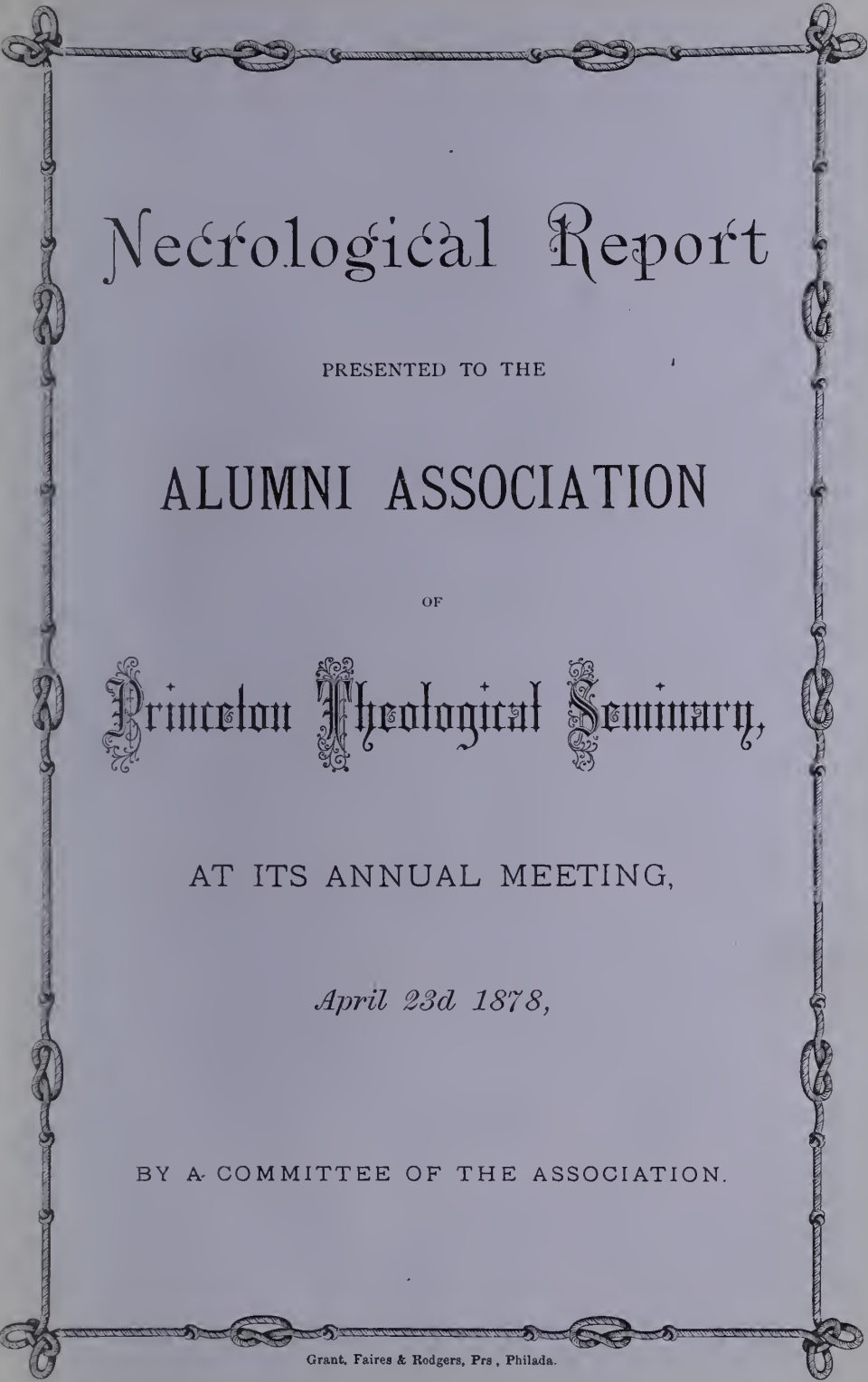




Necrological Report

PRESENTED TO THE

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

OF

Princeton Theological Seminary,

AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING,

April 23d 1878,

BY A COMMITTEE OF THE ASSOCIATION.

NECROLOGICAL REPORT

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XVII.

NATHAN LEWIS RICE, D. D.

Nathan Lewis Rice was born Dec. 29, 1807, in Garrard County, Ky., and was the son of Gabriel and Phebe (Garrett) Rice. His father was a plain and unassuming but highly respectable farmer, who was greatly loved and respected by his neighbors. Nathan remained on the farm until he was sixteen years old, when he commenced teaching a school in order to raise money to defray the expenses of a college education. At this time his purpose was to study law. At the age of eighteen he united with Harmony Church in Transylvania Presbytery, Ky. From this time his views and purposes were all changed, and religion was ever afterwards the governing element of his character. His brothers offered to assist him in his college course, but his native independence led him to decline the offer, and he determined to pay his way by his own exertions. He entered Centre College, Ky., then under the presidency of the Rev. Gideon Blackburn, D. D., in the Fall of 1826. Here, during a portion of his course, he was teacher of Latin in the preparatory department, teaching during the day and studying at night. He remained in college probably about two years; but, for some reason, he did not graduate. He studied theology for one year under Dr. Blackburn, and at the end of that time was licensed to preach by Transylvania Presbytery, Oct. 4, 1828. In the following January, he was called to become pastor of Harmony Church, of which he was by birth and profession a member, but he declined the call, and feeling the need of more thorough preparation for the work of the ministry, entered Princeton Seminary in the Fall of 1829. Here he studied most assiduously for two years, and became known by his large attainments and extraordinary ability. Having returned to Kentucky, he accepted a call to the church at Bardstown, where he was ordained and installed June 8, 1833. Bardstown was at that time the seat of a Roman Catholic College and Cathedral, and in order the more effectually to counteract their efforts at proselyting he established an academy for girls, of which he became the principal, and which was taken under the care of the Presbytery. He also established a school for boys, and founded a newspaper called *The Western Protestant*, which was afterwards merged into *The Presbyterian Herald* of Louisville. He was pastor at Bardstown about eight years, his pastoral rela-

