

THE

# PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.

EDITED BY

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"Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."—JER. vi. 16.

VOLUME II.—1852.

PHILADELPHIA:

WM. H. MITCHELL, 265 CHESTNUT STREET.

1852.



# PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.

NOVEMBER, 1852.

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## Miscellaneous Articles.

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### WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION.

A CONVENTION, with the startling name of WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION, has recently been holding its sessions in Syracuse, N. Y. The question naturally arises, What are "Woman's Wrongs" in this Christian and free country? It has been a common sentiment, that the gentler sex are here invested with every right which God ever gave to Eve and her daughters. Although first in the transgression, and visited with judgment, their condition here is certainly one eminently favourable to their present and eternal interests. Who would not vindicate the wrongs of woman, if any existed?\* What father, husband, son, or brother is not by nature committed to the maintenance of every prerogative belonging to daughter, wife, mother, or sister? The female sex in this country are utterly unable to discern their grievances. The general *unperverted judgment of both sexes* is, therefore, the first fact which nullifies the claims of the new Reformation. We are aware of the sophistry by which this position may be resisted; but we are not so much contending with sophisters as justifying wisdom to her children.

We have assumed that our readers know the object of these Woman's Rights Conventions. We perhaps assume too much, and will therefore briefly explain. So far as the real aim of these Conventions is distinctly divulged, their motto would seem to be "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and Hu-man-ity." They virtually advocate a sex-destroying process for one half of the human race.

\* We do not deny that woman suffers some wrongs under the statutes of some of the States. So do other classes in the community—sometimes the rich and sometimes the poor. The redress, however, of these occasional wrongs, is very different from the radical objects contemplated by the Woman's Rights Convention.

upon his means; it prevents sundry suspicions of the wife that she has been overcharged; and it takes away from the honest storekeeper all anxiety about debts and accounts. Housekeepers may rely upon it that Victoria's rule is the right rule. "She does not order on credit, and take the chance of being able to pay." She has too much good sense for that, and so she pays when she orders. If the cash system be a good one for the palace of a queen, it is better for the mansion of a rich American, and for the humbler dwellings of our poor.

Ladies, if you want to be good housekeepers, keep your eye upon queen Victoria. She is an *intelligent* housekeeper; she is *economical*; and she *pays cash*. She is, indeed, a queen of a housekeeper. What an honour is this to one who fills the loftiest earthly throne,

"And with the shadow of her robe  
Belts all the climates of the globe."

Although a great queen, Victoria is a true woman. She understands how to keep house.

## Biographical and Historical.

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF REV. SAMUEL MILLER, D. D.

SAMUEL MILLER was the grandson of John Miller, who emigrated from Scotland to America, and settled in Boston, in the year 1710. He was a Presbyterian in his own country, but after his arrival here he connected himself with the Old South Church, Boston, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. Ebenezer Pemberton. He had two children; the elder of whom, John, though not a graduate at any college, was educated at a school in Boston, under the care of the celebrated John Lovell, who conducted the education, at least in its earlier stages, of many of the most eminent men of New England. This son, while he was yet a pupil in Mr. Lovell's school, became decidedly pious, and joined the Old South Church, of which Dr. Sewall had then become pastor. He determined from this time to devote himself to the Christian ministry; and after prosecuting a course of study with reference to this, he was licensed in May, 1748, to preach the gospel, by the Boston association. He travelled soon after into the colonies of Delaware and Maryland; and having received a unanimous call from the Presbyterian church at Dover, in Delaware, he returned to Boston, and was ordained to the work of

the ministry by a council, of which several of the most distinguished ministers in the vicinity were members. The right hand of fellowship was delivered on the occasion by the celebrated Dr. Mather Byles; and we have heard it pronounced by a competent judge, who once saw it in manuscript, a remarkably fine specimen of composition.

Immediately after his ordination he repaired to Delaware, and entered upon his pastoral charge, dividing his labours between the Presbyterian church in Dover and another in Smyrna. In 1751 he was married to Miss Margaret Millington, a lady of high intellectual and moral worth, as well as of great personal attraction. In this retired situation he continued to discharge the duties of his office, till the year 1791, when he was removed by death, in the sixty-ninth year of his age.

