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ARTICLE I.—THOUGHTS ON THEOLOGY.

Prudens futuri temporis exitum  
Caliginosâ nocte premit Deus;  
Ridetque si mortalis ultra  
Fas, trepidat. Quod adest, memento  
Componere æquus.

HOR. CARM. Lib. iii. Ode xxix.

WE propose, in this Article, that the following topics shall guide us in our remarks: Theology, in its reference to the unknown; to the tendencies of this age; to the methods of reasoning employed in its defence; and to its permanent foundations in the nature and the wants of man. These topics may not appear, at first, to be very intimately connected. At the close of the Article, we trust that they may appear to be more so than they seem to be at the commencement.

Much of theology pertains to the unknown; and to that nearly all the difficulties in the science belong. The same is true, however, of every other science, and every other subject of inquiry. Most of the science of astronomy, using that phrase as denoting what it would properly embrace—belongs to the unknown. We have determined the size of the earth, the distances of the planets, the laws of their motion, the mag-

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## ARTICLE III.

## THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE REV. WILLIAM HILL, D. D.

To trace the history of the eminent servants of Christ who have labored long and successfully in the vineyard of their Lord, to recall the incidents connected with their conversion to God, their trials and discouragements in the pursuit of the requisite qualifications for the Gospel ministry, the distinguishing characteristics of their preaching, their varied success, and their dying testimony to the power of that Gospel which, for many years, they have pressed upon the attention of their fellow-men, is one of the most pleasing, as well as among the most profitable duties to which we can be called. The lives of such men constitute an important and an essential part of the history of the Church of Christ. The Providence of God towards His people, in their associated capacity, is often most apparent in His dealings with those who have been leaders in Israel. What a void would exist in the history of the Church, if the names of Chrysostom, Augustine, Calvin, Luther, and others of equal distinction were to become extinct! Succeeding generations would feel that a mighty chasm existed in the progress of the Church which subsequent developments would never fill. We might theorize and indulge our fancy in respect to the causes of existing facts, but nothing decisive, nothing that would satisfy the sincere inquirer after truth could be known. Hence it has entered into the plans of the Almighty to perpetuate the names of those who have been instrumental in achieving glorious moral conquests, and whose example of active, devoted piety would be felt centuries after their bones had mouldered into dust. They may have widely differed in their constitutional temperament, in intellectual power, in capacity for profound research, in theological and literary attainments, and in the amount of good accomplished during their earthly existence. Some may have been distinguished for great powers of reasoning and discrimination, whilst they were deficient in what may be termed practical power. They

could comprehend and analyze the most abstruse dogmas of a speculative theology, and could exhibit truth so clearly, as to command the assent of all. Others excelled in devising plans for the propagation of a pure Christianity. They knew well the workings of the human heart, what chord to touch to give efficiency to the means employed for the establishment of Zion, when and where to present religion to their fellow men as a matter of personal concern; they were *practical* men, but they had little capacity and less taste for studying the philosophy of things; they eschewed metaphysical abstractions, assured that if God honored their ministry in the conversion of souls, the great end of their calling would be accomplished.

But whatever diversity in talent and attainment may have existed among God's ministers, though some may have been distinguished for intellectual endowments and the most extensive erudition, whilst others were most eminent for their piety and devotion to their work as the ambassadors of Christ, their history is alike full of instruction to those who may succeed them. It is fitted to encourage the desponding, to awaken to action the indolent and indifferent, and to excite to still greater energy those who are most active in their ministerial work. The record of their self-denying efforts to promote the cause of truth, may serve as a stimulant to future generations to live for the glory of God, and the permanent well-being of the family of man.

These remarks are suggested by the decease of the venerable man whose name stands at the head of this Article. Long known throughout the country as one of the most distinguished ministers in the Presbyterian Church—as the associate of Hoge, Graham, Alexander and Rice—and having lived during the most eventful period in the history of our Church, and acted a part which will have a most important influence upon the interests of religion in these States, a brief review of his life and of the times in which he lived, is due to his memory, and to the Church with which he was connected.

The Rev. WILLIAM HILL, D. D., was born in Cumberland county, Virginia, March 3, 1769. His ancestors were from England. His father having died when he was five years of age, he was committed to the exclusive care of his mother.

After the lapse of a few years she married Mr. Daniel Allen, an Elder in the Presbyterian Church, in Cumberland county, at that time under the pastoral care of Dr. Samuel S. Smith, President of Hampden and Sidney College. Whether his mother was a professor of religion previous to her second marriage or not, is unknown. It is evident, however, from various circumstances, that she united with the Presbyterian Church in Cumberland, either by certificate or upon examination, shortly after her marriage to Mr. Allen, and was a consistent and exemplary Christian. The pious counsels which she gave to her son, made an impression upon his mind which was never effaced. She died when he was eleven years of age; but he has recorded the statement, that "her prayers and instructions were never completely obliterated, even during the thoughtless and vicious life he lived for some years after her death." At ten years of age he was placed under the tuition of Mr. Drury Lacy, who was afterwards one of the most distinguished ministers in Virginia. Mr. Lacy was employed as teacher in his family by the step-father of young Hill, for three years. It was during this period that he obtained an English education of a higher grade than was usual in the country schools of Virginia. After the death of his mother, he was placed under the guardianship of one who had but little regard for religion, and whose example, therefore, operated most unfavorably upon him. His serious impressions were soon effaced, and he became absorbed in the pleasures peculiar to a fashionable society. Providence soon changed his position in this respect. He entered Hampden and Sidney College, then under the presidency of Rev. John B. Smith, in 1785. It was during his collegiate course that the great change occurred which decided his future destiny in life. When he went to college his mind was occupied with worldly pursuits, and the influences by which he was there surrounded were only fitted to banish more effectually serious thoughts. There was not a pious student in college, and not one who was known to possess a Bible. The first part of his college course was marked by a total disregard of religious obligations, and an indulgence in the vices common to his ungodly associates. And yet notwithstanding his irreligious life, there were periods when the remembrance of his

