

# WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY

LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA

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## HISTORICAL PAPERS

No. 3.—1892

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UNIVERSITY  
OF VIRGINIA

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## PREFACE.

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This number contains the valuable address of Col. Bolivar Christian on "The Scotch-Irish Settlers in the Valley of Virginia," now nearly out of print; Notes on Washington Academy and Washington College, by the Hon. Sidney S. Baxter; Memorial Tributes to the Rev. George A. Baxter, D. D.; and a continuation of Sketches of Trustees.

In preparing these Sketches we have been greatly aided by the Rev. William Brown, D. D., Mrs. S. C. P. Miller, Judge William P. Houston, and William H. Ruffner, LL. D. These will be continued in succeeding numbers.

We hope to publish in the next number a continuation of Dr. Ruffner's history of the institution by his son Dr. William Henry Ruffner.

WILLIAM McLAUGHLIN,  
WILLIAM A. GLASGOW,  
HENRY ALEXANDER WHITE,

*Committee.*

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY,  
*February, 1892.*

## MEMORIAL TRIBUTES TO THE REV. GEORGE A. BAXTER, D. D.

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The following notices of Dr. Baxter appeared after his death.

From the "*Watchman of the South*," supposed to be by the Rev. STUART ROBINSON, D. D.

GEORGE A. BAXTER, D. D.

"The memory of the just is blessed." Affection to the past, and benevolence to the present and future, unite in erecting a monument to departed excellence. It is the peculiar felicity of the good man, that his usefulness does not die with him. His memory remains as a sweet savor behind him, and though dead, he yet speaks—elevating and purifying those of after times. His example stands as a model of generous emulation to the young, and as a source of honest pride to the old.

He therefore has always been a benefactor to his own and after times, who has perpetuated the memory of worth. And Old Mortality, as delineated by the greatest of novelists, was doing the work of a true patriot, as well as an enthusiastic lover of the past, when he bent over the half obliterated records on the tombs of his ancestors, and sought to revive the evidence of their illustrious deeds. And in this good work, whatever is done must be done quickly. The lights which guide us in delineating the characters of the departed are continually and rapidly going out in the darkness of the past.—"Time's effacing fingers" sweep over the traces they have left behind them, and soon those whose records might have afforded an instructive chapter in the great history of man,

may be described in the melancholy language, "*stat magni nominis umbra*"—he stands the shadow of a mighty name. The uncertain babbling of tradition, the dim and indistinct tracery of popular belief, are the only mementos left us.

The name that stands at the head of this article has suggested these reflections. And how strange, how painful, to think of him as one who *was*. But yesterday and I was sitting at his feet—his "bland and noble countenance" shone upon me to cheer the hours of laborious investigation, and his pure and peaceful wisdom directed my footsteps in the way of knowledge. But now he belongs to a departed race, and to the mighty men of old. His sun was eclipsed when it shone with the greatest brightness. In the full maturity of his transcendent talents, and while exercising an incalculable influence for good, his mantle fell from him, and his spirit returned to Him who gave it. The stroke that removed him was unexpected. The last letters that I had received spoke most cheerfully of his improved health. What was my consternation when a friend came into my chamber with the announcement, "Dr. Baxter is dead!" Alas for our Southern Zion, alas for the Church of God! "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth: for the faithful fail from among the children of men." This sentiment was echoed by ten thousand hearts.

Months have now elapsed since his death, and I have confidently expected that some of his associates in usefulness would give the church a delineation of his character. But I have been disappointed. A few short obituary notices are the only tribute to his memory, save that indelible one written in the hearts of his friends, and that which exists in the most important *acts* of our church during its late stormy period. Be mine, then, the voluntary task of gathering those fragments which may be of use in assisting his successors to form an estimate of his unique and admirable character. The delineations will no doubt be coarse, for the hand that gives them is inexperienced, but the hand will be guided by affection and reverence never felt in conjunction for any other man I have ever known.

