

ENCYCLOPÆDIA  
OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

INCLUDING THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN ASSEMBLIES.

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AND OTHER EMINENT MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH.

Including a Description of the Historic Decorations of the Pan Presbyterian Council of 1880,

By REV. HENRY C. McCOOK, D. D., LL. D.

*Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following—PSALM XLVIII, 12, 13.*

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of the Board of Trustees of Auburn Theological Seminary. The Board of Commissioners, at the meeting in 1881, in the record which they made of their testimony to his high character and valuable services, said: "A man of high attainments and honorable distinction in the Presbyterian Church, he gave to the Board of which he was a member the benefit of timely counsels and great practical wisdom, and never ceased to manifest a deep and anxious interest in the welfare and usefulness of this beloved Seminary. And it should also be mentioned as a proof of this, and as a mark of his generosity, that one of his latest acts was that of presenting to the Seminary his carefully selected private library, to be added to the library of this Institution, and also a portrait of his father, the Rev. Dr. William Wisner, of Ithaca. And while we bow to God's will in depriving us of his assistance, we thankfully record our estimate of his high character, and his untiring devotion to the interests of theological learning."

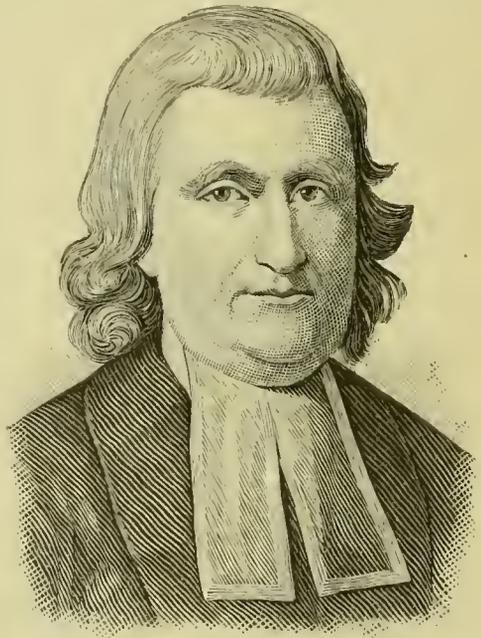
**Wiswell, George Franklin, D. D.**, was born at Whitehall, N. Y., in 1820. He was educated in Middlebury College; a student in the Union Theological Seminary, 1841-4; ordained June 18th, 1845. He was pastor at Southold (L. I.) N. Y., 1845-50; Financial Secretary of the Union Theological Seminary, 1850-3; pastor at Peekskill, N. Y., 1853-6; pastor at Wilmington, Del., 1856-67, and since 1867 has been in charge of the Green Hill Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, Pa. Dr. Wiswell is an affable gentleman, a faithful pastor and an able and successful preacher. He was a member of the N. S. Remmon Committee, in place of Dr. Thomas Brainerd. He is an active and efficient member of the Presbyterian Board of Publication. He moves forward quietly in the discharge of his duties to his congregation, has their confidence and affection, and is favored with the divine blessing on his ministry.

**Witherow, Rev. Benjamin Howard**, was born at Fairfield, Pa., February 23d, 1840; graduated at Jefferson College in 1859; studied theology at Allegheny Seminary, and was ordained by the Presbytery of Burlington, August 30th, 1864. He was pastor at Cream Ridge, N. J., 1864-69, and at Columbia, Pa., 1869-73, in both which charges he labored faithfully and successfully, having the confidence and esteem of his people. He died in Shippenburg, Pa., February 7th, 1876.

**Witherspoon, A. J., D. D.**, was born in Lancaster, S. C. He graduated at the South Carolina College. After studying theology privately, he was licensed by Bethel Presbytery, and devoted himself to the Foreign Mission field, but the state of his health prevented him carrying his solemn purpose into execution. He had pastoral charge of Montpelier, Geneva and Laurel churches, in Marengo county, Ala., where his labors were blessed. After relinquishing this position, he went to Mobile and took charge of Warren Chapel Mission, which was formed

into a church in eighteen months. He organized five churches, as evangelist of South Alabama Presbytery. For some years he has had charge of the Bethel Chapel for Seamen, in New Orleans. Here he has accomplished much good by his faithful labors. This useful Institution, so worthy of public sympathy and support, was founded in 1877; begun upon a small scale, accommodating about 250 persons in the reading room and concert hall, and now it provides entertainment for 800.

**Witherspoon, John, D. D., LL. D.**, was a branch of a very respectable family, which had long possessed considerable landed property in the East of Scotland. He was lineally descended from John Knox, well-known as a distinguished instrument of spreading the reformed religion in that part of the



JOHN WITHERSPOON, D. D., LL. D.

