

SKETCHES

OF

VIRGINIA,

HISTORICAL

AND

BIOGRAPHICAL.

BY THE

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that floats in the world is derived from the traditions of the sons of Noah, handed down to their posterity.

“But enough, and more than enough. I can hardly guide my pen. I will, however, add that no lukewarm seeker ever became a real Christian, for ‘from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force;’ a text which I read 500 times before I had the slightest conception of its true application.

“Your Brother,

“To Henry St. Tucker, Esq.”

“J. R., of Roanoke.

The last days of Mrs. Judith Randolph were, by her special and earnest request, passed under the roof, and in the family of Dr. Rice, in Richmond. As she approached her end, she proposed to Dr. Rice a bequest of some of her property, as a memento of her kind feelings to him, and as some return for his multiplied attentions to her, for a series of years, and particularly in that present sickness she was convinced would be her last, and also to add something to his regular support, which she saw was not so abundant as she could wish. Dr. Rice firmly, yet in the most gentle manner, declined the proposition, and convinced her, as he supposed, that, in the circumstances, it might have an ill impression. Some time after, her friend, Benjamin Watkins Leigh, was called upon by her to draw her will. After her death, Dr. Rice was surprised, that, notwithstanding his objections, she had made him a legatee. Being engaged in some benevolent operations that required pecuniary help, he took the legacy, and scrupulously divided it all among those in measure, as near as he could conjecture, according to her estimation of the objects while she was living.

CHAPTER XXIX.

REV. CONRAD SPEECE, D. D.—HIS YOUTH AND MINISTRY TO 1820.

THE author of the beautiful hymn—“Blest Jesus, when thy cross I view—that mystery to the angelic host”—Conrad Speece, was for many years pastor of the Stone Church, Augusta County, the third in succession. Of German origin, though entirely English in his education, he often playfully, in his later years, called himself “the old Dutchman.” In some manuscript notes, he says: “My father’s name was Conrad Speece, the son of Conrad Speece, who emigrated to this country from Germany. My mother’s maiden name was Ann Catherine Turney. I was born in New London, Virginia, November 7th, 1776. My parents were poor, but honest and industrious people.” His birth occurred about a year previous

to that of John H. Rice, D. D., and in the same county, Bedford. Both were blessed with pious mothers; both struggled hard with poverty for an education. They were associated as tutors in college, and maintained for each other a warm friendship through life.

“My parents,” he says, “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. In 1787, we removed to a farm five miles from New London, where I was employed, several years, in the labors of agriculture. As I delighted much in reading, I gradually acquired some knowledge of the historical parts of the Bible, and some ideas on the leading doctrines of 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, moved probably by the representations of Mr. Brown, “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 in 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 from 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. He proceeded to gather word after word, in rapid succession, reduce it to its root, find its place in the form, subject it to the rules, ascertain its meaning, and commit all to his faithful memory. After that day, 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 plough unwearied, from rising to setting sun. At the close of the year, Mr. Graham removed to Liberty Hall, and was succeeded by Mr. George A. Baxter. This gentleman, while presiding over this Academy, had two pupils, John H. Rice and Conrad Speece, who honored him in after-life. Mr. Speece remained under the instruction of Mr. Baxter a year and a-half, applying himself with great devotion to his studies. “I had now gone” — that is, in two

years and a-half — “through the usual course of languages and sciences” taught in the Academy. Of his habits with the pen we know nothing more, than that he sometimes wrote poetry, which was thought extraordinary for a youth.

“In February, 1795, my excellent mother died. This led me to resolve that I would seek religion. I tried to pray, and find the way of salvation. Being about to quit school, my father told me I must provide for myself. I had formed the idea of becoming a lawyer, but rather dreaded it in a religious point of view, and was not in circumstances suitable for studying law. I wrote to my friend, Mr. Edward Graham, of Liberty Hall Academy, asking his advice on my future conduct. He invited me to go to Liberty Hall, offering my boarding, and what instructions I could gain, for a little assistance to him in teaching. Perpetual thanks to God, and thanks to my friend Graham also, for this invitation — I went to Liberty Hall, in May, 1795. New studies, in which I engaged eagerly, together with light, ungodly company, soon banished serious impressions from my mind. I heard the preaching of William Graham, our rector, with intellectual pleasure, but with a hard heart. I became fond of the profession of the law, and spent my leisure hours in legal studies. Towards the end of this summer, I gradually became again anxious about my eternal interests; I felt myself a sinner, and set out more earnestly than ever to seek salvation. I was soon driven to the brink of infidelity, by some of the more mysterious doctrines of Scripture. Jenyn’s Internal Evidences and Beattie’s Evidences, providentially put into my hands by our rector, fully convinced me of the truth of Christianity. I resolved now to turn my whole attention to the obtaining of acceptance with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ. But how should I come to the Father by him? I set out ignorantly to gain, by my own strength, what I called the wedding garment, an humble, holy disposition of heart, as a preparation to my being accepted in Christ. Here I discovered, much more than before, the dreadful depravity of my nature, felt the evil of sin, and acknowledged myself most justly condemned. In the midst of many desponding fears, I cried to God, in the name of Christ, for sanctification as well as justification. At length, in the course of the autumn, 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. Blessed day, ever to be remembered with gratitude and wonder! In the ensuing winter, I resolved to engage, God willing, in the ministry of the gospel. In April, 1796, I was received to communion in the Presbyterian Church of New Monmouth.”