mother's admonitions and prayers would make him sad and pensive, and would excite him to prayer and to form resolutions to consecrate himself to God. He always attributed his conversion to her, as the chief instrument under God. When most engaged in frivolous and wicked amusements, his peace would be disturbed by the vivid recollection of her interest in his salvation. Two years, however, elapsed, after he entered college, before there was a decided change in his character. Though often under the deepest conviction of sin, he could not summon sufficient resolution to seek counsel from religious friends. At length, under the convicting power of the Spirit of God, he retires to a grove for meditation and prayer. There, under the broad canopy of heaven, amid the silence of that secluded spot, where he was unheard save by the God whom he sought, he gives vent to the agony of his soul in language expressive of the most earnest importunity—and there it was that he was enabled, by the grace of God, to cast his burden upon the Saviour, and to purpose to live a new life. Still so indefinite were his conceptions of the nature of religion, that he had not the remotest idea of having experienced a radical change in his character. He was comforted—"the intolerable burden of sin," as he expressed it, was taken away, and his resolution to devote himself to the service of God was strengthened. He had a deep sense of his own frailty and instability, and hence he refrained from communicating his feelings to others. Strange as it may seem to us in these days, during this time of religious interest, he had no Bible to read. He applied to the steward of the college for the loan of his large family Bible. This was granted to him, with the understanding that it would be returned before evening. The young inquirer returned to the forest, and devoted the entire day to reading the gospel by Matthew. Shortly afterwards "*Alleine's Alarm*" was given to him by a Christian friend, to whom his anxiety on the subject of religion had been communicated. This he read with great interest. Upon one occasion, as he was reading this book, his fellow student, James Blythe, of Kentucky, came into his room, and observing that this was a religious book, remarked, "Hill, are you spending your time reading such books as this?" This was a most critical mo-

ment with the young inquirer. In after life he often said that this was the turning-point in his future history. He was strongly tempted to evade the question; but God enabled him to answer—"Yes, Blythe, I have been reading that good old book, and I am determined, by the help of God, to save my soul." From this period young Blythe became a true penitent. During the Christmas vacation that occurred not long after the conversion of Blythe, another student, Cary Allen, subsequently known as a gifted minister in the Presbyterian Church in Virginia, was a subject of converting grace. These three, Hill, Blythe, and Allen, together with Clement Read, a resident graduate, held frequent communication with each other. They determined to meet for prayer on Saturday afternoon in one of their rooms in college. "Although," says Dr. Hill, in his narrative of the great revival in 1787, "we sung and prayed with suppressed voices, we were overheard by some of the students, when a noisy mob was raised, which collected in the passage before the door, and began to threaten vengeance, if we did not forbear and cease all such exercises in college for the future. Information of the riot was given to President Smith. Some of the prominent leaders in the riot came forward and accused us of praying and singing in a Methodistic manner, and expressed their determination to break it up. This was the first intimation the President had that any of the students were serious. With tears in his eyes, he said to the serious students, who had been the occasion of the disturbance, 'I rejoice, my young friends, that you have taken the stand you have. Your meeting next Saturday afternoon shall be held in my parlor; and I will be with you, conduct it for you, and render you all the assistance you need.'" This may be considered as the commencement of the extensive revival of religion that prevailed through several counties in Eastern Virginia and North Carolina from 1787 to 1789, and whose influence has been felt in every part of Virginia to the present time. These meetings continued to increase in interest. Within a short period one half of the students in college professed conversion to God. The work extended into neighboring churches. A most deplorable apathy on the subject of religion had existed throughout the State

for many years. Nothing like a general religious interest had prevailed since the days of President Davies. The ministry, with few exceptions, had become worldly-minded, and neglectful of pastoral duties, so that but little difference between them, the members of their churches, and the unconverted was discernible. The effects of the revolutionary struggle were visible in the churches no less than in the state of the community generally. Ministers, elders, and private members had imbibed the spirit of war, and volunteered to fight the battles of their country. President Smith formed a company composed of the students in college, the members of his church, and others, and went forth in defence of the rights of freemen. In the meantime the cause of religion suffered. The Sabbath was desecrated—sanctuaries were deserted—intemperance prevailed to a fearful extent, and the few pious hearts that remained had occasion to mourn over the desolations of Zion. Thus it continued until the development of religious interest among the little band of youths in Hampden and Sidney College in 1787. From this period a new life was breathed into ministers and people. President Smith, who was highly gifted as a preacher, and a man of great influence throughout Eastern Virginia, was greatly quickened in spirit. He preached more frequently, visited neighboring churches, and made special efforts to arouse the churches from their spiritual lethargy. He was instrumental in awakening a high degree of religious interest in the surrounding counties. The spiritual fire, thus enkindled, spread into various parts of Eastern Virginia, and reached some of the churches in North Carolina.