The necessity for promptness in collecting traits of character in a permanent and tangible form, which exists in all such cases, is peculiarly strong in the present instance. Perhaps no man of his

talents and standing has left fewer writings as monuments of his greatness. He was pre-eminently unambitious. An acquaintance of considerable intimacy for years did not develop a single instance in which he seemed to court the public gaze. He never thrust himself forward. He never took a more prominent stand than circumstances compelled him to assume. But when thus forced into a conspicuous station, his resources were always adequate to the occasion. For such circumstances he was peculiarly fitted, by a quick penetration and comprehensive grasp of mind, which enabled him to meet an unexpected subject as if it had been maturely investigated. He never seemed to be taken unawares. In the confusion of desultory debate, he stood armed at all points, and the weapons of argument, or ridicule, or humor were ever at hand. In the whole course of my pupilage under him, I never knew him to postpone an answer to an objection. The most skilful cavils that could be collected from our own minds or from books never seemed to possess anything of novelty for him, but were met and exploded as old antagonists, the secret of whose weakness was well understood. The whole vast stores of his mind, all that he had read or thought, seemed completely at command. He required no time to parade his arguments or burnish his weapons. And this quickness in the perception of truth gave him a readiness in detecting and exposing fallacy. I have seen arguments proposed to him with an air of triumphant confidence, and then promptly met with a simplicity and clearness which convinced even the objector. And the answer was always accompanied by a kind good humor which robbed defeat of its chagrin.

His memory was singularly retentive. The most minute facts and arguments seemed rooted in his mind. Any one who has conversed with him about books or men must have observed this trait. He once repeated to me a large part of a poem of considerable length, and on being asked when he had read it last, answered, "About forty years ago."

Another distinguishing feature of his character was his imperturbable good humor. The vexations of a lecture room, arising in part from the dulness or indolence of pupils and in part from a self-confident dogmatical spirit that often distinguishes the learner, are well known. But even these could not destroy the serenity of his tem-

per. Though he often sported with a frivolous argument, he was always kind to the objector. Even an impertinent cavil I have seen met by the same meek forbearance. But the writer of these lines has observed him closely in still more trying circumstances—when those whom he esteemed friends opposed and bitterly vilified him for actions which he deemed essential to the welfare of the Church. But even personal unkindness did not move him. With open hand and open heart he still courted a return to amity. For a debater he was perhaps too confiding and credulous. His own open fairness, and his superiority to trick and finesse, led him to expect the same qualities in his antagonist, and he sometimes suffered by his charity. He was an illustration of a passage to be found in a discriminating author. “It has been remarked,” says Abercrombie, “that a turn for acute disputation, and minute and rigid criticism, is often the characteristic of a contracted and prejudiced mind, and that the most enlarged understandings are always the most indulgent to the statements of others—their leading object being to discover truth.”

As a writer, his style was uniform, yet always elevated—a table land, without hills or valleys. It was the opposite of all pomp and parade. He relied for success on the force of truth presented in the clearest light. When he had given a fair view of an argument he did not loiter around it to adorn and beautify it. He left it to produce its own effect, unaided by elegance of diction. Nor did he pause to guard it against every little cavil; he seemed satisfied if it was based on truth; he did not even carry it out into all its legitimate ramifications, but threw it out with an air that seemed to say that it had cost him too little labor to be regarded with much fondness. His eye seemed to be fixed on the thing to be proved, and he hastened to it with an impatience of all delay. He marched boldly on in the highway of argument, nor turned aside to subdue every petty outpost. He never skirmished, he wielded no small arms. But every volley came booming on with the destructive force of heavy ordnance. Every new sentence contained a new idea, every step was an advance towards the goal.

As a preacher he exhibited the same general characteristics. He had too little ornament and too much thought, to be very attractive to the mass of hearers, if they were strangers. For though he

wielded the club of Hercules, it had not a single wreath to adorn it. It often required a cultivated as well as attentive mind to follow the rapid flow of his thoughts; but to such minds, his sermons were both an intellectual and a spiritual feast. His preaching was evangelical and practical, and his advice to the inquiring bore the stamp of scriptural authority and wisdom.

But in the sacred family circle he was most engaging. There he was unrivalled. The stories of his mind and the treasures of his heart were poured out with lavish profusion. And I have often left his fireside with an impression of his intellectual power, equal if not superior to that made by his public efforts. Such is the idea I have formed of the man we mourn, though at first prejudiced against him. Peace to his memory. The rancor of party spirit will let him sleep undisturbed, and even his enemies will be tempted to do him justice. For even one of his warmest opposers said of him in debate, even when his name had not been hallowed by death, that "God had few such servants on earth."

