CENTENNIAL ADDRESSES

I.

Dr. Thornwell As a Preacher and a Teacher

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I confess to sincere hesitancy and genuine misgiving in allowing myself, by the action of the other members of the committee appointed to arrange for this centennial, to be put upon its program. In my own opinion, others could have done the service better. But to discourse upon Dr. Thornwell as a Preacher and a Teacher, it seemed important to have one who knew him as such by personal experience. And so great have been the ravages of death during the fifty years since his departure, that very few now remain of the many who sat under his ministry as a Preacher, and at his feet as a Teacher. But, having enjoyed this rare privilege during my whole Seminary course, circumstances appeared to make it proper that I should undertake the task assigned.

And so, what I shall say on this occasion will be largely reminiscent. Although a half-century, full of exciting events in our history and of absorbing work on my own part, has elapsed since my illustrious friend and preceptor was called from distinguished and most useful service on earth to the higher and more blessed service of Heaven, I still retain a very distinct impression and vivid recollection of him, both in the pulpit and in the professor's chair. And I have refreshed my memory in this respect and gathered further authentic information, by re-reading—and I must say, with the most intense pleasure and profit—"Thornwell's Life and Letters," by his friend and co-laborer, Dr. B. M. Palmer, who, I am told, regarded this book as his best contribution to the press.

Dr. Thornwell's public service to the Church and his generation alternated between that of preaching and teaching, and for the most part combined the two functions. It seems appropriate, therefore, that he should be considered in these two kindred aspects of his life and service together. But, to treat the subject more clearly, let us distinguish, and consider first

DR. THORNWELL AS A PREACHER.

In a very remarkable way the Lord indicated His predestination of young Thornwell to the gospel ministry. So far as we have any record, he was not born and reared in circumstances which pointed in this direction. His father, whose occupation was that of an overseer of slaves on the plantation of another, died when James was nine years of age, and left his widowed mother with several small children to care for and rear, in a condition of poverty and straitness which afforded her little opportunity to provide for their due education and training. That she was a woman of positive religous character, who impressed upon her son's youthful mind the truths of Christianity, he himself gratefully testifies. But, on account of his aptness to learn and his manifest brilliancy of intellect, at an early age he was taken from his home to be educated through the generosity of kind and noble gentlemen. And, as far as we can gather, neither of these in any way sought to direct his attention to the ministry. Mr. W. H. Robbins, who had taken the bright lad to his own home in Cheraw to educate him, was not at that time a professing Christian; and both he and Gen. James Gillespie, the other patron, had thought and spoken of the profession of the law, which Mr. Robbins himself followed, as affording the proper sphere for the development and exercise of the talents of their little, pale-faced protege. But when young Thornwell, dwelling in the home of his bachelor patron and enjoying the advantages of his society and his library, as well as of the village school, was yet a youth of sixteen, he heard incidentally from his patrons their idea that he should become a lawyer. And so overwhelming was his conviction at that time, though not then himself a professing Christian, that he must prepare for the gospel ministry, even though it involved, as he apprehended, the sundering of the affectionate and delightful relations with his noble patrons and his loss of their needed help in his education, he felt constrained to inform Mr. Robbins; and, unable to talk to him face to face about the matter, he wrote a manly, courageous letter, unfolding his views and convictions; and, putting it under Mr. Robbins' plate at the supper table, hid himself until the dreaded revelation should occur. Mr. Robbins read it, and hunting his missing protegé, found him hiding on the piazza and weeping as if his heart would break. But, noble and wise man that he

was, he took James by the hand, led him back to his accustomed place, and comforted his anxious heart with the assurance that no obstacle would be put in the way of his complying with his convictions of duty, and that the kindly relations between him and his patrons should not be disturbed on that account.

We hear no more of this matter until young Thornwell had been graduated at South Carolina College, with the first honors of his class, at the age of nineteen, and was engaged in teaching at Sumterville, S.C., where he made profession of faith and united with old Concord Church. And now firmly decided to preach the gospel, he declared at once that purpose and began to direct his further studies to that end.

