

# Lincoln University Herald.

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## Death of Dr. Isaac Norton Rendall.

BY WILLIAM HALLOCK JOHNSON.

"A prince and a great man is fallen this day in Israel." Such was the thought in the mind of friends and neighbors and of the alumni of Lincoln University as they learned of Dr. Rendall's death, on the 15th of November. Dr. Isaac N. Rendall was born on September 3d, 1825, at Utica, N. Y. After graduating from Princeton College and Seminary, he was ordained by the Presbytery of Mohawk, his first charge being at Oneida Lake, N. Y., and his second at Renova, Pa. He was called to the Presidency of Lincoln University, then Ashmun Institute, and was on his way to assume his duties just as President Lincoln was assassinated. For forty years as President, and then as President *ex honore* till his death, he devoted himself to the upbuilding of the University and the education of colored young men.

In the circumstances of Dr. Rendall's death, there were many indications of the hand of a kind Providence. His work had been done; the institution for which he labored had been placed upon a firm basis; the responsibilities of his office had been transferred to the broad shoulders of his nephew and successor, Dr. John B. Rendall. He died full of days and honors, rich in good deeds and in loving friends, beloved and almost worshipped by a great army of students, who had felt the impress of his personality. Active in mind and body almost to the last, he was spared any long illness or dependence on the ministry of others. His end came peacefully in the morning hours, amid the tender ministrations of those he loved best.

"Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail,  
Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,  
Dispraise or blame—nothing but well and fair,  
And what may quiet us in a death so noble."

Three elements stand out prominently in Dr.

Rendall's character: his unfailing courtesy, the simplicity and sincerity of his Christian faith, and his devotion to the Negro race. He was a man of rare polish and charm of manner, "a gentleman of the old school," always dignified, but never pompous, with a delicate respect for others founded upon a true self-respect, with a courtesy which was no external polish, but the natural expression of nobility

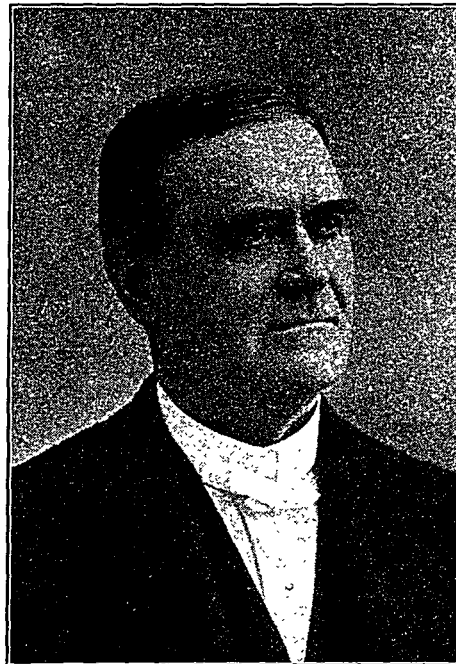
of character and loftiness of purpose. Dr. Rendall well deserved the title once enjoyed by his teacher, Dr. Samuel Miller, of Princeton, "the Chesterfield of the Presbyterian Church."

When a timid freshman, who is now a prominent member of his race, entered Dr. Rendall's study, he was greeted for the first time in his life with the title, "Mr. C——." "I went back into the woods," he says, "and repeated to myself a number of times, 'Mr. C——, Mr. C——.' I was born again in that hour."

Young and old, rich and poor, as they met Dr. Rendall, were sure of a kindly smile, an extended hand, and a bright and appreciative

word. "His setting sun," as a student has recently said, "shed its glory over us all." Not only the student and faculty community, but a wide circle of friends and the great body of Lincoln alumni, feel that a light has gone out, that a beneficent presence has been lost to us, and that earth is poorer as heaven is richer, since Dr. Rendall has been taken from us.

