

Foot, George

1823

Selection from the Manuscript Sermons of  
Joseph Ives Foot, with a brief memoir of his  
life (octavo vol).

ALL

Joseph Ives Foot - Union 1821.

CLASS OF 1823

GEORGE FOOT

Second son of Joseph and Abigail (Baldwin) Foot, was born in Watertown, Litchfield county, Conn., Sept. 1, 1800. His ancestor, Nathaniel Foot, was one of the original settlers of Weathersfield. The parents of Mr. Foot became members of the Church when he was about eight years of age and sought with great assiduity and success to train their children for God. In a revival of considerable power which occurred in his fourteenth year at West Granville, Mass., where his parents then resided, Mr. Foot experienced, as he hoped, a saving change, and became a member of the Church. His attention was at once turned to the gospel ministry, influenced no doubt by the example of his oldest brother, Joseph I. Foot.

He was fitted for college by Rev. Timothy Cooley, D.D., of Granville, Mass., and entered Union College, Schenectady, as Freshman in 1819. Wholly dependent upon his own resources, his close application and the privations he underwent seriously impaired his health. Threatened with pulmonary disease, he left college at the end of his junior year and went to Georgia. The change proved beneficial, and he was able to pursue his studies while maintaining himself by teaching. He entered the senior class of the University of Georgia at Athens, and graduated with the highest honors of his class in 1823.

Continuing to teach, he pursued the study of theology under the direction of Rev. Dr. Alonzo Church, and was licensed, August 7, 1824, and soon afterward ordained as an evangelist by the Presbytery of Hopewell. He entered at once upon the work of an evangelist, and preached abundantly on the destitution of Upper Georgia. Dec. 19, 1825, he was married at Laurenceville, Ga., to Miss Ann Fish, a native of Groton, Conn. Early in 1828 Mr. Foot returned to the North, and supplied, without settlement, several churches in Connecticut and New York. In 1829 he was settled at Fairfield, N. Y., and afterward at New York Mills, March 23, 1831, and Greene, August, 1833, where he remained till January, 1837. These were days of division and weakness in the churches of New York. Settlements were of short duration and easily dissolved. With the errors and abuses rife in that region Mr. Foot had no sympathy. He opposed with all his powers the views and conduct of the men who, however well-meaning, were sowing discord in the churches. In 1837 he went to Cincinnati, expecting to devote himself permanently to the work of home missions in the West. Acting for a time as agent of the Education Society, he did a good work in laying the foundations of the colleges and seminaries just struggling into life, and in turning the hearts of many young men to the gospel ministry. In 1839, while attending the General Assembly at Philadelphia, he was called to the churches of Port Penn and Drawyers, Delaware, under circumstances which seemed to make his duty plain. He accepted the call. Here his longest pastorate with one exception was spent, and in many respects his most important work was done. The field covered the bounds of the old Forest church, the early charge of Rodgers, as well as the original bounds of Drawyers. But these once strong churches were utterly feeble, and one of them, Forest, near Middletown, had gone to desolation. The labors of Mr. Foot were greatly blessed

in the revival of religion and in building up the institutions of the gospel. In 1848, feeling that the prosperity of the Drawyers church was greatly hampered by its location and the unwillingness of the congregation to remove it, Mr. Foot accepted a call to the church at Northumberland, Pa., where, however, he remained but a little time, on account of the ill health of himself and family. Early in 1850 he removed to Newark, Del., and ministered to the churches of Newark and Christiana. In October, 1851, he accepted a call to East Whiteland in the great Valley of Chester county, Pa., where he remained until December, 1855. In November, 1854, his home was made desolate by the sudden death of his wife, who for nearly thirty years had shared the vicissitudes of his life. One of the most lovely and godly of women, her life had been to him an unmingled blessing--her death was a bereavement not easily borne.

In December, 1855, Mr. Foot accepted a call to the Pencader church at Glasgow, Delaware, which, in connection with the church at Christiana, he supplied with great acceptance until laid aside by growing infirmities. In April, 1857, Mr. Foot was married a second time, to Miss Amelia H. Polk, of Wilmington, Delaware, a lady eminently qualified for the responsibilities of a pastor's wife, and who added greatly to his usefulness as well as to his happiness. She survives him. In April, 1866, on account of rapidly-declining health, the Presbytery was asked to dissolve this his last and longest pastorate.

