

ADDRESSES

—AND—

HISTORICAL SKETCHES

—DELIVERED AT—

THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

—OF—

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES

—OF—

UPPER AND LOWER TEN MILE.

—BY—

DRS. BROWNSON, ALLISON AND WILSON,

—AND—

REV. MESSRS. ATKINSON AND GLENN.

WASHINGTON, PA.:

F. WARD, BOOK AND JOB PRINTER, REPORTER JOB OFFICE.

1879.

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CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

COMMEMORATIVE OF

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE REV. THADDEUS DODD,
AS PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF TEN MILE IN
SEPTEMBER, 1779.

HELD AT

RINGLAND'S GROVE, WASHINGTON COUNTY, PA.,

THURSDAY, AUGUST 28, 1879.

ADDRESSES

OF

DRS. BROWNSON, ALLISON AND WILSON,

AND

HISTORICAL SKETCHES

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1879.

THE PRESBYTERIANISM OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

AND ITS

INFLUENCE ON THE WEST,

BY

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Episcopacy lays claim to great antiquity, boasts of Apostolical succession and affects a lofty pity for anything ecclesiastical which can not be traced back in an unbroken line to the time of the Apostles. Mere antiquity is not much to boast of, for while old age is venerable it may become decrepid and imbecile and venerableness may degenerate into drivelling senility.

If challenged to the test of antiquity, we as Presbyterians are ready for the trial. We shall not decline the issue, for Presbyterianism is older by millenniums than the Apostles. It had been in successful operation for thousands of years before Peter cast his first net or caught his first fish. At Horeb, in the light of the burning bush—the symbol of the Church burning but not consumed—Moses received his great commission, and the beginning of that commission ran thus: “Go and gather the *elders* of Isreal together.” The first thing which he was authorized and commanded to do was to *convene the Presbytery*. Apostolical succession? We claim Patriarchal succession! From the burning bush at Horeb Moses went to Presbytery and took his brother Aaron along with him to do the talking. There was a Presbytery in Egypt before the Exodus and at Sinai after the Exodus. We make no ostentatious parade of antiquity, for we have much else that is more valuable, but the respectable old gentleman named Pecci, living at Rome under the title of Leo XIII ought

to know that there were Presbyterians long before the Apostle Peter was born, or Rome was built, or Episcopacy or Papacy was ever heard of or dreamed of. Moses and Aaron were Presbyterians and ever since the bush at Horeb burned and was not consumed, Presbyterianism has been a power in the history of the world. By Presbyterianism I mean not a mere name or form or badge or party-cry, but a system of doctrines and principles the history of which can be traced back along a line of fire to the Apostle Paul and thence to the burning bush at Horeb; doctrines which set the great heart of Augustine aflame and kindled any lights which irradiated the gloom of the dark ages; the doctrines of the Waldenses for ages in their Alpine fastnesses, of the Reformers and the fore-runners of the Reformation, of Huss and Jerome of Prague, of Wickliffe, of Luther, of Zwingli, of Calvin, of Knox, of Ridley, of Latimer and Peter Martyr, of the Covenanters and the Puritans, of Dort and Westminster. If we would celebrate the history of these doctrines we should have to go into higher figures than centuries; we should have to make our computations in millenniums. Talk they of Apostolical succession! Of what value or avail is the fictitious line of ceremonial tinsel and frippery when the life and spirit have departed? The true line of succession does not consist in the unbroken continuity of empty, extra scriptural forms and ceremonies, but in the continuous holding forth and passing forward the vital doctrines of the Gospel accompanied by the Spirit and power of true godliness. The line passes on from Enoch, the seventh from Adam to Noah, the preacher of righteousness, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to Paul, from Paul to Augustine, the greatest of the Fathers, from Augustine to Succat, commonly known as St. Patrick, a sound Presbyterian, from Succat through the Culdees and every Witness for the Truth during the Middle Ages, thence on through the fore-runners of the Reformation and all the Reformers, from the Reformers through the Covenanters, the Puritans and the Pilgrim Fathers. Along the whole line stakes and faggots have blazed, all along it is sprinkled with the blood and strewn with the ashes of martyrs:

"Kings, Prophets, Patriarchs all have part"

"Along the sacred line."

It is not meant by these commemorative services that Presbyterianism is only a century old, but we are here to celebrate the planting of Presbyterianism in this seed-plot, which was so won-

derfully prepared in the providence of God for its reception, and the harvested results of which planting have been so abundant and precious. God sifted the nations for the finest of the wheat with which to plant the vergin soil of this new continent. Persecution drove to these shores the choicest spirits of Europe; the Dutch from Holland, the Puritans from England, the Huguenots from France, the Covenanters from Scotland and Ireland. Much of this seed wheat was sifted out from Scotland and the north of Ireland, and was sown broadcast throughout these hills and valleys of Western Pennsylvania.