Just here it is proper to explain how young Thornwell became a Presbyterian and turned to the ministry of our Church. He was not born and bred in that faith. His mother was a member of the Baptist Church, and so lived and died. None of his generous patrons who educated him were Presbyterians. The family of Mr. Pegues, to which he was first taken, was of the Methodist persuasion. Mr. Robbins, with whom he resided afterwards, though reared a Congregaitionalist, was not, as already said, at that time a member of the church, but later in life united with the Episcopal Church. While at college in this city, Thornwell rarely—it is said only once—attended the Presbyterian Church. But it is related that in one of his afternoon strolls in Columbia he dropped into a book store; and, ever eager after books, he noticed one lying on the counter bearing the name "Confession of Faith." (Westminster, of course.) Struck with its contents, he bought it and took it to his room in the college. And beginning to read it, he was so fascinated with its logical unfolding of Scripture truth that he read it through that night before he lay down to sleep; and he was so thoroughly convinced by the truth it set forth, that he accepted its system of doctrine at once. Hence, when a year or two later he was converted, he naturally sought membership in the Presbyterian Church. And, in passing, let me add that in after life there never was a more sincere and ardent adherent, and an abler, nobler champion of our standards than he.

Although directing his studies in preparation for the ministry, young Thornwell continued to teach in Sumterville, and

subsequently in Cheraw, for a year or two more. Why did he not, as usual in this day, repair to the theological seminary? Our cherished institution in Columbia, although his eyes were turned to it, was then in its infancy—planted there in 1831, the year of his graduation—and with very inadequate and unattractive equipment. He was induced to go to Andover Seminary, but was not at all pleased with the conditions there; and soon went to Harvard University, where he pursued special studies for a few months.

In 1833 he was taken under care of Harmony Presbytery as a candidate for the ministry, and in 1834, when twenty-two years of age, was licensed by the same presbytery as a probationer for this office. Shortly afterwards he began the regular work of the ministry at Lancasterville, in this state, where a new church was organized, and he served his first pastorate in that and the country churches of Waxhaw and Six-Mile Creek.

At this point in my discourse it may be well to set forth Dr. Thornwell's conception of a call to the ministry and some of his early experiences in connection with this office and work. He was always a man of very dear views and very positive convictions of the truth. Though recorded later in life, I quote from his own pen his idea of a call to preach the gospel. (Collected Writings, Vol. IV., pp. 32, 33): "That a supernatural conviction of duty, wrought by the immediate agency of the Holy Ghost, is an essential element in the evidence of a true vocation to the ministry, seems to me to be the clear and authoritative doctrine of the Scriptures. Men are not led to the pastoral office as they are induced to select other professions in life; they are drawn, as a sinner is drawn to Christ, by a mighty, invincible work of the Spirit. The call of God never fails, to be convincing. Men are made to feel that a woe is upon them if they preach not the Gospel. It is not that they love the work/for often, like Moses, they are reluctant to engage in it, and love at best can only render its duties pleasant; it is not that they desire the office, though in indulging this desire they seek a good thing; it is not that they are zealous for the glory of God and burn for the salvation of souls, for this is characteristic of every true believer; nor is it upon a due estimate of their talents and acquirements they promise themselves more extended usefulness in this department of labor than in any other, for

no man is anything in the kingdom of heaven except as God makes him so; but it is that the Word of the Lord is like fire in the bones; they must preach it or die; they cannot escape from the awful impression, which haunts them night and day and banishes all peace from the soul until the will is bowed, that God has laid this work upon them at the hazard of their lives."