Mr. Foot then removed to Odessa, Delaware, the home of the Drawyers church, which of all his charges he had loved the best. Here he gradually failed in health, until, on the 2d of May, 1867, he fell asleep. Agreeably to his request, he was buried in the Oakland cemetery, at West Chester, Pa., where the remains of his first wife and of three grandchildren are interred. Of six children by his first wife, but one lived to maturity--Harriet Foot married Sept. 19, 1850, to Rev. Wm. E. Moore, pastor of the First Presbyterian church, West Chester, Pa.

Mr. Foot was a man of remarkable character. Strong in all his convictions, he always impressed his own mark upon any community in which his lot was cast. He was a very thorough and accurate classical scholar, and took great delight in instructing young men and aiding them on their way to the ministry. After he was forty years of age he undertook the study of Hebrew, and obtained such mastery of it as to be able to read it with great facility at family worship. As a theologian he was eminently sound and clear. His doctrinal views were Calvinistic, of the type of Edwards and Dwight, though he called no man master. His preaching was almost always doctrinal. He delighted in the doctrines of the Westminster Confession, and under his hands they stood forth in living forms, full of warmth, vitality and beauty. He was pre-eminently a scriptural preacher. His earlier life in the ministry, spent in itinerating, made him thoroughly familiar with the Bible, and with its power to interest and move the hearts of men.

As a writer, Mr. Foot was clear, terse and epigrammatic. Most of that which he gave to the press was in the form of newspaper articles, and sermons on special occasions. A series of articles "On the Origin and Progress of the Early Churches in America," published in the 'Cincinnati Journal', in 1837-8, under the signature of Historicus, attracted great attention and gained for him an enviable reputation as a Church historian. During all the active period of his life he wrote a great deal for the newspapers on the questions of the day, and thus exerted a wide influence in moulding public opinion. A collection of his published writings would furnish several large volumes. But besides a volume of the sermons of his brother, Rev. Joseph I. Foot, D.D., which he edited, a historical discourse on the Drawyers church and a pamphlet containing three sermons on baptism, he left nothing in a permanent form.

Mr. Foot was a man of great personal integrity: sincerely and transparently true himself, he had very little toleration for craft or timeserving in others. His word was always to be taken, and those who differed from him most were won by the frankness and sincerity with which his convictions were expressed. Men sometimes hated him for his opposition to their schemes, but no man who ever knew him failed to acknowledge the honesty of his intentions and the purity of his life.

In him religion was a principle rather than an impulse. Duty was the watchword of his life, but duty as enforced by a conscience which knew no appeal save the Law and the Testimony. To repress rather than to express his emotions was a lesson learned in early life from the rugged men by whom his childhood was surrounded. He himself felt that it was an element of weakness, and not of strength, that he seemed to be unmoved by the scenes of sorrow or of joy through which he was passing. Yet the fire burned all the fiercer for that it was denied a vent. His afflictions were deep, and his friendships as lasting as life itself. They who knew him best loved him best, and those who were most familiar with his life had the deepest confidence in the sterling character of his piety.

Wilson's Presbyterian Historical Almanac pp. 206-208  
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CLASS OF 1823

GEORGE FOOTE

Born September 1, 1800.

Married December 19, 1825, Ann Fish, of Groton, Conn.,  
at Lawrenceville, Georgia.

He was a graduate of Union College, 1823, and was a  
minister at Port Penn, Delaware.

He died at Odessa, Delaware, 1867.

He had six children, all of whom died in infancy or  
childhood but one

1. Harriet Francina Born April 17, 1829, who was a  
member of Rutgers Institute in  
New York City.

FROM Foote Family  
Abram W. Foote  
Marble City Press-The Tuttle Co.  
Rutland, Vt. 1907.

GEORGE FOOTE non-graduate of 1823, of Hartland, Conn., was a member of the Adelpic  
Society. (Died: 1867)  
Adelpic Catalogue 1830