

For the Session and Church.

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PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
Semicentenary Celebration
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN
BOARD OF EDUCATION;
HELD BY APPOINTMENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
NEW YORK, TUESDAY, MAY 25, 1869.

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NEW YORK, TUESDAY, MAY 25th, 1869.

CONTAINING ADDRESSES BY THE

REV. DRS. MCGILL, LORD, BEADLE, AND McCOSH.

ALSO,

A SEMICENTENARY REVIEW; OR PRACTICAL SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPLES AND
WORK OF THE BOARD, FROM ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN 1819 TILL THE PRESENT
TIME; BY WM. SPEER, D. D., CORRESPONDING SECRETARY OF THE BOARD.

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the vast pecuniary resources of the Presbyterian Church, and their devotion to the ends of the kingdom of the Messiah;—then indeed will this be a happy hour—then indeed will this occasion be one most memorable and most blessed.

Address of Dr. McGill.

The first great fact in which the New Testament ministry originated could not fail to lead the Church of God, in the exercise of her power of ordinance, to found a Board of Education, with main reference to the training of indigent and worthy candidates. The calling of poor men together into a school under the tuition of Him who had become so poor himself that he had not where to lay his head, was the beginning of all education for the ministry: and the Church could never hold and read the record of this primordial fact, without instituting a memorial, at least, which would remind the churches forever that *by* the poor, as well as *to* the poor, the gospel is preached. Even if the covenant with Abraham had always descended with its temporal benefits, in the form of earthly affluence, to the seed of the Church, and the call of God for ministers had corresponded with the demands of the world itself, for models of social refinement and rank, that would cost the people nothing, in the nurture of gifts and the attainment of aptitudes, that origin of the order, bound up as it was in the mysteries of redemption itself, would have had some organized aim on the visible Church, to honor and emphasize it, while time endures.

The darkest ages of declension in the Church felt the power, blind but vital, of that poverty in which the great preacher of righteousness ministered himself, and taught and commissioned others to minister, when again and again a mendicant order sprang forth from her bosom, to restore in some sort the sound of preaching, where rites and riches had again and again smothered it in silence. Poor preaching friars heralded the Reformation. And the Reformation spread with power, and lasted in strength, almost precisely as poor men were nurtured for the ministry. It never rose to the higher classes, an element of aristocracy in the land, as in France, and Italy, and Spain, without perishing in blood, however learned and faithful. Scotland herself would have been chronicled now as only a martyr church of the past, if her first minister of "Christ's evangel" had not appeared, like a true apostle in this respect, sent without successors, Patrick Hamilton, cousin of the king, with ample fortune and courtly manners; so much entangled by his birth and breeding with great things in the world, that he could neither live nor die, in the testimony of Jesus, without some political agitations. From the ashes of that first martyr, arose the singular duality, which has distinguished that mother Church to this day, alimony and independence; a claim on the civil magistrate for bread and honor, and the

refusal of his claim to a corresponding obedience and conformity. This "law in her members warring against the law of her mind" would long since have extinguished her sanctification, if she had not from the beginning nourished her independence in the poverty of her ministers. Before a General Assembly, or a Synod, or a Presbytery, had an existence in Scotland, her best nobility entered into a bond, to look out for "faithful men" in any condition of life, whom they would "nourish, maintain, and defend;" that they might "truly and purely minister Christ's gospel and sacraments to His people." In the subsequent and long contest of the Church with a rapacious nobility, for a third of the mortmain which the overthrow of Popery had left, her plea was always, in one breath, for "the ministers, the schools, and the poor." And, stooping for more than three hundred years, to find faithful and able men in any condition of life, she has not degraded her ministry, but elevated her people; lifting every layer of the social fabric, that could furnish a man fit to be a minister of the gospel, into a higher and nobler destiny, even "for the life that now is," than has been attained by any other people in Europe.

Coming from such a stock, to occupy this continent, the Presbyterian Church would be sure to seek the right men, and secure the right education. The high standard of ministerial accomplishment she brought over seemed to embarrass her in the wilderness, for a time, and prompted those loud and frequent appeals to the mother country for more ministers, which begins the history of her evangelization here. But the very source of her embarrassment quickly proved to be the facility with which she provided ministers not only, but fountains of education for the whole land. She awoke to the consciousness of what she was herself, and the scholars were already here, to man the free academy, and college, and divinity chair. The Alisons, McDowells, Wilsons, Tennents, Blairs and Smiths, were ready; and the churches, in their deep poverty, so abounded in riches of liberality, that the very first classical school opened in the Presbyterian Church was without fee from the student, and that without any discrimination between the poor and the rich, or one denomination and another. And when the Synod, some four years afterwards, in 1748, imposed a small tuition fee, on such as were able to pay, it was done reluctantly, and the record was made in an apologetic way, that "the salaries of master and usher were not sufficient encouragement." Precisely one hundred years ago, Dr. Witherspoon, William Tennent, Brainerd, Guild, Ewing, Blair, Caldwell, Reed, and Kirkpatrick, the Moderator, were appointed a committee for the year, by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, to disburse "sixty-two pounds to poor and pious students," at the College of New Jersey. And thus it continued, in every part of the Church, especially Western Pennsylvania, until the Board of Education was organized. When Jefferson College at Canonsburg,

