

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY

LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA

HISTORICAL PAPERS

No. 3.—1892

1. THE SCOTCH-IRISH SETTLERS IN THE VALLEY OF VIRGINIA: ALUMNI ADDRESS AT WASHINGTON COLLEGE, JULY 1, 1859. . BY COL. BOLIVAR CHRISTIAN.
2. NOTES ON WASHINGTON ACADEMY AND WASHINGTON COLLEGE: PREPARED IN 1873, AT THE REQUEST OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION. BY HON. SIDNEY S. BAXTER.
3. MEMORIAL TRIBUTES TO THE REV. GEO. A. BAXTER, D. D.
4. SKETCHES OF TRUSTEES, CONTINUED.
5. SAMUEL AND WILLIAM LYLE, JAMES RAMSEY, JOHN MONTGOMERY, TRUSTEES; WILLIAM MCCLUNG, AND MANY ALUMNI. BY WILLIAM HENRY RUFFNER, LL. D.

UNIVERSITY
OF VIRGINIA

BALTIMORE:
JOHN MURPHY & CO.
1892.

Virginia

LD

5873

.W2

328939

NO.3

1892

COPY 2

VIRGINIA
ALBANY 70

PREFACE.

This number contains the valuable address of Col. Bolivar Christian on "The Scotch-Irish Settlers in the Valley of Virginia," now nearly out of print; Notes on Washington Academy and Washington College, by the Hon. Sidney S. Baxter; Memorial Tributes to the Rev. George A. Baxter, D. D.; and a continuation of Sketches of Trustees.

In preparing these Sketches we have been greatly aided by the Rev. William Brown, D. D., Mrs. S. C. P. Miller, Judge William P. Houston, and William H. Ruffner, LL. D. These will be continued in succeeding numbers.

We hope to publish in the next number a continuation of Dr. Ruffner's history of the institution by his son Dr. William Henry Ruffner.

WILLIAM McLAUGHLIN,
WILLIAM A. GLASGOW,
HENRY ALEXANDER WHITE,
Committee.

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY,
February, 1892.

denominational school, to make its election between fountains of wild bewildering waters on the one hand, and the ancient crystal wells of truth on the other ; between a spirit of fancied improvement, which was indeed one of startling innovation, on the one hand, and the ancient and tried order of the Lord's house on the other. And it is believed that almost every subsequent week and month has been demonstrating that he and the worthy guardians of the Institution who stood shoulder to shoulder with him, made their election wisely and well. There may have been things to regret in those days, because the storm was wild and loud and long ; and perfection is not an attribute of mortals even in times of quiet. But now that it is overpast, it is too plain to be doubted that there have come to us from it righteousness, and peace, and order, an example not deserving to be soon forgotten of the heroic love of truth ; an instance in which the spirit of God lifted his flaming and zealous standard according to the ancient promise of his word ; and a new proof, added to the many which were already found in the history of spiritual affairs in this world, that his hand will not desert those to whom anything is better than deranged order and corrupted truth.

From the *Staunton Spectator*, 1846. By the Rev. B. M. SMITH, D. D.

WASHINGTON COLLEGE, LEXINGTON, VA.

Mr. Editor.—In the three preceding numbers, I have endeavored to give a brief outline of the early history of Washington College. The facts and historical data which have been exhibited, touching its paternity, cannot be questioned. Permit me to retrace my hasty steps for a moment, that I may bring to view, a little more in detail, the operations of this institution during the presidency of the Rev. George A. Baxter, D. D.

Dr. Baxter while yet a young man was chosen to preside over this rising institution about the time that it received the name of Washington Academy and its first endowment from "the Father of his Country." He continued its President more than thirty years, during which time it had its seasons of adversity as well as

prosperity. Its seasons of adversity, however, compared with those of prosperity, resemble the occasional cloud that may be seen on a bright day in summer to flit across the disk of the sun, which only obscures his light partially, and but for a moment. In proof of this I refer to a long list, although imperfect, of Dr. Baxter's pupils, which lies before me. Here are the names of many that this institution has educated, and prepared to fill the highest stations in the fields of usefulness and fame; hundreds remain to this day, although some have fallen asleep. And were it not that delicacy forbids to eulogize those who are alive, and in the spring-tide of usefulness and career of fame, I would spread before the community a few scores of those distinguished names. Such an *exposé* would prove that the Alumni of Washington College are no disgrace to their beloved and respected *alma mater*. In point of talents, scholarship, principles and usefulness in their respective professions and occupations, they exhibit as much ability, and sustain as high a reputation, as the Alumni of any other institution generally do. The grade and reputation of any school may be ascertained by the general character of its Alumni. It is as true of schools as of men—"by their fruits ye shall know them." On this test we throw Washington College, without a moment's demur, knowing assuredly that she shall pass the ordeal triumphantly. Upon every scroll of fame which we unroll since the memorable year of 1776, we find the names of her Alumni inscribed. Go to the Senate of the United States, and there you will find of her sons; go to the House of Representatives, and there you will be fascinated with the eloquence of those who have enjoyed her instructions; go to the legislative halls of any of the States, South or West, of our own State, and you will be permitted to listen to the counsels of many of her pupils; go to the Bench and Bar of the States just referred to, and you will find many of her Alumni adorning the higher walks of jurisprudence. Her Alumni who belong to the medical profession are numerous and highly respectable; the lustre which they reflect, by their profound skill in medical science, upon their *alma mater*, is sufficient to deter any man of common sense from speaking lightly of her. The number of her Alumni who have entered the ministry

