

# Daniel Kidder

*The Rev. Daniel Parish Kidder*  
A.B., A.M., D.D., LL.D.  
*Professor of Practical Theology, 1871-1881*

See also: [DANIEL PARISH KIDDER \(1815-1891\)](#)

Dr. Daniel Parish Kidder had been a member of the original faculty of Garrett Biblical Institute for fifteen years, when in 1871 [President Foster](#) invited him to come to Madison to take the chair of Practical Theology, left vacant by the death of [President McClintock](#). He was then forty-one years old and had made a distinguished name for himself in the church. Born in western New York of the old New England stock, he early showed intellectual gifts and was teaching in public schools at the age of 14. Though his family had no liking for Methodism, the lad attended Genesee Wesleyan Seminary in Lima, New York, where he was soundly converted and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. After a few months in Hamilton College, to please his parents, he transferred to Wesleyan University, graduating in 1836.

He had entered Genesee Conference on trial, when in 1838, Bishop Waugh sent him to Brazil as a missionary. His two years' sojourn bore fruit in two notable volumes on Brazil, which contained the best account of these "good neighbors" that had been printed in English. Two pastorates in Paterson and Trenton were highly successful, when interrupted by his election in 1844 as secretary of the Sunday School Union. He held this office for three quadrenniums, and by unrelenting industry succeeded in raising in some measure the low standards of the old fashioned Sunday School. Some of his published opinions reveal his wise analysis of the institution and cast foregleams along the line of progress followed by his brilliant successor, John H. Vincent.

Meanwhile, the Garrett Biblical Institute was beginning to take form, and from its inception Dr. Kidder's counsel was constantly sought by Eliza Garrett's legal adviser and by President Dempster, who sought him for the faculty. Here he had a notable career as a teacher and counselor of young men. It is not strange that [Dr. Foster](#), who had known him intimately during his residence in Evanston as president of Northwestern University, should turn to him to take [McClintock's](#) vacant chair. Conditions, however, as they developed at Madison were in some respects unfavorable to the highest success. Within a year [President Foster](#) had become Bishop Foster, to be replaced by a new president, [John F. Hurst](#), a much younger man and a comparative stranger.

Before the new order at Drew was well established, came the Wall Street hurricane of '73 which swept away the Drew endowment and left the Seminary treasury bare. [President Hurst](#) threw all his strength into the Herculean task of making good the loss. He unloaded upon Dr. Kidder the great mass of executive detail which he was unable to handle. Perhaps this produced a certain friction between the two good men. Moreover the new professor had moved into the house which [Mr. Drew](#) had built for the [McClintock](#) family. [President Hurst](#) regarded it as the "presidential" residence and acted upon that theory somewhat to the discomfort of its occupant, who, however, gracefully accepted the situation and effected the exchange of domiciles.

Yet none of these things disturbed the calm dignity of Dr. Kidder, thought it is probable that the added executive responsibilities and the general anxiety on the campus as to where the next month's salary, if any, would come from, did not tend to make his classroom work any more efficient. Yet many of his students have testified to the value of his instruction and the kindly interest and sympathy with which he entered into their personal problems. His own missionary experience in South America, though brief, intensified his interest in mission and in young men from the foreign field and in those students who were preparing for foreign service.

When he retired in 1881 and became secretary of the Board of Education, [President Buttz](#) said that by his books and teachings he had "virtually founded the department of practice theology in the Methodist Episcopal Church." Dignified and somewhat formal in manner, he was a stickler for etiquette, and his students used to tell many amusing stories about his politeness, even to vagrant domestic animals which crossed his path. But no one discounted his thoroughness as an instructor. This student comment could be multiplied many times: "As a teacher he was painstaking and thorough; his pupils must not only understand, but remember; he was a drillser."

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