

# SPIRIT OF THE XIX. CENTURY.

---

VOL. I.

AUGUST, 1842.

No. 8.

---

A DISCOURSE IN MEMORY OF THE LATE REVEREND JOHN BRECKINRIDGE, D. D.; PRONOUNCED IN THE CHAPEL OF THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT PRINCETON, N. J., AT THE REQUEST OF THE STUDENTS, ON THE LAST DAY OF JANUARY, 1842: BY JAMES W. ALEXANDER.\*

To the task which has been assigned me by the brethren of this Seminary, I approach with a diffidence, the causes of which are too manifest. For I am to offer my tribute to the memory, not of a stranger, but of one whose voice has often filled this house, and in the presence of those better able than your speaker to discriminate and portray this lamented servant of Christ. And I know of no peculiar fitness which I can bring to the work, save that which is derived from an affectionate intimacy of more than twenty years. It has been a disadvantage in preparing for this exercise, that I have enjoyed no sources of information not common to you all, except my own scattered recollections; a fact which will be my apology, when you find in the sequel how little I have to add to your previous information. A number of minor incidents in the life of this departed friend, will be purposely omitted, as being fully known to every one who hears me.

The Reverend John Breckinridge, D. D., was born at Cabell's Dale, near Lexington in the state of Kentucky, on the 4th of July, 1797. Both his parents were of old Virginian families of high respectability. His father, John Breckinridge, was a distinguished lawyer and statesman, an able and eloquent member of our national Senate, and for some time Attorney General of the United States. The pious and venerable mother of our deceased friend still lives, having survived a number of her children.

Thrown, as I am, almost entirely on my own remembrance, I hasten to observe, that my boyish recollections go back to the entrance of Dr. Breckinridge into the College of New Jersey, in the autumn of 1814. He was graduated in 1818, at which time I had myself become acquainted with him as a member of the College. During these years of academical study, he showed the same activity of mind and energy of character which have marked

---

\*The writer of this Discourse thinks it due to the friends of Dr. Breckinridge, as well as to himself, to say that it was composed just on the eve of a long and anxious absence from home; during the continuance of which it went to the press.

his later life. His high sense of honor and dauntless spirit, unchastened as yet by religion, brought him into more than one difficulty. But during this period, it was given to him to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; and from that day to this, it may be truly said, he has lived the life of a devoted Christian. From the beginning he cherished high thoughts of the gospel ministry, and determined to devote himself to this work. Accordingly, in the year 1820 he was matriculated as a member of this Seminary, in connexion with which he continued more than two years, during a part of which time he was tutor in the College. In the latter of these situations he had it in his power, as I can testify, to manifest a tender interest in the salvation of the youth committed to his care, whom in a number of instances, he instructed and warned, with faithfulness and success. In the year 1822, he was licensed as a probationer for the gospel ministry by the Presbytery of New Brunswick; and shortly after was married to Margaret Miller, the eldest daughter of our venerable friend and instructor; an event the most auspicious, connecting him with one every way worthy of him, and who was, as he used to say, 'next to his soul's salvation, the best gift of God to him.' It was their joint resolution to give themselves to the work of Christ in the field of foreign missions; a resolution which however they saw reason to change, when they came to study more fully the indications of Providence, in regard to their duty.

The first settlement of Mr. Breckinridge was over the McChord Presbyterian church of Lexington, in his native state; in which relation he continued about three years. His youthful ministry was thus exercised in circumstances fitted at once to try his faith and stimulate his exertions.

In the year 1826 he became collegiate pastor with the Reverend Dr. Glendy, of the Second Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, where he continued about five years. It was his last and principal settlement as a pastor. By every form of public testimonial his friends and parishioners in that community have signified their respect and attachment. He was honoured and beloved, and had the signal blessing of being made instrumental in purging and greatly increasing a church which had become the subject of many disorders.

