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E. P. Humphrey  
From Mrs James Humphrey

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Dead of the Presbyterian Church,  
IN KENTUCKY.

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DEAD OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
IN KENTUCKY.

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ADDRESS

Delivered before the Two Synods of Kentucky at their Joint  
Centennial, held at Harrodsburg, October 12, 1883.

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BY

EDWARD P. HUMPHREY, D. D.

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# The Dead <sup>of the</sup> Presbyterian Church in Kentucky.

BY REV. EDWARD P. HUMPHREY, D. D.

The time and place of this commemoration have been happily chosen. The time is the close of the first century of Presbyterianism in Kentucky, and in the region round about. The place at which we are met is near the site of the Harrodstown station, a stockade built about 1774 by the white settlers for protection against the Indians. Harrod's station was a few miles distant toward the south; beyond it was Crow's, near Danville. In an easterly direction, similar stockades were built on the other side of Dix river, and nearer to Harrodstown, another at Cane Run, and still another toward the north, the famous McAfee station. Here the Gospel began to be preached by David Rice in the year 1783; and the congregations gathered in this circuit of entrenchments made up his first pastoral charge. And so a "great light" suddenly sprang up in the thick woods and cane-brakes of far-off Kentucky. The accomplished historian of this occasion, the Rev. J. N. Saunders, has supplied us with a vivid word picture of the primitive places of worship and the appearance of the worshipers.

The wilderness became "a dark and bloody ground" before it began to blossom. Two years earlier than the arrival of Mr. Rice, young John McCoun, an only son, had been captured by the Shawnee Indians near McAfee's, carried to Ohio, and burned at the stake with excruciating tortures. The savages, one hundred and fifty strong, returned to the station, but were repulsed by thirteen of our marksmen, who kept up a well-directed fire from the blockhouse, using the bullets molded by the women and children as the fight went on. The Presbyterian pioneers at McAfee's, in recognition of this and other divine interpositions, gave to their church, when it was founded, the name of New Providence. A few months before Mr. Rice preached his first sermon in Kentucky, the savages, led by that white-skinned miscreant, Simon Girty, attacked Bryan's station, near Lexington, and shortly afterward slaughtered sixty of our brave men at the Blue Licks,

During the first ten years of Mr. Rice's ministry, the white settlers habitually strapped the rifle to the plow-handle, and carried their weapons into the corn fields with the hoe and the axe. Dr. Blythe was heard to say, that it was the custom of the men to attend preaching well armed, and even the minister carried his rifle and rode with holsters. The whole case is summed up in a communication of Judge Innes to Secretary Knox, showing that within the seven years which followed Father Rice's first sermon, fifteen hundred people were killed or taken prisoners by the Indians, twenty thousand horses were carried off, and property taken to the value of \$75,000. (Butler 195.) But in the midst of these bloody times, Mr. Rice gathered congregations at all the stations that I have named. In 1785, he held two conferences with the brethren at Cane Run. The second of these conferences was attended by three other ministers who had followed him to Kentucky, and twenty-three representatives of twelve congregations. The ministers present were David Rice, Adam Rankin, James Crawford, and Terah Templin, the last two being licentiates. Among the representatives were Henry McDonald from Walnut Hill, David Logan from Lexington, William Scott from Pisgah, Jacob Fishback from Dix river, and James McCoun from New Providence. The text of Mr. Rice's first sermon in 1783 has been repeated to-day by our presiding moderator: "The people that sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light has sprung up." His text two years afterward, at the Cane Run conference was: "For Zion's sake will not I hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness and the salvation thereof as the lamp that burneth." In 1783 it was the light suddenly springing up; in 1785 it was the righteousness going forth as brightness to fill the land.

One year later the Presbytery of Transylvania, or the Presbytery of the Forests Beyond, or in plainer English, the Presbytery of the Backwoods was founded at Danville, with Mr. Rice as Moderator. In 1802, the Synod of Kentucky met for the first time at Lexington, with Mr. Rice again as Moderator—always the first in honor among his equals in the House of the Lord.

His permanent home was with the congregation at Danville, preaching monthly at New Providence. He established in his own house, in Danville, as early as 1785, a school which became the germ of the Transylvania University, and by a sort of unconscious prophecy, the forerunner of Center College. In the year 1792, he was a member of the convention which met at Danville to frame a constitution for the State. In this convention he did much, but without success, to

secure the gradual emancipation of the slaves. In the fiftieth year of his ministry in Kentucky, and the sixty-fifth year of his age, he found himself laboring under poverty, under the incipient malady of the brain, and the habitual melancholy which attends those afflictions.

