

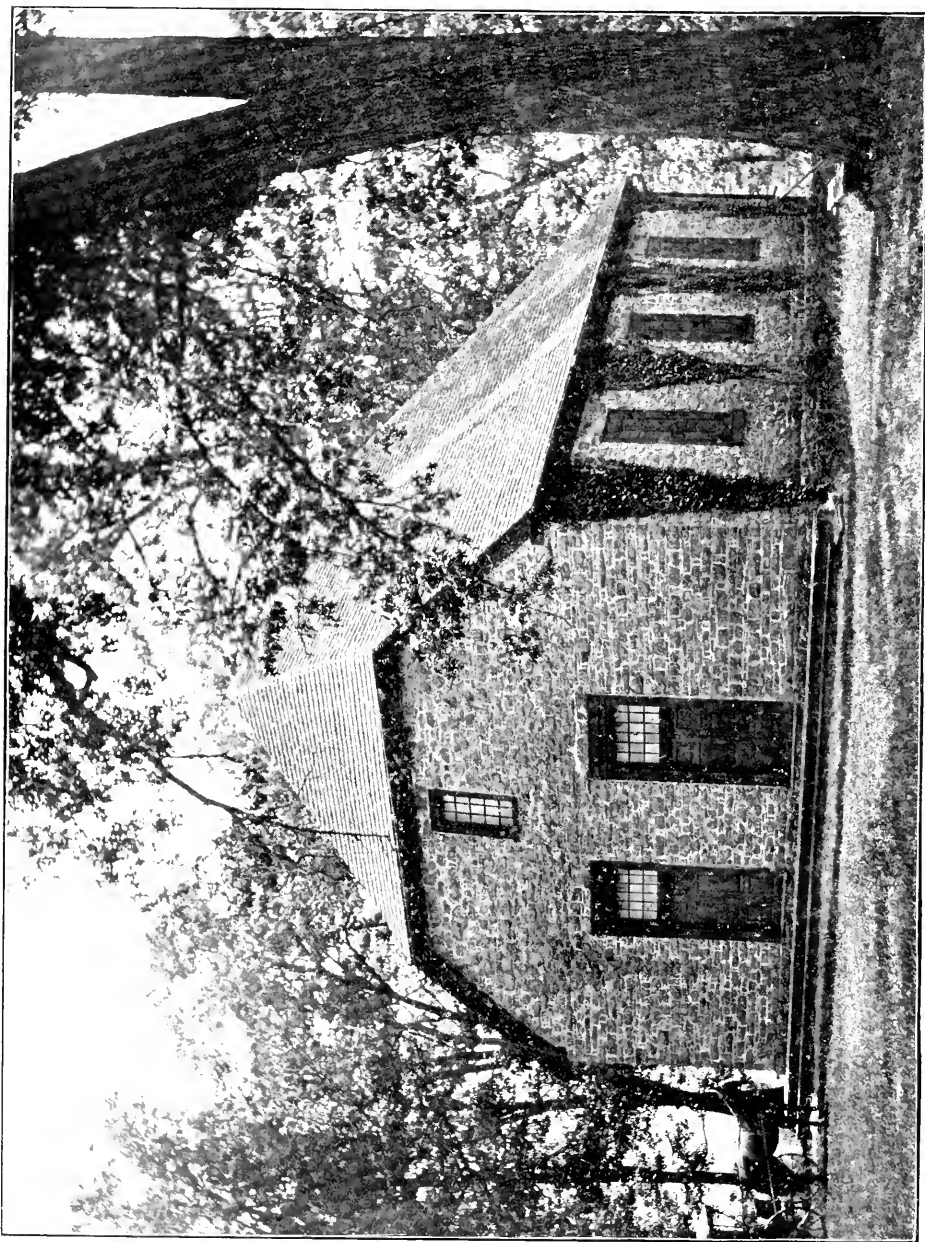
AUGUSTA CHURCH

1737 to 1900.



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Van Devanter, James Nichols
1857-
History of the Augusta
church

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OLD AUGUSTA STONE CHURCH.
(Situated on the Folly Pike, eight and one-half miles north of Stanton, Va.)

1983

HISTORY
OF THE
AUGUSTA CHURCH,
FROM
1737 to 1900.]

BY
REV. J. N. VAN DEVANTER,
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.



STAUNTON, VA.:
THE ROSS PRINTING COMPANY.
1900.

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TO

My Congregation,

WHICH HAS BEEN SO CONSIDERATE OF ME

FOR NEARLY NINE YEARS,

I AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATE

THIS VOLUME.

PREFACE.

THE present volume is the outgrowth of an attempt to prepare a sketch of this Church. The material multiplied till the dimensions had grown beyond the limits of a sketch, and hence it was determined to put this material in permanent book form, rather than in a pamphlet, that it might be the better preserved.

The engravings have been added at a considerable cost, that the history might be made more real. The authorities carefully studied and quoted from were *Foot's Sketches of Virginia*, first and second series; *Waddell's Annals of Augusta County*; *The Minutes of Lexington Presbytery*, and the *Sessional Records* of this Church.

I have gathered the facts and endeavored to present them as faithfully as possible.

In giving the history of the last period of twenty years I have departed from the manner in which I dealt with former periods, because the three who ministered here during this time are still living, and the third one is writing the history. For this reason it was treated in a perfectly general way.

May the Lord bless this effort to the glory of His name and to the stirring up of the minds and hearts of our people to true Christian patriotism.

J. N. VAN DEVANTER.

FORT DEFIANCE, VA., *January 1, 1900.*

History of Augusta Church.

THIS Church is a result. It results from principles which had been in existence a long time, which had operated in Germany, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the British Isles, which caused those who became its members and supporters, or their ancestors, to seek homes in this new and unsettled country. From being an effect, it in turn becomes a cause, a link in the chain of cause and effect, which has transmitted to us the blessings which we now enjoy.

The present is so abundant in its blessings and advantages which we have as compared with those of our forefathers, that we are apt to forget the giver in the enjoyment of the gift.

Whatever we enjoy of civil and religious liberty has not always been so, but has evolved out of the abuses of the rights and privileges which God gave to man. These abuses were the taking away from man the truth, and denying to him the liberty of conscience.

With the dawn of the Reformation, the revival of the study of the Word of God, came the exercise of the liberty of conscience, and the change from darkness to light, from bondage to liberty.

The doctrines of Calvinism, and the sturdy independence which these doctrines beget in the minds and hearts of all who receive them, recognizing as they do God's absolute sovereignty, man's total depravity, and Jesus Christ the only mediator between God and man, had more to do with, and entered more largely into, the forming and fashioning of our country and its Government than anything else.

These stern convictions of duty and responsibility to God provoked the troubles which caused large numbers to seek homes here, where the authority

of neither Church nor State would prevent them from worshipping and serving God according to the dictates of their own consciences.

Following the history of this spirit, born of the Truth and the Holy Spirit, will account for the large numbers of oppressed and persecuted people who escaped from Scotland to the North of Ireland.

When they were no longer secure there they came to this country, braving the dangers of voyage, as it was in those times, when it took months instead of days to cross the ocean, and facing the dangers incident to settling in a strange country inhabited by Indians.

They were willing to endure all this rather than to give up this principle. These Scotch-Irish came to Pennsylvania, and from there to this beautiful valley. That part of Virginia east of the Blue Ridge had been settled long before this. This valley was the frontier. It was one of the favorite hunting grounds of the Red Man.

The Governor of the colony encouraged all to settle here that he could, especially these brave people, mainly because he wanted to build up protection for the East side. By having this valley filled with people between himself and the Indians of the West and Northwest, they could not so easily reach him and his people.

CHAPTER I.

REV. JOHN CRAIG, D. D.

THE history of this Church extends almost to the first settlement in this part of the valley. So far as is known, the county was entered for the first time by white men in 1716, when Governor Spotswood and some of his staff crossed the Blue Ridge and formally "took possession for King George the First of England". Mr. Waddell (author of *Annals of Augusta County*) concludes from many accounts that John Lewis was the first white settler in what is now Augusta county in the summer of 1732, near the twin mountains Betsy Bell and Mary Gray. From this time the population increased very rapidly, many coming up the valley from Pennsylvania. There were enough people here to organize this territory into a county. October 30, 1745, Governor Gooch issued the commission, and December 9, 1745, the county was duly organized. In 1738, November 1, however, the General Assembly of the colony of Virginia passed an act establishing the counties of Frederick and Augusta, but they were not organized until 1745.

The county of Augusta then covered all the territory embraced in the States of Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and nearly all of West Virginia. In 1745 what is now Staunton was called "Beverly's Mill Place."

This country was visited frequently by the Indians. It was wild indeed, but was rapidly filled by this sturdy liberty-loving people. We are told that "they were generally profoundly religious, bringing their Bibles with them, whatever else they had to leave behind." The earliest recorded movement upon the part of these people for organized church work was in 1737.

"A supplication from the people of Beverly Manor, in the back parts of Virginia, was laid before the Presbytery of Donegal, Pennsylvania, September 2, 1737, requesting ministerial supplies." This request was denied at the time, but the following year Rev. James Anderson was sent. Mr. Anderson preached the first regular sermon ever delivered in this section of the country.

"In 1739 they applied for the services of Rev. Mr. Thompson, who came

and preached for a time." In both of these instances, in the "supplication" for Mr. Anderson in 1737, and Mr. Thompson in 1739, we have evidence that there was an organization here earlier than 1740. It is perfectly clear that there was concerted action upon their part.

"In 1740, Robert Doak and Daniel Dennison from Virginia declared, in the name of the *congregation* of Shenandoah, their adherence to the call formerly presented to Mr. Craig.

Dr. Craig came in 1740, and his coming was really upon being *called* the second time. This is a third instance which gives weight to the supposition that there was an organization here earlier than 1740.

Rev. John Craig, who was called to this Church, was born in the parish of Donagor, County Antrim, Ireland, August 17, 1709. He was born of pious parents, who took great pains in "instructing him in the principles of religion." He was very early affected by these teachings, and at the age of five or six was compelled "to fly to God with prayers and tears in secret for pardon, peace, guidance and direction."

About the age of fourteen or fifteen he made a profession of religion, "being admitted, after examination, to the Lord's table by Rev. Alexander Brown, who baptized him."

He devoted himself to study so faithfully that he says, "I never received one stroke or so much as a sharp rebuke from all the masters I was with."

In 1732 he attained to the degree of M. A. in the College of Edinburgh. At this time he was much in doubt as to what calling he should choose, but after a "long and dangerous illness" he was pretty well settled upon the ministry. He says: "America was then much in my mind, accompanied with the argument that service would be most pleasing and acceptable where most needful and wanting, which raised in me a strong desire to see that part of the world.

"At that time I had a dream or vision representing to me, as it were, in miniature the whole that has happened to me of any importance these thirty-five years; yea, the very place I have been settled in these thirty-five years. I knew it at first sight, and have done here what was represented to me then."