Samuel Miller was the fourth son of the Rev. John Miller, and was born October 31, 1769, at the residence of his father, a few miles from Delaware. His early literary training was under the parental roof; but in due time he was removed to Philadelphia, and became a member of the University of Pennsylvania. After passing through this institution, he graduated with high honour, July 31, 1789.

Having formed the purpose of devoting himself to the ministry, he entered upon the study of theology, shortly after his graduation, under the direction of his father. But his father being removed before he had completed his theological course, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Lewes, of which his father had long been a leading member, and immediately after put himself, for the residue of his course, under the instruction of the celebrated Dr. Nesbit, of Dickinson College. Here he continued for a number of months, and during this time not only enjoyed the best opportunities for literary and theological improvement, but formed an intimacy with his venerable instructor, which was a source of great pleasure, not only to himself, but to those to whom he imparted his cherished recollections as long as he lived.

In the year 1792 he was invited to visit a church on Long Island, with a view to being heard as a candidate for settlement. On his way thither he stopped in New York, and preached to great acceptance. The result was, that in the autumn of that year he received a unanimous call from the united Presbyterian churches of New York to become the colleague of Dr. Rodgers and Dr. McKnight. He has been heard to remark that he had never at that time aspired to anything beyond an ordinary country charge; and that nothing could have surprised him more than that he should have been thought of for such a public and important sphere of labour. He, however, after due deliberation, accepted the call, and was ordained and installed June 5, 1793.\*

From the commencement of his ministry in New York he enjoyed a reputation in some respects peculiar to himself. Though Dr. Mason, and Dr. Linn, and Dr. Livingston, and other great lights were there,

\* For an account of the licensure and ordination of Dr. Miller, see *Presbyterian Magazine* for 1852, p. 179-183.

yet the subject of this notice was far from being thrown into the shade. Besides having the advantage of a remarkably fine person, and most bland and attractive manners, he had from the beginning an uncommonly polished style, and there was an air of literary refinement pervading all his performances that excited general admiration, and well might put criticism at defiance. He was scarcely settled before his services began to be put in requisition on public occasions; and several of these early occasional discourses were published, and still remain as a monument of his taste, talents and piety. One of his earliest published sermons was before a society in the city of New York for the manumission of slaves; and it may well be doubted whether a more discreet, unexceptionable, and dignified sermon has been written on the subject since.

At the beginning of the present century Mr. Miller preached a sermon appropriate to the time, reviewing some of the more prominent works of the century then just concluded. This sermon formed the nucleus of a work published in 1803, in two volumes octavo, which contained the most thorough account of the various improvements of the eighteenth century, which was then to be found in the English language. In executing this work he brought to his aid many of the most gifted and accomplished minds in various departments of learning; and in the favourable manner in which the book was received on both sides of the water, he had the most gratifying testimony that his labour had not been misapplied.

He was honoured with the degree of Doctor of Divinity, from the University at which he was graduated, in the year 1804. At that day it was uncommon, if not unprecedented, for a person so young to receive that honour; and he used sometimes, in sportively referring to it, to relate the following anecdote:—

He was travelling in New England with a clergyman who was well acquainted there, and they called, at the suggestion of the Doctor's travelling companion, to pay their respects to a venerable old minister, who lived somewhere on their route. The Doctor's friend introduced him as Dr. Miller of New York; and as the old gentleman knew that there was a distinguished medical practitioner of that name living there, and as he had not heard that the clergyman had been doctorated, and perhaps it had never even occurred to him that so young a man as he saw before him *could* be, he took for granted that it was the medical doctor to whom he had been introduced; and after a few minutes, wishing to accommodate his conversation to the tastes and capabilities of the stranger as well as he could, he turned to him, and asked him whether he considered the yellow fever, which had then just been prevailing in New York, contagious. Before the Dr. had time to reply, his friend perceiving the old gentleman's mistake, said, "This is not a medical doctor, sir, but a Doctor of Divinity."

