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ARTICLE I.—*Annals of the American Pulpit*; or Commemorative Notices of distinguished American Clergymen of various Denominations. With Historical Introductions. By WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D. Volumes III. and IV. New York: Carters. 1858. 8vo. pp. 632, 836.

WE have already paid our respects to the former volumes of this work, and we need not repeat the remarks which we then made upon the plan and manner of the collection. But this new portion has a peculiar charm, as containing the history of our own venerable and beloved branch of the church catholic. Delightful as it has been to turn over these pages, we have found it a slow process, as our progress has been continually interrupted by the emotions which memory awoke, as we saw passing before us in vision, the images, first of those whose names were perpetually on the lips of our fathers, and then of those at whose feet we ourselves once sat. The task or sacred office of recalling such associations has chastened every controversial heat, and made us fain to recall the day when the Presbyterian church in the United States was an undivided body; while the prospect of yet greater increase and diffusion over rising States and conterminous countries, lifts our hearts in thanksgiving and hope.

When we reflect that the series extends from 1683 to 1855,

that it contains regular biographies of two hundred and fifty-six clergymen, and briefer notices of two hundred and twenty-eight, we recognize the wisdom and even necessity of the plan adopted. A work so wide in range, concerning so vast a territory, and constructed chiefly from unpublished sources, would have been the merest sham, if attempted by the unaided toils of any individual. The author has drawn largely upon the amplest and most competent circle, and we are constrained to say his success has been complete. We may not always think the hero worthy of the song, or the statue of the niche; this might be said of an Iliad or a Walhalla. Yet the selection of names is as judicious, we are quite sure, as any living writer would have made it. Inequality, as we said on a former occasion, will always be predicable of joint labours like these; but what then? we have contributions as often above as below the average mark; and some of the letters are gems of characteristic biography which would shine even without their present tasteful setting. We cannot always subscribe to the admiring verdict of pupils, parishioners, and kinsmen; but the hyperbole in such cases is not to be ascribed to the careful and wise editor. Instances of this kind it would be invidious to point out, and happily their number is very small; while it is pleasing to observe, that of the opposite fault, or the blackening of departed purity, the book, so far as we can discern, affords no example.

Of the fathers of American Presbyterianism, beginning with the revered MAKEMIE, the third volume gives full and authentic histories. The line of Tennents and Blairs, whose descendants are among us, and to whose eminent services Dr. Alexander directed attention by his "Log College," is duly illustrated. It is remarkable how many of these worthies might be classed as the associates and defenders of Mr. WHITEFIELD.*

* We observe a tendency, in quarters where accuracy might have been expected, to abridge the venerable evangelist's name into *Whitfield*, thus inventing a new surname, and sinking the graceful etymology which Cowper has sweetly consecrated in his *LEUCONOMOS*. By which we are reminded, that having many years ago spent a Sabbath with the late reverend Joseph Rue, who as a pupil of William Tennent had often met Whitefield, we inquired of him how the name was pronounced: Mr. Rue's answer was emphatically "*White-field*."

The biography of William Tennent may be selected as a fair specimen of the care with which our indefatigable author has searched into a vexed question of fact, and of the singular interest which can be thrown round the history of a quiet country minister. The striking letter of Dr. Woodhull reminds us of a visit which we enjoyed at the parsonage of that venerable man, then surrounded by relics of the battle of Monmouth; and of his showing us a life-sized silhouette of his pious predecessor. The name of President BURR leads us to note, as indicative of the learning which then prevailed, that we possess an autograph discourse, in Latin, which he pronounced to his students upon the occasion of Dr. Doddridge's death. The memoir of DAVENPORT is one which carries a moral, never to be forgotten; and the story of his fanaticism and his retractation, taken in connection with the notices of the Great Awakening, is as valuable to the coming age as anything in the book. Indeed all the narratives in this stadium of our church-history read like an entertaining story-book; nor can we see how anything more full of interest could be brought into a Presbyterian family. In the compendious life of President DAVIES we are pleased to observe that Dr. Sprague, with his characteristic accuracy, omits the blundering fable about the great preacher's reproof of King George, during a sermon. It is high time that an idle anecdote, awkwardly patched up out of a story well-known to all readers of Scottish history, should cease to be published in the front of this great and good man's sermons. We have perused his autograph journals of his British tour, and have found no allusion to any appearance before royalty. Indeed the very thought of a persecuted Virginia dissenter being invited to preach before George II., is, in the eyes of one who knows the times, simply ridiculous.*