ALUMNUS.

Extract from an address delivered before the Society of Alumni of Union Theological Seminary, Prince Edward county, Virginia, at the Annual Commencement June 13th, 1848, by the Rev. JOHN H. BOCK, D. D.

But to others of us who came later here, there arises the vision of another face and form, a brow in whose massy proportions nature had carved nobility, a countenance in which with the native beamings of a giant intellect Divine Grace had blended a sacred tenderness, which adored and trembled, and loved and wept, like some holy and sweet-spirited infant. We remember him in the pulpit—how the blood flushed his face, and the tears suffused his eyes, when his own or another's tongue depicted the awful retributions which await unbelieving sinners. As some one passing Dr. Payson's church after his decease pointed over to it and said, "There Payson prayed," so as we pass the neighboring church, the words paraphrase themselves to our thoughts, and we feel, "There Baxter wept." We remember when sometimes he came to the prayer room, late by a minute, and found us singing :



“To hear the sorrows thou hast felt,  
Dear Lord, adamant would melt.”

or some such hymn of contrition, how the sentiment, especially if it savored deeply of the cross of Christ, would at once thrill into his heart, and send forth its witnesses, the crimson and the tears, even before he reached his seat. We remember, too, on occasions when his spirit was fairly awakened, how we watched the light which came from his many-sided mind in the enthusiasm of its epic power of grandeur; and saw him as some Hercules, walking in the realms of Reason and Logic, hurl down pinnacle and battlement, and wall and foundation, of some fortress of untruth, by successive blows, without any visible throes of exertion; or sweep away the foundation of some castle of folly at a single trenchant stroke; and then proceed with the meekness of a child to build in its place a clear, shining structure of truth, from which only the image of the Divine Saviour might be reflected; or we followed him as guide into some region of thought which had seemed a dim and doubtful labyrinth before, and saw by the light which he carried how it assumed the order and clearness of a Grecian city built for a daylight dwelling-place. And in those times of fiery trial, when brethren were unhappily alienated from brethren, and party contests rose around the very altar connected with the very glories of the temple, we watched him with a confidence rendered half prophetic by a recollection of the past, as he went through ordeal after ordeal; and we had already foretasted the result when he came out as gold of the seventh refining. Every one who ever enjoyed his instructions probably remembers what visions he would sometimes present of the awful solemnities of Eternity and the glory of the exalted Saviour, and then take pains to hide himself behind the humblest question or remark of his humblest pupil. And we all must reflect with regret how the creations and achievements of his mighty mind—I take leave to say on this occasion, as mighty a mind as I can well conceive of, in the possession of a mere mortal—are in the main utterly lost to the Church, from his rooted aversion on all occasions to any show of self.

On the times of the Second President, only a single remark will be offered. It is, that under him the Seminary was called on, as a

denominational school, to make its election between fountains of wild bewildering waters on the one hand, and the ancient crystal wells of truth on the other; between a spirit of fancied improvement, which was indeed one of startling innovation, on the one hand, and the ancient and tried order of the Lord's house on the other. And it is believed that almost every subsequent week and month has been demonstrating that he and the worthy guardians of the Institution who stood shoulder to shoulder with him, made their election wisely and well. There may have been things to regret in those days, because the storm was wild and loud and long; and perfection is not an attribute of mortals even in times of quiet. But now that it is overpast, it is too plain to be doubted that there have come to us from it righteousness, and peace, and order, an example not deserving to be soon forgotten of the heroic love of truth; an instance in which the spirit of God lifted his flaming and zealous standard according to the ancient promise of his word; and a new proof, added to the many which were already found in the history of spiritual affairs in this world, that his hand will not desert those to whom anything is better than deranged order and corrupted truth.

From the *Staunton Spectator*, 1846. By the Rev. B. M. SMITH, D. D.

#### WASHINGTON COLLEGE, LEXINGTON, VA.

*Mr. Editor.*—In the three preceding numbers, I have endeavored to give a brief outline of the early history of Washington College. The facts and historical data which have been exhibited, touching its paternity, cannot be questioned. Permit me to retrace my hasty steps for a moment, that I may bring to view, a little more in detail, the operations of this institution during the presidency of the Rev. George A. Baxter, D. D.

