

ANNALS

OF THE

AMERICAN PULPIT;

OR

COMMEMORATIVE NOTICES

OF

DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN CLERGYMEN

OF

VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS,

FROM THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTRY TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR  
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIVE.

WITH HISTORICAL INTRODUCTIONS.

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

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VOLUME III.

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NEW YORK:  
ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS  
530 BROADWAY.  
1858.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856.

BY ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern  
District of New York.

to take measures for establishing an Academy, over which he subsequently presided for some years; and being myself one of the Trustees of the institution, we were frequently brought together in relations of both business and friendship. I often heard him preach, and saw him in private under a great variety of circumstances; and, in his last illness, he appointed me one of the executors of his will.

In form, Mr. Alexander was thick set, and about five feet, nine or ten inches in height. He was slightly lame, and walked in a manner that would indicate that one leg was shorter than the other. His face was full, broad, of rather a florid complexion, and expressive of reflection and intelligence. His manners evinced a benevolent spirit, and yet he was distinguished for strength of purpose. I well remember that his tenacity and perseverance used to be indicated by his being called, "the old Scotchman,"—with reference to his Scotch descent. Though I cannot say that he was reserved in conversation, yet neither was he particularly communicative, except on some special occasions; and then he would make himself highly interesting. He was exceedingly amiable and exemplary in his private relations, and was pre-eminently a loved and loving husband and father.

I think Mr. Alexander never ranked among the more popular preachers of his day. His discourses were, I believe, always sensible and edifying; his voice was sufficiently full and clear, but not remarkable for smoothness; he had little or no gesture, and not much animation. Whenever I heard him preach, I think he read his discourses, though I believe it was very common for him to preach from short notes. The excellence of his preaching doubtless lay rather in the matter than in the manner.

I will only add that Mr. Alexander sustained a very high character as a teacher, and I believe pretty uniformly secured the confidence and affection of his pupils, as well as the approbation of their parents.

I regret that it is not in my power to give you a more extended description of the subject of your inquiry; but if what I have written shall be at all available to your purpose, I shall be highly gratified.

I am, my dear Sir, with great respect,

Your friend and servant,

OLIVER R. STRONG.



## STEPHEN BLOOMER BALCH, D. D.\*

1779—1833.

STEPHEN BLOOMER BALCH was a descendant of John Balch, who emigrated to New England, at an early period, from Bridgewater in Somerset, England, and became possessed of large property and extensive influence. A great grandson of his removed to Deer Creek in Harford County, Md.; and there the subject of this sketch was born on the 5th of April, 1747. He was the second son of James† and Anne (Goodwyn) Balch; both of whom were exemplary members of the Presbyterian Church. His father was a man of a highly gifted and cultivated mind, had a fine poetical talent, and was the author of some anonymous pieces that had no small celebrity in their

\* Religious Telegraph, (Richmond, Va.,) 1833.—MS. from his son, Rev. T. B. Balch.

† According to another authority, James Balch emigrated directly from England to Maryland.

day. The youthful days of the son were spent, for the most part, under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Strain, who was distinguished for his eloquence, and, who, but for his warm attachment to his people, would have been removed to a more conspicuous sphere of labour.

While he was yet a youth, his father removed with his family from Maryland, and settled in Mecklenburg County, N. C. Here he was employed for several years in assisting his father to cultivate his farm, but his heart was set upon going to College, and ultimately becoming a minister of the Gospel. For the accomplishment of this object, he alternately taught a school and pursued his own studies; and indeed he was a student at the same time that he was a teacher. When he was about twenty-five years of age, he was fitted for an advanced standing in College, and had, by his industry and economy, acquired the necessary means for defraying the expenses of his collegiate course.

