

THE VICTORY WON:

A MEMORIAL

OF THE

REV. WM J. HOGE, D. D.,

LATE PASTOR OF THE

TABB STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

PETERSBURG, Va.

RICHMOND, VA:

PRESBYTERIAN COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

1864.

THE VICTORY WON:

A MEMORIAL

OF THE

REV. WM J. HOGE, D. D.,

LATE PASTOR OF THE

TABB STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

PETERSBURG, Va.

RICHMOND, VA:
PRESBYTERIAN COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.
1864.

MEMORIAL

OF THE

REV. WM. J. HOGE, D. D.

AMONG the many ministers of the gospel who have manifested a deep concern for the religious welfare of our soldiers, few, if any, have surpassed the late and lamented Rev. Dr. Wm. J. Hoge, of Petersburg, Va. He was not, indeed, at any time a chaplain, but on various occasions he visited the army, and it would be difficult to say to which party these visits gave most pleasure—to the earnest loving minister, who delighted to preach the gospel to the noble men who are fighting our country's battles, or to the gallant and war-worn heroes who so relished his fervid and impressive ministrations. He was eminently fitted for a soldier's preacher. He had a manly, soldierly look, a powerful sonorous voice, a warm, genial heart, a beaming countenance, a fine flow of language, and a soul on fire with love to his Saviour and to his perishing fellow-men. Nothing delighted him more, on his return from his army visits, than to tell how the thousands of soldiers had gathered to hear the gospel, and of the hope that God had blessed his ministrations to their eternal good.

Though his duties to his large congregation in Petersburg were sufficient to have absorbed all his attention, yet he could not deny himself the privilege of often visiting the camps in the neighborhood of the city. Indeed, it is not improbable, that in this way he overtaxed his strength and thus cut short his valuable life. Not only did he preach to the men in camp, but he invited them to his church, and when they came assured them of a cordial welcome; addressed himself directly to them, sometimes changed the subject he had selected for one more appro-

priate to their circumstances, and not unfrequently requesting his people to give up their pews to afford the most comfortable accommodations for his soldier hearers. The large number of soldiers attending, formed a striking feature in his congregation; the galleries usually occupied by them, being so crowded, that when they rose to prayer, it looked almost like successive lines of battle.

But this devoted servant of God, was called away from these abundant labors, when they promised fairest for the most blessed results. In the apparently full strength of his manhood, he was laid upon a bed of sickness, which proved the bed of death. Most deeply is his departure lamented. Few are blessed with such qualifications for extensive usefulness. But God has taken him to himself, and what he does is always the wisest and the best.

In order to gratify the many soldiers who had known and loved this lamented minister, the large numbers who had listened to his preaching, and it is also hoped to profit and edify others who have never seen nor heard him, the following tribute to his memory, with the incidents of his last hours, already published in another form, is now issued in the present shape.

May God's gracious Spirit render it a blessing to the reader.

SKETCH OF DR. HOGES CHARACTER,

BY REV. T. V. MOORE, D. D.

HAD we taken the roll of our ministers at the opening of this year to conjecture who among them would likely be called home during its months, WM. J. HOGES would have been one of the last we would have selected. In the prime of a vigorous manhood that had not yet numbered its thirty-ninth year; with an unwasted constitution that seemed to possess a very exuberance of life; in the noon-tide of a usefulness that seemed so necessary to family, Church and State; with a capacity of doing good that had not reached its limit, so expansive and exhaustless were its elements; and with a delight in his Master's service that made labor a luxury to him, we, in our short-sighted wisdom, would have inferred, that, whoever might be taken, he, surely, must be spared. And even after tidings

of his serious illness reached us, we could not feel that his strong and manly frame would sink under it, or that God would remove one whom we so much needed. We could not think of death in connection with one, who seemed so full of life.