In September of this year, Mr. Speece was chosen tutor at Liberty Hall on a salary of sixty-five pounds and his board; October 20th, together with George Baxter, he received the degree of A. B. at the Hall; on the same day the Rector, William Graham’s resignation was received by the Trustees. “In the same month

(September) I was received by the Lexington Presbytery as a candidate for the ministry. They appointed me, as trials, a homily on original sin, and a Latin exegesis on the question, in quo consistat coeli felicitas. The ensuing winter I studied Theology under the instruction of our Rector. In April, 1797, our Presbytery accepted my first trials, and further appointed me a lecture on Isaiah 11th: 1-9; and a popular discourse on John 3: 7. Reluctant to engage too early in preaching, I obtained leave of the Presbytery in September to defer delivering these exercises until the ensuing spring. On carefully examining the Confession of Faith, I found no subject of scruple, except the doctrine of infant baptism. It was necessary to obtain, if possible, full satisfaction on it before the next meeting of Presbytery. I entered on the study of the subject by the Scriptures, with the aid of Booth's *Pedobaptism Examined*, and William's *Antipedobaptism Examined*. In the result the preponderance of evidence seemed to me to be against infant baptism. 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."

The succeeding year he made his home mostly at his father's, having left Liberty Hall on account of his health, in the month of June. In the month of October the Presbytery held a conference with him on the subject of baptism, in a kind and friendly way, without removing his difficulties. He continued with his father, and was engaged laboriously on the farm during the winter, and regained his bodily vigor by the continued toil. In the spring of the year 1799, Rev. Archibald Alexander, President of Hampden Sidney College, on a visit to Rockbridge, called to see him for the purpose of engaging him as a tutor in College; and found him engaged in the hardest of farming work, running a ditch to drain a portion of the farm. The interview was agreeable and characteristic, and ended in an engagement of Mr. Speece as tutor. "In May, 1799, I settled as tutor at Hampden Sidney College. Made little progress this summer in the study of baptism. About the end of the year, however, I considered it my duty to be baptized by immersion on a profession of my faith. This was done in April, 1800, by the Rev. James Saunders, pastor of Appomatox church. Without any preliminary formality I immediately began to preach the gospel. An awful, yet delightful task! Preached almost every Sabbath, at various places around and often at college."

"My friend, the Rev. Archibald Alexander, having obtained, in the autumn of this year, the removal of his objections against infant baptism, soon convinced me of the necessity of reconsidering the subject for myself. I now read Richard Baxter's *Plain Scripture Proof of Infants' Church Membership and Baptism*, and received much light from it, as also from Mr. Alexander's consideration. In the course of the winter I became thoroughly a convert to the Pedobaptist doctrine; and informed our pastor by letter of my in-

tention to return to the Presbyterian church. April 9th, 1801, having read before the Presbytery of Hanover a discourse on baptism by way of trial, they licensed me to preach the gospel. Went on preaching as before." This is his brief narrative of his life at Hampden Sidney for a little more than two years. He received for the service rendered the first year as tutor, by agreement with the President, and by order of the Board, March 28th, 1800, one hundred pounds — "which," say the records, "is twenty pounds per annum more than was formerly directed to be paid him." He was associated with John H. Rice, under President Alexander, and proved himself to be, what he said of Mr. Rice — "an able teacher." Fresh from the labor of the farm he delighted to retain the simple habits of his father's house, dear to his recollections of childhood, and blessed to the restoration of his health; frequently found it difficult to conform, to his position as instructor of youth. Often, in his room, he might have been seen without coat, vest, shoes, or stockings, engaged at his books, attired as for haymaking; and sometimes when summoned by the bell to recitation, he has rushed out of his room unconscious of his appearance, till some friend remonstrated with him for his carelessness in exposing himself to the ridicule of the boys. A severe reproof from the President, Mr. Alexander, was the effectual cure.

"Weary of a college life, and desirous to devote myself more entirely to preaching, I left Hampden Sidney in September this year (1801), and set out as a travelling preacher. About the beginning of October the Synod of Virginia appointed me a missionary to any of their vacancies below the Allegheny mountains." While connected with college, Mr. Speece exercised his poetic powers to some extent. His productions were of a devotional kind, expressing the spiritual exercises of a Christian man. "I prescribed to myself a rule, never to write a line for which I should, as a Christian, blush in a dying hour." The hymn in use, the 372d of the Presbyterian collection, bears date October 6th, 1800, and first made its appearance in the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine. His contributions to that periodical in the poetic line were numerous, until the appearance of the *Virginia Religious Magazine*, which became the vehicle of his thoughts for the public eye.

