

Sarah B Postell

1857.

SERMONS.

BY



WILLARD PRESTON, D.D.,

LATE PASTOR OF THE

INDEPENDENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA.

WITH A

Biographical Sketch of the Author.

BY

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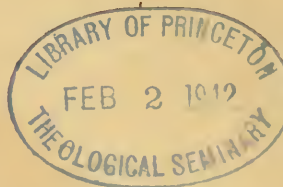
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO THE
INDEPENDENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
AND CONGREGATION,
SAVANNAH,

This Selection from the Discourses

OF HIM,
WHO FOR NEARLY A QUARTER OF A CENTURY,

BROKE TO THEM THE BREAD OF LIFE,

IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY

HIS SURVIVING FAMILY.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE wishes of an affectionate people, mourning the recent loss of a faithful pastor, whose connection with them had been characterized by mutual and ever-increasing love and respect, to the last hour of his life, cannot be regarded by his surviving family otherwise than as authoritative commands. It is in compliance with such wishes that these volumes of Sermons have been compiled, and are now presented to the people of their author's late charge, and to the public.

The difficulty of selecting from the very large collection of manuscripts left by the deceased pastor, a limited number for publication, has been greatly enhanced by the vast variety of subjects treated of, and the uniform degree of excellence which they present, as well as by the brevity of the time, the longest allowed by circumstances for the completion of the work. The editor can hardly indulge the hope that he has, in all cases, made the best possible selection, or that the better judgment of one more competent to the task would entirely coincide with his own. His anxiety on this score, however, is in some measure reassured by the consciousness that he has earnestly endeavored to discharge the trust committed to him in a manner worthy of the author, and satisfactory to those whose affectionate regard for him has prompted to the work.

One rule which has been observed in the compilation of the Discourses contained in these volumes, has been to exclude all

such as were chiefly devoted to denominational or sectarian subjects, of which there are indeed but few, and to present only such as would be received by evangelical Christians, of whatever name. It is believed that in them is preached, clearly and fully, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That they are eminently practical in their bearing, and personal in their application, those who sat under the preaching of their author need not to be assured.

Asking indulgence for any imperfections which may be apparent in the portion of the work for which he is responsible, the editor commits the volumes to the church and congregation who have requested their publication, in the sincere hope that they may ever prove a pleasing memento of him who for so many years ministered to them in the Gospel, and that the revelations of eternity may show that their publication was not in vain.

J. W. P.

March, 1857.

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SKETCH

OF THE

LIFE OF REV. WILLARD PRESTON, D.D.

THE subject of this memoir was born in Uxbridge, Massachusetts, May 29, 1785. He was the youngest but one of a family of six sons and six daughters. His father was a substantial farmer; a man of strong, energetic mind, great uprightness and integrity of character, and of extensive usefulness in the community generally, and in the Church, of which he was an officer for many years. His mother, whose maiden name was Elizabeth Hart, was a lady of unusual sprightliness of mind and sweetness of manner, joined to a cheerful and consistent piety, which made her a universal favorite and the idol of her family. Willard, the subject of this memoir, seems to have inherited the strong logical mind of his father, and the brilliant wit and playful humor of his mother, united with the most exquisite sensitiveness and sensibility of temperament. He was the pet child of his parents and the delight of his older brothers and sisters. Though he was possessed of an ardent and sanguine temper, his childhood was marked by docility and unquestioning obedience to his parents and teachers, and by a susceptibility to religious impressions which would almost warrant the conclusion that his conversion took place at an early period of life. If a childhood and youth of unsullied purity, and a most conscientious observance of the Sabbath and religious duties, are any ground for such a conclusion in any case, it might surely be admitted in this instance. It was not, however, till after the completion of his collegiate course

that his convictions of duty became so clear and urgent as to lead to an entire change of his pursuits and purposes of life. At an early age he gave indications of superior intelligence and intellect. His love of study and proficiency in the branches then taught in village schools, led his father to place him under the tuition of Rev. Dr. Crane, the parish minister of Northbridge, where his father then resided, preparatory to giving him a collegiate education. His preceptor enjoyed a wide popularity as a teacher of youth, and had the honor of training some of the master minds, which within the last half century have shone as bright luminaries in the Church. Among these may be mentioned the Rev. Dr. Spring, of New York, and the Rev. Dr. Hawes, of Hartford.

