

Dr. John A. Gordon.

Ten years ago, when parents were investigating Occidental College for their children, they were told, "You had better see Dr. Gordon, he is the man that knows most about the college; he has done the most for the college, too;" and after but few meetings with the quiet, strong personality and but one impression of his genuine and kindly interest, and his burning enthusiasm for a truly Christian College, doubting parents decided, and Occidental was their choice.

At that time Rev. John A. Gordon, D. D., was vice-president of the college and also filled the chair of Bible and Philosophy. For more than eighteen years he had labored early and



J. A. Gordon at the time of the Civil War.

late and untiringly for the college, teaching subjects to his liking and subjects thrust upon him by the lack of teachers; teaching with other classes reciting in the same room in a downtown hall, where the college had crowded itself after the burning of the Boyle Heights buildings; and going with the college to its new campus in Highland Park, which was made possible by gifts obtained through his tireless energy and zeal, and a gener-

ous part of which was the gift of Mrs. Gordon who shared his enthusiasm and loyalty to the college.

Dr. Gordon spent his school days at Monmouth College, entering in 1860. While a Sophomore at 22 years of age, he heard the call of the Union Army for men and enlisted as a soldier in the 83rd Illinois. He served that regiment first as corporal, later as sergeant, until the spring of 1864, when he was appointed lieutenant in the 16th United States Colored Infantry. Soon after he was promoted to the rank of captain, and later to that of major in the same regiment, and although he was engaged most of the time in garrison duty, he took part in two very important battles, the second battle of Fort Donelson and the battle with Hood's army at Nashville.

Upon returning home from the war, he completed his college course, graduating in 1868, and for the next eight years was at the head of the English department of his Alma Mater and taught, besides those subjects in his department, Political Economy and Bible.

In 1888, Dr. Gordon was called to Occidental College, and while waiting for his department to be more fully organized, he held brief pastorates at Monrovia, Azusa and Pomona. He was instrumental in founding the United Presbyterian church of Pasadena, and for the past nine years, he has been at the head of the Bible league for the State of California with a wide reaching influence. His degree, Doctor of Divinity, conferred by Westminster College, Pennsylvania, is but small indication of the life of usefulness he has lived. Even now at an age when many are simply awaiting their summons of "Well done," Doctor Gordon still retains the activity and the vigor, the earnestness and the buoyant strength that have characterized his whole life.