

# The American Presbyterian.

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### THE ASSEMBLY AT GETTYSBURG.

HARRISBURG, MAY 29, 1868.

Amid the gravest and most important discussions which have ever occupied the attention of the Assembly of our branch, reminding one of 1857, but involving even greater interests than at that troublous period, a day of relaxation and refreshment was wisely interposed—such relaxation and refreshment as a visit to the scene of the grandest victory of our late war alone could give. About 330 persons, including a number of ladies, made up the company. The presence of our loyal Presbyterian Governor, one of the heroes and laurel-crowned victors of the combat, was a feature of uncommon interest. The rain, which seemed to follow us along nearly the whole route, ceased before we entered the limits of the town. After alighting from the cars, the company filed around the Diamond, in the centre of the town, occupying more than half of a circle, with the Governor, the Moderator of the Assembly and the Committee of arrangements in the centre. Here, the necessary directions for getting a satisfactory view of the battle-field, and the arrangements made by the good people of Gettysburg for entertaining the Assembly, were announced and received with cheers. The whole body, under the lead of the Governor and Moderator, moved toward the scene of the first day's disastrous fight on Seminary Ridge. Here the important localities were pointed out by the Governor, Prof. Hay and J. B. McCreary, Esq. We easily saw where the First Corps, under Reynolds, met Buford's dismounted men, back of the Seminary, drove them back, notwithstanding the loss of their brave commander, and captured some hundreds in a rail-road cutting;—the smooth open plain, where the unfortunate Eleventh Corps meeting Ewell, just returned from York, broke and fell back in melancholy confusion, surging through the town toward Seminary Hill; and thus bringing the victorious First Corps between two fires, and compelling them to retreat, with the loss of many men captured by the rebels in another rail-road cutting, close by that in which the rebels had surrendered early in the day. These points were easily made out from the Seminary Ridge; and like our own discomfited troops, the fatigued members of the party having completed this part of their inquiry, began to fall back to the town. In the large Hall attached to the Agricultural grounds, ample provision had been made by the hospitable people, among whom is not a church of our branch, and perhaps not a single member of our Church, but who entertained our Assembly as liberally as if we had had at least as much claim upon them as upon the Harrisburg congregation itself. The presence of the Chief Magistrate and brave soldier of Gettysburg, at the head of the party, may have had something to do with the abundance of their friendly demonstrations, but we know that the good people take pride in making visitors, whom they respect, feel welcome to the town. The stream of their generous and self-denying hospitality, set flowing by the tremendous demands of the battle converting every public and almost every private house into a hospital, has seemed to have almost forgotten how to resume its wonted channels. The thanks of the Assembly was immediately voted to the ladies and gentlemen of Gettysburg, with some brilliant coruscations of patriotism, poetry, Latinity, and heart-felt piety from Dr. Cox, when the line of march was resumed to the scenes of the second and third day's fight. The greater part of the crowd soon found themselves upon the corner-stone of the monument, in the Soldiers' National Cemetery. Here prayer was offered by Dr. Skinner; and the incomparable address of Mr. Lincoln, in the fall of 1863, in laying the corner-stone, was read by General Geary. Seldom did fitter, weightier words fall from human lips than were those ten short, simple sentences, from the lips of the most universally loved, and most bitterly mourned of American citizens of this century.

From this commanding point and from another in the rear of the Cemetery, the chief features of the battle ground were easily pointed out. The main interest, however, centered in the portions of the field