In the autumn of 1772, he became a member of the Junior class in the College of New Jersey. Here he contracted an intimate friendship with his classmate, James Hall, afterwards the Rev. Dr. Hall, of North Carolina, who was for many years a prominent clergyman in the Presbyterian Church. He was admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1774. The Hopkinsian controversy was, at that early period, not unknown, even at Princeton; but Mr. Balch seems to have had little sympathy with his brethren of that school. During one of his college vacations, he boarded at some farm-house in the neighbourhood with a Hopkinsian brother, who did his utmost to induce him to adopt Dr. Hopkins' peculiar view of disinterested benevolence. Finding him less docile than he could have wished, he made his case a subject of special prayer at the family worship, and continued the prayer in his behalf to a very unusual length. When they rose from their knees, Mr. Balch, not being greatly pleased with this kind of effort to convert him, turned to his fellow-student and said,—“If you wish to pray me into disinterested benevolence, go to your closet.” This anecdote is related upon the authority of the late Rev. Dr. Samuel Stanhope Smith, who was a resident of Princeton at the time.

A short time before Mr. Balch graduated, President Witherspoon was applied to by the Trustees of the Lower Marlborough Academy, in Calvert County, Md., to recommend a suitable person for Principal of that institution. Dr. Witherspoon immediately offered the place to Mr. Balch, and advised him to accept it; giving him at the same time many important hints in respect to his conduct in subsequent life. Mr. Balch, having the utmost confidence in the judgment of his venerable friend and President, determined at once to accept the place. Accordingly, after making some little preparation, he set off upon his journey; but, on reaching Philadelphia, he found himself short of funds, and knew no person in the city to whom he could apply for aid. He resolved, however, to call for what he needed at the hotel, and, as a last resort, to exhibit his testimonials as evidence that he was worthy to be trusted. The next morning, he walked to the market house,—not in the best spirits, and, as he was passing through the crowd, he noticed a person apparently scrutinizing his countenance very closely, though he said nothing. At length, when he had set out to return to his lodgings, and had proceeded some distance, he heard a voice calling to him with some earnestness; and, on looking around, he saw that it was the same person who had just before been so intently gazing at him. He

represented himself as an itinerant merchant, and stated that he knew him by his resemblance to his friends in North Carolina, from whom he had lately received great kindness during a severe illness ; and he then added,—“Perhaps I can now pay back the kindness of your friends.” This unexpected overture led Mr. Balch to disclose to him his actual need, and the stranger lent him all the money that was necessary for his relief. Mr. Balch often related this circumstance with great satisfaction.

After reaching Calvert County, he entered at once upon his duties as teacher, and succeeded in gaining, in an uncommon degree, the confidence and affection of his pupils. The events of the Revolution were beginning now to excite great interest throughout the country; and the Preceptors of Academies were required to keep their pupils in a kind of military training, ready to exchange their books for muskets at a moment's warning. This state of things rendered Mr. Balch's office as a teacher far more difficult and responsible than it would otherwise have been ; and, on one or two occasions, the older members of his school were actually put in requisition for military service.

During his residence in Calvert County, he made the acquaintance of Bishop Claggett, from whom he received many kind attentions, and with whom he was ever after in very friendly relations, till the close of the Bishop's life.

He continued teaching for about four years, and received the greater part of his salary in Continental money—“rather a bright remuneration”—to use the language of his son, “for fighting with mosquitoes, and for being conquered quite frequently by the Tertian ague.”

He then went to Pennsylvania, and was licensed to preach the Gospel, by the Presbytery of Donegal, on the 17th of June, 1779. Hearing, about this time, of the death of his father, he returned to the South, and spent some months in travelling as a sort of missionary in the Carolinas. On his way thither, he spent a Sabbath in Georgetown, and preached in the hamlet which had been founded in September, 1751, by George Beall, whose granddaughter he subsequently married. The people invited him to remain, promising to build him a church, but he declined at that time, though he gave some encouragement of returning to them after performing his projected tour at the South.

While Mr. Balch was itinerating in North Carolina, he was subjected to many privations and hardships. On one occasion, night overtook him when he was in a strange neighbourhood ; but he discovered a dwelling not far from the road, which he supposed, from its appearance, must be the residence of some wealthy man. He made his way to it, and was very hospitably received by the lady of the house, though her husband was not at home. Being greatly fatigued, he retired early, and soon fell asleep ; but it was not long before the gentleman of the house, who was no less a personage than General Williams of North Carolina, returned unexpectedly, entered his chamber, and intimated to him, in no equivocal terms, that he should allow no one who was not a Whig to sleep under his roof. “Let me rest in peace then,” said his guest, “for I was educated under Dr. Witherspoon,—one of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence.” The next day, the General entertained Mr. Balch with a poem which he had composed on the Stamp Act ; and, on the following Sabbath, as the enemies of the Revolution laid great stress on the apostolic injunction to be

subject to the higher powers, he earnestly requested his clerical guest to discourse upon that passage. He did so, much to the annoyance of the Royalists who were present, while the General, with several pistols in his belt, acted as Clerk.