He removed to Green county where he died in the eighty-third year of his age. But he continued his labors, according to his day and his strength until his eightieth year, visiting the churches which he had founded; assisting his brethren in revivals and sacramental meetings; making missionary tours through Kentucky and Ohio; endeavoring to quiet the tumults of the revivals of A. D. 1800, and the troubles in the Cumberland Presbytery; resisting the vagaries of the New Lights, and preaching the word as he had opportunity. Mr. Rice's gifts as a preacher were not so remarkable as his administrative ability, his sound sense and judgment, his zeal and piety. "He was not" using here the words of Dr. Cleland, "like the eccentric comet, with its long and fiery tail, which attracts the gaze and awakens the speculation of beholders for a few days and then disappears, but as the glorious sun which, by its regular and constant influences, enriches our fields, illumines our horizon, and gladdens our hearts."

In the year 1791 Mr. Rice had the pleasure of welcoming the first of the "eight missionaries," so called. These young men were converted at Hampden Sydney and Liberty Hall, in the revival of 1787-8, and they came to Kentucky one by one, from 1791 to 1800. Among these was Robert Marshall, who was one of the most efficient laborers in the revival of 1800; who was carried away from the foundations by the wave of enthusiasm which flowed toward the New Lights, but soon afterward recovered his poise and finished his course in the honor of his brethren. Carey Allen came with Marshall from Virginia, and began and closed a brief ministry with his young life, at Paint Lick and Silver creek. His eloquence and zeal, his prepossessing appearance and melodious voice gave promise of distinguished usefulness; but he was cut down in the very flower of his age. The effectiveness as a public speaker which was in him may be known from a single incident. On one occasion he recited the hymn, "To Arms! To Arms!" with such natural emphasis, that many of his hearers sprang to their feet thinking Carey had seen through the window a party of Indians lurking in the woods.

From Allen, we turn to John P. Campbell, another of the eight missionaries, and, perhaps, the most brilliant of them all. It pleased the Lord to raise up in him a defender of the faith at a time when controversy was forced upon our brethren. Somebody must fight, or

everybody would have to run away. Campbell's mind was exceedingly quick and acute; his learning was sufficient; and his courage rose with the exigencies of the contention. He was like the young soldier of whom it was said that the shout of the enemy was the music to which he marched. In every controversy, Campbell was a veteran to be sent to the front, and an adversary whom nobody would despise the second time. The "New Light" set up by Barton W. Stone was the smoking wick of a tallow candle when Campbell was done with it; the Pelagianism of Craighead was pulverized under his sledge-hammer; and when one Robinson, who ridiculed the baptism which the children of Israel got with Moses in the cloud and in the sea, Campbell left his man as dead as Pharaoh. As a controversialist, Campbell refused to be afraid either of his convictions or of his adversaries. As a preacher, he was distinguished for weight of matter, brilliant diction, the flashing of a deep-set and dark blue eye, classic elegance of style, and gracefulness of delivery. But he lost his voice by preaching in the open air. Like a broken vesper bell, the call to prayer lingered in the vibrations, but the melody was gone. His nervous system was delicately strung; he was impatient, and thought to be at times irascible. Lord Roseburg said lately that "success is not with the wasps, but with the bees." Possibly Campbell had not thought of that. But so it was that, though he preached in many places, he never found a permanent home; not at Danville, nor Nicholasville, nor Cherry Spring, nor Versailles, nor Lexington, nor elsewhere in Kentucky. He was compelled to resort to the practice of medicine for the maintenance of his nine children; and he died at Chillicothe, Ohio, from exposure while preaching, at the age of fifty-three.

John Lyle was another of the eight missionaries. Dr. McGuffey describes him as much above the common stature, erect, carrying a fine head covered by a profusion of hair entirely white, flowing down to the shoulders. Mr. Lyle was a power in his day. He took a leading part in the controversies then flagrant; rebuking the strange tumult of the people called the jerks in the revival of 1800, and riding two months in the Cumberland Presbytery, in order to compose the difficulties there. He was also a leading member of the commission whose proceedings led to the separation of that Presbytery from our communion and the formation of the Cumberland Presbyterian church. Mr. Lyle went far in advance of his generation. We have Dr. Robert Stuart's authority for saying that Mr. Lyle established in Paris the first school ever undertaken in the West for the exclusive education of girls. The circulation of the Bible by colporteurs was

suggested by him long before the formation of the Bible Society, and he set up a printing press for the dissemination of religious literature, many years before Tract Societies and Publication Boards were thought of. In the venerable Bishop Kavanaugh, we have a link which connects him with the living generation. Young Kavanaugh, when a boy of thirteen, was indentured to Mr. Lyle as an apprentice in the printing office. The apprentice lived in the family of his master, and was converted and led to seek the Methodist ministry. Mr. Lyle was ready to cancel the indenture of apprenticeship, but under the law then in force, the apprentice, when he became of age, might sue him on the contract. Let Mr. Kavanaugh finish the story: "Mr. Lyle asked me whether, if he would release me from all obligation to him, I would sue him. I assured him I would not. He then smiling said, 'Will you ever sue me till you fall from grace?' thus giving a pleasant thrust at my doctrine of the possibility of such an event. I promised I would not, and on this bargain we parted." It proved to be a very safe bargain for Mr. Lyle, as we all know who know the good Bishop.

