

THEODORE SPENCER

Cornelia, daughter of Jonas Platt, of Whitesboro, N. Y., was engaged to be married to Rev. Theodore Spencer, son of Chief Justice Ambrose Spencer. She was east on a visit, but reaching Albany on her way home, sickened and died but a short time before the day fixed for the wedding. She died May 27, 1821.

Whitesboro's Golden Age p. 90
From Transactions of the Oneida Historical Society
1881-1884.

1819

THEODORE SPENCER:

DIED:-In Utica, Nov. 1st., Mrs. Catharine Spencer,
wife of Rev. Theodore Spencer, and sister of P.M.
Vosburgh, of this city.

Albany Evening Atlas
November 9, 1855

1819

THEODORE SPENCER

Theodore Spencer, clergyman, was born at Hudson, N. Y., Apr., 1800, son of Ambrose Spencer, the eminent jurist. He entered the U. S. military academy at West Point, but did not graduate. He turned to the law, opened an office at Auburn, N. Y., and was district attorney for the county. His convictions led him to enter the Congregational ministry, and he held a charge at Rome, N. Y., and afterward at Utica. On account of impaired health he had to retire from the active ministry, and was made secretary of the Home missionary society for his section of the state. He wrote "Conversion: Its Theory and Process Practically Delineated" (1854), and other books on theological subjects. He died at Utica, N. Y., June 14, 1870.

The N. C. of A. B. Vol. V. Page 224.

CLASS OF 1819

THEODORE SPENCER

Was born on the 24th of April, 1800.

He married Miss Vosburgh, of Kinderhook, daughter of Myndert T. Vosburgh, and removed to Auburn, Cayuga Co., where he practiced the law for some years, and was district attorney of the county. About the year 1835 he abandoned that profession, and became a minister in the Presbyterian church. He officiated as such a number of years at Utica.

Biographical Sketches of the Distinguished Men
of Columbia County. p. 69

William Raymond
Albany
1851.

CLASS OF 1819

THEODORE SPENCER

Son of Ambrose Spencer, came to Auburn about 1825, and opened an office in connection with Jno. W. Hurlbert. He practiced law some six years, and removed to Utica, where he studied divinity.

FROM History of Cayuga County, N. Y. p. 221
Elliot G. Storke
D. Mason & Co.,
Syracuse
1879.

1819

THEODORE SPENCER.

MARRIED: At Kinderhook, on the evening of the
28th ult., by the Rev. Mr. Sickles, Theodore
Spencer, Esq., of Auburn, to Miss Catharine
Vosberg, of the former place.

Albany Argus
Nov. 4, 1823.

1819

THEODORE SPENCER

DIED* In Utica, November 1st, Mrs. Catharine Spencer,
wife of Rev. Theodore Spencer, and sister of
P. M. Vosburgh.

Albany Evening Atlas
November 9, 1855

Rev. Theodore Spencer, was a son of Chief Justice Ambrose Spencer, born in Hudson, N. Y., April 24, 1800. He studied for a time at Yale College, but was sent from there to West Point, with a view to his entering the army. A brother, a promising young officer, fell on our frontier during the war of 1812, and it was desired that he should take his place. But Mr. Spencer inherited a taste and aptitude for the law, and resigned his cadetship and ~~the~~ first read in the office of Hon. Thomas R. Gold, of Whitestown, and afterwards in the office of Hon. Myndert Vosburgh, of Kinderhook. Admitted to practice, Mr. Spencer began it at Auburn, and rapidly advanced in it, and at an early age was appointed district attorney of the county. While filling this office he was brought to a knowledge of himself and the Saviour under the preaching of Mr. Finney and Dr. Lansing, and united with the First Church, Auburn, and was soon chosen a ruling elder. The beginning of his Christian life, was the beginning of his Christian activity. He commenced labors for the salvation of others at once. He conversed with them, addressed conference meetings, and went out to neighboring districts to speak in school houses and wherever else assemblages could be gathered. But this did not content him. He would not divide his time and strength, and abandoning the Bar, he prepared for the Pulpit. Licensed and ordained by the Genesee Congregational Association, he preached at Geneseo, and was settled in the second church, Rome, and organized and supplied a Congregational Church in Utica, which disbanded on his leaving it. His loss of voice had precluded public speaking, but he substituted conversation for sermons, and reached a larger number than most preachers. His parlor was turned into a sanctuary, and many of the most intelligent people of the city, and from all denominations, sought instruction from him. He had conceived a theory of conversion, containing some peculiarities, which he applied with great power and effect, and no pastor in Utica or elsewhere more completely swayed their hearers. In accordance with his mental habit, he systematized the exercises of the soul in conversion, and arranged them in one single order of succession and in distinctly separate stages. He got his cue from Hopkinsianism, and especially insisted that a perfect submission and consecration to God should precede everything else, and that faith should follow at an interval. He prepared a brief pamphlet on the subject for distribution among inquirers, and when unable even to converse with companies, he devoted several years to the composition of a volume upon it, but by the time it was published, he

obviously lost zeal for its circulation. Without his avowing it, he changed his views. He saw the danger to which he exposed himself and his followers,--the danger of stopping at supposed submission and consecration, and not going on to believing,--the danger of legalism at the expense of faith,--the danger of a religion of duty, leaving Christ out. Most certainly the law lost the pre-eminence in his own experience, and the Saviour was put in its place.

Regaining his strength somewhat, Mr. Spencer accepted the Secretaryship of the Home Missionary Society for Central New York, and filled it with distinction. Not satisfied with gathering funds, he was a bishop for the feeble churches, and looked after them with a shepherd's watchful and tender eye. The draft upon him was too great, however, and with strength exhausted again, he laid the office down. For twelve or fourteen years he was disqualified for labor, and for the last six months of his life suffered excruciating pain,--but who can describe his nearness to the Saviour and his enjoyment of him. My previous intercourse with him had been familiar and confidential, and I had before been called to pass with him through the most trying scenes of his life. Freely received to his chamber and held to his deathbed, even with the torture borne there, it seemed the ante-room of heaven, and I could easily think myself communing with a redeemed spirit.

Mr. Spencer's mental characteristic was an unsurpassed keenness, and power of analysis, and the characteristic of his moral constitution was force, and persistence of will. He was the son of Ambrose Spencer, and inherited these traits from him, and the brother of John C. Spencer, he shared them with him. Conversion made him as set on religious objects as he had been on worldly. He was ~~as~~ intense as a Christian as he had been as a man. This gave him a severe aspect to ordinary vision, and to many of his acts an appearance of harshness,--but no warmer or tendered heart ever beat in a human bosom.

Mr. Spencer was twice married; first, October 28, 1823, to Catharine, daughter of Hon. Myndert Vosburgh, with whom he studied law at Kinderhook, and second, July 9, 1857, to Rebecca Hill, widow of Dr. Ball, of Hoosick Falls. His early manhood was clouded by the death of a daughter of Judge Jonas Platt, of Whitestown, to whom he was affianced, and the shadow of it was never effaced, though it left no gloom upon him. Subtracting nothing from the affection of a full heart which he gave to his wives, nothing of what he gave her was abated to the last.

His death occurred at Utica, July 14, 1870. Three sons are living,--Dr. Ambrose S. Spencer, of Utica, Myndert Vosburgh Spencer, Dental Surgeon, and William C. Spencer, M. D., Surgeon in the United States Army, with the rank of Major.

Theodore Spencer 1819

Theodore Spencer

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