But, as if to enforce that great lesson which we have so often been taught recently, that God must be every thing and man nothing, he was taken, and others, who feel that they could have been so much better spared, have been left. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

And yet mysterious as we call such sad removals, we are prone to forget that the mystery is only in regard to those who are left, not those who are taken. To them all is love, all is light. Early ripened, they are early garnered. Early trained under the cross, they are early called to the crown. Earlier taken from the "heat and burden of the day," they enter upon "the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory." It may be that our tone of feeling is taken rather from our selfish sense of our loss, than the teachings of either the Word or Providence of God; and that the very Heathen had a truer conception of the Divine procedure when they said, "whom the gods love, die young." We may discover hereafter that what we call these premature removals, were but honorable promotions of those whom the Master has only called up higher to a glorious service above, for which they had been training here below.

A brief record of our beloved brother's short, but useful life, will not be deemed inappropriate, by any who knew him. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Hocking in 1850, and soon after removed to Richmond to aid his brother in a Female School just opened. In this capacity he not only labored as a teacher with great acceptance, but a precious revival occurring during the year, did an unusual amount of preaching, and many a subject of that revival doubtless owed much to his faithful labors. In the Spring of 1852, he was called to take charge of the Westminster church in Baltimore, a colony from the 1st Presbyterian church of that city, and was ordained by the Presbytery of Baltimore. His labors in this church seemed to be abundantly blessed to its increase in every element

of prosperity. Early in 1855, he was united in marriage to Virginia, daughter of Rev. Peyton Harrison, who survives to mourn his irreparable loss. In May, 1856, he was elected Professor of Biblical Introduction in Union Theological Seminary, and entered upon his duties at the opening of the session of that year, in which position his labors are too well known to most of our readers, to demand any notice of them. In the spring of 1859 he accepted the co-pastorate of the Brick church in New York, which for half a century had been under the care of Dr. Spring, and the crowds that began to throng the church when he preached, filling the aisles as well as the pews, attested the hold he was taking on the public mind in that great city. The breaking out of the war found him in this position, surrounded with every comfort, and a prospect of large usefulness, had he been able to stifle his convictions and sympathies. But his heart was with the struggling people of that brave old Commonwealth, who were then girding themselves for the terrible conflict before them, and he longed to share their trials, and aid in comforting them in their sufferings. Accordingly, as soon as he could make his arrangements, so as to justify his removal in the eyes of the many friends who were unwilling to part with him, he resigned his pastoral charge, and on the day of the first battle of Manassas, and at the very hour when the tide of battle was turning, he delivered his valedictory discourse; and not without considerable personal loss, risk and exposure, made his way with his family to Virginia. Soon after his arrival he took charge of the Presbyterian church of Charlottesville, Va., where his labors reached beneficially the students of the University, as long as the war permitted any large number of them to remain. In the fall of 1863, he accepted the pastorate of the large and important Tabb Street church in Petersburg, where his brief course of labor was greatly blessed. Every dissension vanished before the sunny glow of his warm and manly heart; the house was soon filled with worshippers; the colored gallery was often crowded to suffocation with eager and delighted listeners to whom he would turn at times and address special words of instruction; the young and the floating population, particularly the soldiers, were drawn to his ministrations in large num-

bers; the congregation with their characteristic liberality made the most ample provision for his comfort, and every thing indicated a success and usefulness greater if possible than ever before. But these bright hopes were soon clouded. His labors in church, camp and hospital during the spring had already begun to tell on his vigorous frame, and when the first military operations were made against Petersburg, he encountered so much fatigue and exposure as to bring on an attack of dysentery, by which he was very much prostrated. When shells began to be thrown into the city, he was removed for safety to the hospitable mansion of Mr. James Jones, of Chesterfield, when his disease assumed a typhoid type, under which he slowly, but steadily sank, until Tuesday July 5th, when his brave and manly spirit was taken to its eternal reward. Thus ending a life whose brief space, and large results excite at once grief at its untimely close, and wonder at its great success, and gratitude that whilst we have so much over which to rejoice, that death could never destroy, but rather hallow.

