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W. H. ROBERTS, D. D., LL. D., 1920-1921.

## IN MEMORIAM.

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ROBERT ALEXANDER WEBB.

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One of the most honored alumni of the Columbia Theological Seminary was the distinguished Robert Alexander Webb, D. D., LL. D., who graduated at this institution in 1880. He was an honored and successful pastor in South Carolina of the famous Bethel Church in York county, which gives name to Bethel Presbytery, and of the Westminster Church at Charleston, S. C. He then entered upon his life work as professor of Systematic Theology, first at the Southwestern University for sixteen years, from 1892-1908, and then in the Kentucky Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Louisville, from 1908-1919. Thus for twenty-seven years Dr. Webb was the accomplished, inspiring and effective teacher of the greatest of all the sciences in two of our Theological Seminaries. His name and memory are cherished with great affection in this Seminary, where for three years he was a student and in which he served as Smyth Lecturer in 1914-15. The subject of his lectures was, "The Doctrine of Christian Hope," and it was a distinct contribution to the literature of theology in this field, and deserves more adequate publicity and wider circulation. His book entitled, "Theology of Infant Salvation," covers a wide field in a most able and convincing manner. It is unfortunate that the title conceals the value of its contents from the general reader, for the book deserves to be a theological and religious classic.

As a man, Dr. Webb was possessed of a brilliant intellect, which combined in rare degree rational and imaginative factors. His most thoroughly logical and philosophical discussions were lighted up with the blaze of facile and ever-active imagination and fancy, and if he had written poetry or indulged in rapsodies, the numbers would have moved under the impulse of linked argumentation. His emotions were dynamic and easily aroused and the current of profound feeling ran like the Mississippi through all of his living and thinking. He was

moral and conscientious by nature and dictates of obligation were to him final. The play of humor radiated in his countenance and enlivened most delightfully his intercourse with others.

As a friend, Dr. Webb was tender, forbearing, frank, genial and delightfully communicative. There was, however, a beautiful reserve, which kept him from becoming effusive. He loved his friends with an intense devotion and his loyalty to them was ready to bear almost any strain, even telling them frankly of their mistakes and foibles. His students were attached to him with an admiration and affection, which was based in large measure on great love which he cherished for them. No one who ever sat in faculty with him could forget how earnest he was as to the real interest of his students; how forbearing and long-suffering he was with their foibles and failures and how skillfully he could plead for even the most hardened offender to have another chance.

As a Christian, Dr. Webb was singularly consecrated. While incapable of cant or pretense, the super-natural had become ingrained into the very texture of his mental habitudes, so that by inner impulse he lived "in the 'Heavenlies.'" If any man in our day walked with God like Enoch, Dr. Webb was the man. He had profound experience of sin and of grace and all forms of pharisaisms was entirely foreign to his religious convictions. An undisguised humility and modesty, a beautiful meekness and lowliness of spirit adorned his character with a charm that made every sensitive soul love and admire him.

As a theologian, Dr. Webb was orthodox, Biblical, confessional, and thoroughly rational in the true sense of the word. He was a sound and convinced Calvinist, upon the basis of Scriptures and reason alike. It is a great pity that he did not publish more and it is hoped that his lectures to theological students have been left in such shape that a System of Theology can be digested from them. After twenty-seven years of teaching no man in the history of the Church was better prepared to publish such volumes. When requested by his friends and brethren to publish his lectures, his reply exhibited his real humil-

ity; he said if he were to publish such a book that nobody would read it, but he was much mistaken in this estimate.

As an ecclesiastic, Dr. Webb was gifted and influential, but for some years, for various reasons, he had retired from active effort to influence the ecclesiastical life of the Church, but he was a thorough believer in the distinctive mission of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and an advocate of its continued separate existence. He made no effort to conceal his views from those who had the right to know them.

The Seminary which he attended, the Synod of which he was a member, the Church of which he was minister, is bereaved in his transfer from the services of the Church below to the higher services of the Church Triumphant and Heavenly.

His memory and services are cherished with deep affection at this Seminary, to whose interests he was so devoted and loyal.