This was a wonderful experience indeed, but is surpassed by that which follows. He embarked at Larné, June 10, 1734, and was landed at Newcastle, on the Delaware, the 17th of the succeeding August. "I escaped a very imminent danger without any means but the kind hand of Providence, being accidentally cast overboard in a dark and tempestuous night. I lay as on a bed of down on my back, on the raging wave which tossed me back on the ship's side, where I found hold and sprung aboard, and none aboard knew of it." In September he attended the Synod of Philadelphia and presented his letters of introduction. After looking for some time for a suitable home and position, he was employed as teacher in the family of Rev. John Thompson. He taught school one year, and read two more. He "entered on trials and was licensed by the Presbytery of Donegal 1737," and was sent to the congregations of the valley, which he visited. He was ordained in September, 1740. His ordination sermon was preached by the Rev. Mr. Sankey, from the text Jer. iii: 15: "I will give you pastors after mine own heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."

After his ordination, he came to this field of labor, "purchased a plantation and began to improve upon it, and June 11, 1744, married a young gentleman of a good family and character . . . daughter of Mr. George Russel, by whom I had nine children."

The period covered by the pastorate of Dr. Craig was a most interesting one. It was a formative one, when the future was as unmarked as the forests and lands to which they had come. There were no roads except the occasional trail of the Indian. They had nothing to guide them save the compass, the stars, and the moss upon the trees. So with their future. They had their Bibles, their reason and their consciences, untrammelled by Church or State, to guide them. They were free to worship as they thought right, and their duties to fellow-man and to the State would be determined by this.

This principle was what led them to this country; now we find it guiding them in affairs of Church and State.

These liberty-loving and God-fearing people were moving into the valley rapidly. This section, Tinkling Spring, and about Staunton, must have

reached hundreds, for there were enough people here in 1738, six years from the date of the first settlement, to justify the action of the General Assembly of the colony of Virginia, to pass an order to organize this section into a county. This was not carried out till 1745.

This Church was organized not later than 1740; which makes it five years older than the county of Augusta, and older than the city of Staunton. In this period, and for a long time afterwards, "money was counted in pounds, shillings and pence: One pound, Virginia currency, being \$3.33 1-3; sugar was .16 2-3 per lb.; 2 nutmegs, .22; ½ lb. powder, .33 1-3; ½ lb. lead, .19½, and one ounce of Indigo, .25."

"Rates for ordinaries fixed by the court 1746: "Hot diet, .12½; cold ditto, .08 1-3; lodging, with clean sheets, .04½; stabling and fodder for a night, .08 1-3."

It is difficult for us, living in this age with every modern improvement, to imagine the real state of things in those days. We have fine roads, railroads, the telegraph and telephone, making our mode of travel as rapid and comfortable as possible, and the means of communication almost perfect.

They were without any of these things. The absence of them made the difficulties in the way of transacting business, and the meeting for social and religious purposes, as great as possible.

They did not find homes ready for their families, nor the land ready for cultivation, but they had to fell the trees, build their houses, and clear and cultivate the land. Suiting themselves in a location, selecting according to their tastes, whether for farming or grazing, gradually the settlement grew.

The church grew under the ministrations of Dr. Craig. Some idea of the growth of the church and the settlement may be had from this entry in Dr. Craig's diary: "The year being ended, the whole number baptized by me is one hundred and thirty-three." "Robert, son of Robert Young, was baptized January 22, 1742," and Mr. Craig notes that he was "born with teeth."

In the second year of his pastorate he baptized eighty-two. This is the record of infant baptisms, and indicates a large population, considering the short time since the first settler came to this part of the valley.

They worshipped first in a log building situated near where the "old cemetery" now is; or perhaps it was in one corner of this enclosure. The location of this log building may account for the location of the "old cemetery" being so far from the present church building.

We have no way of determining how long they were in building the present house of worship; but it must have required much longer than it would to build a structure of the same kind now. In the minutes of session January 2, 1848, mention is made of the session meeting in "the new session house."

"It was built in 1847, the hundredth year since the building of the church." This must evidently mean since the commencement of building the church, for we have, from Dr. Craig himself, the date, January 22, 1749, on which they held their first service in this building. If this supposition be true, it gives us some idea of the length of time it took for them to build the church. If it be not true, then this statement makes the church *two years older* than it is generally thought to be, and leaves us to wonder why (if finished in '47) they should wait until '49 before worshipping in it.

These people did not have the improved implements for quarrying the stone, nor wagons for hauling them. Evidently they could not work continuously, because of the demands upon their time for providing for and protecting their families. It might almost be said of them, as it was said of God's people of old, "every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon."

The stone was brought on "drags" or "lizards." Tradition says that the sand for the mortar was brought from North River, several miles distant. It was chosen because of its superior quality. The women are said to have brought this sand on "pack-horses." The securing of a sufficient amount of it for a building of this size, from the most convenient location, and with the best of wagons and plenty of hands, would now be considered a big undertaking. Whether many or few formed themselves into bands for bringing the sand, and how many weary trips they made over these rugged hills, and what dangers they encountered and escapes they made,

eternity alone can now reveal. The character of these people is seen in the kind of work they did. They bailed not only for present needs, but provided for the future. The mortar which cements these stones, it is said, cannot be duplicated by our workmen, it being almost as hard as the limestone which it holds. This building was dedicated January 22, 1749. At this time there was no Presbytery in Virginia. The Valley was the missionary ground of Donegal Presbytery in Pennsylvania. From the time work was begun here until 1758, the pastor of this Church and his elder had to travel the distance of "near three hundred miles" to attend the meetings of Presbytery.

The people of this section were granted much liberty, religiously, in order to induce immigrants to settle here, that they might form a wall of protection against the Indians, for those who lived in East and Southside Virginia. They were never subjected to the severe trials which fell to the lot of Makemie, Davies and others in that part of Virginia where the Church of England was the established church.

The period from 1753 to 1756 was a most trying one for the people of the Valley. The Indians and the French were causing a great deal of trouble on the frontier. This section felt the strain also, because they were called upon to furnish troops to resist this combined force. The defeat and death of Gen. Braddock in 1755, caused great fear to take hold of all this country, because they felt that without this protection their country was thrown open to the enemy. Many who had money, which they could take with them, "were for flying to a safer place of the country." They came to Dr. Craig for advice, which he gave with unflinching fidelity, "opposing that scheme as a scandal to our nation, falling below our brave ancestors, making ourselves a reproach among Virginians, a dishonor to our friends at home, an evidence of cowardice, want of faith and a noble Christian dependence on God as able to save and deliver from the heathen; it would be a lasting blot to our posterity."

After thus roundly scoring them, he advises them to build forts sufficient to hold twenty or thirty families, in the different parts of the settlement con-

venient to these groups. One of these forts was to be built around this Church. "They required me to go before them," says Dr. Craig, "in the work, which I did cheerfully, though it cost me fully one-third of my estate. The people very readily followed, and my congregation in less than two months was well fortified." In the rear of the Church, and on part of one side, a ridge may still be seen which marks the foundation and shows the size of the old fort.

When Hanover Presbytery was formed in 1755, by order of the Synod of New York, there was a division in the church, of which Whitefield was the occasion. The parties were known as the "New Side" and the "Old Side."

Whitefield was very earnest and zealous; his work was attended with great revivals. The more conservative regarded these revivals with suspicion, fearing the consequence of so much excitement, but the New Side endorsed him.

It was not till 1758, when these two factions came together, that Dr. Craig became a member of Hanover Presbytery, for this body had been formed of New Side ministers. So far as I can learn, this Church remained a part of Hanover Presbytery, until Lexington Presbytery was organized in 1786.

In 1760 Hanover Presbytery met in this Church, at which time Mr. James Waddell, who afterwards became so famous, was taken under the care of Presbytery.

Many have been the hallowed associations clustering around this old building. Dr. Foote says in his *Sketches of Virginia*, "Let us walk around this house, and enjoy the beauty of the prospect. These remains of the fortifications in Indian wars, wasting away by the constant tread of the assembling congregations, are eloquent memorials of the early ages of Augusta county. This old house has seen generations pass; it has heard the sermons of the Synod of Virginia in its youthful days. Could these walls re-echo the sentences which have been uttered here, what a series of sermons! Its three pastors, for about one hundred years, taught from the same pulpit. Here the venerated Hoge was licensed in 1781, and here the Rev. Archibald Alexander

passed some of his trials in preparation for the ministry. In no other house in Virginia can such recollections be cherished as rise up around us here."

Dr. Craig says that his congregation was twenty miles wide, and thirty miles long. Who can estimate the influences which have radiated from this Church as a centre! Within the scope of country once occupied and ministered to by Dr. Craig there are at least one hundred churches of different denominations. Two main reasons may be given why so many other denominations came into what was once exclusively Presbyterian territory. *First*, After the country was made habitable by these Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, people came here from many parts of the world who were not of this type and training. *Second*, The utterly impossible task of one man being able to come in contact with all of these, and to attract them to this Church and hold them under his influence.

In those days the court not only attended to affairs of State, but undertook to regulate the home and the individual. Mr. Waddell says: "In 1751 we find an order from the court for making a 'ducking stool.' This was the punishment of women convicted as 'common scolds.' There is no record of this having been used, not because they lacked scolding women, but more likely because of a lack of water enough near the courthouse to duck the offender."

The whipping-post was also used for both men and women.

The question of the comparative antiquity of this Church and that of Opequon, it seems to me, is settled by Foote in his *Sketches of Virginia*. He says that Rev. John Hoge was the first pastor of Opequon Church. He gives the date of his graduation from Nassau Hall as 1748. After this he prepared for the ministry under the care of Newcastle Presbytery. The dates of licensure and ordination are not certainly known, the records of the Presbytery for that period being lost, but he appears upon the roll of Synod in 1755 for the first time.

Dr. Foote further says, that this church was organized by him. In 1748, the first mention of Mr. Hoge, he was only a graduate from college. He must have had at least three years, if not more, in preparation for the min-

istry, which would make it 1751 or 1752 when he had finished and was ready to take charge of the Church. The probable time of the organization was between 1751, when it is supposed that he completed his preparation, and 1755, when his name first appears upon the roll of Synod; while the Augusta Church was organized not later than 1740, and probably as early as 1738. Dr. Foote says of Augusta Church, "This is the oldest house of worship in the Valley of Virginia."

In the colonies there was a spirit of unrest, owing to the tyranny of the home government, mutterings of the storm which was soon to burst on this fair land. We can well imagine the spirit which was aroused in these Scotch-Irish to throw off the yoke of oppression. Not only was the State preparing for the revolution, but the Church was preparing to free herself from the tyranny of the Church of England, which was the established Church in this section. This oppression had become simply intolerable, hence we find the energy, nerve, and piety of the time, contriving plans for religious liberty. This Church had its part in the work.

Dr. Craig was one of those present in 1773, when his "Presbytery took the bill of toleration into consideration." This was Hanover Presbytery, to which this Church belonged. The ministers who were present upon this occasion were Craig, Brown, Leak and Irwin. In this age, when perfect freedom is the right of all, we can scarcely appreciate the condition of things when this was not the case. The "Bill of Toleration," above referred to, had reference not only to allowing ministers who were not in the established Church to *preach* the Gospel unmolested, but that they be allowed to perform marriage ceremonies. According to the laws then governing these people, no one was regarded as legally married, who had not been married by one of the ministers of the established Church. All other ministers were prohibited from this.