The Rev. Mr. Graham of Liberty Hall Academy, now Washington College in Lexington, Virginia, came to the assistance of President Smith. He brought with him two young men, one of whom was the late Dr. Alexander of Princeton, New Jersey, then a member of Liberty Hall Academy, but as yet unconverted to God. Mr. Graham returned to the valley with his soul greatly revived. The students he had taken with him were deeply impressed during the religious services upon which they attended in Prince Edward County. Hitherto religion in the Valley had been in a languishing condition. The state of things, however, soon began to assume a different aspect. Mr. Graham

was a preacher of great power. He was one of the most intellectual men in the State, possessed a finished education, and was fitted to be eminently useful as a minister of Christ. His fervid eloquence, especially after his visit to Hampden and Sidney College, produced a powerful effect in his own Church, and throughout that portion of the Valley. Extensive revivals of religion prevailed, whose influence for good is still felt in the young men converted to God, and who consecrated themselves to the work of the ministry.

It was during this period of revivals in Virginia, that the Presbyterian Church obtained a position in the State, which has never been lost. Her ministers were eminently revival men. Though few in number, they labored with unremitting activity for the salvation of souls. The spirit of Davies, of the Tennessees, and of Whitefield was infused into them; and hence the work of God was extended through their instrumentality. During the progress of these revivals frequent meetings were held. Ministers visited from house to house. The truth of God was preached plainly, and with reference to an *immediate* effect. The total depravity of man, his responsibility and guilt, a vicarious atonement, the necessity of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, the dependence of the sinner upon the Spirit of God, and the retributions of eternity, were the great truths exhibited during this season of revivals. They were the sword of the Spirit which subdued the hearts of multitudes, and were instrumental in bringing many to Christ, who proved to be burning lights in the Presbyterian ministry in Virginia. And yet these revival scenes met with the most bitter opposition, especially in the Valley of Virginia, where the congregations were composed chiefly of emigrants from Scotland and Ireland. When President Smith came to the assistance of Mr. Graham, he preached in defence of revivals from the text, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish." The Seceders in Rockbridge County were so violent in their opposition to the revival, that "they thought him possessed of an evil spirit." Dr. Smith in his defence, naming the Seceders, said, "that from the time they set themselves in opposition to the revival at Kilsyth and Cambuslang, the Spirit of the Lord had forsaken them." But notwithstanding this opposition, these revivals progressed; many

who at first opposed the work of grace were convinced of their error, and united in promoting it. Hundreds were converted—the churches which had been deserted were rapidly filled—vice of every description, which had been open and unblushing was more concealed, and the whole moral aspect of the community was changed. The period from 1787 to 1789 must be regarded as fraught with richer blessings to the Presbyterian Church in Virginia than any subsequent period. It was emphatically the period of revivals, which were traceable, in their origin, under God, to the praying youths of Hampden and Sidney College. Did our limits permit, we would gladly refer to other incidents of the “great revival” which are deeply interesting. But we must forbear. Dr. Hill has left in manuscript a full, and the only authentic history of this wonderful work of grace. We hope it may be presented to the public in a permanent form.

It was during the summer of 1787 that young Hill made a public profession of religion. He graduated at Hampden and Sidney College in 1788. Shortly after his graduation he commenced the study of Theology under the direction of President Smith. The course of theological study at that time was very restricted. There were but few facilities for obtaining a thorough knowledge of Biblical Literature. The study of the Hebrew language was confined almost exclusively to a few tutors, or ministers who were not very actively employed in ministerial work. Theology, as a science, was pursued to a very limited extent. The Bible was emphatically the book of study. The Confession of Faith and the Catechisms of the Church, Calvin's Institutes, and the works of Edwards and Bellamy were studied so far as the short time devoted to theology would permit. The demand for an active ministry was such that the period for theological studies was necessarily much shorter than at present. And yet were we to judge from the intellectual power and commanding eloquence displayed by the ministers of Virginia in the early part of this century, we should doubt whether, notwithstanding the disadvantages under which they labored, they were not as well qualified for their work, as the great majority of those who have succeeded them. During the progress of their studies they were accustomed to

exercise their gifts in conducting religious exercises. By thus combining study and the more practical part of their profession, they commanded the attention and secured the favor of their hearers as soon as they entered fully upon the work of the ministry. This was the case with Graham, Hoge, Alexander, Legrand and Hill. Though they had no other theological instruction than what they obtained from a country pastor, and had few opportunities for becoming thoroughly acquainted with the theology of the schools, yet they were familiar with Bible truth. The foundation of an eminently useful life was thus laid. Their subsequent history showed that their minds were well disciplined, and furnished with knowledge suited to the times in which they lived.