And a striking incident connected with his entrance upon this high and holy calling is recorded. Like every other young candidate, he had his doubts and misgivings as to his call, though impelled by a conviction of duty to seek the office. He was on his way to his first, or an early, appointment in the new field to which he had been invited. And, like the struggle which involved the soul of Jesus in His temptation in the wilderness, the powers of darkness overwhelmed him, and the artful adversary plied him with the most serious misgivings. With a high-strung, sensitive nature like his, and the world appealing most powerfully to his natural ambition, it was a fearful struggle, a real Gethsemane in his experience. But the crisis came as he entered the pulpit and began the service. Light from above then beamed in upon him, peace and joy filled his soul, and the Spirit of God unloosed his fettered lips. The question was settled, the victory was won, the divine anointing was bestowed; and the charmed hearers bore testimony to his power. And from that momentous hour he was a minister called and owned of the Lord.

But though favored and encouraged in his ministry, enjoying constant evidences of the divine blessing upon his work, the young pastor did not remain long at Lancasterville. After two years in this field, Dr. Thornwell, then twenty-five years of age, was elected professor of Logic and Belles Lettres in South Carolina College and called back to this high service in his Alma Mater. How, with his exalted views of his sacred calling, he could have accepted this position which did not offer the opportunity of regularly preaching the Gospel, we are not advised. But doubtless, there were reasons unrecorded which made him recognize this to be the call of God.

However, his insatiable desire to preach the Word and his deep sense of obligation to fulfill his ministerial calling made him restive and prevented his remaining long in this otherwise con-

genial and honorable position. Before two years had elapsed, he joyfully accepted a call to the pastorate of this (Columbia) church and came back to the pulpit—which he filled with great zeal, ability and satisfaction to his flock.

But only one year passed before he was again called back to the college, this time to be its chaplain, as well as professor of Sacred Literature and Evidences of Christianity.

This position Dr. Thornwell filled with signal ability and success for ten years. While he taught Christianity from his chair with ardor and force, he served also as the duly appointed pastor of the college community, conducted the daily prayers, and preached the Gospel with burning zeal every Sabbath in the chapel. But his passion for the full and undivided work of the ministry kept him restless and dissatisfied, even with these great opportunities of usefulness to the young men of his native State and to others who shared his ministry in this prominent seat of learning. And so, when a call came to him to the pastorate of the Second Church of Baltimore, recently vacated by the distinguished Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge, he gladly consented to accept it; and Charleston Presbytery, though most reluctant to have him leave, put the call into his hands. But the College trustees, supported strongly by the faculty, availed themselves of a rule not hitherto enforced, and put a veto upon his going by refusing to release him without a year's notice in advance. However, in 1851, when another call came to him from Glebe Street Church, Charleston, he did accept it and entered once more upon coveted pastoral work.

As I now see it, it seems strange that a minister whose fame had already spread abroad throughout the land and stood in the very front rank of our preachers, should have considered a call from what was then little more than a missionary enterprise of the Second Church of Charleston, and used a small, unattractive building located on a narrow side street in an obscure situation, which in later years was abandoned for these reasons. (As a lad of twelve years, I happened to be on a visit to Charleston in March, 1851, and heard Dr. Thornwell's sermon on a trial visit to this church, the first sermon I ever heard him preach.) But, strange as it may appear that he should have accepted this call, such was his zeal to preach the Gospel that he went, entered with fervor upon the pastoral work, attracted

audiences that made the little building overflow and require enlargement of its accommodations, and greatly delighted his flock.

But scarcely eight months had passed before South Carolina College once more laid its hands upon its now distinguished alumnus and professor, and called him back to its service, this time as president as well as chaplain and professor in his former chair. Seriously hesitating and most reluctant to surrender his delightful and promising pastorate, Providence, as he felt, led him back to the college. And four years more of splendid service were given to that institution, where his administration as president was most successful at a time when it was greatly needed. But the time had now come when his Church realized that she should have his services in another sphere. Accordingly, in 1856, he was transferred to the Theological Seminary in Columbia, as professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology, and filled in connection therewith once more the pulpit of this church—for a while as stated supply, and then as installed pastor. This latter relation, however, was of short duration, on account of his final failure of health, followed August I, 1862, by his untimely decease. It was while he served this church in 1859 that I, as a student of the Seminary, came under his ministry and heard him preach, more or less constantly, until my graduation in 1862.