The inconvenience and hardship caused by this law was very great. Every one desiring to marry, was compelled to go to one of the ministers of this Church, or pay him whatever he might demand, to come to them. The Presbytery of Hanover labored unceasingly, sending one petition after an-

other to the General Assembly of Virginia, until, step by step, religious freedom was secured. The Augusta Church was more than an interested spectator. In 1785 we find that her session sent to Presbytery a petition asking that it define the meaning of the word "liberal, as used in the Presbytery's memorial of last fall." This shows the careful oversight and anxious solicitude of our Church, in all that was agitating the public mind. They did not seek preference in this matter, but desired that all denominations should be upon a level in the eyes of the law. Thus we have some idea of the disturbed condition of this period, both in Church and State.

The firmness of character, and the singleness of purpose of Dr. Craig, may be seen in the way he stood the assaults made upon him by the New Side ministers and their sympathizers. Many of these came into his bounds preaching their doctrines and calling him "poor, blind, carnal, hypocritical, damned wretch." "But Providence so ordered that affair, that they gained none of my people that I knew of; my moral character stood clear and even among them."

The Lord permitted him to lead his people through the conflicts and trials of this period until summoned into His presence, when he laid down his armour as a soldier of the cross, having fought a good fight, and having kept the faith.

Dr. Craig died April 21, 1774. The following is the inscription upon his tomb:

ERECTED BY G. C., SON TO J. C.
 IN MEMORY OF
 THE REV^d JOHN CRAIG, D. D.,
 COMMENCER:
 OF THE PRESBYTERIAN MINISTERIAL SERVICE,
 IN THIS PLACE,
 ANO DOMINI, 1740,
 AND FAITHFULLY DISCHARGED HIS DUTY IN THE SAME.
 TO APRIL THE 21ST, ANO DOMINI, 1774,
 THEN DEPARTED THIS LIFE WITH FIFTEEN HOURS AFFLICTION:
 FROM THE HAND OF THE GREAT CREATOR.
 AGED 63 YEARS AND 4 MONTHS.

Near the foot of the large slab which covers his grave is the following :

THE CHURCH OF AUGUSTA IN EXPRESSION OF THEIR GRATITUDE
TO THE MEMORY OF THEIR LATE BELOVED PASTOR (HAVING OBTAINED
LIBERTY OF G. C.) PAID THE EXPENSE OF THIS MONUMENT, 1798.

In both of the foregoing I have faithfully preserved the spelling and all, just as it is on the tomb, using capital letters just as they are used there.

The Church was vacant from 1774, until Rev. William Wilson was ordained and installed pastor in November, 1780.

CHAPTER II.

REV. WILLIAM WILSON.

MR. WILSON was born in Pennsylvania, August 1, 1751. "His father, James Wilson, an emigrant from Ireland, in his youth was a hearer of Mr. Whitefield, in Philadelphia, and became in consequence, a hopeful convert to Christ. When about forty years of age he removed to Virginia, and settled about twelve miles east of Lexington, and became a member of New Providence Church. His devoted piety in his family, and his intercourse with his fellow-men, were remarked by people among whom professors of religion were common."

Mr. William Wilson was the eldest of thirteen children, ten boys and three girls. Early he became a professor of religion, and joined the Presbyterian Church. At the age of eighteen, he entered upon a "course of liberal education," becoming a student of "Mount Pleasant, that germ of Washington College." "He soon became so much delighted with his studies, that hardly anything could have prevailed on him to relinquish an object so dear to his heart. He prosecuted his education with unusual ardor, diligence, perseverance and success, and soon became a tutor in the school in which he learned the rudiments of Latin. The classics and mathematics were his favorite studies during his academical course. In these branches his proficiency was rapid and thorough, and he retained his early partiality for them through life. Having completed his academical studies, he entered on the study of Theology under the care and direction of the Rev. William Graham, an eminently gifted divine. He was received as a candidate (under the care of Presbytery) April, 1779, and in the fall of the same year, October 28, was licensed in Prince Edward county. He received and accepted a call to the pastoral charge of Augusta Church, and on the last Wednesday of November, 1780, was ordained and installed. The Church prospered under his ministry, and was occasionally blessed with precious seasons of revival. His judgment was

sound, his memory retentive, copious and prompt. He spoke with sufficient fluency; but the modulation of his voice was not happy. Few public speakers indeed, either in or out of the pulpit, possess the faculty of giving to the voice a gratifying variety in its modulations. A soporific monotony, the bane of an agreeable and impressive delivery, exists to a deplorable extent."

This extract was taken from Dr. Wilson's obituary in the *Southern Religious Telegraph*, published January 1, 1836.

Whatever may have been the objections raised to the average public speaker in those days, I do not think these faults could have been prominent in Dr. Wilson, for in later years he was sought more frequently than any one else to preach before Presbytery. If the above were true of him, the Presbytery would not have punished itself so frequently. Any one familiar with the customs of Presbytery, could not help being impressed in reading its Minutes, with the esteem in which he was held by this body. The positions given him, upon the committees of Presbytery, show the estimate which his brethren placed upon his scholarship.

Men rarely excel in more than one department of learning. Mr. Wilson was a theologian, but especially proficient in the classics and mathematics. Indirectly we gain, from Minutes of Presbytery, that he was a man of fine judgment, not only in things ecclesiastical, but of human nature, because he was appointed by Presbytery to adjust differences arising in some of the churches. This is a most difficult task, requiring rare gifts. The reports of Presbytery show that he was very successful. For many years he was a man of great endurance, and was filled with the home missionary spirit. The records show that in 1788, he was sent to the Tygart's Valley River, in what is now Randolph county, W. Va. The distance from Staunton to Huttonsville, on the Tygart's Valley River—where evidently he preached—by the Staunton and Parkersburg Pike, is ninety-three miles. This road crosses ten ranges of mountains, two of which, the Cheat and the Alleghany, are each eighteen miles across. We must bear in mind, in estimating these labors, that he did not have this fine road. He was probably one of the first to carry the Gospel to this beautiful but newly-settled country.

He would spend from two to four Sabbaths in these fields when he was sent on such tours. Many times he was sent to what is now Bath county, and to Greenbrier, and as far as the city of Charleston, W. Va. These facts show not only the nature, and consecration, and fortitude of Dr. Wilson, but also the widening influence of this Church, of which he was pastor. It was their contribution to home missionary work, for he was their representative. Almost all of Lexington Presbytery's work in West Virginia, has radiated from the work done by Dr. Wilson and others of Lexington Presbytery on the Tygart's Valley River.

Through the influence and labors of the pastor of Augusta Church, she has stretched another hand to Greenbrier, and even to Kanawha Valley. I do not say that she was the sole instrument in this work, but she was one of the main contributors. If Virginia was called the "mother of statesmen," truly may we say that Augusta Church is the mother of churches. Her influence was felt in Kentucky, where many of her members went in the early history of this country. Near Pendleton, S. C., there is an "Old Stone Church," evidently named for the "Old Augusta Stone Church," for "among its builders were Capt. James and Col. Robert Anderson," who went to South Carolina from this Church. Both of these gentlemen were officers in the Revolutionary army. To the many names of the famous sons of this Church I may add one more, that of Capt. Robert Gamble, "who led one of the assailing parties at the storming of Stony Point. He, with his men, mounted the wall in the immediate vicinity of a cannon, and seeing the match about to be applied, barely had time to lower his head, and order his men to fall flat, before the gun was discharged. He was, however, permanently deafened by the concussion."

Eternity alone will reveal the full influence which has radiated from this old Church, both in Church and State. From the organization of Lexington Presbytery in 1786, we begin to find mention of the names of the elders of this Church. The reason that the records of Presbytery have been so carefully studied to obtain facts about this Church is, that the Minutes of Session for a period of about one hundred years were destroyed by fire. Some of the names

mentioned in records of Presbytery were elders while Dr. Craig was pastor. We have evidence of one, who was one of the charter members of the Church, and who at that time was elected elder. This was Dr. Robert Curry, who was a native of Londonderry, Ireland, and came here with the pioneers, and settled about six miles northwest of the Church, where he, and his son Samuel, and grandson Robert A. all lived. Dr. Curry was succeeded in the eldership by Samuel, and Samuel was succeeded by Robert, thus making a continuous line in the eldership from the organization of the Church, in one family, until the death of Mr. Robert Addison Curry, in February, 1898, he having served the Church for fifty-three years.

There appears upon the Minutes of Presbytery, as delegates from this Church, the names of James Allen, in 1788, John Campbell, 1790; Joseph Bell, 1802; Jacob Van Lear, 1804. The Minutes show that this Church was represented in the General Assembly in 1791, by Rev. Wm. Wilson and Elder John Campbell, and in 1804 by Elder William Bell; John Dennison's name appears in 1809.

Dr. Wilson's health became impaired, caused by erysipelas in the head. At some times during this sickness he in great measure "lost the memory of his mother tongue. He could not give the name of anything he wanted in English, but could readily give it in Greek or Latin."

In 1810, Dr. Wilson requested Presbytery to dissolve his pastoral relation with this Church. His health being so much affected by this disease, he did not feel that he could perform the duties of the office. From 1810, until 1813, the Church was without a pastor, but was supplied in 1811 and 1812 by Rev. Jehab Graham. Dr. Wilson lived upon the hill south of the Church. His house stood near where the residence of Mr. T. A. Jordan now stands. Dr. Wilson has many descendants, some of whom are members of this Church, and one, Mr. Edward McKim McCue, a great-grandson, is now an elder.

While Dr. Wilson was not able to perform the full duties of the pastor, frequent reference is made to his being appointed to fill vacancies, and to do some missionary work. His life was extended through nearly the whole of Dr. Speece's pastorate; frequently during this time, he preached for the people of his old charge, and always with great acceptance.

Dr. Speece, in preaching his funeral, "spoke of the last discourse which he heard him preach at eighty-four, as not inferior either in vigor of thought, methodical arrangement, or animation of manner, to any that he ever heard him preach. Also, with evident emotion, he spoke of the prudent, courteous and affectionate deportment of his predecessor towards himself, and said he would cherish a grateful remembrance of it whilst he breathed." Dr. Wilson died December 1, 1835, and was buried in the old cemetery. The following is the inscription upon his tomb:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
 REV. WM. WILSON,
 SECOND PASTOR OF AUGUSTA CHURCH.

He was a man of native talent,
 Of attainments not inconsiderable:
 Of conciliatory manners:
 Of pure morals:
 And an Orthodox, Able, Minister
 of the New Testament.

BORN AUG. 1ST, 1751.

DIED DEC. 1ST, 1835.

AGED 84 YRS., 4 MOS.



REV. CONRAD SPEECE, D. D.

CHAPTER III.

REV. CONRAD SPEECE, D. D.

REV. CONRAD SPEECE was called to the pastorate of Augusta Church October 1, 1813. Mr. Alexander Nelson represented this Church in Presbytery when this call was placed in his hands. He was installed October 16, 1813, by Revs. Wm. Wilson, Wm. Calhoun, Jno. McCue and Geo. Brown, a committee of Lexington Presbytery.