From Baltimore, he removed, in 1831, to Philadelphia, having been selected by the Board of Education, their Secretary and General Agent. It was in this situation that he developed those talents for the conduct of public affairs which rendered him invaluable to the church, and which, in the opinion of many, have left nothing equal to them in any individual. He found that institution dead: by a series of powerful operations, he elevated it to a state of prosperity. He came to the work with reluctance, at great expense of comfort, he carried it on with labour, against a strong current of objection, and even as I know by a careful examination of the documents in the case, in the midst of severe obloquy; but his success was surprising. No influence of an individual among us has been any thing like it, before or since. When he took the direction, the Board had 100 beneficiaries: when he left it, the

number was 600. It stands forth as the most prominent portion of his energetic life; an encouraging proof of what may be effected by burning zeal and indefatigable labour. That all his measures were the best possible, that the prudence and caution were as conspicuous as the enterprise of the administration, I will not assert; but to deny to it extraordinary energy and extraordinary success would be to deny the statistics of the Board.

It was during this period that Dr. Breckinridge became involved in an affair which gave him as much solicitous labour and as much notoriety as any event of his life, I mean his controversy with the Rev Mr. Hughes, now the Right Reverend Bishop Hughes. Our friend considered himself as forced into this controversy, which he conducted for about a twelve month, in the Presbyterian, a religious newspaper of Philadelphia. It was a weighty load taken upon his new and arduous labours. A learned controversy was scarcely ever undertaken at greater odds. And situated as I then was, I was a witness of its progress, and wondered at the power of endurance no less than the prowess of Dr. Breckinridge. His antagonist was a wily and accomplished priest, at home in the controversy, and unscrupulous about his weapons. There may be diversity of opinion as to the expediency of such disputations, or as to the wisdom of our brother in burdening himself, at that juncture, with such a charge: there can be but one, as to the self-devotion, the fearlessness, and the versatility of polemic tactics, with which he carried through the warfare. It was mentioned, as I know, in a Convent at Rome, in the presence of a friend of Dr. B., and in connexion with his name; and it has raised his opponent to the mitre. At a later period, Dr. Breckinridge engaged in an oral controversy with the same gentleman; and the substance of both these debates has been published in separate volumes. In this great contest between Protestantism and the 'Church of Rome,' he was always interested. Much of his private reading was in this field; and with reference to this, some of the most valuable parts of his library were selected.

In May, 1835, Dr. B. was elected by the General Assembly, Professor of Pastoral Theology and Missionary Instruction in this Seminary. The question thus forced upon him was in no common degree an agitating one. On the one hand, he had expended great labour on the Board of Education, and had seen several of his plans carried out into successful operation; and the Board earnestly solicited the continuance of his services. On the other hand, his frame demanded repose. He was harassed and worn away by the frequent journeys and incessant toils of his secretaryship, and sighed, after these repeated changes, for the quietude of home. His attachment to this place, and this institution, was great. The demand for increase of funds, was urgent, and it was believed that no man so well as he could rescue it from pecuniary embarrassments. To these latter considerations he yielded, and took up his abode among us. And here if any where, it is proper for me to say, the Princeton Seminary owes a debt of lasting gratitude. How he laboured in its behalf, how he expended his strength in its cause, and in gaining friends in its necessities, is

known to many who hear me. But Providence seemed, by successive removals, to be warning him that this was not the place of his rest. His known zeal for foreign missions as well as his known capacity for the conduct of public enterprises of benevolence, led the Executive Committee of the Board of Foreign Missions, in 1837, to elect him as their general agent. At first he entered on these duties for a few months only, but in the summer of 1838 he resigned his professorship.

The epoch was marked by his greatest earthly affliction. On the 16th of June, 1838, his beloved wife was removed from him by death. For many months she had been gradually sinking. Effort after effort, journey after journey, proved inefficacious. It was the will of the Lord to take her to himself. In the anguish of the hour, he was the more easily persuaded to leave his professional cares, and assume more stirring and absorbing duties. He accordingly entered on the general agency of the Board of Foreign Missions, in which he continued until the spring of 1840. The same year he was elected President of Oglethorpe University, an appointment which it was earnestly desired that he should accept.