Spending a year among the vacancies in Virginia and Maryland, he visited his native county in 1802. "There being a revival in Bedford, I spent a few weeks in April there, and found the preaching of the gospel in such circumstances peculiarly delightful." In February of the next year he accepted an invitation from Montgomery County, Maryland, and divided his labors between the congregation of Captain John and the Falls church, and Union in Fairfax, Virginia. On the 7th of December, the Presbytery of Baltimore received him as candidate, and put in his hands a call. He delivered before the Presbytery a sermon on 1st Cor. 10th: 20 and 21, and a lecture on Romans, 9th chapter. They "put me through the usual examinations. On Sabbath, April 22d, 1804, the

Presbytery at Captain John ordained me to the work of the ministry and installed me as pastor of that church. The Rev. Dr. James Muir presided and preached on Heb. 2d: 3d, first clause. The Rev. Stephen B. Baleh delivered the charge." On account of repeated attacks of bilious fever he concluded that the climate did not agree with his constitution, and the congregation finding some difficulty in sustaining him, he asked a dissolution of the pastoral relation, and preached his farewell sermon, April 21st, 1805. For a series of years, in his early ministry, he was greatly afflicted with sickness; attacks of bilious fever were severe and protracted. From his poetical effusions the affliction appears to have been blessed to his spiritual welfare.

Mr. Speece laid before Synod regular journals of his journeyings and preaching for the time he acted as missionary, before and after his settlement in Maryland. These are lost. Only one extract is extant, in the Virginia Religious Magazine, vol. 1st, pp. 378, 379: "Passing lately through a neighborhood where I had preached several years ago, I called on an old acquaintance and relative, who has for some time past professed religion. Of his first awakening he gave me the following account. 'You may remember the time when you preached at ———. I was one of your hearers. Until that time I had been quite careless about the salvation of my soul, and for some years a profane swearer, and otherwise grossly wicked. My heart was not affected by any of the solemn truths which you delivered on that occasion — yet from that day I felt very awful and abiding religious impressions. When I saw and heard you, I was led to reflect that a few years ago we were children and playmates together; that now you were become a Christian, and a minister of the gospel, while I remained a miserably impenitent sinner, under the wrath of God, and in danger every moment of dropping into hell. These reflections produced in my mind the most alarming convictions of sin, and so fastened them upon me that they were not to be shaken off. I was constrained to betake myself to prayer for divine mercy; and so continued until, as I trust, I obtained the pardon of my sins by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.' How various are the methods of the Holy Spirit in bringing sinners unto God! and how strangely does he bless the labors of his ministers often, while they seem to themselves to be spending their strength in vain! I remember well that on the day referred to I concluded with sorrow of heart, that I had preached the gospel without the least success. Yet God was pleased to make me instrumental in awakening this person; and that not by my preaching, strictly speaking, but merely by my presence. Let not the preacher of the gospel despond because he sees no immediate and striking effects of his ministrations. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, this or that."

In the beginning of the year 1806—"I entered on the discharge of my duties in Fluvanna and Goochland,—a half of my time to be

employed at Columbia, in Fluvanna, and the other half at Licking-hole, in Goochland. Took my abode at Major Robert Quarles, in Fluvanna. At the close of the year circumstances did not favor a renewal of my expiring engagements. At the beginning of Feb., (1807,) I entered on a new scene of action; having acceded to a proposal for my preaching during five years, one half of my time at Peterville Church, in Powhatan, the other half equally divided at Turkey Cock, and Tearwallet Churches, in Cumberland, with a reserve of the fifth Sabbath to myself, whenever one should occur in any month. In these regions there are a few pious Presbyterians thinly scattered, but no organized societies. Took my abode at Josiah Smith's, Esquire, in Powhatan." While residing in this family, which was his home during the whole time of his engagement, he attended the General Assembly in Philadelphia, 1807, received the degree of A. M. from Hampden Sidney, 1808; second time a delegate to Assembly, and preached the Missionary Sermon, 1810; made observations on the annular eclipse, 1811, and Dec. 26th—"witnessed this night the latter part of that most tremendous scene, the burning of the Richmond Theatre." At the close of his engagement he says—"I enjoyed the pleasures of friendship in no ordinary degree. But the success of my preaching, especially in Powhatan, appeared to be small. I fear indeed my own spirit too often slumbered over my sacred work. Upon the whole I felt a wish to retire:—accordingly, about the middle of November, (1812), I went to my father's in Campbell, and spent a few months of the winter in preaching around."

