezekiel ii. 3, and the whole chapter was read in his most impressive manner. Near the close of the discourse, he broke forth into a solemn and impassioned apostrophe to Deity in nearly these words—"Send us, if thou wilt, marrow upon our cattle, a famine upon our land, cleanliness of teeth in our borders; send us pestilence to waste our cities, send us, if it please thee, the sword to bathe itself in the blood of our sons; but spare us, Lord God Most Merciful, spare us that direst and most dreadful of all thy curses,—an alliance with Napoleon Buonaparte." As he uttered these rousing sentences, the blood gushed from his nostrils; he unconsciously put his handkerchief to his face, and the next instant made a gesture which looked as if he were designedly waving it before the audience like a bloody and symbolic flag. You can fancy better than I can describe the impression which this incident, coupled with the awful apostrophe, made upon the crowded assembly. Next day I asked the young lawyer why he did not proceed, as he had promised, to pull the Doctor out of the pulpit. "Why," said he, "I was perfectly horror-struck when he wound up that terrible apostrophe by waving his bloody handkerchief."

The reference to this sermon leads me to say that Dr. Mason was accustomed, during the first half of his ministry, to discuss political topics both more frequently and freely than most of his contemporaries in the city of New York. His own political opinions were very decided and well known, and his animadversions upon public men or their measures subjected him to no little odium, and perhaps also to some personal danger. By some of his brethren, members of the same Synod with himself, his conduct on this head was deemed open to censure. They thought that he sometimes unduly mixed up things secular and sacred. It is, however, due to him to say, that when he handled matters which other men

abstained from as foreign to the proper business of the pulpit, he did so because he believed that they were closely related to the moral and religious interests of society. He deemed it to be his duty as a minister of Christ to expose and denounce sin in all its forms—whether found in the skirts of the State, of the statesman, or of the private citizen; and in doing so, he was only imitating the example of the venerated fathers of his mother Church of Scotland in her best days.

As a preacher, Dr. Mason was singularly happy in what used to be styled “the opening up of the text,” and in the analysis of the subject contained in the passage. One illustration of this statement occurs to me. It is from a sermon which I heard him preach from the words, “I have no greater joy,” &c., III. John, 4.—“The Spirit of God,” said he, “by the pen of the Apostle presents us with these points, viz:—

1. The greatest of all Interests,—The Truth.
2. The First of all Duties,—Walking in Truth.
3. The purest of all Joys,—Hearing that our Children walk in Truth.”

He told me that, in the earlier part of his ministry, his habit was to write the introduction and the application of his sermons with great care, and then to commit them perfectly to memory. The body of the discourse consisted of a very full analysis of the subject, or of the passage on which the sermon was founded, which he studied as thoroughly as he could, but leaving the language in which his thoughts should find utterance to the inspiration of the moment. He could do this with entire safety, for few men possessed a greater *copia fandi*. Such was his method of sermonizing at the time of his first visit to London in 1802, and hence his famous Sermon before the London Missionary Society, as well as the many others which his English friends were so urgent to have published, required to be written out in full after delivery. But in later years (except the very last of his ministry) his numerous duties forbade his making even this kind of preparation for the pulpit, and if he had not been compelled by the opportunity of friends to reduce to writing what he had already preached, some of his most admired sermons would have been lost forever. Towards the close of his life the failure of memory consequent upon the disease which paralyzed mind and body, obliged him to write his sermons, and even to read them. It was not without a severe mental struggle that he consented to put on this ignoble yoke as he viewed it, for he had all the old Scottish prejudices against “readers of the Gospel,” and had said as hard things about them as any one. The first time he preached for me in this way was in Spruce Street, Philadelphia, where he knew the people had an especial dislike of “the paper.” He laid his notes on the Bible, and then said—“My friends, I must ask your indulgence for adopting to-day a practice which through life I have condemned. I must read my sermon—the hand of God is upon me. I must bow to his will.” I need not say that the bitterest haters of “notes” in the audience were melted, and for a time the church was truly a Bochim.

The mention of his prejudices against reading sermons reminds me of his prejudices against funeral services, as they are connected with a very tender, and to me ever memorable, scene. For this latter feeling he was mainly indebted, I imagine, to his Scottish training. He was strongly opposed to “funeral services,” under the plea that they were apt to become mere occasions for eulogizing the dead. When his son James died at Carlisle, I went there to attend his funeral, and was requested by some members of the family to beg the Doctor to allow an Address to be made at the grave, for the sake of his son’s young companions in College. I did so. He at once replied, “No, no, these things are so often abused.” Of course I did not urge the matter. As the young men who served as pall-bearers lifted the coffin, the afflicted father exclaimed in tones which those who were present can never forget—“Young men! tread lightly;

ye bear a temple of the Holy Ghost"—then, overcome by his feelings, he dropped his head upon my shoulder and said—"Dear Mr., say something which God may bless to his young friends." An Address was made, and very soon a revival—powerful and precious in its fruits, began in the College and the town, with the history of which you are familiar.

In these reminiscences of Dr. Mason as a preacher, I must not omit to notice his manner of reading the Scriptures. He used to say that "correct emphasis is sound exposition," and he certainly illustrated the truth of the remark in his own practice. Often have I thought that the chapter he had just read needed no further exposition. He attached great importance to this part of a minister's public duty, and once complaining of the little attention paid to it, said to me,—“there are twenty good speakers to one good reader.” A friend of mine heard him preach on one occasion in the Crown Street Church, Philadelphia. The large house was thronged in every part, and crowds were at the door eager to push in, and necessarily creating some confusion. At the hour appointed for Divine service, the Doctor rose, and leaning over the pulpit, rapped smartly two or three times against it, and by this unusual procedure effected instant and perfect silence. He then read those noble stanzas in Dr. Watts' version of the 17th Psalm, beginning with—"What sinners value, I resign,"—in a style that told with amazing power upon the audience. My friend said that if he had heard nothing more, he would have felt himself richly recompensed for his long walk to church; for Dr. Mason's reading invested the glorious hymn with a fresh majesty, and almost gave it a new meaning.