Presbyterianism is the primitive form of church government, and consequently the Presbyterian Church is the true Catholic Church. Presbyterianism, therefore, is good for all times, for all races, for all circumstances, yet its catholicity does not consist in a dead, monotonous uniformity; but, as in nature and in all the works of God, it consists in variety in unity, and unity in variety. So that the Presbyterianism of Western Pennsylvania has specific characteristics which render it one of the most interesting varieties of the species. One of these characteristics is:

I. *Sound scriptural doctrine in creed, catechism and sermon.*

Presbyterianism in America was not a new invention. It was not an experiment. The original Presbytery did not adopt any written constitution, but was governed by common consent, according to the usages of Presbyterian bodies in other countries. The type of doctrine was Scotch-Irish, which as a type is very marked and distinct. Our ancestors in the ecclesiastical line exalted and honored in a peculiar manner the Word of God, putting it in its proper place above all traditions and commandments of men. They required a "*thus saith the Lord*" for everything and when they had found that, they acted according to it or according to their understanding of it without the slightest fear of man or Devil. They read the "*thus saith the Lord*" just as calmly and as impartially by the light of the hangman's torch as they did by the light of their own firesides. To their Bibles they went for everything that was necessary in the regulation of human life and human society. They drew their form of church government from the Word of God, directly and exclusively. So Zwingli, from his Greek Testament, elaborated a system of Presbyterianism. Thus, also, Calvin got his system of church government. The First Book of Discipline was not modeled after any human pattern, but was drawn directly from the Word of God. "They took not their

pattern," says Row, "from any kirk in the world, no, not from Geneva itself, *but laying God's Word before them, made reformation according thereunto, both in doctrine first, and then in discipline.*" This fundamental principle that doctrines and forms and rites and ceremonies must have a positive warrant from Scripture, swept away the last rag of the habiliments of the Harlot of the Seven Hills. At Geneva the blue waters of the Rhone rush out from the lake, and in their Alpine purity swiftly wash away the impurities of the city. So with the Genevan type of the Reformation, the Water of Life flowing from pure scriptural sources, swept away Romish terrors, corruptions and abuses.

The Reformers of Scotland from Wishart to Renwick among her martyrs, and from Knox to Rutherford, among her theologians, appealed directly to the Word of God, in the presence of kings, and prelates. Nothing was taken for granted—nothing was taken on mere human authority. To the law and the testimony was the inevitable appeal. The Bible became the text book of Scotland, and the result was that the teachings of the Bible, pure and simple, became the sum and substance, the body and soul of the theology of Scotland as they have not in any other land in christendom: and in the department of ecclesiology, in the discussion of church principles, Scotland has given us incomparably the richest literature in the world. In the immortal writings of Calderwood, Gillespie, Rutherford, Brown of Wamphray, Forrester, Rule, Lawder and, the born-blind Jamison, Presbyterianism has been fixed on foundations which can never be moved.

This was the Presbyterianism which was planted a century ago on these hill-sides and along these valleys of Western Pennsylvania. It was a system which was well matured and thoroughly understood by those who preached it here. There was no uncertainty, no ambiguity as to doctrine, no crudeness in the administration of government or discipline.

This soundness of doctrine, moreover, was not dead orthodoxy but was attended by appropriate spiritual experience. "The Christian's Great Interest" by William Guthrie, David Dickson's "Therapentica," Rutherford's "Letters and Theological Treatises," are among the immortal works on the subject of experimental religion. In this department Samuel Rutherford occupies a position as unique as Shakespeare does in literature. These and similar books constituted the libraries of pioneer ministers in Western Pennsylvania. We their descendants have gone farther

and fared worse. Now, the result of the preaching of this sound doctrine experimentally, along with the administration of the sacraments and ordinances according to Presbyterian order was :

II. *Revivals of Religion.*

This is the second characteristic of the Presbyterianism of Western Pennsylvania which I mention. Similar results had followed the faithful, experimental preaching of sound doctrine in Scotland and Ireland. The valley of Ayr had been stirred as by a purifying tempest through the week day discourses of David Dickson; and the revival at the Kirk of Shotts has become familiar to all evangelical churches in christendom. The same thing is true of the whole covenanting period, when in fields, in mountains, in caves and dens and at Martyrs' graves the Gospel was preached with power and the demonstration of the Spirit. Sometimes it was so preached and received within sound of the baying of the pursuing bloodhounds. Likewise in these wilds of Western Pennsylvania the same Gospel was preached with like effects within sound of the savage Indian's war-whoop. Here the Gospel was accepted and preached as the *wisdom of God and the power of God*. The history of the planting of the Presbyterian Church in Western Pennsylvania is a history of revivals. This fact deserves the most emphatic recognition at our hands to-day. It should be kept in the fore front of the history.