Dr. Hill was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Presbytery of Hanover, July 10, 1790. For two years after his licensure he acted as a missionary in the lower counties of Virginia as far down as the Chesapeake Bay, through the upper counties to the Blue Ridge, from Tennessee to Maryland, and especially in the counties in the lower part of the Valley. He acted under the direction of *the Commission of Synod*. At that period missionary societies, such as now exist, were unknown. But the missionary spirit was not wanting. The Synod of Virginia, composed of Hanover and Lexington Presbyteries, Redstone in Pennsylvania, and Transylvania, now a part of Kentucky, was formed October 22, 1788. In 1789 the Synod appointed a Committee, consisting of four ministers and four elders, to be called *the Commission of Synod*, who were to receive the recommendations of ministers from Presbyteries, and give such directions to the missionaries appointed by them, respecting their fields of labor, "as the exigencies of different places, in their wisdom, would require." The Presbyteries were directed to raise contributions, which were put into a general fund for the support of the missionaries. The salary of the missionary, thus appointed, was two hundred dollars annually. This Commission sent their missionaries from the Bay-shore to the Mississippi. In 1807 the Synod, finding that the work of supplying the destitute portions of the country was too extensive for the means at command, dissolved the Commission, and then it was that the General Assembly appointed a Board for

the purpose of carrying on the work of Missions. The journal which was kept by Dr. Hill during the time he acted under the commission of Synod, is replete with the most interesting facts, and evinces, on his part, the most untiring energy, self-denial and perseverance in the cause of his Master, from the very commencement of his ministry.

In October, 1792, Dr. Hill was married to Miss Nancy Morton, the daughter of Col. William Morton, of Charlotte County, Virginia. They lived together sixty-one years, Mrs. Hill having died in June, 1851.

Immediately after his licensure, Dr. Hill was invited by the congregations which President Smith had served, to become their pastor. Preferring, however, a location in the Valley, he declined their call, and after acting under the Commission of Synod for two years, he settled in Berkeley, now Jefferson County, Virginia. This was missionary ground. There was no organized church in his field of labor. When he entered the ministry he determined not to build upon another man's foundation, but, in view of the immense destitutions in his native State, he sought a location where there was the greatest prospect of usefulness. This spirit was characteristic of the ministers of that day. There were no splendid city churches to allure them or to excite their pride. The largest congregations were in the country, and were composed, for the most part, of farmers of intelligence and of the highest respectability. But the young men, who at that time entered the ministry in Virginia, knew that their vocation would demand personal sacrifices, that they must be missionaries in the proper acceptation of the term, and that their chief reward would be the establishment of Zion through their instrumentality, and in witnessing the fruits of their labor in eternity. Hence they were consecrated to their work. They traversed oftentimes an extensive territory, preached daily in school-houses and barns, or wherever the people could be assembled for worshipping God. They had much to discourage them. The indifference, frivolity and profligacy of the community in which they labored, were serious obstacles in their way. But God blessed their self-denying efforts in the extension of his kingdom. They carried the Gospel where it was hitherto unknown. They organized

churches which have proved to be the most influential in the State. And though not one of those who entered the ministry at the time Dr. Hill commenced his labors is now living, there are many who attribute their salvation to the early ministry of these men of God, and they narrate, with great interest, the effect of particular discourses upon the large congregations assembled on sacramental occasions. During the eight years of his residence in Jefferson County, the ministry of Dr. Hill was one of great success. He was regarded as a preacher of the most commanding eloquence. His style of address was popular; his zeal in the service of his Master was unabated. In 1799, he was requested to deliver a funeral oration at Harper's Ferry in memory of General Washington. Besides the regular army stationed at that place, and numbering three thousand men, fifteen thousand persons were brought together by the reputation of the young orator, as well as by their veneration for the Father of his Country. It is the testimony of those who were present on the occasion, some of whom are still living, that this eulogium was one of the finest specimens of oratory which they had ever heard. His strong voice, distinct enunciation, and earnest delivery, together with the truths uttered, made an impression upon this immense assemblage which is remembered to this day.

In January, 1800, Dr. Hill removed to Winchester. Here he passed the greater part of his ministerial life. For thirty-three years successively he was the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in this place. When he came to Winchester the church was feeble, and rendered more so by the distractions which had existed for some years. He was called by a unanimous vote of the church. A large proportion of the membership were foreigners by birth, who differed in sentiment from others in the church respecting revivals and the fashionable amusements practiced in that day. This had been the chief cause of difficulty, previous to the installation of Dr. Hill as pastor. But notwithstanding his known sympathy with those who favored revivals, and who were opposed to these dissipating amusements, he was earnestly invited by both parties to assume the pastorate of the church. His situation was a delicate one. He was, however, a man of great