* 1. The story of Bruce.—“The same person (Mr. Livingston) told another account of Mr. Bruce's freedom with the king. One day he was preaching before his majesty at Edinburgh, and the king was sitting in his own seat, with several of the nobility waiting on him. The king had a custom very frequently of talking with those about him in time of sermon. This he fell

2. The story of Davies.—“His fame as a pulpit orator was so great in London, that some noblemen who had heard him, mentioned in the presence of king George II., that there was a very distinguished dissenting preacher in London, from the colony of Virginia, who was attracting great notice, and drawing after him very crowded audiences; upon which the king expressed

Our earliest memory of sepulchral marbles connects itself with a slab in the aisle of the Pine street church, over the ashes of the Rev. GEORGE DUFFIELD; our infant feet often trod upon that sculptured stone, which had then been laid about eighteen years. His grandson and great-grandson, Presbyterian ministers, bear both his names.

Few names in the history of our church and nation are more worthy of record than that of JOHN WITHERSPOON. The succinct memoir here given is just, being indeed all that such limits allowed; but we crave more. It is greatly to be regretted that Dr. Green, the pupil and ardent admirer of Witherspoon, should never have received encouragement to publish the copious life which he had prepared of his great predecessor; we have reason to believe that the manuscript has left the country. The influence of Witherspoon upon such minds as those of Dr. SAMUEL SPRING and JAMES MADISON cannot now be calculated. If Mr. Rives shall consent to give to the public the results of a learned research which he so well

into that day. Mr. Bruce soon noticed it and stopped, upon which the king gave over. The king fell a talking with those near him a second time, and Mr. Bruce stopped a second time, and if I remember, sat down in his seat. When the king noticed this, he gave over, and Mr. Bruce went on with his subject. A third time the king fell a talking; Mr. Bruce was very much grieved that the king should continue in this practice, after the modest reproofs he had already upon the matter given him; and so a third time he stopped, and directing himself to the king, he expressed himself to this purpose: 'It is said to have been an expression of the wisest of kings, (I suppose he meant an apocryphal saying of Solomon's,) When the lion roareth, all the beasts of the field are at ease; the Lion of the Tribe of Judah is now roaring, in the voice of his gospel, and it becomes all the petty kings of the earth to be silent.'"—*Wodrow's Life of Bruce*, p. 154.

a strong desire to hear him, and his chaplain invited him to preach in his chapel. Mr. Davies is said to have complied, and preached before a splendid audience, composed of the royal family and many of the nobility of the realm. It is further said, that while Mr. Davies was preaching, the king was seen speaking at different times to those around him, who were seen also to smile. Mr. Davies observed it, and was shocked at what he thought was irreverence in the house of God, that was utterly inexcusable in one whose example might have such influence. After pausing and looking sternly in that direction several times, the preacher proceeded in his discourse, when the same offensive behaviour was still observed. The American dissenter is said then to have exclaimed, '*When the lion roars, the beasts of the forest all tremble; and when King Jesus speaks, the princes of the earth should keep silence.*'" *

* Dr. Hill, quoted by Mr. Barnes; Essay prefixed to Carters' edition of Davies, 1845.

knows how to conduct, we shall perhaps learn unexpected things concerning the early theological acumen of Madison, as evoked by the philosophic Scotchman. Dr. Sprague slightly errs in saying that the only American edition is of 1803, in three volumes; for we have before us an edition of 1800 and 1801, in four volumes, from the press of William W. Woodward, of Chestnut street, who may be described as the Robert Carter of that day.

It is to us a solemn memento, that we do not get beyond the middle of this first Presbyterian volume, before we find ourselves among those whom we personally remember; for the stately form of Dr. WOODHULL, the son-in-law of Gilbert Tenent, rises distinctly before us. We further recall his venerable relict, and her reminiscences of President Davies, in full dress, and with his gold-headed cane. Still more vivid is our memory of Dr. SAMUEL STANHOPE SMITH, in his beautiful old age, and of the affecting scene when in 1812 he resigned his presidency. Of Dr. JAMES HALL we could relate numerous anecdotes, as it was our privilege to look upon him with reverence in the home of our childhood. In addition to the valuable statements of Dr. Morrison, we think it not superfluous to state, that this devoted servant of God was sometimes visited with spiritual distresses of long continuance, and such gravity as even to silence his preaching. One result of these desertions of soul was, that he sympathized in an extraordinary degree with persons labouring under similar depressions; so that he would go miles out of his way to administer comfort to such, amidst his frequent visits to the north. In these journeys, which were always either on horseback, or in his own gig, Dr. Hall had so many friends at every stage to welcome him, that we remember his having said, that in coming to the General Assembly he once paid no more than half a dollar. That similar hospitalities are not obsolete, is attested by a distinguished clergyman of Paris, who has just left us, and who declares, that in travelling between three and four thousand miles in the United States, neither he nor his son ever spent a day in any public house.