There is another point which I must not omit—*his public prayers*. They were scarcely less remarkable than his sermons;—remarkable for their appropriateness to the times, and to the circumstances of his audience; for their comprehensiveness, for their holy, scriptural unction, and their exquisite tenderness. Unlike the prayers of some good men, they were never didactic; there was no preaching in them. They consisted wholly of supplications, intercessions, thanksgiving, and were evidently the utterance of a soul in conscious, confidential, yet reverent and earnest converse with the great God our Saviour. I have heard prayers characterized by a certain sublimity of sentiment and language, fitted to beget admiration of the person officiating, for his eloquence, rather than to awaken true devotional feeling. Such a performance was wholly at war with all Dr. Mason's ideas of the nature of the exercise. And yet, if by eloquence in prayer be meant the giving intensity to the devotions of a worshipping assembly, then I may say that Dr. Mason's prayers were often pre-eminently eloquent. I have repeatedly seen the whole congregation drowned in tears, some of them being scarcely able to restrain convulsive sobs, during the prayer before the sermon. This profound sensation was produced by nothing that even approached a theatric trick—it was simply the result of the sympathy kindled by the warm outpouring of the preacher's own heart.

During the earliest years of Dr. Mason's ministry, I was too young to appreciate his qualities as a pastor; but I remember that he was very attentive to the children and youth of his parish. He had several catechetical classes for those of tender age, and for young men and women; and in conducting them, he evinced a marvellous power of adapting himself to the capacity of the youngest child present, and of enlisting the attention of all by striking remarks and apt anecdotes. I could name many warm hearted and intelligent Christians, most of whom are fallen asleep, though a few remain unto this present, who look back with fond and holy affection to the old room in Pine Street, where they used to recite the Catechism to Dr. Mason, and listen to his simple and forcible exposition of it. So far as my recollections of his pastoral qualities go, they accord with the testimonies on this point, which I have received from those who were older than myself. From what I have heard from them as well as from

what I know myself, I feel warranted in saying of *him* what was said of his venerable father, by a most competent judge, and one very chary of his compliments—"he was the completest minister I ever knew." In supervising the various details of parochial economy, in systematic family visitation, in conducting fellowship-meetings, in the sick room, in the house of sorrow, by the bedside of the dying, in dealing with troubled consciences, I do not believe that Dr. Mason's superior could any where be found. He was exceedingly happy in his treatment of the class last named. He put them at once at their ease, so that they could unburthen their hearts to him with entire freedom. I once called upon him in much distress of mind produced by the fear that I had not experienced in a sufficient degree what the old divines were wont to call "the law-work." He listened to me patiently, while I described my mental difficulties and desires, and then said,—"Dear M., take care that you don't become rash in your prayers. While I was in Scotland, as a student in Divinity, I was myself tempted just as you now are. I called upon a venerable clergyman with whom I was upon terms of intimacy, and told him my trouble. He replied to me,—'My son, take heed what you ask of the Lord. I was once thus tried, and I prayed the Lord very earnestly that He would enable me to realize deeply the terrors of the law. He answered my request, and cured me of my folly. His Spirit, as I may say, took me up, and for a time shook me over hell. It was enough. I have since asked the Lord to lead me by his love, and to save me from the terrors of his law.' And such," added Dr. M., "is my advice to you."

In the progress of his ministry, the duties incident to his manifold relations as Pastor, Theological Professor, Provost of Columbia College, Editor, and confessedly the master spirit of the Associate Reformed Church,—the denomination with which he was connected during the whole of his active life, compelled his congregation to be content with seeing and hearing him on the Lord's day. Yet amid these multifarious engagements, he never lost the pastoral sympathies. His heart was with his people in their joys and sorrows, and when distance or the press of other duties hindered his going in person to weep with a stricken household, his pen was employed to convey to its members his condolence and his counsels. Many of these letters are to be found in the recent Memoir of him by the Rev. Dr. Van Vechten, but they form only a small part of his correspondence with afflicted friends; and if they were all collected and published, I think that the volume would take rank among the sacred classics of our language.

For three years, during the period when he was in the full vigour of his mental powers it was my privilege to attend the Seminary of which he was the head and founder. Of his pre-eminent fitness for the post of *Theological Instructor*, no one who knew him and is competent to judge, can have a moment's doubt. He frequently introduced his course of lectures with one on Modesty, apparently with the view of showing those of us who had just come from College, with our academic laurels quite fresh, how very little we knew. Starting some topic in Ethics or Theology, he would ask—"What is it? Why? How?" He used to say to us—"Gentlemen, don't go round a thing, nor above it, but drive straight into it;"—"if you are asked, what is the text-book in the Seminary,—say, your Bible." He did not deliver a formal and regular series of lectures either in Systematic Theology or in Biblical Criticism. But when we were studying the argumentative Epistles of the New Testament, he was accustomed to give us, in connection with the recitation, a critical exposition of the more difficult chapters. On these occasions, while he was the expounder, he required us to come to the lecture as fully prepared as possible, by a careful examination of the words, phrases, and grammatical structure of the passage, and also of its historical and geographical allusions. In these exercises, perhaps more than in

any other, he displayed his masterly powers of analysis and argument, his deep insight into the meaning of Scripture, his exquisite scholarship, and his command of language. This, I may add, was his favourite department, involving, as it did, the study of the Bible itself, i. e. the truth of God exactly as it lies embedded in the written Word of God. He by no means undervalued the importance of Systematic Theology, but he considered it a comparatively easy task for those who had been drilled from childhood to attain a respectable acquaintance with this branch of study; while the ability to discover and expound the real and precise meaning of Scripture, to gather the various passages bearing upon any article of faith, and to show how they establish its truth, could be acquired only by laborious and careful culture. Accordingly, his aim was to make his pupils "mighty in the Scriptures," and they were, in fact, the grand text-book during the whole theological curriculum.

