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PIONEER

# PRESBYTERIANISM

IN TENNESSEE.

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ADDRESSES

DELIVERED AT THE TENNESSEE EXPOSITION  
ON PRESBYTERIAN DAY, OCTOBER 28, 1897.

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RICHMOND, VA.:

THE PRESBYTERIAN COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION,

1898

BX 8947  
T2P5



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REV. SAMUEL DOAK.

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BY J. W. BACHMAN, D. D.

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**T**HERE are periods and places which should never be forgotten. They make the foci of ellipsis which encompass infinite benedictions. There are times when the faculties of mind and heart and soul glow with a strange brilliancy; and these, gathering up all the good of the past and the hopes of the future, pour along man's pathway a flood of truth, principle and righteousness that honors God and blesses all succeeding ages.

There are times when the world enjoys moods of genius and piety. It may last for a decade, or cover a hundred years. During this period men move out on the stage, act their part, die, and many of them lie in unmarked graves; but through them—their labors, their prayers and tears, the world has had an uplift that has made the angels sing for joy.

In the days of Pericles, philosophy, oratory, poetry, culture, art and statesmanship culminated in a glory and excellence which have given models that still hold sway in every field.

After more than two thousand years, when you speak of oratory, you think of Demosthenes; of poetry, Homer rises before you; or art and architecture, you remember Phidias, a copy of whose immortal Parthenon we find among us, the masterpiece of our Exposition.

We do well not to forget the work and the workers of the past. Here are the fountains whose streams have made glad and beautiful the earth.

One hundred and twenty years ago a young man was moved by a divine impulse to pass the borders of civilization and build his cabin in the great valley of the Mississippi.

In that early day it was known as the Holston settlement, a part of North Carolina which afterwards became East Tennessee. It was a wild but good land then. The words of an old history describing a Land of Promise tells us of this country: "A land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills—a land of wheat and barley and corn and honey—a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills one may dig brass."

It was then an unbroken forest from Virginia to the farthest west, save here and there the cabin of the pioneer or the wigwam of the savage.

Into this wilderness rode a young man in

1779. He was separating himself by choice and being separated by divine purpose for great things.

History teaches that when God would put great forces in the field, he, first of all, separates the leaders to himself. Moses and Elijah were with him in the quiet and loneliness of the desert. John the Baptist and Paul were with him in the wilderness. The busy, hurrying, bustling world was shut out, and they were shut in with infinite wisdom, infinite power and infinite love. What a school! One man for a scholar and God for a teacher! Here they learned of him, and with him held converse as a man with his friend. It made life serious, earnest and strong to be alone with God, and gave to the world the most beneficent characters found in the annals of history.

Samuel Doak was separated from kith and kin and put in the wilderness of mountains and hills and savages to be the forerunner of a great people and the founder of institutions which have been a benediction to more than three generations.

Obeying an impulse, like the apostle of old, he must go into the regions beyond, and hither he came into this land where now we dwell, as the "apostle of learning and of religion."

He was born in Augusta County, Virginia, in

August, 1749, of Scotch-Irish parentage. His early life was one of struggle for self-development, that he might be a man as God intended. Working his way in the academic course and then teaching to secure means for further progress, he is soon found at Princeton, where he graduated under Dr. Witherspoon in 1775.

In that day knowledge was sought with great earnestness. When a young man wanted an education, his first inquiry was, how can I *make* the money? In these latter years of progress the young man's inquiry is, who will *furnish* the money to educate me?

Studying theology under approved teachers—practical and godly men—for there were no theological seminaries in the land—Mr. Doak was licensed by the Presbytery of Hanover, October, 1777.

The following year he moved into the Holston settlement, now East Tennessee. His first work was in Sullivan County in what is known as the Fork Church (New Bethel). It is probable that my great-grandfather, Joseph Rhea, of Ireland, had been preaching there for a few months, but did not settle on the field. Mr. Doak took charge and remained a year. In 1780, he moved into Washington County, and located on what is known as Little Limestone.