Memorials like this sometimes instruct by their very reticencies, confirming our belief that the unwritten history of the

church is the greater and more valuable; inasmuch as the sayings and doings of the best and wisest men often pass without a chronicle.* A remarkable instance of this occurs in the case of the Rev. Dr. MOSES HOGE. Valuable as were the few writings which he gave to the press, they are scarcely to be procured; nor could they give any notion of his profound knowledge, impressive discourse, and heavenly graces. Those who enjoyed the conversation of the late Dr. Alexander, can never forget the almost filial terms of loving admiration in which he was wont to speak of Dr. Hoge. The extracts which follow from letters of Dr. Hoge to Dr. Alexander, will not be without interest to a class of readers whom we are always solicitous to gratify. Of date March 12, 1811: "Several weeks ago I received a letter from you, which has made a very sensible impression on my mind. I am, however, in hopes that the designs of the most accomplished tyrant on earth, may not be as hostile to Christianity as Mr. Walsh supposes. That Barruel was, by his zeal for his king, as for royalty, and for his religion, led into many mistakes of this nature, is, I believe, acknowledged by his best friends. And I think it not improbable that this may be the case with a writer of similar religious sentiments. I intend, however, upon your recommendation, to send for the work itself by Mr. Wood." April 5, 1815: "For the account you have given me of the happy reformation which has lately taken place in Nassau Hall, I am much indebted to you. This is certainly a glorious event. Many of the youth of that place will no doubt become preachers of the gospel, and burning and shining lights in the church. I have long thought that the education of youth has, for the most part, been miserably mismanaged in our country. Piety and virtue seem rather to be secondary than primary objects in most of our seminaries. And can we reasonably expect religion to revive and flourish with us while this is the case? There are, indeed, some religious people in our country, who consider learning of little or no advantage to an ambassador of

* "Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
Multi; sed omnes illacrymabiles
Urgentur, ignotique, longa
Nocte, carent quia vate sacro."

Jesus Christ; and the success which has attended an unlearned ministry in the world, ought certainly to check the pride of human learning, and lead us to depend less upon — —. Thus far had I written two days ago; but I was arrested by the prevailing epidemic. I think myself, however, better; nor am I under any apprehensions for the result. If I have any more to do on earth, my life will be prolonged, and if not, I wish not to live. It would, however, I acknowledge, be mortifying to me to leave the world, without having done something more for One to whom I acknowledge myself to be under infinite obligation; for Christian brethren whom I dearly love; and for impenitent sinners whom I sincerely pity. But the will of God is always right and best.”

The sermons to which allusion is here made are really little else than full skeletons; for it was not his manner to write much in preparation for the pulpit. It was our lot to hear a sermon from his lips just before his last illness, in the summer of 1820; and on this occasion he reverently visited the burial place of Burr, Edwards, Davies, and Witherspoon. The wisdom, humility, and meekness of the apostolic man, are the more impressed upon us by reason of the solemn and paternal exhortations which he took occasion to give to a careless and inexperienced youth. Though Dr. Hoge often delivered sermons, which by the award of the best judges placed him in the very highest rank as a theologian, a believer, and a master of the human heart, it is almost proverbial that he looked upon his own performances with a sort of trembling contempt. In corresponding with Dr. Alexander, on the subject of ministerial education, which they both had so much at heart, he discloses his deep anxiety lest the day should arrive, when genius, erudition, and eloquence should carry it over heart-religion and zeal for the glory of God in the salvation of souls. There are many still living who remember him as the messenger of divine grace to their souls. In natural connection comes the name of DRURY LACY, a brother Virginian, who likewise by a notable coincidence departed this life in Philadelphia. The “silver hand” of Mr. Lacy is one of our earliest remembrances. It was a hemisphere attached to the wrist, in order to replace the hand which had been torn off by the bursting of a musket; into this

appliance he used to screw a table-fork. With the remaining hand he achieved an elegance of handwriting such as we may never see again, since the disuse of the "grey goose-quill." If the records of Hanover Presbytery are still extant, they present, we will venture to assert, an elegance unequalled by any similar document in the country.