In his method of tuition he combined the lecture and the catechetic exercise,—the latter, however, being the predominant element. Every answer to a question, if it contained an averment or a proposition of any kind, was instantly followed by his "Prove it, Sir," or "Now for your proof." And you may be sure that each proof text or argument was subjected to the most rigid scrutiny. "Think," he was wont to say; and in these exercises he at once compelled and taught us how to "think" to purpose. Let me here remark that Dr. Mason has been charged with encouraging his students to cultivate that sort of "thinking" which is commonly allied to inordinate self-esteem, and which looks with contempt upon the established formulas of Theology. Nothing can be more unfounded. Some may indeed have mistaken or perverted his advice on this head, but he certainly never designed to beget or to countenance the independent thinking which affects new views and original speculations. No man was more quick to note or more prompt to condemn a departure from the "old paths." "New light," said he, "is in most cases only a second edition of old darkness." His object plainly was to guard us against mere traditional beliefs, against the acceptance of opinions because they belonged to the creed of this or that sect, or were connected with the name of this or that eminent man, and lead us to examine for ourselves the grounds on which Christian doctrine rests, so that we could give to every man that asks for it a sound and intelligent reason for our faith. That this was his sole object in saying to us "think—think for yourselves," is manifest from the fact that, with only two or three exceptions, the entire body of those trained by him for the sacred office have ever been remarkable for their tenacious adherence to the olden Theology.

Dr. Mason observed himself and required in his students the most rigid *punctuality* in regard to the Seminary exercises and appointments. He stigmatized the want of it as a lack of virtue, thoroughly entering into the sentiment of Seneca that "time is almost the only thing of which to be covetous is a virtue." He used to say—"You may steal my money, I may be able to make more; you may steal my goods, I may be able to replace them; but my *time*, neither you nor I can replace, if once lost." Indeed it would have been impossible for him to have gotten through the half of the multifarious duties that devolved upon him during the most active portion of his life, if he had not adopted and insisted upon the rule of punctuality. At our Seminary exercises, five minutes were allowed for variation of watches, and for unavoidable detention. If in that time the Professor did not appear, the students were free to go to their rooms. I can recall only one instance of the Doctor's failure in promptness. On this occasion we watched for him with no little anxiety, when we found the moments of grace were nearly gone. The five minutes having expired, we at once left the house, but when we reached the street we saw the Doctor approaching at a very rapid pace. As he joined us, noticing our time-pieces in our hands, he exclaimed, "All right, gentlemen, all right, but hear me before you separate God in his provi-

dence called me to visit an aged parishioner and friend now upon his death bed I have come from that scene of sorrow as rapidly as I could. I will be happy to give you the usual lecture, if you can spare the time." I need scarcely say that we all gladly re-entered the recitation room.

I know not how I can better describe the relation in which Dr. Mason stood to his students, than in those words of Paul,—“Ye know how we exhorted and charged every one of you *as a father his children*; we were gentle among you as *a nurse cherisheth her children*.” No one could be brought into daily intercourse with a man of such commanding talent, even if it consisted only in listening to an exegetical or doctrinal prelection, without feeling for him the highest admiration. But the admiration of his students was combined with the fondest affection. He was not only our teacher, drilling us in Hebrew, Greek, and Theology, but our counsellor, our guide, our familiar friend, ever exhibiting the most lively concern for our health, our comfort, our spiritual welfare, as well as for our intellectual progress. Even in the lecture room, frigid as the place commonly is, and chilling as are its exercises, we discovered the amplitude and wealth of his heart, as well as of his head. Often, while he was lecturing, have I seen the tears coursing down his cheeks, and the whole class exhibiting emotions kindred to his own.

How much is it to be regretted that a man of such rare endowments, and one so highly fitted to enrich the theological literature of our country, should have left behind him so few monuments of his piety and learning. His efforts unquestionably marked an epoch in the history of theological education in the United States. True there had been Professors of Theology before his day; but the Report drawn up by him and presented to the Synod of the Associate Reformed Church, in 1804, and the accompanying Constitution of the Seminary, contains a scheme of theological education far in advance of any thing ever before attempted in this country. He was himself chosen by the Synod to carry out, as Professor of Theology, his own views, and he at once engaged in the enterprise with characteristic ardour. Indeed his whole soul was in this work, which he always regarded as by far the most important sphere of labour which the Head of the Church had called him to fill. Unfortunately, the smallness of the denomination with which he was connected, and the consequent poverty of the Seminary, obliged him to retain the pastoral office, and thus hindered the concentration of his energies upon the task with which were entwined the fondest desires and hopes of his life. Occupied as he was with such diversified duties, authorship, except to a limited extent, was out of the question.

Before I bring my letter to a close, I must be allowed to say a few words respecting Dr. Mason, as he appeared in the more private relations of life. His company was eagerly sought by persons of the most various characters and pursuits, and no wonder, for he was gifted with every quality needed to make him shine in society. His gentlemanly air and manners, his genial humour, his ready wit, his quickness at retort, his various knowledge of books and men, his ample fund of anecdote, and his capital tact at telling a story, rendered him the life and attraction of every circle into which he entered. I have often met him in company, and have witnessed the deference and admiration of which he was the object. But I love best to think of him as he appeared among those whose friendship he knew he could trust,—the brethren with whom he was in habits of weekly companionship. Sweet to me is the memory of those reunions of other days, in which the heart and the intellect found such rich refreshment. I wish I could recall the *epea ptereoenta* of those occasions, but I cannot—let me only say that those whose wings were most like those of the dove, “covered with silver, and their feathers with yellow gold” flew thickest from the lips of Dr. Mason. The subjects of our talk were manifold, though mainly of religious or theological character. One discussion is fixed in my memory, and I refer to it because it

serves to illustrate a trait of Dr. Mason, which I deem worthy of notice, namely,—his singular candour, and his readiness to acknowledge a mistake, when fairly convinced that he was mistaken. The meeting was at my own house, and among the friends present were Drs. Mason, McLeod, Romeyn, Rowan of New York, Laurie of Washington, and Blatchford of Lansingburg. The question was one upon which Dr. Mason had committed himself by writing and publishing an article which had attracted great attention, as probably the ablest defence of the view it maintained which had then appeared. After a little general talk upon the subject, it was agreed to organize the meeting for a more formal discussion. Dr. Laurie and myself were named as the disputants, and Dr. Mason, by common consent, was to be our Moderator. After debating the question at some length, Dr. Laurie assumed a position in relation to it, founded upon an alleged fact which I ventured to deny; and Dr. Mason immediately interposed a remark which showed that his views of the subject were in harmony with my own. Whereupon Dr. Laurie, expressing his surprise at Dr. M.'s remark, said,—“But did you not write the article on this very subject, that appeared a few years ago in the Christian's Magazine?” “I did,” said Dr. M., “but I did not know as much when I wrote it as I ought to have known.” On another occasion, advertising to the pride of consistency sometimes exhibited by persons otherwise excellent, he said to me,—“M.—he is a poor man who cannot afford to give away sixpence, and he is a poor soul, a very poor soul, who cannot afford to acknowledge an error, lest perchance some one should charge him with inconsistency.”