After due preparation, he entered Brown University, where his course was marked by propriety of conduct, close application to study, and the development of mind of no common order. There, too, his passionate love of music was indulged and cultivated, and by his fine voice and great skill on the violoncello, he became an important auxiliary to the college choir, of which he was a leader. His love of music was never lost, and was a source of enjoyment not only to himself, but to his family and friends.

He graduated with one of the highest honors of his class, in September, 1806, and with the restless energy and characteristic promptness which ever urged him forward to the accomplishment of any purpose he had formed, he returned to his father's house only to prepare to leave it, and enter at once upon his professional studies. Law was the profession to which he had looked forward and directed his preparatory reading; and the week after his graduation found him a student in the office of the Hon. Sylvanus Backus, of Pomfret, Connecticut, a gentleman distinguished for his great amiability and urbanity, and none the less for his professional attainments.

Here, while devoting himself with assiduity to the study of this noble science, it is believed that the claims of a law, higher and nobler, were set home on his conscience. His religious

impressions revived, and that all-important change was effected which led him to seek a profession more congenial to the newly-awakened desires of his heart, and to devote himself to the service of his God, in the work of the Gospel ministry.

Accordingly, in the spring of 1807, he left the office of Mr. Backus, and went to New Brunswick, New Jersey, where he engaged as preceptor of a select school for young ladies. On the 3d of May he made his first public profession of religion, and united with the Dutch Reformed Church, then under the pastoral care of Rev. Ira Condit, D.D. With him he soon after commenced the study of theology, preparatory to that sacred work to which he believed he had been called by the Spirit of all Truth, operating on his soul, and causing him to prefer its solemn and self-denying labors to the honors and emoluments which he might have hoped to win in the practice of a secular profession. His studies were continued under the direction of the Rev. Samuel Stearns, of Bedford, Massachusetts, and by him he was presented to the Andover Association for licensure, and was accepted.

His first labors in the ministry were in Hallowell, Maine, where he produced a favorable impression, and was considered a young man of extraordinary promise. The character of his sermons from his earliest ministry was eminently evangelical and sound in the faith; but in his youth not so severely logical as in later years. His earlier style was embellished with much that was poetic, but never abounded in illustration. That style, so popular at the present day, was then almost unknown in the sturdy school of New England theology. The simplicity, comprehensiveness, and unction of his public devotional exercises, were very remarkable; and he was once surprised and humbled on being asked by an aged minister, for whom he had preached, "*What books of devotion he had studied?*"

In the fall of 1808 he visited a sister residing in Vermont, and was invited to supply the pulpit of the Calvinistic Congregational Church, in Burlington, in that State, and to become its pastor permanently. This proposition his feeble

health compelled him to decline, and to seek a more genial climate.

In the following summer he again visited New Jersey, reviving and strengthening the friendships formed while a resident of New Brunswick, some of which were of a strong and tender nature, and were cherished through life. It is pleasant to remember that he was permitted, in its last year, to revisit those scenes and friends endeared by so many fond recollections.

After preaching a few Sabbaths to destitute churches in New Jersey, he extended his journey to Philadelphia, where he preached under the auspices of the venerable Dr. Ashbel Green, and was instructed and encouraged by his paternal counsels and commendations.

The succeeding winter and year were spent in Virginia, in the families of Hon. John Taliaferro and Hon. James M. Garnet, as the tutor of the son and daughter of the latter, stately preaching in a church consecrated to Episcopal worship, and to an auditory composed of such as piety or courtesy induced to attend the ministry of the youthful preacher. His congregation, though numerically small, was intellectually such as to tax to the utmost his mental and literary resources. This will be readily conceded, when, in addition to those who have been named, such men as Samuel L. Southard and John Randolph, of Roanoke, were sometimes of the number. Nor were motives wanting to inspire a zeal for the spiritual good of his hearers, which, it is believed, were felt, and that many humble and teachable minds were fed with the pure milk of the Word.

