



THE REV. THOMAS E. PECK, D. D.

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I. LITERARY.

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UNION SEMINARY has been called again to mourn the loss of one of her able and accomplished teachers. On the 2nd of October, 1893, Dr. Thomas Ephraim Peck, Professor of Systematic theology, passed into the everlasting peace, after months of suffering from Bright's disease of the kidneys and an attendant failure of the functions of the heart.

Dr. Peck was born in Columbia, South Carolina, on the 29th of January, 1822. He was the son of Ephraim Peck, a native of Connecticut, and Sarah Bannister Parke, daughter of Thomas Parke, LL. D., Professor of the classic languages in the College of South Carolina. His father, a man of delicate constitution, had come south for his health, and opened a small mercantile establishment in Columbia. After a few years residence he united with the First Presbyterian Church, and developed a strongly marked and active Christian character. On the 4th of January, 1821, he intermarried with a daughter of Professor Parke, and after a married life of somewhat over eleven years, died leaving four living children, two sons and two daughters. Thomas, the oldest child was ten years old at the time, and William, the youngest just two months old. The daughters Mary, Susan and Ann Catharine grew to womanhood and married, the first Rev. Samuel H. Hay, the second Rev. Lucius Simonton. After the death of her husband Mrs. Peck lived with her father until his death in 1840. She opened a school for small children and soon her school-room was full. For many years she pursued this business for the support of her children. Mrs. Peck was a remarkable

woman—strong-minded, cheerful, a devoted christian, resolute, active and persevering. Prematurely widowed, yet content with her lot, the brave young mother fought her battle for her children with consummate energy and with unfaltering faith in a covenant-keeping God. Her reward was rich even in this world, and in the noble character and career of her oldest son her reward was richest. Living in the home of his grandfather, the early days of Thomas Peck were spent in the atmosphere of a college. His traits were early formed into a scholastic type. His preparatory training was conducted in the Academy of the town then under charge of John Daniel, an efficient and faithful teacher. He was ready for college before he had completed his fourteenth year. At that early age he entered on his collegiate course, took the regular curriculum, and graduated with great distinction in the eighteenth year of his age. In the year 1838 he was brought into connection with the person who was destined to exert the controlling influence on his mental and spiritual character. Dr. James H. Thornwell entered the college on his first professorship at that time. The young Professor and his congenial pupil were soon attracted to each other, and the web of destiny began to weave between them. A strong personal attachment sprang up. Dr. Thornwell was a frequent and welcome visitor at the home of his pupil as well a most influential power over him in the class-room. Under this fortunate connection young Peck was brought to the obedience of the Christian faith. This occurred in his junior year, but he made no open profession of his faith until after his graduation. During his college career his grand-father, Dr. Parke served as Librarian and Treasurer of the institution, and his grandson was associated with him in the discharge of both offices during the intervals in his studies. After the death of his grand-father young Peck was continued in the office of Librarian. There is nothing known of the mental processes by which he was led to the conviction that it was his duty to enter the ministry. It was probably under the same influence which had led him to the acceptance of the gospel. After his mind was made up he entered the Seminary, but before two weeks had passed he was suddenly seized with an attack of sickness, and was forbidden by his physician to resume his studies for six months after his recovery. Singular to say he never re-entered the Seminary. Continuing in the position of Librarian to the