When visiting as a missionary agent the destitute regions of the south-west, including the republic of Texas, he became known to the people of New Orleans, from the church in which place he was called as its pastor. It was a new embarrassment, and none but those who saw him very nearly, can know how great was the anxiety which he suffered from these doubtful questions of duty. It seemed as if Providence would not allow him to take rest in any spot on earth. His countenance expressed his cares. I have no hesitation in declaring my belief that to these cares he fell a victim. For many months his friends observed with pain that his health was on the wane. He still preached and laboured, even beyond his strength. The lingering malady under which he laboured caused him great lassitude, depression and pain, but such was that sanguine energy to which he owed so many of his successes, that almost until the last, he entertained some hopes of recovery; and such was his earnestness for the progress of Christ's kingdom, that he certainly desired it. And here I judge it best to quote the words of one who attended his death bed.\*

"He spake often of a certain dulness, and darkness of mind, but never seemed, for a moment, to distrust the fulness, the infinite sufficiency of Christ, nor the reality of his own interest in him. His utmost doubts were uttered in words like these: *to distrust him, would be as much as to say I have served a hard master.*"

After a calm adjustment of his temporal affairs, he added, "that as to this world, his last duties were done; and as to death, he desired only that we should not allow him to encounter it unawares, but inform him in due time, of the approach of the last struggle."

"The principal seat of his disease was in the throat; and for several months before his death, that eloquent voice, which had filled so many hearts and thrilled so many spirits, with all high and tender emotions, was already hushed to the lowest whisper. At the same time his frame was reduced to the last degree of ema-

\* See Balt. Lit. and Rel. Magazine, vol. vii. pp. 475-90.—(October, 1841.)

ciation (though he daily rose and dressed himself, almost to the last,) and his nervous and vital energy so much prostrated, that he could not endure the least excitement. While these circumstances render his great and enduring self-possession and composure, the more remarkable, they explain also, how it was that the last months of his life were months of solitude and silence."

"For several days before his death, it was evident that he was sinking rapidly; and his bodily distress, which was great during many months, became excessive, and sometimes overpowering, as his end drew nigh. It seemed to be his earnest desire that his departure should be peaceful and without bodily suffering. But the conflict seemed protracted, and sometimes the last enemy struggled fearfully; and at such times his desire to depart was very strong. The night of the 3d of August was one of constant distress, restlessness and suffering. The next morning, he seemed convinced that his hour was nearly come, and calling his two brothers to his bed-side, he extended a hand to each of them, and said, "*I am dying: remain with me.*" As the progress of dissolution was made known to him, his countenance would light up, and an ejaculation of praise or hope broke from his lips; and as the promises and consolations of the gospel were, from time to time suggested to him, he constantly assented—"oh yes—true—true."

"To the end he was in full possession of his reason. "*Nothing.*" said he, "*is impossible with God.*" And a little after—"God is with me"—these were his last words."

Thus died our beloved brother at the age of 44 years, at the place of his birth.

In speaking of the private character of the deceased, I scarcely know whether to regard it as an advantage or a disadvantage to do so in the presence of so many who knew him. For while even an imperfect sketch will revive the picture in your affections, the failure of exact portraiture will be the more obvious. No man, it will perhaps be agreed, in all our acquaintance had a more distinct and marked personality. Every thing about his mind and manners was prominent. He rises before you, dignified in person, scrupulously decorous in habit and gesture, with a countenance careworn and grave but to an extraordinary degree versatile and obedient to the play of the emotions. His enemies never undertook to deny that wherever he went he imprinted a mark. I knew no man of whom it could be more truly said, that he never left any company without leaving a distinct impression. This arose in a good degree from the characteristic earnestness of his soul, imparted to his manner. He entered into every thing with all his heart, and awakened all around him, at least for a time, to a sympathy in the same objects. This tension of mind was very striking, and was some times such as to give a cast of anxiety to his manner, which communicated itself even painfully. As he was never without some high plan of usefulness, and was generally employed in the practical furtherance of it, his discourse was singularly animated, and resembled that of an advocate in a capital case. This was the secret of his wonderful success as a public agent. Such earnestness would give momentum even to ordinary powers, but when

joined to such fertility, ingenuity and adroitness as his, it was well nigh irresistible, as hundreds remember to whom he applied for benefactions.

Not that he never relaxed. Men who never relax are seldom very intense in action.