The memoir of President GREEN carries us back to days when he, Dr. Wilson, Dr. Alexander, the Rev. George C. Potts, and Dr. Janeway, were the Presbyterian pastors of Philadelphia. In days when the flowing and powdered wig was not yet discarded, and when kneebuckles were part of clerical insignia, Dr. Green was one of the most conspicuous men in the streets of our greatest city. Neither his piety nor his eloquence has any fit memorial. His masculine style of writing is not exemplified in the autobiography which he penned late in life; nor have we any collection of his nervous epistolary composition. We are very far from considering his baccalaureate discourses as his best. Indeed, nothing ever proceeded from his lips which we would be more desirous to reproduce, than those Thursday Evening Lectures, of which the words were extemporaneous, and which blended doctrinal discussion with close and affectionate appeals to the heart. As a familiar expositor of Scripture we consider Dr. Green to have surpassed all we ever knew. When President of the College he assembled the entire body of undergraduates, on the afternoon of the Lord's-day. Five chapters were commonly embraced in each lesson. Some are living, who are remembered as having uniformly recited the whole of this long lesson by rote. We might summon such witnesses as Governor Lumpkin, Mr. Senator Iverson, Chief Justice Green, and the Rev. Dr. Kirk. The Doctor had an extraordinary knack of fixing the attention even of the giddiest. His explanations recur to our minds, after forty years, as having justly settled for us the meaning of numerous passages, and as having forestalled the most formidable objections of infidelity. Throughout his career, President Green never lost sight of the spiritual good of his pupils, as paramount to all other considerations. If he was sometimes deemed imperious and despotic, he showed a very different mien, as we can testify, when any resorted to his study under religious anxiety, as was the case

in more than one of the revivals. We yield hearty concurrence to the remarks of the Rev. Dr. Murray, in regard to Dr. Green's Lectures to the Sunday-school teachers of Philadelphia. A touching instance of Dr. Green's piety, in the delicate relation growing out of a collegiate charge, occurs in a letter of his preserved by Dr. Janeway, in which he says: "Be assured, my dear friend, that I long, long since, laid it down as a rule, and have considered it as a sacred duty, to pray for my colleague whenever, in secret, I pray for myself."* A man of more guileless honesty and more perfect courage, we never expect to see on earth.

From Dr. Green it is natural to pass to his coeval and copresbyter, the Rev. JAMES P. WILSON, D. D. Just fifty years ago his name became known to us, in connection with an incident of childhood. From that time onwards we were taught to think of him as a great theologian, and a prodigy of learning. His tall spare frame and bloodless visage are justly noted in Dr. Hall's contributions; where allusion is also made to Dr. Wilson's practice of bleeding himself. This, let us add, was in like manner the habit of President Smith. Both suffered from hæmoptysis; and both were intimate friends of the arch-phlebotomist, Dr. Benjamin Rush, whom we also remember among the good and great Philadelphians of that day. The comic letters of Doctors Patton and Ely give a prominence to certain oddities of this remarkable man, which were but as spots upon the sun, scarcely observable amidst the mild radiance of his truly remarkable excellencies. His entrance on a religious life, after long practice at the bar, and under impressions produced by the murder of a beloved brother, was such as diffused a peculiar influence over his whole ministry. That refusal of presents, which some have placed in a ludicrous light, was a corollary from his scrupulous opinions concerning the independence of the minister, as president of a court. A spirit of judicial argumentation ran through his pulpit discourses. Each was an hour long, and was continuous ratiocination, with avowed exclusion of addresses to the feelings. We never heard more interesting trains of thought; nor do we wonder

* Life of Dr. Green, by Dr. Joseph H. Jones, p. 589.