College he commenced the study of Theology under the guidance of his friend the young Professor of Metaphysics. All his theological training was from him. It is a singular circumstance that living in a stone's throw of a Theological Seminary he should never have sought its advantages. He had undoubtedly an extraordinary substitute in the great talents and strong personal friendship of an extraordinary man. At that time both of them had doubts of the advantages of a Seminary training; nor were Dr. Peck's views on the subject entirely settled until he was called himself to the work of teaching in such a school. By his own experience of both methods of ministerial training he finally became satisfied of the superior value of the Seminary system, except the cloistered life of the student. He at length obtained licensure and entered on his work. His first engagement was in Fairfield district where he preached to the churches of Salem and Jackson, the latter now Lebanon church. While thus engaged his friend, Dr. Thornwell, received a call to the Second Church of Baltimore, just vacated by the resignation of Dr. Robert J. Breckenridge. This call was accepted. But the College and the State of South Carolina generally were opposed to his going, and insisted on the rigor of the law which required a year's notice to be given before a professor could resign. With the consent of the church in Baltimore Dr. Thornwell sent Mr. Peck to fill the place until he could be honorably released. This policy ultimately resulted in Thornwell's remaining in Columbia, but the movement proved decisive in the case of his young friend. A church was in course of erection on Broadway Street in Baltimore for the accommodation of a colony from the 2nd Church. The building being completed and a church organized, Mr. Peck was called as pastor, and entered on the charge in 1846. The congregation was never large and there was little prospect of encouraging growth. The population of that part of the city was chiefly composed of Methodists and Romanists; and for several years the fine abilities and faithful preaching of the young pastor contended in vain with the surrounding difficulties. His style of preaching though of a high order, was not popular, in the sense which draws people without any partialities to his system of belief to attend on the services of a minister. His labor was not altogether in vain. The congregation grew steadily though slowly, and the thorough training of a teacher

so clear and effective moulded many a valuable servant of the kingdom who afterwards became the strong helper of other churches.

In the year 1857, on the retirement of a warm personal friend from the charge of the 1st Presbyterian Church of Lynchburg, Virginia, Mr. Peck was unanimously called to the pastoral office, without ever having been seen or heard by any member of the congregation. With his peculiar views such a call came with peculiar force. He at once visited the church, and on a survey of the ground announced his willingness to accept the call if the church having now seen and heard him saw proper to confirm their invitation. His presence and the taste of his quality intensified the purpose of the people into eagerness; the call was renewed and promptly accepted unless the Presbytery of Baltimore interposed to prevent. That body which had been content to let him struggle on in his difficult position without any special sympathy at once roused to the apprehension of losing him. The Central Church just vacated by the resignation of Dr. Stuart Robinson immediately extended a call to him. The two proposals came before the Presbytery at once and the body decided in favor of the church in Baltimore. Mr. Peck, suppressing his personal preferences assumed the care of a large and important field in the same city in which he had spent twelve years of discouraging work.

After he had been actively engaged for several years as pastor in the Broadway charge, Mr. Peck was married to Miss Ellen C. Richardson, the daughter of Scotch parents, and a staunch Presbyterian. The marriage proved singularly fortunate. No two people were ever better suited to each other. The strong character and sterling piety of the wife was just suited to the strong character and sterling graces of the husband; and during a married life of nearly forty years each proved the best earthly blessing of the other. Seven daughters were born to them—four in Baltimore and three at Hampden-Sidney. Three of these died in infancy, and one in the very bloom of womanhood.

After Mr. Peck had been in charge of the Central Church some twelve or eighteen months, in the year 1859 he was elected to the chair of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government in Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. The call was promptly declined, for the reason that he had been so short a time in the Central Church he did not suppose he had

fulfilled the Divine will in putting him into that field. But during the ensuing winter his health began to fail; he was becoming fully satisfied that preaching in so large an audience room was injuring him, and when the call to the Seminary was renewed in the Spring of 1860 he accepted it. He reached his new post on the 7th of April, 1860, and entered on the happier life, and the long term of over thirty-three years of honored and useful service which was terminated by his death on the 2nd of October, 1893. His health had been steadily failing for some year or two before his death, but his work was unflinchingly done up to the close of the term in the spring of that year. But the welcome vacation brought no relief to the subtle disease that was preying upon him. He steadily grew worse, and on the opening of the fall term he was unable to meet his classes. The work of the Seminary had just gotten under weigh when it was interrupted by the tidings that the venerable and beloved instructor in the Theological department had passed into the peace of God. He had not completed his seventy-third year. On the afternoon of the next day the funeral services held in the College Church were attended by a large assembly composed of the entire population of the village of Hampden-Sidney, the officers and students of both institutions, and delegates from the surrounding congregations. The demonstration of respect and sorrow was as marked as were the claims of the dead to receive it. All the family of the deceased who were in this country, except his aged mother, were in attendance and shared in the amazement of the whole assembly in hearing the voice of the widowed wife mingling bravely in the song of praise which greeted the advancement of the good man into his high estate. The quiet history of a quiet life is easily told. The task of making a just estimate of the talents and character of a remarkable man now remains to be done, and presents a work of much greater difficulty.