A leading element in Dr. Rendall's greatness was his absolute simplicity and sincerity of character. Full of good works, he kept the deeds of the right hand from the knowledge of the left. With abundant reason for pride in the growth of the institution of which he was for forty years the guiding spirit and tower of strength, he would allow no word of personal commendation, but ascribed everything to the grace and goodness of God. His religion was no veneer or mere profession, but entered into the warp and woof of his being. It was his native breath and vital air,



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and he could speak of the spiritual life in any society with an ease and naturalness which removed any feeling of abruptness or of offence. His concern for the welfare of others was shown with equally delicate tact for the hotel waiter who served him, for the guest distinguished in public life who sat at his own table, and even for faithful attendants when his own life was ebbing fast. A former student, now a well known minister and teacher of his people, tells of the profound impression made upon his life by the question asked in his first interview with Dr. Rendall: "Are you a Christian, sir? Why not, sir?" When Dr. Shepard, missionary to the Congo, visited Lincoln University, and told of a native king who had insisted that he was not a sinner, Dr. Rendall put a magnifying glass in Dr. Shepard's hands, with the message, "Give this to the king when you return, and tell him to look through it at the point of a needle, and see how rough and jagged it appears."

All of us, teachers and students, were anxious to be on our best behavior when Dr. Rendall was present. He made us feel, somehow, that goodness was attractive and desirable, and that meanness was despicable. He has furnished to hundreds of students, scattered through the South and elsewhere, a practical standard of what is best and highest in Christian character. Their ideal, if expressed, would be in the concrete: "To be like Dr. Rendall." All who knew and loved him, even in the sadness of their loss, glory in his fruitful life, and his abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom. For him, heaven will not seem a strange place. It was present, we felt, in his soul, and in the beautiful daily life which he lived among us at Lincoln University. Of few men could it more truly be said that for him to live was Christ.

Dr. Rendall will be longest remembered and honored as the friend and benefactor of the Negro race. It is true that his alert and vigorous mind, active till the last, was occupied with a variety of topics: science, history,

politics and archaeological research; and his professors would often find the latest books in their own departments lying on his study table. Yet the one subject, aside from the Scriptures, which was uppermost in his thought, and most prominent in his conversation, was the Negro race. Before taking up his life-work at Lincoln University, he had shown his interest in their welfare by teaching in the colored Sabbath school when a student at Princeton, and by boldly espousing the Union cause in his first pastorate, amid an unfriendly environment. While others discussed "the Negro problem," he made a profound and sympathetic study of the Negro, of his needs, of his capacities, and of the providential meaning of his history. His philosophy of the subject was deeply Christian. "We must look at the Negro," he was fond of saying, "through the eyes of Christ." Friendly to industrial education and to all movements for the bettering of material conditions, he insisted that the Negro, like the white man, cannot live by bread alone. He felt that the cause for which he labored was one which appealed to the heart of Christ, that the needs of the race could only be met by Divine grace, and that the only effectively uplifting education must be of the heart, as well as of the hand and of the head. The prominence which he gave to the Christian element in education is illustrated by a remark recently made by a graduate coming to place his son in college: "I wish my son to be in an institution where students are treated as if they were made in the image of God."

Dr. Rendall was a sturdy champion of the right of the Negro to the best and highest in education, and of his capacity to receive it. "Anglo-Saxons with black skins," was a description he was heard to apply to a group of students. A feature of the fiftieth year jubilee celebration, in 1904, was a powerful plea which he made for the best educational advantages for the colored young men. "I would as soon think of offering them a different education," he declared, "as I would of giving them a different air to breathe."

Lincoln University was born in a missionary motive—the desire to train young men for the evangelization of Africa. "God will be glorified in Africa," was the theme of the dedicatory sermon preached by Dr. Van Rensselaer, when Ashmun Institute was founded. Behind the body of students whom he loved and for whom he labored, Dr. Rendall saw the needs of ten million people in this country, and he often spoke and prayed for those of the ancestral continent. Lincoln University, he said, was born with "Africa" engraved on her forehead. His vision will not be realized, and the work which he began be completed, till the

blessings of Christian civilization and culture have been brought to all the members of the African race wherever found.

The memory of Dr. Rendall's character, so strong and so beautiful in its simplicity, of his mind, so wide in its outlook and so wise in its planning, and of his influence, so far-reaching and so beneficent, will ever be an inspiration in the institution to which he devoted his long and fruitful years of service.—*The Presbyterian*.