that the most cultivated minds of a city always prominent for letters, gathered in the First Presbyterian church. Of that revered edifice we have a print lying before us; and well do we remember the meetings of the General Assembly, when that court had not yet lost its prestige by becoming ambulatory; and when the huge pulpit was graced by the magnates of the church. It was a scene quite parallel to that of Edinburgh in May. While Presbyterian preachers were more free from manuscript hinderances in that day than at present, there were few who could go the length of Dr. Wilson's remark: "I have preached twenty years, and have never written a full sermon in my life, and never read one word of a sermon from the pulpit, nor opened a note, nor committed a sentence, and have rarely wandered five minutes at a time from my mental arrangement previously made." A few words of Dr. Hall's letter to Dr. Sprague more accurately present Dr. Wilson's mode of preaching, than anything we have seen. After hearing many noted preachers, in more countries than one, we find no exact parallel to this cool yet fascinating reasoner; he was *sui generis*. In his simple view of ministerial address, the preacher was a father, talking as simply and plainly as possible to the family which surrounded him. There was therefore no change of tone, and no jar to the hearer's feelings, when Dr. Wilson requested that a lady in the gallery would cease to cough; or, turning to the famous Orbilius of our schoolboy days, would say, "These are points of grammar, which we refer to the better learning of Mr. Ross." He was himself an enthusiastic linguist. Besides his *Essay on Grammar*, 1817, which was indescribably dry, he had issued in 1812 an *Introduction to the Hebrew Language*; in which he warmly espoused the judgment of Capellus against the utility as well as antiquity of the Masoretic vowel points. When Middleton's celebrated work on the Greek Article appeared, it deeply interested Dr. Wilson. His exactness of learning made him a formidable examiner in Presbytery. On a certain occasion, when a manuscript of theological lectures was submitted to Dr. Wilson, he not only pronounced it to be in the main a translation from Turretine, but added the odd remark, that the writer mended his pen at the top of each new page. He would sometimes examine young men upon books which

they had borrowed from him; and this we remember to have befallen our companion, Joseph S. Christmass, in regard to Edwards on the Will. Dr. Wilson died in patriarchal peace; and we gladly copy the most striking and edifying statement of Dr. Skinner. "He said to a friend, 'I have a difficulty, and you will perhaps think strangely of it; I am at a loss what to pray for;' and added, in a most solemn tone and with his eyes lifted to heaven, 'God knows I am willing that whatever he pleases should be done.'"

The name of the Rev. JAMES MITCHELL is one which connects our own generation with that of Todd, Waddel and Graham; for this veteran soldier laboured from 1781 to 1841. His frame was knotty and enduring. When he was seventy-eight years of age, we remember to have accompanied him on horseback fifteen miles from the place of preaching; and he was as alert as any one of the cavalcade. At times he delivered discourses which were remarkable for their fire. We have heard him speak of Dr. Waddel, whom he well knew; and who, according to his recollections, was not inferior to the glowing portrait of Wirt. Under the preaching of this great orator, Mr. Mitchell said, whole assemblies were often melted into tears.

We still wait for an adequate memoir of Dr. MILLER. Few men in our church have better deserved such a tribute. For the purposes of a work like this, the sketch before us is all that we could demand; but it is sad that we should lose the recollections still accessible, concerning one whose memory is sacred. Well did he discharge the debt, which, according to the dictum of Bacon, every man owes to his profession. A more staunch and loyal Presbyterian Calvinist never lived. The warfare which he waged against high-church assumption was prompted by pious conviction of the truth; its fruits are still held in honour as well by our brethren in Scotland as by ourselves; and we lately saw an Italian version of his treatise on Presbyterianism, printed at Turin. Here, as in other cases, Dr. Sprague's extensive knowledge and singular industry make his bibliographical lists highly valuable; it will be seen that Dr. Miller's pamphlet sermons reached a very high number.

His numerous volumes were chiefly in vindication of our ecclesiastical tenets.

Dr. Miller combined some admirable traits, which are oftener seen apart. For great and various reading he was noted from his very boyhood; yet no man showed less of the bookworm. His portrait, by Sully, as in early manhood, is fresh, beautiful and courtly; for he was the charm and decoration of the most select circles in New York; and all through life he stood unsurpassed, so far as our observation goes, for good humour in conversation, brilliant but innocent repartee, and a fund of anecdote at once jocund and inexhaustible. With all this, he was visibly growing in grace during his whole ministry. This was repeatedly remarked by Dr. Alexander, who lived by his side forty years, and who loved to testify, that he had never detected in his colleague a trace either of personal vanity or of envy. He was by nature fearless, we may even say polemic; yet a more melting forgiveness, or a larger charity, we do not hope to find. In all our knowledge of ministers, we never knew one who was so ready to own himself in the wrong, or so unfeignedly lowly in regard to his own attainments; nor one more conscientious in self-denial and special prayer. Those who judge him only by his books, can have but a remote conception of what Dr. Miller was, either as the vivifying spirit of delighted groups, or as the spiritual and tender Christian friend.