The personal character of Dr. Peck was strongly and beautifully marked. Its leading quality was an absolute and inflexible integrity. Even in his boyhood he was grave and thoughtful beyond his years, though now and then the underlying traits of a different sort would show themselves in outbreaks of joyous merriment. He was not fond of society; he was not fond of sport; his habits were studious; his mind was more engaged with books and serious reflection than with the em-

ployments which are commonly suited to the boyish age. As he grew older these tendencies strengthened. Under the care of his faithful teacher, John Daniel, he made steady and rapid progress. His fidelity in the discharge of his duties made him the favorite pupil of his master. Always obedient, always faithful to his appointed tasks, a strong personal attachment sprang up between them. He was fully prepared for college before he had completed his fourteenth year. He at once entered on his collegiate career, but unfortunately was placed in the freshman class when he ought to have been placed in a higher position, where his energies would have been suitably taxed. He found the tasks of the freshman course so easy and familiar, his well-formed habits not yet confirmed and hardened, gave way to a carelessness which finally brought on him a touch of censure. But only a touch was needed, and from that time his energies were so well directed, that he graduated with great distinction. During his tenure of the Librarian's office, he made good use of his opportunities for personal improvement, and after Dr. Thornwell's appearance on the scene, and especially after the entry of divine grace into his heart, his character soon took on the colors which marked it to the end of his days. The natural gravity of his temperament and the natural bent of his intellect to a thorough and accurate apprehension of whatever subject engaged his attention developed a character of intense integrity, sober, steadfast, staunch in principle, tinged with something of the severity which strong convictions will always impart, and is often mistaken for the severity of personal disposition. So far was this from being true of Dr. Peck, that underneath this grave earnestness and elevation of moral conviction, glowed the fire of a generous enthusiasm, warm affections, and what seemed to be so incongruous as not to be suspected, a keen sense of humor, a lively wit, and strong sensibilities to the charms of home, to the value of friendship, to the love of country and to the love of race. The most marked trait of his character, mental and moral, was his devotion to principle. His intellect always sought the central principle of a subject; his heart was always open to the naked force of obligation. Conformity to the will of his chosen Lord was the leading trait of his religious character. Obedience to the law of right, full adjustment of character, feeling, and conduct to the demands of truth in every sphere and especially in the sphere of revelation were the objects which regulated all his energies.

He would do what he thought was right, no matter if he stood alone against overwhelming odds—no matter whom it hurt—no matter whom it offended. He was repeatedly tried in this way during his connection with the Presbytery of Baltimore. He more than once voted alone against the whole body, and the event almost invariably justified his resistance to the prevailing current. His convictions of the obligations of right were inexorable. This resolute fidelity sometimes puzzled the lovers of expediency, and their politic suppleness shrank under the severity of convictions which they could not understand. Yet there was not an atom of pride or selfishness in it; it was the sole datum of an integrity that never flinched from responsibility, or tampered with its own convictions of truth and rightness. His views of himself were profoundly humble. He saw the evils of his own heart with a distinctness and a deep sensibility which scourged his self-esteem into complete abnegation. All these exhibits of stern fidelity were the fruit of his deep insight into the obligation of truth and duty. If there ever lived in this world a man of high and staunch principle, it was the subject of this sketch. Of the stuff martyrs are made of, he was all compact. His ideal of Christian character was framed on the words of our Lord, "*If ye love me keep my commandments.*" His conscience was tender and imperative in its ascendancy. His affections glowed under his steadfast demeanor like the white heat of anthracite. It is often the case, and he was a typical instance—that under the grave and steadfast character of a Calvinist, so often misunderstood, there glows the sweetest and tenderest affections, the liveliest sensibilities to poetic beauty, to the charms of wit, and even a frolicsome humor. Dr. Peck was full of these seemingly incongruous qualities. His affections were strong and naturally received what they gave. His family were devotedly fond of him; his students loved him; his friends were strongly attached to him. His laughter was so full of intense merriment it was irresistibly contagious. His own wit was as bright as his enjoyment of the wit of others. It seemed a singular expression of character to see this grave earnest mind abandon itself to a hilarity so free and joyous. His feelings were all deep and energetic, and in their higher moods would sometimes flow over into his preaching until the vigorous logic and the stately march of his periods would glow like a chain of steel in the fire of a furnace. In the earlier years of his religious history, he

