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כִּי־שִׁפְתַי כִּהֵן יִשְׁמְרוּ־דַעַת —MAL. ii: 7.

Πρόσεχε τη ἀναγνώσει, τῇ παρακλησει, τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ.—I TIM. iv: 13.

Testimonium enim Jesu est spiritus prophetiae.—REV. xix: 10.

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REV. ABRAHAM B. VAN ZANDT, D.D., L.L.D.

BY REV. JOHN A. DE BAUN, D.D.

Professor Abraham B. Van Zandt, D.D., L.L.D., was born in Albany Co., N. Y., in 1816. His parents were of the old Holland stock who so early made that region a strong-hold of civilization and evangelical piety. He was one of a numerous family of children, and because in straitened circumstances, was early apprenticed to a mechanical trade. In the mean time, however, an older brother, Benjamin, had managed by industry, frugality, and consecrated determination, to secure for himself a collegiate and theological education, and seeing the same spirit and the same desire for the work of the ministry in this younger brother together with the promise of special talent, he encouraged and helped him to follow in the same course. So it came that Abraham was graduated from Union College in 1840, and from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1842. In that same year he was ordained pastor of the Church of Matteawan, N. Y., by the Presbytery of North River.

Here he began immediately to prosecute his work with such marked ability that the attention of other churches was awakened, and the Reformed Church of Newburgh gladly secured his services that same year. With this church he remained six years, laboring with great zeal and fidelity, and becoming known far and wide as an eloquent preacher, and a student of scholarly attainments. In 1848 he was called to the pastorate of the Presbyterian Church in Petersburg, Va., where his reputation grew apace, and where he formed personal and social attachments which were ever most dear to him and his family, and were maintained to the end of his life. But then and ever his heart and his efforts were first and fully for Christ and His Church; and he was constantly seeking to do better and better service. That his abilities were appreciated there, is evident enough from the fact that when a series of lectures on the evidences of Christianity was delivered before the University of Virginia in 1850-1, by such men as Drs. Plumer, McGill, James W. Alexander, Hoge, Robert J. Breckenbridge, Stuart Robinson, and N. L. Rice, the young Petersburg pastor was invited to give the second of the course. The topic assigned him was "The Necessity of a Revelation: and the condition of man without it;" and he acquitted himself so well that thenceforth he held an honored place among the foremost preachers and scholars of the Southern section of the church. The degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred on him by Hampden Sidney College, in 1853.

The Central (Ninth St.) Church, New York City, had belonged to the Collegiate Church for about twenty years, when it was thought best to set it off by itself. But there was much anxiety as to its success, outside of the organization of the mother church. So Dr. Van Zandt was persuaded to come and do what he could for the enterprise. He

assumed the pastorate of this church in 1856, and faithfully did his best for three years, when it became evident that it was best to abandon the effort. He was then called to the large and important church of Montgomery, N. Y., in whose pastorate he continued until 1872, when he was elected by General Synod to the Professorship of Didactic and Polemic Theology in the Seminary at New Brunswick. This Professorship he held until the year of his death, 1881. In 1873 he received the degree of Doctor of Laws from the College of New Jersey,

Dr. Van Zandt was a student. He had the power of concentration, and the endurance which enabled him to work intensely at his desk, day after day, all day long and far into the night. He carefully elaborated his sermons when a pastor, and his lectures when a Professor, giving great attention to analysis and style, but especially giving heed to comprehensiveness and precision in statements and definitions. Nothing of his work satisfied him until he had given it keenest cross-questioning review, and felt fully prepared to defend every side of it, and to press every point. He had intense love for old-fashioned orthodoxy according to the Standards of his church, and something like scorn for anything approaching boneless broad-churchliness.

In his pastoral work he laid great stress upon the "faithful instruction of the children and youth," attending personally and regularly to catechetical exercises in the several quarters of his congregation, up to the end of his ministry.

As a preacher, after his careful preparation, he had a fiery impetuosity of delivery which not only always commanded attention, but which often thrilled his audience with something of his own vehemence. Yet his preaching was not to be characterized as emotional. It was clear, sound, solid reasoning, which left both understanding and conviction of the truth, and many of the common people who sat under his ministry long years ago still formulate their expressions of doctrine and duty in almost the very words he gave them from his pulpit.

The same characteristics followed him in ecclesiastical debates, and into the professorial chair. Indeed, they were part of his natural disposition. He was a clear thinker, and he had quick passions and an indomitable will. These together made him an orator in that better sense which includes permanent results, as well as immediate impressions.

For the rest, he was—as such a good man would be likely to be—a grand lover, and, but for the grace of God, a good hater—a positive man, born to lead somewhere. It was to his blessedness, and to the great good of the Church of Christ, that Divine grace early came into his heart to rule, restrain and consecrate.

In his class-room he was clear, strong, logical, positive and comprehensive in his definitions of doctrines, and his sustaining arguments. He made much of the Covenant of Grace as a central truth, and while

always fair in his treatment of divergent systems, he taught an Augustinian Theology, not as if he believed it, but because he knew and loved it.

Besides many elaborate sermons, essays, and reviews, he left behind him a completed and carefully written out series of Lectures on Didactic Theology, and a Commentary on the Constitution of the Reformed Church, which last had been the occupation of his later leisure hours.

His last illness was long, lingering and exceedingly distressing, but borne with unwavering patience and resignation, until in July, 1881, he entered into rest. His flesh rests in hope among the buried of the people whom he loved so well, at Montgomery.—*See Chr. Intell.* Also, In Memoriam, A. B. Van Zandt, Catskill, 1881.

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