It was here, amid the fascinations of southern social life, that he imbibed that love of the customs and characters of the South which made him essentially a southern man, and fitted him especially for the sphere to which the Providence of God assigned his later years—a sphere so congenial to his early and enduring prepossessions.

Soon after his return to New England, in 1811, he was united in marriage, at Northbridge, Massachusetts, to Lucy

Maria Baker, fourth daughter of Joseph Baker, M.D., of Brooklyn, Connecticut, and Lucy Devotion, his wife, of Puritan descent on the part of the father, and of Huguenot on that of the mother. By this union he had nine children, seven of whom survive their lamented father.

A short time after his marriage he became the pastor of the Congregational Church, in St. Alban's, Vermont. His ordination took place on the 8th of January, 1812. Here he continued till declining health, caused by the severity of the climate, made a removal necessary to one more mild. His pastoral relation to that devoted people was dissolved in September, 1815. The ties which bound him to them were of no ordinary nature. They were his first love as a church, and never was a church more worthy the love and gratitude of a pastor. The strength of their attachment was shown by their desire to have the relation renewed; two distinct invitations having been given him again to become their pastor. But though circumstances prevented his second settlement among them, it was a source of great comfort and pleasure to him to believe that the bond which united their hearts to his was never broken. This was proved by many affecting incidents, especially during his last visit to them in 1851, when he was hailed with the liveliest demonstrations of love by those who still survived, and by the children of those who had been called from earth. With them he visited the graves of their parents and loved ones, and mingled with theirs tears of affection to the memory of those who had been the dear friends of his younger days, and with whom he had "taken sweet counsel and walked to the house of God in company." It may be proper to add, that such was the effect on the minds of the people, by the removal of their pastor, that the last sermon he delivered to them was apparently blessed by the Holy Spirit to the conversion of many, and was followed by an interesting revival.

In June following he received a call from the Pacific Congregational Church, in Providence, R. I., a small remnant of a church which had been rent by doctrinal differences, the larger

portion holding the Arminian faith, and forming what is now a large and evangelical church in that city. His labors with that people, though short, received tokens of the Divine approbation, in an interesting revival, in which the students of the University shared,—some of whom are now shining lights in the Church, and honored instruments of diffusing the Gospel in heathen lands.

He was dismissed from that church at his own request, in 1821, and in August of the next year was installed over the Calvinistic Congregational Church in Burlington, Vt., the same field to which he had been invited earlier in his ministry. This relation, though mutually happy, was destined to be of short duration. Their former pastor, the Rev. Daniel Haskell, had been called to the Presidency of Vermont University, and now, by a calamitous visitation of Providence, was rendered incapable of discharging his official duties. The church was, therefore, again called upon to resign their pastor to fill the vacant office. Mr. Preston entered on the duties of the Presidency in April, 1825. Shortly after his inauguration, the great and good La Fayette assisted in laying the corner-stone of a new college edifice, erected on the site of one consumed by fire the year before, almost simultaneously with the first appearance of the malady which deprived the institution of the valuable services of Dr. Haskell.

Owing to adverse influences, chiefly growing out of cases of discipline, Mr. Preston resigned the office in 1826. President Wheeler, in his "Historical Sketch" of his predecessors, Presidents of the University of Vermont, says: "Dr. Preston was connected with the college for so short a time, that little can be said respecting his actual or prospective influence. He was a man remarkable for his gentlemanly and elegant bearing, of simple, genial, and artistic tastes; and in the discharge of his public duties, secured, at once, the love and admiration of students and of others."

In the fall of 1826, Mr. Preston removed to Philadelphia, without any special charge, but supplying, as his health permitted, vacant pulpits, and often assisting the venerable and

learned Dr. James P. Wilson, of the First Presbyterian Church, whose declining health made such occasions of frequent occurrence, and sometimes for several successive Sabbaths.

