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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.

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BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

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VOLUME IV.
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FROM THE HON. F. NASH,

JUDGE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA.

RALEIGH, February 17, 1857

Dear Sir: Your letter has just reached me, and few things would give me more pleasure than to comply with the request which it contains, if the pressure of my official engagements were not such as to forbid my doing it in any other than the most hurried manner. I knew Dr. Chapman well and loved him much. When he came to this State to preside over our College, he resided with me nearly three months before he went to Chapel Hill. This gave me an opportunity to become well acquainted with him. Plain and unpretending in his appearance and manner, his heart was warm and sincere. Not specially calculated to shine as a Professor, the pulpit was his appropriate place. More highly gifted with power on his knees than any man I ever knew, his public prayers warmed the hearts of all who heard him. I have met with no man, unless perhaps the late Dr. Nettleton was an exception, who seemed to me to exceed Dr. Chapman in a deep and spiritual acquaintance with the Word of God. His discourses were plain, but always interesting. He was a good man—eminently faithful in the discharge of every duty, social and relative; eminently kind to those around him, and always having an eye to their better interests. I cannot say that he was the father of Presbyterianism in this particular region, but I may say that he was a most efficient promoter of it—when he came hither, the lamp was burning, but it was with a feeble and dubious flame—by his untiring zeal and vigorous efforts he poured into it fresh oil, and it has been burning ever since with a steadily increasing lustre and warmth. There is no doubt that he exerted a benign influence here, which was far from exhausting itself with the generation that was contemporary with him.

Regretting that my account of this excellent man must be so meagre,

I am, my dear Sir, with sincere regard,

Respectfully and sincerely your friend,

F. NASH.

JAMES RICHARDS, D. D.*

1793—1843.

JAMES RICHARDS was a descendant, in the fourth generation, of Samuel Richards, a native of Wales, who settled in the parish of Middlesex, near Stamford, Conn. He was the eldest child of James Richards, and was born in New Canaan, Conn., October 29, 1767. His father was an intelligent, respectable farmer, highly esteemed both as a man and a Christian; and his mother, whose maiden name was Ruth Hanford, was one of the brighter ornaments of her sex;—not indeed specially favoured in respect to advantages for education, but distinguished for a masculine understanding, great firmness of purpose, and a fervent and elevated piety. In his earliest years, he gave indications of an uncommonly delicate bodily constitution, though it was quickly discovered that there was no corresponding mental imbecility—on the contrary, his intellectual powers were perceived to be

* Memoir prefixed to his Lectures by Rev. S. H. Gridley.—MS. from his family.

of a very high order; and some of his early feats in the acquisition of knowledge would seem almost incredible. When he was thirteen years old, he had so much knowledge and so much character withal, that he was a successful teacher of a common district school; and he was employed in this way for two successive winters.

From his early childhood, he evinced a strong desire for a collegiate education; but the straitened circumstances of his father, in connection with his own apparently frail constitution, seemed to put this beyond his reach. At the age of fifteen, he left home, with the concurrence of his parents, with a view to seek some employment in which he might become permanently settled. He went first to Newtown, distant about twenty-five miles from his native place, and there became an apprentice to a cabinet and chair maker. He was obliged, however, in consequence of a severe and protracted illness which occurred shortly after this, to return home; and we hear of him resuming his mechanical labours, first at Danbury, and afterwards at Stamford, and then retiring from them altogether. He seems, however, at one period, to have been occupied at his trade, for a short time, in the city of New York.

The early religious instruction which he received under the parental roof, and particularly from his mother, did not fail to make some impression upon his mind; but that impression seems to have yielded, in a great measure, to the influence of worldly associations. But in 1786, when he was in his nineteenth year, he became thoroughly awakened to the importance of religion as a practical concern, and ultimately gave the most satisfactory evidence of being renewed in the temper of his mind. He is said to have been brought to serious reflection in the midst of a scene of unhallowed levity, and particularly in consequence of the prominent part which he was himself bearing in it. For a season, the burden of his guilt seemed to him greater than he could bear; but, after a few days, while he was reading the thirty-eighth Psalm, he found the joy and peace in believing. Shortly after this, he joined the Congregational Church in Stamford, and henceforward evinced the genuineness of his piety by a consistent and devoted Christian life.

His great purpose now was to devote himself to the Christian ministry. Accordingly, having been released from his apprenticeship, he returned to New Canaan, and commenced his studies preparatory to College, under the direction of the Rev. Justus Mitchell, at that time Pastor of the Church with which his parents were connected. He was, however, quickly interrupted in his preparatory course by ill health, and then by an affection of the eyes; and for several months he depended on his sister to read to him as the only means of advancing in his studies. He finally completed his preparation for College at Norwalk, under the instruction of the Rev. Dr. Burnet, and through the kindness of two female friends, who had offered to aid him to the extent of their ability.