In his own household Dr. Mason was all that might be anticipated from one whose heart was so full of warm and tender affection, and all who had access to his home could not but be struck by the beautiful exhibition which he was wont to make at once of filial, conjugal and parental love. It was my privilege to be present when he bade his family farewell, on the occasion of his last voyage to Europe. He had requested me to come on from Philadelphia and preach for him on the Sabbath before his departure. My text was the words—“We have strong consolation,” and he was pleased to say that the discourse had been the means of ministering “strong consolation” to his own heart in the trying circumstances in which he was then placed. The parting scene was very affecting—a sore trial to himself and to those whom he left behind; for a voyage to Europe was then a far more serious undertaking than it is now, and his shattered constitution rendered it quite probable that we should see his face no more. Having taken leave of the younger members of his family, one by one, he came down stairs, and sat for some time, with his wife on one side of him, and his venerable mother on the other. At his suggestion, we all joined in singing the hymn “The Lord will provide”—he then rose, dropped his head upon his hands, as in silent prayer, for some moments, and at length said,—“God, my own God, the God of my fathers, the Angel of the Covenant that led me and led me all my days, bless my dear family.” He paused for an instant, and said to me,—“let us go.” We attended him to the boat which was to convey him to the ship, and parted with faint hopes of ever again meeting him this side of Heaven.

You are aware that there was a warm controversy between Dr. Mason and the late eminent and excellent Bishop Hobart on the subject of Church government. Some time after Dr. Mason's death, I was attending a funeral at which Bishop Hobart was present. While in the carriage on our way to the place of interment, the Bishop said to me,—“Mr. McCartee, you were, I understand, a favourite student of Dr. Mason, and I should be much pleased to learn from you something more respecting him than has been published. After mentioning some things illustrative of the Doctor's character, allusion was made to the controversy about Episcopacy, and I said—“I can tell you something of Dr. Mason's views of that discussion which I think will not be disagreeable to you, and which you might never be apprized of, if I did not tell you. He once observed to me that ‘it

was very unpleasant to conduct a debate with some antagonists, for they never met the point fairly and honourably; but it was pleasant to hold a discussion with Bishop Hobart, for he met the question fairly and like a man.' " "Thank you Sir,"—replied the Bishop to me—"thank you Sir, I shall cherish that as a compliment indeed, for I am well persuaded that Dr. Mason would never have said any thing like that unless he meant it."

But I must bring these reminiscences to a close, with the expression of my earnest desire that our gracious God will carry you comfortably through the laborious and important work in which you are engaged, and with the assurance that I remain,

Ever yours,

R. McCARTEE.

FROM BENJAMIN SILLIMAN, LL. D.

NEW HAVEN, February 14, 1855.

My dear Sir: On reading your letter, asking for my reminiscences of Dr. Mason, my first impression was that I ought decidedly to decline any attempt of the kind, on the ground that my acquaintance with him was not sufficiently intimate to justify it. Being, however, as you are aware, altogether disposed to aid you in your arduous, though gratifying, researches, I began to recall some early impressions, and to look over my manuscript journal, introductory to my first voyage to Europe, and of my residence there, in 1805 and 1806. From this source, and from memory, I may glean a few things, but probably of too little importance to serve your purpose.

In the winter of 1804-5, I accompanied President Dwight to New York for the purpose of obtaining letters of introduction, and of making other arrangements preparatory to a voyage to England and a residence in Europe, of which an account was published in my first Journal of Travels. The reputation and social position of Dr. Dwight made my way easy to the eminent men of the city, among whom, in various walks of life, were John M. Mason, Rufus King, Oliver Wolcott, John Trumbull, Archibald Gracie, Samuel Miles Hopkins, John B. Murray, Benjamin Douglass Perkins, Moses Rogers, William W. Woolsey, James Watson, and others,—several of whom were enlisted by Dr. Dwight on my behalf. In honour of him, and with some reference to my expected mission abroad, a large number of gentlemen were invited to dine by the brother-in-law of Dr. Dwight, Mr. Moses Rogers, an eminent merchant, whose elegant mansion was on the battery facing the harbour. The guests, to me an imposing group, were assembled in the drawing room of Mrs. Rogers, and last of all, was announced the Rev. Dr. Mason, whom I had never seen. He was then approaching the meridian of life; but his countenance was radiant almost as in youth. Never before or since has the presence of any man impressed me as his did on that occasion. Tall, erect, of fine symmetry of form, with a perfect muscular development, a noble, intellectual head, and strongly marked features, on every line of which mind was stamped, with the graceful air of a high-bred gentleman of the old school, and with the bearing of a man who could not be unconscious of his own talents and fame—elegantly dressed, but with chaste simplicity,—as he entered the room, all rose from their seats to greet and welcome the pride of New York.

A proud man he would doubtless have been, had not his heart been touched by a higher power than human; and indeed such was the majestic mien and commanding dignity of the man, and such the spontaneous deference yielded to him by all, that he certainly needed a large share of Christian humility to counteract the natural and almost pardonable vaulting up of self-esteem. Had he been a military man, every one would have said that he was born to command;

and his sway, if not imperious, would certainly have been imperial. Martial costume could not have added to his native dignity, but might have embellished his majestic form in a manner to attract and dazzle the common mind.

His extraordinary powers of conversation were immediately prompted by the company, and he entertained and instructed them during the protracted sitting. It was not my good fortune to sit so near him at the dinner table as to hear his remarks to the best advantage; but I had afterwards the privilege of witnessing his unrivalled colloquial powers on various occasions.