Dr. Robert Stuart was another of the eight missionaries, and he was their peer in his usefulness down to a good old age. Archibald Cameron was not of their number, but his ministry which began in 1795 and continued forty-one years entitles him to a place among those who founded the church in our Synod, and then built upon the foundation walls of strength. He studied for the ministry at Danville with David Rice. Immediately after his licensure he began to preach in Shelby and Nelson counties, and labored there to the end of his days. He stood by the truth against Adam Rankin, against Barton W. Stone, against the infatuations of 1800-1805, against the waywardness of the Cumberland Presbytery, against the Pelagianism of Thomas Craighead, and against Arminianism, and against the incipient "Reformation," and against everything else that opposed itself to the truth. He was inferior in learning to John P. Campbell, inferior in pathos to Thomas Cleland, inferior in dealing with infidelity to David Nelson; but in love and zeal for the truth, in a knowledge of Calvinism and the grounds on which it rests, both rational and scriptural, in controversial aptitude and power, and in doctrinal and experimental preaching, he was the equal of the best man among them. The churches now existing in the counties of Shelby, Henry, Spencer, and a part of Jefferson, were organized by Mr. Cameron; and the sturdy and intelligent Presbyterianism of that region took its shape and spirit from his strength and fidelity.

If he had been married, especially if well married, he would have

been more presentable in his personal appearance; if he had not been tempted beyond what he was able to bear, he would have restrained now and then his terrific power of sarcasm; if he had been mindful of the thirty minutes rule of our day he would not have used the "gift of continuance" so freely. The tradition is that the people have been known, if they were very hungry, to go home while he was preaching, dine at their leisure, and return to the church in time to hear the last hour or two of his sermon. This is probably an exaggeration. But at a day when lawyers like Felix Grundy, and John Rowan, and John Pope were heard patiently four or five hours at the bar and from the stump, an earnest servant of God, like Mr. Cameron, might be excused if he claimed for the souls of men as much time for consideration as they gave to their law suits and politics.

About the noonday of this generation appears the venerable form of Dr. Thomas Cleland, for a long time the pastor of the congregations at Harrodsburg and New Providence. We should give to his labors a large space in this memorial service, because his biography is the history of the growth, in members and power, of Presbyterianism in this region, because he was, in some sense, the typical Kentucky preacher of his day, and because this assembly is largely made up of the descendants of his spiritual children. He participated first as an exhorter and then as a preacher in the revival of 1800-1805. He took up his pen against the Arian and Socinian errors of Barton W. Stone, and endured as best he could the mortification of seeing three of our ministers, Houston, McNemar, and Dunlavy, prominent leaders in the revival of 1800, going over to Spiritualism run to seed and assisting in establishing the Shaker community in Mercer county. Dr. Cleland was of the commission to the Cumberland Presbytery, was active in the proceedings which resulted in the deposition of Craighead and the defeat of the Pelagian party; he entered into the controversy with President Holley and his partisans in Transylvania University, and toiled at the foundation of Center College when that institution became a necessity of our position. He defended Protestantism against Bishop David, the doctrines of the divine decrees against the Arminians, of the covenants against the Baptists, and the doctrines of grace against the "Reformers."

The larger part of his life was spent in Mercer county, with the congregations at New Providence and Harrodsburg. His ministry was accompanied with the repeated outpouring of the Holy Spirit. A work of grace began in the New Providence church in 1823, and continued without abatement for seven years, two hundred and forty

having been gathered into that church. During his ministry there about seven hundred people professed their faith in Christ. The work of saving men, took on its power in Harrodsburg in 1826, continued three years, and resulted in adding to the church one hundred and seventy-three converts. If we were able, as we are not, to compute the number of those who were converted under his preaching at camp meetings and sacramental meetings in other places, we should be better able to appreciate the greatness of the work which the Lord helped him to perform. Meanwhile Dr. Cleland opened his house for the instruction of candidates for the ministry. The catalogue of fourteen of his pupils is preserved. Among those who are no longer living are Drs. James Barnes, N. H. Hall, John H. Brown, and David S. Todd. Some of his pupils were in narrow circumstances and received their board in his family gratuitously; others at half price, or as suited their convenience. He published, in 1825, a hymn book—which for many years, held in the churches the place lately given to the “gospel hymns”—and in it the Gospel was sung by our people, responding to the Gospel preached by the ministers in camp meetings and revivals.