that fountain of ever blessed memory, was chartered in 1802, seventeen years earlier than this Board, more than half its first band of students consisted of candidates for the ministry, supported by the Church. And at the date of this organization, in 1819, it was ascertained that fifty-nine candidates, at least, were already on the list of gratuitous education; the Presbyteries having been required to make yearly report of their attention to this interest, from the year 1806. It is a great mistake, therefore, to suppose that this Board has brought into existence, like an unwise charity, the very objects of its care and nourishment. On the contrary, they created the Board, as one of the factors. It was because the call of God, from the days of the Apostles, either with or without an organized instrumentality, would commission the poor in this world, who are rich in faith, to preach the gospel, that a faithful church responded, in the formal institution of this Board. The unity of the Presbyterian mind was the other factor. Thirty years of working in our beautiful system had completely relieved it from the jealousies which feared the evils of centralization. And no triumph of Presbyterian unity could be more signal and significant, than the voluntary transfer to a Board of the General Assembly, of that interest which, of all common interests in the Church, is most particular, and like the family institute itself, the care and nurture of youth, in their aspirations to the ministry. Hence the preamble with which the organic law of this Board begins—"Whereas, the General Assembly forms the bond of union of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and affords the acknowledged means of combining the intelligence and concentrating the efforts of that denomination, etc."

The first members of this Board were worthy of such a trust; and the selection indicated how vast was the value of the trust, in the apprehension of the Assembly. They were, Drs. Ashbel Green, Samuel Miller, Archibald Alexander, Janeway, Latta, Neill, Blatchford, Romeyn, and others, ministers and elders, who are to be held in everlasting remembrance. And no arm of the church has been distinguished with a brighter succession of executive officers. The cultivated wisdom of Neill, the great versatility of Ely, the surpassing eloquence of Breckinridge, the fervent piety of MacFarland, the rich accomplishments of Hope, the vast resources in mind, and heart, and hand, of Van Rensselaer, the abounding energies of Chester, the indefatigable industry of Wood, have all been fully engaged to do the work of this Board, and develope its bearing on the vital interests of the Church.

I shall not attempt to traverse, even in general terms, the entire field they cultivated. Perhaps they attempted too much. "The home, the school, and the Church," have all been edified, however, and blessed by their labors. But I dwell only now, and with the utmost brevity, on that part, the first great part, which I

have especially seen and known, for more than half the semicentenary we celebrate to-day, the care of candidates for the ministry, during the years of sacred study in the seminary.

1. The first great benefit has been, the increase of ministers by this instrumentality. Many our most useful pastors and missionaries, and some of our most prominent teachers in colleges and seminaries, would have been so discouraged by the want of means in youth, as to desist from the pursuit of a liberal education, but for the aid afforded by this Board. It has been so in all ordinary times, and especially so in times of extraordinary trial to the industrial interests of the country, under financial depression and disaster. Often has the ingenuous and spirited pupil at the seminary come to his teacher, with the revelation of a broken fortune or competence at home, and the necessity of his desisting, almost at the threshold of the ministry, in order to earn the funds required to finish his course. Accustomed to the greater blessedness of giving than of receiving, he and his friends reluctantly, for a little, at the thought of his becoming a formal beneficiary. But the delicate ministration of this Board, so much more maternal than eleemosynary, wins the application for aid, and his course is uninterrupted. Thus the Board of Education has become a great reserve and regulator to the currency of sacred learning, shields from bankruptcy the pious recluse, and through all the fluctuations and ruin of fortune, itself casts up an highway for the steps of those whose feet are hailed as beautiful upon the mountains, when they go to preach good tidings of good, and publish salvation. It is by supplementing the inadequate means of those who have started on their own funds, even more than by taking up the indigent at first, that this beneficent charity has multiplied the ministers of the gospel.