In the winter of 1828-29, the entire prostration of his health induced him, with the urgent recommendation of his physician and other friends, to make trial of the climate of the South; and in March, 1829, he sailed for Savannah, where he arrived on the 2d day of April. After a sojourn of only a few days, making the acquaintance of several Christian gentlemen, and particularly that of the then pastor and several of the elders of the Independent Presbyterian Church, he left for the upper portion of the State of Georgia. His letters were from his friends in Virginia to gentlemen in Powelton, where he spent his first summer, and whose dry and balmy atmosphere had a healing and renovating effect on his wasted health. He preached as occasion presented, and also took charge of an academy in that village. In the autumn of the same year, he was invited to Milledgeville, to supply the pulpit of the Presbyterian church, and assume the charge of a large academy for both sexes.

Here, his family having joined him, he spent the year; but as it was not his purpose as yet to locate himself or to assume permanent relations, he removed, at the close of the year 1830, to Madison, Morgan County, where the double duties devolved on him in the care of both a church and an academy.

In the fall of 1831, an invitation was given him to remove to another field of labor in the same section of the State. But the conditions on which his acceptance depended had not been complied with, when he received from the Eldership of the Independent Presbyterian Church in Savannah, an invitation to visit them and preach, with a view to permanent settlement, should there be mutual satisfaction. With this he complied, and preached his first sermon before that people, December 25, 1831, and on the 14th of January following, received a unanimous call from the Session and Trustees to become their pastor.

This he accepted, and began his pastoral labors in Savannah, in January, 1832. And here he entered into a field which he

cultivated with unfaltering vigor and industry for nearly a quarter of a century, comprising more than half of his ministerial life, and continuing until his earthly labors closed.

For this field he seems to have been peculiarly fitted and prepared in the Providence of God, by his education, manners, piety, experience, temperament, and habits of industry. He at once addressed himself to the onerous labors before him, with a zeal and earnestness which never relaxed, until his heart ceased to beat; carrying with him and increasing the confidence and affection of his important charge from the beginning to the very last day of his life, which was suddenly closed.

His charge was a laborious and responsible one, and his history illustrates strikingly the value of the faithful minister to the Church and community, and the burden of cares and anxieties devolving on him. The infidel, who sneeringly objects to the bad political economy of supporting the Christian ministry, as being consumers and not producers, would stand rebuked, on a candid survey of the life of Dr. Preston.

His congregation was among the largest, most refined, and intellectual, in the Southern States. His extended acquaintance brought him into communion personally and by correspondence, almost daily, with a large number of strangers, who sought information and counsel on a great variety of subjects. None except those intimately associated with a long-settled pastor, can estimate the burden of calls and duties pressing on him from a thousand sources.

His ordinary public labors consisted of three public services on the Sabbath; a weekly lecture; and an almost invariable attendance on a weekly congregational prayer meeting. These labors were interrupted only by the omission, during the summer season, of one of his Sabbath services: for he rarely accepted of the summer vacation usually given by city churches to their pastors. And such was his devotion to his people, that for seven years consecutively at one time, he never left the city except for some occasional ministerial call abroad.

Besides a laborious attention to parochial visiting, and administering consolation to the afflicted and sorrowing around him,

he was often called on to visit the sick-beds of stranger invalids, who every winter resorted in crowds to the city from abroad. So deeply was he affected with the situation of lonely and afflicted strangers at the public and other boarding-houses, that he is said often to have taken the rounds of the hotels, to ascertain whether there were within any unfriended sick strangers needing religious counsels. Here he would be found acting the good Samaritan, administering personally to their physical wants, or interesting others in their cases, and directing the sufferer to the Great Physician of souls; and many will bless God through all eternity for those soothing and timely visits.

In addition to giving full instruction to his enlightened congregation, by his ordinary pulpit labors, he prepared and delivered, on different occasions, several courses of lectures on special topics, greatly to their edification. A course of able lectures on the Organization and Polity of the Christian Church, especially interested and instructed his hearers, in which, whilst opposing the views of other brethren, his manner was so gentle, and his spirit so catholic, that none seemed to take offence; thus showing that controversy may be conducted in a Christian manner that will not sunder or hinder the affections of Christian communities. One has said, "A man may innocently be drawn into a religious controversy, but who has innocently come out of it?" He, perhaps, came as near as any one ever did to giving a satisfactory affirmative reply to the question.