You will expect me to say something of Dr. Mason's appearance in the pulpit. And here I cannot do better than to transcribe verbatim a record which I find in my manuscript journal, of that date:—

"March 31, 1805. I attended Dr. Mason's church in the morning, and heard a very excellent discourse. In the afternoon I heard him again, from the words—'To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' It was a very animated, pathetic and forcible sermon. A young man of great promise, and highly respected in the congregation, had died suddenly that morning. Dr. Mason made use of this circumstance very happily. After urging on all ages and classes of his audience the importance of repenting *to-day*, because of the uncertainty of life, he suddenly threw himself towards one side of the pulpit, and with his arm outstretched, and his hand pointed towards the pew where the young man sat only the Sabbath before, he exclaimed, in thrilling tones and with a look of anguish,—'There, there, my friends, in that pew, only a few days ago, sat one who had every reason to expect long life, which the most perfect health could afford; and this morning his spirit fled to the eternal world! Now go home and calculate on long life!' Here he abruptly concluded, himself and his audience being in tears.

"It is impossible for me to convey any adequate idea of this extraordinary man. Besides the real merit of his discourses, there is a wonderful effect produced by his countenance, which is commanding and impressive in the highest degree; by his voice which is unusually deep-toned and powerful; and by his attitudes and gestures which have great dignity and force. He has, moreover, the advantage of a large and finely proportioned person, with remarkably strong muscular expression. He is certainly an orator *sui generis*."

Thus far my early impressions.

In subsequent years, and after my return from Europe in 1806, I heard Dr. Mason preach on many occasions, both in his own pulpit in New York, and in New Haven, which town he occasionally visited, and more than once at the season of Commencement. His mind appeared to be growing constantly more powerful, and his eloquence more stirring and vivid; his command of the most impressive and appropriate language seemed quite absolute; and all that belonged to his masterly powers, both physical and intellectual, being on the increase, he commanded, swayed, convinced, and impelled his audiences, as if only a volition of his, for that purpose, was necessary. I was not so happy as to hear that celebrated Sermon from the words—"To the poor the Gospel is preached." It was delivered in New Haven in the autumn of 1810, and from the accounts which I heard of its wonderful effect upon the audience, both then and on other occasions, it was matter of deep regret with me that I had accidentally missed my opportunity.

Dr. Mason's prayers were remarkably elevated and pathetic. He seemed spiritually to ascend with the rich flow of devout language and thought, which rose, as it were, like a cloud of incense, from a consecrated censer: his celestial aspirations appeared like what David in his happiest frames, and Isaiah always, might have breathed forth. There was, as I thought, no attempt at self-display, but language copious, elevated and warm ascended to the Father of spirits, adapted at once to fill the mind with noble thoughts, and the heart with devout feelings.

His noble form and glowing face gave the impression that, in heart and mind, he stood at the foot of the great white throne.

In addition to his multiplied labours as a preacher and a writer, and an oracle for advice, and influence, and action, not only on religious but on many other subjects, Dr. Mason was induced to accept the appointment of Provost of Columbia College. Whether this new labour added the weight which, with all that he sustained before, could no longer be borne, I cannot say; but the time was approaching when the great and good man, in the very maturity and perfection of his knowledge, power, fame, influence, and usefulness, was to be bowed down. The impending catastrophe was perceived by the skilful and sagacious. The late distinguished Dr. David Hosack related to me that he met Dr. Mason in Park Place, coming from the College buildings, when he saw from the livid hue and turgid condition of the blood-vessels of his face and head, that he was in imminent danger. His first impulse was to draw his lancet, and beg permission to relieve him by opening a vein. But not being professionally in his confidence, he was restrained by his sense of medical etiquette, and fearing to be thought officious and an alarmist without cause, he allowed the threatened sage to pass on his way. Alas, how much was it to be regretted that professional scruples did not yield to the benevolent impulses of the great and discerning physician, and that the stroke had not thus been averted!

The next public occasion on which I saw Dr. Mason was at the formation of the American Bible Society in New York, in May, 1816. He was one of the speakers on that day; but O how fallen!—not indeed into imbecility; but the physical man was prostrated, and the giant mind struggled through an enfeebled frame,—still, however, grand in its approach to decay.

Dr. Mason's succeeding years brought him only occasionally under my observation. There was a revival, but never a full recovery, of power; and it was painful to realize that fifty years had fixed a boundary to the action of one of the noblest intellects of the age. His prostration was mourned over as a public calamity. Thirty years more of efficient service in the cause of his Master might well have been hoped for, and, with his great physical and intellectual power, there seemed no reason why he should not have remained a splendid octogenarian, like him who, at the head of a College which he has sustained by his talents, and endowed by his munificence, still lives in full vigour—*clarum et venerabile nomen.*

In his family circle, the presence of a guest at his table prompted his high conversational powers. So copious was the flow from his gifted and richly furnished mind, and so vivid and energetic was his diction, that the guest was well contented to listen, or only to give, by a question or suggestion, a new impulse to an intellect that seemed almost equally well furnished on every topic.

I had much experience of Dr. Mason's kindness at the time of my leaving the country. Among other favours which he rendered me, he furnished me with a number of valuable letters, one of which introduced me to the noble society of Clapham Common, near London—the Thorntons, Wilberforce, &c.; another to the London Missionary Society, and its phalanx of great and good men—Illardcastle and his associates; and another to his uncle and family connections in Edinburgh, which made me at home in warm hearted Scotch families, creating friendships that have been perpetuated even to this day and this country. I must not omit to say that he also furnished me with full and written directions for travelling in England. As, however, the whole system of travelling has been long since radically changed, those minutes, although then important, have become obsolete—not so, however, the pious thought with which they concluded—“Dr. Mason wishes Mr. Silliman a safe, pleasant and prosperous voyage, with abundance of grace, mercy, and peace, from the God of salvation, through the dear Redeemer.”

Dr. Mason accompanied me to the ship—the ill-fated Ontario, which, with all on board, was lost on her return passage, and with paternal kindness gave me, at the moment of sailing, his parting blessing.