Before passing from this brief outline of Dr. Thornwell's work as a preacher, it may be well to consider for a moment that apparently strange fact that, though so eminent as a preacher of eloquence, ability and popularity, and so renowned and valued throughout the Church, he should have spent so large a portion of his ministry in the State institution—where all the time he felt painfully caged and cribbed in the exercise of his ministry, restricted to very small and doubtless unappreciative audiences, and the burden of teaching was constantly repressing his energies and exhausting his strength. In looking back at the Providence which so ordered his lot, the explanation is probably to be found in this fact: At the time when young Thornwell entered South Carolina College its president was Dr. Thomas Cooper, a man captivating in many respects, but a blatant infidel, who was using his high office to poison the minds of the choicest young men of the State attending upon its chief institu-

tion of learning, and in disseminating infidel influences from which our people did not recover for a generation or more. But Dr. Thornwell seems to have been the man whom God raised up, qualified and sent to this very fountain of baleful influence to correct and purify it, and redeem the State from its pernicious power. While yet himself but a youthful student in the College, although an ardent admirer of Dr. Cooper personally, he soon discovered and began to combat and tear to pieces the flimsy infidel system of his instructor. And, as he developed more and more, he appeared to be the very man capable of destroying this evil, to which the eyes of the public had become opened, and of saving the rising generation of our cultured young men from the ruin which threatened them. To do, and to complete, this great and important work, the Lord appears to have held him in the College, and to have sent him back again and again, until the time had come for him to enter upon and fulfill his noblest and best work in connection with the School of the Prophets in this city.

And now, having given this hurried sketch of Dr. Thornwell's ministry, let us next consider what were his characteristics as a Preacher.

His bodily presence was not imposing. He was small of stature, spare of build, with diminutive limbs—his weight being hardly over 100 pounds. His shoulders were a little stooped and his chest flat and somewhat sunken. His hair was jet black and worn longer than usual in this day; and he always, as I knew him, wore side whiskers. His dress was somewhat peculiar: always black, and his everyday attire was generally a swallow-tail coat, high-heel boots and beaver hat. His voice, though rather coarse for one of his size, was not high-keyed or very strong. His manner in the pulpit appeared at first a little awkward, marked by a nodding of the head as he emphasized in reading and beginning to speak; but all this passed off as he warmed up to his subject. His action was not specially graceful, his gestures being somewhat angular, and the lifting of both hands—the right holding a large white handkerchief—was very common. But all this was unnoticed as he proceeded with his discourse. His tone in the pulpit was always solemn, and grave, and earnest. He might practise pleasantry in the class room, or on the floor of the Church courts, but never in the pulpit, where he seemed

to realize fully that he stood as an ambassador of Christ to dying men. The profoundest reverence, earnestness and zeal pervaded his pulpit utterances. And withal there was about him an inexplicable something which impressed and captivated his hearers; as one of my classmates expresses it, describing his own experience as he heard Dr. Thornwell for the first time: "A mysterious power—not universally bestowed: an attribute of greatness: a soul power that seems almost to disregard physical conditions and material instrumentalities. I think I should have had a spiritual uplift if I had gone home without hearing the great preacher say a word. It would have been a wordless sermon of great power and lasting enrichment."