connected with General Geary's personal reminiscences. With soldier-like frankness and directness and genuine modesty, the brave man showed us, how, as he came upon the field, on the morning of Thursday, he ventured to disregard the *ipissima verba* of his instructions, which, as he showed us on the spot, would have left Little Round Top and Round Top to the enemy, and exposed our whole line to the rebel fire from those commanding eminences. He pointed out his line of march across the wooded country, the scene of his encounter with the rebel skirmishers, already seeking to make a lodgment on those important positions; told how he drove them out and seized and held the hills with his men, and how, when his numbers were insufficient to complete the line from Round Top to Cemetery Hill, he threw out pickets in front of the unoccupied parts of the line, and so amused the rebels, until his commanding officer was informed of his movements, sent his approval of the change he had ventured to make, and filled the gap yet unoccupied by our forces with newly arrived troops. Much amusement was created by a series of lively questionings addressed to Governor Geary at this point, in which we believe Dr. Nelson took the initiative, and in which the General's liberal "mode of viewing, stating, explaining and illustrating" his orders, was shrewdly brought into comparison with the terms of the basis of Reunion under discussion in the General Assembly. It was asserted, however, that his construction had been endorsed by the loyal people of Pennsylvania, when they made him Governor in 1866; and alluding to his subsequent connection with the Presbyterian Church, it was finally concluded that he was "not inconsistent with the Reformed or Calvinistic sense."

Most stirring, thrilling, and beyond the possibility of adequate reporting, was the Governor's account of his final repulse and withdrawal of Ewell's Corps of 24,000 men from the position into which they had broken, on Culp's hill, on the evening of Thursday, while the General and many of his men of the Second Division of the Twelfth Corps, were engaged as reinforcements, in repelling an attack at Round Top. Standing upon the very spot where the battle raged, and where the dead and dying lay, weltering around him, he showed us how his new line had been formed at right angles with the original one; how all night of Thursday, the two hostile lines lay within hearing of each other's voices; how prisoners captured from the enemy, warned him one after another, of Ewell's purpose to sacrifice any number of men necessary to carry his new position and break our right wing and so overwhelm our whole extended position; how through the night, he passed from man to man along the works, charging them to resist the assault if it cost them their lives; how, precisely ten minutes before the time fixed for the assault by the rebels, he unexpectedly opened upon them; how seven distinct times the obstinate, desperate, unflinching hosts of the enemy beat like an infernal storm against his breastworks, each renewed attack being over rows and rows of their fallen comrades; and how, many of his own little band, but six thousand in number, went down in the storm of fire and blood. Reckless of personal danger, feeling that in such a fearful crisis a General's true place was in every spot where he could direct and encourage his troops, and seeing that the attempt must be made to dislodge the enemy from the strong positions he described, he had formed his famous "White Star Brigade," consisting of his own 28th Pennsylvania, a New York and an Ohio regiment, and placing himself at their head, in spite of the remonstrances of his brother officers, and putting his trust in God, he had led them in a charge, which swept the enemy from the crest and drove him out from the bloody gorge "the way he came." Twelve hundred of Ewell's men lay dead before those stubbornly guarded defences. Had they been yielded, the last dikes of liberty would almost certainly have gone down, and the triumphant tide of rebellion would have swept over the whole of that field of supreme trial to our cause.

As the General paused in his unadorned account of that great victory, the whole company broke out into tremendous applause, three cheers were given, the ladies joined in the demonstration, and all hearts overflowed with unspeakable gratitude for the deliverance which God, by true and

loyal hands, had wrought for us that day. Enough, enough, we felt; what of exultation the heart could well contain had been experienced; a raised sentiment of devout patriotism had been kindled which would perhaps never quite pass away. Supper, and the return to the cars, soon followed, and without a mishap of the most trivial kind; without a drop of rain, and with only an occasional gleam of over warm sunshine, the Assembly was borne swiftly back to the hospitable homes of Harrisburg and to the serious duties of a deliberative body, engaged on the most serious business of its whole history.

Commencement at Lincoln University, Tuesday and Wednesday of next week.

### THE FIRST CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA.

This mother of churches, in her one hundred and seventieth year, is renewing her youth. The great changes in population which have been going on in the city, the ratio of which has greatly increased in later years, have left the venerable pile so far from the centre, that it has seemed at times as if nothing was left to the people but to dispose of the old estate and to follow in the wake of the colonies they had so frequently sent out. Yet few were aware what a breakwater in the way of this movement of the population the very existence of the old church was. Not only did families, who moved away from the neighborhood, retain their connection with the church with a tenacity which passed into a proverb, but many resisted temptations to remove to more desirable localities on account of their unwillingness to yield their privileges as members of the old church. Still, so great was the process of depletion, that few were prepared to witness the signs of animation and rejuvenescence, which have attended the induction of the new pastor to his place by the side of the venerated Albert Barnes.