Dr. Speece was "of German origin, though entirely English in his education. He used frequently to call himself 'the old Dutchman.'" "My father's name was Conrad Speece, son of Conrad Speece, who emigrated to this country from Germany. My mother's maiden name was Ann Catherine Turner. I was born in New London, Va., November 7, 1776. My parents were poor, but honest and industrious people. My parents sent me several years, in my childhood, to a common school, where I learned reading, writing and arithmetic. They also instructed me early in religion." "Samuel Brown, afterwards pastor of New Providence, was one of his early teachers. Having formed a high estimate of the boy's capacity, he wrote to his father, urging him to send his son Conrad to the grammar school near New London. This request, declined by the father on account of his narrow circumstances, made an impression of lasting influence on the boy. Some months afterwards Mr. Edward Graham, the teacher of the grammar school, 'offered to give me tuition for four years, on condition of my assisting him in teaching as soon as I should become capable, and until the end of that period. My grandmother Speece, in New London, offered to furnish my boarding on moderate terms. On this plan, I entered the school in November, 1792. At first the Latin language was very irksome to me, but soon became easy.' He committed the grammar with great readiness, but as a matter of memory. There was no pleasure in the effort to apply the forms and rules to the examples of the first

Latin book. Mr. Graham encouraged him, and complimented the progress he was making. One day, while looking over the forms in the grammar, and getting almost weary of his occupation, the whole matter seemed to open to him in a twinkling, like the drawing of a curtain, or awaking out of sleep; and he saw at once the meaning of the forms, and the design of the rules he had been storing in his retentive memory. After that, the acquisition of Latin was a delightful exercise. For a time his teachers knew not what to think of young Speece. On went his recitations, rapid without pausing, sentence after sentence, with the same cheerfulness and ease he had followed the plow unwearied, from rising to setting sun."

"In February, 1795, my excellent mother died. This caused me to resolve that I would seek religion." He found many difficulties in his way, and at one time was on the verge of infidelity, when some one placed in his hands *Jenyn's Internal Evidences* and *Beattie's Evidences*. "These," he says, "fully convinced me of the truth of Christianity." He attended Liberty Hall, spending his leisure hours in the study of the law. The delight in his studies, and the influence of light ungodly companions turned him, for a time, from his purpose of becoming a Christian. "At length, in the course of the autumn of 1795, I was enabled to cast myself, with mingled joy and trembling, by faith, on the rich mercy of God in Christ for salvation, and to devote myself to His service. In the ensuing winter I resolved to engage, God willing, in the ministry of the Gospel. In April, 1796, I was received into the communion of the Presbyterian Church of New Monmouth." In September, 1796, he was received under the care of Lexington Presbytery as a candidate for the ministry, and was assigned his trial pieces. In October he received his degree B. A. at Liberty Hall. In the spring of 1797 he passed his trials for licensure, and the trials for ordination were given him. He studied Theology with Rev. Wm. Graham. While preparing for ordination he became troubled about infant baptism. He studied the question carefully, but nothing relieved his mind of doubts. He says, "In April, 1798, the Presbytery, after accepting my pieces of trial, desired of me an account of my difficulties on baptism. They treated me in a friendly manner, and desired me to attend their next

meeting. In the meantime my licensure was necessarily suspended." He gave up his position as tutor at Liberty Hall, and went home to work on his father's farm. In this way he regained his health.

In 1799 Rev. Archibald Alexander, president of Hampden-Sidney College, called to see him for the purpose of securing him as tutor in college. "He found him engaged in the hardest of farming work, running a ditch to drain a portion of his father's farm." His studies in baptism during this period resulted in his being immersed. He immediately began the preaching of the Gospel. He remained in this connection just one year. In the meantime, all of his doubts as to the scriptural mode of baptism being by pouring or sprinkling, and not by immersion, were removed, and he became a veritable champion of the mode which he had once opposed. In April, 1801, he returned to the Presbyterian Church, and became a member of Hanover Presbytery. "Having read before the Presbytery a discourse on baptism by way of trial, they licensed me to preach the Gospel." Thus, you see, he not only satisfied his own mind, but also the mind of the Presbytery, because they licensed him at once. He seems to have been utterly unconcerned about public criticism. It is said of him while teaching at Hampden-Sidney, that "often, in his room, he might have been seen without coat, vest, shoes or stockings engaged at his books, attired as for hay-making," and he would often start to his class-room in this plight, when the bell would ring. The hints which he has given us of his own life, are sufficient to show us the traits of character which made him the great man he afterwards became. He was perfectly honest with himself, simple in manner, sincere, and a lover of the truth. The account of the installation given in the Minutes of Presbytery, does not agree with that in *Foote's Sketches*. Dr. Foote does not mention the name of Rev. Wm. Wilson, as having anything to do with it. The omission in the "Sketches" is evidently wrong.

From 1801, when he gave up his work as tutor in college, until he was called to this Church in 1813, Dr. Speece was preaching in Virginia and Maryland. He rose rapidly in the esteem of his brethren. He was many times moderator of Presbytery, and moderator of the Synod of Virginia in

the years 1810, 1813, 1817, 1825 and 1835. I do not suppose this can be said of any other man, for it is an honor conferred upon but few, and seldom but once. He frequently represented the Presbytery in the General Assembly. From this time, the Minutes of Presbytery begin to show the membership of the churches, and the amounts the churches gave to the different causes.

In 1816, Augusta Church reported 180 members. At the same time Staunton reported 51, and was joined with Brown's Meeting House, now Hebron, in one pastoral charge; Bethel reported 136. In 1817, Union Church was organized with a membership of 44. At the same meeting, Augusta reported 165. The falling off is evidently, mainly accounted for in the organization of Union Church, which was once a part of Augusta. In those days it did not require a Commission of Presbytery to organize a church. Some one would organize it, and then it would ask to be admitted into the Presbytery. Owing to this fact, and to the way the Minutes were kept, we have no way of telling accurately, how largely this Church was drawn upon in the organization of those churches which have grown within the territory once occupied by it.

In 1820 Mossy Creek reported 100 members. In 1824 Augusta 204, and in 1825 she reported 214. Tinkling Spring, 139. This old Church not only claims priority in age, but that under the leadership of such men as Craig, Wilson and Speece, she stood in the front rank in point of numbers, and in all the advance movements of those days. Her influence was felt in the establishment of Union Theological Seminary. Frequent mention is made in the Minutes of Presbytery of her gifts to this cause.

It is not difficult to imagine the interest which Dr. Speece took in this institution. He was born in the same county with, and about one year before, Dr. John Holt Rice, who founded Union Theological Seminary in 1824. Both of them were poor, and both had to struggle hard for their education. "They were associated as tutors in college, and maintained for each other a warm friendship through life." In 1832 Augusta Church gave to the Seminary \$144.

There are many amusing things told about Dr. Speece. He was a very

large man, and upon one occasion went to a tailor to have some clothes made. The tailor said that he thought he could fit him. Dr. Speece said that was just what he did not want. He wore his coat so loose, that he could take two children within its spacious belt, and then have some to spare. One of these little ones, who was thus taken within the compass of his coat while Dr. Speece was in it, is now an honored professor in one of our Universities. Where Dr. Speece boarded, he would not allow any noise during the forenoon, but after dinner he was ready for a romp with the children, often running with a child clinging around each leg. He was a great reader. Often he would be found sitting on his horse, absorbed in reading, oblivious of the fact that his horse was grazing by the roadside. He gave the name "Hill country of Judea," to that portion of his field west of the Valley Pike, and it will always be known by that name. The picture given by Dr. Foote of Dr. Speece's installation will give a good idea of the gatherings in those days.

The installation was to be on Saturday, and the communion on Sunday. It was their custom upon communion occasions to have preaching on Friday and Saturday preceding, and Monday and Tuesday succeeding communion Sunday. Business was suspended, and their *time* and *attention* was given to this one thing. They did not think that, *too much time* to spend in these sacred services. The description given by Dr. Foote is as follows :

"The public services began, as usual, on Friday at the old grove-embowered Church fort. The pastor-elect preached from Heb. xii. 15: 'Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be deceived.' On Saturday came the installation services.

"The pastor of Tinkling Spring, Rev. John McCue, many of whose charge were accustomed to worship here in former days, came along to preach on the Sabbath; also Wm. Calhoun, the minister of Staunton and Brown's Meeting House, whose charge embraced a portion of those on Lewis' Creek, and those in Staunton that once made part of the 'Triple Forks,' and still in their affection clung to the Stone Church. From Mossy Creek and Jennings'

Gap, the scene in succeeding years of the labors of Hendron, and from the South River down towards Port Republic, with their minister, George Bourne, the talented and the erring, the people came as in the times when their fathers and themselves, when children, fled to the fort for safety, and came on Sabbath to worship. The hill was full of horses and people; not a carriage there. You could see the people coming from every direction, as the highways were not fenced in as at this day, in groups of smaller or larger companies; here a family all on horseback, the father with a child behind him and one in his arms, and the mother equally balanced, moving slowly along; another with his wife upon a pillion, and a child on the pommel of his saddle; and then some young people that had met accidentally on the road, or had, perhaps, gone a little out of their way on some pretence, came riding up in the unpretending gallantry of independent mountaineers. The congregation retired, some to their homes, and visitors with their friends to pass the night. On communion seasons, and particularly on this, all houses were opened for friends, and all common business suspended, and all families gave themselves up to hospitality and devotion. People felt free to talk on religious subjects, and review the dealings of the Lord with them, and to inquire for the right way. Often on such occasions the anxious soul, for the first time, spoke of its fears and its desires after salvation. On Sabbath morning at an earlier hour the families assembled. What a sight of beauty and solemnity all around! the mountains and hills and forest-covered plains, all in the gorgeous dress of frosty yet mild October; and the old fort hill thickening with men and women coming to worship God. The voice of singing and of prayer is heard from the old Church echoing among the trees. Had a warm-hearted inhabitant from the North of Ireland been brought, like Ezekiel in vision, to stand upon the hill, he would have recognized the cadence and the melody of his ancestors, and joined in the sacred old tune he had so often sung; he would never have asked if this were a sacrament, but have looked around for the ministers, and for the tables, whether they were in the Church or at the tent in the church-yard. And there, in the capacious seats around the pulpit and the reading desk, were the ministers for the occasion; and the elders of the Church;

Wilson, the retired pastor, tall, spare, erect, warm in feeling, earnest in delivery, lifting up his voice like a trumpet, in his excitement; McCue, short, full set, of a ruddy countenance, pleasant and earnest in his services; and Calhoun, of middle size, spare, with high cheek bones, in appearance and manner, and delivery of his message, much resembling John B. Smith, of Hampden-Sidney, under whose ministry he came into the church; and the newly-installed pastor, tall, square-shouldered, athletic, as mild in his demeanor as strong in his manhood. First, the sermon on the death of Christ, and its blessed fruits in the salvation of sinners through faith. Then the fencing of the tables, warning the unprepared, the impenitent and faithless to keep back from the table of the Lord, and not to touch the holy emblems. Then the consecrating prayer, and the hymn and the serving of the first table with the bread and wine, and an address on some exciting subject of the Gospel hope or faith. And after the elements have been passed down the long tables, extending to the right and left of the pulpit, the length of the house, covered with white linen, and seated on either side with communicants, and the guests have been indulged in meditation and devotion, another hymn; and then another company of guests came out of the crowd to take the place of those retiring from the tables, served by the new pastor. Another minister waits on these with the elements; and an address, and with singing, these retire for others; and thus table after table is served till all in the large assembly who have on Saturday or Sabbath morning, or some previous time received from the officers of the Church a token of admission, have received the communion. The passing hours are not carefully noted; the solemn devotions of God's people must not be disturbed or hurried, or the decencies of religious habits and belief shocked by the rushing to the communion from sudden impulse, or coming burdened with unworthiness that could not meet the eye of the elder and minister. Then came the closing hymn, and the prayer and giving thanks, and the solemn address to those who had not approached the Lord in penitence and faith. On Monday the pastor preached, as usual, on such occasions, a sermon calculated to cherish the impressions made on the minds of the people by the services of the preceding days."