His language was rather that of the schools than of the masses. He says himself that he was at first sadly deficient in the use of words; and for this reason committed to memory in. early life much of the Scriptures, Milton and Shakespeare, in order that he might acquire the English tongue. And he had studied philosophy so constantly and enthusiastically that he naturally acquired the habit of thinking and speaking in terms adapted to this science. So his language was not popular. I have heard him try to preach to children; but very soon his tongue would slip off into phraseology which they could not understand. I have heard him preach to negroes, but unconsciously he dressed his thoughts in words above their comprehension. And in late years I have heard some say that they could not read his writings with pleasure because his style was not what they could readily understand. But for my own part, having become accustomed to it, his style is to me the most attractive of any author whose writings I consult. It is wonderfully clear and thoroughly accurate—always using the very best English word to express the thought. And Dr. Thornwell had so thoroughly studied the Bible and incorporated its truths and language into the very fibre of his thoughts, that his sermons and other religious writings are steeped with Scripture ideas and phraseology—his profoundest conceptions of truth and his grandest arguments in its exposition and vindication finding expression in the very words of inspiration. This adds the highest charm to his style.

Some say, too, that he lacked imagination in his preachings. But, while it is true that he did not freely indulge this faculty and

gave flights to his imaginative and descriptive powers, as some others whom I have known, his manner of sermonizing being rather that of close reasoning and impetuous argument, I did not observe any lack in this respect when I sat under his ministry; nor do I perceive it now when I read his sermons, which appear to me to abound in appropriate figures and the choicest rhetoric.

Some again have entertained the idea that Dr. Thornwell was cold and intellectual in his preaching. There never was a greater mistake. While his sermons were indeed intellectual, in that they were profound, logical and distinctly argumentative, they were most thoroughly Scriptural and spiritual. He heartily accepted the Bible as the infallible and all-sufficient Word of God, which alone he was commissioned to preach. And I never sat under any preacher who more faithfully expounded Scripture. And as he had himself drunk deeply of the fountains of grace in his profound studies and in the frequent and severe discipline to which Providence subjected him, he poured forth in his discourses the most spiritual views and applications of Divine truth.

Another characteristic of Dr. Thornwell's preaching was—what Dr. James W. Alexander notes in his "Thoughts on Preaching"—that he often used great themes on which he prepared great sermons. As evidence of this, look at the few sermons which have been preserved and are published in his "Collected Writings." Many of these great sermons on great themes were his baccalaureate sermons while chaplain of South Carolina College, preached specially to the graduating classes of that institution. One of these, a commencement sermon, I have lately re-read, in order specially to judge of his style and his method of preaching. It is that on "The Necessity of the Atonement," delivered to the graduating class of South Carolina College in 1844. It is in itself a masterly treatise on theology, covering all the essentials of the Christian scheme, and setting forth the whole plan of redemption in its clearest and most Scriptural view. As I thus read it over thoughtfully and carefully, I was not surprised at what occurred in my personal experience many years ago. While I was laboring as evangelist of Charleston Presbytery in 1867-9 and was intimately associated with the ministers of Charleston, I remember that one day Dr. Gir-

ardeau remarked to me: "Dr. Thornwell's sermon on 'The Necessity of the Atonement' has done more in shaping my theology than anything that ever came into my hands." (Of course, he had no reference to the Bible.) And not long afterwards I was talking with the Rev. Christopher P. Gadsden, a prominent and most evangelical Episcopal minister of that city—rector of St. Luke's Church—and he made identically the same remark. Later I learned that Mr. Gadsden was a member of that graduating class to which the sermon was preached, of 1844, and was chairman of the committee which requested and secured its publication.

And this brings me to the consideration of the effects of Dr. Thornwell's preaching. None who knew him would question his matchless ability, his profound learning, his fervid eloquence, and his spiritual unction. But what were the practical, spiritual effects of his great preaching? That he was a Revivalist, whose ministry was distinguished by gathering souls into the kingdom—as was Dr. Daniel Baker, of that day, and Dr. R. A. Torrey, of the present time—none would say. He seems not to have directed his efforts especially upon this line. But, as to the real, permanent effects of his ministry in upholding the truth, in vindicating the Word of God, in relieving doubts, in comforting the sorrowing, and in edifying the saints, there is abundant testimony. Everywhere that God called him to preach, the common people heard him gladly and flocked to attend upon his ministrations. It is related that in his earliest ministry in Lancaster County the country people heard him with rapt attention and delight, and sometimes were so charmed and impressed under his preaching that unconsciously they gathered about the pulpit as they eagerly listened to his powerful preaching. The late Dr. A. A. Morse, of our Synod, once told me that while he was a student of South Carolina College, James H. Carlisle, the eminent saint and distinguished educator of my own city, who lately passed away, entered the college. His father, a local Methodist preacher, had had serious misgivings about sending his son there to sit under the Calvanistic preaching of Chaplain Thornwell. (We Methodists and Presbyterians of this day understand each other better.) But Sabbath after Sabbath, upon returning from the chapel services, young Carlisle would stop at Morse's room to talk over