On Tuesday evening of last week, a welcome was given to Dr. Johnson and his estimable lady, in the large ante-room or vestibule and adjoining apartments of the church. This great space, large enough by itself for a medium-sized church, was adorned in the most tasteful and profuse style, with flowers and evergreens. An immense mirror filled up the central window in the front of the house, which was skillfully surrounded with rare blooming plants, in front of which Dr. Johnson and his lady received the congratulations of their friends. Upon one of the walls was the motto, in large evergreen letters: "The church saluteth you;" upon the opposite wall the pastor emeritus might read: "Love to the end." For several hours, the rooms were thronged with happy faces, beaming welcome to the new pastor and gratitude to the old, who also formed a conspicuous and genial part of the company. The elegant refreshments, bountifully provided by the ladies, were evidently appreciated by the crowd, and the new portrait of Mr. Barnes, suspended between the two portraits of Dr. James P. Wilson, in the study, received a due measure of attention. The occasion was as well honored and enjoyed by the congregation and their friends, as from its rarity and significance, it deserved to be.

On Thursday evening, June 4th, the Installation services were duly performed by the Fourth Presbytery. Rev. Stephen W. Dana, pastor-elect of the Walnut street church, presided with great dignity; prayer was offered by Dr. S. A. Cox, whose presence was a feature of uncommon interest; the sermon was preached by Dr. Zephaniah M. Humphrey, of Calvary church, on Romans i. 16: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." It was an acute and timely presentation of the current temptations to undervalue the Gospel of Christ. The preacher took occasion to allude to the contest between the friends and opponents of liberality within orthodox limits in the Church, and gave voice to the indignation of Christendom at the persecution and suspension of a distinguished and honored brother for the crime of *hymn singing*. He also referred, in suitable and eloquent terms, to the honor and responsibility of the position about to be filled by the pastor elect of this ancient church.

The constitutional questions having been put by Mr. Dana and properly answered by Dr. Johnson and the people, the pastoral relation was declared duly consummated. After a suitable anthem by the choir—"Cast thy burden on the Lord," the charge to the Pastor was delivered by Mr. Barnes; of which we can only say that it was universally felt to be worthy of the man and of the occasion—a fitting, touching, deeply wise, historically rich address—the mature, mellow fruit, and in some respects, the embodiment of the life and character of the man—such as we might expect from Albert Barnes at one of

the supreme moments of his existence. We shall have the satisfaction ere long, of giving it to our readers in the *Shepherd*, with perhaps too great a desire of retaining the people to a late hour—once in 38 years is not often to be kept out late—very briefly charged the congregation, encouraging them to maintain their ancient and honorable position. The Doxology was then sung and the benediction pronounced by Dr. Johnson, with a voice full of emotion. Afterwards the customary greetings were given by the congregation, in which the old pastor shared, without distinction, in the cordial demonstrations tendered to the new. Many also crowded around Dr. Cox, and welcomed the venerable and handsome patriarch, with affectionate and respectful cordiality. In the great congregation, counted, altogether, nearly a score of ministers, one of whom pressed forward to grasp Mr. Barnes by the hand, saying that he was an aged Episcopalian minister, who wished to thank the author of the Commentaries for the great benefit he had gained from his works. In such a manner these interesting and novel services were brought to a close. We must not omit to add that the rich and mellow tones of the organ and the services of organist and choir contributed not a little to sweeten the memories of the occasion.

The consummation so devoutly wished has thus, in God's good providence, been brought to pass. The First church, with its needs, its aims, and its associations—all so unusual—is supplied with a pastor, who was their first and only choice; who, with one consent, is recognized as God's gift to them, in and for their peculiar circumstances, and who, it is joyfully believed, will be the means of maintaining and extending the usefulness and reputation of this honored seat and nursery of American Presbyterianism.