Notwithstanding he entered Yale College in 1789, yet, at the close of his Freshman year, in consequence of inability to meet the necessary expenses, he was obliged to withdraw from College and return to his friends. Convinced that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for him to prosecute a regular collegiate course, he put himself again under the instruction of his venerated friend, Dr. Burnet, at Norwalk; but, after he had been there a short time, another severe illness subjected him to a still further interrup-

tion. His case, for a while, was regarded as well nigh hopeless; and his remarkable recovery he was accustomed to ascribe, under God, to the constant and affectionate vigilance of one of his sisters. Having passed a few months at Norwalk after his recovery, he went to Farmington in 1791, where he engaged for a few months as a teacher; and then went to Greenfield, and completed both his academical and theological course under the instruction of Dr. Dwight. His diligence throughout his whole course was untiring, and his improvement worthy of the best advantages—as an evidence of which, the Corporation of Yale College, in 1794, at Dr. Dwight's suggestion, conferred upon him the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

In 1793, Mr. Richards was licensed by a Committee of the Association in the Western District of Fairfield County, to preach the Gospel. After preaching a few Sabbaths in the parish of Wilton, he went, by invitation, to Ballston, N. Y., where, for some time, he supplied a vacant pulpit; and, during his residence there, he committed to paper a series of resolutions for the government of his heart and conduct, which no doubt had much to do with his eminent piety and usefulness. On leaving Ballston, he went to Long Island, and for a while supplied two small congregations,—one on Shelter Island, the other at Sag Harbor; and, though the generation to which he ministered has now passed away, it is said that the savour of his earnest and faithful ministrations still remains.

In May, 1794, in consequence of the earnest recommendation of the Rev. Doctors Buell and Woolworth of Long Island, he received an invitation from the Church in Morristown, N. J., to preach to them as a candidate; and, having accepted the invitation and passed two or three months with them, they gave him a call to become their Pastor in September following. He accepted the call, but for some reasons his ordination and installation were deferred until May, 1797, when he was solemnly consecrated to the pastoral office by what was then the Presbytery of New York.

In November, 1794, he was married to Caroline, daughter of James and Caroline (Hooker) Cowles of Farmington, Conn.,—a lady of a refined and excellent character, in whom he found not only a most affectionate and devoted wife, but an effective coadjutor in carrying out all the great purposes for which he lived. They had seven children. Mrs. Richards survived her husband several years, and died at Auburn on the 8th of October, 1847.

Mr. Richards' position at Morristown was one, not only of great responsibility, but of great delicacy. With comparatively little experience in the ministerial work, with a numerous congregation, embodying a large amount of intelligence, scattered over an extensive territory, and withal still agitated by the strife of preceding years,—his settlement there would have seemed at least an experiment of doubtful issue. He succeeded, however, in reconciling parties which had been at variance, and giving to the congregation a more harmonious and peaceful character than it had known for a long period. At the same time, his labours in the pulpit were eminently acceptable, not only at home but abroad; and he came to be regarded throughout the whole region as quite a model of ministerial character. And his faithful efforts, in season and out of season, were not in vain. At three different periods during his ministry, the salvation of the soul became the all engrossing concern among his people, and large numbers were added to

the church, whose subsequent exemplary life attested the genuineness of their conversion.

In 1801, he received the degree of Master of Arts from Princeton College; and in 1805, he was chosen Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. This latter distinction was remarkable, on account of his being at the time but thirty-seven years of age.

Mr. Richards continued to exercise his ministry with great acceptance for several years, and indeed as long as he remained at Morristown; but, after a while, in consequence of the increasing expenses of his family, he found himself under the necessity of asking for an addition to his salary; and this request, though seconded by the cordial wishes of many, met with no very grateful response from the Congregation at large. Shortly after this,—in the early part of 1809, the Presbyterian Congregation at Newark, having become vacant by the removal of Dr. Griffin to a Professorship in the Theological Seminary at Andover, presented a unanimous call to Mr. Richards to become their Pastor. This call, after mature deliberation, he accepted; though he parted with his Congregation at Morristown with great reluctance, and with every demonstration on their part of the most cordial good will. Indeed they ultimately acceded to his proposal in respect to an increase of salary; but he still believed, in view of all the circumstances, that Providence pointed him to Newark. The Presbytery of Jersey, when called to consider the case, sanctioned the proposed transfer,—immediately after which, he entered his new field of labour.

In taking his position at Newark, Mr. Richards succeeded a man, the splendour of whose gifts and the power of whose eloquence had elevated him to the highest rank of American preachers. He was aware that this rendered his situation one of no ordinary difficulty; but he resolved, in better strength than his own, that he would task his faculties to the utmost with a view to make full proof of his ministry. And in carrying out this purpose, he quickly found himself in the midst of a congregation who gave him the most decisive testimonies of their respect and confidence. His instructive, judicious and earnest preaching, the tenderness and fidelity of his pastoral intercourse, and the remarkable discretion which he evinced in all relations and circumstances, secured to him a place in the affections of his people and of the surrounding community, such as few ministers have ever attained.