Dr. Baxter while yet a young man was chosen to preside over this rising institution about the time that it received the name of Washington Academy and its first endowment from "the Father of his Country." He continued its President more than thirty years, during which time it had its seasons of adversity as well as

prosperity. Its seasons of adversity, however, compared with those of prosperity, resemble the occasional cloud that may be seen on a bright day in summer to flit across the disk of the sun, which only obscures his light partially, and but for a moment. In proof of this I refer to a long list, although imperfect, of Dr. Baxter's pupils, which lies before me. Here are the names of many that this institution has educated, and prepared to fill the highest stations in the fields of usefulness and fame; hundreds remain to this day, although some have fallen asleep. And were it not that delicacy forbids to eulogize those who are alive, and in the spring-tide of usefulness and career of fame, I would spread before the community a few scores of those distinguished names. Such an *exposé* would prove that the Alumni of Washington College are no disgrace to their beloved and respected *alma mater*. In point of talents, scholarship, principles and usefulness in their respective professions and occupations, they exhibit as much ability, and sustain as high a reputation, as the Alumni of any other institution generally do. The grade and reputation of any school may be ascertained by the general character of its Alumni. It is as true of schools as of men—"by their fruits ye shall know them." On this test we throw Washington College, without a moment's demur, knowing assuredly that she shall pass the ordeal triumphantly. Upon every scroll of fame which we unroll since the memorable year of 1776, we find the names of her Alumni inscribed. Go to the Senate of the United States, and there you will find of her sons; go to the House of Representatives, and there you will be fascinated with the eloquence of those who have enjoyed her instructions; go to the legislative halls of any of the States, South or West, of our own State, and you will be permitted to listen to the counsels of many of her pupils; go to the Bench and Bar of the States just referred to, and you will find many of her Alumni adorning the higher walks of jurisprudence. Her Alumni who belong to the medical profession are numerous and highly respectable; the lustre which they reflect, by their profound skill in medical science, upon their *alma mater*, is sufficient to deter any man of common sense from speaking lightly of her. The number of her Alumni who have entered the ministry

of the gospel in the Presbyterian Church is greatly to her honor and praise. The devoted men who founded this College have not been disappointed. Fondly did they hope, and most devoutly did they pray, that she might become "a nursing mother" to the Presbyterian Church—and so she has. Hundreds have gone from her venerable halls to proclaim the everlasting gospel, some of whom have been, and some are now, Presidents in our Theological Seminaries and Colleges. Among the early graduates of Washington Academy is found the name of the Rev. John H. Rice, D. D., one of the greatest men and most profound scholars that our church or country ever knew. Go East or West, North or South, and you will find in the ministry of the church just referred to, men of piety, talents, learning and influence, who have received their education at this College. The time has come to make an *exposé* of these matters, and to inform the community that this school is worthy of their confidence and patronage. That she might have accomplished more and done better, I concede, but that she has achieved so much and done so well is a matter of profound gratitude. To inquire into the reasons why she has not been more prosperous is foreign to my purpose. I remark, however, in passing, that if all those who are under lasting obligations to her, and owe her all they know, had used their influence and efforts in promoting her interests, by communicating information respecting the facilities and advantages of education which she possesses, she would, doubtless, have accomplished more.

It is deeply to be regretted that no one has undertaken to furnish the community with a sketch of the life and character of the Rev. George A. Baxter, D. D., a man to whom this institution owes a great deal, and whose memory deserves to be venerated by all its Alumni.

Permit one who has enjoyed the inestimable privilege of sitting under his ministry eight years, seven of which he was a member of his church, to close this number with a brief sketch of his character. Dr. Baxter was descended from respectable parents who resided in Rockingham county, Virginia, where he was born July, 1771. At an early age he manifested a strong attachment for literary pursuits. And whilst yet a young man, having undergone a great change in

his religious views and feelings, he resolved to make a full surrender of himself to God and prepare for the work of the holy Ministry. He was a pupil of Mr. Graham, and graduated at the 'Log College' before it received the name of Washington Academy. He was President of Washington College more than thirty years, and Pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Lexington thirty-three years. I do not disparage Dr. Baxter's able, pious, and learned co-adjutors and successors either in this College or Church, when I say that both owe a debt of gratitude, and perhaps something more, to his memory, which is not likely soon to be discharged. Dr. Baxter was inaugurated Professor of Theology in Union Theological Seminary, April 11, 1832, in which office he continued until his death, which occurred April, 1841.

