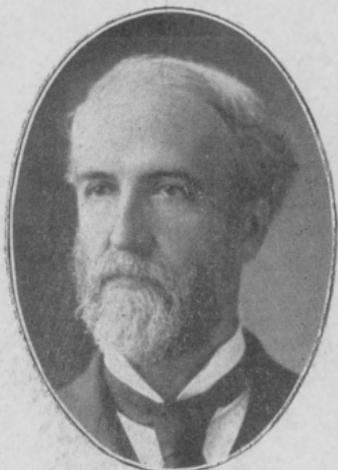


A LOST LEADER



THOMAS TREADWELL EATON, D. D., LL. D.

Memorial Sermon

By HENRY ALFORD PORTER

Delivered at Walnut Street Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky, December 22, 1907, and Published by Request of the Church

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

By J. M. WEAVER, D. D.

TO
MRS. THOMAS TREADWELL EATON
Sympathetic Helper and Inspiring Companion
IN ALL THE WORK OF
HER BELOVED HUSBAND

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The Rev. Thomas Treadwell Eaton, D.D., LL. D., was born in Murfreesboro, Tenn., November 16, 1845. His father was the Rev. Joseph Haywood Eaton, LL. D. He was the founder of the Union University, at Murfreesboro, Tenn. Dr. T. T. Eaton entered Madison University (now Colgate University), of which an uncle, the Rev. George W. Eaton, was then President. Dr. Eaton continued at Madison University until 1861, when he returned home and enlisted as a Confederate soldier in the Seventh Tennessee Cavalry, of which Gen. N. B. Forest was commander. He served during the war, a brave and fearless soldier, and at its close returned to Murfreesboro, where he taught school one year and then entered Washington and Lee University. From this institution he was graduated in 1867 with great honors, winning the gold medal for his oratorical ability. He was chosen speaker from the graduating class on commencement day.

Having been graduated here he returned to Murfreesboro and for several years taught Mathematics and Natural Science in Union University. Here he took up the study of law and was admitted to the bar. After a few months, believing that he was called of God into the ministry, he turned from the law. As in all to which he gave himself he prepared himself thoroughly for the ministry. In January, 1870, he became pastor of the Baptist church at Lebanon, Tenn. In that year he was ordained. In 1872 he accepted a call to Chattanooga, Tenn. He was pastor here from 1872 to 1875. From there he was called to Petersburg, Va. He remained there several years, and in 1881 he was called to Louisville, Ky., and became pastor of Walnut-street Baptist church, on the northwest corner of Walnut and

Fourth streets. Here he gave himself to the work of building up the cause of the Baptists in the city. From his church sprang the Twenty-second and Walnut street church, the McFerran Memorial church, now the Fourth Avenue, the Third Avenue church, and others. He continued pastor at the Walnut-street church, now on Third and St. Catherine streets, until his sudden death, twenty-six years. In 1872 he was married to Miss Alice Roberts, of Nashville, Tenn. His wife and two children, Mr. J. H. Eaton, a lawyer, of Denver, Col., and Mrs. Edward Farmer, of this city, survive him. A short time after becoming pastor of Walnut-street church, Dr. Eaton became editor of the Western Recorder, the chief organ of the Baptists of the South. He was a model editor, and soon made the Recorder a great paper, known and honored throughout the land. He was editor at the time of his death. On the 24th of June, he went to attend the Kentucky Ministers' Meeting and the General Association of the Kentucky Baptists, at Mayfield, Ky. While there he took part in all the proceedings with his usual vigor. On Friday we parted at Mayfield, he to go to Blue Mountain, Miss., where he was to deliver a series of lectures. But on the way, at Junction City, Tenn., he received a stroke of apoplexy, became unconscious, and never recovered consciousness, dying on Saturday, the 29th of June, at 1 o'clock in the afternoon. As he fell, his last words were: "I am a very sick man."

Thus passed from us a "prince and a great man." And now he has entered upon that "rest that remaineth for the people of God."



A LOST LEADER

"Now after the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Joshua, Moses' minister, saying, Moses, my servant, is dead; now therefore arise."—
Joshua 1:1, 2.

No figure looms so colossal on the pages of history as that of Moses. His abilities were panoramic.