The translation is easy to Dr. ROBERT FINDLAY, the friend of African Colonization from America, towards which he was one of the first to propose any feasible scheme. Our personal recollections bring up the scenes connected with the early movements in 1816, particularly the earnest conferences between this fervent, energetic man, and the late Dr. Alexander, who shared in his enthusiasm, and was partner in all his counsels. And we pen these words with peculiar solemnity and grief, on the very day which reports the decease of a contemporary friend of Africa, we mean the excellent Mr. Anson G. Phelps, second of the name, and like his honoured Christian father, devoted to the work of Colonization. Dwelling in a house where ministers were continually entertained, we saw in our boyhood and youth many whose names adorn these volumes; for example, Doctors and Messrs. Balch, Romeyn, Grif-

fin, Richards, Lyle, Doak, J. P. Campbell, Blackburn, Flinn, Palmer, Fisk, Jennings, Blair, and W. S. Reid. But we cannot satisfy ourselves with a bare mention of one so honoured as the late Dr. BLATCHFORD of Lansingburg. His portly person and benignant countenance rise before us, as we knew him first in his punctual visits to Princeton as a Director of the Seminary, and then as dispensing the hospitalities of his own generous mansion. Dr. Blatchford was a man of no common energy and warmth. His youth in England had been much cultivated, not only by classical studies but by the fine arts; and we have lately been examining a finished drawing from his hand, which has been pronounced extraordinary, even by great critics. His friends remember the singular talent which he had, for dashing off at the fire-side impromptu profiles of his friends. As the patriarch of a large family, Dr. Blatchford shone conspicuous; and the generous flow of his heart led him to enlarge this home-circle until it took in a multitude. We have good cause to attest his tender and encouraging disposition towards young candidates for the ministry. He never lost what was dignified and cordial in his English clerical manners; and in the pulpit he fairly represented the better class of Nonconformists in his native land. Instructive, animated, full of gracious doctrine and unction, he always satisfied his hearers, and sometimes melted them by the gush of his own emotions. Two of his sons entered the ministry, and were familiarly known to us more than thirty years ago.

Dr. SPEECE is recalled with a glow of interest, by all who remember Lacy, Lyle, Alexander, and Rice. If the remaining groves and thickets about Prince Edward Court-House and Briery could speak, they would testify of many a high argument, held by these inquiring and enthusiastic young men, upon baptism and other professional topics. Speece was a favourite with all the rest. Dr. Sprague's correspondents give a good notion of his huge ungainly figure, and rotund, deliberate, gainsaying discourse, all reminding one of Samuel Johnson. True, he was a rustic moralist, as proud of his native mountains as the other of Fleet street. But, in his sphere, he, too, was elegant, ingenious, learned, sententious, polemic, and even oracular. Careful in his diction, even to purism, Dr. Speece

often poured forth to his rural flock discourses which, though extemporaneous as to their words, were periodic and terse. We remember no conversations in our youth more deserving of a Boswell, than some which fell from the lips of this Augusta pastor, as he bestrode his tall horse among those beautiful woodlands. The licenses which he allowed himself in his home circle were almost antics, strikingly in contrast with his elephantine port, and often intended to awaken the wonder of martinets and cits. Thus we have seen him in a short jacket play on his flute, after coming in from the day's work, and have known him clamber into an open window, to the alarm of more proper brethren, whose intellectual loins were thinner than his little finger. All the contributions given here, touching this generous and accomplished friend of our boyhood, are valuable. We will add to these a few extracts from letters to the late Rev. Dr. Alexander; remarking, by the bye, that they are almost faultless specimens of a round-hand which is now seldom seen.

In allusion to a manuscript work of religious fiction, he writes, August 15, 1808: "I am delighted with the prospect of seeing your sweet Eudocia presented to the public. Before I received your letter, I had resolved to write to you soon, principally to entreat that the door which confined her might be opened, that she might walk forth for the entertainment and edification of the world. I hope the humorous and satirical parts of the work will be retained. They will be useful in themselves, and render the book alluring to a larger number of readers. And though I should not like to differ in a point of taste from Mrs. Alexander, allow me to put in a word in behalf of the dream or dreams which you read to me in the manuscript. Dreaming is indeed a delicate subject both in philosophy and religion. But we believe that God does sometimes speak to men in dreams and visions of the night, to fasten important instruction upon their hearts." "I have long been collecting ideas for a treatise on liberty and necessity; not to increase the mass of metaphysical subtilities on the subject, but if possible to diminish it. But I have another design in hand, more likely to be executed; namely, to write a sermon or dissertation on the doctrine of Election. Presumptuous as it may appear, I