Mr. Balch was invited to settle over a congregation in North Carolina; but he had made up his mind to return to Georgetown, with a view to establish there a Presbyterian Church. Accordingly, he went thither in March, 1780, and found as unpromising a field of labour as can easily be imagined. He preached for some time in a room rented for the purpose; and, in 1782, a few individuals interested in sustaining Divine institutions, joined in building a very plain house for public worship. There were seven persons, including the Pastor, who joined in the first celebration of the Lord's Supper. Shortly after this, he was instrumental of establishing a Presbyterian Congregation in Fredericktown, Md.

The return of Peace, at the close of the Revolution, contributed not a little to the growth of the village in which Mr. Balch was settled. His church gradually increased, and many Episcopalians who resided in the neighbourhood joined in their worship. Still he found his salary quite inadequate to the support of his family; and, in order to meet his current expenses, he was obliged to resort to some other business; and he chose that of instructing youth. Accordingly, he was in the habit, for many years, of conducting the education of young men; and among his pupils were not a few who have since attained to great usefulness and prominence.

After the removal of the seat of government to Washington City, the Episcopalians, who had been accustomed to worship in the Presbyterian Church, established a church of their own; and thus the number who contributed to Mr. Balch's support was temporarily somewhat diminished. The loss was, however, quickly much more than made up by fresh accessions from various quarters; insomuch that it became desirable that the place of worship should be enlarged. Into this project Mr. Balch entered with great resolution and vigour; and it was chiefly, if not entirely, by contributions obtained through his persevering efforts, that the enlargement was effected. Mr. Jefferson, who was then President of the United States, contributed in aid of his object seventy-five dollars. He applied to Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury, but he declined giving, on the ground of the excessive frequency of similar applications. Mr. Balch immediately dropped the matter, and began to converse on general subjects; and among other questions which he asked was one in regard to the success of Napoleon, in subverting the Genevese Republic. Mr. Gallatin said emphatically that his country was gone. "I am sorry to hear it," rejoined Mr. Balch, "for the city of Geneva has produced more illustrious men in Church and State than any other spot on the globe." He then rose and bade the Secretary good morning; but, before he had proceeded far, was called back to receive from Mr. Gallatin a handsome donation.

From this time Mr. Balch's congregation gradually increased until 1821, when the old church edifice was taken down, and a more commodious and more elegant house erected in its place. The night before the dismantling of the old building, Mr. Balch preached a sermon to an immense assemblage, in which he discoursed somewhat at large upon the history of the congregation. It was an occasion of deep interest to him; and while he rejoiced in it as marking a favourable epoch in the history of his congrega-

tion, it could not but awaken in his mind many sad and tender recollections.

In the year 1818, Mr. Balch was honoured with the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the College at which he was educated.

In the year 1831, Dr. Balch experienced a great calamity in the burning of his house. Some time before day, the watchman, in going his accustomed round, observed a light in one of the front rooms, but did not at first suppose that it was any thing out of the common course. When he came near the house again, he observed that it was wrapped in flames. The fire gained on the building so rapidly that, in a few moments, every way of escape was cut off, except by a slippery shelving roof which was under the window of his chamber. Several fruitless attempts were made to pass the stairway; but, as he opened the door that led to it, he saw nothing but a cloud of smoke mingled with sparks of fire. In this extremity, Dr. Balch, with great self-possession, resolved to lead the way on the roof. When the aged couple were discovered in these awfully perilous circumstances, a feeling of horror ran through the assembled multitude; but when it was perceived that their escape was effected, it gave way to a shout of generous exultation. He escaped with only the garments in which he slept; his apparel, furniture, library, manuscripts,—every thing which his house contained, was burnt to ashes. The loss was one which he ill knew how to sustain; but a circumstance occurred shortly after, by means of which he was saved from the embarrassment to which he might otherwise have been subjected. One of his early pupils suggested to him the idea that he was entitled to a pension, under the then recent law of Congress, providing for Revolutionary claims. An application was accordingly made, his claim was granted, and before his decease he drew the sum of twelve hundred dollars.