He was firm in his religious views, and perfectly frank in the avowal of them. But these opinions were held without dogmatism, and uttered in a spirit of Christian charity, so that an opponent would love the man, even where the argument failed to carry conviction.

His manners were so winning and affectionate, that his presence was always hailed with delight by the old and young, the exalted and the humble. He was ever accessible to the child and the stranger, and all came to him without reserve, for he had an open ear to the tale of suffering and distress. There was an unusual blending of the dignity of the Christian gentle-

man and minister with the native unaffected gentleness of the child, in the character and manner of Dr. Preston, admirably adapted to the calling of the Christian minister. He seemed never to forget his high profession—never to forget that his work was to serve God and humanity. And hence, while he could stoop to the lowliest, there was no compromising of the seemliness of his station.

There was a sublime exhibition of his Christian heroism, self-denial, and benevolence, during the prevalence of yellow fever in Savannah, in the summer of 1854. Disease and death were abroad in their most appalling forms, mowing down the people. The citizens who could leave were fleeing in all directions from the remorseless scourge; and his parishioners begging him for their sake, and for that of his church and family, to flee with them from the threatening danger. Like a faithful sentinel he nobly stood by his post; preferring to risk life rather than desert the suffering and the dying. The soldier may brave the sudden onset of the battle-field, sustained by a love of glory, and maddened into fury by the cruelty of his foe; but to follow the philanthropist, even in old age, as he unselfishly threads the streets and lanes of a city, under burning suns by day and noxious damps by night, for weeks and months in succession, amid revolting and heart-sickening scenes of disease and pain, in order to do good to the souls and bodies of men; watching by the dying through long nights of suffering, and then following them to their last resting-place, and returning to soothe the bereaved survivor: this is to witness one of the very highest achievements of valor. And such was the scene the aged pastor encountered. In the mean time he was called on to close the dying eyes of his eldest son—a gifted and accomplished scholar—and to lie down himself in the fearful embraces of the formidable pestilence, and to struggle for days, in his old age, in a doubtful issue between life and death. This is one chapter of his pastoral experience.

A few extracts from his correspondence will furnish a glimpse of his sufferings and endurance during the memorable presence of this pestilence, and show the man and the Christian minis-

ter better than any words can describe. In his daily journal to a loved one of his own household, he says, "Writing to you so often and fully is a pleasure, though, indeed, a melancholy one. It is my chief employment at night; and after the fatigues of the day, it is a relief to recount to you its chief incidents; but the sorrow and astonishment with which you will be overwhelmed in reading the sad record is a great drawback on the satisfaction of telling you everything which affects me. But, my dear —, be not over-anxious; let us put our trust in God, and possess our souls in peace. Pray, indeed, but do not faint. I may take the epidemic and die, though I have not as yet felt the slightest apprehension in visiting the sick and the dying and attending funerals." "If the entreaties of friends could have influenced me, I would long since have left the city. But the *still voice* of duty has prevailed, and I trust *will prevail*, over that of friendship and the warmest earthly affection. I may, indeed, be the next victim, but I have no more fears than if unusual health prevailed. If I die, may it be in the faithful discharge of my duty; and *it is* my duty to remain with the sick, the dying, and the afflicted. Your sympathy in my labors and trials is most grateful, but I am chiefly concerned how you will bear the terrible details, which have become so familiar to me that I have almost ceased to be astonished at anything. No more awful scenes, it seems to me, can occur, than I have already witnessed. I have to-day been so constantly engaged, and withal so distressed on account of poor —, that I hardly know what I wrote to you of this day's occurrences, in the letter which I mailed this afternoon." "I have visited to-day some twenty families, ministering in different ways to their necessities and comfort. I am often with the sick and dying till long after midnight, and then return to my solitary room for rest, but scarcely for repose. I am sometimes amazed at the scenes I have witnessed, and the part I have borne in them. It is indeed a wonder unto many that I and mine are yet spared, surrounded as we have been by some of the most malignant cases, and as much exposed by contact with them as it is possible to be." "I have struggled with