Dr. Baxter was a great and good man. As a man of genius and a scholar he was distinguished, as an orator and a preacher he was unsurpassed; as an instructor he was eminent and successful; and as a man and a christian, those who know him best will be the first to speak his praise. For native powers of mind, he will be ranked among the first men in the history of our Church and Country. In the acquisition of knowledge the efforts of his mind were singular and extraordinary. In mathematics, logic, rhetoric, history and theology his knowledge was extensive and profound. In the entire command of his thoughts he excelled most men. His taste was correct and refined, his judgment solid, his views comprehensive, and his reasoning faculties powerful and commanding. He possessed uncommon powers to please and instruct. His knowledge was not confined to a single science, or to one branch of literature; it was varied, profound and extensive. As a pulpit orator he had few equals, and was surpassed by none. As a preacher he was esteemed a *model*. His eloquence was of the most commanding, dignified and impressive order. He was in style, taste, power, gesture and argument, the finished and consummate orator. He was wise to win souls, and was greatly successful in his efforts to bring men to a knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus." The Holy Spirit honored and blessed his ministry by the conversion of many souls in numerous revivals of pure and undefiled religion. To such revivals of religion he was an enlightened and warm friend. In a word, he was a man of devoted and fervent

piety ; “mighty in the scriptures ;” mighty in the knowledge of “the faith once delivered to the saints ;” mighty in the history of the Church ; mighty in sound wisdom and discretion ; mighty in that noble, comprehensive character given by the pen of inspiration to a minister of old—“he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith,” and through his instrumentality “much people was added to the Lord.”

And yet, notwithstanding his greatness, he was as simple as a child, and as easy of access as one altogether unconscious of any merit. He was confiding in his friendship, sincere in his professions, and always charitable and forgiving. His humility was real, his life unostentatious, and his frame of mind devout. “He was a burning and a shining light.”

The decease of this inestimable man called forth testimonials of respect from various institutions and ecclesiastical bodies with which he was connected. His death was a sad stroke to many a sorrowing and smitten heart. He was greatly beloved and universally lamented.

Such is a feeble outline of the character of the Rev. George A. Baxter, D. D. Thousands will attest its truth. The writer speaks what he knows, and testifies what he has seen and heard.

From the *Central Presbyterian*. By REV. WILLIAM BROWN, D. D.

#### REV. GEORGE A. BAXTER, D. D.

[The reminiscence found below, in which this venerated name is prominent, was published under the head of Editorial Correspondence in the *Central Presbyterian* in 1865. It was, however, just after the resuscitation of the paper, and when the mails of the country were not open to half its readers. On this account the writer has the more willingly complied with numerous requests for the republication of the article. Some unessential changes have been made. The scene referred to was so extraordinary as almost unavoidably to awaken a suspicion that the description is overdrawn ; especially when the age of the writer at the time is called to mind. It is only natural to think that the account gives the impressions then received by a highly excited youthful mind, but that it is really, though undesignedly, an exaggeration. But the statement

which the Rev. Dr. Plumer has been so kind as to furnish will be a satisfactory safeguard upon that point. His letter we here subjoin :]

COLUMBIA, S. C., *October 24th, 1867.*

Rev. WM. BROWN, D. D.:

*My Dear Brother,*—When you first published your recollections of a meeting near Strickler's Spring, in Virginia, I was very much impressed with its accuracy. I have recently read it over again, and I am satisfied that I could not alter a sentence to make it more truthful, as far as it goes. You have given us the central figure and actor. If it were right I could add to the sketch others. You yourself were then a little boy. You sat near me, and I could hardly look at the preacher without seeing you. I read your emotions as distinctly as I ever read those of any person. At no great distance sat your excellent mother, and near to her that wonderfully experienced Christian, the mother of Rev. Wm. G. Campbell. A little further on was a group of College boys, who had come there without any serious purpose. But they were awed into solemnity.