*In culpa est animus qui se non effugit umquam.*

No man had a keener relish for wit and humour; no man oftener used these as the vehicles of important truth, or more fully dissolved his circle into healthful mirth. But no man was more free from levity. In the intercourse of many years, I never knew him to trifle, to cheapen himself by a buffoonery, or to forfeit the dignity even of the moment. Looking considerably at his whole demeanour, I reflect on this as one of his most obvious characteristics. Thus while he was the life of every company, and while his flow of conversation won him access, where men of equal merit but inferior manners could not have found it, he retained that hold upon his hearers which made it possible at any time for him to approach them as the minister of Christ.

It is almost needless to say after this, that he was a gentleman. He was such by birth and breeding, and association all his life with the highest models of courtesy which our country possesses; but inasmuch as not every one who enjoys these influences attains the same standing, I must add, he was a gentleman from principle, from temper, from conscience, and from benevolence. Not such gentlemanhood was his, however, as that which evinces itself by the adoption of the world's latest fashion, in dress or equipage, or by the bow and the grimace, but that 'benevolence in little things,' which made every man with whom he conversed seem the special object of his attention, and every sharer of his hospitality assure himself of welcome. Assiduity of attention, and persuasive language, marked the manner of Dr. B. to every person with whom he had an interview. If the universality of this should cause doubt as to its sincerity, it ought in justice to be said, that in every instance known to your speaker, and in a multitude touching his own personal interest, there was as much promptness of performance as there had been heartiness of profession. It was in part the courtliness of the old school in which he had been educated, but chiefly the earnestness of the individual, which produced this manner.

As the son of an eminent statesman, as chaplain to Congress, as a pastor in two of our most polished state capitals, as a favourite preacher in our three greatest cities, and as a welcome traveller and guest in every part of our union, Dr. B. had of necessity moved in that very current which more than all others produces ease of manner and knowledge of the world. Perhaps no minister in our church was on terms of familiar intercourse with so many of the leading political men of the day. With these, it was always striking to observe, that his manner was that of an equal. As a man he was profoundly courteous: as a minister of Christ he was almost lofty, certainly unbending. This has repeatedly been forced upon my notice in journeys with him. He never kept his clerical character in reserve: it was the prominent object. In that character he always spoke, and was perpetually producing the impression,

that he magnified his office, that he claimed respect for it, and that he would challenge its honour in any company on earth. This manner could not perhaps have been carried further, without fault. Indeed, notwithstanding the comity and persuasiveness of his manner, Dr. Breckinridge possessed an extraordinary tenacity of opinion, and persistency of purpose, and a self-respect which forbade him to risk even the appearance of truckling: his faults were much more on the side of pride than of vanity. Neither was he one of those toneless amiable men who cannot say a hard thing in the way even of duty. He could and did utter rebukes which were as the piercing of a sword. And to this may be attributed the opposition which he met with in many public enterprises. Particularly his contempt for what was unfair or dishonorable, in church affairs, often drew from him reproof and invectives which were almost insupportable. The dignity and the courage of the man both contributed to this. In his most playful hours, at his own fire-side, by the way, or in his sick room, he was always dignified in his demeanour. Perhaps this is best expressed by saying, that he was one with whom no man ventured to take liberties; or if the arrogance of folly ever attempted it, as the moth ventures on the candle, it attempted it but once.

And as to personal courage, it is a chapter in the history of our lamented friend which deserves a notice, while it least of all demands it. Who ever doubted it? Who ever heard his name mentioned without some connexion with this quality? Intrepid by nature, he was trained in a country and society where timidity is the infrequent exception, and where contempt of danger is not merely cultivated but overrated. It was a part of his character upon which he probably did not value himself, as he scarcely conceived of his being other than he was in this respect. The faults of such a temper are many; to subdue them demanded continual effort in our brother. On the reception of an insult, the impulse of the moment doubtless was to avenge his honour on the spot. Where he failed to do so, it was not fear but conscience and Christianity which forbade the act. To the very extreme of life there was a youthful sensitiveness to all that respected reputation and honour, which showed how delicately the instrument had originally been strung, and which while it was a preventive of every thing abject or equivocal, called for special grace to prevent its degenerating into an undue respect for what is at best a worldly good.