the sermon, and freely declared that he had never heard the Scriptures so delightfully and profitably expounded before. He, too, was of the class and committee that claimed the sermon on "The Necessity of the Atonement."

Only the other day a brother was telling me that Dr. Brackett, my gifted classmate, who was not given to emotional excitement, had told him how, while we were students together in the Seminary, he had wept under Dr. Thornwell's preaching as he unfolded and pressed the claims of foreign missions from the pulpit. When he was pastor of Glebe Street Church, Charleston, I have been told, that one evening he preached a sermon on the Judgment; and, without any appeals to the imagination or pathetic picturing of the terrors attending that great event, but in the earnest, powerful opening up of the awful truth, the whole congregation appeared terror-stricken and unconsciously seized the backs of the pews, as when Jonathan Edwards preached his memorable sermon on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." One young man, who in later years became an associate of mine, was present on this occasion, and said he never was so frightened in all his life.

At the General Assembly in Indianapolis, in 1859, it is related that Dr. Thornwell preached a sermon from the text, "Simon, son of Jonas; lovest thou Me?" which melted the whole audience to tears.

These are a few instances of the immediate effect of his preaching, which might be multiplied. And, if I may bear my own personal testimony, although I had enjoyed the ministrations of fine preachers before I came to the Seminary, I never sat under the preaching of any minister who so impressed, instructed, and edified me as did Dr. Thornwell. And so from my own experience, I am prepared to endorse most heartily this glowing portrayal of his preaching as given by Dr. Palmer:

"The feature most remarkable in this prince of pulpit orators was the rare union of vigorous logic with strong emotion. He reasoned always, but never coldly. He did not present truth in what Bacon calls 'the dry light of the understanding'; clear, indeed, but without the heat which warms and fructifies. Dr. Thornwell wove his argument in fire. His mind warmed with the friction of his own thoughts, and glowed with the rapidity of his own motion; and the speaker was borne along in what

seemed to others a chariot of flame. One must have listened to him to form an adequate conception of what we mean. Filled with the sublimity of his theme, and feeling in the depths of his soul its transcendent importance, he could not preach the Gospel of the grace of God with the coldness of a philosopher. As the flood of his discourse set in, one could perceive the ground-swell from beneath, the heaving tide of passionate emotion which rolled it on. Kindling with a secret inspiration, his manner lost its slight constraint; all angularity of gesture and awkwardness of posture suddenly disappeared; the spasmodic shaking of the head entirely ceased; his slender form dilated; his deep grey eye lost its drooping expression; the soul came and looked forth, lighting it up with a strange brilliancy; his frail body rocked and trembled as under a divine afflatus, as though the impatient spirit would rend its tabernacle and fly forth to God and heaven upon the wings of his impassioned words; until his fiery eloquence, rising with the greatness of his conceptions, burst upon the hearers in some grand climax, overwhelming in its majesty and resistless in its effect. * * * *

"This generation will never look upon his like again; a single century cannot afford to produce his equal. It may listen to much lucid exposition, much close and powerful reasoning, much tender and earnest appeal, much beautiful and varied imagery,; but never from the lips of one man can it be stirred by vigor of argument fused by a seraphic glow and pouring itself forth in strains which linger in the memory like the chant of angels."