David Nelson belongs to the memorable era of 1826–29. His early ministry was given to East Tennessee. He became pastor in Danville in 1828, remaining there two years. He was a child of nature, simple in his habits of life, untidy in his dress, and generally eccentric. His friend Ross describes a cottage which he built in Tennessee, I presume. It was unlike anything ever seen before, with the stump of a tree left in the middle of his parlor as a center table. In preaching he rarely exceeded thirty minutes, but the weight of his matter, his condensed masses of thought, his laconic phrases, put such a strain on the attention of his hearers that his thirty minutes were better than sixty of a diffuse and rambling preacher. His best-known published work is the “Cause and Cure of Infidelity.” It met squarely and unanswerably the doctrines of infidelity that were current at the time. It was originally prepared for oral delivery. Although two or three hours long, it was heard with unwearied attention by the most intelligent people, many an unbeliever confessing the power with which he spoke. The book is not now in active circulation, but it was mighty in its day. It resembles an old ship of the line, like the famous man of war, the Constitution, invincible while afloat but giving place when its victories and glories were won, to newer floating batteries. Dr. R. J. Breckinridge, after an intimacy of twenty years, said of Dr. Nelson: “I never knew a more godly man, a more noble gentleman,

a more illustrious example of a great pulpit orator." "He spoke extempore always, but the pathos, the unction, the impressiveness of his preaching were amazing." (Sprague IV., 688.) But his brain gave way under the tasks which he imposed upon it. He slowly died at the top and fell to the earth, at the age of fifty-one.

Dr. Nelson's career belongs to the first half of the century. Before leaving this period we should recall a few other names which adorn our annals. Samuel K. Nelson, the brother of David, was one of the founders of the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb. Joshua L. Wilson, when a lad of nine years, heard David Rice preach his first sermon. He and Dr. Cleland were ordained at the same time. After a laborious and fruitful ministry of six years at Bardstown and Big Spring, he took charge of the first church in Cincinnati, where he became a pillar of Presbyterianism. John T. Edgar, the Chrysostom, or golden-mouthed, was trained in Maysville and Frankfort, for his life-work in Nashville. Gideon Blackburn began his ministry in East Tennessee, preaching in his hunting-shirt, Bible and hymn book in hand, rifle, shot-pouch and knap-sack by his side. When the Indians were driven off, he rode to Middle Tennessee and administered, so it is said, the Lord's supper from the stump of a tree in the forest which covered the site of Nashville. Later in life he became pastor at Louisville in Dr. Witherspoon's church; then President of Center College. He closed his career by founding Blackburn University. He represents the three eras of Western life, the era of the hunting-shirt, the era of the saddle-bags, and the era of advanced culture; and in them all was true to the Lord of all ages and the Head over all to the Church. James K. Birch was called by his brethren the "old ecclesiastic," to describe his unquestioned leadership in our church courts. Whoever met Mr. Birch in debate, would if he was wise, do one of two things; either he would be sure of his ground, or he would leave the bridge behind him wide open. He received an honor conferred on no other man in the century, having been elected three times Moderator of the Synod. James Blythe was one of the eight missionaries from Virginia. He was the minister of the church at Pisgah (Dr. Douglass') for more than forty years. He was also an eminent teacher through all his days, and closed his life in the Presidency of Hanover College. Dr. Blythe was the Covenanter of his generation; never shrinking from controversy, fearing nobody, flattering nobody.

The distinguished presidents of Center College belong to the middle and second half of the century. Jeremiah Chamberlain held the office



four years with distinguished usefulness. He became President of Oakland College, Mississippi. That institution reached great prosperity under his administration. But in an evil hour he fell dead at the hands of a disorderly and drunken student.

The year 1832 brings into the field of vision the person of John C. Young. He entered the presidency at the age of twenty-seven, and served twenty-seven years. The college had been in existence eight years, and had graduated twenty-nine men, of whom, let it be said, twelve became ministers of the gospel. Under the administration of Dr. Young, funds to the amount of more than \$100,000 were collected; the number of students increased from a very few to more than two hundred; the graduates rose from two in the first class to forty-seven in the last class which he taught. Powerful revivals of religion marked the whole period. Of those who were educated under him, one hundred and twenty-six became ministers of the Gospel, not counting those who began their college course at Danville and finished it elsewhere. Dr. Young's mind was singularly acute; rarely in any discussion was he driven into a corner. He was a fine classical scholar, an accomplished metaphysician, of reading almost boundless, and as a teacher remarkably apt, and as a governor of young men full of resources. It would be hard to find a pupil of his who will not say that he received some of his best and noblest impulses from the teachings and example of Dr. Young; next to impossible to find one who will not tell you that he was a man to be looked up to, quoted, and followed. His successor, Dr. Lewis W. Green, was the first graduate of the college, then a professor therein, afterward successively pastor in Baltimore, professor in the Theological Seminary in Hanover, president of Hampden Sidney College, president of Transylvania University, and six years at the head of Center College—everywhere equal to his great opportunities. He was an accomplished classical scholar, well versed in the higher philosophy, and one of the most eloquent men of a generation in Kentucky abounding in eloquent men. His successor was William L. Breckinridge, a singularly pure and upright man, vertically upright, a Christian gentleman of warm affections, inspiring others with generous thoughts, true to his friends, his principles, and his church, loving and beloved. More than one in this company is ready to say "very pleasant hast thou been to me, my brother."