decision, and he knew well the workings of the human heart. For nearly thirty years he continued the pastor of the church in Winchester, without any serious difficulties with those of his members who differed with him in sentiment. His ministry during this period was greatly blessed. He was then in the vigor of his manhood. His strong intellect and power as a speaker were often visible in the pulpit, and in the judicatories of the church. In no part of the State was there a higher degree of intelligence and of refinement than in this community. A strong man was needed in the pulpit to stem the tide of fashionable iniquity that threatened the interests of the church. Dr. Hill was felt to be such a man. His talents were universally acknowledged, and none doubted his sincerity, however they may have differed from him in opinion. During the thirty-three years of his ministry in Winchester, he exhibited an energy of character, and a glowing eloquence in his pulpit ministrations which were remarkable. Numbers were converted to God through his instrumentality, who will be as stars in the crown of his rejoicing forever. The churches in the neighboring counties were often favored with his assistance, and so pungent were his discourses that he was regarded as the most effective preacher in Western Virginia. Men of the highest intellect and occupying prominent positions in society, as well as those of inferior pretensions, were brought through his agency into the kingdom of the Redeemer. Among those who were converted under his ministry in Winchester, was General Daniel Morgan, of revolutionary memory. Bold and daring to an extreme, rough in exterior, and with a mind of great vigor, though uncultivated, this distinguished officer was led by the preaching and conversations of Dr. Hill to humble himself before God, and to dedicate the remnant of his life to the cause of Christ. He became a member of the Presbyterian Church in Winchester, and when the hour of his death arrived, he had the benefit of the counsel and prayers of the man of God who was the instrument in his conversion.

In February, 1834, Dr. Hill accepted a call to the Briery Presbyterian Church, in Prince Edward county. Here he remained two years, and then removed to Alexandria. After continuing the pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, in

Alexandria, for two years, he found that the infirmities of age were disqualifying him for the active discharge of the duties of the pastoral office. He, therefore, resigned the pastorship of this church, and removed to Winchester, the scene of his former labors, to live and die among those whom he loved, and who would gladly minister to him in the last period of his earthly probation. He was able to perform ministerial duties for six or seven years after his return from Alexandria.

During his residence in Alexandria, and for two years after his return to Winchester, he was engaged in preparing a history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. He was eminently qualified for this work. No one had examined more carefully the documents connected with the rise of Presbyterianism in this country, and if his original plan had been carried out, his history would have been one of the most valuable works ever issued from the American press. That plan was to prepare a connected history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, without reference to controverted points, further than would be necessary to exhibit the true character of American Presbyterianism. When he commenced his history, the Presbyterian Church was a united body. The elements of disunion were at work, but he did not anticipate the severance of the Church he loved. Hence, he did not write to sustain a party. Whilst he had no sympathy with the movements of the "Act and Testimony" men, but, like his old friend Dr. Alexander, and the other professors at Princeton, and, we may add, nearly the whole of the Synod of Virginia, regarded that document, and the measures proposed by its advocates, as unnecessary and pernicious in their tendency, he had no motive to induce him to prepare his history with reference to any party organization in the church. Dr. Hodge and himself, were agreed as to the course pursued by the "Act and Testimony" men. Dr. Hill had written the greater part of his history several years before the division of the church. Dr. Hodge published his Constitutional History shortly after the division, and after he had identified himself with the party that claimed to be the representatives of Scotch Presbyterianism. In judging of the degree of confidence that is to be reposed in the statements of these gentlemen, respecting the origin of Presby-

terianism in this country, it is important that this fact should be known. The one had no party feelings to gratify in showing, as he does most conclusively, that American Presbyterianism, in its origin, was not of the rigid stamp of the Scottish Church. The other found it necessary, after the rupture in 1837 and 1838, to endeavor to reconcile the position taken by his branch of the church, with the existence of the liberal and Congregational element apparent in the mother Presbytery. And hence it is natural to presume that his judgment respecting the founders of the Church was biased by his party associations. Before the publication of the first number of his history, Dr. Hill published several communications in the religious papers, in which he briefly presented the documentary evidence of the liberal character of the founders of the American Presbyterian Church. To his surprise, this excited considerable opposition among the excising portion of the church. Dr. Hodge was elected to vindicate their views. He published his work in the form of numbers. This induced Dr. Hill to change his original plan, and instead of publishing his history in two octavo volumes, as he at first contemplated, he concluded to issue it in numbers, and to reply to Dr. Hodge. We cannot but regret that he was diverted from his original object. We have examined what he had written previous to the publication of Dr. Hodge's numbers, and we are persuaded that if his plan had been carried out, his history would have been a standard work centuries hence. Circumstances, which we need not detail, prevented him from publishing more than one number. That, however, contains an argument in proof of the liberal spirit of the Fathers of the Church, based upon its early records, which, we are confident, cannot be answered.

In the memorable scenes of 1837 and 1838, Dr. Hill was deeply interested. It could not have been otherwise. For nearly a half century he had been a prominent minister of our body, had witnessed its rapid advance in numbers and moral influence, and had devoted his powers to the vindication and diffusion of the principles of the Presbyterian Church. When, therefore, measures were proposed, and carried out by the highest judicatory of the church which violated the fundamental principles of Presbyterianism, which set at nought the truth