During his residence at Newark, the sphere of his influence was continually enlarging, while he was constantly receiving new expressions of public regard. He was chosen a Trustee of the College of New Jersey in 1807, and was a Director of the Theological Seminary at Princeton from its first establishment; both of which offices he held until he left the State. He was also intimately connected, at this period, with several of the earlier and more important of our benevolent institutions; and in 1815, he preached the Annual Sermon before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. In the same year, he was honoured with the degree of Doctor of Divinity from two Colleges,—Yale and Union—a high but deserved testimony to both his literary and theological acquirements.

Dr. Richards' ministry in Newark, as in Morristown, was signalized by remarkable tokens of the Divine favour. The years 1813 and 1817 were specially memorable for the powerful workings of Divine influence among his people. During fourteen years, which constituted the whole period of his ministry here, he received to the church about five hundred members,

three hundred and thirty-two of whom were added on a profession of their faith. Among them were six young men who became ministers of the Gospel.

The Theological Seminary at Auburn having been established by the Synod of Geneva in 1819, Dr. Richards was appointed to its Professorship of Theology in 1820; but declined the appointment. Being re-elected, however, in 1823, under somewhat different circumstances, he signified, in due time, his acceptance of the invitation. This was justly regarded as ominous of great good to the institution; as his standing in the Church for prudence, piety, and theological attainment, was such, as to secure not only to himself but to the infant Seminary with which he became identified, the general confidence and favour of the Christian community. He was inaugurated Professor of Christian Theology, October 29, 1823,—the fifty-sixth anniversary of his birth.

The enterprise to which he now addressed himself, was, on many accounts, a laborious and difficult one; and no one who knows its history can doubt that the success which subsequently attended it, was attributable in a great degree to his persevering and well directed efforts. He engaged immediately, and not in one instance only but again and again, in the business of collecting funds; and, at different periods, he traversed a large part of the State of New York, besides visiting Philadelphia, Boston, and some other large towns, for the prosecution of this object. His letters, during this period, indicating the various degrees of success which he met in different places, show how completely his mind had become absorbed in the interests of the institution, and withal how constantly he acknowledged God in all the favour with which his efforts were crowned.

It is quite safe to say that, during the whole period of his relation to the Seminary, he may be regarded as having been the chief instrument of increasing its funds,—the main spring of its financial operations. He possessed rare qualities to fit him for this service; and whatever may have been the self-denial which it involved, he always performed it with the utmost alacrity. The universal respect which was felt for his character,—his dignified manners, and fine social qualities, and highly acceptable efforts in the pulpit, and especially his almost intuitive perception of the springs of human action, gave him an advantage in his appeals to the liberality of the Christian public, as rare as it was important. And then he was a most accomplished financier;—strictly accurate, though always perfectly honourable, in every pecuniary transaction. Notwithstanding he was associated in the management of the concerns of the institution with men of the utmost shrewdness, and of great experience in such matters, they were more than willing, especially in circumstances of embarrassment, to take counsel of his wisdom; and in seasons of the deepest darkness, the first gleam of light generally emanated from his far-reaching and prolific mind.

Dr. Richards, shortly after he went to Auburn, and indeed during almost the whole period of his connection with the Seminary, felt himself constrained to take and to keep, if not a strictly controversial attitude, yet an attitude of defence, towards those whom he regarded as holding theological or practical errors. He found, immediately on his arrival there, that the peculiar views of Dr. Emmons prevailed extensively in that region, and had obtained no inconsiderable footing in the Seminary; and, as he dissented totally and strongly from those views, though with great respect for the talents and

* character of their author, he felt himself called upon to endeavour to expose their fallacy, and, as far as he could, to fix in the minds especially of his own students, an opposite system. It was a comparatively silent, but somewhat severe and protracted conflict, in which this purpose engaged him; but there is no doubt that he ultimately succeeded in giving a different direction to the prevailing sentiment, not only of the institution, but of the surrounding community, on that general subject.

But this was by no means the most important controversy in which Dr. Richards was called to bear a part. About the year 1826 commenced the period signalized in the history of both the Presbyterian and Congregational denominations in this country, by what have been commonly called "new measures" in connection with revivals of religion. Dr. Richards marked the progress of this new state of things with the deepest concern. He carefully noted all the progressive developments, and deliberately came to the conclusion that, however there might be somewhat of Divine influence connected with it, or rather operating in spite of it, yet it was to be regarded, to a great extent, as a spurious excitement. With this conviction strongly fixed in his mind, he was prepared to take the attitude of resistance, whenever he should be called to act in reference to it; and, after a while, the time for action came, and he was found as firm as a rock in the midst of an agitation that convulsed the entire community. Without making himself needlessly offensive, he utterly refused to co-operate in the popular measures, notwithstanding he did it at the expense of being branded, in public and in private, as fighting against the Holy Ghost. The fever existed, not to say raged, inside of the Seminary itself; and even some of his own students, who, both before and after, regarded him as among the brightest models of wisdom and excellence, were, for the time, excited into such a phrenzy, that they publicly prayed for his conversion. But none of these things moved him; and he lived not only to see the finger of scorn that had been pointed at him withdrawn, and to hear the voice of obloquy that had been raised against him, die away, but to know that his course had met the approbation of the wise and good every where,—to receive in some instances the hearty acknowledgments of those who had been among his active opponents.

