

THE PRESBYTERY
OF
THE LOG COLLEGE;

OR,
The Cradle of the Presbyterian Church
IN AMERICA.

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EXPLANATORY STATEMENT.

IN order to prevent misunderstanding, it is proper to state that this valuable history is published by the Board for the Presbytery through the author, the members of that body and Dr. Murphy defraying the entire expense. For obvious reasons the Board has acted on the rule that it is inexpedient for it to publish local histories, however interesting and valuable they might be. But for the action of the Presbytery and Dr. Murphy, this volume, notwithstanding that more than two-thirds of it relates to the origin and general history of our Church and contains much new and valuable information pertaining thereto, could not have been published by this Board.

E. R. CRAVEN, *Secretary.*

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THE ORIGINAL LOG COLLEGE BUILDING.

APPENDIX.

CELEBRATION OF THE FOUNDING OF THE LOG COLLEGE, SEPT. 5, 1889.

FOLLOWING the preparation of this volume, and growing out of it, there was held on September 5, 1889, the year which is the centennial anniversary of the organization of the General Assembly, a celebration which was so extraordinary in every respect that the author was persuaded to delay the issuing of the book until a description of that noteworthy event could be prepared as an appendix. The commemorative occasion was marked by so many favoring providences; it drew together such a vast assembly; it was so cordially advocated by the public press; it was honored by the presence of so many distinguished people; it had with it such hearty good-will from all classes, all parties and all denominations,—that it cannot but be regarded as a most remarkable and significant event. It was the more noteworthy in that such results were entirely unanticipated. In the beginning its friends had no higher purpose than an ordinarily important reunion, and all its vast proportions were developed as the work of preparation progressed.

The celebration grew out of the continued study of its history which had been undertaken by direction of the Presbytery. As that study progressed and led to the minute investigation of points in the history which had not come in the way of previous explorers, certain new and striking facts were discovered. How should these important facts be rescued from oblivion and brought to the attention of those who are interested in the cause of religion? Evidently some extraordinary thing must be done for that purpose. This was the first impulse that prompted to our wonderful celebration. What else would be so well adapted to awaken the attention of the Christian public to our strangely interesting history?

It became more and more manifest to us at every step that we were following the leadings of Providence. Plans of preparation

slab covering his grave it is recorded that he died May 6, 1746. His will was made in February, 1745, and he died shortly after.

"Log-College Evangelists" was the title of the address of R. M. Patterson, D. D., LL.D., of Philadelphia, as follows:

The cautious Dr. Archibald Alexander has declared: "The Presbyterian Church is not more indebted for her prosperity and for the evangelical spirit which has generally pervaded her body to any individual than to the elder Tennent."

The founder of the Log College deserves that transcendent commendation because—

1. He began the movement that thoroughly Americanized and Presbyterianized the Presbyterian Church in America.

2. He insisted that the first and the essential qualification for a true minister of the gospel is vital piety.

3. He held that when God bestowed extraordinary gifts upon a man, he was not to be kept from preaching the gospel because he could not go through a college curriculum.

4. Accepting the birthright membership of the children of members of the Church, he contended that for full communion they should exhibit the evidences of regeneration in the fruits of piety.

5. He believed in revival and awakening seasons.

The "Log-College evangelists" whom William Tennent trained for the ministry leavened the whole Church with these views.

Gilbert Tennent was first a pastor in New Jersey. He then settled in the Second church, Philadelphia, and left his impress on that city, which is the metropolis of Presbyterianism in the United States.

John Tennent, spiritual and seraphic, a Robert Murray McCheyne, died when twenty-five years of age, after a pastorate of only seventeen months in Freehold, N. J.

William Tennent, Jr., through whose life one can scarcely resist the conviction that there ran a line of the supernatural and the miraculous, succeeded his brother in Freehold, and continued the influence begun by him.

Charles Tennent, at White Clay Creek, Delaware, and Buckingham, Maryland, helped quietly to mould what has ever since been a strong Presbyterian region.

Samuel Blair, profoundly learned and deeply pious, labored for four years in Shrewsbury, New Jersey, and then in Fagg's Manor, Pennsylvania, for twelve years, establishing there a classical school from which went such men as Samuel Davies and John Rodgers. He and Gilbert Tennent were the ecclesiastical leaders of their party in maintaining the Log-College principles through the unhappy internecine struggles of the Church.

John Blair, the brother of Samuel, first settled in the Cumberland Valley at the Big Spring or Newville; then followed Samuel at Fagg's Manor as preacher and teacher; afterward becoming professor of theology in and vice-president of Princeton College.

Samuel Finley, after itinerating as an evangelist through Southern New Jersey, settled in Nottingham, Maryland, for seventeen years, and instituted an academy there in which some of the most distinguished men in the Church and State were educated, and then was the president of Princeton College.

William Robinson, the son of an English Quaker, entered the ministry

from the Log College and devoted himself to evangelistic labors among the poor and outlying populations, and during the short period of his life of five years in the ministry was "the instrument in the conversion of as many souls as any minister who ever lived in this country."