tion there being dissolved April 8, 1841. At the same time he was dismissed to the Presbytery of Ebenezer, in which he performed much mission work, but for most of the time preached as stated supply to the church at Paris, Ky. Whilst residing at Paris, he held a debate on Baptism, with President Fanning, of Nashville, Ky., which, not being satisfactory to the Baptists, led to arrangements for a discussion with the well-known Rev. Alexander Campbell, of Bethany, Va., at Lexington, Ky. This discussion was presided over by some of the ablest lawyers in the State, Henry Clay being among the number, and elicited the most intense interest throughout the whole western country. The efforts of Dr. Rice in this debate were regarded as brilliant and thoroughly successful specimens of logic and oratory, and at once lifted him to fame. The debate was written out by the debaters and published in a large volume and widely circulated.

Whilst he was in Cincinnati, superintending the publication of this volume he received a call to become pastor of the Central Church in that city, whither he removed in 1844. He was installed as pastor Jan. 12, 1845. Under his ministrations the Central Church, which was a colony of 32 members from the old First Church, rapidly grew and became strong and vigorous. While in Cincinnati, his labors were abundant. In addition to performing his pulpit and pastoral duties, he wrote several volumes, held several public debates and taught classes of candidates for the ministry. The influence of his presence and labors was felt by the whole city. Early in 1853 he accepted a call to the Second Church of St. Louis, then vacant by the death of Dr. William Potts. He was released from his pastoral charge in Cincinnati, April 9, 1853, and installed Oct. 9, 1853. His pastorate in St. Louis was characterized by the same varied, incessant and successful labors as that in Cincinnati. He edited *The St. Louis Presbyterian*, and wrote and published several books. In 1855 he was chosen Moderator of the General Assembly, which met in Nashville. In 1858 he was called to the North Church in Chicago, over which he was installed by the Presbytery of Chicago, Oct. 20, 1858. He found this church small and weak. Under his labors it soon grew strong and flourishing. He also edited while here *The Presbyterian Expositor*. May 30, 1859, he was elected by the General Assembly to be Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology, in the Theological Seminary of the North-west, at Chicago, and the duties of this Professorship were performed in addition to his pastoral and other labors.

Dr. Rice remained in Chicago until 1861, when he was called to the Fifth Avenue Church in the City of New York, to succeed the lamented Dr. James W. Alexander. He accepted and was installed April 28, 1861. Here his labors were new in kind and large in measure. His health, heretofore good, soon began to give way. He was released from this pastoral charge April 16, 1867, and retired to a farm near New Brunswick, N. J. After resting from all mental work for a year or more by order of his physician, he was called to the presidency of Westminster College at Fulton, Mo., at the same time taking charge of the church in Fulton. Here he remained, again working with his accustomed assiduity and energy until he was elected June 17, 1874, to the professorship of Didactic and Polemic Theology in Danville Theological Seminary. He accepted the position and returned to the scene of his earliest labors, and was formally installed Oct. 16, 1874, during the Sessions of the Synod of Kentucky, at Shelbyville. Here he performed his last earthly labors. After the close of the Seminary session in May, 1877, he went greatly exhausted and in poor health with Mrs. Rice and a daughter to visit his brother-in-law, Mr. McKibbin, in Bracken County, Ky. While there he grew seriously ill, and it soon became manifest that his life was drawing to a close. But his mind was full of peace and holy joy. To the very last "the glory, of the celestial city was reflected from the face of the dying saint." He died June 11, 1877, about 6 A. M., at Chatham, Bracken Co., Ky. His remains were taken to Fulton, Mo., where they were buried after an appropriate discourse from the Rev. James H. Brooks, D. D., of St. Louis.

Dr. Rice was married Oct 3, 1832, to Miss Catherine P. Burch, eldest daughter of the Rev. James K. Burch. Mrs. Rice and several children, still survive.

Dr. Rice was truly a great man. He impressed all who heard him preach, the most cultured and the most cultivated, with a sense of his power. "He was great in intellect, great in labors, great in goodness. His most characteristic mental feature was the logical faculty. Closely connected with this was his well-nigh unrivaled power of analysis." Then he knew men and how to reach their hearts. He was also large-hearted, generous, fervent, the highest style of a Christian man. Truly, in his death, a prince and a great man is fallen in Israel. We have not space for a list of even his principal publications.