was subject to occasional fits of depression, but in later years these passed away. This is the common experience of men of unusual talents. They stand on the threshold of the great arena eager for the competition and thirsting for success, yet uncertain of themselves; their abilities untested; and the strong impulses to action checked and fretted with the doubt whether the venture will prove a source of satisfaction or distress. In many cases this stage of the mental development produces moodiness and irritation; discontent with self breeds suspicion of others; and the manifestations of character become unpromising and perilous. In Dr. Peck's case there was nothing of this: the firm texture of his mind and his strong hold on the principles of religion, held down such effects of depressed feeling, and left him only to the grief it created, and to the silence of a steady endurance. As he passed on, and the development of his intellect and his growth in grace expanded into maturity, his steadfast nature with its underlying currents of lively and affectionate sensibility grew equable in their habitual manifestations. His work, whatever it was, was always well and faithfully done according to the law of his own exact and veracious conception of duty.

As a thinker, Dr. Peck was peculiar in some respects. His intellect was thoroughly developed under the boundary lines of his own gifts. Its leading characteristic was the power of analysis; and this faculty was under the control of a feeling of obligation to truth which determined the utmost thoroughness and exactness, both in his processes and his conclusions. He struck straight for the central principle in every subject of his investigation, and vigorously followed the logical lines of its development. In his sermons, in the briefs of his lectures, in all his work, this character of completeness and precision of outline—this thoroughness of analysis was conspicuous. His logical expositions rung clear in every link. This trait seems to have been characteristic from the beginning to the end of his career. It appears in a marked degree in one of his trial pieces for licensure now before us. It appears in a still more striking form in his *Ecclesiology*, the little work which embodies the mature results of long years of professional exertion in the class-room. Occasionally this vigorous pursuit of thoroughness subjected him to disadvantage in his public preaching. He was at times apparently over-trained, made stale by over-exertion, to use a phrase from the scientific discipline of

modern athletics, and there would be a noticeable lapse of faculty due to weariness from the strong wrestle with his deep compacted analysis. But as a general rule, it brought him into the pulpit or the chair of his lecture-room, with a mind full of well-digested thought. He left little room for impulse for sudden inspiration, for flashes of feeling or fancy. His mastery of the art of mental composition was complete in a rare degree, and when he was called upon to use his well-wrought material he was ready to respond. Not very often, and yet not very rarely, his feelings would kindle, not by flashes but by steady increase, into an intense glowing animation, and interpenetrate the strong-linked cable of his argument until it was hot with passionate emotion. But usually it came forth in a clear, well-sustained and strong stream of calm thought, bearing on the purpose in view with pointed logical power. Dr. Peck was no speculative genius, careering over the fields on either side of his line of march, and pushing on mere tentative expeditions. His mind was not inventive, but didactic—trained to exposition, not to discovery. His fidelity to his task as the teacher of a great fixed creed, his love of positive truth, his conscientious obligation to present no mere probability as authoritative reality kept him back from all mere tentative excursions. This stern integrity made him the invaluable teacher, not less than the high-toned Christian man that he was. But as an expositor of truth, as an exegete of Scripture, as a philosophic student of history, he was probably without a rival in his day. Clear as a brilliant day, his well-hammered expositions left the feeling on his audiences in the public assembly and on his classes that he had reached and was building on the bottom rock of his subject. The only fault of his teaching was the natural tendency in the class of minds to which he belonged, to push his logic to extremes, and with less regard to the effect of circumstances in modifying conclusions than is necessary in some cases. His place as a *teacher* will be hard to fill.

This supremacy of the analytic faculty obscured faculties of less prominence though existing in no unseemly disproportion to it. His imaginative faculty was vigorous, but was seldom allowed to show itself in those forms in which alone it is popularly recognized. It made itself apparent in his clear and often stately style, in the general hues and colors sometimes thrown over his topics, and in the definite outlines impressed on his narrative of facts. It seldom appeared in the mere ornament

of his diction; still less frequently in positive trope and figure, or imaginative analogies.