Dr. Balch, after he had passed the age of fourscore, retained so much vigour as to be able to preach occasionally without inconvenience. A few Sabbaths before his death, he had preached three times in Alexandria, besides attending a funeral. On the Sabbath immediately preceding his death, on returning from public worship, he showed manifest signs of indisposition, and found himself unable to walk home. He revived, however, and, during the week, evinced his accustomed cheerfulness. The next Sabbath morning, (September 7, 1833,) after having rested well during the night, he awoke and took some refreshment; but was immediately seized with a spasm of the heart, which caused almost instantaneous death. The tidings of his departure produced a great sensation in the whole community. The Aldermen and Common Council of the town passed a unanimous resolution to attend his funeral. The town Gazette was clothed in mourning; while funeral badges were displayed not only in the church, but upon the market house, and upon all the stores in the streets through which the immense procession passed. A Funeral Discourse was delivered on the following Sabbath, by the surviving Pastor of the Church; and there was subsequently another before the Presbytery of which he was a member, by the Rev. Elias Harrison of Alexandria. His ministry in Georgetown extended through a period of fifty-three years.

In 1782, Dr. Balch was married to Elizabeth, daughter of Colonel George Beall, of Georgetown,—a young lady of great beauty and rare accomplishments. She died in her sixty-second year. He was subsequently married

to a Mrs. King, who lived but about twenty days after she became his wife. He was married a third time to a Mrs. Parrot. He had nine children,—four sons and five daughters,—all by the first marriage. One of his sons was a judge in Florida, two were lawyers, and one, the Rev. Thomas B. Balch, is a Presbyterian clergyman, well known as the author of “Christianity and Literature,” “Ringwood Discourses,” and various other works. His eldest daughter is the widow of the late General Macomb of the United States Army.

FROM THE REV. ELIAS HARRISON, D. D.

ALEXANDRIA, May 7, 1857.

Rev. and dear Sir: It gives me pleasure to comply with your request for my reminiscences of the Rev. Dr. Balch, late of Georgetown, partly because the very intimate relations in which we were placed towards each other, during the last seventeen years of his life, gave me the best opportunities of knowing him, and therefore enable me to speak of him with great confidence, and partly because my estimate of his character is such that I am glad to co-operate in any effort to embalm his memory.

The first time I ever saw him was in 1813, when I was a student at Princeton College, in company with his son Thomas. He came there on a visit,—the first he had ever paid to the institution, since he was graduated; and, as was to be expected, it was an occasion to him of much pleasurable excitement. He remained there for several days,—being frequently present both in the common dining hall, and in the recitation room; and moving about freely, as he did, among the students,—with some of whom he was acquainted, he became exceedingly popular. Their attention was particularly drawn to him by the *sly humour* which came out both in his language and in his countenance; while the anecdotes in which he abounded, concerning the scenes and incidents of bygone days, called forth peals of laughter, which were heard from one end of the College grounds to the other. In these explosions he himself always joined most heartily; and it was said that Dr. Green, who was then President of the College, and who was more than commonly tenacious in regard to ministerial propriety and dignity, took him to task in respect to the freedom of his demeanor, intimating that such loud “horse laughs,” as he termed them, would lessen his influence and injure his reputation. To this Dr. Balch replied,—for he afterwards told me the story,—that for his own part, he always did love a good “horse laugh;” and that if he (Dr. Green) had indulged himself in that way a little more frequently, he never would have supposed that his own nose was the nozzle of a tea-pot, or that his head was made of glass—alluding to certain imaginings predicated of Dr. G., (whether true or false I know not) at a time when he was suffering under the influence of great nervous depression. In the end, however, our venerable President became so much interested in the Doctor and his irrepressible humour, that he not only relaxed somewhat from his accustomed dignity, but actually, in some degree, caught the contagion, and heartily shared in the laugh which at first he seemed to deprecate. Before Dr. Balch took his departure for home, he expressed to the occupants of a certain room an earnest wish to be permitted to sleep there one night, as it was the room which he had occupied during his whole college life, and it was not likely that he should ever be there again. His request was very cheerfully complied with; and this, with other pleasant circumstances, served to leave a most agreeable impression on the minds of the students, and to render his visit among them a delightful episode in the tedious monotony of college life.