### The Funeral.

The funeral of Dr. Isaac N. Rendall was held in the Mary Brown Dod Chapel, at Lincoln University, on the afternoon of Tuesday, November 19th. The exercises were in charge of Prof. Robert L. Stewart, D. D., senior member of the faculty. A large number of graduates of the University, and of friends from neighboring towns and cities, were present.

The invocation prayer was made by the venerable Dr. David Tully, of Media, now in his ninety-third year. After the reading of the Scriptures and the singing of Dr. Rendall's favorite hymn, "Rock of Ages," the opening address was made by Dr. Stewart. He was followed by Drs. J. M. Galbreath and James Carter, in faithful and impressive tributes to the character and worth of Lincoln's deceased President. Rev. Dr. Holliday, the oldest in years of service of the trustees, spoke, as the representative of the Board, of some of Dr. Rendall's characteristics; and Dr. William A. Creditt, of Philadelphia, as representative of the alumni, in an eloquent address, told of what he was to the students of the University, and how sincere their sorrow over his departure.

A series of resolutions passed by the alumni and some telegrams and letters of sympathy from those far distant, were read. Prayer was offered by Rev. Dr. R. H. Nassau, for forty years a missionary in Africa, and the benediction was pronounced by an early graduate, Rev. Dr. Solomon P. Hood. The pall-bearers were six grand-nephews, four being the minister-sons of President John B. Rendall. Interment was in the Oxford Cemetery.

Dr. Rendall was never married. A brother, three years his senior, of Shreveport, La., survives him, being ninety years of age; also a nephew, Dr. John B. Rendall, President of Lincoln University.

### Dr. I. N. Rendall Dead.

The Rev. I. N. Rendall, D. D., President *ex honore* of Lincoln University, died at the University early in the week. Dr. Rendall

was eighty-eight years of age, and had been President of Lincoln for fifty years when he resigned his position a few years ago on account of advancing age. He gave a long life of service to Lincoln University and the cause of Negro education, and was loved and honored by Lincoln men wherever they were found. He wrought well in his day and generation. He lived to serve others. His work will abide in the great University which he built, and in the lives of the men whom he influenced by his teaching and sent forth into the world.—*Afro-American*.

### Visit to Greensboro, N. C.

Professor George Johnson spent Sunday, November 17th, in Greensboro, N. C. This town is the "gateway" of North Carolina, and in addition to being a railroad center, is also noted for the educational institutions established which it contains. The Agricultural and Mechanical College for the Colored Race has one of the best equipped plants to be found in the South. In addition, there is the Emmanuel Lutheran College and Bennet College, supported by the Methodist Church, North.

The Presbyterian church for the colored people is of special interest to Lincoln University men. It was established about thirty-eight years ago by James Crestwell, and for many years Jacob R. Nocho, of the Class of '69 C., was an elder and pillar of the congregation. Six years ago, the present pastor, the Rev. J. G. Walker, took charge. Mr. Walker, if not a son of Lincoln University, is at least a nephew, since he is a graduate of a sister institution, Biddle University. Under Mr. Walker's ministry, the church has prospered exceedingly. A new church has been erected, at a cost of \$8,000, most of it raised on the field. About 100 members have been added to the church, and the annual receipts have been raised from an average of \$500 per year to \$1,800 per year. During the past six years, \$11,000 have been raised for all purposes by the people of the congregation. In the near future, a new parsonage is to be built on the site of the old. For six years the church has been self-sustaining.

Professor Johnson's visit was on the occasion of the sixth anniversary. He preached morning and evening. In the afternoon, the Rev. Dr. Clark, of the Southern Presbyterian Church (white), preached the sermon.

There were many Lincoln men at each of these services. In the morning, Messrs. W. H. Long, '90 Seminary; A. Sidney Long, '91 College; Prof. Smith, of the International Training School in Durham, N. C.; G. W. McAdoo, '85 C.; J. S. Fuller, '91 C., and many