In the winter of 1827-28, Dr. Richards' health became seriously impaired, and for nearly two years it continued in a somewhat feeble and dubious state. In 1830, it was so far improved that he was enabled to discharge the duties of his office with nearly his accustomed energy; though a shock had evidently been given to his constitution from which he never fully recovered.

Notwithstanding Dr. Richards had stood up so erect against the tempest which, for several years, had swept over the churches, especially in the region in which he resided, he did not concur in the ultimate measures which were adopted by the General Assembly for the division of the Church. But he never indulged the semblance of acrimony towards those of his brethren who viewed the case differently, or those whom he considered chiefly instrumental in bringing about that result. He endeavoured subsequently to conform to the state of things as it actually existed, as well as he could; and he often expressed his gratification at the regular and rapid growth both of order and of purity in the portion of the Church with which he had been more immediately connected.

In the autumn of 1842, Dr. Richards' health began perceptibly to fail, and there were several concurring circumstances that may have contributed to hasten his decline. As he was walking in the village of Auburn, he suddenly fell in consequence of a determination of blood to the head, and was taken up nearly or quite insensible. Shortly after this, he was deeply afflicted by the sudden death of his eldest child, Mrs. Beach of Newark; and before he had recovered from the shock which this event had occasioned, the intelligence came to him that a beloved grandchild,—a boy of thirteen years, had been drowned under the most afflictive circumstances. But notwithstanding his infirmities, aggravated no doubt by these bereavements, he continued to give considerable attention to the duties of his Professorship during the winter and spring; and he occasionally heard the recitations of his class, until within two days of his death. It was his intention to have conducted the religious services of the chapel in the Seminary the Sabbath before he died; but when the day came, it found him unable even to leave his house. Towards the close of the next day, as he was conversing with one of his colleagues, he was suddenly seized with a chill, which proved the immediate harbinger of his dissolution. From this time his articulation became indistinct, and his tendencies manifestly were towards a state of insensibility. He was enabled, however, to signify his wants to those around him, and especially to bear testimony to the sustaining power of the Gospel in his last hour. There was a delightful tranquillity diffused over his dying scene, that spoke most impressively of the rest to which death introduced him. He died on the 2d of August, 1843. Two days after, his Funeral was attended by a large concourse of citizens and friends, and an appropriate Discourse delivered by one of his colleagues, the Rev. Dr. Mills, on Acts xiii. 36. His death was also duly noticed in the pulpits which he had formerly occupied, both at Morristown and Newark.

The following is a list of Dr. Richards' publications:—A Discourse occasioned by the death of Lewis Le Conte Congar, a member of the Theological Seminary at Andover, 1810. An Address delivered at the Funeral of Mrs. Sarah Cumming, wife of the Rev. Hooper Cumming, 1812. Two Sermons in the *New Jersey Preacher*, 1813. A Sermon before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign missions, 1814. A Sermon at the Funeral of Deacon Stephen Baldwin, 1816. "This world is not our rest:" A Sermon delivered at Morristown, 1816. The Sinner's inability to come to Christ: A Sermon on John vi. 44, 1816. A Circular on the subject of the Education Society of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, 1819. A Sermon before the Education Society of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1819. A Sermon on a day of Public Thanksgiving and Prayer, 1823. Two Lectures on the Prayer of faith, read before the students of the Theological Seminary at Auburn, 1832. Two Sermons in the *National Preacher*, 1834. After Dr. Richards' death there was published, from his manuscripts, in 1846, in an octavo volume, *Lectures on Mental Philosophy and Theology*, with a sketch of his life, by the Rev. Samuel H. Gridley; and in 1849, in a duodecimo volume, twenty of his Discourses, about half of which were a reprint of what he had published during his life.

FROM THE HON. THEODORE FRELINGHUYSEN, LL. D.

MEMBER OF THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, AND PRESIDENT OF RUTGERS COLLEGE.

NEW YORK, May 9, 1848.

Dear Sir: I enjoyed the privilege of a friendly and intimate acquaintance with Dr. Richards, from the spring of 1809, when he first settled in Newark, until his death. I have much reason to be grateful to God that his kind providence early brought me into such relations and under such influences. Dr. Richards was a man of singular excellence. There was in his character a happy combination of Christian discretion and deep, sober-minded and cheerful piety.

His good sense, (and few men had more,) and his religion, seemed to be formed, if I may so say, after a business mould. They were practical, daily, and everywhere. He was as much at home in the social circle as in the great congregation—in the pulpit as at his fireside.

He was a wise man. Sagacious in his estimates of human character, and of large foresight of the probable results of measures and principles: and hence he was an able and reliable counsellor.

He maintained an exemplary prudence in the management of his domestic concerns. While his charities were always liberal, he still conscientiously "guided his affairs with discretion;" and his household economy was conducted on the just and safe rule of keeping his expenses within the reach of his means.