It is well for us who live in the whirl and bustle of this advanced age, to dwell upon scenes such as Dr. Foote has described and take our bearings. The reader will gain a better idea of the descriptions of these services if he will refer to the cut of the interior of the Church. As you stand in the right aisle facing the pulpit as it now is, the old high pulpit, with sounding board above it, was almost immediately behind the stove on the right. The reading desk was in front of the old pulpit. The right aisle is the one referred to by Dr. Foote as running the length of the building, and in which the long tables were placed. Standing with your back to the *old pulpit* and facing south, you will notice an odd-looking window on the opposite side from you. This formed part of a double door, which used to be the main entrance. From this double door in the south, running to the old pulpit in the north, and intersecting the long aisle, tradition says, that they placed a table in this aisle also, and they divided the *communion set* into three equal parts, a pitcher, plate and goblets, with their stands for each, of the three divisions of the tables, viz., to the right, left and front of the old pulpit.

The "token" which was used at this time, was a small piece of copper with the letters "J. C., A. C.," evidently being the initial letters of "John Craig, Augusta Church." It was necessary for those who wanted to commune, certainly the members of this Church, to get one of these tokens. The conditions under which they secured this permit, indicate the careful oversight which the pastor and elders had of the members. They held these, to be given to those who were, in their judgment, worthy to commune. To pass judgment upon this question they must have had a very intimate acquaintance with each one. How strange would it seem to this generation to witness this now! Dr. Speece was pastor of this Church for more than twenty-two years. He had some warnings of his approaching end and of its nature, having had symptoms of apoplexy. He died from this cause at the home of Mr. Allen, where Mr. Frank Bell now lives. He was buried by the Nelsons in the old cemetery.

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF THE
REV. CONRAD SPEECE, D. D.,
FOR MORE THAN 22 YRS. PASTOR
OF AUGUSTA CHURCH.
BORN NOV. 7TH, 1776. DIED FEB. 15, 1836.

He consecrated a mind
Rich in genius and Learning
To the service of his Savior
In the great work of the sacred
Ministry. And here sleeps
with his people till they
Shall all stand before the judgment
of Christ.

Reader!
If in his life he tried to save
Hear him at last, O! hear him
from the grave.

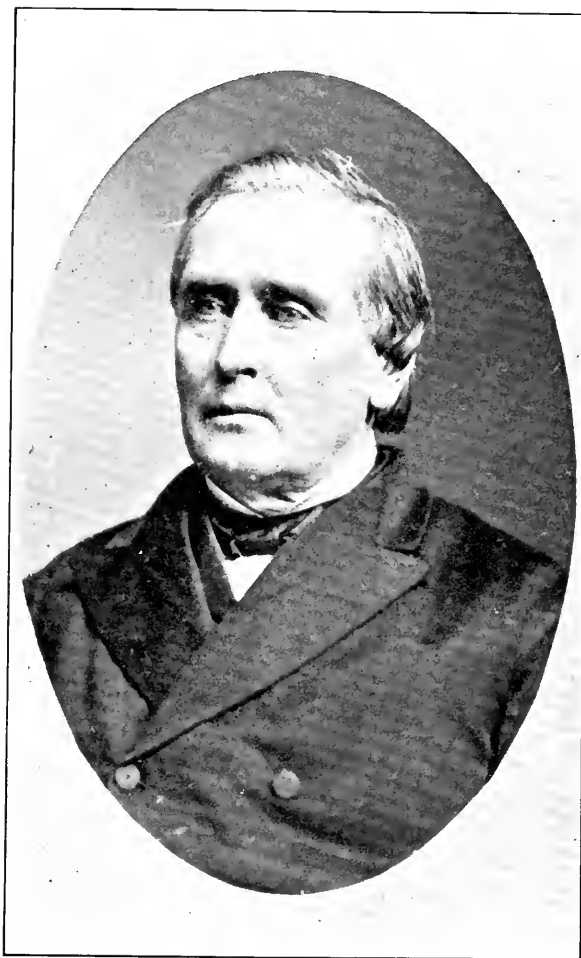
This stone is erected in token
of affection that can know no end.

Nearly one century of the history of this Church was made under the pastoral care of three of God's servants. The principles which led to the establishing of this Church have steadily moved on, while one generation after another has come upon the scene, been influenced by them, and have passed away, the principles living and influencing all who come under their sway. Thus we find the Church of God is never dependent upon any one man for its success.

CHAPTER IV.

DR. WILLIAM BROWN.

DR. WILLIAM BROWN was the next pastor of Augusta Church, being installed in October, 1836. "He was descended from brave and pious ancestors, one of whom, on the maternal side, was an emigrant from the North of Ireland, a settler in the county of Rockbridge, an officer in the Revolutionary war, and subsequently slain by the Indians. His wife and two daughters were carried in captivity as far north as Canada, and those who have read *The Captives of Abb's Valley* have been thrilled by the narrative of the tragic death of the mother and one daughter, and of the rescue and return of the other to Virginia. This was Mary Moore, who became the wife of Rev. Samuel Brown, and the mother of Dr. William Brown. Of the six sons of these parents four became ministers of the Gospel in the Presbyterian Church. Dr. William Brown, the fourth of these sons, was born in the county of Rockbridge, September 11, 1811, and was received into the church of which his father was pastor, when he was ten years of age. He graduated at Washington College in April, 1830. In 1832 he went to Princeton Theological Seminary. In 1835 he was licensed by Lexington Presbytery and spent the winter following at Union Seminary, in Prince Edward county." The occasion upon which Dr. Brown was ordained was remarkable from the fact that two other men were ordained at the same time and place. The ordination of these brethren took place at Augusta Church. Dr. Brown was ordained and installed pastor of this Church, and Mr. Joseph Brown and Mr. Alexander B. McCorkle were ordained evangelists. In those days Presbytery often adjourned its sessions in the Church to meet at some private residence. On this occasion, during their meeting, they adjourned from the Church to meet at the residence of Mr. James Allen, an elder of this Church. The house of Mr. Allen is now owned and occupied by Mr. Frank R. Bell. It was in this house



REV. WILLIAM BROWN, D. D.



that Rev. Mr. McCorkle stood his examination for ordination. Dr. Brown entered upon his ministry here in October, 1836. The Church had been vacant since February 15th, the date of Dr. Speece's death.

It was the custom to have morning and afternoon service at the Church. The people coming long distances would bring their dinners and spend most of the day, as their fathers had done. Frequent mention is made of meetings of the session during the interval between morning and afternoon service. The session house was built upon the north side of the Church, immediately back of where the old high pulpit used to be. There was an entrance from this into the Church at, or near, the pulpit. The design in putting it this way was, that they might use it as a kitchen if the fort should be besieged by the Indians. Doubtless, also, it was for the convenience of the pastor, that he might pass immediately from the session house to the pulpit. If the pastor did not return to his home during the intermission between the services, which was not likely in the case of Drs. Craig and Speece, who lived at least five miles from here, it was necessary that he have some place of seclusion to prepare for the service of the afternoon. It is probable, then, that the session house was built against the church, and at this particular place, for the pastor's convenience as a study, as well as for the purpose above mentioned.

This house was removed from its time-honored position to its present location in 1847. In the Minutes of Session for January 2, 1848, mention is made of session meeting in session house and being able to have fire. Records of meetings in the open air and at the Church door were made several times prior to this, which was evidently during the time of tearing away of the old and building of the "new session house." Just here, before mentioning the subsequent change made in the Church building, it will be well to introduce an extract from the Minutes which will give us an insight into their mode of worship and the spirit of the times:

"*Augusta Church, May 16, 1844.*—Session met by a call from the pastor, and was opened with prayer. Present, the pastor and elders Allen, Van Lear, Gamble, Craig and Nelson. A petition having been presented to the session signed by some members of the congregation and *some others*, having

a reference to the *position of the clerk, and to introduction of new tunes, urging the propriety of the clerk's standing in front of the pulpit, and complaining of so many new tunes.*"

This matter was put into the hands of a committee composed of the pastor and elders Van Lear and Allen, who were to consider the request made, to formulate an answer and report to the session. Tradition says it was the duty of the clerk to announce the hymns, reading two lines and then singing them before reading any more, thus the whole hymn would be sung.

The session met May 19, 1844, to receive and to act upon the report of the committee. They "presented the following statement, which, on motion, was unanimously adopted and ordered to be placed upon our Minutes, and to be read to the congregation :

"A respectful petition has been presented to the session of this Church signed by a considerable number of the congregation, which the session has had under consideration, and respecting which they have come unanimously to the views and conclusion now about to be stated, as, on the whole, in their judgment, most advisable in the case. The petition has reference to two points: The one is in regard to the *position of the clerk*; the other to the *introduction of new tunes*. As to the first of these—the *position of the clerk*—we acknowledge that there may be individual preferences, and those preferences, honestly entertained, ought always to be treated with due respect; so, on the other hand, the congregation should bear in mind that the services of a clerk are entirely gratuitous; that the office is to most persons, at best, irksome and onerous, and that, therefore, unless the position of the clerk be very objectionable, from its remoteness and inconvenience, there should be all reasonable indulgence conceded to *his* decided preferences. At all events, we cannot regard this matter, though only of individual preference, as being among those things *which are at all essential*.