His character was so simple, transparent and child-like, that it requires no skill for its analysis, and his usefulness was so directly connected with that character, as it was unfolded by nature and grace that the one is completely explained by the other.

He was blessed with fine physical endowments. His bright face, with its sparkling eyes and blooming cheek, gave token of a system that had never felt the depressing influence of chronic disease, whilst his well-knit and stalwart frame seemed capable of any amount of labor. This gave him a ceaseless flow of animal spirits, that seemed ever gushing up like a fountain, in the exuberance of its enjoyment of everything fair and beautiful in nature, so that he had an exquisite relish of life that was contagious, and gave special charm to his society. His voice was one of unusual compass and power, and few who ever heard its deep organ-like notes in singing, or its clarion ring when excited in speaking, can soon forget its rich and musical inflections. These physical advantages contributed largely to his success as a preacher.

His mind was characterized rather by symmetry of development than the predominance of any single power.

The logical and imaginative faculties were so evenly balanced, that had either been in deficiency, he would have been noted for the possession of the other. A ripe, scholarly culture gave the chastening finish to both. He had a rich vein of playful wit, unmingled with the bitterness of sarcasm, which, especially in private, was ever throwing around every topic it touched, the bright sparkle of its fancies, lighting it up with its brilliant corruscations, but leaving no sting or blister behind. These mental endowments gave a peculiar charm to his private intercourse, as well as his public services.

But the main elements of his success lay in his emotional nature. He had naturally a large, manly heart, full of genial and generous emotions, that lifted him above all littleness or jealousy of feeling, and made him love rather to "raise mortals to the skies," than to "pull angels down." His range of sympathy was a very broad one, enabling him to rejoice with the joyful, and mourn with the sorrowful, to mingle his feelings with the ripe and often saddened musings of hoary age, and enter into the gushing gladness of childhood, as if himself a little child. This quick sympathy with youth, gave him a rare power to attract the affections of the young and lead them to the great Shepherd.

To these natural gifts was added a large measure of the grace of God. He had what we may almost call a personal love for Jesus, that made Christ the great theme of his preaching, and largely of his conversation, and a love of souls that never seemed to weary of efforts to save them; a faith that seemed never to have been crippled by dark wrestlings with unbelief, and which seemed to feed upon the living Word, not only in the critical study of it, but in the joyous use of it, so that his mind, heart and very vocabulary became saturated with its spirit and language; and a hope that shone like a morning star, growing brighter and brighter, until it faded not into the darkness of the grave, but rather into the brightness of that day that has neither sunset nor cloud forevermore.

A fellow minister, and his successor at Union Theological Seminary, writing since his death, a letter of sympathy to his bereaved brother, says:

"I do not think that I ever met with any one whose

soul seemed to be more full of love to Christ than our sweet brother. It seemed to pervade his whole being. I remember how it struck me on my way to Synod last fall. I had not seen him for two years; but in a very little while after our meeting, he took out of his pocket a small English edition of John's Gospel, and turned to some of our Saviour's wonderful words, and began to talk about them with his usual animation; his noble countenance beaming the while with a delight and joy which now seems to me more like that of a seraph than of a saint, still dwelling in a tabernacle of flesh."

This brief summary will suffice at once to describe and explain his character as a preacher, without any more minute detail, which to most of our readers would be unnecessary, as they have heard him for themselves. Suffice it to say, that he excelled, and was steadily growing in the excellence, as an expository and experimental preacher.

Had his life been spared, much might have been expected from him as a writer. His *Blind Bartimeus* is a fine specimen of the mingling of the expository and experimental, and belongs to a high class of practical religious literature, as is proven by the many thousands of copies that have been sold on both sides of the Atlantic. His graceful and genial tribute to the lamented Dabney Carr Harrison, which has been so largely circulated in the army, and some more fugitive pieces, indicate the same power, and gave a promise for the future which we mourn to see thus prematurely blasted.

Such in brief were his life and character, this meagre sketch of which will be a fitting prelude to the last solemn scene in his life, which is given in the following communication.