Here, my brethren, we are brought face to face with the embarrassments which beset this part of our commemoration. The names on the death-roll of our ministers exceed three hundred. It is a sol-

em thought that of all the ministers who were members of our Synod in 1833—fifty years ago—only one survives to this day, Rev. Dr. Eli N. Sawtell, the first pastor of the Second Church, in Louisville. Then, the materials are not within our reach for the biographies of many of our departed brethren, whose good works deserve the most grateful mention. Still further, there is danger lest we bestow on a few leading ministers the praises which ought to be divided among those who have shrunk from public recognition; who have sat slunk in our church courts; and have coveted only the best gifts, the gifts and graces, whereby they have built up existing congregations, founded new churches, and turned many to righteousness. Of the twelve apostles, the labors of three only are described in the Book of Acts; and the names of four only are mentioned, except in the list contained in the first chapter. Yet, who can doubt that, measured by their fidelity and zeal, the nine attained to the first three? Would that we were able to distribute the sacred honors among our own brethren who have done well the work.

The apostle Paul struggled with this embarrassment. In the epistle to the Hebrews (chap. xi.), he celebrates the faith of the primitive worthies, one by one. But the time fails him as he advances, and he falls away from the recital of their heroic acts of faith, to the simple repetition of the names of a few; and then, when compelled to cut short the roll, he describes the virtues of the anonymous dead in that grand panegyric which begins with, "Who subdued kingdoms" and ends with, "of whom the world was not worthy." To the Philippians (iv: 3), he is obliged to content himself, as Dr. M. D. Hoge has observed, by mentioning "Clement also, and other of my fellow laborers, *whose names are in the book of life.*"

Nothing would be more delightful and inspiring than a free conversation in our two Synods to-day, devoted to reminiscences of our brethren, of whom nothing has now been said. Samuel Findlay, James Vance, John Howe, and Samuel B. Robertson were members of the first Synod, and were laborious itinerant missionaries, riding far and wide. John McFarland, Andrew Todd, and John Coons fought the battle, side by side, against the partisans of President Holley. James C. Barnes sang the Gospel with such effect that men said he shook the windows; he could be heard a mile; and he drowned out the bass-viol and organ whereby his righteous soul was vexed. William L. McCalla was fearless to a proverb, with a touch of grim humor. It is said that, when a portion of his congregation at Philadelphia became dissatisfied with him as their pastor, he surprised

them with a proposition to divide the church property between the parties. On being asked to suggest the mode of division, he said to his opposers: "I offer to you and your friends the outside of the meeting-house, and I and my friends will keep the inside." McChord, Logan, Brown, Paxton, Calvert, W. D. Jones, Yantis, David Stuart, Joshua Green, Jacob Price, Lapsley, Simrall, and Scott served their generation most faithfully and acceptably. Daniel Smith, Ashbridge, Condit, McPheeters, Branch Price, Bayless, Cheek, and Lowrie were "children of sweetness and light." Davidson was our diligent and conscientious historian. Bishop Forsythe, as we all agreed to call him, established, it is said, no fewer than twenty churches. Daniel Baker, David Todd, and Daniel Young were wise in winning souls.

There were John Breckinridge, who exchanged a pastorate in Lexington for an honorable and fruitful ministry at large, through the whole church; Stiles, the impassioned pulpit orator; Grundy, ever valiant on the weaker side, if only the right was with the weaker side; McClung, almost a prophet in his knowledge of the prophetic scriptures; Hill, far-reaching in his wisdom, and devoted to Christian education, and Nathan L. Rice, distinguished as a preacher, not only in Kentucky, but in four great cities: Cincinnati, St. Louis, Chicago and New York; eminent also as a teacher in Biblical and Didactic Theology; a clear-headed, ready-tongued, imperturbable polemic, grappling with the falsehoods that "come on the winds of doctrine," never "put to the worse in a free and open encounter" with Papists, Spiritualists, Universalists, or with the apostles of the so-called Reformation.

Besides Dr. Rice, three other of our brethren have recently entered into rest out of a good and fruitful old age. Dr. Hawthorne was full of the spirit of self-denial. His last days were given to his pastoral charge at Princeton, Kentucky, and to the feeble and vacant churches in that region. When far advanced in life, and in the dead of winter, he made long journeys on horseback, in spite of storms, and roads deep in the mire. However bad the weather on Saturday, he would go against all remonstrances to meet the faithful few—perhaps twenty, it may be only ten—who, he was sure, would expect him to preach to them on the Sabbath. Those who knew Dr. Hopkins best were "affectionately desirous" of him, a strict Presbyterian, a man of clear thought, and of honest and fixed convictions, an instructive teacher of righteousness, a loving pastor, a genial companion, and a faithful friend. And long will we remember the imposing personality of Dr. William C. Matthews, a sturdy scion of a noble stock. In the vigor

of life he was one of the foremost among his peers in the ministry. And his preaching was never so persuasive as when, in his last days, he stood in the pulpit, panting for breath, and quieting as best he could the murmurings of a tired and muffled heart.