I earnestly request you to republish the account of that solemn scene. Those who have read it will be glad to read it again. Those who have never read it will be glad to peruse it for the first time.

Very fraternally yours,

WM. S. PLUMER.

#### A REMINISCENCE OF EARLY LIFE.

On Saturday, August 25, an unexpected providence led my way over the North mountain to the Rockbridge Alum Springs, whence, after spending only a few hours at this famous fountain of health, my course was down Dunlap's Creek<sup>1</sup> until within sight of Goshen Depot, on the Covington and Ohio railroad. Here, making a sudden turn to the right, I was in a little while involved in the depths of Strickler's Gap. After many travels through the mountain passes of Virginia, I must say that none of them makes so deep an impression upon me as this. That through the Blue Ridge, along the noble

<sup>1</sup> Bratton's Run.

James, exceeds it in some respects ; chiefly because you have there the sight of a great river—here only one of its branches. But, taking into account the extreme narrowness of the defile, the stupenous mountains and crags almost hanging over you, and of course the great depth of the gorges in view, the sudden, surprising turns of the road, the wonderful bendings and interlappings of the ridges, suggesting a doubt whether a way can be found to get through—I do not hesitate to place it before all I have ever visited. It is truly a scene of wildness and grandeur which the beholder cannot soon forget. The effect on the present occasion was the greater, because my ride of six miles on horseback through these deep, silent shades was alone, and during the last hours of a calm and hot day in summer. For as I emerged into the great valley at Strickler's Springs, and turned to catch a side view of the old familiar Jump close to my left, the last rays of sunlight were leaving its lofty peak. It was an admonition to hasten on my journey. But suddenly a reminiscence of years long gone by seized and bound me as if by some magic power, and for a time entirely banished the thought of everything else. And well it might be so ; for was I not standing on holy ground? The North river, after so long threading its doubtful way from head-springs hid behind interminable mountains, just here suddenly breaks through the last, the one forming the western boundary of our wide, and fertile, and beautiful Valley of Virginia—in its whole length and breadth surely one of the very loveliest upon earth. Now, as if freed from long, oppressive struggles, and “ rejoicing as a strong man to run a race,” it strikes its course south and obliquely across the Valley, for about thirty miles, till swelled by many tributaries its waters are mingled with the James as it enters its magnificent highway through the Blue Ridge. It was here at this spot immediately on the right of the road—on this beautiful grassy level where it suddenly touches the mountain, which rises abruptly and so high that it seems almost to hang over us—it was here that I witnessed more than forty years ago a scene which some of the people of Rockbridge yet speak of, and which certainly was one of memorable interest. Never can it be forgotten “ while I have any being.” As no account of it has ever been published, I will attempt a description ; conscious, however, that it is a very inadequate one.



The time to which I refer was about the year 1822, and the day was one on which the communion of the Lord's Supper was to be administered; interesting services and largely attended, having been held for some days preceding. The Sabbath was one of loveliness such as the climate of Virginia often gives in September, especially among the mountains. The assembly was immense. Carriages were then rarely to be met with, and the multitudes came entirely on horseback and on foot. They had poured over from Kerr's Creek and down Walker's Creek and Hays Creek; they had come down through Strickler's Gap, from the Pastures and other places behind the mountains; they had gathered from Lexington, from Timber Ridge, from Fairfield and from New Providence. It was a time of uncommon religious awakening over the country, the hearts of the people were deeply moved by "power from on high," and not only the utmost good order, but the utmost solemnity also, was to be marked even by a casual observer. The church on the river, now called Bethesda, was at that time without a house of worship, but was then and for many years after under the care of the Rev. Andrew B. Davidson. Whether on the present occasion he preached in the morning I cannot now certainly recollect, but he conducted most of the communion services in his usual fervid and impressive manner. A very large number were admitted to the church upon profession of their faith, and sat down for the first time at the table of the Lord. In the great congregation of that day might be seen the newly convicted sinner, the stricken penitent, the rejoicing convert, and the riper joy of older Christians—all mingled together, and making it a communion season long to be remembered. Surely it was a scene for angels as well as men to look upon!