After my return from Europe, in the following year, I had, as I have already intimated, repeated opportunities of seeing Dr. Mason in private society. He was every where the admired and observed of all observers. His coming was fondly anticipated; his arrival cordially greeted; and all hung upon his lips for entertainment and instruction. His historical reminiscences and his fund of anecdote were inexhaustible; and both were highly instructive and interesting. At dinners and in soirees he was ever in the ascendant—all waited for his communications; and they were often embellished by brilliant wit, exquisite humour, and the most versatile action, producing intense delight and admiration. If the eloquent preacher would have made a great commander, he might also have been a great actor, either tragic or comic; for his powers in both ways were of the highest order, and, as already remarked, they were sometimes indulged to the great exhilaration of the circles of which he was always the master spirit. Particular scenes of the kind are even now fresh in my recollection, and not a few of his vivid and stirring rehearsals and anecdotes seem as of yesterday; but they would hardly be appropriate decorations of the monument which I would fain raise to the memory of one who, in his grand, though too brief, career, has left in this land no superior behind him.

I have alluded to Dr. Mason's conversational powers—I ought to add that I have known them to be put forth in grave circles, and on grave themes, in the most impressive manner. It was like the unceasing flow of a magnificent river, both copious and inexhaustible, and passing with a rapidity of current that created life by motion, and bore along all before it.

Believe me always, with affectionate regard,

Truly your friend and servant,

B. SILLIMAN, SENIOR.

FROM THE REV. GEORGE W. BETHUNE, D. D.

BROOKLYN, March 13, 1857.

My dear Dr. Sprague: You ask me for some recollections of Dr. Mason—and what I can give you I will; but I was too young to know him in his palmy day of strength and power. Circumstances, however, made me, from earliest childhood, familiar with his name, person, and history. My grandmother, Mrs. Isabella Graham, and my mother, were members of the Associate Reformed Church in Cedar Street, New York, under the pastorship of the elder Dr. Mason, and for many years under that of his son. The families were also intimate, though I did not come closely under Dr. Mason's influence until 1822, when he was President of Dickinson College,—which was some years after the shock which affected irreparably his mighty intellect.

Dr. Mason had, in rare combination, all the qualities, moral, mental and physical, requisite for a pulpit orator. Nursed in the school of Scotch Theology, his views of Divine truth were characterized by that depth, richness, and unction, which gave such evangelical power to the writings of Boston, the Erskines, and other great teachers, who never strayed from the cross, and delighted to arrange their thoughts under the two covenants made with the first and second Adam. Never did he glow with higher energy, or melt his hearers with deeper pathos, than when dwelling upon the mystery of the Incarnation, or the union of believers with Christ, or the relation of the Law to the Gospel; and especially in his Action Sermons or Sacramental Addresses, did he pour out burning words of pious trust and affection, such as those who have enjoyed the privilege of hearing them, have known none since to equal. Though his opinions were firmly

and fully those of the old orthodox school, he was emphatically a student of the Scriptures, deriving his doctrine, not from traditional creeds, but immediately from the living fountain of the sacred word; yet cordially holding the faith of his fathers, because he found in their Confessions what he believed the Holy Ghost had revealed. Hence, while regarding with indignation near akin to scorn, the novelties of his day, which he considered presumptuous attempts to improve the plan of salvation by "philosophy falsely so called," and particularly the puny metaphysics which lose sight of grand truths, in affected niceties and questions engendering strife, he never allowed himself to be trammelled by scholastic terms or technicalities, but retained only such as he knew to be of use, illuminating them by clear definitions. Resembling Paul in the comprehensiveness of his grasp and fulness of his thoughts, the Epistles of that Apostle were his favourite subjects of consideration. He delighted himself and his hearers by continuous courses of lectures upon those inspired expositions of the Evangelical scheme. In this he excelled; his analysis was astonishingly clear, his display of the Apostle's reasoning close and faithful, his criticism ever pertinent, philologically accurate and manly, his detail concise, and his practical inferences, rich, devotional and edifying. The profound knowledge he had acquired of the sacred languages, eminently fitted him for a commentator. As a Professor and the sole Professor in the Theological School he established, he taught the language of the Old Testament so successfully, that it may be safely said, no students have been, on an average, better skilled in Hebrew than his. His classical erudition was both profound and elegant, as those who had the advantage of listening to his comments on the "Art of Poetry," by Horace, and the "Treatise on the Sublime," by Longinus, well knew. It is remarkable that even when his mind had so sunk under the influence of disease as to take little notice of the most familiar things around him, he enjoyed with an evidently keen relish the edition of Homer by Heyne, then just published.

The physical qualities of Dr. Mason were worthy of the mind and heart that animated them. He stood, at least, six feet high; his frame was large, very muscular, but admirably proportioned; his head was massive, the forehead very broad and very high, shewing what the phrenologist calls the organs of ideality, causality, benevolence, and veneration, in full development. His features were regular, his eye full, clear and remarkably expressive, the nose straight, with the nostrils wide, the mouth firm, but not compressed, and the chin round and finished. In a word, though *handsome* is too poor a term with which to describe a union of intellectual, benevolent and courageous expression, it is seldom that such a man walks the earth. It was notorious that at a time when an avowal of his political sentiments, with characteristic boldness, had roused the anger of the multitude to threaten him with personal violence, such was the majesty of his port in the open street, as to compel the homage of all who met him. To these advantages was added a voice of surprising power, compass, and modulation. Its tones were round, full and clear, without roughness or shrillness; at one time, sweeping all before it in a thundering torrent, at another, gentle and sweet as a mother's hushing her infant, yet never omitting the slightest inflection which a just emphasis required, and of that he had the keenest perception. His utterance was deliberate, though at times impassioned; never frantic nor maudling, but in his utmost energy or subdued pathos, dignified and self-governed. Every consonant was heard, and the nicest orthoepist could rarely detect an error from the best usage. Hence his reading of Scripture constituted a special charm of his pulpit services, and many tell us that it was as good as a commentary; making difficult places plain, and giving new beauty to what was before but barely understood. Occasionally, when reading the Psalms from the version in use among the Scotch Churches, he allowed himself what may be called a tone or rhythmical cadence, which displayed the great compass and flexi-

bility of his voice. Few who ever heard him read on Communion days the 103d Psalm, can forget how he used to pitch his voice high, and then, by what the musician calls a *cadenza*, bring it down at the end of the verse, to a deep sonorous bass. His gesture was natural, though bold and sweeping; yet, with the exception of a thump upon his cushion, or a defying impulse of his clenched hand at the close of an argument, seldom violent, never artificial, but always the dictate, and therefore the accompaniment, of his thoughts.