Dr. Speece wrote a short sketch of the events and circumstances he thought worthy of remembrance, up to this period. It bears date Augusta County, Virginia, Jan. 28th, 1828. It is contained on three and a quarter sheets foolscap paper, written in a round, plain hand. It is to be regretted that he did not give a fuller account of his life, connected as he was with some eminent men: and that he did not continue it to the close of his days. From this time to the end of his life his memoranda of ministerial services is complete, with the exception of baptism, of which there is not a single entry. The memorandum books contain only occasional statements of facts.

"March 5th, 1813. Having received an invitation, I set out from my father's to visit Augusta Church, which afterwards became, and still continues to be my pastoral charge, and which has been the scene of my greatest usefulness in the ministry. From the point of time last mentioned, I preserve my journal entire." The dates and facts chronicled were helps to his memory, and to himself were suggestive of events innumerable, and circumstances of deepest interest—but to others little else than the chronology of a preacher's labors. As a specimen we give a page or two:—

Journal.

"March 5th, 1813. Set out for Augusta.—Sabb., 7th. P^d at Lexington, Ps. 46, 1, 2, 3.—Sabb., 14th. P^d at New Providence M. H.,

James 1, 9, 10.—Sabb., 21st. P^d at Augusta Church, Luke 8, 18.—Same Ev'g. P^d at Staunton, John 12, 32.—23d. P^d at Aug'a, Ps. 117, 1.—24th. P^d at Wm. Craig's, Heb. 4, 13.—Sabb., 28th. P^d at Aug'a, 2 Sermons on 1 Cor. 3, 11.—31st. P^d at Salem M. H., Gal. 2, 19.

“April 1st. P^d at Capt. Jno. Campbell's, 3 John 2.—Sabb., 4. P^d at Bethel M. M., 2 Sermons on 2 Cor. 6, 17, 18.—5th. P^d at Mr. Wm. Gilkeson's, Acts 21, 13.—Sabb., 11th. P^d at Aug'a, Luke 18, 13.—16th. P^d at Mr. James Hooke's, Luke 8, 14.—17. P^d at Flogel's M. H., Ps. 119, 124.—Sab., 18. P^d at Aug'a, 2 Sermons, the 1st on Luke 10, 42, first clause; the 2d on Isa. 44, 5.—19th. P^d at Salem, P. 119, 133.—22, Ev'g. P^d at Staunton, Rev. 22, 34.—Sab., 25. P^d at Aug'a, 2 Sermons, the 1st on 1 Cor. 4, 2; the 2d on Ps. 37, 4.—Same Ev'g. P^d at Staunton, Prov. 28, 13.—27. The people of Augusta Church invited me, by their Elders, to settle permanently among them as their pastor. They appeared unanimous and earnest in their invitation. I promised to decide on their proposal within the next month.—Same day. P^d at Aug'a, Matt. 7, 21.—29, Ev'g. P^d at Staunton, 1 Cor. 13, 5.—30. P^d at Bethel, Isa. 45, 22.—Same Ev'g. P^d at Mr. John Logan's, 1 John 3, 1, first clause.

“May, Sab. 2d. P^d at Bethel before the Lord's Supper, 1 Cor. 11, 24.—4th. Arrived at my father's in Campbell.—6th. Attended the meeting of Hanover Presbytery, at Lynchburg.—8th. Obtained my dismissal from this Presb'y to join the Presb'y of Lexington.—Same Ev'g. P^d at Lynchburg, P. 119, 133.—Sab'th, 9. P^d at do., before the Lord's Supper, Phil. 3, 7.—11th. Left my father's.—Sab. 16. P^d at the Masons' Hall, Richmond, Matt. 5, 6.—Same day. P^d at the Capitol, do., Ps. 119, 124.—17th. Wrote to inform the people of Augusta Church of my acceptance of their proposal. They are to have my undivided labors, and to give me, for my support, 500 dollars per annum, and as much more as proper exertions can from time to time obtain. Appointed to begin my labors there on the first Sabbath of next month.—Same day. P^d at the Masons' Hall, Richmond, Rom. 8, 37.—18th. P^d at Mrs. Catherine Strothers, do., Matt. 16, 24.—21st. P^d at Josiah Smith's, Esq'r, 1 John, 3, 5.—22d. P^d at Peterville, Matt. 22, 4, 5.—Sab., 23d. P^d at Turkey Cock, Eph. 6, 15.—Same day. P^d at Capt. Joseph McLaurine's, Ps. 119, 140.—25. P^d at Tearwallet, 1 Thess. 1, 3.—Same day. P^d at Mr. Geo. Anderson's, Matt. 16, 24.—26. P^d at Mr. Stephen Trent's, Ruth 1, 16.—29. P^d at Turkey Creek, 2 Cor. 13, 11, first part.—Sab. 30. P^d at Columbia, 1 Thess. 3, 8.

“June 1. P^d at Lickinghole, Zach. 9, 9.—4th. Arrived at Alexander Nelson's, Esq'r, where I take my abode.”