The time is short. But we may not forget the story of Junia in Roman history. Although at her funeral the images of twenty illustrious houses were carried in the procession, Brutus and Cassius were conspicuous above all others, by reason of the absence of their effigies. That spectacle would be repeated to-day if the names should be suppressed of Robert J. Breckinridge and Stuart Robinson. Both were endowed with a broad understanding, genius, sparkling wit, eloquence, undaunted moral courage. Both were men of fixed convictions; both were natural-born controversialists; neither was in the habit of being baffled. Both were consecrated men, and had a leading spirit in their bosoms. Each moved in his own separate sphere. Dr. Breckinridge was at home in the intricacies of metaphysical and polemic theology; Dr. Robinson was mighty in the scriptures. Dr. Breckinridge's training as a lawyer and politician gave him prodigious power as a debater and parliamentarian; Dr. Robinson's early conversion and consecration to the work of the ministry bore him up to an exalted position as a preacher of the Gospel. Our generation will not forget the mastery which Dr. Breckinridge maintained in our church courts; nor will it forget the pathos with which Dr. Robinson repeated the message of the spirit and the bride to him that thirsteth; when he wept and the people wept. Each filled his own sphere with an illumination which lingers on the horizon in a steady and beautiful afterglow.

From these personal sketches, we must now turn to some general observations on the position and services of our departed brethren.

During the first part of the century they were not only pastors, but itinerants. They did not hesitate to shut the doors of their meeting houses for weeks and go forth to labor abroad. In Mr. Lyle's diary we read: "June 14, 1801. The Lord's Supper was administered at Salem; Messrs Crawford, Rannels, Blythe, Howe, and Stuart attended" In October following we read that "Messrs. Lyle, Crawford, Marshall, Logan, and McGraw were together at a Sacramental meeting in Lexington." Mr. Lyle rode from Paris to the Cumberland river, and spent two months in trying to compose the disturbances in the Cumberland Presbytery. Dr. Cleland made a missionary tour through the frontier counties of Pulaski and Wayne, preaching every day and night to crowded and weeping congrega-

tions composed largely of people who had never before seen a Presbyterian preacher. In 1805, he followed a wilderness trace as far as Vincennes, Indiana, wading or swimming the streams. One night he staked out his horse and fed him on corn that he had carried in a wallet from Louisville, and slept on a puncheon floor of the only cabin he had seen in the day's journey. At Vincennes, he preached in General Harrison's camp the first sermon ever heard from the lips of a Presbyterian minister on the lower Wabash. In the year following he repeated his apostolical journey. As Dr. Cleland was, so were all his brethren. In the revival of 1826-9, thirty congregations from Maryville to Columbia were visited from on High, and four thousand people professed to have received the regeneration. The ministers went two and two from congregation to congregation, reserving little or much time for their own fields of labor, as the Lord led them along. In 1828, Gallager, Ross, and Nelson, then living in East Tennessee, hearing of the outpouring of the Spirit in Kentucky, came over on horseback to assist their brethren. A meeting which they held on Corn Island, near Louisville, gave to Presbyterianism in that town a permanent foothold. Later still, Nathan Hall, Nathan L. Rice, David Todd, and Daniel Baker left their pulpits vacant sometimes for weeks at the call of their brethren.

The preaching of our older ministry is easily characterized. It was doctrinal to an extent not equaled in our day. The New Light schism originating as early as 1802, turned on the doctrines of the Trinity, of the Covenants, of regeneration, of the nature of faith and repentance. The Pelagian heresy broached by Thomas Craighhead, a few years later, raised the contention in regard to original and actual sin and imputation. Mr. Alexander Campbell broached his plausible but misleading theories still later; and all along our preachers were drawn into controversy with our Baptist and Methodist brethren. Campbell, Cameron, and Cleland preached on these topics, and printed their sermons, and then defended their positions in tracts and in the *Western Luminary*. Forty years ago, the people who listened to the opening sermon in Presbytery and Synod, from such veterans as Dr. Blythe or Father Howe, were reasonably sure to hear a compact exposition of the doctrine of justification, or inability, or the perseverance of the Saints. And many a crowded assembly listened, I say, not with patience, but with spiritual comfort to Mr. Birch's famous sermon on election, two or three hours long, wherein he set forth "ten facts," each of which was indisputable as a fact, and all of which were as closely jointed and articulated as, let me say, the ver-

tebræ of a mastodon. No people in the Church were more thoroughly indoctrinated than the Presbyterians of Kentucky, in those days of great teachers and intelligent believers.