### CENTENARY OF PINE STREET CHURCH.

Friday, May 29th, was a marked day in the history of old Pine street church. For with it closed the first hundred years of its existence. The most elaborate preparations had been made to celebrate the centennial worthily. The morning was showery, and betokened disappointment to the participants in the privileges of the occasion. Approaching the church, we beheld it gaily decorated with flags—emblematic of the staunch loyalty which has characterized this ancient church during its whole existence. Passing in by one of the small gates, in company with others, we first wend our way to the grave of Dr. Brainerd. This spot loving hands had beautifully ornamented. The grave itself was strewn with flowers. In the centre was placed a cross of white *immortelles*. The whole was canopied by an arch of evergreen, surmounted by a star, enclosing the letter B in a wreath of flowers. Upon this arch the last text of Dr. Brainerd was inscribed: "Abide with us." The thought at once occurred, as we stood by the final resting place of the beloved dead, with what pleasure had he looked forward to participation in the joys of this occasion; but God willed it otherwise. We next enter the lecture-room. Over the pulpit the following motto meets the eyes: "And they did eat and drink before the Lord, on that day, with great gladness." The appropriateness of the text was perceptible, when the long tables are observed with their preparation for the evening banquet. The pillars and walls of the room were adorned with wreaths and flags. Over the tablet of Dr. Duffield was a flag, upon which was written: "On the tent of General Washington, on the surrender of General Cornwallis at Yorktown, in 1781." The portraits of the Rev. Philip Milledoler, D.D., Rev. Ezra Siles Ely, D.D., Rev. Thomas Brainerd, D.D., and Ferguson McElwaine, a former elder and trustee of the church, hung upon the walls.

We proceed now to the main audience chamber. Near the principal entrance stands a table for offerings—a mute appeal to the affection of both old and new members of the church. Above the table, upon which the names of the young men from the congregation who fell during the rebellion are enrolled, are seen trophies of ancient armor. Over the door this motto was inscribed: "Old Pine street Church welcomes her children." Glancing within, a tropical scene breaks upon the view. On each side of the pulpit is a century plant. The pillars are wreathed with evergreens and decked with flowers. Beautiful hanging baskets are intermingled with stationary plants. Over the pulpit, encircled with a wreath of evergreen, are the words 100 YEARS. On each side are displayed two beautiful American flags. Beneath hangs a star of white lilies. Upon the pillars are two standards, with the following words: "May 30th, 1768"—"May 30th, 1868." On the walls, near the pulpit, are two banners, with the names of the pastors of the church, as follows: "George Duffield, D.D., Pastor from 1771 to 1790; John B. Smith, D.D., 1791 to 1799; Philip Milledoler, D.D., 1800 to 1805; Archibald Alexander, D.D., 1806 to 1812; Ezra Siles Ely, D.D., 1814 to 1835; Thomas Brainerd, D.D., 1837 to 1866."

The galleries are festooned with evergreens, interspersed with small American flags. In front of the organ is the following passage: "The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers." Immediately above is a beautiful star.

The exercises commenced with an invocation, by the Rev. Z. M. Humphrey, D.D. The long-meter doxology was then sung. After which, prayer was offered by the Rev. Albert Barnes, and the Scriptures were read by Rev. Dr. Wiswell. Next followed an address by the Pastor, Rev. R. H. Allen, in which a warm welcome was extended to all present. He said, "a hundred years in the history of a church must necessarily develop many things which become intensely interesting to those who are now living, although they may have been considered of small moment at the time they occurred. Not only the joys and sorrows, the struggles and triumphs, which were experienced by their fathers in organizing and building up this time-honored church, are deeply interesting to them now, but every relic of those time-honored days, though it be but a soiled letter, a fragment of a sermon, a piece of the wood which composed the first pew, or anything, no matter what, so it comes to us from the years of ancient times, is preserved and guarded as a sacred treasure." He referred to the church as it appeared one hundred years ago, when it was considered one of the finest in the whole country; and also to the improvement made last summer, when it was remodelled and beautified at a large expense, which at once placed her among the most beautiful temples of Divine worship in our great city. At the conclusion of the address, the centennial hymn, expressly written for the occasion, was sung. A response was then made by the Rev. Geo. Duffield, D.D., a grandson of the first pastor of the church. At the close of his remarks, he presented an offering—a tattered document—in which was recorded the call of the first pastor, in 1771. Thereupon, the Rev. Samuel D. Alexander, D.D., the son of the fourth pastor, made an address. The exercises of the morning closed with the benediction, by the Rev. J. H. A. Bomberger, D.D.