United Kingdom. He was born, February 5th, 1722, and his father was at that time minister of the parish of Yester, about eighteen miles from Edinburgh. His father was eminent, not only for piety, but for literature, and for a habit of extreme accuracy in all his writings and discourses. Young Witherspoon was very early sent to the public school at Haddington, where his father spared no expense in his education. He had been at that seminary but a little while when he attracted particular notice; he was distinguished for assiduity in his studies, for soundness of judgment, and for clearness and quickness of conception among his schoolfellows, many of whom afterward filled some of the highest stations in the literary and political world. At the age of fourteen he entered the University of Edinburgh, where he advanced with a great degree of credit in all the

branches of learning, until the age of twenty-one, when he was licensed to preach the gospel. When a student at the Divinity Hall, his character stood remarkably high for his taste in sacred criticism, and for a precision in thinking and a perspicuity of expression rarely attained at so early a period.

From Beith, where he was first settled as pastor, he soon received a call to the large and flourishing town of Paisley, where he enjoyed great reputation, and labored with uncommon success. During his residence at Paisley, he was invited to Dublin, in Ireland, to take the charge of a large and respectable congregation. He was also invited to Rotterdam, in the United Provinces, and to the town of Dundee, in his own country, but he could not be induced to quit such a sphere of comfort and usefulness as Paisley offered him. He rejected also, in the first instance, the invitation of the trustees of the College of New Jersey, in America. But, urged by all the friends whose judgment he most respected, and whose friendship he most valued, hoping, too, that his sacrifice might be more than repaid by his being made peculiarly useful in promoting the cause of Christ and the interests of learning in the New World, and knowing that Jersey College had been consecrated from its foundation to those great objects to which he had devoted his life, he consented on a second application. And true it is, that after the election of Dr. Witherspoon to the presidency, learning received an extension that was not known before in the American Seminaries. He introduced into their philosophy all the most liberal and modern improvements of Europe; he made the philosophical course embrace the general principles of policy and public law; he incorporated with it sound and rational metaphysics, equally remote from the doctrines of fatality and contingency, from the barrenness of the schools, and from the excessive refinements of those contradictory but equally absurd and impious classes of skeptics, who either wholly deny the existence of matter, or maintain that nothing but matter exists in the universe. The number of men of distinguished talents in the different professions who received the elements of their education under Dr. Witherspoon demonstrates how eminent his services were to the College of New Jersey.

Dr. Witherspoon continued directing the Institution of which he was President, with increasing success, till the commencement of the American War, but that calamitous event suspended his functions and dispersed the college. He then entered upon a new scene, and appeared in a new character. Still, however, he shone with his usual lustre. Knowing his distinguished abilities, the citizens of New Jersey elected him a delegate to the convention which formed their republican constitution. In this convention he appeared, to the astonishment of all the members of the legal profession, as profound a civilian as he confessedly was a philosopher and divine.

From the Revolutionary committees and conventions of the State, he was sent, early in the year 1776, as a representative of the people of New Jersey, to the Congress of United America. He was seven years a member of that body, which, in the face of innumerable difficulties and dangers, secured to Americans the establishment of their independence. Dr. Witherspoon was always firm amidst the most gloomy and formidable aspects of affairs, and always displayed the greatest presence of mind in the most embarrassing situations. His name is affixed to the Declaration of Independence.

Towards the close of his life, however, Dr. Witherspoon felt and gratified an inclination to retire from the political scene, on which he had long acted with uncommon dignity and usefulness. He withdrew, in a great measure, from the exercise of all the public functions that were not immediately connected with the duties of his sacred office. For more than two years before his death he suffered the loss of his sight, which continued to hasten the progress of his other disorders. These he bore with a patience and a cheerfulness rarely to be met with, even in those eminent for wisdom and piety. His activity of mind and anxiety to be useful would not permit him, even in this depressing situation, to desist from the exercise of his ministry and his duties in the college. He was frequently led into the pulpit, both at home and abroad, during his blindness, and he always acquitted himself, even then, in his usually accurate, impressive and excellent manner. He had the happiness of enjoying the full use of his mental powers to the very last. He died, November 15th, 1794, in the seventy-third year of his age. The College of New Jersey lost in him a most distinguished President, America one of her ablest statesmen, and the Church of Christ one of her most valuable ministers. His writings, which are well known, were collected into four volumes, octavo, and of which a uniform edition was published at Philadelphia, in 1803, and at Edinburgh, in 1804, in nine volumes, 12mo.

**Witherspoon, Statue of.** As an expression of their admiration of Dr. John Witherspoon, and of his eminent services to the church and the country, a majestic statue of him has been erected by his friends, in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia. The site is on Lansdowne Drive, just east of Memorial Hall, the foundation of the pedestal having been completed on Tuesday, November 16th, 1875, in the presence of a considerable number of ministers, ruling elders and laymen, together with a deputation from the St. Andrew's Society of Philadelphia. After prayer by the Rev. W. W. Barr, D.D., of the United Presbyterian Church, the corner-stone of the monument was laid by the Rev. George W. Musgrave, D.D., LL.D. On account of the inclemency of the weather, the assembly proceeded to Machinery Hall, of the Centennial Buildings, where the Rev. William P. Breed, D.D. (to whose commendable and indefatigable

activity the whole enterprise mainly owes its success), occupying the chair, an address was delivered by the Rev. William Adams, D.D., LL.D., of New York. At the conclusion of the oration a handsome Presbyterian flag was presented by the young ladies of West Spruce Street Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia to the Centennial Committee of the General Assembly. It was presented by George Junkin, Esq., and received by Col. J. Ross Snowdon, chairman of the committee.