"This was the bravest warrior that ever buckled
sword;
This the most gifted poet that ever breathed a
word;
And never earth's philosopher traced with his
golden pen
On the deathless page truths half so sage as he
wrote down for men."

He was a leader. A man's greatness as leader is to be measured by the work he does in the light of the obstacles he faces. The obstacles Moses fronted pushed up their heads like Himalayas. He surmounted them all. The work he did was the making of a nation out of a horde of slaves in forty years.

And Moses was a teacher. More wonderful than his power of leadership was his gift for teaching. Most men are born with one talent, and are compelled to make what music they can on a single string. Now and then a man comes into the world who is himself an instrument of ten strings. "Most men," it has been said, "can teach one thing well; now and then a man is born who is an entire college faculty, and when he closes his eyes a whole university goes to sleep." Such an one was Moses.

Dr. T. T. Eaton was, like Moses, one of the most versatile of men. He was a leader and he was a teacher, and great as each. If, as Carlyle says, "we can not look, however imperfectly, upon a great man without learning something of him," then a glimpse of the myriad-minded man who served you as pastor for more than twenty-six years shall stir and inspire us, even though, to my sorrow, I speak of him with all the inadequacy and imperfection of one who knew him little.

SUNSET AND SUNRISE.

Like Moses, Dr. Eaton died when his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. It was exactly twenty minutes after one on the afternoon of the twenty-ninth of June, 1907, that the soul of Thomas Treadwell Eaton, preacher, theologian, author, leader, teacher, ascended, at the age of sixty-two years and in the zenith of his intellectual powers. His sun went down while it was yet day. It was sundown in the darkened home on Second avenue, and sundown in every home in this church, and sundown all over the South. There was many a Baptist who, when the news came of the death of Dr. Eaton, felt like Tennyson did when Byron died, and wanted to go out and write on the rocks, "Eaton is dead." And there was many a Baptist, and many a man who is not a Baptist, who felt like the old Massachusetts farmer, who cried out in his grief when Daniel Webster died, "Daniel Webster, the world seems lonesome without you."

The manner of his going became him. He fell on the field. He went with his hands full, as they had ever been. To some of us Napoleon was something of a myth until we saw Dr. Eaton carrying on numerous plans at the same time, each one of them great enough in itself to occupy an ordinary mind. "And when the pilgrim came to the gate of the city, there was the sound of a trumpet." And there was a trumpet to welcome Eaton. Surely the realization of heaven most compatible with his eager spirit was that which has been promised in the Apocalypse, "And his servants shall serve him."

A GOOD BEGINNING.

Like Moses, again, the spark of piety and genius early began to burn in Dr. Eaton. Like the son of Amram and Jochebed, he was well born; he had a good start. He came forth a boy from a pious home in Tennessee. He knelt with father and mother at morning and evening prayer, and learned from parental lips lessons of piety which lasted and controlled him amid

all the varied and exciting scenes of a lifetime, and helped him to die in peace. It is no small advantage to have started from a home where God is honored, and His word read, His law upheld, and His day revered. A sanctified atmosphere is a good surrounding for boys and girls to start from, and if the laxer ideas of religion and Sabbath days and home training that prevail to-day produce as splendid men and women as the much derided Puritanic Sabbath and Puritanic teachings have produced, it will be a matter of congratulation and thanksgiving.

Moses was the son of a Levite. Dr. Eaton was a minister's son. Notwithstanding there are conspicuous exceptions—and the exceptions have built up a stereotyped defamation on the subject—statistics, plain and undeniable, prove that a larger proportion of ministers' sons turn out well than are to be found in any other genealogical table. Blot out from American history the names of those ministers' sons who have done honor to Christian pulpit and judicial bench and commercial circle and legislative chamber and presidential chair, and you would obliterate many of the grandest chapters of that history. Let all the parsonages where children are growing up take courage and consolation. Let the boys who were born in parsonages take heart of grace. Such a birthplace is neither a disgrace nor a handicap. A glory and privilege rather; a real vantage-ground. If there is any inspiration in a birthplace, the parsonage has it. It is high honor to be born there. It is higher honor to be worthy of such an origin. De Condolle, the distinguished French savant, says that the sons of ministers have contributed to science more eminent men than has any other class of families. He might have added that they have also swelled the ranks of poets, philosophers, theologians and military heroes of the past. Truly, God's righteousness is "unto children's children; to such as keep His covenant," and the star of hope lingers over the parsonage.

