

ANDOVER-HARVARD
THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

766.706
Oct. 14, 1942

THE
UNION SEMINARY MAGAZINE

NO. 4.—MARCH-APRIL, 1898.

I.—LITERARY.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF UNION THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY.

BY PROF. W. W. MOORE.

I. THE BEGINNING, 1812-1823.

The Presbyterian Church in America was composed originally of emigrants from Great Britain and Ireland, and for a number of years the ministers of their various congregations were drawn from beyond the seas. As the church grew, however, and the population of the country increased, the supply thus obtained proved to be inadequate, and the necessity for a native ministry became more and more apparent. Academies and colleges were accordingly established from time to time during the eighteenth century at various places, such as Princeton, Lexington and Hampden-Sidney; and the candidates educated in these institutions received their theological training from the president of the college, when he chanced to be a minister (as was commonly the case), or from other approved divines here and there throughout the country. But not until 1812, the year of our second war with England, did the church establish an institution to be devoted exclusively to theological education. In that year Princeton Seminary was founded, with the Rev. Archibald Alexander (formerly President of Hampden-Sidney College) as its organizer and first professor. In the same memorable year the Synod of Virginia adopted the plan of a Seminary to be located within her bounds, inaugurated measures to raise funds for its sup-



DR. JAMES B. LATIMER.

REV. JAMES FAIR LATIMER, D. D.

A CHARACTER SKETCH.

God increasingly reveals himself to the world, in the lives of its great and good men. They are God's utterances—the words of God in which he speaks to the world in every age. Often in these great lives He speaks but a single word. They are the utterance of but one single sublime truth, which they express in themselves and which they body forth to the world.

At other times He gathers up into one life the richness of many lives and sends it forth into the world, complete, well rounded, to express not merely one truth or one phase of truth, but to express the Truth in all its completeness as applied to every phase of human life. To reflect Him in every relation and at every angle of life just as the diamond reflects at every angle the light of the sun.

Among the many good gifts that have been given to me, I count as one of the greatest the privilege of having known and loved such a Man.

For it is as a Man that I think of him first and always, rather than as a Teacher or Preacher. Poor indeed is he who, though he has ability to inspire respect as a teacher or preacher, can never hope to command the respect of the world as a man.

It was Dr. Latimer's well rounded magnificent manhood that gave energy and impressiveness to all his teaching and preaching. In him the man was never swallowed up and lost sight of in the profession. His nature was too strong and manly to ever be bound and cramped in the fetters of a mere professionalism. In listening to him, whether in the class-room or in the pulpit, one never thought of him merely as a teacher or preacher discharging the functions of his office, but rather the involuntary thought was—"There speaks a Man."

As a man he was big-hearted, loving and lovable, and unusually approachable. There was nothing cold or repellant in his nature, but with the stern and manly strength of a great nature he combined the gentleness and sympathy of a woman. His great heart was ever open as was his home to his friends and full of cordial and kindly welcome.

Both in his public and private life he was a modest man, unassuming and devoid of ostentation. His greatness was unmarred by egotism. He did not seek to live in the public eye, nor did he ever invite or listen for the world's applause. His soul slaked its thirst in nobler and more enduring streams.

As a scholar he justly ranks among the great and independent thinkers of our church. With a logical mind of great grasp and wonderful subtlety, and perceptible powers remarkably keen, he comprehended at a glance and discriminated as if by intuition.

With the strong convictions of a great soul he was a fearless seeker after truth, going wherever logic and the Bible led him. He loved truth for its own sake and was always more anxious to make sure that his opinions were true than merely to be true to his opinions. Truth-loving and truth-seeking he was a veritable apostle of sincerity, and his whole life was a protest against pretence and sham.

This spirit of sincerity led him to discard in his preaching the artificial helps and rhetorical devices that other men think legitimate and proper to employ. He never sought for effect in gestures and postures and modulated voice, but his pulpit eloquence was simple and direct, the effect being sought through earnest appeals to the heart and conscience rather than through the devices of art. His preaching was characterized by a passionate earnestness that was often irresistible in its intensity. Nothing could withstand him. He was a torrent that bore everything before him.

"He rests from his labors" but his influence abides, and the lessons of his life will ripen with the passing years. Those who knew and loved him will always find him present. They will ever revere his memory as one who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak—his sympathy to the suffering—his life to his country and his heart to God."

R. L. TELFORD.

Lewisburg, W. Va., March 16th, 1898.