cannot but think I could produce something more satisfactory than I have yet met with on that doctrine, especially in the business of answering objections against it." March 17, 1809: "Is poor old Virginia to be easily abandoned by its religious teachers? Is not Presbyterianism the only visible preservative, under God, of sound evangelical truth, and rational religion here? Surely this is a matter of very serious consideration. I may mention in confidence, that my friend, Dr. Miller, has repeatedly desired me to put myself in the way of a call from New York. Did I suppose myself fit for New York or Philadelphia, which I hardly can suppose, I should not the less regret to see our Northern friends labouring to strip my native country of its ministers, and abandon it to infidelity, enthusiasm, and licentiousness. After all, I can conceive calls of duty which might induce me to leave Virginia some years hence, should it please God to give me life and health. Nor have I any peculiar antipathy to Philadelphia; I like it, indeed, the best of any city I have ever seen. You will collect from the above what to say to my German brethren, should they speak to you concerning it. It seems impossible that I should comply with any call from them now. By the way, do you know how any one of us could be constitutionally dismissed from the whole Presbyterian church, to join any other denomination of Christians?"

The Doctor, it should be remembered, was the son of a German; the name being properly Spiesz. It was this which drew to him the attention of German congregations, then less able than now to procure preachers, in New York and Philadelphia; while at the same time it attracted his insatiable mind to the rationalistic writers. We could produce his clever annotations on Bauer and Michaëlis. In his country home he treasured up most valuable authors, and sometimes kept his learned stores laid away in boxes. A great book was by no means to him a great evil; and we behold him now in memory, dilating with animation upon a reperusal which he had just accomplished of Plutarch's Lives. No man in Virginia was more completely *au courant* of the recent theological literature, and certainly no one was so fascinating in observation upon all that occupied the public mind. It is known to few now living, that Dr. Speece

and Dr. Alexander once had an amicable controversy in print, upon the old question often mooted in the schools, whether souls were *ex traduce*.

The longer we ponder over these attractive pages the more cause do we see for thankfulness that God has raised up for our country so many strong and illustrious men within our church; and this term we here accept in no narrow sense. Among these some of the grandest and most admirable characters have been formed by the hand of Providence and Grace afar from cities and conventional refinements; growing up to varied erudition and masculine energy amidst the day-labour of actual service. Such preachers were Brainerd, Dickinson, Davies, Waddel, Smith, Hoge, Speece, Rice, Baxter, Matthews, Jennings, and Nelson. It would be easy to swell the list, and to add those more splendid names of professors, orators, and authors, who have achieved a national reputation. It is not for us as Presbyterians to say how much truth there is in the following judgment of our New England neighbours; but the source of the statements gives them peculiar interest: "We feel ourselves—we are sorry to say—among men of higher mark, in these new volumes, than in those which commemorated the Trinitarian Congregationalists. True, among the latter there were clergymen, from the earliest times, who had no superiors, and hardly any equals, this side heaven; but among the leading divines of the Presbyterian church, we discern, as we think, a more uniformly elevated standard of distinctively clerical talent, learning and character. One reason for this undoubtedly is, that the Presbyterian church, occupying a much larger extent of territory, and reckoning, certainly for an entire century, if not longer, a more numerous catalogue of ministers, would, by the laws of proportion, furnish a greater array of choice names for the biographer. But this is not all. In New England, with the legal support secured for nearly two centuries to the Congregational clergy, and with the life-tenure of their office, many men occupied prominent pastorates while devoid of superior qualifications for their profession. Such ministers were generally men of strong minds, cogent influence, and distinguished reputation; and being literally the *parsons* (*personæ*) of their respective parishes—wield-

ing often an autocracy, little short of despotism—they had scope for the unchecked growth and exercise of eccentric traits of character and abnormal habits of life. And they often acquired the local fame which would entitle them to a place in a record like Dr. Sprague's, by oddities rather than by graces, or by services and labours outside of their profession, rather than by preaching and the cure of souls. Accordingly, the first two volumes of the 'Annals' exceed these last two in variety of character and incident, in the affluence of piquant anecdote and grotesque description, and in the exhibition of the *manysidedness* of ministerial life. Presbyterianism, on the other hand, never had a local establishment in this country, but has been compelled to conquer by the 'sword of the Spirit' all the ground it occupies. Its ministers have, for the most part, won and held their places because they were fitted for them, and laborious in them. With few exceptions they have given themselves wholly to their work, with such subsidiary avocations in teaching or agriculture, as were necessary to eke out their support in new or feeble churches, and in sparsely settled districts. The circumstance that has impressed us most of all in these narratives, is the very large number of men of surpassing ability, endowments, and sanctity, who have been settled for life, or for many years, in very obscure localities and humble parishes. '*