The venerable minister gathered himself up, as if in a paroxysm of astonishment, and lifting up both hands, exclaimed, with a protracted emphasis upon each word, "*You don't!*"

In 1806 Dr. Miller was moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.

In May, 1811, died the Rev. Dr. Rodgers, with whom Dr. Miller had served in the ministry, as a son with a father, for nearly twenty years. He preached a touching and impressive sermon on the occasion of the death of his venerable colleague, and two years after published an extended biography of him in an octavo volume. As Dr. Rodgers had been identified with the Presbyterian Church more prominently, and for a longer period than any other man, Dr. Miller, in writing an account of his life, was led almost of necessity to detail many events and scenes with which he was connected in common with many others; and hence there is far more of the general history of the Presbyterian Church to be found in this volume than in any other biographical work that has been published. Independently of the peculiar interest that attaches to the subject, the work is quite a model in its department.

Dr. Miller is understood to have taken a deep interest in the establishment of the Theological Seminary at Princeton, from the first inception of the enterprise, though without the remotest idea that he was destined to be more intimately connected with it than many others of his brethren. When Dr. Alexander was inaugurated, in August, 1812, Dr. Miller preached the sermon—and an appropriate and admirable sermon it was.\* When the chair of ecclesiastical history and church government was to be filled, the eyes of the Church were directed to Dr. Miller; and in due time the judgment of the Church was pronounced in his being formally elected to that responsible place. The appointment was made in May, 1813, and having accepted it, he was inducted into office on the 29th of September following.

Here Dr. Miller continued discharging the duties of his office with great fidelity and ability, and to the entire acceptance of the Church, during a period of more than thirty-six years. Though he had not, in his latter years at least, any great vigour of constitution, and was obliged to nurse himself with more than ordinary care, yet he was able to go through with his prescribed duties in the seminary, besides performing a good deal of occasional literary labour, until within about a year of his death. In May, 1849, the General Assembly accepted the resignation of his office, testifying at the same time in the strongest manner possible their grateful appreciation of his services, and their high respect for his character. His health, which had been waning for a considerable time, failed after this more perceptibly, until at length it became manifest to all that his period of active service was over. He lingered a number of weeks, suffering not so much from positive pain as from extreme exhaustion and difficulty of respiration, but without a cloud to intercept the clear shining of the Sun of Righteousness. He felt that his work was done, and he was ready to enter upon his reward. The few friends who were privileged to see him during the period of his decline, especially

\* Republished in "*Home, the School and the Church*," for 1852.

after he had nearly reached the dark boundary, were not only edified but surprised at the expressions of humble, grateful, joyful triumph, that fell from his lips. He gently passed away to his reward, on Monday evening, January 7, 1850. His funeral drew together a large concourse of clergymen and others from the neighbouring towns and cities, and an appropriate and characteristic sermon was preached on the occasion, by his venerable colleague, Dr. Alexander.

Dr. Miller was married a few years after his settlement in New York, to Miss Sargeant, daughter of the Hon. Jonathan D. Sargeant, of Philadelphia. They have had a large family of children, several of whom still survive in the different walks of honourable and Christian usefulness. Two are in the ministry of our Church.

We cannot dismiss this brief notice of Dr. Miller, without adding a few words in respect to his character; though it is only the most general estimate of it that our limits will allow us to attempt. Indeed he has been so long and so generally known, not only throughout the American church but abroad, that it would seem almost a work of supererogation to speak of his character at all; and the little that we *shall* say, we acknowledge is dictated rather by a reverent and affectionate regard for his memory, and a personal satisfaction in recalling his admirable qualities, than by a conviction that any effort of ours is necessary to extend or perpetuate his fame.