"The praises of God, we think, may be sung with about equal acceptance, and near about equal convenience to most, whether our clerk be immediately *under* the pulpit, or in his seat immediately in *front* of it, as is the case in many, if not most of the churches in our land. It is a consideration, too, of no

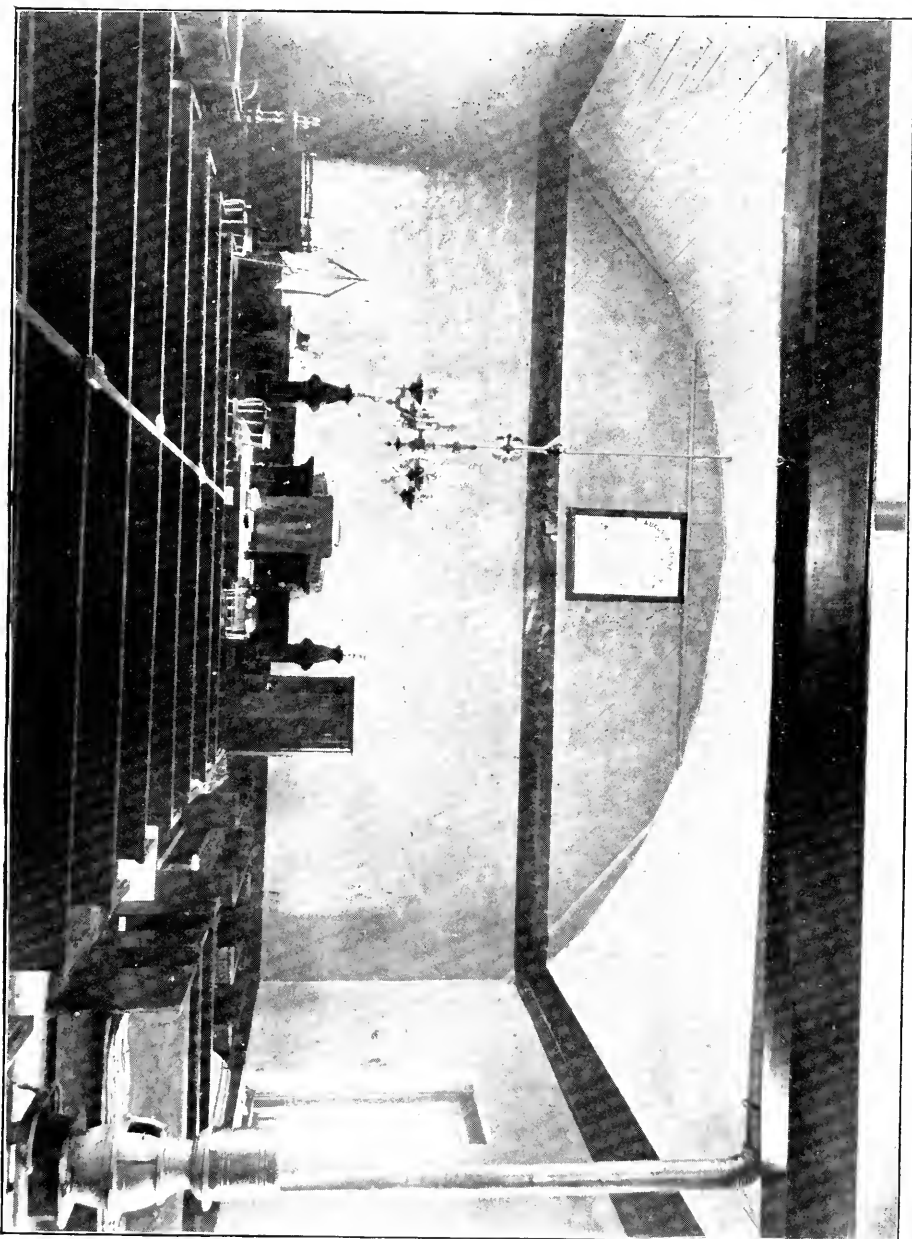
small weight, if not absolutely decisive in the case, that while the ample qualifications of our present clerk are acknowledged in the congregation and out of it, we know of no one else of acceptable qualifications who would, under present circumstances, be willing to act as our clerk in *any position*. The practice of the clerk standing in front of the pulpit originated chiefly from the fact that in former ages the people generally were not able to read, or to provide themselves conveniently with books. The circumstances having changed, the necessity or importance of continuing the practice, except on particular occasions, is not the same it once was. In addition to all this, it is proper to state that some of the petitioners themselves, as we are assured, regard this as a thing respecting which they have no *personal* preference or wish.

“As to the introduction of *new tunes*, we must take it for granted that no one can wish that *none* such should be brought into use in our Church, because such an objection, if valid, would have prevented in former years the introduction of those which are now old. It must be granted, indeed, by all, that new tunes ought not to be brought in too fast, but the congregation should have sufficient time to learn in some degree, by proper efforts, one or more that may be on hand, before they are called upon to learn others. Here, however, we must say that we do not think there has been such an excess of these tunes in our congregation as to be justly oppressive to any one, since, upon careful inquiry, we are not able to ascertain that more than about seven have been brought into use during the last seven years. A good proportion of our tunes are those long familiar to the people. Some of the others, though new here, are really about as old as the existence of our mother, the Presbyterian Church in Scotland. Most of the tunes we use here, are considered and used by the church at large as among the choicest specimens of music. Our variety is yet quite limited. Let it ever be remembered that in any number of tunes that may be introduced, every favorite of every person in the congregation cannot, in the nature of the case, be included. Whilst the singing in our congregation is superior to that in most, we are aware it is not what it might be, and the session of this Church would rejoice to co-operate in all

suitable ways for its improvement; and as one means to promote it would hereby recommend and urge upon all the propriety of furnishing themselves with our excellent new Hymn Book, that they may join with us in this delightful part of the services of the sanctuary. We shall be happy to find that this matter here ends, as we think it surely ought. Let us follow the things which we think will make for peace, things wherewith one may edify another. Let us remember the excellent maxim of one of the early fathers of the Christian Church, 'In things essential, *unity*; in things not essential, *liberty*; in all things, *charity*.'"

In 1855 another very radical change was made. Both the exterior and interior of the building were changed. If those not familiar with the place will refer to the cuts of the Church, they will understand these changes better. The building faces the east, as you see it there. Originally, there was but one double door in the east, the one on the right hand as you face the Church. Just opposite to this door there was a double one in the west end; between these two doors was the aisle running the length of the building. The main entrance was on the south side, which also had a double door. From this entrance on the south, there was another double aisle running to the north side, intersecting the aisle from east to west in front of the pulpit. The whole interior of the building was changed. The pulpit was placed in the west, the double door on the south was closed, the aisle running from it to the north was removed. A single door was made of the double one in the west, and a new double door was made in the front on the left side corresponding to the one on the right side. A double aisle running from this left-hand door the length of the building, corresponding to the one on the right. The old square box pews, which were very high and faced the old pulpit in the north, were replaced by more modern ones, which were made to face the new pulpit in the west. The Church remains substantially as it was changed at that time.

From 1836 to 1860 Dr. Brown was pastor of this Church. At that time he was invited by the stockholders of the *Central Presbyterian* to take charge of that paper. "In consequence of the failure of his sight, he gave up his editorial labors in 1879, and removed to Fredericksburg, Va. To obtain



INTERIOR OF CHURCH.

the benefit of a residence in a warmer climate, he removed to Florida, where he had purchased property in the vicinity of Bay View, and where he spent the remainder of his days in a quiet and happy home, yet able to minister to the little church near his residence, where, after the total failure of his sight, he could repeat from memory the hymns to be sung and the portions of scripture appropriate to the service. On the morning of April 22, 1894, he gently passed away from the darkened earth to the inheritance of the saints in light. As an ecclesiastic he was universally recognized as an authority in the courts of the Church, so familiar was he with rules of order, so well acquainted with precedents, so thoroughly posted in deliverances and decisions as to be a living Digest. He had an eminently judicial mind, united with an understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, and what Israel ought *not* to do, a discernment often lacking but always useful. He was thus instrumental in directing the policy of the Church in safe channels, and in restraining it from needless or hurtful legislation. A devout student of God's Word, a man of prayer, regulating all of life by what he believed to be right in the sight of God, devoid of all pretence, free from cant and religious mannerism, humble and sincere, he illustrated in his life the Truth which he preached, blessing those about him by the quiet, unconscious influence of a blameless and consistent walk. It was a peculiarly trying providence which brought blindness upon one who took peculiar pleasure in all the aspects of the natural world; in the changing seasons of the year; in the starry heavens; in the faces of children, and in the works of Art. And herein is the grace of God illustrated, for blindness, in his experience, was but the shadow of God's wing. It brought him into the secret place of the Tabernacle of the Most High, into the pavilion of the Divine Presence; and a failure of natural vision only made the eye of faith more clear to visions of beauty transcending the brightest scenes of earth.

“Dr. Brown's old age was like the vestibule of the Temple, in which he waited reverentially and patiently until the time arrived, when by a single step he passed within the veil to see the King in His beauty, and to behold the land no longer afar off, but a present inheritance, an eternal and satisfying possession.”

Dr. Brown's strong attachment to this old Church, his only pastoral charge, and his deep interest in her welfare were very marked. One of the last acts of his life was to give his large library, of many hundred volumes, to Augusta Church for the use of the pastor and his successors. The memory of Dr. Brown is cherished most tenderly in this congregation by all who knew him.



REV. FRANCIS H. BOWMAN.

CHAPTER V.

REV. FRANCIS H. BOWMAN.

REV. FRANCIS H. BOWMAN succeeded Dr. Brown as pastor of this Church, in 1861. He was the son of Rev. F. and Harriet B. Bowman. He was born in Charlottesville, July 9, 1833.

“He gave evidence of piety in early life and became a communicant in the Presbyterian Church at Greensboro, Ga., of which his father was pastor. He was fourteen years of age when he joined the church. He entered Oglethorpe University in the year 1848. He graduated at that institution in 1850. He taught for one year after this in Mt. Zion Academy, from which place he went to the University of Virginia, where he spent two years. In the prosecution of his theological course he was one year at Union Seminary and one at Princeton. He left Princeton in the spring of 1856, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Hopewell. Soon after this he was ordained and installed co-pastor of a church in Liberty county, Ga. Later he became pastor of the church at Greensboro, Ala., but his health failing, he remained there only a short time. From Greensboro he came to the Augusta Church. His pastorate extended through the very trying period of the civil war. Mr. Bowman was a man of varied attainments. He was capable of filling any position, socially or in the courts of the Church, with credit to himself and with honor to his Church. He possessed a personal magnetism, and an ideal pulpit manner or delivery, which gave him wonderful power over all who came in touch with him.”

One who is qualified to speak says that “he was the finest pulpiteer he had ever seen.” He was the possessor of an unusually fine form and said to be very handsome. His pulpit ministrations were a model of gracefulness and dignity. He took a deep hold upon this people, and all who remember him hold him in the highest esteem. Mr. Bowman may justly be called the

martyr pastor of this Church. He moved from here to Memphis. After he became pastor of the church there, yellow fever became epidemic in that city. Mr. Bowman felt it to be his duty to stay at his post. He did not spare himself by fleeing from this disease, but faithfully ministered to his afflicted flock. When he left his home to visit one who was ill, he bade his family good-bye, making them promise him that if he contracted this terrible disease, they would not come near him. This was the last time he saw his family. He was brought home ill and soon died. During the pastorate of Mr. Bowman here, there were no marked changes in the congregation."



REV. I. W. K. HANDY, D. D.

CHAPTER VI.

REV. I. W. K. HANDY, D. D.

FROM the time that Mr. Bowman's pastoral relation with this Church was dissolved in October, 1868, Rev. W. G. Campbell supplied this pulpit until Dr. Handy came. Dr. Handy was called unanimously by Augusta Church, January 30, 1870. He was installed pastor in May.