We must again express our opinion that Dr. Sprague has accomplished a great national work, of which the value will be acknowledged by posterity. The plan was formidable for its extent; the mode of securing the material, lying scattered and formless all over the country, was nobly and ingeniously devised; and the execution demanded a diligence and a tact which belong not to one in a million. Errors, and inequalities, and omissions there are no doubt; but who will reckon these, in a task so patriotic, honest, and desirable? The subsidiary parts have sometimes fallen into most able hands; and some of the letters offer felicitous specimens of out-line portraiture from distinguished pens. It is no small attraction of the volumes that they contain complete letters, of biographical interest,

* North American Review, for April, 1858, p. 583.

from Dr. Miller, Dr. Alexander, Dr. Lindsly, Dr. Knox, Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Clay, and Judges Johns and Kane, among the departed; from such statesmen as Mr. Van Buren, Mr. Fillmore, Mr. Frelinghuysen, Mr. Butler, Mr. Choate; scholars, such as Presidents Day, Nott, Carnahan, Ruffner, Maclean, and Talmage; and Professors Beecher, Breckinridge, Park, Dabney, Silliman, and Skinner; to say nothing of a host of clergymen, including some of the greatest eminence. The descriptive power, the stirring incident, and occasionally the humour of these articles, deriving variety from authorship thus diverse, combine to make the work a mine of entertainment.

Whether the gifted author will forgive us for saying it, we know not; but he has been providentially in training for this very service almost all his life. Always welcome wherever he went, in Europe or America; always inquiring, yet always communicating more than he received, he has ransacked the chests, files, and memories of half the distinguished men in the nation. Some notion may be derived of his collecting zeal, from the library of American pamphlets, filling about twelve hundred bound volumes, and extending from the earliest Puritan *origines* to our own day; all presented as a free gift to the Theological Seminary at Princeton. If we err not, he is again building up a similar pile of material, which will be invaluable for future investigators. The history of our church and country, and the biography of our noted men have always commanded Dr. Sprague's warm sympathy; hence he has become preëminently an inquirer and a collector. These tastes and pursuits have fitted him for that elaborate compilation and digestion of facts, of which we here have the results. He has differed from many gatherers, in that he has always been acquainted with his own accumulations, whether in print or manuscript. There is no good reason why we should be silent concerning our author's magnificent collection of autograph documents; especially as this has directly contributed to the chief labour of his life. We are not among those who indulge in cheap sneer at such tastes. These very contemptuous critics will themselves sometimes chuckle over a single stray letter of Washington or Napoleon, while they affect to pity the crotchet of a man who has brought together with immense care,

fine historic knowledge, and exquisite arrangement, myriads of letters, compositions, even entire works, from the most famous pens, each redolent of personal associations, and collectively precious from their completeness and continuity. Nature and reason get the better of the cynic, when, in the penetralia of the British Museum, or the Advocates' Library, he alights on the original Magna Charta, the Solemn League and Covenant, Ben Jonson's *Queen's Masque*, the *Aminta* of Tasso, *Comus*, *Irene*, or even *Waverley*. No man can seek, procure, classify and con a great body of historic manuscripts, without at the same time augmenting his fund of valuable information.

We speak without book, and from hearsay, for we have never enjoyed access to Dr. Sprague's collection; nor are we sure that we shall escape his censure for telling what is reported. But we believe there are few such prodigies of diplomatic wealth in the world. Counting letters and other documents, from persons of all sorts, more or less distinguished, the visitor of this collection will find it amount to not less than sixty thousand. In regard to American names, we have been told there is scarcely a single class or series—such as Presidents, Generals, Governors, Bishops, &c.—which is not complete. A connoisseur informed us that Dr. Sprague's British collection would be a large one in England; his French collection in France; and his German collection in Germany. Unless some men of learning and taste were endowed with this additional talent for preserving the memorials of the past, we should have no such encyclopedic works as that which we are here about to lay down. That it has received so large a share of public applause from all parts of the country, and every branch of the church, must be a reward to the excellent author, second only to the inward persuasion that he has rendered a grateful service to the cause of Christ.