As a preacher, Dr. Peck justly took a high rank. His manner was ordinarily quiet; he used little gesture; there was no dramatic power. But from the full fountain of a full mind flowed a steady stream of clear-cut and continuous argument, brightened now and then with a diffused coloring of imaginative conception and infused with a spirit of habitual earnestness, which now and then deepened into passionate fervor, and rose into the region of a positive and high eloquence. Occasionally a flash of sarcasm would bite in the impression of the truth with extraordinary power. Generally there was an entire mastery of himself; occasionally he would be caught up in the torrent of his emotions, and the entire audience would follow with breathless interest a discourse protracted far beyond the modest limit ordinarily placed on his discussions. A scene like this in his earlier life is still remembered in the Buffalo congregation, when he preached for an hour and a half on the anticipation of heaven, during which he came down from the pulpit and walked back and forth before the people with his eyes streaming with tears, and his lips trembling under the torrent of his pathetic conceptions. A similar scene in some respects occurred in a sermon delivered in Farmville during the war. Such exhibitions however were rare. The prevailing type of his preaching was just what the commission of the gospel requires of every gospel minister, "*Go teach all nations.*" Dr. Peck's preaching was didactic and eminently instructive; its staple was clear exposition; it was aimed to develop as clearly and fully as possible the mind of the Spirit. The convincing power of his statements was wonderful and constituted one of the charms of his preaching. His exegesis of Scripture was exact and full; and when he had hewed the truth out of the mine, his analysis of its significance bore the stamp of that thoroughness and exactness which was the leading trait of his thinking. His enforcement of the truth on the heart and conscience bore the marks of the deep earnestness of his convictions. His style, both in speaking and writing, underwent a change as he passed from youth to age, although even to the last when roused in preaching, the stately march of his periods renewed the musical vigor of his earlier discussions. The longer sentences which distinguished his style at first grew compact and often curt in his later work. The expression of

collateral connections in his ideas was cut down; all modifications which interrupted the straight progress of the main thought were pruned away. He struck straight from the shoulder; every word not essential to carry the thought was ruled out. His style grew sententious and terse, almost curt. The thought stood revealed in itself and in its relation to the end in view with no room for question of its meaning or its intent. This development no doubt was due to the training of the class-room, and the necessity for precision and clearness in his instruction of his classes. But it was at the same time a development along the line of the leading trait of his intellect, and probably would have made its appearance if he had continued to teach only from the pulpit. His manner of speaking also changed; there was little variety in his emphasis in passing from sentence to sentence, but the supreme power of his clear thinking was unabated to the end.

Dr. Peck was eminently a Biblical preacher. He understood that his commission was to preach the word—to teach whatsoever the Master had said. His faithful and reverent spirit abhorred the prostitution of the Christian pulpit into a rostrum from which all sorts of subjects were discussed, and the instruction of the people made subordinate to their amusement. In this matter his example and his instructions were faithfully exerted to impress correct conceptions of gospel preaching on the students under his care. As long as such men are moulding the character of the rising ministry, the church has at least one valuable guarantee that it will not lack for ministers who need not to be ashamed of their work.

As a teacher, Dr. Peck carried the same traits of thoroughness and exactness into the class-room. His explanations were always clear, distinct in outline and thoroughly digested in the analysis of the body of the subject. His procedure was the old common sense Socratic method of question and answer following the statements of the text-book closely and thus discovering the fidelity with which the student had mastered it. Where he agreed fully with the text his concurrent expositions were brief. When he differed with the text his expositions of his own views were extended and carefully made. Occasionally he would resort to what was the favorite method of Dr. Baxter and Dr. Thornwell. After requiring the statement and proof of a point from the student each of those great dialecticians would assume the defence of the opposing error