Dr. Miller, as we have already had occasion to intimate, had much more than common advantages in respect to personal appearance. Of about the middle size, he was perfectly well proportioned, with a fine, intelligent and benignant countenance, which would not be likely to pass unnoticed in a crowd. His manners were cultivated and graceful in a high degree, uniting the polish of Chesterfield with the dignity and sincerity of a Christian minister. He was remarkably exact in his attention to little things; and though this may have sometimes given him, to a certain extent, an air of formality, it had undoubtedly much to do in giving a finish to both his manners and his character. His work on "Clerical Manners" could never have been written by one who was less considerate and exact than himself; and, indeed, but for his exceeding modesty, one might almost suppose that in writing it he was taking his own portrait. He was never thrown into any society so polished but that he was entirely at home in it, and while he was as far as possible from being enslaved to worldly usages, or cultivating a habit of too indiscriminate worldly intercourse, he never thought it beneath him to appear on all occasions as the accomplished Christian gentleman.

Dr. Miller's intellectual and moral character partook of the same beautiful symmetry that characterized his external appearance. How far this grew out of his natural constitution, and how far it was the result of discipline and habit, we do not pretend to say; though we have heard that he has himself said that he was originally of an impetuous turn, and that it had required severe efforts to



school himself into all that moderation and self-control of which we saw him in possession. He had evidently by nature a kindly, sympathetic and generous spirit. His heart beat quick to the tale of distress, and his hand opened instinctively to administer relief. He had warm social affections, and evidently received as well as imparted great pleasure in his intercourse with his friends. His mind was not, like that of Dr. Mason—bold, startling, we had almost said terrible in some of its demonstrations; but it was perfectly well balanced in all its faculties, calm and deliberate but certain in its movements, and worthy of being trusted wherever good taste, sound judgment and high intelligence were demanded. He might not have been selected as the man to electrify the multitude by a single effort, but there are few men who have an assemblage of intellectual and moral qualities, so well fitted as were his to form a dignified character, or to secure a course of honourable and enduring usefulness.

We have already alluded to the fact that Dr. Miller early took rank with the best preachers of his day. His sermons were generally written, but in the earlier periods of his ministry, as we have heard him say, were almost always committed to memory, as the prejudice against reading in New York was so great, that it was at the peril at least of one's reputation as a preacher that he ventured to lay his manuscript before him. At a later period, however, especially after he went to Princeton, he generally read his discourses, but he read with so much ease and freedom, that but for the turning over of the leaves one would scarcely have been aware that he was reading at all. His voice was not strong, nor yet particularly musical, but it was pleasant notwithstanding; and so perfectly distinct was his enunciation that he could be heard without effort at the extremity of the largest church. His attitudes in the pulpit were extremely dignified, though perhaps somewhat precise; and his gesture, which was never otherwise than appropriate, was yet not very abundant. His utterance was deliberate, perhaps too much so to suit the mass of hearers; but it was marked by an evident sincerity and solemnity that were well fitted to make an impression. He would occasionally deliver a sentence with an air of majesty, and a degree of unction that would make it quite irresistible. We remember, for instance, to have heard him relate, in a New Year's sermon on the text "How old art thou?" the well known anecdote of the Roman Emperor, exclaiming at the close of a day which had gone to waste, "Oh, I have lost a day!" and it seemed scarcely possible that the exclamation should have been uttered in a way to secure to it a higher effect. Still he could not be considered an impassioned preacher; and his manner was characterized rather by quiet dignity, and occasionally by genuine pathos, than by any remarkable versatility or vigour. But his discourses were decidedly superior to his manner of delivering them. He never shot at random; he always had a distinct object in view, and he went deliberately and skilfully to work to accomplish it. There was the same