A singular providence caused him to settle

here. Riding through the forest, he came upon a company of men felling timber. They immediately asked his business, and were told that he was a preacher. They demanded an exercise of his gifts. Standing on a log, with his auditors sitting on the fallen trees around him, Mr. Doak preached his trial sermon. It seems to have been eminently satisfactory. He was called at once. Here he founded Salem Church and afterwards laid the foundations of a school which has been the fountain of blessing and power to all this western section. It was first chartered as Martin Academy and afterwards became Washington College, the first literary institution in the Mississippi Valley.

The beginnings of that day were small and simple. Three small cabins, made of logs, and you have the home, and the church, and the school. Early Presbyterianism, built on this foundation, and men stood firmly here to fight life's battles successfully and grow into perfect manhood.

About this time there was a remarkable excitement in all the region. The struggle for independence was on, and fears were greater than hopes. The invading army was driving everything before it in the south and east. Word had been sent to the mountain-men of

Watauga that if they did not lay down their arms, a lesson would be taught them they would not soon forget.

It was then that old men, and young men, and boys, at the call of Shelby, Campbell, and Sevier, could be seen rallying at Sycamore Shoals, on the Watauga. They came as the tribes came of old, when Samuel called, and there stood among them that day one like unto the judge of old, though the dew of his youth was still upon him.

The scene beggars description. Hundreds of hardy men with rifle, blanket, and haversack, with their wives and their little ones, bowed their heads, while Samuel Doak led in prayer.

Commending them to the favor of the God of battles, and asking protection for their wives and children in their absence, the prayer ends, when, springing to his feet, and looking like a messenger from the skies, he cried: "And now, my countrymen, the 'sword of the Lord and Gideon.'" Catching up the cry, the whole army shouted, "The sword of the Lord and Gideon." The far-off hilltops seemed to catch the shout, and, as if in joy at the coming struggle, tossed it from peak to peak, till every mountain was filled with the name of the Lord. And then the mighty cry rolled downward, filling the happy valley with a music akin to that

of victory, while the sparkling Watauga, as a laughing maiden, went singing the praises of the men who were going to fight the battle and turn the tide of victory on King's Mountain.

At his home on the Limestone, Dr. Doak accomplished the great work of his life. As preacher and teacher he laid foundations on which others have builded for more than a hundred years.

Salem, New Bethel, Concord, Hebron, New Providence, and Carter's Valley, in Hawkins county, and Mt. Bethel congregations were formed by him.

The preacher of that day was a man among men. On Sabbath morning he might be seen neatly and plainly dressed, according to the fashion of the day. Then putting on his shot-pouch and powder-horn, with rifle in hand, he would mount his horse and ride away to church. There he would find an intelligent and gallant congregation, armed like himself, ready to hear the word, or fight for the defence of their homes.

Dr. Doak was a plain, strong preacher of the word. He fed his people with the truth of God as he taught them in classics and mathematics, to make them strong men and women in the faith.

He has been described as rather rugged and

severe in aspect, above middle stature, knit brow and pressed lips, quick step, eye and face glowing with the light of faith and hope.

The most distinguished feature of his life was his labor to educate men. He was truly an "apostle of learning." A great student himself, mastering chemistry and Hebrew after he was sixty years old, he became a master to make others study. He was a profound classical and mathematical scholar.

The pride of his mature life was Washington College. In his later years, he founded Tusculum College. But the first institution he made the source of literary power in the land.

From this institution have been constantly flowing out newstreams which have been widening and deepening in their course, "enriching the medical department with men of well-cultivated genius, giving to the bench, the bar, the legislative halls, and especially the pulpit, their brightest ornaments." In short, this college has been a blessing to every department of civil and religious society.

Here such men as James Gallaher, Gideon Blackburn, John W. and A. A. Doak, Dr. J. G. M. Ramsey, John Blair, William Dulaney, L. C. Haynes, John Netherland, James A. Lyon, N. G. Taylor, J. D. Tadlock, who were giants in their day, were educated.

Dr. Doak left his finger-prints on the workers in every field. Men of principles never die. They cease from their labors, but their work goes on.

Men with a purpose are not driftwood on the stream. They plant themselves along the shore and live on in those who follow them.

At the ripe age of four-score years, Dr. Doak was translated into the kingdom above. His body sleeps in old Salem church-yard among those he loved and taught.

“ Taking him for all in all,  
We shall not look upon his like again.”