But how shall I venture to approach that shrine and dwelling-place of personal virtues, where if any where on earth, the real character shines out—the domestic hearth! Especially when every day reminds me how the coals of that hearth have been scattered and the lights of that home extinguished. If there ever was a man who was in danger of carrying these affections to an extreme—it was he of whom I speak. If he were an idolater, his idols were the *lares*, his house-hold gods. In his case, these feelings burnt with the fervor of passions. The strongest glow of domestic attachments continued and evinced itself by ardent, enthusiastic and even romantic expressions, long after the period when such

tokens become unusual, and even to the close of life. Of the conjugal relation, he had those thoughts which have ever characterised the purest minds, and he would have trampled on the ignorance and the effrontery of such as exalt an uncommanded celibacy, or disparage God's ordinance, as not knowing that so doing they serve the cause only of impure lust.

" Far be it I should write thee sin or blame,  
Or think thee unbefitting holiest place.  
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,  
Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced,  
Present or past, as saints and patriarchs used.  
Here love his constant shafts employs, here lights  
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings."

Not without reason did Breckinridge value his home. Its reigning charm was no common one. May I be allowed to drop a tear over the grave of her who was the tutelary genius of his life, who never ceased to rule over his spirit with all the romantic power of youth, and who was lovely even to the last? My memory goes back almost thirty years, to the day when we were children together, when our parents were in their prime, when brothers and sisters gambolled about us in these green fields, some of whom are gone. I stood by her grave—and saw there deposited as much innocent beauty, as much simplicity, as much of the charm of infancy carried into womanhood, as I ever expect to behold in this life.

Frequent bereavements marred these joys, but strengthened the affections; no circumstances can ever persuade me that Dr. Breckinridge ever lost the passionate fondness of heart. It was impossible—and most of all impossible for him. No, "her refinement—her patience—her humility—her cheerfulness in trial—her fortitude—her readiness to forgive—her faithful, constant love—her self-devotion to her children—her personal charms—her domestic virtues—her fine graces" [the enumeration is from his own pen] could never be blotted from so sensitive a heart.

From these afflictions of our greatly afflicted friend we are naturally led to consider him in the character which is most of all important, and in which he most shone—that of a child of God. No words could describe him better, than to say that he was devoted to God in heart and life. This shone so conspicuously that he was always pointed out as a man of zeal, and by some as a zealot. In his earlier years of profession, being thrown among the people of this world, he placed himself in the posture of bold resistance to their maxims and vanities, and became the object of much rebuke and ridicule. His influence was always on the side of a strict life and against conformity to the earthly ways of the age. Those who saw most of him can best testify to the frequency and solemnity of those private exercises by which the flame of holy love is kept alive. The character of his religious sentiments was pensive, reverent and awful, and he lived manifestly under an impression of impending death and judgment.

To say that he was eminently conscientious, fearing sin, and solicitous about the way of providence and duty, is to add little to the previous representation. His standard of Christian integrity



was very high, so that his whole life was eager and almost restless, as of one who strove for the mastery. This impressed itself on his countenance and gave alacrity to his motions. He was ready for sacrifices in the cause of the church, even of that which he prized beyond most men, the delights of home, and the blandishments of domestic affection; a readiness exemplified by his frequent removals, consuming labours, and vexatious journeys.

His religion was an animating principle, which combined most happily with the extraordinary warmth of his temperament. The steadfast persistency of his purposes gave a propulsion to every thought, word and effort. In labours, therefore, he was abundant, not merely in public but in private. It was his maxim, not uttered so far as I know in profession, but carried out in practice, to make all his intercourse even with worldly men the means of urging religious truth upon their minds. Few persons have more uniformly acted on this purpose, and instances of a memorable kind might be given, where his casual exhortations have led to saving results. In performance of this duty, he certainly did not err as most of us do, on the side of reserve; and no height of reputation or office in the persons addressed formed any hindrance to his efforts.

Under his great trials, the anguish of his soul bore a fair proportion to the depth of his affections, and the natural resistance of his will. A man less accustomed to carry his purposes would have suffered less. The work of resignation was a strange and a painful struggle, but through divine grace it was accomplished. He vindicated the ways of chastening Providence, and composed himself under strokes which crushed all the powers of mere nature.