After this I never saw him until I came to this city in the close of the year 1816. It was, I think, the last week in December of that year, when, in accord-



ance with a long established rule for mutual convenience and profit, it was his turn to aid my venerable colleague, Dr. Muir, in the solemnities of the Lord's Supper. I then heard him preach for the first time; and though the discourse could not be called an eloquent one, there was still a *something*, both in matter and manner, that rivetted my attention so closely, as to leave an impression which the lapse of more than forty years has done little to efface. In person, he stood before us, large, tall, and rather commanding. His countenance, though solemn, seemed after all to have in it a tinge of dry humour. His language, though chaste and well adapted to his subject, was the suggestion of the moment,—for he never wrote his discourses. His method was lucid and natural, and yet peculiarly his own. And his manner was characterized by fervour, unction, and I would say, originality withal. The impression which he left upon me, was somewhat strange indeed, but it was on the whole highly favourable both to his intellect and his heart—an impression, I may add, which none of his subsequent exhibitions ever served to remove or impair. He was a great friend to loud as well as animated speaking in the pulpit; and in this, my first, interview with him, he counselled me most earnestly never to lose sight of that important requisite in a preacher;—adding, in his usual quizzical manner, that young ministers were little aware of its importance, for it was often accepted by the people as a substitute for good sense and sound argument.

Dr. Balch was also greatly in favour of preaching without a manuscript, and especially without writing at all; and he seemed, at that first interview, to take quite a fancy to me, because I had avowed my determination never to take even short notes into the pulpit, and so far as practicable, to avoid the common practice of always writing fully for the Sabbath. He told me, if I remember right, that he scarcely ever wrote a whole sermon, and had never written the half of one during his whole pastorate; and he certainly gave a somewhat remarkable reason for it. It was this:—When on his way from the Carolinas to the place of his final settlement,—Georgetown, he was invited to preach at a certain church in Virginia, at which there were several ministers of the Baptist denomination, and a very large gathering of people. The services had been opened by a discourse which, though delivered with great vehemence and boldness of manner, seemed to him very crude, disjointed and illogical. [The Baptist clergy were not then what they have become since—they were doubtless pious and devoted men, but few of them had anything beyond a common education.] Inasmuch as he had taken his diploma at College, and withal had several well prepared discourses with him, which he had carefully committed to memory, he indulged the rather self-complacent reflection that, as he was to follow the illiterate preacher, he should, to say the least, not suffer in a comparison with him. He acknowledged that the evil principle within him so far gained a momentary control, that he was expecting to hear his sermon spoken of in no measured terms of approbation; but, instead of that, as he was walking behind a large number of people, after the sermon had been delivered, he heard them speak of it as absolutely so poor a thing as not to be worth the time they had spent in listening to it; while his illiterate predecessor was extolled to the skies. “From that time,” said the Doctor, “I firmly resolved never again to attempt either to preach a great sermon, or to write out another sermon for the pulpit”—a resolve to which I believe he adhered, without a single exception, till his dying day.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that he did not *study* his sermons. He did not study them in the ordinary way; and yet the orderly method and compact arrangement by which they were marked, showed that they were the product of no inconsiderable thought. He generally formed a brief outline of his discourse in the early part of the week, and then occupied himself leisurely in filling it up before the Sabbath. These skeletons were written in very small paper books, made for the purpose, each of which would perhaps hold a hundred

or more; but they were never taken with him into the pulpit. I have seen many of them, and have remarked their apparent neatness and freedom from both erasures and blots; but was never able to decipher a solitary line, except by a vigorous effort of the imagination; for his handwriting was scarcely more legible to me than Arabic. His preaching was most frequently doctrinal, and was characterized by great fearlessness and energy. He evidently cared little for the praise of man, and I have sometimes thought, still less for his censure. I am inclined to think that the general character of his pulpit performances was such as to justify the remark said to have been made by a respectable and excellent old lady, that "it was always very good living."