And now, turning our attention for a little while to

DR. THORNWELL AS A TEACHER—

I have already sketched incidentally the history of his work as such. But let me recapitulate. Shortly after his graduation at South Carolina College, he began teaching a private school in Sumterville. The next year found him principal of the Cheraw Academy, where he taught one or two sessions more. At the age of twenty-five he was professor of Logic and Belles Lettres in his Alma Mater. Returning to the same institution from a year's pastorate of this church, he filled the chair of Sacred Literature and Evidences of Christianity, along with the chaplaincy. A few years later, after eight months' pastorate in Charleston,

he returned once more to the College, which he served as president, chaplain and professor in the same chair. And, finally, he was transferred to the chair of Theology in the Columbia Seminary, where he served seven years, to the end of his short life. So that, while he usually served in the dual capacity of Preacher and Teacher, for the greater part of the thirty years allowed him for the service of the Church he was engaged in teaching.

And what shall I say of him in this capacity? My own deliberate opinion is that as such Dr. Thornwell stood in a class by himself. I thought I had had excellent teachers before I came to the Seminary; we had other able and successful instructors there; but, in my judgment, none was to be mentioned in the same category with Dr. Thornwell. All in all, he completely towered above any other I have known as a teacher. My own opinion in this respect is fully sustained by the judgment of others who sat with me in the Seminary, and whose impressions I have secured. And Dr. Palmer, than whom none knew him more thoroughly and was more capable of forming a correct opinion—through association with him as fellow-professor in the Seminary, and close and intimate fellowship with him for twenty years in this city—expresses his judgment in even stronger terms.

But what were Dr. Thornwel's characteristics as a Teacher?

First, a genuine enthusiasm in the subject which he taught. No matter what it was—whether the ancient languages, belles lettres, philosophy, sacred literature or theology—he could not teach it in a cold, formal or superficial way. Such was the keenness of his intellect, the ardor of his temperament, and the innate passion of his soul for the truth, that he was impelled to investigate, thoroughly every subject for himself and to incorporate into his own nature the knowledge acquired. Hence, he ever brought into the professor's chair a zeal and a love for what he was to teach, which at once impressed and captivated his pupils, and inspired interest and enthusiasm on their part.

Second, his profound, accurate, and available scholarship.

Intellectually, Dr. Thornwell was from boyhood a genius. His mind possessed that quickness, that penetration, that ready grasp of the truth, which put him altogether out of the ordinary. As evidence of this, read the records of his boyhood's studies,

and his letters written at that period. At seventeen he entered the Junior class of South Carolina College; and, though it was composed of forty-three young men, many of excellent ability and ambitious for its honors, only a few days after his admission he was acknowledged to be its unquestioned leader; and in two years graduated at its head. He was from childhood throughout his life, a voracious reader, covering in his reading a wide field of literature; and he read with such absorption, and care, and intelligence, and comprehension, that whatever he read was ever afterwards his own. Thus, his knowledge of literature, philosophy, and the Scriptures was not only profound, but such was his mastery of them, and the clearness of his disciplined memory, that they were always at hand for ready use. I could give from personal knowledge illustrations of this, in the readiness with which he could turn to any book in his well-selected library and show the author's treatment of the subject which happened to be in hand.

And this thorough and practical scholarship could not fail to command the respect and confidence of his pupils.

I well remember a little incident, the like of which is often told. Dr. Thornwell's text-book in theology was Calvin's Institutes, the meaning of which, even to the barest historical allusions, he brought out with wonderful comprehension and thoroughness. And one day after a recitation, as several of us were talking over the lesson, my classmate, Dr. Jas. S. Cozby, remarked: "I tell you, brethren, that man, Jimmie Thornwell, finds in Calvin's Institutes what John Calvin himself never thought of." Such was the impression he made as a teacher.

Third, his quick and marvellous apprehension of the needs of his students.

