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THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOR THE YEAR ENDING JAN. 31, 1918

The Chairman of the Executive Council, Mr. William H. Scott, greatly regrets his inability to prepare and present his usual annual report. In his absence, and at his request, it is offered by the General Secretary. He is happy to report that Mr. Scott is convalescing from his recent serious illness, and that he hopes to be able shortly to resume his attendance upon the meeting of the Council. His services to the Society in various capacities have been constant and most helpful.

In common with nearly all societies of a like character—with the exception of those which are sufficiently endowed—The Presbyterian Historical Society has suffered from the distractions and the strain of the war—Historical and literary values have been discounted; the minds of our people have been engrossed with the great activities of the Government, and the different organizations for the relief of the world's unprecedented distress. The membership of our Society has felt this pressure. A gradual decrease in our lists has been in progress for three years. We are compelled to report this year the smallest enrollment since 1916. We added eight names to our roll in 1918,—the most inconsiderable addition in many years. As against this diminished gain, nine members resigned, having paid their dues; and twenty have been removed by death. Of these last, four were life members, namely:

THE EVOLUTION OF A PRESBYTERIAN RELIGIOUS JOURNAL.

BY REV. W. P. WHITE, D.D.

It may not be thought unimportant to have the evolution of a Presbyterian religious journal recorded for preservation among Presbyterian historical records.

The journal we have in view is *The Continent*, widely circulated and read throughout the Church.

It is the outgrowth of three previous journalistic enterprises.

The first of these was *The Interior*, which was a child of the reunion of the Old and New School branches of the Presbyterian Church, and was born in Chicago, in the spring of 1870. Those mainly instrumental in giving it existence were Rev. R. W. Patterson, D.D., Rev. Arthur Mitchell, D.D., Rev. James W. Trowbridge, V. A. Turpin, an elder of the Third Presbyterian Church, Hon. Elliott Anthony, and Hon. R. B. Mason. Fifty thousand dollars capital was thought to be essential to the founding of the paper.

The interest of a number of churches was secured, and when to the earlier subscription five thousand dollars each was made by George Armour and Hon. Cyrus H. McCormick, the needed sum was possessed.

A board of directors was chosen consisting of President, Hon. R. B. Mason; Vice President, R. W. Patterson, D.D.; Secretary, Rev. J. W. Trowbridge; Rev. D. C. Marquis, C. B. Nelson, V. A. Turpin, G. F. Bissell, Hon. Elliott Anthony, W. G. Holmes. M. D. Buchanan, an Elder of the Third Church, was appointed treasurer and later W. S. Mills publisher.

A number of names was proposed for the paper. "The Interior," not at first favored, was finally unanimously adopted as short, original, expressive and impressive.

Rev. Arthur Swazey, D.D., pastor of the Third Church, was made Editor-in-Chief, and Rev. C. VanSantvoord Assistant. George B. Carpenter, a bright young newspaper

man and paragraphist, added much value to the paper in its early days.

The first number appeared March 14, 1876, and was cordially received. "All agreed that it was strong, dignified and typographically a thing of beauty." It met, however, the usual experiences of new enterprises. "Occasionally," it is said, "a cog slipped and the lubricant of conciliation was needed to keep the board of directors, editorial staff, publisher, and official treasurer in good working order."

In a little more than eighteen months, and ere the financial success of the paper was assured, came, in October, 1871, the great Chicago fire. All that was left of *The Interior's* plant, including its subscription list, was in an iron safe deeply imbedded in a mass of glowing *débris*. When sufficiently cooled to be secured and opened, the air caused the partially incinerated contents to ignite and what was not burned was so drenched with water as to make it practically useless. Most of the original capital had been exhausted and many of the stockholders financially ruined. The situation was most despairing.

"At this critical moment," we are told, "a stranger from Ohio appeared on the scene. Physically he appeared to have the strength and frame of an athlete. He could work sixteen hours a day, week in and week out. He could, if necessary, set the type of the weekly issue. He also wielded a trenchant pen. His hope was boundless; his enthusiasm perennial. He also stood ready to supply the needed capital. In the surrounding waste of dust and ashes he began work. There was not in all the city a printing press where *The Interior* could be run off. Most of the artisan class had left Chicago to seek employment elsewhere.