How warmly and cheerfully he entered into every measure for the cultivation of piety in all the places where his lot was cast, how frequent were his visits to social assemblies, how solemn his warnings, how fervent his prayers, how multiplied his private counsels, will be remembered by Christians in a hundred different congregations. For the afflicted and the oppressed, he was never slow to stand forward, and that in full armour. The cause of the African in a special manner engaged his sympathies as long as he lived, and while he feared and abhorred the mock philanthropy of those fanatics who under the guise of love for the black race have increased their perils and rivetted their chains, he underwent labours and made sacrifices in the cause of this down-trodden people, such as will be sought in vain among the annals of abolition.

But it was in seeking the salvation of souls, by the ministry of the word, that his pious emotions found their chief vent. With the popularity which he enjoyed, he might have made his public performances occasions of theatrical ostentation. Those who prized him least, have never whispered such a charge. In looking towards ministerial duties, he regarded less the preparation of the intellect than of the heart; and the impression which he left was always one produced in a good degree by the sympathy of his hearers, with his own profound feelings, perhaps rather suggested than distinctly expressed.

It is, however, as a preacher, that Dr. Breckinridge was most widely known and will be most remembered. For this he was

trained, with all the aids which the best instructors of our country could afford, and to this he perpetually looked, as the grand business of his life. His preparation in the way of learning was more that of diversified information than of minute research. He was a sound classical scholar, and was familiar with the choicest portions of our own literature, which a quick and retentive memory made him prompt to apply. Throughout his ministerial course, he entertained lofty sentiments with regard to his office, never regarding it as a mere trade or a means of personal display or emolument. It was impossible to see him in the pulpit, without feeling that he was penetrated with a sense of his high vocation. By the public stations which he occupied, and by his repeated and great journeys, in almost every state of our Union, he made himself heard by an incredible number of persons, and there is no instance of his having ever withheld himself from the most laborious efforts, even when his strength was on the wane.

The fact is undeniable, that he was one of the most acceptable preachers in our country, to the great body of our people. In New York, in Philadelphia, in New Orleans, in Baltimore, his public services were demanded with avidity, and attended by admiring auditories. While this is well ascertained, it is more difficult to analyze the sources of his reputation and influence. His performances were unequal, and exuberant, and far from being faultless. His style and elocution were strikingly peculiar, and became him as they would become no one else. He rose with an air of uncommon solemnity, which affected his posture and his tones. The advantages of a melodious voice, fitted for the uses of pathos, were employed by him to the utmost. The earlier portions of his discourses were preparatory and tentative, and the success of his subsequent effort depended much on his rising to that warmth which was the native element of his eloquence. When he did thus rise, the effect was often astonishing. Never was the elevating power of passion more exemplified. His style became instinctively more simple and perspicuous, and the native earnestness of his heart urged him forward with a torrent of energetic, ardent, and some times overwhelming diction.

His sermons were not logical arguments of linked regularity, like the pulpit dissertations of Tillotson; nor the methodized passion of the elegant French school; nor the faultless and elaborate structures of Hall, perfect in polish and articulation. No: he most succeeded, when he most forgot all rule. His lavish fulness overleaped all conventional limits, and while he was never coarse, and seldom abrupt, he was bold, impassioned, and wild. It would be as unjust to put such effusions to the test of rhetorical canons as to apply the rule and compass to the forest pine, or the tropical palm tree.

Such a manner could not be great except when informed with the highest emotion. It was not in the purely didactic therefore, but in the impassioned or the tender, that his great strength lay. His argument took the garb of persuasive invitation, or legal menace, or indignant invective. Here as elsewhere, the source of power was his natural earnestness. The flame enkindled in his

own feelings burst forth and caught in the hearts of his hearers. As a matter of observation, it will not be denied, that his highest efforts were attended with an impression which more correct and equable orators might sigh after in vain.

It is higher praise to say, that in every sermon he evidently aimed at the salvation of those who heard him. He loved to preach the great distinctive doctrines of free and sovereign grace. And his labours were not in vain in the Lord. There is reason to believe that he will be met by multitudes to whom the word at his lips was a message of salvation. In more than one instance he was favored with extensive awakenings, as the fruit of his ministry.