In this manner he journalizes till the day of his death. The situation of the congregation, the circumstances of the invitation, the retired pastor, his reason for acceptance, were all trusted to his memory with these simple dates. His visit to his much esteemed brother in the ministry, and companion at the College, John H. Rice, who had but lately removed to Richmond, in interesting circum-

stances, is so recorded that a stranger would not know how much he valued that brother and friend. His interview with the brethren of Hanover Presbytery is summed up in the notice of meeting them, and getting a dismission, and the text on which he discoursed to their great gratification. All his public services are recorded in chronological order, his attendance on Synod and Presbytery, his visits of every kind that led him out of the bounds of his congregation, short notices of events of particular importance, all are put down in chronological order. While he is particular in mentioning his attendance on the Lord's Supper, and performance of the marriage ceremony, he does not in the journal make record of baptisms. The reason is not anywhere given.

On the 1st of October, 1813, at Windy Cove, he became a regular member of Lexington Presbytery; and received and accepted a call from Augusta church. Saturday, the 16th of the month, was the day designated for his installation. The appointment was made for a communion season, on the succeeding Sabbath, embracing the two previous and succeeding days. His record of *the last great gathering of the old congregation of "The Triple Forks of Shenandoah,"* is as brief as an ordinary notice could be; "was installed as pastor at the church, by a Committee of Lexington Presbytery. The Rev. George Bourne preached on John 5: 35; the Rev. Wm. Calhoon presided, and gave the charge. God grant that the people and myself may never forget the solemn transaction. May he bless our covenant abundantly."

The public services began as usual, on Friday, at the old grove embowered church-fort. The pastor elect preached from Heb. 12: 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 on the installation services. The pastor of Tinkling Spring, John M'Cue, whose charge many of them were accustomed to worship here in former days, came along to preach on the Sabbath; also William Calhoon, the minister of Staunton and Brown's meeting-house, whose charge embraced a portion of those on Lewis's Creek, and those in Staunton, that once made part of the "Triple Forks," and still in affection clung to the Stone church. From Mossy Creek and Jennings' Gap, the scene in succeeding years of the labors of Hendren, 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. Horses, caparisoned with saddles for men and women, and pillions, and blankets, were to be seen standing all around, tied to the limbs of trees, from an early hour on Saturday. You could see the people coming from every direction, as the highways were not so 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 second pastor, William Wilson, under the pressure of infirmity, had retired from the office of pastor; you might see his residence on the rising ground, a little to the south of the church; and the third pastor, of whom high expectations had been formed, was about to be installed. Installation services in those days of health and longevity were rare. Few people had witnessed two on that hill, many had never witnessed one. Though men had human passions then, and felt all the frailties of our nature, and ministers and their people were not exempt from causes of uneasiness, yet the changes in the pastoral relation were not so frequent then as they are now. Pastors lived, and labored, and died among their people. This third pastor of Augusta lived to fill up with his predecessors the ministerial labors of about a century of years; and all three at last were buried by the people they had served, and will come forth with them, and with each other, at the resurrection.

The old Presbyterian settlers of the Valley were very particular about their personal appearance when they met on the Sabbath for the worship of God. Before the Revolution, their "Sunday clothes," brought from the mother country, were costly, according to their ability to indulge in this almost single approach to extravagance, and were preserved with a care becoming the economy of their situation. During the struggle for independence, the wives and daughters plied the wheel and loom more dextrously, and brought out, as the product of their skilful fingers, the apparel of their husbands, and brothers, and themselves, for their Sabbath meetings, as well as for their domestic pursuits; and since the war of independence the great increase of wealth had not yet enabled the foreign texture to supplant the domestic fabric. And on this occasion men and women, boys and girls, youth and maidens, came in fabrics of all kinds and colors, more domestic than foreign, just as suited the taste and opportunities of independent men and women, dressed all in "their best."

On Saturday, instead of the usual preaching, suited to a communion season, and a short recess, and then another sermon, the services suited to the installation of the new pastor, were performed. The Rev. George Bourne, but lately ordained, preached from John 5: 35, "He was a burning and shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in that light;" and gave a sketch of what a pastor should be, shining as the light, burning like the fire that warms and does not destroy. The Rev. William Calhoun presided, and after the proper questions had been asked and answered by the pastor and the people, gave the charge to each to walk worthy of their vocation. 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 open for friends, all com-

mon 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 enquire 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 of the North of Ireland been brought, like Ezekiel in vision, to stand upon the hill, he would have recognised the cadence and 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; M'Cue, short, full set, of a ruddy countenance, pleasant, and earnest in his services; and Calhoon, 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 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 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 come 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. The crowd slowly disperses. The hill is silent, and the tread of horses echoes in the forests as the little groups seek their homes; some bearing in their hearts the good seed, and some shaking off the solemn impressions made at the supper of the Lord. Larger assemblies may be gathered at old Augusta Church, but such a meeting of the Triple Forks will never be again. 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. His text, Acts 3: 26, Unto you first God, having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

Such, with the exception of the installation services, were the communion seasons in the valley of Virginia. These meetings were often attended with great excitements; and the services were prolonged through successive days. Deep convictions were not unfrequently the consequences — and many hopeful conversions. People flocked to these meetings with an interest they could not describe, and carried away impressions they could not forget. Congregations have multiplied in numbers, and grown smaller in their circumference and number of members; ministers have smaller fields of labor, and live nearer to each other. Communion seasons in frequent succession may be attended by riding a few miles, and the novelty is gone; and the interest from visitors at a great distance is gone; and the laborers gathered at a meeting are fewer in number; and the taste of people is greatly changed with their changed circumstances. Notwithstanding a communion in the summer or early fall in one of the old valley congregations, is invested with circumstances that touch the heart.