"By all the expedients known to the ingenuity of a practical newspaper man a new list of subscribers was made up. If Chicago could not print the paper, Cincinnati could. In one month from the date of the fire, November 9, 1871, *The Interior* was out once more." After two years of vicissitudes with the paper, Dr. W. C. Gray, heretofore referred to, was greatly relieved by the taking over of the financial burden

by Hon. Cyrus H. McCormick and his wife, and the directory ceased to exist.

Dr. Gray's own story of the tragic event, and his rescue and rehabilitation of the paper, is most interesting and deserves to be recorded and preserved, and hence we give it as written :

It was that Monday morning when Chicago was still aflame that I was passing down Fourth Street, Cincinnati, on the way to my office. Mr. Anthony Hinkle, of the great schoolbook firm, stopped me. He was holding up every one he met and knew to get money for Chicago. He did not ask "How much will you give?" He put down the amount, gave credit for the spot cash, and said he would call for the balance of the \$100 the next day!

I turned aside to the telegraph office and wrote dispatches to the *Interior*, *Advance*, *Standard*, *National Teacher*, and a number of other Chicago religious publications, to come to us. But the wires were down, and I mailed them.

Mr. Mills, the publisher, answered that *The Interior* was dead. Then I had information that wreckers were in Chicago, trying to carry away everything left of the paper in the ruins. That did not appear to me good Presbyterianism. I wrote Mr. Mills to pick up every shred of *The Interior* he could find and come to me and I would help him start. This brought a committee of the board to Cincinnati to see me, and in short I sold out and went to Chicago.

Our first editorial employee was R. W. Patterson, later chief editor of *The Chicago Tribune*.

The paper owed about \$10,000. The company was put to it to care for themselves, and the stock was scattered. There were the old theological jealousies. But to sell it at sheriff's sale would kill it, and so I struggled on for a year. Dr. V. A. Turpin told me that if Cyrus H. McCormick were at home, he might help, but that in his absence he thought Mrs. McCormick would. I called on the lady. She said: "Go back to your work and have no anxiety. *The Interior* shall not fail." I then undertook to concentrate the stock into the hands of Dr. Turpin and C. B. Nelson, with the right to dispose of the paper as they deemed best for its perpetuity.

It was hard tramping. I had to edit and publish at night and then tramp all day for stock. But I succeeded. Dr. Benj. W. Dwight, of Clinton, N. Y., wanted to enter as equal partner, but eventually Mr. McCormick took charge, and the paper was transferred to him January 1, 1873. Three prominent names were announced—Dr. Francis L. Patton, Arthur Mitchell, and Abbott E. Kittredge.

The Swing controversy proved highly injurious to the paper. The Reunion was yet new, as we had been established as a Reunion paper. Then Dr. West's articles were printed in the paper, and they fairly resulted in the slaughter of our subscription list. Mr. McCormick was thoroughly desirous of the extension of the Reunion to the Southern Church, the Cumberlanders, the United Presbyterians, and the Reformed. He wished *The Interior* to be an orthodox, broad, irenic, comprehensive and charitable paper. He instructed me to cast the whole influence of the paper for general Presbyterian reunion.

Dr. Charles L. Thompson, then pastor of the Fifth Church of Chicago, was added to the staff, and on Dr. Patton's retiring, Dr. L. J. Halsey. Other workers following were Robert J. Young, Major Henry M. Robinson, and Robert J. Young.

Under the editorship of Dr. Gray, *The Interior* came to be widely known, and exercised an important influence in the Presbyterian Church. He died in September, 1901, and was succeeded by Nolan R. Best, who had been editor of *The Zanesville Courier*. After Dr. Gray's death the management of the paper was confided by the owners to Everett Sisson, who had been Dr. Gray's chief aid.

The second paper to which *The Continent* fell heir was *The Presbyterian Journal*. It was announced in its first issue, which bore the date, December 30, 1875, that its appearance was the answer to the demand of the Church for a low-priced paper.

It was a blanket sheet of four pages and was published in Philadelphia. Its proprietor was Rev. J. Ford Sutton and its editors Dr. Alfred Nevin and Rev. J. Ford Sutton. Twenty-five thousand copies of the first four numbers were issued.