When the morning services were about closing, it was announced from the stand that Dr. Baxter would preach in the afternoon. After a short intermission the singing of a hymn was the signal for the congregation to assemble again; which was done promptly—it might even be said eagerly. No one seemed to have departed; hardly a straggler could be seen. Many there were negroes, to whom a suitable place was assigned; and it may be proper to mention here that during this revival a very large number of them were added to the various churches around. Altogether it was a

wonderful assembly. From the preachers' stand in the grove to the foot of the mountain, and as it had been in the forenoon, seated on the rocks for twenty or thirty yards up its steep side, there was a dense mass of human faces, upon which one all absorbing interest was depicted. What a responsibility to stand forth as the ambassador of Christ to such a crowd, and beseech men to be reconciled unto God!

The worship before the sermon seemed peculiarly edifying, and well suited to give a right direction to the feelings of the people. Dr. Baxter gave out the 17th Psalm—a favorite one with him. It contains these striking verses :

“What sinners value I resign;  
 Lord, 'tis enough that thou art mine:  
 I shall behold thy blissful face,  
 And stand complete in righteousness.

This life's a dream, an empty show;  
 But the bright world to which I go  
 Hath joys substantial and sincere;  
 When shall I wake and find me there?

My flesh shall slumber in the ground,  
 Till the last trumpet's joyful sound;  
 Then burst the chains with sweet surprise,  
 And in my Saviour's image rise.

O glorious hour! O blest abode!  
 I shall be near and like my God:  
 And flesh and sin no more control  
 The sacred pleasures of the soul.”

Had it been but yesterday I could hardly call to mind more vividly the tone of voice, and at times the quivering lip, and the whole countenance with which these verses were read. As they were heard that day, sung by almost unnumbered voices to the tune of “Old Hundred,” “the sound was as the noise of many waters.” When it was ended, Dr. Baxter gave out for his text that striking passage in Isaiah lvii, 20, 21: “But the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” He was then in the very prime of life, his mighty powers of intellect in their full maturity, and his religious sympathies, always quick and tender,

were now overflowing; for his heart was all aglow with the revival pervading the country. I was then only a little boy eleven years old; but having recently united with the Church, my interest was intensely excited, and I can remember distinctly to this day the general outline of the discourse.

He first stated briefly but with great clearness and force, who were meant by the wicked; that it included all who were alienated from God. He next demonstrated from the nature of his moral government, and the constitution he had given to man, the absolute impossibility of such persons enjoying any true peace. This position he confirmed by reciting the confessions of Rousseau, Voltaire and Hume, together with some striking cases coming under his own observation.

He then turned with a most searching appeal to those of his hearers still unreconciled to God, asking whether their consciences did not often testify that they had never found the happiness they craved. Here the emotions of the preacher, which at various points of the discourse he had with much effort controlled, became almost overpowering. His benignant face was bathed in tears; for like Paul, and Whitfield, and others of the same spirit, he often thus besought men. It was, in fact, sometimes with great difficulty and after a considerable pause he could find utterance. Under this appeal the whole congregation was deeply moved, and many of the stout hearted were melted like wax. His own feelings, though still under intense action, at length found vent, and were more calm. With unspeakable solemnity he next pointed the class he was addressing to the future. If they had been like the troubled sea in the past, what could they expect in a dying hour, and a day of judgment! Here he recited Jeremiah xii, 5: "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" If in this world of mercy, said he, a sense of guilt, and apprehensions of the wrath of God, make you sometimes so unhappy, how will it be in that hour when mercy is departing forever? when such a sense of avenging justice shall seize upon you as will *completely reverse the very instincts of nature itself?*

In illustration of this last point, he added—"Suppose, as you are seated here this moment, you should see the heavens above suddenly gathering blackness, and feel the earth, under some mysterious power, trembling beneath your feet; and you who are seated upon the mountain should feel it shaking to its foundation; and looking up to its top, we should see it nodding to its fall. What would nature dictate? We should all flee in horror from the fated spot. But how completely will all this feeling be reversed to the impenitent at the last day! O, you will then say to the mountains and to the rocks, 'Fall on us, and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?'"<sup>1</sup>