John Rowland, a fervent Welshman, was the man whose licensure by the Presbytery of New Brunswick against the diploma rule of Synod led to the Schism. He too was a powerful awakening preacher; under his ministry were wonderful works of grace wrought first at Maidenhead and Hopewell, New Jersey, then in Eastern Pennsylvania. The elders of the Great (Chester) Valley church, intensely Old Side in the Schism, shut its doors and barred its pulpit against him one Sabbath morning, and turned him into the fields to preach; the pastor of that church here pronounces an unstinted eulogy upon him!

Charles Beatty's life was in some respects the most versatile of all. Entering as a student and graduating, he became the successor of its founder in the Neshaminy church, was a missionary to the Indians, preaching the first Protestant sermon on the site of Pittsburgh, and was the ecclesiastical diplomat of the day.

Thus these ten men, so multiform in their gifts, covered the whole Church from New York to Carolina.

Their principles are now commonplace among us. But they were bitterly opposed in the beginning and middle of the eighteenth century. The Log-College men in maintaining them became in part the innocent occasion and in part the guilty cause of a division of the Church which lasted from 1741 to 1758.

It was the day of small things for the American Presbyterian Church. In 1726, when the Log College was opened, there were only twenty-seven ministers in the denomination. In 1743, on the consummated division, there were only fifty-one. At the reunion there were only ninety-four ministers. But the unhappy strife ended, and the Log-College principles prevailing, the Church began to grow rapidly.

That growth, however, met with a severe check from the Revolutionary War. Presbyterians to a man were patriots. We have not, with backward step, to cover the Tory nakedness of any of our ecclesiastical ancestors. And the destroying havoc of war surged specially over the section of the land in which our congregations were located. The enemy particularly hated them. These congregations were, therefore, fearfully crippled. Comparative data show that there were not in the whole land at the close of the war ten thousand members of our Church. In 1807, the first year we have the official figures of communicants, there were only 17,871, with 330 ministers and 598 churches, in a general population of about seven millions. There are now, in all the branches of Presbyterianism in the land, over 10,000 ministers, nearly 13,000 churches, over 1,500,000 communicants, fully as many Sabbath-school members, with 26 theological seminaries, 46 colleges and universities and academies, and schools without number, controlled by them. *Here* is the Ramah of the American Presbyterian Church. *Here* began our schools of the prophets.

The same heavens are over us to-day that were one hundred and sixty-five years ago. The same green pasture-fields (Naioth) where the sons of the prophets abode are around us. The old beautiful scenes of Nature are still here. But the little rustic log building, eighteen by twenty feet, has disappeared. From it, however, were developed not merely Princeton College and Seminary, Lafayette and Hampden-Sidney, which are to be heard from to-day, but all the colleges and theological seminaries which are training the young men of the Church for its ministry. It

still lives in each and all of them. And its site is still here. Verily it is sacred. The place whereon we stand is holy ground.

President F. L. Patton of Princeton College, who was to have been the next speaker, was prevented from attending by the death of his little son. His place was taken by the Rev. Dr. J. O. Murray, dean of the faculty of Princeton College. Dr. Murray said that although he was unable to trace the exact connection between the two, he was sure Princeton owed very much of what it is to-day to the beginning of things at Neshaminy. He liked the modesty of those early teachers. They called their institution "Log College," and not "Neshaminy University."

We owe more to the founders of institutions than to those who carry them on. They endure the self-sacrifice of meagre salaries and attendant labors. For their successors ample endowments and special departments make toil far easier.

He was glad to say that Princeton College is largely perpetuating the spirit of the Log College. It has seventy sons of clergymen on its roll and seventy candidates for the ministry, and contributes in free tuition not less than ten thousand dollars a year.

No institutions are more long-lived than institutions of learning. Roundhead and Cavalier have disappeared from English history; Oxford and Cambridge, which looked down on their conflicts, flourish more vigorously than ever. Such a university as that of Bologna has seen kingdoms rise and fall and has taken a new lease of life. The work of the men who started Log College, which resulted in the founding of Princeton and other colleges all over our country, can only be measured when the life of those great institutions has been fully developed and their history fully written.

The hymn, "Come, Thou Almighty King," read by the Rev. Richard Montgomery of Ashbourne, was sung, after which the Rev. Richard McIlwaine, D. D., LL. D., president of Hampden-Sidney College, Virginia, read a careful and comprehensive paper on "The Influence of the Log College in the South."

He alluded to the migration of those Pennsylvanians who had come under the influence of the Log College into Maryland, Virginia, and North and South Carolina. He traced the visits of the Rev. William Robinson and his successor, Samuel Davies, to those localities, and referred to the work of John Roan, Samuel Finley, the Tennents and the Blairs in that region. He dwelt particularly on the success of Davies, who was termed the "Apostle of Virginia," and in quoting from a sketch of that pioneer of the Church, said, "To no one man, in a religious point of view, does the State owe so much. No one can claim a more affectionate remembrance by Christian people. If the Log College had done nothing more than lend this incomparable man to Virginia, it would be entitled to the everlasting gratitude, not only of the South, but of the world, for it was through his instrumentality, in part, that the principles of human freedom were first formally acknowledged and enacted as fun-