In his dispositions he was kind, amiable and eminently social. I never saw him out of temper but once, and then but for a short time; while, during a long course of years in which I was familiar with him, and met him in almost every variety of circumstances, he was pre-eminently good natured, cheerful and buoyant. His exuberance of good humour continued with him till the close of life; and some of his friends of nervous temperament found it an excellent antidote to depression of spirits. He was, in relating humorous anecdotes, absolutely irresistible—neither the dignity of Dr. Green, nor the sobriety and quietness of my revered colleague, Dr. Muir, was proof against it. I must confess there was no man whom I welcomed more heartily than Dr. Balch, when I found the *blues* were gathering upon me; for though I was constrained to think, with the venerable President of Nassau-Hall, that his laughing explosions were perhaps too frequent and sometimes too violent, yet he actually did more for me in certain moods than any physician could do; and then there was such an air of naturalness about it, that you seemed to feel that, with such a constitution as he had, it could hardly be otherwise.

He was very urgent with young ministers to get married, if possible, as soon as they were settled. And as he was often appointed to charge the newly installed pastor, he not unfrequently hinted at what he regarded a duty on this subject, in that solemn exercise. He did so at my installation; and though, on the whole, the charge was very judicious, and unusually solemn, he could not resist the impulse to say,—and with an archness of tone and manner that was marked by the whole congregation, and created a universal smile,—that it would be well for me to remember that "a Bishop" must not only be "blameless," but "the husband of one wife." He saw me married not many months afterwards, and offered me his congratulations on the occasion, with a heartiness that could not have been greater, if he had supposed that I had got married merely out of respect to the advice he had given me at my installation.

Dr. Balch's pastoral relation seems to have been a happy one. His charge gradually increased from a mere handful of people to one of the largest congregations of our denomination in this whole region. His people respected and loved him; and those of them who still survive, never speak of him but with a feeling of profound veneration. He was always welcome in their families; and his open and cheerful manner, and freedom from all stateliness and reserve, made him a great favourite, especially with the young. I believe it is uncommon that a minister, during so long a period, retains in so high a degree the affection of his people.

A few years before his death, he was affected with a sudden paralytic stroke, while in the midst of his discourse on the Lord's day. It came without a moment's premonition, rendering him both stiff and speechless, but neither depriving him of consciousness, nor changing his bodily position. Taken home, he was soon restored to speech, and in a few weeks, by proper medical treatment, to about his accustomed health. While he was confined to his bed, I called to see him; and finding him at the moment alone, he seemed unusually gratified, and hardly able to express his feelings of joy that an opportunity was once more

given him of speaking without restraint. "For," said he, "neither my family nor my physician, though transcendently kind, and earnestly seeking my recovery, have rightly understood my case; they have interdicted all company, and laid an embargo on my tongue ever since it has been restored to use; and I know very well that these two things, if persisted in, instead of curing me, will hasten me out of the world. I must see my friends, and I must talk, or I must die." And he did talk rapidly, though he saw my alarm at the announcement of the prohibition, and though Mrs. Balch, rushing in at the sound of his voice, urged every consideration she could to prevent it. Strange to say, he recovered rapidly from that hour; and often did he remind me afterwards of that accidental, or rather providential, circumstance of my finding him alone; "for I verily believe," said he, "it was the means, under God, of continuing my life a little longer."

This attack is supposed to have resulted immediately from his discontinuing the use of tobacco; to which he had been immoderately given for more than sixty-five years. In all other kinds of personal indulgence he was very sparing; and had never tasted ardent spirits, to the amount of a spoonful, from the age of twelve years. His physician had warned him of the probable issue of a sudden breaking up of this habit, and advised him, by all means, if he were to attempt it at all, to let it be a gradual process; but, being rather obstinately set in his resolves, when once made, he persisted, until he had well nigh experienced the worst. He then resumed the practice for three or four years, and during the whole period enjoyed uninterrupted health; when, relinquishing it again, he was again visited in the pulpit of a neighbouring brother with an attack similar to the other, though not so severe or protracted. He then returned to it once more, and continued it in moderation till his death.