vital to all representative governments, namely, the right to a fair trial for charges alleged, which cut off from the church, ministers and private members who had been consistent and honored servants of God for many years, Dr. Hill did not hesitate to espouse the cause of those who had been so unrighteously, and in utter contempt both of the letter and spirit of the constitution, deprived of the privilege of membership in the church which they loved. He regarded the excising measures of 1837 and 1838 with the the deepest abhorrence; and though some of his old valued friends, through the influence of party associations, had been prominent in thus severing the church, he felt that respect for constitutional rights, and for the true interests of the Presbyterian Church, demanded a firm and steady resistance to acts which, however intended, were as tyrannical as any that ever disgraced the ecclesiastical councils of Rome. He knew that if the General Assembly had the right to cut off, without a formal charge or trial, 500 ministers and 60,000 communicants, in one portion of the church, the right existed to sever from its connection any church or synod; and therefore, he had no assurance that the Synod of Virginia would not come under the ban of the Assembly, upon a plea as flimsy as that assigned for the excision of the Synods of Geneva, Genesee, Utica and the Western Reserve; and that he might be placed in the same position with the venerable Dr. Richards, who, after a ministry of forty years in the Presbyterian Church, was most unceremoniously cast out of it, and that too, chiefly through the instrumentality of those who had not been in the church more than ten or fifteen years. At the meeting of the Synod of Virginia, in the fall of 1837, Dr. Hill delivered a most powerful and eloquent speech against the Excising Acts. We shall never forget the scathing rebuke which he gave an eminent lawyer of Virginia, who defended the acts of the Assembly. His detestation of the principles involved in this excision, continued to the end of life. A few weeks before his death, when it was thought he could not survive many days, he was asked, if he had not a message for the brethren of Synod? He replied, "Tell them to stand by the constitutional principles of the Presbyterian Church," thus evincing to the last his strong attachment to the Constitution

of the Church to which he had consecrated a long and laborious life.

For eight years previous to his death Dr. Hill was much engaged in reading his favorite authors, and in writing sketches of the lives of some of his early associates. He left, in manuscript, narratives of the lives of Dr. Hoge, Rev. Cary Allen, Rev. Nash Legrand, and Rev. James Turner. He had not the physical ability to preach the Gospel for the last five years of his life. He had been anticipating death, and with great composure. He loved to converse on personal religion, to narrate his own spiritual exercises, and ever seemed to be aspiring after more mellowness of soul, and a greater likeness unto his Divine Master. The grace of God was evidently preparing him for his departure from earth. Several months before his death he thought that his end was at hand. During this attack, he repeatedly expressed his entire confidence in the Saviour, and said, that if it was God's will, he would prefer "to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." Bodily disease would occasionally bring into action his naturally impatient temperament. His mind would lose its proper balance, and his views of things would be distorted. But at other times, he would be calm and submissive. And even when his intellect was beclouded in respect to other subjects, he had the most vivid recollection of persons, names, and incidents connected with the history of the Presbyterian Church in Virginia. When his disease was inducing languor, and an aversion to mental effort, a reference to the ministers with whom he was associated in early life, would cause his eye to glisten with pleasure—his countenance and expressive tones of voice, would indicate his absorbing interest in every thing pertaining to the history of the church he loved. He recovered partially from this attack of sickness. His system, however, was gradually giving way, under the infirmities of age, and the power of a long existing disease. Two weeks before his death he was laid prostrate upon his bed. His mind was seriously affected from the commencement of this last attack. For some days, he was in a state of delirium, apparently unconscious of suffering. All power of connected thought was gone. And yet there was something in the character of that delirium which indicated his

deep interest in spiritual things. Sometimes he spoke as if he was preaching that Gospel which he had proclaimed for sixty years. Then, again, he seemed to be transported to the portals of heaven. Among other things, he said, "I hear music;" it seemed as if God was giving him a foretaste of the rich melody that would soon fall upon his redeemed spirit. He continued in this delirium until his soul was released from its clay tenement. His vigorous constitution resisted, with great tenacity, the assault of the ruthless destroyer. But it finally yielded the contest, and on the 16th of November, 1852, the oft repeated wish of this venerable father was gratified—*his soul was at home with his Saviour.*

*The character* of Dr. Hill was marked, and may be contemplated in several aspects.

*He possessed an intellect of great clearness and vigor.* No one need to misunderstand him. His conceptions were strong and vivid, and his style of expression was terse and sententious. His active life in the first part of his ministry prevented that kind of mental discipline which is the result of severe study. His intellect was more remarkable for strength than for logical development. He grasped a subject with great energy. He sought to obtain large and comprehensive views of truth rather than to indulge in vain speculations. His perceptions were quick, and his conclusions, which would prove to be correct, were oftentimes formed with great rapidity. He loved the truth, and hence in his investigations he brought his vigorous mind to contemplate it in its various relations, but not so to analyze it by metaphysical distinctions as to lose sight of it in its moral bearings upon the human heart. His memory was remarkably retentive. His mind was capable of comprehending any subject to which it was directed; and though his impatient nature might prompt him to forego the thorough investigation of subjects, step by step, in a logical form, he would nevertheless give such a degree of attention as was necessary to arrive at a right conclusion. His mind was well stored with first principles; and therefore making them the basis of his inquiries, he did not deem it indispensable in order to ascertain the truth to pursue with logical, metaphysical accuracy a subject in all its aspects.