But I most honoured and revered him in the pulpit, where he appeared as an ambassador for Christ to persuade men to be reconciled to God. He was not what a very refined taste would regard as a finished, or even a graceful, orator. But while he possessed few of the decorations, he had none of the arts, of oratory. He came as the messenger of God on a mission, solemn as death and the awards of eternity; and his great subject filled his soul, and gave an earnestness, an animation, and a deep emotion, often to tears, to his addresses, that awed every mind of his audience. He spake as a dying man, with the eloquence and power of truth.

And then the ministrations of the pulpit and the impressions made on the Sabbath were followed and confirmed by the consistent testimony of his life and conversation through the week.

As might well be supposed, he exerted a weighty and extensive influence with his people, his townsmen, and in the ecclesiastical assemblies of his Church. Among them all his memory is cherished with affectionate and grateful respect and veneration. He left the savour of a good name.

I might say more—I could not feel satisfied to say less, of a servant of God, "whom I esteemed very highly in love for his work's sake," and for his own sake.

Yours very truly and respectfully,

THEODORE FRELINGHUYSEN.

FROM THE REV. CHARLES WILEY, D. D.

UTICA, August 16, 1848.

Rev. and dear Sir: I cheerfully comply with your request to furnish you with some reminiscences of Dr. Richards during the period of my connection with the Seminary over which he presided. It would be a sufficient motive to me to do so that you have made the request; but, in addition to this, I feel a spontaneous pleasure in bearing testimony to the uncommon excellence and worth of a truly able and learned divine, and one too, to whom I feel myself under a weight of

personal obligation for his paternal interest and his judicious instructions and advice.

It is one of the strongest proofs of genuine excellence in human character, as well as in every thing else, that it bears the test of time and experience, and that the effect of an extended and thorough acquaintance is rather to increase than to diminish our esteem of it. This was the case in an eminent degree with Dr. Richards. There was nothing illusory about him—no transient or superficial gloss, that would disappear on a nearer approach and examination. His excellence consisted for the most part in strong native sense, and in solid attainments in learning and piety, that disclosed themselves more and more clearly in the progress of a closer intimacy and acquaintance. Though by no means destitute of what are called popular talents, he could not be regarded as a brilliant man; nor did he, I imagine, commonly strike the minds of the young and immature with special admiration. I consider it, indeed, one of the best evidences of the real worth of Dr. Richards, that my appreciation of him has risen with the progress of my own maturity, and that, at this moment, when, from an extended acquaintance with preachers, and divines, and Christian men, I am better qualified than ever before to judge of his merits, I feel myself constrained to assign to him a conspicuous and elevated place amongst those eminent persons, who have adorned by their virtues, and edified by their usefulness and talents, the American Church.

His preaching, during the period that I had an opportunity of listening to him, was instructive, judicious and earnest; and, though marked by no feature of originality, either in the matter or style, was never destitute of interest, being animated, in parts of it, with a lively Christian sensibility that engaged the attention, and at times moved the affections, of the hearer. Indeed, I can easily imagine that in the actual relations of a pastoral charge, with the advantage of a tall and imposing person, a powerful voice, an engaged manner, and an easy movement of the sensibilities, all uniting to give effect to a deep and thorough evangelical sentiment in his discourses,—Dr. Richards must have been at times a very effective, and in the best sense of the term, eloquent, preacher. His discourses, though uniformly correct, could not be said to be marked by any special literary character. Indeed, they might even be regarded at the present day as deficient in this particular, though perhaps a question might be raised as to the propriety and correctness of the present prevailing taste upon the subject. *Excessive* literature, certainly, is out of place in a sermon—it is an element of weakness rather than of strength—the themes of the Gospel are too grand and solemn to be clothed in a mere literary garb—they demand a simpler dress; and he, who discovers a propensity in the treatment of such themes to exercise extraordinary care in the selection of his words, and in the construction of his periods, not only betrays a feeble sense of the momentous character of his subject, but shows himself to be destitute of a truly masculine taste. Instances indeed there are, as in the eminent case of Robert Hall, where the mind appears to be cast by *nature* in a peculiarly graceful mould, and where the greatest elegance of style and expression seems to be so spontaneous and natural as in no degree to detract from the more serious and useful effect. But such instances are rare, and are easily distinguishable from every thing like a factitious and showy taste, which, in the sphere of preaching, is usually connected with a very enfeebled effect of religious impression.

In Dr. Richards there is nothing of this. If he had literary propensities, they seem to have been restrained rather than indulged. His preaching was marked by a simplicity and directness in style and manner, that bespoke the serious divine rather than the ambitious and showy orator.