I never heard, while sitting at his feet, anything about Pedagogy and Child Study, as in this day. But, whether Dr. Thornwell had studied these subjects as such or not, with his own ardent, bright, impressible nature, he had traversed all the roads through which his pupils were passing; and so, readily apprehended their difficulties, entered into their experiences, and knew just how to lead them out. Among my associates in the Seminary were many men of fine intellect, trained powers, and ardent study. And time and again I have known them to bring up their difficulties in the class room; they would state

them perhaps bunglingly, hardly knowing themselves how to express them. But I never knew Dr. Thornwell to hesitate for a moment in reply. He seemed always to catch instantly their difficulties, and was able immediately to answer correctly and satisfactorily.

Fourth, his living illustration of what he taught.

As intimated before, Dr. Thornwell's mental constitution and habit were to appropriate to himself his acquirements, make them part and parcel of his being, and live out in his own life the truth that he had taken in. The logic which he studied he put into his sermons, lectures, and writings; the metaphysics in which he reveled, found illustration in his own mental frames and character; and the Scriptures, which he loved, and searched, and preached, and taught, above everything else, he incorporated into his own life. Thus, he stood before his students as an exemplification—not perfect, indeed, as the Divine Master before His disciples, but, like Paul, whom they might follow even as he followed Christ—a striking embodiment, a living illustration, of the principles which he taught.

Such was his thoroughness, that I confess I never made, and seldom ever heard, a satisfactory recitation to Dr. Thornwell. But some way his principles of truth got hold of me; and in my subsequent ministry I found myself ever building upon the lines he had marked out for me.

Fifth, his method and spirit in the class-room.

Dr. Thornwell usually employed a text-book, which formed the basis of his instructions; but he supplemented it by lectures, which were followed by questions—after the Socratic method. His lectures on Theology, which it was my privilege to hear, were always delivered with the utmost solemnity, reverence, and earnestness. They were like sermons from the pulpit, and the students felt their solemnizing, worshipful power as they heard him. But the ordinary recitations were characterized by a freedom and bonhomie which relieved them of monotony and tediousness, and always made them bright and interesting. He managed thus to get very near to his pupils, and to keep in close personal touch with them.

Finally, his faculty of impressing himself upon others.

Beyond any man whom I ever came in contact with, Dr. Thornwell possessed what we call "personal magnetism." His

ardent temperament, his simple, easy sociability, and his capacity of entering readily into the feelings of others, made him a most attractive companion, won the closest and tenderest friendship of those associated with him, and naturally drew his students to him and exerted a powerful influence over them.

This led, as we would expect, to a frequent, though generally unconscious, imitation of him both in and out of the pulpit, which was sometimes really amusing. But in a good way it accomplished much. Doubtless, no teacher or preacher who ever served our Church, so impressed his principles, his views, and his character upon his pupils and others associated with him as did Dr. Thornwell. This is recorded of him as College professor; and by personal observation and experience, I know it of him as Seminary professor.

It is often said—and I can readily credit it—that it was Thornwell's stamp upon Dr. B.M. Palmer, who was so long and intimately associated with him, himself gifted and impressible, a fine subject for the stamp, which made him the grand and towering character and leader that he was. And, although Dr. Girardeau was never a pupil of Dr. Thornwell's, yet, through his fellowship with him for many years in the same Presbytery, and his profound admiration and passionate love of him, I am convinced that Thornwell largely shaped and promoted his noble career. And the same might be said, no doubt, of the late Drs. Thos. E. Peck, T. Dwight Witherspoon, Wm. T. Hall, and Henry F. Hoyt, and many others who have illumined the pages of our Church's history.

And thus, as Preacher and Teacher, as well as Theologian and Ecclesiologist, Dr. Thornwell is worthy of genuine and hearty commemoration on this Centennial of his birth. Let us cherish tenderly and sacredly his memory, as we learn the many lessons of his illustrious career; and let us fondly and devotedly conserve the grand and noble work which he performed for our State and for our Church.