those who were struggling with death, and when the fearful contest was past, have closed the eyes and composed the limbs of the poor victims; and, with the assistance of a servant, dressed the body for the grave, and have been one of the two or three who have borne and committed it to its narrow house. I have cheerfully borne separation from my family, for the reason that they are safe (as I trust) from the sight and ravages of this awful pestilence. But yet I am well in body, and all ours are yet spared. For which let us be sincerely thankful, and let it silence all your excessive fears, and lead you to put your trust in God." Such language and conduct need no comment. They make their way at once to the heart.

The amount of his labors at this time is almost incredible. His correspondence through the whole period of his greatest labors was voluminous, not only with the members of his scattered family, but with his people, dispersed in every part of the country, all anxious for information that could be relied on; and where he could not in person administer consolation to the bereaved, his pen was employed in the mournful office. The number of letters he wrote in those few weeks (more than a hundred, and many of these containing two or more large sheets, closely written) is truly astonishing, especially when taken in connection with his engrossing labors and anxieties.

As a preacher, Dr. Preston's sermons were logical and argumentative, rather than pathetic; but they were strictly evangelical in spirit. His divisions were natural and happy; his style, especially in advancing life, was almost severe in its simplicity, but lucid as the light of day. He felt that the pulpit was not the appropriate place to show off the flowers of rhetoric, or to please the imagination, any further than these ornaments can be made ancillary to religious advancement. He felt that the messenger from heaven had too serious a work before him, simply to divert and amuse his hearers.

His topics for pulpit presentation were chosen from subjects that led him to discuss great vital doctrines and practical duties. He had no taste for strange texts to make the people stare, or for odd and startling exhibitions to excite surprise

rather than to do good. He had no liking for philological abstractions, or for topics unsuited to the pulpit; evils, which it is greatly to be feared, are eating out the very vitals of the piety of many a church. He did not encourage or gratify the "itching ear," for he considered the Gospel message as designed, not for diversion, but for the renovation of the heart and the reformation of the life. In his night lectures he came nearer to the heart, and fed the people of God with the richest food of experimental piety.

His delivery was usually calm and unimpassioned. There was, however, a subdued earnestness of manner that held the attention of the hearer to the close. He rarely rose to a lofty eloquence, yet never fell to a point where he failed to interest his audience.

His enunciation was so deliberate and distinct, though with no great body of voice, that he made himself heard with ease by the most remote hearer in his large and capacious church; which building, we may remark by the way, after all the modern attempts at improvement in church architecture, is probably, in its interior, the most graceful, chaste, and imposing structure in the nation, for Christian worship.

Dr. Preston read the Scriptures and sacred hymns in public worship, with great solemnity, dignity, and power. He had a happy and forcible manner in giving public notices from the pulpit,—a strangely rare pulpit attainment, and yet one by no means to be despised by those who would save their congregations from vexatious mistakes and perplexity.

He was peculiarly felicitous in improving providential occurrences, and his apt and appropriate funeral addresses were often most affecting and impressive. In the house of mourning and sorrow, his presence was that of a ministering angel, soothing, comforting, and instructing. His gentleness and sympathy banished all reserve, and made the sufferer feel that a brother's heart was with him.

His private and social intercourse with the families of his church, was of the most attractive and pleasing character. His courteous and urbane manners, his cheerfulness, gentleness, and

playful humor, made him the most delightful of companions. All longed to see the "dear pastor," old and young, and in his presence the brow of care relaxed, and the burdened heart found relief.

His occasional preaching from home, was always a season of interest to the community visited. He always left behind him, on his return from these visits, a strong impression of his learning, piety, and ability as a preacher. He received the degree of D.D. from the trustees of the State University of Georgia; a mark of respect, which if always equally deserved would constitute an honorable distinction as a just tribute to scholarly, theological learning; but which unfortunately has lost its significance in its indiscriminate distribution.

To sum up all, Dr. Preston was a man of rare gifts for the pastoral office, and few men have been able to take so strong and enduring a hold on the confidence and affections of so large a flock.