2. And yet there has never been a crowd to share the benefits of such help; and the supply of beneficiaries has always been more precarious than the supply of funds. Among the many reasons for this which are to be regretted, there is one which may be specified as the second chief benefit to the Church and the world, achieved by this Board—the high standard of learning, as well as piety and talents, it demands. It is mainly owing to the Board of Education, that the full course at College, and three years at the Seminary, have been secured now, at length, as the indispensable training of our ministers. Fifty years ago such a course was but exceptional; now it is the rule. Even the licensed candidates return from their Presbyteries, for a third year at the Theological Seminary, more eagerly and assiduously than candidates would, half a century since, repair to a seminary at all. More than all other causes combined, which can be conjectured for the change, the pledge required by this Board has secured it. Half our students of theology, thus marshalled and required, and this half the men of humble circumstances in the world, will, of course, constrain the other half to

attain the fullest preparation which the wants and wisdom of our day prescribe.

3. And yet the tuition by this Board, as well the exaction of her pledge, has gained for us the happy result. Let it be emphatically pronounced as the third main benefit of this institution, that it has furnished the Church with a literature, on the whole subject of Christian education, and especially, that most difficult branch of it, vocation to the ministry, better than the cyclopedia of all the ages, and all the schools, had ever given before. Search the letters, and histories, and theologies, from the manuals of Augustine and Chrysostom to the latest volumes of Pastoral Theology, and you will find nothing so clear and exhaustive, on a call to the ministry, the value of this order, the means of perpetuating it, the way of increasing it, the necessity of upholding it with adequate and liberal maintenance, as in the annual reports and periodicals produced by the Secretaries of this Board. If not another benefit could now be specified, but the body of this literature, so full, so rich, and sound, and seasonable, up to the wants of the age, simplifying what had been obscure, and reducing to solid maxims what had for centuries been floating, without definition, between the extremes of superstition on the one hand and enthusiasm on the other, the scattered *treasures* of this Board gathered to our shelves for the last twenty-five years, would be worth all the money, and time, and toil bestowed upon its operations for half a century. Search and see. Let the author and compiler in time to come, when he has studied the doctrine "of the laying on of hands," in the canon of God's word, turn to the volumes of theory and practical wisdom, we have here collected, for the most varied and complete illustration of a subject that was confessedly, but thirty years ago, the most vaguely understood of any momentous theme in the kingdom of Christ.

4. The fourth great benefit of this Board, which I can but mention, is its special subservience to the interest of Missions, both at home and abroad. It begins with missions, and it ends with missions. It was the cry of destitution in this land which led to its organization; and it was on the first wave of its visible success that the Church heard the cry of the heathen, coming to the benches of her own General Assembly. Midway in time, between ecclesiastical missions at home, and ecclesiastical missions abroad, this arm of our strength has wonderfully ministered to both, and in turn has been quickened by both; and must inherit forever an undivided recompense, in the conversion of the world to our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. It is our symbol of Christianity, in its beneficent influence on the social welfare of mankind. "The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all." It is a distinctive privilege of the Christian ministry, compared with any other calling in life, that it belongs to no one rank in the social hierarchy; but

is identified and endeared with every class, that comes at all into the level of the sanctuary. It is not a priesthood; but serves a priesthood, which is universal as faith is; and knows no distinction but the sublimer heights of self-sacrificing faith in Jesus Christ. It is fitting that the origin should be level, as the destination of the ministry in this life; that parity of rank in the oversight and the Assembly should begin with parity of rank at the school, in every particular of its economy and fellowship. The rising representatives of that only remedy which has been discovered for the woes of inequality among men should be taught to use it, in a discipleship among themselves, that cultures to the highest degree homogeneous feeling, and eradicates the baleful weeds of envy and discontent, at the season when they strike the deepest root in our susceptible nature. The Board of Education is doing this, with delicate hand. The name of *beneficiary* is becoming obsolete among our students. "On a scholarship," not "on the funds," is now the classification of its candidates; and the proportion of these to the whole is increasing every year.

The Republic, which borrowed our Constitution to begin with, took also the germ of our first Latin school in Pennsylvania, for development at West Point and Annapolis. Events have shown the wisdom of the nation, in this education of her officers, for the army and the navy, at the national expense, without any distinction of the rich and the poor. Tuitions, and rations, and costumes, and books, and instruments, and implements, are provided for all alike; as soon as they are admitted to any preparation and probation of the soldier. Why should it not be so in the Church? Why should our Church have receded from the light of her own example? Why not return to it—and have "the rich and the poor meet together," without a difference, at Princeton, and Allegheny, and Danville, and Chicago, as they meet together in military and naval academies of the whole country? It is the service of a common mother they meet to prepare for. It is a warfare more inevitable and momentous, and one in which there is no discharge; no escape from "hardness," in any sheltered position—no furlough, or leave, or connivance in duty, by which the inadequate salary may be supplemented, in avocations that do not tarnish the armor, and compromise the fidelity of the soldier. Why then should not the collections for this Board be ten-fold more liberal; and, like the national appropriation to national academies, educate at the cost of the whole Church, with full sustentation, all in any condition of life, whom God will move by his Spirit, to culture the gift, and desire the office of a bishop?