LAST HOURS.

To the Editor of the Central Presbyterian:

DEAR BROTHER.—Agreeing with you, as I do, that it is a grateful duty to treasure up what is precious in the dying exercises and peaceful departures of the children of God, and that the Church is enriched, and the faith and hope of timid believers strengthened by these recorded illustrations of the supports of Divine grace when heart

and flesh fail, I comply with your request, and herewith furnish you with some account of the last hours of my beloved brother, Dr. Wm. J. Hoge.

Others may, with more propriety, portray his character as a man and as a minister—his talents, acquirements, and services to the Church—be mine the duty of simply detailing what I witnessed in his dying chamber. May the narrative I now subjoin be blessed to the encouragement and consolation of those who knew and loved him—and of all who, loving the Lord Jesus Christ, may chance to read this record of what grace enabled him to say, and to enjoy, on the eve of his translation.

Up to the time of his illness, he continued to reside at the Parsonage, next door to the church in which he ministered in Petersburg; but when the enemy commenced shelling the city, it was deemed expedient to remove him to some country place where he might be free from the perils and excitement of the siege.

He was accordingly conveyed to "Dellwood," the hospitable home of James Jones, Esq., about five miles from Petersburg; and very soon after, both the Parsonage and the church were repeatedly struck by shells, showing that his removal was a very timely and necessary precaution.

I had heard of his dangerous illness, but was detained by sickness in my own family until Sunday evening, July 3d, when I went over in an ammunition train, and reached Dellwood about nine o'clock.

When I entered his chamber, after embracing me tenderly, his first words were: "Brother, there has been much that was bitter in this dispensation, but I would not have escaped it if I could, because it has taught me so much of the love of Christ. More confidently than ever can I say, I *know* that I love *Him*."

He seemed physically stronger than I expected to find him, and so natural was his appearance, so cheerful, and occasionally even playful, was his conversation, that I was inclined to hope he might yet recover. This hope was strengthened by the conviction that the God in whose service he delighted, would not cut him off in the flower of his days, and in the midst of his usefulness, while so great a work for the country and the church remained yet to be accomplished.

But the springs of life were giving way, and there was much concurrent mental depression. He did not, indeed, utter any expression intimating the slightest spiritual dejection, but he said so little that was indicative of the contrary, that I frequently found myself asking during the day whether it was probable that he would be permitted to pass away without communicating his feelings in reference to death, and his wishes in our behalf, so soon to be separated from him. Without attaching any undue importance to death-bed exercises, where the life has been eminently Christian, still I could not but hope that God would permit one whose piety was so mature, whose love to Christ was so absorbing, and whose spiritual tone had been habitually so elevated and joyous, to leave behind him some dying testimony that might add to the consolation of survivors. But not upon this day was it given him to bear such testimony as our hearts craved, although there was much in his conversation that denoted humble acquiescence in the Divine will and earnest devotion to the Divine glory.

The morning of Tuesday, the 5th, dawned in cloudless beauty. The increasing light revealed the change which a single night had wrought in his appearance. He was evidently sinking, and yet the expression of physical distress which his face had worn the previous day, had entirely passed away. His eye was bright, his countenance was serene, and his intellect unclouded. When he saw me sitting at his bed-side, he greeted me lovingly, and began to remark upon the extreme beauty of the opening morning. His love of nature, cultivated and developed by communion with the great Author of nature, and by the study of whatever was beautiful in His works, was to him a source of unusual enjoyment. From the window near which he lay, he could look out upon the waving woods and transparent sky, and drinking in refreshment from the scene he began, as his custom was, to admire these manifestations of the glory of God as displayed in his visible creation.

Yet placid and peaceful as he was, there were unmistakable indications that he would probably not see the noon of the day which had dawned so tranquilly, and his

family, and friends, and the servants of the household began to assemble in his room.

Looking around, he asked, "Why are so many of you gathered about me at this early hour of the day?" I replied, "Because the doctor tells us that you are not to be with us much longer, and we wish to be near you while we can, and to hear whatever you may desire to say at such a time."