Our fathers were not only familiar with revivals in Scotland and Ireland but also in our own land, under Edwards in New England and under Whitefield and the Tennents in Eastern Pennsylvania.

Anderson, Dodd, McMillan, McCurdy, Marquis, Patterson, and Smith as ministers, and Buffalo, Chartiers, Cross Creek, Cross Roads, Pigeon Creek, Three Springs, and Ten Mile as churches are indissolubly associated with the history of revivals. This is a great fact—a fact which cannot be over-estimated. But a still more interesting and important fact is this, that here in Western Pennsylvania, in an obscure fort surrounded by hostile savages, this revival influence began, which gave tone to the religious history of the century. We stand to-day on hallowed ground.

But there is a still more important and wonderful fact in this connection. The last century drew to its close under the evil genius of French atheism. During the Revolutionary war France had been our ally. French fashions, French manners, and French modes of thought prevailed extensively. Some of the leading

statesmen of that time and many of the lower politicians were avowed infidels. French atheism was discussed around camp-fires, in legislative halls, in social circles at the Federal Capital and in the backwoods of remote western settlements. The air was heavy with the poison of deadly error, and the church even felt its paralyzing influence. The question was—and a prodigious question it was—whether the new Republic was to be a christian land or whether it was to become a propaganda of atheism. In Vance's Fort began the quiet work of grace which settled forever on these shores the issue as between the Gospel and French infidelity. This is the crowning and amazing fact of this part of the history.

This work of grace not only affected Western Pennsylvania and the regions lying directly west and north of it, but it also affected Virginia and North Carolina, and especially Tennessee and Kentucky. It did more, I doubt not, than any other single influence to make the great West and South-West what they are to-day as compared with what they would have been under the power of French infidelity. There is not a state or territory in the Union which does not feel the influence of the spiritual impulse which was thus given.

III. The next characteristic which I mention is *sound learning*.

Presbyterianism has always been the patron and promoter of learning. An open Bible, and enlightened intellect and an unfettered conscience, she carries with her whithersoever she goes. She is a child of the light and she hates darkness, whether it be spiritual or intellectual. She always appeals to an enlightened judgment, and thus has made the pulpit the bulwark of truth and righteousness. Indeed Presbyterianism and ignorance are as incompatible as light and darkness. It has never been planted anywhere, even in the darkest portions of the earth, where it has not diffused spiritual and intellectual enlightenment. No amount of oppression, no disasters can quench this inherent light of Presbyterianism. To some of the most trying periods of persecution belong many of the greatest names in Presbyterian History, such as Calderwood, Boyd of Trochrigg, Brown of Wamphray, Andrew Melville, Samuel Rutherford, James Durham and George Gillespie, amidst persecution and exile the learning and literary labors of these men were prodigious. Andrew Melville, in the presence of the the king and his council, unclasped his Hebrew Bible from his girdle and throwing it on the table, exclaimed "*these*

are my instructions;" and when the royal parasites discovered that the Bible was in Hebrew, they were as much horrified as though it had been infected with the plague. When the youthful George Gillespie reached London as a Commissioner to the Westminster Assembly, he went direct to the Abbey where the Assembly was in session, travel-stained and weary as he was, and standing behind the crowd, listened to an able speech by Goodwin, in favor of independency. Being observed by his friends he was urged to make a reply, and reluctantly coming forward in his traveling costume, in an off-hand speech of an hour and a half, he utterly demolished the elaborate defenses of Independency. Of his great speech against Erastianism, Selden, the most learned man in England said: "This young man by his single speech has swept away the learning and labors of my life." Such has always been the spirit of Presbyterianism.