From the records of Lexington Presbytery we learn that Mr. George Bourne, calling himself a preacher of the Independent Church of England, made request "to be taken into union with this Presbytery," at its meeting in Staunton, Oct. 18th, 1811. Some reports unfavorable to Mr. Bourne having come to the knowledge of Presbytery, action in his case was deferred. He renewed his request the next spring, at a meeting in New Providence, in April. The Presbytery hearing statements favorable to Mr. Bourne, and in consideration of his having labored about eighteen months in the Presbytery, and a congregation at Port Republic having been formed under his ministrations and zealous labors, resolved to receive him as a candidate. Being introduced to Presbytery, he was examined on his experimental acquaintance with religion, his views of the doctrines and form of government of the Presbyterian Church, and giving satisfaction to the members, he was licensed "to preach the gospel of Christ as a probationer for the gospel ministry." At a meeting of Presbytery on the 29th of the next October, at Tink-

ling Spring, a call was presented from the congregation of South River for Mr. Bourne's services, and being by him accepted, preparations were made for his ordination, which took place at the house of Mr. Joseph Barger, Port Republic, Dec. 26th, 1812; Mr. Wm. Wilson presiding, and Mr. John McCue delivering the ordination sermon. In the succeeding May he attended the General Assembly of the Church as delegate from Lexington Presbytery. He was again a delegate in 1815; and in consequence of his action as their representative, he was arraigned and tried by his Presbytery on two charges by common fame. 1st. With having brought very heavy charges in the Assembly against some ministers of the gospel in Virginia, whom he refused to name, respecting their treatment of slaves, the tendency of which was to bring reproach upon the character of the Virginia clergy in general. 2d. And also, since his return, with having made several unwarrantable and unchristian charges against many of the members of the Presbyterian Church in relation to slavery. The trial took place at Bethel, Dec. 27th, 1815. The excitement in the country was great; at the fall meeting the congregation of South River applied for dissolution of the pastoral connexion, alleging inability to meet their obligations, and "other causes;" and Mr. Bourne threw the gauntlet boldly against the Presbytery and the community in which he had cast his lot, maintaining from the press which he set up in Harrisonburg, and by addresses where people would listen, and in conversation, that slavery as known in Virginia, was incompatible with the gospel; that slaveholding and church membership were a contradiction, and that slaveholding and the ministry was worse than absurd — were no common sin. Had he maintained these sentiments in a manner becoming the decencies of life, the public mind, not then feverish on the subject of slavery, but actually inclining to emancipation, might have borne it in silence as the extreme of a well-meaning man, and been, perhaps, carried on in its course.

Four ministers and four elders were present at the adjourned meeting for the trial — Rev. Messrs. Baxter, M'Cue, Speece, and Anderson received from Hanover Presbytery at that meeting; with Elders Messrs. John Babb, Samuel Linn, William Bell, and John Weir. Mr. Bourne, to prevent a trial, had cited all the members as witnesses; the Presbytery, as a preliminary step, decided that such citation did not bar the right of members to sit in Presbytery. Mr. Bourne then offered an appeal to the Assembly on the whole case; this the Presbytery refused in this stage of the business. The first charge was taken up, and assertions made by Mr. Bourne on the floor of the Assembly were reported by a delegate from Hanover Presbytery, Rev. J. D. Paxton, who was present as a member of Assembly, very concisely; the principal part of his testimony being, that Mr. Bourne "said he had seen a professor of religion, perhaps he said a preacher, driving slaves; thinks he added chained or tied together, through a certain town in Virginia. In answer to some observations by the Rev. William Hill, Mr. Bourne said it was im-

possible to conceive or describe the state of slavery as practised in Virginia, or in the Southern States, and even by professors of religion; and, Mr. Bourne being called upon to name the party driving the slaves, refused to comply with the call." Mr. Robert Herron testified that Mr. Bourne told him that he had laid before the last General Assembly an overture enquiring what was to be done with a minister of the gospel who tied up his slave, whipped her, left her tied, went to church and preached, then came back and whipped her again, and called on a bystander to kill the husband of the woman whipped, for his interference, and that he, the minister, would see him harmless. Mr. Herron also testified that Mr. Bourne repeated to him the substance of Mr. Paxton's testimony, and said that on his refusal to name the man there was "a great bustle in the house."