"Is it *decided*," he asked, "that I am near my end?" I told him that was the doctor's opinion. He smiled very sweetly, and said, "Could I have my way I would go to Heaven now—*now*;" (looking up and clasping his hands,) "how sweet it would be to be permitted to go at once, and be with my Saviour. And yet I am somewhat surprised at this announcement, for I passed such a comfortable night, and am so free from pain this morning, that I do not feel as if I were dying. Had I known it sooner, I might have spent more time in prayer, but there has been no hour in which I could not say, Father thy will be done." Then his thoughts were evidently attracted heavenward again, and toward Him who had been the supreme object of his love and the chief theme of his preaching, for he added, "I could tell of Jonathan Edwards, and of many wonderful authors and poets, but they are all comparatively low down—Christ! Christ! O the glory of Christ!"

I will not lift the veil which should rest upon his parting interview with the members of his immediate family, nor attempt to describe the unutterable tenderness of the scene. Suffice it to say that these addresses were unspeakably touching and solemn, almost entirely scriptural in their phraseology, (unconsciously so,) and strikingly adapted to the different ages, trials and duties of each. His servants were not forgotten in these parting admonitions. They belonged to a class to whom it was his special delight to preach while in health, and now in his dying counsels he affectionately remembered them.

After expressing his warm personal regard to his physicians, and his earnest wishes for their spiritual welfare; he exclaimed, "O that all physicians were faithful in trying to bring their patients to Christ," and then he added, "Why are not ministers more plain and simple in

their presentation of the plan of salvation?" and then, (illustrating with the finger of one hand upon the open palm of the other, the imaginary positions he assigned to each,) he said, "Here stands the sinner, and here the Saviour inviting him to come. All that the sinner has to do is to pass from this point to this, and the work is done. The way of life is just as simple as *that*."

After sending loving messages to many absent relations and friends, and expressing the hope that his death would be sanctified to the conversion of some in whom he felt a peculiar interest, he requested that preparation should be made for the baptism of his little son William, an infant about four months old. While these were making, he said, "My death will be as easy as the baptism of this child. Both death and baptism are consecrations to the Lord." When all was ready, he did not wait for me to propound the usual questions, but, in a manner inexpressibly tender and reverential, he pronounced the vows for himself and wife; and after the service was over he said, "Now take my little boy and place him in the sunlight!" I took him to the window where the beams of the rising sun were shining brightly, and held the child for a few moments in the immediate rays. He gazed at him with unutterable fondness and admiration, while with bare arms and head illumined by the radiance, as with a halo, he disported himself in the fresh air and golden light of the morning, and then said, "Take him away I am satisfied."

He then dictated the following message to his church and its elders:

"My dear people, I have not preached to you as I expected and would have done in a more quiet and regular Pastorate. I have not presented such trains of thought, or discussed truths in as thorough and orderly a manner as I desired. My preaching has been less doctrinal and systematic than was my purpose. My reason for this is that I have had to 'preach to the times,' using that phrase in its best sense—in the sense of having to comfort and encourage the afflicted, and often have I found my church so full of soldiers that I have had to turn aside and preach exclusively to them." Just here his voice grew weaker, and I could not catch some sentences expressive of affection for the people of his charge, and his

sense of their kindness to him. He then resumed, "The elders which are among you, I also who am an elder exhort; feed the flock of God. The burden now comes heavy upon you. You bear it alone." And then followed a message to them of a private nature, which I need not here repeat.

After his pillows were re-adjusted, and a change made in his position in the bed, and some refreshment was administered to him, he made this singular observation; "There are many little things which seem insignificant in themselves, but which are done for my comfort, which give me pleasure from the thought that I shall now have no more need of *this*, and now I am done with *that*, forever."