KNOWING WHAT YOU KNOW.

Dr. Eaton resembled the mighty lawgiver, moreover, in the qualities of his character.

Moses was a man of faith. In the roll-call of the heroes of faith in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, he has fullest mention of them all. He could face the Red Sea and the wilderness and the forty years of wandering and the murmuring people because he had faith in the word and truth of God. And our modern Moses was conspicuous, above all things else, for his unfaltering, unwavering, unhesitating faith in the word of God. Against all new-fangled theology, especially against that destructive Biblical criticism that seeks to undermine the popular faith in God's Book, he battled with all his giant intellect. The volume that lay on his pulpit was God's glorious, noble, infallible Word, unabridged and unexpurgated. His commission from heaven was, "Preach my Word," and he preached it on the Sabbath, and preached it from the platform, and preached it through his paper without discount. We have fallen upon a time when many can not say any longer, "Thus saith the Lord." In their view the old verities have been undermined, and they hesitate and stammer and dodge when they mention miracles, the incarnation and the resurrection. We are living in a day when agnosticism has in many minds taken the place of assurance. Instead of "I know that I know," the fashion is to say, "I know that I do not know." It is the era which makes a virtue of not being sure of anything. The man without convictions plays a small part in the game of life. One can not make men believe in that about which he himself is uncertain. Herein lay the great strength of Dr. Eaton: he knew what he knew, and he knew that he knew. His faith was so real that he made men believe just by the intensity of his convictions.

Do you know how Gen. Thomas Jonathan Jackson received the sobriquet "Stonewall," which never left him? The troops of South Carolina, commanded by General Bee, had been overwhelmed at the battle of Manassas, and he rode up to Jackson in despair, exclaim-

ing: "They are beating us back!" "Then," said Jackson, "we will give them the bayonet." Bee rode off to rejoin his command, and cried out to them to look at General Jackson, saying, "There he stands, like a stone wall. Rally behind the Virginians." Many there were who, dismayed by the downgrade movement and looking about for a champion of orthodoxy, were heartened by the sight of the towering and immovable figure of Dr. Eaton, and their cry was: "There stands Eaton. Rally behind him and the old guard."

"HAVING DONE ALL, TO STAND."

Moses was a man of courage. He had the courage of his convictions. He feared not to stand alone in his loyalty to Jehovah. Alone he went before Pharaoh, and told the haughty ruler of the word and will of the Almighty. Alone he stood before the people in their sins when he caught them worshipping the golden calf, and thundered in their ears the judgments of the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity. Of him it might be sung more truly than of Milton:

"Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the
 sea;
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way
In simple godliness; and yet they heart
The lowliest duties on itself didst lay."

Like Moses, Dr. Eaton stood firmly and squarely against the tides of error of his time, and was content to stand alone if need be. It is said that some one asked Napoleon what was the greatest power in the world, thinking he would speak of France or England or Russia, some one of the powers of Europe. He answered: "The greatest power in the world is public opinion." How true it is that men are prone to ask first not what will God think of them or their conduct, but what will the people think? The apostles were not so. Hear them: "Whether it be right in the sight of

God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye, but we can not but speak the things we have seen and heard."

The reader of Dickens will recall the famous advice of Mr. Pickwick, on finding himself in the midst of a political demonstration, and hustled about at the expense of his usual dignity. "Always shout with the crowd," said he. "But what if there are two crowds?" was asked. "Then shout with the loudest," was the profound reply. This Pickwickian philosophy is practised by thousands every day who run with the crowd and follow the line of least resistance. Be he president, or be he tramp, or be he anyone between, the constant temptation is to "shout with the crowd." It takes no moral courage, no self-sacrifice, to do this. The world needs men who will leave the "crowd" for conviction's sake. John the Baptist and Paul and Savonarola and Knox and Luther and Washington and all to whom we owe our religious and national liberties had to leave the "crowd" and, for a time, go the unaccompanied way almost alone, leaving future hands to crown them for their service. If, as Emerson stoutly says, "he has not learned the lesson of life who does not every day surmount a fear," then Dr. Eaton had learned the lesson of life well.

PREACHING AND PRACTICING.