This was the substance, and in the most material parts the language used. I do not think it possible to convey to others an adequate idea of the impression immediately produced. The effect was indescribable. Something, however, may be gathered from a simple statement of what I witnessed. I was sitting with other boys close by Dr. Baxter, on the edge of the platform, and facing the vast assembly. From the very beginning of his sermon their attention had been riveted. It had increased with every step in the preacher's advance, until a more complete absorption in the subject, and consequently forgetfulness of everything else, can hardly be imagined. The emotion of the crowd now reached its climax, and an amazing one it was. I have since beheld many assemblies deeply wrought upon under a sense of eternal things, but never a scene to be compared to this. Many sitting below and on the mountain side at once rose up, and I can testify that I saw a number of persons turn to see if the mountain was not really about to fall. Indeed, so wrapt was my whole soul in the subject, that I also for a moment looked up in apprehension of such a catastrophe. The concluding hymn I had often heard before, but never with such an awful view of the last judgment.

"That awful day will surely come,  
The appointed hour makes haste,  
When I must stand before my Judge,  
And pass the solemn test."

<sup>1</sup> It was probably from early habit that Dr. Baxter, though usually quite accurate in this respect, gave the words "tremble" and "wrath" the pronunciation of *trimble* and *wroth*.

Among all the instances noticed in history, where a whole multitude were swayed like a forest before some mighty wind, I doubt whether there is a more remarkable one than this. When Demosthenes

“Wielded at will that fierce democracy,  
Shook the arsenal, and fulminated over Greece,”

his hearers in a pitch of excitement cried out, “Let us go to meet Philip!” But what was this compared with the cry of burdened sinners, “What must we do to be saved?”—compared with even one lost son saying, “I will arise and go to my father!” The warfare in a single heart is more tremendous in its whole nature and results than “every battle of the warrior with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood.” The eternal salvation of one soul outweighs all the interests of time.

It is true that the power on the hearts of the people during this memorable day was divine; but the Holy Spirit of God commonly uses means suited to the end designed. It was so here. If the universal judgment of the most competent men who knew him may decide, Dr. Baxter had endowments of mind, and powers as a preacher, surpassed by none, and equalled by few of his great cotemporaries. Of his piety, exceeding modesty and great worth, it were superfluous to say anything. Many can still call to mind his majestic presence, his kindling eye, and a head molded so grandly as to “give the world assurance of a man.” His theme, too, on the occasion of which I speak, was exactly suited to his cast of thought, and his sonorous voice rang through the grove and along the mountain like the sound of a deep-toned trumpet. When with all this you consider the place, the great congregation, and the great religious awakening over the country, it may be understood in some measure how well suited these agencies and circumstances were to bring on this awful impression, and carry on the work of mercy and salvation. Still it was not the less divine. “There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” Certainly I must ever remember the scene here imperfectly presented as one of the most interesting of my life. I have ventured the sketch, believing it will be a reminiscence not without interest to many, and especially, because it recalls a memorable

incident in the life of a great and good man so much loved and revered.

Passing out from the shadow of the mountain, and riding in the last twilight of evening down the river to the Rockbridge Baths, the reflection was a natural one: Where are now the people gathered together on that communion Sabbath? A few remain until the present time; concerning most, the wind hath passed over them and they are gone—long since have they joined the still greater congregation of the dead, and passed to their judgment before God. The voice of those who on that day preached the unsearchable riches of Christ, is hushed. In fact, of all the ministers then in the Presbytery of Lexington, I can think of but three who are now among the living; the Rev. John McElhenny, D. D., the Rev. John D. Ewing, and the Rev. James Morrison—old pilgrims, each leaning thoughtfully on his staff at the banks of Jordan.

Dear old Rockbridge! a place where any might be thankful he was born. With a scenery so bold and charming as hardly to allow a sister in the family to vie with her; with a region where indeed the Lord most plentifully “sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills;” with a people who from the first filled it with sanctuaries and schools; the home of Graham, and Alexander, and Baxter, and Ruffner, and McDowell and Stonewall Jackson—the great and the good; and of multitudes unknown to fame, “whose record is on high”—may blessings be forever upon thee!

And may the days soon return when among all our afflicted but not forsaken churches the word of the Lord, as in the days of old, shall “have free course and be glorified.” “Return, O Lord, how long? And let it repent thee concerning thy servants. Oh satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.”