thus revealing the lines of attack on the truth and requiring the learner to expose the error and defend the truth. Then in the close of the wrestle the teacher would expound clearly the whole ground covered, display the error in the antagonist reasoning and show the strength of the supports of the truth. As a general rule Dr. Peck was content with a fair statement of the opposing position, and then with a direct exposure of the infirmity of its defences. His manner to the students was always kindly, not demonstratively sympathetic, though his sympathies were always true and strong, and whenever an appeal was made to them it was always so met as to make a repetition far easier than the original application. He was hardly ever severe in censure; a silence that was as vocal as words and more impressive, was his method of rebuke, and a few grave words of kindly warning were the only approach to discipline. He was so revered by his classes nothing more was needed. He was solicitous to evoke the powers of the student, and used an effective degree of effort for the purpose, but had no extraordinary aptitude for this species of influence. His great merit lay in the unrivaled clearness of his expositions of the truth and its opposing error. There was no excuse for any student leaving the class-room with any incompetent conceptions. If he paid due attention he could not fail to carry away just views of the subject.

As a writer, the traits of style which distinguished his preaching appeared in his written discussions. Whenever he did write for the public press the work was valuable, but it was a fault with him as it is with other gifted men that he published so little. He has left behind him but few completely written sermons, but a great mass of notes and sketches from which it may be possible to make a valuable contribution to the literature of the church, and to leave something more than his living influence to test the qualities of a most noble servant of the Master, and to extend the influence of his noble gifts. We earnestly hope this may be done. Dr. Peck published one small volume containing the notes of his lectures on Ecclesiology. It is packed from beginning to end with the rich results of his study and lends emphasis to the regret that he published no more. Occupying for years the chair of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government he was fully competent to have given many a valuable lesson to the church and the world from his thorough mastery of the story of the

visible Kingdom of our Lord. Occupying for years the chair of Theology he was fully competent to have added to the treasures of the church in the exposition and defence of her creed. His actual publications beside the little volume just mentioned all limited to a few review articles, a few sermons, and a few articles in the Baltimore Critic, of which he was at one time joint Editor with Stuart Robinson. It is due to the memory of Dr. Peck that this deficiency be made up out of his posthumous writings if it can be done.

There is one great service rendered by him which is not generally known and in some respects perhaps the greatest he ever rendered. He is to be credited with restoring to the church that principle of her creed which is now recognized, *that giving is an ordinance of worship*. It is assuredly a remarkable fact that principles and even public offices, distinctly set forth and solemnly covenanted to be observed in the written creed of a church may not only pass out of use, but actually out of knowledge. The office of the Deacon and the principle that giving is an ordinance of public worship are samples of this fact in the history of the Presbyterian Church in this country, and we believe also in the history of the same church in the British Islands and on the continent of Europe. When the work of missions at home and in foreign parts fairly begun in this country the only recognized method of raising the necessary funds was by means of agents sent round to visit the churches. The very end and purpose of the organized church was this very enterprise of spreading the gospel and providing the men and means to do it through her own established instrumentalities. Yet this great leading end of the church had completely died out of the knowledge and practice of the church; and when under the stress of the difficulties created by this extraordinary condition of things, Dr. John Holt Rice offered a resolution in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian denomination that the church of Christ was by its very nature a Missionary Society he was construed as making an unauthorized innovation. The reason of this state of things was this: The Missionary movement was begun and directed by the Congregational churches of New England. The organic weakness of that system compelled the formation of societies outside of the church to carry on the work. The very terms of the apostolic commission and charter of the church required this work to be carried on by the church itself