Of its kind there is nothing in history superior to the heroism and magnanimity displayed by the pioneers of the Presbyterian Church in Western Pennsylvania in their devotion to learning. Within sound of the Indian's war-whoop they laid the foundations of our Literary and Theological Institutions. Here on Ten Mile Creek—consecrated ground—Thaddeus Dodd opened his Log Academy, Joseph Smith, at Upper Buffalo, appropriating his kitchen for the purposes of a Latin school gave it the dignified and classical title "*The Study*," while even earlier still, Dr. McMillan, on the banks of the Chartiers, had laid the foundations of Jefferson College. Within sight of the council fires of blood-thirsty savages these intrepid and glorious fathers laid the foundations of institutions whose influence has had a wider reach and a deeper current than ever belonged to the Porch or the Academy of the ancients. Through what toils, and sacrifices and perils were these institutions founded! Shame on us their descendants if we let the light which they kindled in the wilderness go out or grow less! Here on this sacred soil, on this great memorial day, at this feast of Tabernacles, within sound of the bell of the united College of Washington and Jefferson we should catch somewhat of the spirit of the fathers and should consecrate somewhat of our strength and substance to carrying forward the work which was so grandly begun by them.

The last characteristic which I shall mention is:

IV. *The Advocacy of Human Rights.*

From the day on which Moses demanded the emancipation of

Hebrews from the brick kilns of Egypt, Presbyterianism has been the consistent and heroic advocate of human liberty. King James when he attempted to subvert the constitutional and ecclesiastical liberties of Scotland met an insurmountable obstacle to his designs in the heroic Presbyterian clergy of that age. His views and feelings were tersely expressed in his well known maxim: "No bishop, no king," which being translated and interpreted according to the history of the period means, that with Presbyterian bishops—which by the way, are only scriptural bishops—there can be no tyranical kings; *and let all the people say amen!* In a similar spirit he gave utterance to another famous saying: "that Presbytery agreed as well with monarchy as God and the Devil," which being translated and interpreted means that Presbytery does not agree with oppressive, unconstitutional monarchies, *and again let all the people say amen!*

Republicanism is Presbyterianism in the State. Our republican institutions are modeled after the Presbyterian Form of Government and that again is modeled after the Hebrew Commonwealth. In George Buchanan's "De Jure Regni Apud Scotos;" in Brown of Wamphray's "Apologetical Relation;" in Rutherford's "Lex Rex;" in "Naphtali" and the "Hind Let Loose," are found the principles of constitutional liberty which are now almost universally accepted. But the advocacy of these principles then involved banishment, imprisonment and death. "Lex Rex" was burned by the public hangman, and its author only escaped a similar fate because death intervened. Addressing Presbyterian clergymen, Regent Morton exclaimed spitefully: "there will be no quietness in this land till half a dozen of you be hanged or banished the country." "Tush, sir," replied Andrew Melville, threaten your courtiers after that manner. It is the same to me whether I rot in the air or in the ground." Looking straight and steadily into the eyes of King James, Melville said, "Sir, when you were in your swaddling clothes, Christ Jesus reigned freely in this land;" and at any cost, at every peril these intrepid men maintained the crown-rights of Christ as King and Head of his Church.

Without fanaticism, without extreme or distorted views, more than by any single man, the true principles of religious liberty were taught in this country by Francis Makemie, the father of Presbyterianism in the United States. False to every principle of their creed, and dead to every inspiring memory of their history, would the Presbyterians of this country have been if

they had not stood as a tower of defense for human freedom. They were the descendants of the Huguenots whose blood, shed in the cause of religious liberty had baptized almost every rood of French soil; of the Dutch who under William the Silent made the dykes of Holland a Thermopylæ of freedom; of the Scotchmen who signed the Covenant in their blood. In a Presbyterian community, in a Presbyterian Convention, which had as its presiding officer a ruling elder, was framed and promulgated the Mecklenburg Declaration which embodied the spirit and principles of Declaration of Independence, and which ante dates that document by the space of a year or more; and even earlier than this, within the bounds of Old Redstone Presbytery, the Westmoreland Declaration was made at Hannahstown. Not from the hot bed of French Infidelity, as some would have us believe, came the principles of our free government, but from the fiery furnace of persecution through which our Presbyterian ancestors past, principles which had been tried "so as by fire," principles in defence of which our ancestors in the ecclesiastical line, had, for generations poured out their blood like water. Without Presbyterian muscle, Presbyterian brain, Presbyterian valor and true Calvinistic endurance and perseverance, American Independence would not have been achieved; and to these principles of freedom no class of Presbyterians have been truer or more loyal than those of Western Pennsylvania.

Such has been the Presbyterianism of Western Pennsylvania in its leading characteristics, Sound Doctrine, Genuine Revivals of Religion, Sound Learning, and Devotion to Human Freedom. From this region emigrants have carried these principles and influences into every Western State and Territory. These principles and influences have been and continue to be the life-blood of the nation, and through all the veins and arteries of the body politic these life currents circulate. In these lie the future safety, health, strength and purity of the Republic.