But the enjoyment of the labors of such a minister, like all earthly blessings, is a boon given only for a season, and must come to its close.

Subsequently to his recovery from the yellow fever, he was left, for months, in a languid state. In compliance with the importunities of his anxious flock, he travelled for a season. His system rallied, and he was restored to his usual health. He engaged again, with his wonted zeal, in his arduous labors.

On Sabbath, the 20th of April, 1856, he preached a solemn discourse from the text, Isaiah 38 : 1, "Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live." It was so earnest and affecting as to attract the special attention of many, and to elicit the remark from a number, that he seemed to be giving his parting counsels. On Saturday morning of that week (26th) he rose apparently in strong health. After breakfast he made some calls, and attended a meeting of the Georgia Baptist State Convention, then in annual session in Savannah. Late in the afternoon he entertained some visitors at his house, in his usual cheerful manner. Shortly after they retired, he was suddenly seized, about 7 o'clock P. M., with a paralysis of

the heart, was carried to his bed, and, after a short and painful struggle, expired, in the 71st year of his age. The veteran Christian soldier laid down his bright and burnished armor, and went to his rest.

The mournful intelligence, like an electrical shock, spread rapidly through the community. The whole city were mourners. It seemed as if every family had lost a beloved inmate. Many a manly face, unused to weeping, was bedewed with tears.

The funeral was one of those touching, eloquent, and overwhelming tributes, which royalty might envy; which nothing but solid worth ever draws forth—the spontaneous outburst of grief, which honors a long life of earnest devotion to duty—the unbought and priceless suffrage of veneration and love.

On Monday, the 28th, the Independent Presbyterian Church was the point that concentrated the hearts of all the citizens, for all that was mortal of the old and beloved pastor lay confined there, amid the mourning crowd and the emblems of sorrow. They were about to carry away forever to the cold grave a venerable form, that had been seen for long years, moving along those busy streets, and within those habitations, on errands of love and mercy. The Baptist Convention, after passing touching resolutions of sympathy and condolence with the bereaved family and flock, had adjourned to do honor to the memory of departed worth. The spacious house was crowded to its utmost capacity, whilst a vast throng was left without.

A solemn and impressive discourse on the life and character of the deceased, was delivered by the Rev. J. P. Tustin, of the Baptist Church.

The following was the order of the funeral services.

The body being removed to the church at 3 o'clock, attended by the family of the deceased, the members of the Session, and trustees of the church, the services began at half-past 3 o'clock, and were conducted in the following order, viz. :

1st. Prayer, by Rev. D. H. Porter, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church. 2d. Funeral hymn, read by Rev. C. B. King, of the Presbyterian Church. 3d. Reading of the Scriptures, by Rev. Mr. Keys, of the Methodist Church of Savannah.

4th. Hymn, read by Rev. Mr. Clarke, Rector of St. John's Episcopal Church, Savannah. 5th. Sermon, by Rev. J. P. Tustin, of Charleston, late pastor of the Second Baptist Church of Savannah. 6th. Closing prayer, by Rev. Mr. Karn, pastor of the Lutheran Church, Savannah. The services at the grave were performed by Rev. C. W. Rogers, of the Presbyterian Church. A suitable discourse was also delivered on a subsequent Sabbath, to the afflicted flock, by Rev. Mr. Rogers; and a series of resolutions was signed at a meeting of the ministers, representing nearly all the religious denominations in the city, expressive of their profound sense of the irreparable loss to the community, and of their strong appreciation of his superior merits as a man, a Christian, and a pastor.

We cannot close this sketch more suitably than by quoting the language of one of the Savannah journals of the day, giving a summary estimate of the man. "In the character of Dr. Preston we have a bright example of the devoted Christian and faithful minister. His whole soul was absorbed with the care of his flock, and there was no duty so arduous as to cause him to shrink from its performance. In health he was their companion and friend, in sickness a minister of consolation and grace, in death a chief mourner of the departed, and a comforter of the bereaved. No pastor was ever more loved by his people while living, and none more deeply regretted when dead."