Moses, moreover, lived up to his title, "the servant of the Lord." He lived up to the commendation uttered of him by Paul, and chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." He lived out in his life what he preached and taught. It was said of a certain minister that "he preached and his wife practised." Dr. Eaton both preached and practised, and therein lay his mighty power as a leader of men. There is nothing that breaks the backbone of our preaching like failure to practise. And on the other hand, nothing so adds to the weight of our speech as a consistent life.

"His preaching much, but more his practice
wrought;
A living sermon of the truths he taught."

When Dr. Mason, of Cambridge, Mass., died, some one said to the late Robert O. Fuller, who was an officer in the First Cambridge church, "I am at a loss to understand, in the light of Dr. Mason's published discourses, how he got and kept such a grip on his city and his church. The sermons are good, but they do not impress me as remarkable." "Possibly not," replied Mr. Fuller, "but if you had known the man as we knew him, you would have thought that every sermon weighed a ton." The greatest assistant that a preacher can have is a consistent life keeping step with his sermons. The people remember the man long after they have forgotten his message. Dr. Eaton's life kept step with his sermons, and until time shall be no longer, men will be sturdier in their piety, firmer in their faith, more consistent in their life, because of this man who walked with God, believed in Him and obeyed Him.

The words of Trevelyan on Macaulay come back into memory as singularly appropriate of Dr. Eaton: "He died as he had always wished to die--without pain; without any formal farewell, preceding to the grave all whom he loved, and leaving behind him a great and honorable name, and the memory of a life, every action of which was as clear and transparent as one of his own sentences."

"So he died for his faith. That is fine—
More than most of us do.
But stay! Can you add to that line
That he lived for it, too?

"It is easy to die. Men have died
For a wish or a whim—
From bravado, passion or pride;
Was it harder for him?

"But to live; every day to live out
All the truth that he dreamt,
While his friends met his conduct with doubt,
And the world with contempt—

"Was it thus that he plodded ahead,
Never turning aside?
Then we'll talk of the life that he led—
Never mind how he died."

WHAT NEXT?

"Now after the death of Moses." Our first thought would be, "Could there be anything after Moses? Can any one fill his place?" No one. The Lord does not want any one to take his place. Shall the work cease, then? No. "The workers go, but the work goes on." The greatest of men are but for a day; the work is eternal. True, there have been times in the history of the world when the death of a man was the death of a cause. In olden times Thebes rose and fell with her great general, Epaminondas. When he was killed at Mantinea, all was lost, but the soldiers were mercenary, the failure was in the condition of the nation at the time. So, there is something wrong when the work fails to go on.

No, our leader is not to be succeeded. "To every man his work." No two missions in the world are alike. My people, I shall seek to grip the truth as I see it as firmly as did he, but the truth is many-sided, and my accent and emphasis will necessarily be different from his. "How could you take this great and complex work?" some one asked me on my coming to Louisville. I answered, "I could take it because I have a great and united people with me, and infinite resources behind me!" Dr. Eaton fulfilled his mission, and by the grace of an omnipotent God and the help of a people who march with the swing of conquest, I will hope to fulfil mine. But neither on earth nor in heaven will church militant or church triumphant forget the crowned and enthroned Thomas Treadwell Eaton.

FORWARD, MARCH!

"Moses, my servant, is dead; now therefore" —sit down in perpetual grief? No! "now therefore arise." The death of the hero should be a challenge to the heroism of others. Within three days after the death of Moses, Joshua carries the people across the Jordan. Within as many years a capital is founded, the temple begun, the people housed and settled in a land of milk and honey. What Moses had struggled for in vain for forty years, Joshua

achieves in a short time. Why was it? It was because the death of the leader was met by the faith and the courage of the people.

"Now therefore arise—and **go forward**. Our Moses has done mighty things, but everything has not been done. "There remaineth much land yet to be possessed." There are Jordans of difficulty to be crossed before we rest in the land of Canaan. There is an imperial city to be taken for our King. There are tribes to be organized for fresh conquests. There are temples of victory to be builded. There are enemies of our God to be won or put to flight. On the foundation laid by our Moses let us arise and build. What he brought to flower and bloom, let us seek to bring to fruitage. The walls he reared let us crown with capstone and tower.