Dr. Lord's Address.

[Though this address has from necessity been considerably abbreviated, we trust the following will fairly convey to the reader the train of thought, in the Dr's own language.

The introduction was a comparison between the Roman Empire, at the birth of Christ, and the Republic of the United States, when his kingdom is on the eve of its final triumph over all the powers of earth opposed to it. He shows how much greater and more important is the latter. He continues as follows:]

In less than a century of national life and growth, this Republic has reached a greatness which the Iron Empire never knew. Its area is twice that of the fourth great monarchy. Its military and naval power, as developed in the recent rebellion, is fourfold that of Rome under Augustus, or the Antonines. Its population, even now, amounts to forty millions of freemen. The fixed ratio of increase will swell this aggregate, in the next thirty years, to one hundred millions. Beyond that point, and along the march of another century, the assured result, in numbers, wealth, political and religious power, it seems almost audacious to express. Hundreds of millions, intelligent and earnest as they are free, will swarm through its immense domain. Its towns, villages, and great cities, will spring up without number, and as by enchantment, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Its agriculture, manufactures, commerce, literature, and science, will gain an expansion not seen before, through the ages. Its political ideas and spirit will revolutionize monarchical Europe; they will penetrate and emancipate long oppressed Africa; they will send thrills of life, thought, feeling, and action, through inert and immobile Asia. Its religious ideas and institutions will vitally impress for good, or for evil, the world. This Republic is ours; the product, not of heathenism, but of Christianity; and, nationally, the latest and richest fruit of that cross on which the soldiers of old Rome nailed and pierced to the death the Man of Nazareth. Its social, intellectual, and religious aspects and condition correspond to this germinal fact. The problem now is to conserve the Republic for Christ.

The solution of this problem depends, under God, mainly on educated mind; sanctified, indeed, but educated. Mind is power. Educated mind is intelligent and intensified power. Not matter, but spirit, not physical force, but ideas, are omnipotent. And yet not ideas, merely, but specifically Christian ideas. The divine Master therefore, the Apostles, and the successive ministers of the Church, went forth proclaiming everywhere, not the facts of secular history, not the discoveries of natural science, not the theories or dogmas of any human elaboration, but supernatural truth; truth

given by God, truth relating distinctively to the Apostasy and the Redemption. If the process was silent, and gentle as the birth of the dew, the effect was visible and glorious as the shining of the sun. The words of Life soundeth from Spain to Parthia. Satan fell as lightning from heaven. At the opening of the second century, Plutarch affirms the Oracles were dumb, excepting only one, in Lebadaia. On every side temples and synagogues gave place to the Church. The cottages of the poor, the mansions of the rich, the palace of the Cesars, had their converts to Christ. The brave legions even were invaded by the unseen spirit, and multitudes invincible in battle, were conquered by truth and love; until presently, the imperial standard was hallowed and glorified by the Christian Cross. There was a visible regeneration.

Modern society is fresh, vigorous, and self-reliant. Those very elements which it owes to the gospel, and which are its essential differentia, as compared with heathenism, it is apt to think the result of its own wisdom. Many of its literary men parallel their inspirations with that of Paul and Isaiah. Many of its men of science are expert in finding antagonisms between Nature and Revelation, and then in rejecting the latter as a falsehood or a fiction. Many of its philosophers impiously consider themselves able to dispense with God as the cause and support of the universe, and are become gods to themselves. From this source, scepticism and irreverence distil upon and spread among the masses, impairing their sense of right and duty, and sapping the foundations of social and civil order, as well as of religion; while influences still more baleful issue from within the very citadel of Christianity itself, from those, who, wearing its sacred name, basely pervert and betray it. And all these agencies and influences exist and operate where free thought, free speech, a free press, a free government, and a free religion, are the idols.