Dr. Handy was born in Washington, D. C., December 14, 1815. He received his theological education at Princeton Seminary, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Washington in 1838. For some time he was a home missionary in Missouri. This work did not agree with his health, however, and he returned to the East, settling in Delaware. From this Church he went to the First Presbyterian Church, in Portsmouth. He had not been in that city long when yellow fever became epidemic in Norfolk and Portsmouth. Like his predecessor in this Church, Dr. Handy "remained at his post and cared faithfully for the sick and the dead of all denominations." The positions which Dr. Handy held, evidence the fact that he was a man of unusual literary attainments and an indefatigable worker. He was a member of the Presbyterian Historical Society, the Maryland Historical Society, and of the American Scientific Association. "He was esteemed for his laborious and accurate historical researches." "His pastoral work in the bounds of this Church and congregation 'was richly favored by tokens of Divine approval and endearing him to the whole people.'" Dr. Handy was imprisoned in Fort Delaware for fifteen months. "He held daily religious exercises in organized Bible classes. The result of his ministerial labors in prison was a remarkable revival of religion; and not a few Confederate officers afterwards became ministers of the Gospel. His largest published work, *United States Bonds*, portrays his life and labors in prison." He was a wonderfully fascinating man and a fine preacher. He died in Philadelphia on

the 14th of June, 1878, in the sixty-third year of his age. "His remains were brought from Philadelphia and interred near the old Augusta Church. He was warmly endeared to a large circle of friends and kindred; and his memory is embalmed in the hearts of his brethren in the ministry of the Gospel." From June 14, 1878, the date of Dr. Handy's death, till the 4th of July, 1879, the Church was without a pastor, but it was supplied.

CHAPTER VII.

THE remainder of the history of this Church to the present will be treated as one period. During this period, from 1879 to 1900, this Church has been ministered to by three pastors, whose autobiographical sketches in the order of their pastorates, will follow the account of the whole field for this length of time.

The bounds of this congregation have changed since Dr. Craig gave its dimensions as thirty miles long and twenty wide. It embraces a territory now about twelve miles by fourteen. This diminution of territory is due mainly to the organization of churches around the borders and within the limits of this Church, many of whose members, or their parents, once attended here. She has been strengthening her position by establishing out-posts at the following places, which will be named in the order of their establishment: Bezetha Chapel, at Burketown; Spring Hill, Roman and New Hope. The ministrations of the Gospel at these points have been blessed of the Lord in bringing into the Church a large number, who have contributed spiritual and financial strength to the Church. Perhaps no period of equal length in the history of this Church has felt more keenly the drainage upon her strength than this one. This is due mainly to three causes: (1) Deaths and removals; (2) the wave of financial depression which swept over her, causing (3) financial embarrassment to many. Notwithstanding all this she has braved every storm, and has fair prospects, under the blessing of God, of great usefulness in the future. The Church as constituted has six elders: Dr. William Bell, clerk of session, William H. Moorman, Peter H. See, E. McK. McCue, Chas. Edward Crawford and Frank R. Bell. The deacons are Samuel Byers, John A. Brown, Frank McCue, James T. Kerr and G. Crawford Miller. She has at this time two hundred and fourteen members.



REV. ALEXANDER SPRUNT, D. D.

CHAPTER VIII.

REV. ALEXANDER SPRUNT, D. D.

THE first part of this period of twenty years this Church was ministered to by Dr. Alexander Sprunt. "Alexander Sprunt was born in Glasgow, Scotland, July 10, 1852. His parents were Alexander and Jane Dalziel Sprunt, and he is the fifth child of a family of nine children, five sons and four daughters. His father was British Vice-Consul for North Carolina. About the year 1854, his father moved to Wilmington, N. C., and continued there until his death, during the pastorate of the son in this Church. The early part of Dr. Sprunt's life was therefore spent in Wilmington, where the members of his father's family, with two exceptions, still reside. He was educated in Wilmington; at Upper Canada College, in Toronto, Canada; at Davidson College, N. C., where he graduated in 1875 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and at Union Theological Seminary, Hampden-Sidney, Va., graduating in 1878.

"In April, 1878, he was licensed by Wilmington Presbytery to preach the Gospel as a probationer. His first work in the ministry was as assistant to Rev. H. M. White, D. D., pastor of Loudoun Street Church, Winchester, Va. He was ordained to the full work of the ministry by Winchester Presbytery in November, 1878. In June, 1879, he was called to the pastorate of Augusta Church, and on July 4, 1879, he arrived in the bounds of the congregation to undertake the work of this pastorate. Just six weeks before this he had been united in marriage to Miss Ellen Richardson, the second daughter of the late Rev. Thomas E. Peck, D. D., LL. D., of Union Theological Seminary. Dr. Sprunt's pastorate continued from July, 1879, to March, 1885, when he accepted a call to the Church at Henderson, N. C., where he continued until called by the Committee of Evangelistic Labor in his Synod, to undertake the superintendency of this aggressive work of the Synod. He continued in this position for about a year, and shortly after his resignation, he accepted a call to the pastorate of the First Church, Rock Hill, S. C., where he now labors."

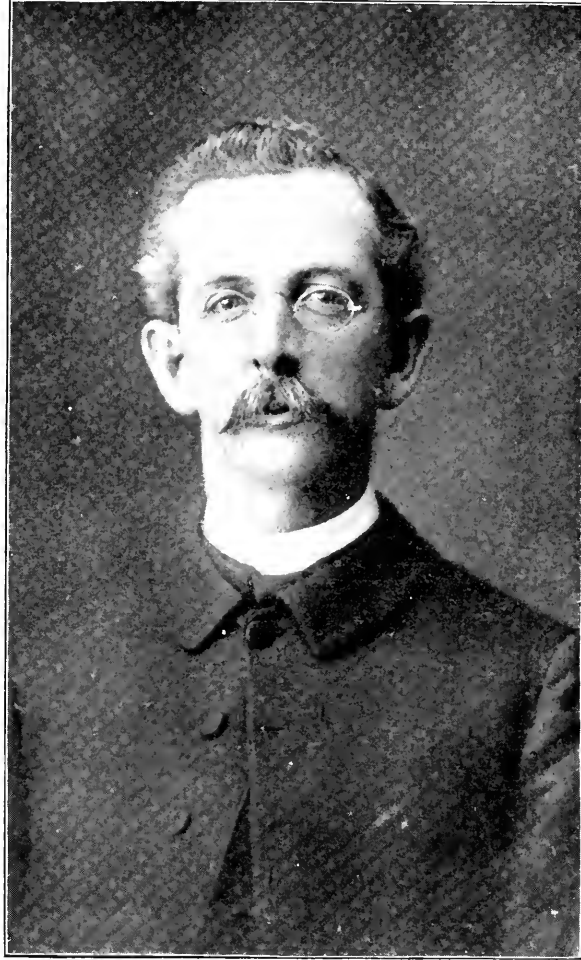


REV. GEORGE L. BITZER.

CHAPTER IX.

REV. GEO. L. BITZER.

THE eighth pastor of Augusta Church, was born in Clark county, Va., December 21, 1860. A baptized child of the church, he came to a saving knowledge of Jesus at some time during his thirteenth year (the time indefinite). Confessed Christ in the Second Presbyterian Church of Alexandria, Va., January 4, 1874, under the ministry of Rev. J. J. Bullock, D. D., graduate of St. John's Academy, Alexandria, in 1877; spent three years in teaching; then, being called to the ministry, five years were given to preparation for the work of preaching, at Washington and Lee University, Union Theological Seminary, and elsewhere. During one session, 1884-'85, he taught Hebrew in the School of Theology at Austin, Texas; was licensed as a probationer for the ministry by Winchester Presbytery, September 11, 1884; ordained by Lexington Presbytery in an adjourned meeting held at Augusta Church, October 9, 1885; labored at Augusta Church from June 13, 1885, to September 25, 1889; at Portland Avenue, Louisville, Ky., from October 1, 1889, to May 15, 1892; at Leesburg, Va., May 15, 1892, to April 1, 1898; from April 1, 1898, to the present at Huntsville, Alabama.



REV. J. N. VAN DEVANTER.

CHAPTER X.

REV. J. N. VAN DEVANTER.

REV. J. N. VAN DEVANTER was born near Waterford, Loudoun county, Va., August 20, 1857. His parents were Armistead M. and Patience Taylor Van Devanter. When nearly twelve years of age he united with the Catoctin Presbyterian Church, under the pastorate of Rev. J. W. Lupton, D. D. His preparatory training was in Waterford, and his Collegiate and Theological, was at Hampden-Sidney College and Union Theological Seminary. He was licensed to preach by Lexington Presbytery at an adjourned meeting held in Staunton, June, 1883, at which time he accepted calls to the home mission field of Lexington Presbytery in West Virginia. He was called to the pastorate of the Church at Philippi, Barbour county, and as stated supply to Leading Creek Church (now Elkins) and to Holly Meadows Church, in Tucker county. This pastorate continued for three years and six months. During this time he was united in marriage to Lelia O., eldest daughter of D. C. and Woodie McDowell Tabb.

January 1, 1887, he entered upon the pastorate of Beverly and Leading Creek Churches, in Randolph county, for the whole of his time. He remained for four years and two months. He was called to Augusta Church in 1891, and entered upon his work here the first Sunday of March. This pastorate of nearly nine years has been a most pleasant one. The results of which will have to be written by the next historian. This Church has a Bible Society, which is older than the Virginia Bible Society. Its annual meetings are held in May, and its contributions are sent to the Virginia Society.

CHAPTER XI.

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF AUGUSTA CHURCH.

ACCORDING to Dr. Craig's account, the building was used for the first time January 22, 1749. The date for this anniversary, of course, was January 22, 1899; but it was not deemed advisable to attempt anything on this scale in midwinter, with such weather as we naturally expected at this time of the year, for it would have been impossible to have made a large crowd comfortable at that time. We did, however, have communion service on January 22d, and had with us Rev. L. H. Paul, pastor of the Mossy Creek Church. This Church is the oldest daughter of Augusta Church. October was the month and the 18th and 19th the days chosen on which to hold the celebration. The Presbytery of Lexington was invited to hold its fall meeting here at that time, and to participate with us in the pleasures of the occasion. Presbytery met on Tuesday, October 17th, and was opened with a sermon by Rev. Thornton Whaling, D. D., of Lexington, Va. On Wednesday, 10 A. M., the Hon. Joseph Addison Waddell, LL. D., author of *Annals of Augusta County*, gave a most interesting historical address under the title, "Reminiscences." Surely, no one was better prepared to make this address than he, and it was listened to with excellent attention. At 11 A. M. Rev. G. B. Strickler, D. D., LL. D., of Union Seminary, spoke from the subject, "Divine Origin of the Scriptures." In this discourse Dr. Strickler stated with perfect fairness the objections made to the Scriptures, and then, with that invincible logic which he wields so easily and so naturally, he swept away all obstacles, causing the Bible to stand forth unimpeached, notwithstanding the long-continued efforts of its enemies. He made his audience feel that it is *the Word of God*, stirring in the heart of the believer a new delight in his Bible. Following this at 2:30 P. M. was an address by that gifted speaker and orator, Rev. G. W. Finley, D. D., of Tinkling Spring

Church, on "The Open Bible in the Hands of the People." The design in this, which he admirably carried out, was to show the effects which the "Open Bible" had produced, even the great Reformation, and the blessings and benefits which have come down to us from it. Thus the history of this Church leads us back to the Reformation before we find an adequate cause to account for its existence. It was at this time that the power of the open Bible began to be felt. Thus this Church owed its origin and history to the Reformation, and she was indebted to the Bible, and the Bible was the Word of God. Thursday, 19th, 11 A. M., Rev. W. W. Moore, D. D., LL. D., of Union Seminary, spoke on the subject, "Presbyterianism and Education." In a masterly and irrefutable manner he showed the elevating and cultivating influence of Presbyterianism upon the mind and heart of the recipient, broadening and deepening his mind, teaching not only self-respect, but respect for authority and, above all, reverence for God. The effects produced by Presbyterianism on the history of the world were abundantly testified to by distinguished scholars of other denominations, whose names and opinions Dr. Moore gave, to show that Presbyterianism was not an invention of man any more so than the complex being, man himself, who is soul and body. The Doctrine is the soul of Presbyterianism, and the Form of Government is the body of Presbyterianism.