symmetry about his sermons as there was about his character, every thing was in its right place. If you did not expect to be thrilled by such overwhelming passages as you might sometimes hear from Mason or Chalmers, you knew that you would never be shocked by anything of doubtful propriety. You expected that everything in the service would be fitting and reverent, and every way up to the dignity of the pulpit; and you were never disappointed. No man was farther than Dr. Miller from that miserable affectation that throws together dry and doubtful speculations, at best the refuse of philosophy, and then calls the heap of chaos that is thus produced a gospel sermon. While his preaching was not common place in any worse sense than the Bible is so, he had no ambition for originality that led him to stray beyond the Bible for the material of his discourses; and while he was satisfied with what he found there, his object seemed to be to work it up in a manner which should best subserve the great objects of his ministry. We would respectfully suggest to some of our young ministers who, in their dread of being found in a beaten track, seem in danger of neutralizing divine truth, if not of cutting a track for themselves outside of the Bible, that they had better gather up as many of Dr. Miller's printed sermons as they can, and study and inwardly digest them, until they have learned from him that light is better than darkness, order better than confusion, and the simple verities of God's word better than a dreamy philosophy.

As a professor in the Theological Seminary, Dr. Miller was alike able and faithful. He gave to his work all the energies of his mind and body; and even after the infirmities of age had so accumulated upon him that he might have reasonably found an apology for relaxing, if not altogether discontinuing, his labours, he still continued to perform the full amount of service demanded by his professorship. His lectures were always highly appropriate and instructive; and while they were evidently the result of much thought and investigation, and were so admirably perspicuous and well arranged that they could be easily remembered, they were always written with excellent taste, and sometimes, where description was called for, were marked by great rhetorical beauty. In his intercourse with the students of the Seminary he was quite as much the father as the professor; and if a record of all his kind offices towards his pupils, many of which were a matter of profound secrecy, could be displayed, we doubt not that it would greatly exceed any estimate which those who appreciate his beneficence most highly have ever formed.

Every one knows that Dr. Miller was not only an honest but earnest Presbyterian. He stood up manfully to resist anything that seemed to him to jeopard the order or the purity of the church; and though he was eminently a man of peace, yet he was not so in any such sense as to be willing to compromise what he believed to be the interests of truth and piety. He would sometimes utter himself with great strength, perhaps we should say severity, in respect to those whom he deemed unfaithful to their obligations as Presbyterian ministers;

but yet his spirit in controversy was generally forbearing and conciliatory. He was not at all liable to the charge of sectarianism, in any offensive sense; while he loved and venerated his own church above any other, believing as he did that she is nearest to the scriptural standard, he loved all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Even those whom he considered as not holding the Head, he treated, whenever he came in contact with them, with all due kindness and respect; and we happen to know instances of this kind, in which his offices of civility and good-will have been afterwards respectfully and gratefully acknowledged.

As a writer, Dr. Miller is certainly found in the foremost rank of American clergymen. With the exception of his "Review of the Eighteenth Century," all or nearly all of the productions of his pen are immediately connected with matters theological or ecclesiastical. His controversial writings, especially those relating to Episcopacy, are, for perspicuity, dignity, and we may add effective reasoning, quite a model. His "Letters to Unitarians," though bold and uncompromising, show great familiarity with the subject, and great adroitness in the management of it. His "Letters to Presbyterians" were admirably adapted to the times in which they were written, and we hope will outlive by centuries the exigency that produced them. We remember to have heard the President of Harvard College, who was himself once engaged in a controversy with Dr. Miller, render the strongest testimony to his character as a writer, particularly in respect to everything connected with rhetorical propriety.

We would respectfully suggest whether an effort should not be made to bring out Dr. Miller's works in a uniform edition. Not only are they intrinsically worthy of preservation, but, more than the productions of almost any of his contemporaries, they have taken their hue from passing events, and are therefore eminently fitted to illustrate our ecclesiastical history during the period in which he has lived.

Dr. Miller's highest attraction, after all, was that he was great in goodness. Not only was he endowed by the God of nature with superior moral qualities, but these qualities were moulded by the God of peace into an exalted specimen of Christian excellence. He was eminently conscientious, disinterested, and devout. Condescending in indifferent matters, he always stood firm to his own convictions, where anything important was involved. He was meek, humble, patient, and forgiving. He moved about in society, exhibiting the graces of nature in attractive combination with the higher graces of the spirit. In his latter years, he was revered as a patriarch, and there was wide-spread and hearty mourning when he went down to his grave.

\* \* S.