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HISTORY
OF THE
San Francisco Theological Seminary
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN THE U. S. A.
AND ITS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.

BY
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WILLIAM A. SCOTT, D. D., LL. D.

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The name that will ever stand most prominent in connection with the founding and the work of the early years of the San Francisco Theological Seminary is that of Rev. Dr. W. A. Scott. Coming to California in the days of the pioneers, his mind at once adverted to the necessity of such an institution, and when the time came for its establishment he was an able advocate for it; and after the Seminary was started no one else did so much to carry it through its years of weakness and struggle. He was not only a Professor to give instruction to the students, but he was also President of the Faculty, of the Directors and of the Trustees. In all these places he was found competent and untiring in labors, while he ever looked to God in faith and prayer to direct and prosper the cause. For almost fourteen years he carried on this work in connection with the onerous duties of a large church, and he lived to see the Seminary comfortably housed in its home on Haight street, San Francisco, and well started on its way to the greater prosperity that has come to it in later years.

He was a man of able and diversified talents, and comparatively few men exercise so great an influence in so many different fields as did he.

Dr. W. A. Scott was of Scotch-Irish parentage, and was born at Rock Creek, Tenn., January 31, 1813. He

died in San Francisco, Cal., January 14, 1885, at the age of 72.

He entered Cumberland College, Ky., while still young and graduated with distinction in 1833. In 1833-4 he was a student in Princeton Theological Seminary, N. J. He received the degree of D. D. from the University of Alabama in 1844, and that of LL. D. from the University of New York in 1872.

HOME MISSIONARY.

He united with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in 1828, and at the early age of 17 he was licensed to preach. For a year before entering college he labored as a Home Missionary in various places in Tennessee. He was chaplain in the army during the Black Hawk War, and in that service encountered many hardships and dangers. After about two years of labor in this way he was ordained, May 17, 1835, in Alexandria, La.

LITERARY WORK.

Dr. Scott was also engaged in various lines of literary work. He had a large library, was a voracious reader, and had at ready command a vast store of knowledge. For three years he conducted and edited the "Pacific Expositor," a religious monthly, and he helped to establish and sustain "The Occident," which was for many years the organ of the Presbyterian Church on the Pacific Coast. He took much interest in matters of science and was a friend of Professor Louis Agassiz, the distinguished scientist.

He was a prolific writer and published several books. Among these are "The Christ of the Apostles' Creed," "Strauss and Renan," "The Wedge of Gold," "The

Giant Judge," "The Bible and Politics," "Esther, the Hebrew-Persian Queen," "Achan in El Dorado," "The Pentateuch," etc.

He was a great traveler also, and had traversed the Holy Land, Arabia, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, the Continent of Europe and other countries. In this he gathered up much interesting knowledge of the world, with which he enriched his preaching and his writings. He was well versed in ancient and modern literature, and studied and read eleven languages. Dr. Scott was pre-eminently a

GREAT PREACHER.

Soon after his ordination he became pastor of the church of which General Jackson became a communing member. This was at the Hermitage of General Jackson, and was supported largely by the General, who was a warm friend of Dr. Scott.

From there he went to the Presbyterian Church at Tuscaloosa, Ala., and in 1842 he was called to succeed Dr. John Breckenridge as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of New Orleans. He drew to this church many influential men, and under his ministrations it became the largest and wealthiest church in the South.

His arduous labors impaired his health at different times, and, that he might recuperate, his friends twice sent him to travel in Europe and the Orient. During these trips they continued his salary, paid his traveling expenses and supplied his pulpit.

IN CALIFORNIA.

On account of broken health he came to San Francisco in 1854 and founded Calvary Presbyterian Church.

Under his leadership this became the strongest Presbyterian church on the Coast, and remained so for many years. In 1858 he was elected Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, which met in New Orleans.

He resigned his pastorate in 1861 and for two years traveled in Europe, during which time he was for awhile in charge of the new John-street Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, England.

In 1863 he returned to America and became pastor of the Forty-second-street Presbyterian Church of New York. He was called back by his friends to San Francisco in 1870. Here he founded St. John's Presbyterian Church. This grew to be large and influential, and he continued as its pastor until his death in 1885.

In the pulpit Dr. Scott was impressive. He was a man of large frame, massive brow and commanding presence. His face beamed with an expression of kindness, intelligence and earnestness. He had a sweet and powerful voice, that filled the largest building, and a ready command of language. His mind was a storehouse of truth, fact and illustration, and with convincing argument and impassioned eloquence he preached the gospel of salvation.

Dr. Scott exercised great influence as

AN EDUCATOR.

Soon after his ordination he established a Seminary for Young Ladies at Winchester, Tenn. From there he was called in 1833 to become President of the Nashville Female Seminary, which had between three hundred and four hundred students.

After coming to California he took a leading part in

founding and supporting University City College, and in later years University Mound College, both in San Francisco. These were for a time vigorous and growing schools for Christian education under the care of Presbyterians. And so the logical step next in order was to found a theological seminary. As has been seen, Dr. Scott was a prime mover in this.

It was in his mind to see such an institution founded when he first entered the Golden Gate in 1854. He was one of the two who determined in 1871 that such an institution should be founded and prepared the way for it. He presented the matter to the Synod in October of that year and his influence helped to persuade his brethren to undertake the great work. He was convener of the committee appointed to carry out the project, and in the final organization was placed at the head of the Directors and Faculty, and for many years he gave himself with all his energies and influence to its development.

He was from the first until the day of his death Professor of Systematic Theology and Mental and Moral Philosophy. He was well qualified for this position, not only by his eminent learning, but also by his "aptness to teach" and the deep interest he took in the students. He used to call them "his boys," and they all felt that he was to them as a father. He won their unbounded love, respect and admiration, and, with Mrs. Scott, often entertained them in his home. He was at the head of the Faculty, Directors and Trustees for fourteen years and thus took the leading part in directing the educational and financial affairs of the Seminary. He also wielded a great influence among Presbyterians and the public generally, and with voice and pen he did

much to awaken among them a deeper interest in this School of the Prophets.

He was permitted to live to see this institution well established and with bright prospects before it, many of which have since been realized. The founding of the Seminary was doubtless his most important work and the crowning glory of his life. And under the favor of God it will ever remain his best and most enduring monument.