For obvious reasons, the printed sermons of Dr. Mason, eloquent and powerful as some of them are, convey but a poor idea of his actual preaching. He was not accustomed to write his sermons before delivery, though doubtless many of them were thoroughly elaborated when he brought them to the pulpit. His usual habit was to premeditate them carefully, and then trust himself boldly to the inspiration of his thought. Hence, conscious of the power he possessed of gesture and emphasis, his sentences were constructed for his own delivery, and reached the hearer with a directness and clearness, no reader's mind can invest them with. What a true orator writes to speak himself, he naturally considers with reference to his proposed manner of utterance and expression; not for the cold type, and the inanimate eye as it traces the letters on the page. This is the secret of the comparative feebleness discoverable in the printed discourses of not a few eminent orators, as Whitefield, Summerfield, or the Dean of Killala. Yet I am far from saying that the written sermons of Dr. Mason deserve not, in an eminent degree, the praise of eloquence. His Sermons on Living Faith, Pardon of sin by the blood of Jesus, Messiah's Throne, and the Funeral Sermon for Mrs. Isabella Graham, are master-pieces of evangelical rhetoric. It is greatly to be regretted that no sketches of his expository lectures remain, or, if extant in manuscript, have not been published, as they could not fail to show, in a higher degree than any of his writings, his logical acumen and theological strength.

There was a peculiarity of his mind, arising from his intense force and directness, which not seldom diminishes his power over an ordinary reader. He disdained the minor steps by which common minds creep to their conclusions, as unnecessary and trivial. He condensed what others would distribute into many propositions, within a brief sentence. He strode by giant intervals from one great truth to another, forgetting, like Newton in his *Principia*, the pigmy limbs which strive in vain to reach after him. Instances of this are found throughout the sermons I have named; yet, when he stooped to explain, by nice definition and discrimination, light beams from every phrase.

Dr. Mason scrupled not to use irony, and the *reductio ad absurdum*, even to an unmerciful degree; but his wit was rather crushing than keen;—not the thrust of the rapier, but the sweep of the battle-axe; and, in his controversies, he allowed his opponent to chuckle over the success of some dialectic stratagem, or the cunning disposition of besieging lines, while he rushed on to seize the commanding heights, and launch his thunderbolts at their astonished heads.

The force of his mind killed him. He shrank from nothing that needed to be done, and never thought that he could attempt too much. Thus at one and the same time we find him the eloquent Pastor of an immense Congregation; the Provost and actual presiding officer of a literary College, to the Senior class of which he delivered an able course of Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity, with other Lectures on higher rhetoric,—taking for his text-book the Art of Poetry, and the Treatise on the Sublime; the Professor of a Theological Seminary, teaching with little assistance the whole range of Theology and Biblical learning; and the conductor of a religious periodical, which he enriched with many most able didactic articles, carrying on also a profound controversy with several vigorous and distinguished opponents. In the midst of all this, his society and hospitable home were sought by intellectual and pious men, who

gathered eagerly the profuse wisdom that fell from his lips. The physical endurance even of his athletic frame was tasked to an extreme; a generous diet only stimulated his powers to a more excessive zeal; and a slow but fatal disease clouded the mighty brain, long before he ceased to breathe.

As I read over this poor sketch of the greatest preacher the American Church has produced, I am not without fears that many will think it an exaggerated eulogy; but I have written what I know to be truth, and am sure of corroboration from the testimony of all who knew and heard John M. Mason.

Very sincerely yours,

G. W. BETHUNE.

FROM THE REV. WILLIAM D. SNODGRASS, D. D.

GOSHEN, February 27, 1852.

My dear Brother: Your favour of the 21st inst., renewing the request for such recollections of Dr. Mason as I may be able to furnish, has been received; and though I still think there are others who might serve your object better, I do not feel at liberty, under all the circumstances, again to decline.

Though so many years have elapsed since the death of this distinguished servant of Christ, his image, as he was towards the close of his life, is still fresh to my mind; nor do I expect ever to lose the vivid remembrance of some things which occurred during the period of my intercourse with him.

I had heard him preach three or four times in my early youth, and had called upon him once at his residence in Carlisle, while he was in the Presidency of Dickinson College. With these exceptions, I had never seen him, until his return from Carlisle to New York, in impaired health, in 1824. In the mean time, he had received an injury which deprived him of the use of one of his limbs, and rendered crutches necessary to his convenience in locomotion. It was also understood by his friends that he had been, for some time, gradually declining in mental vigour. But, notwithstanding this, as I was then his successor, and still young in the ministry, it need not seem strange if, in the prospect of his return to spend the remainder of his days among his friends in New York, I was sensible of some little trepidation, at the thought of his becoming one of my stated hearers. The first Sabbath after his return, however, did not pass without yielding me all needful assurance that I was to find in him, not a critical or curious hearer, but a child-like lover of the truth in its plainest dress. He entered the church, supported by his crutches, and took his seat in a pew occupied by the family of one of his sons, near the pulpit. At the commencement of the discourse, he fixed his eyes upon me with that earnest and steady gaze for which he was remarkable; and, during its progress, while his attention never flagged, he was more than once so affected as to brush the tears from his face. At the close of the service, taking me by the hand, he alluded to the sermon in such a way, and addressed me in such encouraging terms as placed me ever afterwards at ease, and made the sight of his face welcome to me, as often as the Sabbath came round.

Not long after this, I invited him to administer the ordinance of Baptism in the case of my eldest child; and this was the last public service in which he ever engaged. His difficulty of utterance caused him to hesitate a little; but he made the service short, and passed through it without any serious embarrassment. It was an affecting scene to his many friends before him, who could compare what they now witnessed with the fluency and force of manner which had once distinguished him. The contrast was too striking to pass unnoticed or unfelt. Even those who loved him best, were contented to abandon the expectation of hearing his voice in any public effort again.