of the gospel in the Presbyterian Church is greatly to her honor and praise. The devoted men who founded this College have not been disappointed. Fondly did they hope, and most devoutly did they pray, that she might become "a nursing mother" to the Presbyterian Church—and so she has. Hundreds have gone from her venerable halls to proclaim the everlasting gospel, some of whom have been, and some are now, Presidents in our Theological Seminaries and Colleges. Among the early graduates of Washington Academy is found the name of the Rev. John H. Rice, D. D., one of the greatest men and most profound scholars that our church or country ever knew. Go East or West, North or South, and you will find in the ministry of the church just referred to, men of piety, talents, learning and influence, who have received their education at this College. The time has come to make an *exposé* of these matters, and to inform the community that this school is worthy of their confidence and patronage. That she might have accomplished more and done better, I concede, but that she has achieved so much and done so well is a matter of profound gratitude. To inquire into the reasons why she has not been more prosperous is foreign to my purpose. I remark, however, in passing, that if all those who are under lasting obligations to her, and owe her all they know, had used their influence and efforts in promoting her interests, by communicating information respecting the facilities and advantages of education which she possesses, she would, doubtless, have accomplished more.

It is deeply to be regretted that no one has undertaken to furnish the community with a sketch of the life and character of the Rev. George A. Baxter, D. D., a man to whom this institution owes a great deal, and whose memory deserves to be venerated by all its Alumni.

Permit one who has enjoyed the inestimable privilege of sitting under his ministry eight years, seven of which he was a member of his church, to close this number with a brief sketch of his character. Dr. Baxter was descended from respectable parents who resided in Rockingham county, Virginia, where he was born July, 1771. At an early age he manifested a strong attachment for literary pursuits. And whilst yet a young man, having undergone a great change in

his religious views and feelings, he resolved to make a full surrender of himself to God and prepare for the work of the holy Ministry. He was a pupil of Mr. Graham, and graduated at the 'Log College' before it received the name of Washington Academy. He was President of Washington College more than thirty years, and Pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Lexington thirty-three years. I do not disparage Dr. Baxter's able, pious, and learned co-adjustors and successors either in this College or Church, when I say that both owe a debt of gratitude, and perhaps something more, to his memory, which is not likely soon to be discharged. Dr. Baxter was inaugurated Professor of Theology in Union Theological Seminary, April 11, 1832, in which office he continued until his death, which occurred April, 1841.

Dr. Baxter was a great and good man. As a man of genius and a scholar he was distinguished, as an orator and a preacher he was unsurpassed; as an instructor he was eminent and successful; and as a man and a christian, those who know him best will be the first to speak his praise. For native powers of mind, he will be ranked among the first men in the history of our Church and Country. In the acquisition of knowledge the efforts of his mind were singular and extraordinary. In mathematics, logic, rhetoric, history and theology his knowledge was extensive and profound. In the entire command of his thoughts he excelled most men. His taste was correct and refined, his judgment solid, his views comprehensive, and his reasoning faculties powerful and commanding. He possessed uncommon powers to please and instruct. His knowledge was not confined to a single science, or to one branch of literature; it was varied, profound and extensive. As a pulpit orator he had few equals, and was surpassed by none. As a preacher he was esteemed a *model*. His eloquence was of the most commanding, dignified and impressive order. He was in style, taste, power, gesture and argument, the finished and consummate orator. He was wise to win souls, and was greatly successful in his efforts to bring men to a knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus." The Holy Spirit honored and blessed his ministry by the conversion of many souls in numerous revivals of pure and undefiled religion. To such revivals of religion he was an enlightened and warm friend. In a word, he was a man of devoted and fervent

piety ; "mighty in the scriptures ;" mighty in the knowledge of "the faith once delivered to the saints ;" mighty in the history of the Church ; mighty in sound wisdom and discretion ; mighty in that noble, comprehensive character given by the pen of inspiration to a minister of old—"he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," and through his instrumentality "much people was added to the Lord."

And yet, notwithstanding his greatness, he was as simple as a child, and as easy of access as one altogether unconscious of any merit. He was confiding in his friendship, sincere in his professions, and always charitable and forgiving. His humility was real, his life unostentatious, and his frame of mind devout. "He was a burning and a shining light."

The decease of this inestimable man called forth testimonials of respect from various institutions and ecclesiastical bodies with which he was connected. His death was a sad stroke to many a sorrowing and smitten heart. He was greatly beloved and universally lamented.

Such is a feeble outline of the character of the Rev. George A. Baxter, D. D. Thousands will attest its truth. The writer speaks what he knows, and testifies what he has seen and heard.

From the *Central Presbyterian*. By REV. WILLIAM BROWN, D. D.

REV. GEORGE A. BAXTER, D. D.

[The reminiscence found below, in which this venerated name is prominent, was published under the head of Editorial Correspondence in the *Central Presbyterian* in 1865. It was, however, just after the resuscitation of the paper, and when the mails of the country were not open to half its readers. On this account the writer has the more willingly complied with numerous requests for the republication of the article. Some unessential changes have been made. The scene referred to was so extraordinary as almost unavoidably to awaken a suspicion that the description is overdrawn ; especially when the age of the writer at the time is called to mind. It is only natural to think that the account gives the impressions then received by a highly excited youthful mind, but that it is really, though undesignedly, an exaggeration. But the statement