One of the last Sabbaths of his life Dr. Balch spent with me, and assisted me in the administration of the Lord's Supper; and he was apparently in as good health, both of body and of mind, as at any time when I had seen him for a number of years. He preached for me that day twice, and preached also at the Protestant Methodist Church in the evening, in addition to the services rendered at the Lord's table. It was generally remarked that his sermons were not only longer, but far more solemn and impressive than usual; but he suffered no inconvenience from the labours of the day. He left me apparently in fine health and in excellent spirits, and I heard no more from him until the astounding news came that he was dead; and that was quickly followed by an urgent request that I should come and take part in the funeral solemnities. I did go and meet the sad demand that was made upon me,—sharing the service (so far as the addresses were concerned) with the Rev. Mr. Brooks of the Episcopal Church, with whom Dr. Balch had been in the most cordial relations. I was subsequently called upon by the Presbytery to preach his Funeral Sermon, which I did at its sessions in the First Church in Washington City, and in the presence of an immense audience, which had been attracted to the service from a desire to do honour to the memory of that venerable man.

I have already intimated that Dr. Balch was tall and well proportioned in his physical structure. His countenance was a fair index to his character. His eyes were rather small, though keen; his face perhaps a little too long for beauty, and his neck too short for the head that was above it. His gait was always slow and cautious, and his movements indicated either that he was very absent in mind, or that his faculties were intensely concentrated on some particular subject. His dress was never of the most fashionable kind; nor was he always so particular in respect to it as to escape the imputation of being a little slovenly; yet, on the whole, his personal appearance was very respectable, and in society he was not lacking in due attention to the rules of politeness. He was an early riser, and would often take a long stroll, before any of his family or

neighbours were up; and in all ordinary circumstances, ten o'clock at night would find him either in bed, or in his room preparing for it. It was doubtless to the regularity of his habits, the cheerfulness of his spirits, and the utter absence of every thing like agitating or corroding passion, quite as much as to his native vigour of constitution, that was to be attributed not only his exemption from the ordinary maladies which prevail among men, but a state of scarcely interrupted usefulness or enjoyment to the close of an unusually long life.

Notwithstanding Dr. Balch's passion for the humorous and the ludicrous, he thought much and felt much on the subject of personal religion, and to his particular friends, he spoke of it with both freedom and feeling. I never heard him express a doubt of his personal interest in the merits of his Redeemer; and towards the close of life he seemed to dwell upon the prospects of the opening future with a greatly increased interest and solemnity. But the nature and permanency of his religious principles were most effectually tested by the purity of his life, the stern fidelity with which he rebuked the various forms of evil, and his readiness to make personal sacrifices for the cause of Christ. In view of all that I knew of him, I cannot doubt that when he was dismissed from his labours on earth, he went to receive the plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Yours very truly,

ELIAS HARRISON.

Dr. Balch had an elder brother, HEZEKIAH JAMES BALCH, who had a somewhat brilliant, though brief, career. He was born at Deer Creek, then the residence of his father, in 1746; was graduated at the College of New Jersey in 1766; was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Donegal Presbytery in 1767; and was ordained by the same Presbytery previous to the meeting of the Synod in 1770. In 1769, he went on a mission to the Southern States, and shortly after became Pastor of the two Congregations,—Rocky River and Poplar Tent, which he continued to serve till the close of life. In the famous Mecklenburg Convention, (May 19, 1775,) he was present, and had an important agency in framing the well known "Declaration" which that patriotic body put forth. He died, unmarried, in the summer of the same year. He is said to have been a man of fine personal appearance, and an accomplished scholar, and to have disappointed, by his early death, many hopes of extensive usefulness in the Church.

There was yet another brother, JAMES BALCH, who became a clergyman, and lived and died in Kentucky, where he seems to have taken an active part against the movements of the Cumberland Presbyterians.