It would not be easy to name a preacher, of such popularity and extent of service, who has left so few available records of his pulpit labours. His preaching was for the most part, extemporaneous as to the language, and his mode of preparation with the pen, though often laborious and as extensive as if intended to be rehearsed, was of such a rapid and fragmentary kind, that his manuscripts must remain little else than a cipher, to those who shall examine them. It is certainly a great disadvantage incident to this most natural and most effective way of preaching. Yet 'his works do follow him,' and however we may lament or except against any accidents of his preaching, its influence will doubtless continue to be felt, as a means of urging forward the work of God in this generation.

But the pulpit labours of Dr. Breckinridge, though the most frequent, were not the most remarkable of his efforts as a Christian orator. The church laments his loss, as that of a public agent in her great benevolent enterprises, to whom she could show no superior, if indeed any equal. If this language seems strong, I submit to be corrected by those who have been most familiar with our ecclesiastical operations. There were combined in our friend, two classes of qualities equally important in this work, and not often found together; those which relate to the plans, projects, and economy of an enterprize, and those which relate to its presentation to the mass of the people. As it regards the former, he was as fertile of expedient as he was rapid and energetic in execution. We have men who can plan with great ingenuity, and men who can carry out the devices of others: Dr. B. could do both. He was no dreamer of dreams, nor idle schemer. Others might have more caution, and more technical exactness, but when he contemplated a great object, he seemed really in pain until a chain of means for its accomplishment rose before his mind, and the moment of such a suggestion was the moment of his beginning to realise his idea. His plans were great—too great for his own strength—too great, alas, for the supineness of the religious world. If met by a corresponding public spirit on the part of the church, such methods would save our country; but selfishness still reigns among us. *We want public souls*, says Bishop Hackett, *we want them*. His was a public soul. All domestic and personal considerations gave place to this. Thousands of miles were rapidly traversed by him on his agencies, and within a few months he was exploring or soliciting in Boston and in Texas. It has been my

lot to be his companion in such expeditions, and I have seen him, the moment he has entered a steambot, open his books and papers on the table, and during several hours turn the cabin into an office for missionary business. The Boards of the church and this Theological Seminary have just cause to remember his indefatigable exertions in their behalf. It was proverbially current that no man could approach his success in the collection of funds for any great object. Such were his address, his perseverance, his ingenuity, his courage, his persuasive force that resistance seemed vain. In public addresses, on the great charities of the day, he was in his proper sphere. It was on these occasions, under the stress of high enthusiasm and the stimulus of opposition, that he rose above himself, and displayed far more than in any other situation, his power as an orator. Some of his defences of the American Colonization Society, in which his affections were greatly interested, can never be forgotten by the thousands who heard them. Playful wit, retort, sarcasm, and invective, here found their place, and threw his opponents into confusion. In the affairs of our beloved church he took the side of severe, ancient Presbyterianism, both as to doctrine and polity. It was not in his heart to be a cool or tame adherent of any cause. Even those who differed with him could not but admire the active zeal, and ever youthful enthusiasm with which he sought to carry forward our ecclesiastical enterprises. In these he was indefatigable, sanguine, nay, I might almost add chivalric; and hence many of his modes of action are less valuable, now that his own guidance and support are removed from them. We will not, then, forget him, when we number up those who have been the benefactors of the Presbyterian church.

But he has entered into rest. That rest which he never allowed himself on earth, he has found in the paradise of God; and surely he does not regret that he consumed himself in holy service. It is his fervent zeal and indefatigable labour, which more than any thing else should remain in our memories as an example.

We are admonished, beloved brethren, to work while the day lasts, and to look for our rest and our happiness in another world. If, in looking forward to the gospel ministry, your minds are reposing on scenes of literary ease, domestic affection, or personal contentment—check the thought—crucify the worldly desire. Here is not your rest. The more useful you are, the more likely, in this world, to suffer tribulation. The time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it. *For the fashion of this world passeth away!*<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> Though known to the hearers of this discourse, it may very properly be stated here, that about a year before his decease, Dr. Breckinridge entered anew into the marriage relation, with Miss Mary Ann Babcock, of Stonington, Connecticut. This lady survives, to lament an early and most trying bereavement.