On Friday, October 20th, 1876, the colossal statue of the colossal Presbyterian statesman, patriot and divine was unveiled, in the presence of a large concourse of people, many of whom had come from a distance to witness the interesting occasion. The Rev. William P. Breed, D.D., Moderator of the Synod of Philadelphia, assisted by the Rev. Thomas McCauley, Moderator of the Synod of New Jersey, took charge of and conducted the exercises. Prayer was offered by the Rev. Dr. George W. Musgrave. Dr. W. O. Johnstone announced the one hundredth psalm. Scripture selections were read by the Rev. J. B. Dales, D.D. The Rev. Henry C. McCook, D.D., gave a history of the effort to erect the monument. The Rev. Stephen W. Dana, D.D., Secretary of the Centennial Committee, then announced the hymn:—

"Great God of nations, now to thee  
Our hymn of gratitude we raise,  
With humble heart and bending knee  
We offer thee our song of praise."

The contents of the corner-stone were stated by the Rev. Samuel Irenæus Prime, D. D., one of the earliest and warmest friends of the enterprise. The recital of the inscriptions was then given as follows, by the Rev. Wm. M. Paxton, D. D., of New York:—

On the east side:—

"John Witherspoon, n. n., LL. D., a lineal descendant of John Knox. Born in Scotland, February 5th, 1722; ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church, 1743; President of the College of New Jersey, 1768-1794. The only clergyman in the Continental Congress. A signer of the Declaration of Independence. Died at Princeton, N. J., November 15th, 1794."

On the west side:—

"This statue is erected under the authority of a committee appointed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, July 4th, 1876."

On the south side:—

"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."—Lev. xx, 10

On the north side:—

"For my own part, of property I have some; of reputation more; that reputation is staked, that property is pledged, on the issue of this contest. And although these gray hairs must soon descend into the sepulchre, I would infinitely rather that they should descend thither by the hand of the executioner than desert, at this crisis, the sacred cause of my country."—*Dr. Witherspoon.*

Just as Dr. Paxton pronounced the word *country*, the Hon. D. W. Woods, of Lewistown, Pa., a grandson of Dr. Witherspoon, pulled a cord, and the flag which had enveloped the statue fell, suddenly exposing to view the colossal form of Witherspoon.

After the shouts of applause which this unveiling evoked, Dr. Paxton resumed his address. At its conclusion, the Rev. J. Addison Henry, D.D., of the sub-committee, then gave out the hymn:—

"God bless our native land."

This was followed by an oration by His Excellency, Joseph D. Bedle, Governor of New Jersey, President of the Board of Trustees of Princeton College. The statue was presented to the Fairmount Park Commission, by the Hon. J. Ross Snowdon, LL.D., Chairman of the General Assembly's Centennial Committee, and accepted by the Hon. John Welsh, President of the Fairmount Park Commission. Thanks to the Park Commission were extended, in behalf of the General Assembly's Centennial Committee, by the Rev. George Hale, D.D., Treasurer of the Committee. The doxology was announced, with some remarks, by the Rev. Alfred Nevin, D.D., LL.D. After the singing of the doxology, the benediction was pronounced by the Rev. James McCosh, D.D., LL.D., who, also, in response to loud calls from the crowd, made an address. Dr. McCosh was followed in a brief speech by Dr. Stuart Robinson, of Louisville, Ky., who was also called out by the crowd.

The whole enterprise received a most fitting climax in the services of Sabbath evening, the 22d of October, when, in the West Spruce Street Presbyterian Church, the Rev. W. S. Plumer, D. D., LL. D., of Columbia, S. C., delivered, by request of the Centennial Committee of the General Assembly, in the presence of a large and intelligent congregation, a discourse upon the life and writings of Dr. Witherspoon. Thus were concluded the exercises in connection with an event which acquires peculiar importance from the fact that this statue, so far as known to us, is the first statue of a Christian man, as such, yet erected in our Republic.

Witherspoon, Rev. Thomas S., was licensed by the Presbytery of South Alabama, October 23d, 1830, and ordained November 10th, 1832. His whole ministerial life, of fifteen years, was spent within the bounds of the Synod of Alabama. His talents were commanding, and apparently without an effort he made himself familiar with any subject, if not master of it. He was a sound Presbyterian, a ready debater and an able preacher. His influence was deservedly great. He was a lovely man and a faithful minister. At the time of his death (October 20th, 1845), he was engaged in raising funds, by appointment of Synod, for the endowment of the Alabama Professorship in Oglethorpe University. When the endowment was completed, after his decease, the Synod, in testimony of their high appreciation of his worth and services, substituted the name of Witherspoon for that of Alabama, thus making it the *Witherspoon Professorship*. The Presbytery of Alabama, in a minute adopted relative to the death of Mr. Witherspoon, April 3d, 1846, says: "He had labored long and faithfully and well. He fell at his post, on the field