In his social character, Dr. Richards united in an eminent degree the qualities of a true dignity of deportment with an engaging affability and ease. There was

a genial element in his character,—a natural glow of social feeling, that made him at all times accessible, while, at the same time, his large and imposing person, connected with a character matured by grace, and elevated by station and influence, protected him from too familiar an approach. He was very far, however, from any thing like an *artificial* dignity of manner. You would never suspect him of resorting to any of those studied efforts for effect and impression, which some in similar stations have felt it necessary to employ, but which generally betray the conscious lack of a better and truer basis of influence. On the contrary, the character of Dr. Richards was a truly natural one, and the influence he exerted was legitimate, practical and useful. Judging from my own knowledge of his personal qualities, in a social point of view, I should be led to think that, however excellent and instructive he was as a preacher, he must have excelled still more in the peculiar duties of the pastoral relation. His intercourse with his people must have been marked by the most valuable characteristics of Christian prudence, kindness, and sympathy. I have occasion, indeed, to know that this was the case. Years after he became connected with the Seminary at Auburn, a lady who knew him in the days of his pastoral ministrations, spoke to me in the warmest terms of the recollections of that period, and dwelt upon the circumstances of his ministry with a detail that bespoke the deep and lasting impression that had been made upon her mind. I remember her speaking particularly of the extraordinary benignity of his countenance and sweetness of his smile,—a circumstance I should not think of mentioning but that it *was* extraordinary. Every one that ever knew Dr. Richards must, I think, recall that characteristic smile of his. Again and again have I myself felt its potent influence; and in those little collisions of opinion and feeling that sometimes occurred in my Seminary relations, it seems to me that I was oftentimes more controlled by the irresistible effect of his smiling countenance, than by the weight and pertinency of his arguments and persuasions. Indeed, I sometimes thought that he knew the power of this *amiable artillery*.

Another prominent circumstance that must have struck every one that had much intercourse with Dr. Richards, was his profound knowledge of human nature. I do not mean any ordinary attainment in this way—I mean an uncommon insight into the motives and workings of the human heart. To such a degree, indeed, have I felt this easy capacity of his of reading the thoughts, and this quick perception of designs and motives as yet undisclosed, that I am persuaded it would have rendered my intercourse with him at times irksome and unpleasant, but for my conviction, at the same time, of the genuine kindness and sympathy of his nature. Had he inclined, in the slightest degree, to the severe and the cynical in his disposition, his ready perception of human character could hardly have failed to impose a degree of restraint upon those around him. But so genial was his character, and so full his apparent communion and sympathy with even human infirmity, that no such effect was in fact produced. You could only be surprised and amused to find yourself so unexpectedly anticipated, and your most private motives and feelings so completely understood.

Another peculiarity of Dr. Richards—for so I think it may be regarded—was the extraordinary veneration he had for the character and intellect of President Edwards,—a feeling that was ready to discover itself on all occasions, and amounted almost to an absorbing sentiment. No one could be in his society even for a short time, without perceiving that the writings of this eminent divine held the next place in his esteem to the Bible itself. He not only cordially agreed in the main with President Edwards in theological sentiment, (being, like him, what is technically called a *mediate* imputationist,) but he seemed to cherish an affection for his very person and name. Again and again have I seen his eyes suffused with tears in speaking of him—tears of veneration for his piety, and of admiration and wonder at his powerful and extraordinary intellect. He did not, indeed,

surrender his independence of mind even before so great a name,—for, on some minor points, he differed from Edwards; but he declared that it was always with the greatest reluctance and regret that he ventured to depart from so high an authority. And here I may mention it as a *general* characteristic of Dr. Richards, that he was easily penetrated with exhibitions of true genius and intellect in others. He had a ready susceptibility of every thing of this nature, and his generous disposition prompted him to accord cheerfully to others the measure of merit that was due to them. It gave him the most unaffected pleasure, especially, to witness any unusual display of talent on the part of those who were under his instruction in the Seminary, and I have been told that he would speak of such things with the liveliest sensibility, in the privacy of his own family circle. I have in mind one instance in particular, in which this feeling discovered itself in a remarkable degree—it was on an occasion when one of my own classmates, who certainly possessed extraordinary powers as an imaginative and descriptive writer, had been reading to him, as a regular exercise in the class, a sermon remarkable for this species of talent. I recollect to this day the scene described, and the vividness of the painting. It was an illustration of the value of prayer in a domestic picture of a widowed mother, kneeling before her covenant God in the silence of her chamber, and presenting the case of a wayward and reckless son who had gone to sea. Dr. Richards listened with growing interest as the description proceeded, and whether it was the character of the sentiment, or the affecting nature of the narration, or admiration of the talent displayed, or all combined—certain it is, that, at the close of the exercise, he was entirely overmastered. Tears stood in his eyes, and flowed freely down his cheeks,—an honourable witness of his own generous sensibility, and at the same time an involuntary tribute to the success and talent of the writer.