After four or five years Mr. Sutton retired and the paper passed into the hands of the Ferguson Brothers, printers, 15 N. 7th Street. Dr. Nevin continued as editor. About the time of the second Pan-Presbyterian Council, which met in Philadelphia, September, 1880, the Fergusons sold the paper to J. Elliott Condict who, as The Presbyterian Journal Company, obtained the right to publish the proceedings of the Council. The editors were Dr. R. M. Patterson, pastor of the South Church, and Dr. J. B. Dales of the United Presbyterian Church.

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At the close of the Council Mr. Condict offered the editorship of the *Journal* to Dr. R. M. Patterson.

In 1882 the paper, having become considerably involved in debt was threatened with a law suit, when a member of the South Church bought it for Dr. Patterson, who thus became both proprietor and editor and continued as such until the fall of 1893. He had associated with him part of the time as editor Rev. J. Henry Sharpe, D.D., and as assistant editor, Rev. Richard Montgomery. J. L. Scott, D.D., was New England editor, and J. M. P. Otts, Southern editor.

In December, 1893, the paper was purchased from Dr. Patterson by Mr. Wm. H. Scott and for one year was published by The Presbyterian Journal Company, under the direction of Mr. Samuel G. Scott, Dr. Patterson continuing as editor. Writers of prominence contributed to its columns.

In November, 1894, Mr. Scott sold a half interest in the paper to Rev. W. P. White and his son John McGill White, a recent graduate of Princeton University, with some editorial experience from having served on the staff of *The Nassau Literary Magazine*. For the next four years the JOURNAL was conducted under their sole management and editorship. A women's Home Mission edition called for over fifty thousand copies.

Owing to the serious illness of the junior editor in 1898, Mr. Horace P. Camden was engaged as business manager, and upon the untimely death of Mr. White, in November, 1899, Dr. J. L. Scott became associate editor.

In the summer of 1902, Wm. H. Scott bought back the half interest in the paper, owned by Dr. White, and in the beginning of the year 1903, again sold the same to Rev. Henry A. Grubbs, who in May, 1903, became managing editor, with Drs. White and Scott as associate editors, Mr. H. P. Camden continuing business manager.

Later in the same year Mr. Grubbs induced his father-in-law, Dr. Richard S. Holmes, pastor of the Shadyside Church of Pittsburgh, to resign his pastorate and become editor-in-chief of the *Journal*. Effort was at once made to combine the paper with another influential journal. This proving un-

successful a stock company with a capital of \$30,000 was formed and the name of the paper changed to *The Westminster*. With the issue of the JOURNAL of March 24, 1904, the following announcement appeared: "The present series of *The Presbyterian Journal* ends with this issue. Next week a new series under the name of *The Westminster* will begin with Richard S. Holmes, D.D., LL.D., as editor-in-chief. With him will be associated the present editors of the *Journal*."

The stockholders embraced some of the leading business men of the Church. A printing and publishing plant furnished with the latest and most improved machinery and named "The Holmes Press" was established at 216 S. Fifth Street, under the management of Wm. P. Scott. To the editorial staff were added Geo. W. Knox, D.D., of New York, and Miss Mabel D. Holmes. Mr. Charles Hodge was secured as business manager, the former business manager of *The Westminster*, Mr. H. P. Camden, having accepted the position of business manager of *The Assembly Herald*. The subscription price was advanced to \$2.00. The paper was received with favor and its circulation was largely increased.

In 1910 an effort was made by interested parties to consolidate several Presbyterian journals. It was successful only in the case of two—*The Interior* and *The Westminster*. The former purchased the subscription list and the goodwill of the latter and as the successor of the two began the publication of *The Continent* with offices in Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York. Nolan Rice Best as editor-in-chief was placed in the New York office, at 156 Fifth Avenue; Richard S. Holmes, D.D., as associate editor, occupied the Philadelphia office. Wm. T. Ellis was associated with the paper as editor-a-field. The office of publication was in Chicago with Everett Sisson as publisher. He retired in 1912 and the present publisher, Oliver R. Williamson, succeeded him, the office being at 509 S. Wabash Avenue. Dr. R. S. Holmes died in 1912, since which time the paper in Philadelphia has been represented by Dr. W. P. White as Philadelphia news editor, with office in the Witherspoon Building. Dr. Wm. T. Ellis resigned as editor-a-field a few years after the death of Dr. Holmes.