He was occasionally present with us after this, at our meetings of Presbytery. Sometimes he would sit an almost silent spectator of what was going on, while, at other times, his mind would brighten, and he would take part in the business for a while with evident relish. I remember, on one occasion, when a young man was before us, having the ministry in view, he took up the line of examination with decided spirit, proposed questions in rapid succession, and so pressed his demand for proof in support of the answers given, and especially proof from Scripture, that the candidate became not a little embarrassed, and seemed relieved when the examination passed into other hands.

It is worthy of being recorded, in memory of Dr. Mason, that in all the period of his decline as to bodily and mental strength, there was no abatement of his deep and lively interest in the worship of God on the Sabbath. He seemed to have a home feeling in the house of God, which continued with him through all changes and trials. Conditions of the weather, which kept others from the sanctuary, were no obstacles to him. When it was possible, he was there, and always in his place in season. And no one could regard his appearance and demeanour attentively, without being satisfied that he was there, not as a matter of form, or as the result of habit, but because he loved the place, and was happy when surrounded by the associations and influences connected with it. His tenderness of feeling under the preaching of the word was remarkable. The big tear might often be seen in his eye, when the eyes of others around him were dry. He seemed indeed to "receive with meekness the engrafted word." And in referring afterwards to subjects discussed in the pulpit, it was much more frequently in a practical than a speculative way; and never in such language as involved the idea of dissatisfaction or fault-finding in the least degree.

You may naturally suppose, from the relation I sustained to him, that I had frequent opportunities of seeing him in private and social intercourse, as well as in public. We sometimes met at the houses of mutual friends; and, for a considerable period, on my invitation, he frequently dined and spent a part of the day with me on Monday. On these occasions, he appeared differently at different times. Sometimes all efforts to engage him in conversation were fruitless; and yet this did not seem to be the result either of indifference or depression of spirits. He would appear pleased with what was passing around him, and would listen attentively to what was said by others; but when a question was directed to himself, he would generally answer in a monosyllable, and then be silent. There seemed to be a stagnation of the mental powers, while the social feelings were still in play. But at other times, there was a wakefulness of mind about him, which made it easy to entertain him. He would ask as well as answer questions; make somewhat extended remarks upon such topics as were introduced; and sometimes enunciate his sentiments with something like the emphasis which characterized his manner when "his natural force" was not "abated." In conversation with myself, during these visits, he would often refer to some part of one of the discourses of the preceding Sabbath, expressing his approbation of the sentiment, and adding something to illustrate its importance or bearings from the suggestions of his own mind.

But it often occurred to me, in these interviews, that his mental operations were rather in the way of reproducing old ideas, than working out any thing for the occasion. His memory was perhaps as little enfeebled in proportion as any other faculty; and the results to which trains of thought in other days had conducted him, seemed to return, when subjects were introduced to which they stood related. For all investigations or discussions that required the breaking of new ground, his day was already past. His great mind, in adding to the stores of human thought, had done its work. It was the purpose of the Great Master soon to take him to Himself; and the little of life that remained was

granted him, not so much as a season for work, as a period during which he was to wait for his change.

Very affectionately yours,

W. D. SNODGRASS.

EDWARD DORR GRIFFIN, D. D.*

1792—1837.

EDWARD DORR GRIFFIN was born at East Haddam, Conn., January 6, 1770. His father was George Griffin, a wealthy farmer, a man of vigorous intellect, of great enterprise, and of a superior education, for a common one at that day. His mother was Eve Dorr of Lyme, and was distinguished for her lovely and engaging qualities. He was named after his uncle, the Rev. Edward Dorr of Hartford, and was, in the intention of his parents, devoted to the ministry from his birth—a circumstance which was certainly somewhat singular, as neither of his parents at that time made any pretensions to piety.

Being thus intended for the ministry, and withal incapacitated by bodily indisposition to labour much on the farm, he was kept almost constantly at school, up to the time of his entering College. His preparatory studies were chiefly under the Rev. Joseph Vaill† of Hadlyme, towards whom he continued till the close of life to cherish the most grateful and filial veneration.

In September, 1786, he became a member of Yale College. Here he distinguished himself in every department of study, and gave decisive indications of a commanding and splendid intellect. He graduated with one of the highest honours of his class in 1790.

While he was at home during one of his college vacations, a circumstance occurred, by means of which he had well nigh lost his life. His father had a fine horse, whose spirit no one had been able to subdue. Edward mounted him, rode him for several hours, and returned in high spirits, declaring that he would have him for his *Bucephalus*. Shortly after, he mounted him a

* Autobiography.—MS. from his daughter, Mrs. Smith.

† JOSEPH VAILL was born of pious parents in Litchfield, Conn., July 14, 1751. At the age of twenty, he conceived the idea of obtaining a collegiate education, with a view to entering the ministry; but, in carrying out this purpose, he was not a little embarrassed for want of the necessary pecuniary means. He graduated with honour at Dartmouth College, in 1778, and shortly after entered on the study of Theology under the Rev. Andrew Storrs of Northbury, now Plymouth, Conn., with whom he remained till May, 1779, when he was licensed to preach by what is now known as the "Litchfield Association." On the 9th of February, 1780, he was ordained Pastor of the Church in Hadlyme, Conn., and continued in that relation fifty-nine years. He had a colleague settled in the spring of 1832; and as he remained but a short time, he had another settled in the spring of 1835, who continued junior pastor until Mr. Vaill's death. During the last two years of his life, he preached forty sermons. He died in Killingworth, at the house of his son-in-law, David Evarts, on the 21st of November, 1838, in the eighty-eighth year of his age. He possessed a vigorous constitution, was a good scholar, an excellent preacher, and distinguished for conscientiousness, transparency of character, freedom from all affectation, and untiring devotedness to his work. Besides frequent contributions to periodicals, he published a Poem entitled "Noah's Flood," 1796, and another Poem entitled "An Address to a Deist;" also a Sermon preached at the ordination of his son at Brimfield, Mass., 1814. Two of his sons have been graduated at Yale College, and are highly respected clergymen. The elder, *William Fowler*, has long been a missionary among the Indians of the Southwest, and the younger, *Joseph*, (now the Rev. Dr. Vaill,) is (1857) settled at Palmer, Mass.