And this brings to mind another reminiscence of the class-room, of a somewhat different character. The incident is fresh in my recollection, but so much depended on the manner that I fear it cannot be successfully transferred to paper—it was a criticism of a ludicrous character on a sermon, or outline of a sermon, presented by a student who had imbibed a fondness for the style of sermonizing then in vogue among the revival and new measure preachers of the day. The method I refer to, was that of defining very exactly the subject of discourse, by telling first what it was *not*, and secondly what it *was*,—a sufficiently inelegant method at all times, but at this period greatly hackneyed and worn out. In discriminating some Christian virtue,—repentance, or faith, or some other, the student, following this method, proposed first to show what it was *not*, and secondly what it *was*; and under the former division introduced, as usual, a long string of heads, some of which were so remote from any affinity with the subject to be defined, that the most stupid mind could not possibly confound them. Dr. Richards, who had no particular leaning towards the pattern of sermonizing here referred to, nor the *source* from which it was derived, seized the occasion to indulge a little his vein of humour. He launched out without much mercy against the mighty show of logic and philosophic exactness in this method—a method, he said, which gravely and formally detained the argument to *very weariness*, in order to tell us under a dozen different heads that a thing was *not* what nobody ever dreamed it *was*,—just as if, in directing an inquirer after some particular place of residence, you should very carefully and tediously describe some *other* place only to inform the patient interrogator that that *wasn't it*—and then he turned upon the sermon before him, “You say repentance is not so. Who ever imagined it *was*? You might as well tell me ”—and here he rose to the highest pitch of a good-humoured impatience—“you might as well tell me that repentance isn't *that stove*,” pointing to a most unsightly object of that description in the centre of the room. The effect was just what he intended—

we had no more specimens of that species of sermonizing while I was in the Seminary.

I have thought proper to mention this incident, because, to those who knew Dr. Richards, it cannot fail to recall his image vividly to mind, under a natural and not unamiable aspect, making a judicious use, as he often did, of the genuine humour he possessed, in order to convey a salutary lesson.

But I fear I may be protracting my letter to too great a length. I shall therefore close my imperfect sketch with a very few words in reference to the character of Dr. Richards' piety. From an extended acquaintance with Christian and ministerial character, I do not hesitate to say of it, that it was altogether unusual. It was marked especially by two important characteristics, which will be recognised by all who knew him the moment they are named—I mean a profound veneration of the Deity, and an exceeding tenderness in the spirit of it—features that were very apparent even in his public exercises of devotion. I seem to recall very distinctly his image, as he appeared on these occasions. There he stands, as I have often seen him, Abraham-like, pleading with God in earnest but reverential tones—declaring himself, in the very language of the Patriarch, and I doubt not in his spirit too, to be “but dust and ashes,” and pressing his suit with unaffected humility and fervour, until his voice becomes tremulous, and his accents broken, with overpowering emotion. No one could listen to him, even in these public exercises, without being impressed with a conviction of the depth and tenderness of his piety. But I have reason to suppose that those only who knew him more privately and intimately, had any thing like an adequate impression on this subject. A class mate of mine told me that, much as he had always esteemed Dr. Richards, he never knew him until he had travelled with him, and for some days occupied the same room. He had no idea until then of the depth and fervour of his piety. The seasons of their private devotions were among his most hallowed and delightful recollections—such reverential approaches to God, and such tender expostulations as of a friend conversing with a friend face to face, it had never been his privilege to witness; and I can readily believe all that he said upon this subject,—it being fully in keeping with the results of my own more limited observation of him in this particular.

I will only say, in conclusion, that while many men have been more brilliant than Dr. Richards, and some more profound, few, it seems to me, have possessed a better combination of solid and useful qualities. He filled with entire success, and at the same time without ostentation, the important public stations to which he was called, and, after he had truly “served his generation,” like the Patriarch whom he emulated in the tenderness and fervour of his piety, “he fell asleep.”

Very truly and respectfully yours,

CHARLES WILEY.

FROM THE REV. J. T. HEADLEY.

NEW YORK, December 18, 1849.

Dear Sir: I hardly know what to say respecting Dr. Richards; for, with the ample materials in your hands, I am afraid I can add nothing except what will be mere repetition. On the whole, I think it safest to confine myself to a few anecdotes, illustrating one feature of his character, and which may possibly be new to you. I was his pupil at Auburn, and of all men loved him next to my own father. My grandfather and father were both intimate friends of his, and hence he always took a great interest in me. His noble and generous heart and parental ways bound all his students closely to him, and every hair on his venerable head was sacred in their eyes. His benevolence and kindness were unbounded; which, blending, as they did, with a rich vein of humour, running through his whole character, gave a sprightliness to his goodness, and heightened the benign expression of his countenance.