Let it not be thought that our fathers shook out before the people the dry bones of a metaphysical theology. Their sermons were crammed full with the written Word of God. Many of them repeated from memory, whole chapters, whole Psalms, and hundreds of proof texts, prophecies, and parables. I once heard Dr. Stuart make the closing address at the Lord's Supper. He did not utter one word of his own, but repeated an entire chapter from Paul, with perfect fluency and with such appropriate emphasis as to impress everybody with the conviction that Paul was divinely inspired, else he could not have written the chapter, and that Dr. Stuart had entered into the very mind of the Spirit, else he could not have given to it such a perfect interpretation by the modulations of the voice. Dr. Cleland needed neither written sermon, nor Bible, nor hymn-book in hand. He gave out the hymns from memory, he quoted abundantly from both the Old Testament and the New, giving chapter and verse for every quotation. We have the authority of Dr. John Montgomery, who knew him well, for saying that he never tripped either in the words of the Scripture or in their places in the volume.

Their method of preaching, especially in seasons of awakening, was apostolic. They began by opening the text, then they handled the leading thought, clearly and familiarly, casting upon it all the side lights which shine out from the other scriptures, and speaking earnestly but with restrained emotion. Having planted the truth in the minds of their hearers, they then drove it home upon the conscience. It was the opinion of Nelson, Ross, and Gallagher, that it was difficult for any one man to make a lucid and passionless exposition of scripture, and then rise into an impassioned strain of exhortation. Upon this idea, when two of them were together, one of them spoke twenty or thirty minutes explaining and vindicating the doctrine of the text, then the other took it up and reduced it to its immediate practical uses, with whatever spiritual power the Lord was pleased to bestow upon him. Dr. Cleland sometimes preached an hour and a half. An hour was given to exposition, and thirty minutes to expostulation. He rarely preached without bringing his hearers to tears. The Rev. Harvey Woods says: "I have learned that when Dr. Cleland was to preach I must fix myself so that I could put my head down and cover my face with my handkerchief." One of the best established traditions, about Harrodsburg and New Providence, is that nothing was

more common than the spectacle of the whole congregation bowed down with emotion at the close of his sermon, until it resembled a wheat field over which the summer wind was passing. Dr. McGuffey, writing of Mr. Lyle, says: "Often have I seen his whole frame tremulous with emotion, and the tears flowing profusely down his venerable face, while in tones of tenderness he expostulated with infatuated sinners, in the name of his Master, 'Why will ye die? why will ye die?'" With this fact before us we can believe Dr. Davidson's statement to the effect that thirty sinners were converted to God, at Mt. Pleasant under one of Mr. Lyle's sermons. (David, 119.) Dr. N. H. Hall urged inquirers to come to Christ with what has been called a "startling and terrific energy." While he was holding a protracted meeting at Versailles he preached by request a sermon before the Free-Masons, of whom he was one, in commemoration of St. John's Day. He gave them a faithful Gospel sermon, and then called upon such of his Masonic brethren as were not religious to repent of sin, and in token thereof to come forward for prayer. So powerful was his exhortation that several of them came to the anxious seat in their regalia.

Dr. Young was never so divinely eloquent, if the phrase be allowable, as in his appeals to the impenitent. Some of you have heard him speak, first from the pulpit, then from the floor beneath the pulpit, then in his fervor advancing along the aisle, addressing the occupants of the pews; now to the right, now to the left, describing the terrors of the law and the love of Christ; his lithe form agitated, his face beaming and his lips glowing with the sacred fire, until one after another of his hearers was fairly lifted out of his seat and borne forward to the inquirer's bench. "On some he had compassion, and others he saved with fear, pulling them out of the fire." Nathan L. Rice's manner was his own. He put into the body of his sermon a demonstration clear as the light, of, for example, the guilt of the sinner, and his lost condition. It was often said that while other preachers led the hearer to say "what a fool I am," Dr. Rice forced him to exclaim "how guilty am I." The enmity of the natural mind against God, the conspicuous justice of God in condemning the impenitent on account of his personal inexcusable guilt, were brought home by this great preacher, in a mighty onset on his conscience. That being done, a few well-chosen words, every word charged with life and peace in the Saviour, lighted up the darkness and despair of the man who stood convinced and convicted of sin.

The apostolic spirit of our early ministers would be still further

illustrated if it were possible, as it is not, to ascertain the facts in regard to the meagerness of their salaries.

The support of the Gospel by Boards of Missions and sustentation was not yet known in the church. The traditions show that many of them cultivated small farms. Father Lyle established a printing office. John P. Campbell became a physician. Touching the pecuniary compensation which they received from the people we have but little distinct information. Dr. Cleland preached several years in Springfield and Lebanon. The people gave him, as he says, "but a trifling pittance for his support." At the age of thirty-five he accepted a call to New Providence and Cane Run, near Harrodsburg, on a salary of \$250, of which nearly one-fifth, or \$50 out of \$250, was never paid. He bought a farm of 168 acres near New Providence church, of which only a few acres were cleared. The logs were collected to build his house. With his own hands he quarried rock for the foundation and the chimneys, cleared the ground and built the fences. In that humble dwelling he lived to the end of his days. When the church was built he invested \$150 in the enterprise out of his scanty means, being an example to the flock of generosity.