*Dr. Hill was a man of great firmness of purpose.* When his judgment was convinced he never wavered, unless new and more powerful reasons were presented to him. He was not to be shaken from his purpose to pursue what he believed to be the right path, either by the flattery of friends or the intimidations of opponents. His mental constitution fitted him to be a leader rather than to be led. His indomitable will would never yield to the will of another through fear or favor. He must be fully persuaded of the propriety of the course recommended before he would consent to change any plan of action upon which he may have determined. It was his firmness and decision of character that occasionally impressed others with the idea that he was harsh and forbidding, when in truth his feelings may not have been excited in the slightest degree. He was often placed in situations which called for a high degree of Christian decision. Had he lived in times of persecution, like Paul before Felix, or Luther before the Diet of Worms, or John Knox before Queen Mary, he would have been unmoved by lordly power, or the threats of exalted wickedness.

“ Where'er he went,  
This lesson still he taught, to fear no ill  
But sin, no being but Almighty God.”

His physical temperament was of a mercurial cast. He was ardent, fearless, and enthusiastic. This peculiarity of his physical constitution was known to himself as well as to others. It developed itself amid the conflicts of sentiment in Church and State, in different periods of his life, and combined as it was with an inflexible will, it was sometimes the occasion of leading him to express his own convictions in a manner that would seem to evince unkindness of feeling. Such an inference, however, is by no means legitimate. Whilst, like other men, he was liable to excitement of temper, he was by nature magnanimous and kind. He lived a long life, passed through many scenes of excitement, came in contact with men of every class and character, and it would have been strange indeed if, in the circumstances in which he was placed, his naturally excitable temperament had never been developed. We will ven-

ture the remark, however, that few persons have lived as long, and occupied as prominent a position in the church as he did, and in times of great ecclesiastical difficulties, who have shown more forbearance or a stronger desire to cultivate peace with all. He was ever ready to *defend* what he believed to be the truth. But we are not aware that he ever manifested a disposition unnecessarily to assail the views and persons of others. The grace of God had done much in softening the asperities of his natural constitution, so that in the midst of high party excitement he was enabled, in a great measure, to control a nature that otherwise might have been the source of deep mental disquietude. He had his faults—for he was a man. But they were the faults of that class of mind who unite an ardent, excitable temperament with some of the most commanding virtues of humanity—who if, amid the vicissitudes and conflicts of life, they permit the waves of passion to obscure their vision and to drown the dictates of a dispassionate judgment, have imbedded in their moral nature the principles of right, and which, having a predominating control, will show themselves, sooner or later, in acts indicative of their heavenly origin.

*As a friend Dr. Hill was kind and pleasant.* Those who had his confidence found him one of the most agreeable companions. His conversation was instructive, and sometimes humorous. Undue familiarity he would not permit; but he delighted in a free and easy manner, and none who understood the proprieties of life need be restrained in his presence. Having been accustomed to mingle in all classes of society, with the high and low, the rich and poor, he had a fund of anecdote which gave interest to his conversation. To his ministerial brethren particularly, his vivid narration of events and incidents connected with the history of distinguished men, both in Church and State, during the first part of this century, was always interesting and instructive. He loved the society of his brethren; and after the infirmities of age interfered with his meeting with them in the judicatories of the church, and in protracted religious services, he was always gratified in receiving their visits. His social qualities were well adapted to enlist the affections of those in whom he reposed confidence.

*As a Preacher, Dr. Hill was clear, energetic and impressive.*

His power, as an extemporaneous preacher, was very remarkable. The late Dr. Alexander, than whom none were better qualified to judge, referring, we suppose, to the period when they were associated together in the Synod of Virginia, expressed the opinion that Dr. Hill was one of the most effective extemporaneous preachers the country has produced. In the vigor of his manhood he was probably the most popular preacher in his native State. He had not the learning, and the close, logical reasoning of Rice, nor the chaste and flowing style of Speece, nor the splendid imagination of Kirkpatrick. But there was a combination of excellences in his preaching, which made him a favorite. His commanding person, his clear and powerful voice, the vividness of his conceptions, the directness and pungency of his appeal, and the deep earnestness visible in his countenance and manner of delivery impressed his audience with the conviction that what he said was truth, and such truth as involved their most vital interests. He never aimed to please the fancy, or to gratify a fastidious taste. He sought to arouse a sleeping conscience, to melt the obdurate heart, and to save the soul. His illustrations were drawn chiefly from practical life, and they were, for the most part, so apt and striking, as to make a powerful impression upon his audience. He seldom wrote his sermons. Like most of his brethren in Virginia, he preached from brief notes. This habit was acquired in early life, partly from necessity, and partly because the state of society and public sentiment rendered it inexpedient to use a manuscript. His sentences were short and pithy; and when his soul was fired by his subject, he would throw out thoughts that would arrest the attention of the careless, and awaken to action the dormant faculties of his hearers. Some of the most eloquent and impressive thoughts we have heard from the pulpit, were uttered by him when his mind was enkindled by his theme, and without any preparation. He loved to preach; and Christ and Him crucified constituted the great theme upon which he delighted to dwell.