In the afternoon, the congregation assembled at 3 o'clock. The invocation was offered by the Rev. A. Culver. After which, the hymn: "Before Jehovah's Awful Throne" was sung. An appropriate prayer was offered by the Rev. Peter Stryker, D.D. The Hon. W. C. Alexander, of New York, was then introduced. He was, likewise, a son of the fourth pastor. His remarks were chaste and beautiful. Many reminiscences were brought up, and he, too, proffered an offering—a call for the pastoral services of his father to old Pine street Church.

The Rev. S. W. Duffield, the great-grandson of the first pastor, read a spicy poem. Rev. Drs. Wiswell and Newton, likewise, made addresses. The last alluded touchingly to his pleasant intercourse with the sainted Brainerd. He spoke of the prevalence of his humor, which was indulged always in entire consistency with his Christian and ministerial character.

The services of the afternoon concluded with the benediction. In the evening, a crowded audience participated in the pleasures of the occasion. The exercises commenced at 7½ o'clock. Prayer was offered by Rev. M. P. Jones. An address upon "Reminiscences" of the church was made by the Rev. John McLeod. This was a thorough compilation, from old documents and authorities, of interesting facts in the history of the church. It contained more than the reminiscences of old Pine street, as it gave a description of the city and its contiguous churches one hundred years ago.

After the address, the congregation, by divisions of about three hundred at a time, was invited into the lecture-room, where a bountiful supply of elegant refreshments had been provided. During the banquet, addresses were made to those who remained in the audience-chamber of the church.

One of the leading features of this occasion, was the music. Some of the grandest old anthems were rendered in a manner that reflected great credit on the accomplished singers composing the choir. In the morning and afternoon, we noticed that Mr. John Zebley, Jr., presided at the organ; and have learned that the names of those assisting him were Mrs. Beardsley, Mrs. Branson, Miss Kate Chandler, Mrs. David Craven, Mrs. Karcher, Mrs. R. H. Allen, Mr. Miller, Mr. W. Simmons, Mr. A. R. Paul, Mr. Dutcher, and Mr. Wm. Ivins.

The pieces selected were appropriate for the occasion. Where all did so well, it is difficult to make any distinction; but the solo of Miss Chandler, in "O, Be Joyful in the Lord," and of Mrs. Branson, in "Jehovah's Praise," were both worthy of high commendation.

In the afternoon, "The Marvellous Work" by Mrs. Beardsley, was exquisitely rendered; as were also the tenor solo, by Mr. Miller, in the quartette, "Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah," and that grand chorus, by Mozart, "Glory be to God on high."

In the evening we enjoyed a musical treat from another choir, conducted by Mr. F. Mitchell, and composed of Mrs. Tudor, Miss M. C. Springer, Miss Kromer, Miss Mitchell, Mr. A. Strang, Mr. Chipman, Mr. Tudor, and Mr. Moore. A chorus, arranged by Mr. Mitchell from Verdi, containing a bass solo by Mr. Strang, and a beautiful soprano part, by Mrs. Tudor, was the opening piece. It was universally admired. The evening hymn, by Mrs. Tudor and Miss M. C. Springer, was very sweet and plaintive. Lloyd's "Jubilate," a grand and soul stirring anthem, ended the music by the choir.

It was conceded by all, that the old organ never sounded better, and the walls of Old Pine-street Church never rang with such music before.

Too much praise cannot be bestowed upon the various committees for the creditable manner in which the whole affair was conducted.