We catch an occasional glimpse of the penury endured by these self-denying men. David Rice purchased a parcel of ground near Danville, on the faith of friends who guaranteed the payment, which, however, was so long deferred, or entirely forgotten, that the good man, laboring under the insidious approach of old age and disease, would have been brought to extreme want but for the generosity of one of the neighbors. John P. Campbell was reduced to similar extremities, although living in a wealthy community. Father Stuart was told by one of Campbell's congregation that "they were keeping him on Lent." Unhappily, it is to be feared that this Lenten season was not limited to forty days. We are warranted in saying that our brethren of that day were self-denying, or denied by the people, to a degree that is unknown in our more pleasant places and more considerate congregations. But let us turn to a more agreeable train of thought.

That may well be found in the noble company of Ruling Elders, by whose intelligence, weight of character, piety, and activity the annals of the Synod were adorned. Jacob Fishback, Samuel McDowell, and James McCoun labored with Father Rice upon the foundations of our church in the region where it was first planted. Charles S. Todd, Mark Hardin, Samuel Harbison, and Quinn Morton were fellow-laborers with Mr. Cameron in Shelby county. John Cabell Breckinridge was one of the founders of the Second Church, in



Lexington. Judge Green, with Hopkins, Barbour, Yonce, and Craig served their brethren in Danville; Rice, West, and Price in Nicholasville; the Berrymans at Pisgah and Versailles; McAfee and Dunn, New Providence; Judge Mills, with Todd and Clarke, in Frankfort; the two Skillmans and Scott, in Lexington; Stonestreet, in Salem; Judge Simpson, in Winchester; Wyckliffe and Nourse, in Bardstown; Bullock, at Walnut Hill; January, at Maysville; Preston, at Burlington; Averill, Cassaday, Garvin, Richardson, and Prather in Louisville; Murray, in Cloverport; Judge Graham and Quigley, at Bowling Green; Judge Sampson, at Glasgow; Brank, father and son, at Paint Lick; Walker and Mann, in Harrodsburg; Montgomery, in Springfield; Philipps, in Lebanon; Bell, at Owensboro; Williams, serving sixty years at Houstonville, are a few of the many who used the office of the Ruling Elder well and purchased to themselves a good degree. The house of the Lord in the Synod has always been surmounted by twin towers—the ministry and the Ruling Eldership, both rising strong and comely from the same foundation; both guarding the walls from generation to generation. Which of the two has lent us the surest protection, let another tongue than mine declare.

I must now retire from my unexhausted theme. I have not done justice to the memory of our illustrious dead, nor could such justice be done by any man within the limits of the occasion, and with the scanty materials in our possession. But their praise is expressed in the silent thought of this crowded assembly; in these solemn ceremonies; these prayers and hymns; in the memories which stir in our bosoms; in the tears that besiege our eye-lids; and the vibrations of the mystic chords of sympathy which go out from heart to heart. Better is their praise set forth in the type of Presbyterianism, which they established amidst perils in the wilderness, and perils by the heathen, and in perils among false brethren. But their best and highest praise is in the great company of the redeemed, who have entered into life in the communion of these congregations. The old graveyards which have opened their bosoms to receive the dust of pastors and people, are so many Macpelahs in our goodly land.

The saying has passed into a proverb, that “no man can get away from his ancestors.” From this it follows that no man can separate himself from his posterity. And now let us listen reverently to our fathers, who speak to us out of the past, and then let us advance to meet our children, whose voices greet us as they approach.

“The glory of the children are their fathers.” Our glory is that our fathers of the first generation lighted up the dark woods of Kentucky with the lamp of life, and the fathers of the second and

third generations have handed down to us the light brightly burning. They call upon us to pass it on, all ablaze, to our children, until the whole land is filled with light and warmth. They admonish us not to allow any thirst for immediate success or popularity to loosen our hold upon the doctrines, government, and worship of the church, as we have received the same from the Word of God. In the torch-races of antiquity, only those charioteers won the crown who turned the goal and did not lose the flame. Happy are they who shall both finish the course and keep the faith!

Dear brethren, so long as our Synods are two, let us take into account the things wherein we are agreed, as well as those wherein we differ, and then let us follow the best things. We have succeeded to a heritage which our fathers earned at the expense of extraordinary sacrifices, and preserved in the face of extraordinary trials and reverses. Let us, therefore, be true to our principles and our duties, lest our virtues prove too frail to bear the weight of the inheritance, and we be put to shame. And here on this historic and consecrated spot, here at the Sichern where our first altar was builded, here where we reap the fruits of toils in which we find so much to honor and so little to regret, here where the Son of Righteousness has held its shining way across the firmament for a hundred years, here where the atmosphere is charged with the memory and benedictions of the pious dead, here and now let us reverently commit the future of our dear, dear old Synod to Him who has bought us with His blood.





