and not by any outside organization whatever. But the Presbyterian church blind as a bat to the fundamental object of her own existence, took up the work of Missions in co-operation with these congregational societies. It nearly resulted in her ruin. In the course of time and events, however, her eyes were opened; but when she essayed to withdraw from this anomalous connection, and go into the discharge of her fundamental and plain duty, she was openly resisted. She was charged with bad faith. Her right to establish her own missions was denied. She was held bound by a temporary alliance with those who had no sympathy with her principles, rather than by the command of her head. The extraordinary conflict which ensued explained the extraordinary resolution of Dr. Rice, which to us seems as superfluous as a formal declaration that it is the business of a bank to do a banking business, or of a college that it is designed for educational purposes. The old school of Presbyterians having opened their eyes clung firmly to the discovered line of their duty. They withdrew from their anomalous entanglement and commenced their own work. But they were still in the dark as to the principles which regulated the subject, and years were to elapse before they succeeded in embodying their creed in their practice. They continued to raise the funds for Missions by travelling agents. They seemed utterly unable to rise to the conception, simple and obtrusively obvious as it is, that the revenues could be raised under the pastors and other officers of each church. The system of agencies however worked so badly and was fruitful of so much mischief to the pastors and churches, thoughtful men began to turn to the teachings of the Bible, the Creed and common sense, and soon the divinely given and distinctly covenanted principles which regulated the subject began to emerge. That great man and staunch Presbyterian, Robert J. Breckenridge, then a pastor in Baltimore, and editor of the Baltimore Literary and Evangelical Magazine began to teach what he had discovered in the Creed as drawn from the Bible. He found that the office representing the revenue and charitable side of the church had utterly perished out of the very knowledge of the church that such an officer was a part of her organization. Out of 900 churches then under the General Assembly only *nine* had deacons. It is now fully recognized that the organization of a Presbyterian church is as incomplete without deacons as a human face is

without a nose. It is now recognized that the office of deacon is as much, and even more distinctly an office of divine appointment as the office of ruling elder. These principles though as truly in the covenanted creed of the church then as they are now had sunken out of view and it is no wonder that the church had lost sight of the revenue principles of the kingdom when the revenue officers of the kingdom had been abolished. Under the able vindication of Breckenridge and the coadjutors who at once flocked around him, the office of the Deacon was restored to the place the Lord of the kingdom had given it, and an immense impulse was given to the revenue and work of the church. For all the benefits of this restoration, thanks are due, under God to Robert Breckinridge.

But all was not yet recognized that the Bible and the solemnly covenanted standards of the Presbyterian church demanded. The Revenue officers of the kingdom were found, but not the principles and rules for raising the revenue. Under the discoveries of Breckinridge the travelling agents were abolished, and the raising of the revenue was recognized as a regular part of the work of every organized church under the orders of its own government in the Elders, and by the executive agency of its own financial officers, the Deacons. But the system worked under friction: collections were looked upon under purely business aspects; they were not considered as expressions of religious feelings or as having any sanctifying purpose. The rectifying principle for all this incompetent conception of the subject had long ago been drawn from the Scriptures and embodied in the standards. They taught that giving was a divinely appointed ordinance of public worship, that it sustained the same relation to the sanctification of the worshipper that prayer, or praise, or sacrament sustained, that its benefits were conditioned by the spirit in which the ordinance was used just as every other ordinance was conditioned. It was a principle of extraordinary power, and bore upon personal and spiritual benefits to the user of the ordinance of great value, looking not merely to the resources of the kingdom but to the personal sanctification and comfort of the worshipper. This is now the universally recognized doctrine and practice of the church. Yet it lay long forgotten in the creed which every minister and elder of the church formally adopts at their ordination, and which the whole church glories in calling its own. That it was discovered and brought

out to exert its vast and beneficent influence, we trust for ages to come we owe under God to Dr. Thomas E. Peck. He was the first to find it in the creed and first to bring it back to the knowledge and obedience of the church. He did it in a paper, short, but crammed full of such irresistible evidence that it passed promptly when presented to the Presbytery of Baltimore, and began its march to the ascendancy it now maintains. Dr. Peck's titles to the esteem and gratitude of the church are many; but no service, but one—his training of the ministry for many years—rendered by him compares in importance with this.

There is another development of the Deacon's office required by the plain and positive demand of the Standards and the Word of God which remains to be accomplished. The financial side of the Deacon's office, important as it is, bears no proportion to the importance of its chief significance. The Deacon's office represents that side of the christian church by which it confronts the temporal evils of human life. It is also our Lord's appointment to secure the protection of his widows, his orphans, and his dependent poor within his kingdom. When it is advanced, as it will be finally, from its theoretical position in the creed to that practical development in every christian church which it was designed to secure, it will add immeasurably to the safety of God's helpless servants, to the well-being of the sick and the friendless stranger, to the honor of the church, and to the glory of her benignant head. It will extinguish the reproach on evangelical Protestant christianity that it is solely concerned for the spiritual welfare of mankind, and makes no provision for their temporal wants. It will strip Rome of one of her boasted superiorities and do justice to the kingdom of Christ. God speed the day.