On the second charge, Mr. Herron testified that "he has heard Mr. Bourne say he believed it to be impossible that any man could be a Christian and a slaveholder—that slaveholders were all a set of negro thieves;" and that Mr. Bourne, on being reminded that the Presbytery would call him to account, "answered, let them quit stealing." Three letters from Mr. Bourne to Rev. A. B. Davidson were read, in which he gives account of the doings in Assembly, and says—"Not a man even attempted to defend man-stealing boldly, but Mr. Hill, of Winchester;"—"that the Devil can make better pretensions to be a Christian than a slaveholder—the one is the father of all evil, but he is no hypocrite; but a Christian slaveholder is an everlasting liar, and thief, and deceiver;"—"that the idea that a man could be a Christian or a democrat and a slaveholder, was quite a jest among northern and eastern and western brethren in the Assembly—it is absolutely impossible;"—"a man who says that he is a Christian and a republican, and has any connexion with slavery, only exposes himself to ridicule, for he is so simple that he cannot discern right from wrong, or so deceitful that he professes honesty while he is a thief;—no slaveholder is or can consistently profess himself to be a Presbyterian, if the Confession of Faith is the standard of the Church." A printed paper was read, and another letter from Mr. Bourne to the stated clerk. After hearing these testimonies and papers, Presbytery decided that the two charges were supported. "The question was then proposed—Can Mr. Bourne, consistently with the conduct exhibited by the evidence, be any longer retained as a member of this Presbytery?—which question was decided in the negative. Wherefore resolved, that Mr. George Bourne be and he hereby is deposed from the office of the gospel ministry." From this decision Mr. Bourne appealed to the next General Assembly.

On the 21st of May, 1816, "an overture containing an appeal made by Mr. George Bourne from a decision of the Presbytery of Lexington, was brought into the Assembly, and being read, was committed to Drs. Nott, Blatchford, and Mr. B. H. Rice, who were instructed to report to the Assembly on the subject as soon as convenient." This committee was afterwards enlarged by the addition

of Drs. Green, Wilson and Neill. This committee reported that as the proper documents were not before the Assembly, there could be no hearing of the appeal. The Assembly ordered — “That a certified copy of the records of the Lexington Presbytery, in this case, be duly made and transmitted to the next Assembly, unless the Synod of Virginia, to which the Assembly can have no objection, shall have previously received the appeal.” The Synod of Virginia, at its meeting in October, in Fredericksburg, made exceptions to the records of Lexington Presbytery, “of an appeal to the General Assembly, over the head of Synod, without expressing a disapprobation,” but proceeded no further. The necessary papers and documents being laid before the Assembly of 1817, on the second day of its sessions, Mr. Bourne’s appeal was made the order of the day for the afternoon of the fifth day, but was not taken up till the forenoon of the sixth day, Wednesday, May 21st. On that and the succeeding day, the parties were fully heard. A motion was made to affirm the decision of Presbytery; this, after discussion, was postponed, for — “While the Assembly do not mean to express an opinion on the conduct of Mr. Bourne, yet they judge that the charges were not fully substantiated, and if they had been, the sentence was too severe; therefore resolved, that the sentence be reversed.” The discussion on this whole subject was brought to a conclusion on the forenoon of May 23d, by the adoption of the following resolution: — “That the sentence of the Presbytery of Lexington, deposing Mr. Bourne, be reversed, and it hereby is reversed, and that the Presbytery commence the trial anew.”

The Presbytery, during its sessions at Bethel, reinstated the two charges made against Mr. Bourne in preparation for a new trial. A letter from the accused to the moderator says — “The Presbytery will accept of my apology for every thing which they construe to be justly offensive to them. An irritable temper, however palliated, is wrong; indecorous expressions, especially when liable to misconstruction, cannot be vindicated; and actions incompatible with the charitable sensibilities which the gospel enjoins are unjustifiable. For every thing therefore of this nature, I hope the Presbytery will receive this acknowledgment, both as the proof of my regret and as ample reparation, that the whole subject may for ever be obliterated.” Germantown, May 28th 1817. This letter was not considered such an expression of repentance as would justify the dismissal of the case. A 3d charge was instituted, “that he (Mr. Bourne) did soon after his trial and deposition, print and publish or cause to be printed and published, a sheet signed with his name containing various and gross slanders against the Presbytery.” Also a 4th charge, “that he did in contempt of the authority of Presbytery, and of the sentence by which he was deposed, continue to preach before the sentence from which he appealed was reversed.” On the ground of common fame a 5th charge, “that he did about June 1815, on his return from the General Assembly without any valid plea of necessity, authorize the purchase of a horse for him on the Sabbath day;

and afterwards that he acted a grossly dishonest part in refusing to pay for said horse," and also a 6th charge, "that he had frequently been guilty of the crime of wilful departure from the truth." The trial took place in Staunton, in November 1817. Extracts from the records of Winchester Presbytery were read, containing the evidence taken by the Presbytery on the subject of the 5th charge, the circumstances having occurred in the bounds of that Presbytery. The evidence was full and convincing.