*His theology was a liberal Calvinism.* He had no sympathy with the sentiments of those who sought to magnify the grace of God in salvation, by representing man as having no power of any kind to obey the commands of God,—who, though ac-

knowledging *in words* man's free agency, still divest him of all the essential powers of a free agent, and maintain that he can no more perform what God requires of him, than Lazarus could have come forth at the command of Christ, unless the physical power to do so had been first communicated. He believed that such a sentiment was derogatory to the character of God, and destructive of all moral obligation; for the common sense of every man teaches him, that Lazarus was under no obligation to obey the command of Christ, until the power to obey it was given to him; and if the sinner's inability is of the same kind, his common sense teaches him that, whatever speculative theologians may say, he is under no obligation to repent and believe in the Saviour, until the power to do so is imparted. Dr. Hill was an Edwardean in his theology. His favorite theological writers were Edwards and Bellamy. His preaching was not of a *doctrinal* character, as the term is generally used. He did not think it essential to orthodoxy, or even to the diffusion of the doctrinal peculiarities of his Church, to be incessantly preaching sermons on original sin, election and final perseverance, though he cordially believed these doctrines in the sense in which they were held by the great majority of his ministerial brethren previous to the days of the excision. And yet he was a doctrinal preacher in the true sense of the word. He dwelt upon the fundamental truths of the Gospel, and when he wished to enforce the views peculiar to his Church, he thought it best, as a general rule, instead of using the theological nomenclature of the schools, which would awaken prejudice against the truth, without being understood by the masses, to present them in language familiar to all. The all-sufficiency of the Saviour's atonement was often exhibited, and most forcibly, in his discourses. He regarded it as a most precious truth, that in the provision of redeeming mercy reference was had to the *whole* race of man, and not simply to the elect. He considered it an imputation upon the justice of God to affirm, that He would condemn to eternal perdition any part of the human family for rejecting an atonement which was not provided for them. Hence he could not but regret the attempt made in certain quarters to fasten the limited atonement theory upon the system of Calvinism. In his judgment it was not only a perversion of the views of Calvin, but was calculated to bring into disrepute

the Calvinistic system as held by the fathers of American Presbyterianism, and by such Scotch theologians as Dr. Chalmers, M'Cosh and Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh. With his views of truth Dr. Hill could consistently press upon his hearers the offers of the Gospel, and it was more especially when he was presenting this scheme of love, that he would give vent to the most tender and impassioned eloquence.

*As a member of the judicatories of the Church Dr. Hill was conspicuous.* He was regular in his attendance upon these convocations. His long experience had made him familiar with the rules of deliberative bodies. His powers as a debater were universally acknowledged. His advice was received with the respect due to his talents, experience and standing in the Church.

*The piety of this venerated father was based upon fixed principles.* It was neither the exuberance of animal passion, nor the heartlessness of a cold and formal sentimentalism. We have often heard him remark, that he had not those ecstatic emotions, that high degree of rapturous joy which some experience. His religion was the religion of principle. It was built upon the Rock of Ages, that can stand amid the scenes of the final, notable day of the Lord. He aimed to live according to the rule prescribed by his divine Master. He loved the Scriptures of truth. They were the manna upon which he fed. During the last two years of his life, he read through the Bible with the commentary of Dr. Scott. He had not the mildness of John the beloved disciple, but he had to a very great degree the Christian fortitude of Paul and of recovered Peter. His sixty-six years of service in the cause of the Saviour, were years of a devotion of his intellect and heart to Him who redeemed him with His own blood.

In bringing to a close this outline of the life, character and times of this revered father in the ministry, we must say, that whilst we know he had faults like other men, he was still, in our judgment, a man and an ambassador of the Son of God, such as are not often seen upon earth. It may be the partiality of friendship, or the reverence which one comparatively young in the ministry naturally cherishes for him, who has long worn the armour, that awakened the sentiment; but so it is, our conviction is deep and thorough, that in most of the essential cle-

ments of an honored and useful minister of Christ, Dr. Hill has had few superiors among the eminent men which his State or country has produced.

In his death there is nothing to regret. God spared him to a good old age. His work, as the messenger of God to his fellow-men, was done. His life on earth, at his advanced age, could not well be otherwise than a life of pain. Hence he descends to the grave, "like a shock of corn in its season, fully ripe." We mourn not his departure. His conflicts are over, his victory is won. He has laid down the armour of the warrior to wear the crown of the conqueror. He has gone from the society of friends on earth to unite with her who was the companion of his youth and old age, with many who were saved through his instrumentality, and with most of his early associates in the Gospel ministry, with Smith and Graham, Legrand and Allen, Baxter and Speece, Rice and Alexander, in ascription of praise to the God of their salvation. The strife and contentions which are incident to the best of men on earth have passed away, and those who here may have differed in sentiment, and were enlisted on opposite sides in regard to ecclesiastical questions that agitated the Church, are dwelling together in the same city, the new Jerusalem—in the same country, the heavenly Canaan—in the same palace, the palace of the great King; and they are privileged to participate in the same feast of undying love, free from the impurities and imperfections which attached to their existence on earth. Soon this shall be the case with all the faithful servants of Christ. As a Church, we are admonished by the departure of the fathers in our Israel to gird ourselves with the whole armour of God, to watch with sleepless vigilance every department of our Zion, and to consecrate ourselves more unremittingly to the work of establishing the kingdom of Christ in the world. As one after another, in rapid succession, is taken away, it becomes those who survive to be impressed with the additional responsibilities imposed upon them. May a new baptism of the Spirit be given to the ministry of our Church, that those who are called to fill the places of such as have long stood as watchmen upon our Zion, may, like them, fulfill their mission on earth, and be blessed with the unfading rewards of heaven.