These, and other conversations not here related, continued during the morning, interspersed with intervals of silence—silence occasionally broken by the distant thunder of the guns of the enemy, shelling the town,—in which he seemed absorbed in meditation and communion with God, when only his lips moved, and no sound could be heard. After one of these pauses, he requested that the 7th chapter of Revelation should be read, commencing with the 9th verse: "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number," etc. As I read it slowly, his hands were extended, and his face beamed with a light and joy almost seraphic. When I ended, he said, "That almost carried me away. I was there among the heavenly worshippers. The remnant of my poor body is here, I know, but I was with them in spirit, and I saw it—I saw it. That chapter is enough—all that is blessed is there. Well did I say this is a *glorious* morning. There is more to attract me to heaven than to bind me to earth,—and yet there are many on earth still very dear to me."

As eleven o'clock approached, he desired us to sing for him. As well as we could command our voices, we complied, and sang a part of the hymn, "How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord," after which he remarked: "As I said about that chapter, so I say of this hymn, it is *enough*; all that is comforting in the assurances of the Divine love and care seems to be there; nothing is omitted."

Those who knew his almost passionate fondness for

music, and who have listened to his own voice, when like the pealing notes of an organ it rose and swelled in the worship of God in the great congregation, can best imagine how affecting it was to us when we began to sing the hymn, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds," and when he, no longer able to listen in silence, began to sing himself, with a voice at first tremulous, uncertain and husky, and sometimes not even striking the chords correctly; but as we passed from verse to verse, his spirit catching the inspiration of the sentiment, and the noble elevation of feeling giving strength and volume to his voice, he poured his whole soul into the sound as he sung with us the last two lines of the stanza,

"Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought,
But when I see Thee as Thou art,
I'll praise thee as I ought."

Never can I forget his manner, so rapt, so full of holy triumph as he joined with us in the words,

"Till then I would Thy love proclaim
With every fleeting breath;"

his face beamed with a joy which I thought no earthly countenance could express, and his voice grew deeper, mellower and fuller, as he sang:

"And may the music of Thy name
Refresh my soul in death."

After a brief pause, he said, "I know little of music now—but soon I shall be listening to the diapason of the Universe!"

After lying silent awhile, with his eyes closed, he opened them very wide, and seemed to gaze intensely on objects around him, and said, "It is dark—*dark*—but never mind that,—it is only natural darkness. I am dead, physically dead, but spiritually alive in Christ Jesus—**FOREVERMORE.**"

He had little more to say after this. What more was there to say? He closed his eyes, and continued to breathe more and more softly, untill a little after eleven o'clock he fell asleep in Jesus.

That evening about dusk his body was placed in an

ambulance, and I brought it over to Richmond. It was a lonely ride, through the dim woods and along the intricate roads of Chesterfield county, and as I lay stretched on the straw, alongside the body of my dead brother; I had full leisure to contemplate the greatness of my loss. We reached Richmond as day was breaking. The funeral services took place from my church, at ten o'clock, (it was not possible to hold any in Petersburg) at which most affecting and impressive addresses were made by Rev. Drs. Moore and Leyburn; and he was then buried in Hollywood Cemetary, near the grave of a little boy of his own, who sickened and died from exposure to heat and fatigue consequent upon the long journey to Virginia (*via* Nashville) from New York, when he resigned his pastoral charge in that city, in the summer of 1861.

I have felt a mournful pleasure in the preparation of this sketch; one heightened by the desire that its perusal may be the means of confirming the faith and animating the hope of some who perchance have all their lives been subject to bondage through fear of death. The same grace which rendered the subject of this tribute triumphant over the last enemy, will be sufficient for all who rely on it, and who live as near to the Cross as he did.

Upon but one other does this bereavement fall more heavily than on myself. He was my only brother, and apart from natural affection, there was much to cement our attachment in similarity of tastes, education and calling in life. The Providence that removed him is inscrutably mysterious, but it is none the less wise, and holy, and kind on that account; and as I acquiesce in it, un-murmuringly, I do not forget his own parting words to me; "Our intercourse has been sweet on earth, may it be so forever."

Very truly yours,

MOSES D. HOGG.