Does not this directly suggest a most imperative duty of educated men. Are not the claims of our country upon them clear as the sun, and urgent as they are clear? Our country! Patriotism should inspire and impel us, no less than piety. Our country! This broad continent, which God has reserved till now, as the theatre of plans and processes of unexampled grandeur and magnificence; whose present is the wonder of the nations; whose future must be so gigantic, and may be so glorious. For its own sake, and for the sake of the world, our country *must* be Christian. It is the one supreme necessity. The alternative would be fearful beyond expression. It would cover the future with unrelieved gloom. But, in order to so auspicious a result, educated men are indispensable; men of disciplined mind, of thought, of culture, of various and wide attainments; and all these under the heat and impulsion of Divine love. God can indeed work with any means, or if necessary, without means, causing "things which are not to bring

to naught things that are;" but the law of his government is adaptation. He uses means corresponding to his purposes. John and Peter, the unlettered fishermen, were men of power; made so by grace. But it was Paul, the trained and accomplished scholar, the profound and mighty logician, the impassioned and resistless orator, who moved and fired Asia and Europe with evangelic force and fervor; who founded the Church, and has moulded it, along the centuries, beyond any other human agent. Drop from even the New Testament records that portion thought and penned by this great Apostle, and what a loss! The seeds and germs, indeed, of saving truth, are still all there, every one of them; eternal life in its enertia; but the masterly development, the logical and ethical relation, the convincing and inevitable application, how largely would they be wanting. And then the documents and the doctrines of our faith come with credentials. They offer to men evidences. They address their intelligence and reason, as well as their conscience and their emotional nature. Those are the only true avenue to these. Intellectual conviction must precede spiritual conversion. In our whole Christian work, therefore, for our country, as also for the world, in the uncompromising war of truth with error, of right with wrong, of Christ with Anti-christ, we must not only meet zeal with holier zeal; but we must also meet learning with riper learning, eloquence with rarer eloquence, logic with stronger logic, science with truer science, and philosophy with nobler philosophy; in all these things, the sons of the Church showing themselves to be peers of the realm, while yet the servants of all.

These principles furnish an irresistible argument for the great and vital work of education, secular and sacred. They are a powerful incentive to the young men of the Church, and of the nation, to consecrate themselves, many of them to the work of the ministry, all of them to the service of Christ. We want educated Christian mind and heart in the high places, as well of social and civil life, as of the Church; that from thence, as from the hills and the mountains, may descend streams and showers of blessing upon the plains. Secular professions are useful and to be honored; secular labors have their necessity and their reward; while both these and those, though secular, may also be made sacred, and they ought to be; for, after all, heaven is higher than the earth; eternity is grander than time. They, therefore, who win souls are wise. They who turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars forever and ever.

I appeal to the patriot. Cherish the convictions, and emulate the example of our political fathers, listen to the voice of Washington in that memorable Farewell. Ponder those calm and weighty words with which, in reference to our stability and well-being as a nation, he said, Morality and Religion are their indispensable support.

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I appeal to the Christian. Interrogate the heroes and martyrs of our faith. Summon Paul from his throne. Bid him choose again his work of life. See his bosom heave, his eye moisten, his lips quiver, as with every fibre and affection of his being, he cries out—"For me to live is Christ!"

Dr. Beadle's Address.

[Dr. Beadle's address was not written out. The following is prepared from his notes, which, it is but proper to say, do not at all do justice to the eloquence of the same sentiments as uttered by him.]

Fifty years look upon us to night, years as reckoned by the calendar, but years are told in another way, by *deeds* not *days*; and if we count the men and sum up the work which they have done, then fifty centuries are concentrated upon us to night. And at this juncture in our history, it may be well to stop for a little season and take note of the way we have come, the work accomplished, and thoughtfully ponder what yet remains to be attempted and done.

Much has taken place in fifty years; many changes have passed over our Church and the world. Fifty years ago, fourteen men met in a chamber of Yale College to celebrate the anniversary of the American Board. With grateful hearts, they reported one church established on heathen ground, five Indian converts, and four men from Africa won for Christ. At the end of fifty years, they report *two hundred churches* established in heathen lands, and a record of *seventy thousand converts*.

Fifty years ago, the prayers and self-denials and sacrifices of the noble men who built the "Log College" culminated in the simple and effective organization of the "Board of Education" for our Church. In these fifty years, this Board has given to the church, a large number of her ablest and most useful pastors, and to the world some of the noblest and most successful missionaries. It has furnished presidents of colleges, professors of theology, and fully one-half of all the men on foreign and domestic missionary fields. And if I could read this noble roll-call, there are names that would fall on this assembly like music, and touch the tenderest emotions of the soul. Men who counted not their lives dear unto them, martyrs of Jesus, whose memories will be fragrant in the Church until the Master's work on earth is done.

Much has been done in these fifty years. God's providence has opened the world! He has *created a missionary spirit*! He has removed obstacles! He has given the Spirit in power!

And with the history of the past; a world open before us; the command of Christ upon us, we are here to ask: *What is the duty of enlightened Christian America to the world?*

We can readily see what "*enlightened*" America is doing for the