At the Seminary, one of his weekly exercises with the advanced classes was to meet them in a body, and discuss with four or five of the students, selected by turns, some knotty points on which they had written short essays. No one who has seen him at those times, with his spectacles resting upon the extreme point of his by no means small nose,—his eyes looking over them, as, with his head inclined, he coolly wound up the confident and impetuous young man in his own logical web, can ever forget the expression of his face. He loved to contemplate the workings of a keen, rapid intellect, and would often play with it as an angler with a fish, to see how manfully it would struggle till the debate had gone far enough, and then gently tighten the coil around his helpless victim. After contemplating the astonishment of the student for a while over his glasses, every feature of his face working with a good-humoured, yet comical, smile, he would say, "Well, I guess that is the end of the worsted," and go on to the next. This playfulness was characteristic of his whole life. My father was a member of his church, when, comparatively a young man, he was settled in Morristown, N. J., and relates many anecdotes illustrating this trait. One day some of his parishioners were dining with him, when, nothing but brown bread being on the table, he pleasantly remarked that, whether it was *lawful* for him to eat rye bread or not, he found it to be expedient. At another time, he was preaching a lecture, upon a week day, in a private house, on the outskirts of his parish, when, just before the close of his sermon, a poor drunken woman came in and sat down. In her fits of intoxication, she was always very religious, and hence remained after the people dispersed, to converse with Mr. Richards. She wanted to learn, she said, the meaning of the passage of Scripture,—“The last shall be first and the first last.” Mr. Richards, who had noticed her late entrance into the place of worship, and who saw also the condition she was in, replied,—“It means that those who come to meeting *last*, should go home *first*; and as the rest have gone, it is high time you were going also.” She took the hint and started. He then turned to those present, and quaintly remarked,—“I have sufficiently explained it, for she is making a practical application of it to herself.” Numberless similar anecdotes are told of him, illustrating both his wit and good humour.

To the Doctor's benevolence and noble kindness there was attached none of the maudlin sensibility so common to many of the philanthropists of our day. A clergyman now settled in Massachusetts has more than once told me the following story with great zest. He said that one vacation, whilst he was a student of the Seminary at Auburn, the Doctor wished to take a journey, and so left his son James, who was then rather a roguish boy, under his care. One day, at the usual time of recitation, James was seen playing in the garden, and, when called to his lesson, refused to come; and, as the student went to fetch him, took to his heels and ran. The student pursued, and caught, and chastised him. Immediately after the Doctor's return, James entered his complaint against his tutor. He heard him through, and then bade him go and fetch the young gentleman. He did so; and when the latter arrived, the Doctor said, “Sir, *Jeemes* (he always called him thus) has told me that you whipped him because he did not get his lesson, and ran away, and now I have sent to you to know *if you laid it on well*.” The student replied that he thought he did. “Do you think you punished him enough?” He said “Yes.” “Well then,” continued the Doctor, “if you are sure you punished him sufficiently, *Jeemes*, you may go *this time*.” Stern, yet kind; with a heart overflowing with the tenderest feelings, yet bound as with cords of iron to duty and the Divine law, he furnished in himself the noblest specimen of a man and a Christian.

Very respectfully and truly yours,

J. T. HEADLEY.

FROM THE HON. WILLIAM H. SEWARD, LL. D.

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, U. S. SENATOR, &c.

AUBURN, May 19, 1851.

My dear Sir: I was quite young when Dr. Richards came to occupy a Professor's chair in the Theological Seminary at this place, and he was already advanced in years. Belonging to a different communion, I had less opportunity than many others to mark his traits of character, but I heard him often enough, and saw him often enough, to discover that, with considerable learning and a terse and simple style he combined in a high degree the talent,—best of all talents, common sense.

He was simple and unassuming, but truly dignified in his address and conversation. He did not often mingle in the secular concerns of the community in which he lived, but they never failed to call out his opinions and his influence on great and important occasions of general interest. His influence was then irresistible. I remember that in 1825 or 1826, when the struggle of the Greeks for deliverance from their Turkish oppressors engaged the sympathies of the American people, and of the Christian world, our citizens, following the example set before them in other and more important places, moved with earnestness to make contributions for their relief. Arrangements for a meeting were made, and it was thought proper that a committee should be appointed to solicit in behalf of that noble charity. It was informally agreed that ten persons of considerable wealth and generosity, each of whom was pledged to give fifty dollars, should constitute a committee, and that they should be appointed by the chair. A chairman intrusted with the secret was chosen without difficulty. After many eloquent speeches had given utterance to the just and enlightened sympathy of the assembly, it was moved that the chair appoint a committee. Opposition arose immediately, and the meeting was soon involved in a long and very inharmonious debate on the propriety of vesting such an appointment in the chair, instead of its exercise by the meeting itself,—which was claimed to be the only democratic mode. It was quite apparent that the great object of the movement was in jeopardy, and yet no one seemed to be able to satisfy the people that they could safely renounce the power claimed for them. In this dilemma, I appealed to Dr. Richards, who had before addressed the meeting on the general subject with marked effect. He immediately arose. All was profound silence. "Mr. Chairman," said he, "I should agree with the speakers who claim that this committee ought to be appointed by the meeting, that is by every body, if every body knew every body, and every body was wise. But we all know that every body here does not know every body, and some of us feel that, as to ourselves, we are not as wise as you are, and therefore we who are of that class think it best that you should exercise that power." The effect was complete—the opposition made a very feeble effort further, the committee was appointed by the chair, and, to the amazement and gratification of the people, the committee led off with subscriptions to the amount of five hundred dollars, which, with the other sums subscribed, placed our little community among the most generous ones on that interesting and memorable occasion.

I am, my dear Sir,

With great respect and esteem,

Your friend and humble servant,

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.