"Faces front!" is the Divine command. It is said that Admiral Togo, after his famous victory in the Sea of Japan, sent this message to his men and the nation: "Victors, tie your helmet-strings tighter." It was timely advice.

"Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor lay thy armor down;
Thine arduous work will not be done
Till thou obtain thy crown."

"Not backward are our glances cast, but onward to our Father's throne." To look back is vain and useless; to stand still is decay and death. Look forward and upward. Make the most of the time which yet remains, so that when, on heaven's eternal morning, we shall stand where Eaton stands amid the ranks of God's redeemed and glorified saints, we shall hear the words which will ring in our souls forever, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

A FITTING MEMORIAL.

"Now therefore arise"—and **build a monument** to the lost leader. While it is not good to look back in hopeless regret and inactivity, it is well to think of death, and it is well to think of our dead. The world's philosophy would say, "forget them," but nature and Scripture both bid us to remember our dead.

We build monuments and rear memorials to our military heroes. We honor those who have been pioneers to new regions. We elevate our men of letters. All these things are right, but let us not forget such men as T. T. Eaton, who wrought so nobly and so well for God and the faith. Let us have a statue of him of heroic size in bronze. Let it stand erect, as we remember him. Let there be a sword in the right hand, for as a young soldier he gallantly followed in Forest's cavalry the starry flag of the Confederacy. Let there be an open Bible in the left hand, for with that Sword of the Spirit he fought valiantly his spiritual battles until he fell on sleep.

I believe in monuments. I believe in memorials. I believe in the picture on the wall. Let the artist do all that is within his power to bring you those features that God modeled out of flesh and blood and taught you to love, for He would not have you forget them. Hang it there, and as you look at the dear face that is loved and lost awhile, you will be moved to higher thoughts and better living. I believe in the bundle of old faded letters. Treasure them. The very sight of them will bring memories of holy counsel and of prayers that stormed the throne of grace. I believe in the little shoes. Put them away, and as you fondle them you will hear the patter of silent feet down the halls of memory, and through the telescope of your tears see the children playing on the streets of the New Jerusalem. I believe in the lock of golden or black or silver hair. Keep it among your scented and sacred treasures, and as it winds about your finger it will pull your heart heavenward. I believe in father's Bible, and as you turn its stained and worn pages it will remind you of the things that last. I believe in mementoes that recall to vivid recollection "the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still," for they bind the soul by living links about the throne of God. I believe in the monument to the good and great. Build it to outlast the years, and let it stand there to summon your children's children to piety, to faithfulness, to heroism.

"Build it well whate'er you do;
Build it straight and strong and true;
Build it clean and high and broad;
Build it for the eye of God."

HIS LAST MESSAGE.

An illustration that closes the last chapter of the last book Dr. Eaton wrote—"Faith and the Faith"—is almost prophetic of his own death soon to follow, as he fell upholding to the end the banner of the faith. I leave you with that picture before you and his last written words upon your ears:

"In the hottest of one of the great battles of our Civil War, in one of the regiments most fiercely engaged, was a fair-haired boy. He was but a child, you could see by his beardless chin and his soft white cheek; but he had begged so earnestly to carry the flag that it had been entrusted to his care. In all the fierce charges of that fearful winter's day he had held his place in the line unflinching, and in the last charge, still grasping the flagstaff in his hand, he was among the foremost. But as decimated and broken the line retreated slowly and sullenly, the enemy caught the gleam of the flag and pressed on eagerly to capture it. Vain all the efforts of our boy hero. Vain all his brave deeds, unequalled in that army of brave men. Still, as they crowded upon him, and his young life was ebbing from three wounds, he clung to the flag. As he fell at last, he was carried unconscious to the rear, and strong men wept as they strove to staunch his bleeding wounds. Suddenly he started up—"Is the flag safe?" And as the surgeon, too deeply moved for words, placed it in his nerveless grasp, with a smile of blissful content, he laid his pale cheek against it and died.

"People of God, let us be as faithful soldiers as that young hero. However the battle may go for us, though we fall pierced by the darts of the foe—oh! let the flag be safe! Let no polluting hand mar its white purity, no insolent enemy bear it from us in triumph, but let us welcome death, if need be, with a smile, if we can lay our weary heads upon its soft folds and know that it is safe!

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