It was said at his funeral, and a hundred years will not change the verdict: “It is believed that his usefulness to his country either as a minister or as a teacher of letters and science has not been surpassed by that of any other man the United States has produced.”

As Dr. Girardeau said of his old friend and co-laborer, Dr. Bachman, of Charleston, S. C., so may we say: “When Doak died, science and religion walked arm in arm and laid their blended wreaths of laurel upon his honored grave.”

In his great work of preaching, teaching, and travelling, Dr. Doak had true and noble help-meets. His first wife was Miss Esther H. Mont-

gomery, daughter of a Presbyterian minister in Virginia. His second wife was Mrs. Margaret McEwen, of Nashville, Tenn. These were true, noble and self-sacrificing women, and the church recognizes in them faithful co-laborers and well-beloved servants of Jesus Christ.

Good wives make great men. Their husbands are known in the gates and their children rise up to call them blessed, because they have looked well to the ways of their households and been willing servants of the church.

I would pause here a moment to have you notice that a "distinguishing feature of that early civilization was education, and education for its own sake—not according to the modern utilitarian idea."

The idea with these early teachers was to make men. They caught God's idea. The unit of value was manhood, not gold. "I will make a man more precious than fine gold."

There was little artificial or decorative in their work; solid foundations and strong masonry all the way to the top. Such education always lifts man toward God and heaven.

"Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

So you find Doak and Balch and Carrick and Anderson uniting the school with the church. The home, the school-room, and the pulpit

have always made men and women of whom the state and the church have been proud.

The education of that day linked earth and heaven, God and man, and the product is such men as these.

We are sometimes disposed to attribute a good deal to pure air and the mountain scenery of our land in the formation of character. These have their influence, but it is ideas that lift men heavenward, not mountains. "The reptile may crawl to the highest peak; but it is only the bird of strong wing and dimless eye that can soar beyond the lightning's play and thunder's roll," and look unabashed in the face of the sun.

Dr. Doak had many worthy successors. Two sons and one grandson followed his footsteps in the ministry and the work of education. John W. and Samuel W. Doak, his sons, became presidents of Washington College, also A. A. Doak, his grandson, filled the president's chair in 1844.

"He was then young, handsome, ambitious, generous, and noble. In classical learning he equalled, if not surpassed, any scholar in the land. His whole mind and heart seemed in love with the Greek.

"Sometimes he would read a passage in the original, and his rich, musical voice, and the

glow of his countenance, made you almost imagine that you were listening to the blind bard of Scio reciting his immortal story of Troy."

In the pulpit he was like unto Chalmers. But time fails me to give more than a partial roll-call of the contemporaries, students, and successors of this great man. Their labors, like his, were abundant and faithful, and their memories are fragrant.

Cummins, Balch, and Blackburn stood with him on the field. "Close beside them Isaac Anderson, of giant mould in body, mind, and heart. John Doak, of mellifluous tongue; Charles Coffin, of classic eloquence; Abel Pearsons, of prophetic ken; David Nelson, of enthusiastic zeal; James Gallaher, of majestic oratory; and finally, the last of that generation to cross the flood and lay down his honors at the feet of the Master, the erratic, but generous, brilliant, amiable, admirable Frederick A. Ross."

A great crowd stand with these or follow in their train. William Eagleton, Jno. McCampbell, Stephen Bovell, William Minnis, Gideon S. White, Nathan Hood, James A. Lyon, Phillips Wood, Daniel Ragon, George A. Caldwell, all these and scores of others in the home-field (and Cyrus Kingsbury and Samuel A. Rhea in

the foreign field) contended for the faith in the land where Doak laid the foundations.

“Through faith these subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valliant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.”

This day the Presbyterian Church, the mother of us all, with parental affection and denominational pride, places laurel wreathes upon their graves, and blesses God that they lived and labored in this fair land, and that the mortal remains of so many of them sanctify the soil, while they wait the glories of the resurrection morn.

“Tho’ dead they speak in reason’s ear,  
And in example live;  
Their faith and hope and mighty deeds,  
Still fresh instruction give.”

And now, fathers and brethren, I am persuaded the Master calls to us who remain to so live that when

“We strike these desert tents  
And quit these desert sands”

we shall greet him and them at the general assembly of the saints in the city of the Great King.