Dr. Peck's domestic character and relations remains to be analyzed. In his family relations he was most happy. He was revered and dearly loved by all its members. A most affectionate and faithful father his children never once seemed to think of such a thing as going contrary to his wishes. His sway was that of absolute confidence in his wisdom, rectitude and affection, a confidence interpenetrated and colored by the warmest personal love. The sunnier elements of his nature broke from the restraints of his habitual gravity more freely and frequently under the shadow of his own roof-tree than anywhere else. In times of public trial and personal affliction,

he was the calmest and quietest of men. The secret of his peace was his deep unfailing confidence in God. During the war when the pressure on the people at home, for the means of subsistence had become stringent and universal, the writer of this sketch then living some forty or forty-five miles distant happened to meet some one from the neighborhood of the Seminary and inquired how the Professors were getting on. "Well," said he, "Dr. Dabney is fighting the Yankees, Dr. Smith is hunting for provisions, and Dr. Peck is trusting in God." He felt the calamity involved in the overthrow of the liberties and rights of self-government of the Southern people as every good man in the Confederacy felt it, but he bore it in silence and went on with his work. In his domestic afflictions, and in the final long struggle with the disorder that ended his life, the same steadiness and absolute submission was his prevalent feeling. The words were frequently on his lips, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." His last hours were sunken into insensibility, and he passed into the visions of the eternal peace without a sign of his parting.

A brave and strong standard-bearer has fallen at his post, faithful to the last. An example of fidelity to the truth, regardless of the judgments of men and only mindful of the will of the Master of Assemblies has been left to those who came after him. A most accomplished advocate and defender of the faith has left his work to be taken up by another. A noble character has left its record on earth and gone to its reward in heaven. The tears of natural grief are mingled with the upturned and smiling eyes which follow with joyful confidence the good man's ascent into the region of endless rest.

Avaunt : to-night my heart is light ;
 No dirge will I upraise ;
 But waft the saint upon his flight,
 With a paean of God's praise.
 Let no bell toll, lest his glad soul,
 Amid its hallowed mirth,
 Should catch the note, as it doth float
 Up from the accursed earth.
 From grief and groan to a golden throne
 His favored soul is riven ;
 From grief and groan to a golden throne
 Beside the King of Heaven.

From Poe's Lenore Unpaganized.

Dr. Peck left a family of a remarkable character in more than one respect. One of the most remarkable members of it

is his aged mother, who in her ninety-third year, survives her oldest as well as her youngest child. Infirm, but in sound health, and with faculties unimpaired the venerable saint bears her bereavement with cheerful trust in a long tried and trusted Savior. She waits without impatience and with serene hope her own summons to cross the river of the bitter water and rest in the shade of the trees on the farther side. Mrs. Peck, the widowed wife of the dead soldier of Christ, bears her loss with a serenity of hope and confidence, not seen once in a thousand cases of similar bereavement. Her steadfast and brave faith in the glorious assurances of the Christian gospel so completely overshadowed her personal loss in the heart-felt realization of the glory into which her husband had entered, that she had no room for thoughts of self or the losses of her home and children. She said she was so taken up with the thought of his delight, that when the funeral assembly was called on to close the funeral service with a song of praise to God, her own voice mingled with clear and decisive expression in the ascending harmony. For the first time in the life of every one present this strange and noble triumph of faith and hope was witnessed—a freshly widowed Christian wife with unfaltering tones praising God for his goodness to her dead.

Dr. Peck leaves three living daughters out of the seven that were given him: Sarah, the wife of Rev. James Edward Booker, pastor of the Hebron church in Augusta county, Va.; Ellen, wife of Rev. Alexander Sprunt, pastor at Rock Hill, South Carolina; and Sophie, wife of Rev. James R. Graham, Jr., Missionary in China. Several grand-children give reasonable assurance that his blood will continue to run in the veins of the living on earth for years to come. Meanwhile he rests in the vision of God, and will be fully content when his body, as well as his soul, awakes in the likeness of his Lord.