Rev. William Hill of Winchester Presbytery attended on citation — and gave testimony on the first charge, having been a member of the Assembly of 1815. He repeated what was already before Presbytery with aggravations, and additions, and was confident a deep impression was made by Mr. Bourne injurious to the Virginia clergy and altogether unfounded. Mr. Bourne not attending this meeting of Presbytery, farther action was suspended and new citations issued for the next meeting, which took place in March, 1818, in Harrisonburg. After having ordained Mr. Daniel Baker, now so well known in the Church, Presbytery proceeded to take some evidence in the case of Mr. Bourne. But on account of his absence, though regularly cited, Presbytery directing new citations, adjourned to meet in Staunton, on the fourth Wednesday of April. At the time appointed ten ministers and four elders assembled. Mr. Bourne by letter protested against all the proceedings of Presbytery in his case, and all the proceedings of Winchester Presbytery, denying all the criminality expressed in all the charges, and concluded by, "and hereby appeal from all, and every minute, act, resolution, decision and sentence, which have been or may be adopted ab initio ad finem to the next General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church." Mr. Bourne having impeached Mr. Hill's veracity, the Presbytery first decided that Mr. Bourne's statements accompanying that impeachment were most grossly contrary to truth," and that his attack, "is a most atrocious slander." Presbytery proceeded to prepare their proof on the 3d, 4th, 5th, and 6th charges; and after deliberation pronounced that the charges were all, except the fourth, supported by evidence; — and that, "Mr. George Bourne be and hereby is deposed from the office of the gospel ministry." The Presbytery, declaring that Mr. Bourne's letter was not properly an appeal, and the carrying a case from the Presbytery to the Assembly, passing by the Synod was irregular, resolved that in the present case they would "overlook the inaccuracies of the case, and allow Mr. B.'s letter to have the effect of an appeal in conformity with his wishes."

On the third day of the sessions of the Assembly, May 1818, the papers in Mr. Bourne's case were read, and the hearing of the parties was made the order of the day for the fifth day of the sessions. Tuesday, May 26th 1818, the trial of Mr. Bourne's appeal came on in course, and Mr. Bourne was heard at length. The delegates from Lexington Presbytery, Rev. Messrs. George A. Baxter and Conrad Speece, commenced the defence of the Presbytery — which was completed the next forenoon. On the afternoon of that

day and the forenoon of the 28th, the whole subject was discussed in the Assembly, and "the decision of the Presbytery of Lexington, declaring him deposed from the gospel ministry, be and it is hereby confirmed, on the first, second, third, fifth and sixth charges." The vote was taken separately on each of these charges. In this case protracted through nearly three years, and brought before *three* Assemblies, the whole subject of slavery in its connection with the Church of Christ was fully discussed. The Presbytery of Lexington in exercising upon Mr. Bourne in 1815, the discipline of the Church, assumed the position and asserted the principles maintained ever since by the Church in the Southern States, and consented to, and acted upon, by a large number of those whose lot is cast where slavery does not exist in the civil state. Messrs. Baxter and Speece took the lead in the first trial, and successfully defended their Presbytery before the Assembly on the final appeal. Mr. Bourne cited those texts of Scripture and made the references to the laws of nature and of nations, that have been used ever since to enlist the prejudices and passions of men. Messrs. Baxter and Speece gave those interpretations of Scripture and the laws of nations which are to this day, considered as the abiding truths on which all action in relation to slavery is based.

They maintained that slavery had been a political institution or arrangement from time immemorial; that its existence was recognized in the Old and New Testaments, and the duties of masters and servants as Christians, were distinctly marked out; that the religion of the Bible wherever it prevailed meliorated slavery, and if anything ever brought the bondage of man to his fellow-man to an end, it would be the gospel operating mutually upon the master and the slave. But whether such a state of things as is styled universal freedom will ever be realized on earth, the history of the past, and the prospects of the present give no decided proof. Unfulfilled prophecy, in its true yet dim foreshadowings, admit of a construction favorable to such anticipations. Mr. Speece believed that the gospel would be the great persuasive means to accomplish an end he devoutly desired, universal emancipation; he deprecated all force, believing that violent measures for the eradication of slavery would cause its perpetuity. The progression in which he believed was — the diffusion of the gospel — peace in man's heart and with his fellow-man — and universal freedom. As a friend and supporter of the Colonization Society, the reports he prepared for the Auxiliary Society in Augusta, breathe the most liberal sentiments, and express the highest hopes and most enlarged desires for his native land and for Africa. He lamented the foreign interference, that, under the plea of hastening an event he desired, threw obstacles insurmountable in the path already filled with perplexing difficulties.

The College of New Jersey in September, 1820, conferred on Mr. Speece the degree of D. D. The compliment was received in the proper spirit.