Dr. Whaling followed, proving that the body was of divine origin, formed and fashioned by God Himself, as well as the soul (the doctrine) which He gave to dwell within it. And, further, that this soul demands a body like this to dwell in, as best suited for glorifying God who gave it. So both Doctrine and Form of Government owe their origin to Him, and He is shown to be their direct Author just as really and just as truly as man owes his origin to Him, when He created his body from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Dr. Whaling's subject was "Divine Origin of Presbyterian Church Polity;" *i. e.*, that the Presbyterian Form of Government is the Bible form, and the Bible has been shown to be God's revealed will to man. The presentation of this subject was the most scholarly and conclusive that I have ever seen or heard. We were celebrating the Anni-

versary of a Presbyterian Church. Its Government and Doctrine make it Presbyterian, and these are derived from the open Bible. While revelling in the luxurious presentation of the two sides of Presbyterianism—the divine origin of its Doctrine and Government, neither the memory of the fathers who so bravely contended for the Faith once delivered to the saints, and who transmitted it to us, was forgotten, nor their last resting place neglected. On Friday, immediately after the dinner hour, and before the time for the afternoon session of Presbytery, a large number of the Presbytery and crowds of visitors marched to the “old cemetery.” After the graves had been looked upon the two speakers, Drs. Finley and Whaling, chosen but a few moments before, took their position on a mound on the gently sloping hillside a little way north of Dr. Craig’s tomb; the crowd was called to order; a company of Cadets of the Augusta Military Academy were drawn up in line on one side of the crowd, all contributed to make a most imposing and touching scene. Beneath that sod lay ministers, elders, wives, mothers and daughters, soldiers and statesmen. Above them stood or sat the crowd, representing all ages and classes. To these Drs. Finley and Whaling spoke. Their effort was impromptu, and yet it is doubtful if these brethren ever acquitted themselves more handsomely, as they paid their tributes to the dead, to the Christian and to the patriot, and appealed to those who had entered this goodly heritage to live lives worthy of their ancestors, whose memory we are commemorating. The experiences of this short hour will never be forgotten by many who were present that day.

The crowd of people who attended this “anniversary” was estimated to be at least 1,600 on Wednesday, and not less than 2,000 on Thursday. In the large grove there were said to be from 400 to 500 vehicles. How different from the scene described by Dr. Foote when he says, there was not one vehicle of any kind to be seen, but that the grove was filled with horses and people. The following is taken from the *Staunton Spectator and Indicator*:

“But the surprise and wonder of it all was the ease and sumptuous manner in which all this multitude was fed, verily feasted, by the hospitable people of the community. Upon a big hollow square of tables under the

oaks was spread the greatest profusion of every substantial and delicacy that the country and city markets can afford, and though the people ate with an appetite sharpened by the worry of travel, the fatigue of sitting and the bracing October air, there was every day, after all had finished, a plenty for many more. Then, again, at night the visitors by hundreds found the hospitable doors of the many homes for miles around wide open, and to the surprise of strangers unacquainted with the resources of our Valley people, every one was comfortably quartered, and there was not heard a complaint from any one on account of himself or his beast."

The following "Ode to the Old Stone Church" was written by Rev. R. M. Tuttle, of Collierstown, and was read on this anniversary. By permission it is added to the account of those services.

ODE TO THE OLD STONE CHURCH.

One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary.

Hail! Old Building—roof and rafters,
 Cornice, casings, sills and beams,
 Floor and walls, and deep foundations,
 Pew and pulpit, joint and seams!
 We are here to do you honor,
 And the day most fitting seems.

Time, whose tooth is ever grinding,
 Turning marble into mould,
 Leaves but little trace upon thee,
 Telling us that thou art old,
 And, indeed, the years but render
 Thee more prized than gems untold.

Thou hast past through Revolutions,
 And hast echoed back the yells
 Of the savages in hiding,
 Or when traversing the dells,
 And thy secrets, could we know them,
 Would enchant, like charmer's spells.

In the haze that gathers 'round thee,
In the mist of vanished years,
Shades of lusty men and women,
So to Fancy it appears,
Are in groups, and bands, and bevies,
Working in the midst of fears.

Fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters,
All are busy, all are here:
Some at quarry, some a-building,
With the trusty rifle near,
And with sand-bags from the river
Women in the scene appear.

Thus it was, thou stony temple,
That thy walls did nobly rise;
Faith and Hope, and Resolution,
Under God's beholding eyes,
Moved the builders, holy heroes,
In the truly grand emprise.

In yon well-kept ancient acre,
For at least a hundred years,
Those old worthies have been sleeping
In their narrow sepulchres;
Precious dust! by angels guarded,
Till the Trump of God it hears.

In the pulpit, cleric figures,
Greet us in a moving scene,—
Craig and Speece, and Brown and others,
Holding up the Nazarene,
And each pastor to the present
Is in the procession seen.

Yet another scene's before us!
It is a Communion day,
And the pews and aisles are peopled,
Awed and sombre in array,
By those living in the distance
Three-times fifty years away.

Pastor Craig has preached the sermon,
And the table white is spread,
And communicants are sitting
'Round the board with bowed head,
While the elders pass the emblems,
And appropriate words are said.

Such the scenes and recollections,
And inspiring, too, they are,
Which do here in the devotions
Mingle with the praise and prayer,
And they send us forth to duty,—
For the Lord to do and dare.

Grove-embowered church and fortress,
Reared for worship and defence!
Border tales, and songs, and sermons
Charged with old-time eloquence,
Linger here, like mountain echoes,
Or like some rare redolence.

Like thy solid walls, Old Building,
Is the faith thy people preach,
And enduring as the mountains
Every doctrine that they teach,
And their hopes, bound to the Saviour,
To the highest heavens reach.

Now upon thee, softly falling,
Like the dew upon the rose,
We would lay our benedictions
At this solemn moment's close,
And we pray that God would keep thee
From disintegrating foes.

Lord, to by-gone generations
Thou didst here reveal Thy Name,
And Thy Love upon the altar
Here has burned a constant flame,
And to future congregations,
Fount of Blessing, grant the same!

The One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Old Stone Church.

BY MRS. ELIZABETH McCUE,

Granddaughter of the Second Pastor, Rev. William Wilson, D. D.

One hundred and fifty years ago,
These sacred walls were reared;
By sturdy men of pious zeal
With courage great that never feared,
When the red man lurked around,
And they by Britain's laws were bound,

Unstintingly of work they gave,
And of their need that they had saved,
Laid a foundation firm,
To keep the walls of this old church
Unmoved by time as years roll on;
No sculptured marble floor was laid,
But legend says, the first of stone was made.
No spire from its drooping roof
Turns round with glittering sheen,
That shelters here these old grey walls
From many storms that've been.

God's book, the lamp that brightly shines,
Is laid upon the pulpit near,
To guide the Protestant divines,
Men of long and learned line.
Above is reared a marble slab,
Deep letters on it carved,
The names of all the reverend men
Who've labored here with love and fame.

Oh! could we call the many back
Who've worshipped here in days of yore;
Whose silent feet have walked these aisles,
We'll never meet them more;
And see the old high pulpit stand,
Beside the long north wall;
And the sounding board that hung above
The chancel near at hand;
As now we see the grand old beam across,
That spans beneath the dome to-day.

Dear to us all is this old stone church,
As we meet to-day within its walls
And look behind and think of those
Who for their part their Saviour chose;
And when the echoes of cycling years
Stir our hearts with grief and pain,
Come, kneel within its loved old walls,
And hear the word of God again.

And may the echoes of these years
Rest on this old stone church,
And every stone a monument
To those who built this house.
As we to-day commemorate
Our Saviour's dying love.
All glory unto Him ascribe,
And open wide the doors and let His glory in,
The holy gospel of the Lord, who gave His life for sin.
And honor those who sleep in sight,
Beneath the shadow of these years;
Whose names on many a slab were carved,
Now crumbled into dust;
But God, He will remember and number with the just.



THE COMMUNION SERVICE.

CHAPTER XII.

THE OLD COMMUNION SERVICE.

THIS old service has attracted a good deal of attention, and has been very much admired. There is practically no doubt as to the facts stated in regard to this service. Its history is called "traditionary" because we have not gained these facts from records written or printed. They have been handed down from one generation to another, but in such a way that the facts can scarcely be questioned. At an early period in the history of this Church this congregation sent to England for this service. It was "before Philadelphia was a shipping port." The vessel which brought this service landed at Newcastle, Delaware. There being no railroads at that time, it was necessary to bring the service by land, in the way they transported their goods in those days. When it arrived, and the price of it was known, the congregation met at the Church to decide what to do—whether to accept or to return it. The matter was discussed, and the conclusion almost reached to return it, because they did not feel able to pay for it. A letter was read from an absent member, advising them to keep the service, that they could pay for it. One of the noble wives of the congregation, willing to make any sacrifice on her part for the glory of God and the good of His cause, said that she had been saving her mites for a long time, that she might purchase a set of silver spoons for *her* table, but that the Lord's table must be furnished before hers; that she would give this money which she had been saving so long to gratify the desire of her heart. This simple statement reversed the whole tide of feeling. Her example of self-denial was contagious; there was one after another of those present who followed her example, until they not only decided to keep the service, but readily paid for it. This service has been in continuous use here since that time.

CONCLUSION.

Dear Brethren and Members of the "Old Augusta Stone Church" of 1900:

Your historian has faithfully, without sparing time and labor, gathered and woven into one continuous story the facts concerning the organization of this Church and the old building. He has endeavored to show you what you have received from the past, with its hallowed memories and associations. This precious heritage descends to you *in trust*. It is not a gift that you may dispose of at will, but as it was held by the fathers that you might receive the blessings of which it is a means, so to you this day comes the responsibility of making it a means of blessing to the future. Its future depends upon you.

May the memories of the past—the self-sacrifice, devotion to duty, zeal in the Lord's cause, and soundness in the faith, inspire every heart. When you look upon this old building hoary with age, think of the thousands upon thousands whom God has met here and blessed, as they worshipped in His Temple, and who have passed into that Temple not made with hands to be forever with the Lord. When you look upon that service remember the throngs who have used it reverently, and who remembering with godly sorrow the sins which caused His death, looked with joy to the time when He should come. These are now in the presence of their Lord.

Remember that the usefulness of the Church in the future depends upon the faithfulness with which you do your part. May He add His blessing to your every effort, and grant that His peace may abide with you forever.

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