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PRESIDENT DAVIES AS A HYMN WRITER.

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It is the purpose of this paper to make some record of the work of the Reverend Samuel Davies as a writer of hymns. Of Davies, as man and missionary, preacher and president, it may be said that ample memorials are already at hand.

The impression made upon his friends by his strong personality was set forth, soon after his death (on February 4th, 1761), in several memorial tributes, of which the sermons by Dr. Gibbons and President Finley and the biographical sketch by Mr. Bostwick have been repeatedly printed in editions of Davies's sermons. As time passed on, and the estimate of Davies and his work was not lessened rather than diminished, these early obituary discourses were supplemented by more deliberate estimates of the man and his relation to the times in which he lived.

The recognition of Davies's work in Virginia called forth a eulogium by the Rev. John H. Rice, D. D., running through the columns of the second volume of his *Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine*, from March to December, 1819.¹ An extended study of Davies's career covers three chapters of Dr. William Henry Foote's *Sketches of Virginia* (First Series), Philadelphia,

¹ Dr. Ashbel Green in the notes to his *Discourses delivered in the College of New Jersey* (Philadelphia, 1822) refers to these papers as "Dr. Rice's Memoir of Samuel Davies," which is perhaps the occasion of Allibone's citing them in his *Dictionary of Authors* as though a separate publication. But I can find no evidence of their republication in book form.

THE EDUCATION OF PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS.

A LETTER OF DR. ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER,

WITH A HISTORICAL NOTE BY EDWARD B. HODGE, D. D.

NOTE.—The following interesting letter from the Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander, the first professor in Princeton Theological Seminary, was addressed to his trusted friend, the Reverend William A. McDowell, D. D., of Charleston, South Carolina. A crisis had been reached in the history of the educational work of the Presbyterian Church. Dr. Alexander had the discernment to recognize the supreme importance of bringing the education of candidates for the ministry under the immediate supervision and control of the Church in which they would be expected to serve. Only thus could there be any satisfactory assurance that they would be trained according to the standard of scholarship which our Church requires and in full sympathy with the doctrines and traditions by which she is characterized. It was the age of voluntary societies, and of much controversy with regard to Hopkinsianism and other doctrinal matters. It was the time, too, of the famous "Plan of Union," under which Presbyterians and Congregationalists were endeavoring to work together in the home missionary field. Two prominent education societies had come into existence. One society represented one phase of thought and feeling, and reported annually to the General Assembly. Another represented another phase, and bore no relation to our judicatories. The latter, known under the name of the American Education Society, had early established a "Presbyterian Branch," to which, at the time of Dr. Alexander's letter, enlarged powers had been given, and the noted Dr. Cornelius of New England, was to take up his residence in New York City as its secretary and agent. Under these circumstances many churches and societies joined their interests with the Congregationalists; and the societies auxiliary to the Presbyterian Board simply sent any surplus funds in their hands to the general

treasury in Philadelphia. Dr. Breckenridge had just been appointed Corresponding Secretary of the Board at the time of the letter before us, and by his energy and zeal, to say nothing of his eloquence, soon justified the hopes which were entertained with regard to him. In the course of his brief, but vigorous, administration reforms were instituted, and the work of ministerial education was put upon a basis of permanency and efficiency. The aim which he set before him, and which he saw realized in a degree, was the securing of unity of operation, a common treasury, common principles of action, combined with presbyterial responsibility in the selection and care of candidates.

The differences of opinion, however, to which Dr. Alexander alludes, continued to manifest themselves very distinctly, and when the disruption of the Church occurred, a few years later, into the Old and New School bodies, the latter adopted for a number of years the policy which the Old School repudiated, and conducted their missionary and educational work through the agency of voluntary societies. This policy was abandoned, however, in 1856, and the educational work of the New School Church was entrusted to a "Permanent Committee on Ministerial Education," with the Rev. Thornton A. Mills for the first Corresponding Secretary. This action was one of the providential movements which paved the way for the re-union of the two branches of the Church in 1869; at which time the work of education was consolidated under the present Board, and the full unity of operation for which Dr. Breckenridge labored and prayed was soon happily attained.

PRINCETON July 6. 1831.

REV. & DEAR SIR,

As I know that you take a lively interest in whatever relates to the education of candidates for the gospel ministry,—a subject which is vital to the Presbyterian Church—I wish to inform you of the present aspect of our education concerns; that you may be led to propose & pursue such measures, in your city, as may be for the best interests of the church.

The question which now presses itself on the attention of every Presbyterian, is, whether we had best give up this whole concern into the hands of the A. E. S.; or whether we should endeavor, *as a church*, and by our constitutional judicatories to retain some control over the education of the candidates for the ministry, within our limits. The Society, mentioned above, have recently given a new organization to the *Presbyterian Branch*, & enlarged its powers, professedly with the design of operating in the Presbyterian Church. Dr. Cornelius is to remove his residence to the city of N. Y. and to become the Sec^y & Agent of the P. B. A large portion of our church is already enlisted under the banners of this powerful Society; and soon it will exercise a control over our candidates which no ecclesiastical bodies will be able to resist. Whether this will tend to the real prosperity of our church is a question of grave consideration, on wh. there are very different opinions entertained. What we in this place think, on this point, has been made known fully to the public; and recent events have only served to confirm us in our former views. We still believe, that this is a concern, which above others, should be managed by the church in her distinctive capacity. And if the G. A. Board ever do anything effectively, it must be done quickly & with energy too. The Board have felt this; & recently on the resignation of Dr. Neill, appointed Rev. Jno. Breckinridge their G. Agent, who has determined to accept the appointment, and expects in a few weeks to enter on the duties of his office. He made it a condition that \$10,000 should be raised for the object in Phila. and that the Board should pledge themselves to take on their funds, every properly qualified candidate who should offer in any part of the P. Church. This last measure is very bold; but it is essential to the success of the effort. The old plan of organizing auxiliaries to send up their surplus funds, has been found to be perfectly nugatory; and was pregnant with jealousies of undue favor to particular sections & institutions; and this removes all ground of anything of this sort; for example, in S. C. if you have a hundred needy candidates, the Board will become responsible for the whole of them, at the rate of aid, wh. may be agreed upon; and then her Agent will come

& collect all he can get from your churches & liberal individuals. To carry such a plan into effect will, it is true, call for great energy & wisdom, in the G. Agent and in the Ex. Committee. But if it should succeed even as well as the Missionary exertions of the G. A. it will be the means of extending aid to hundreds of young men who would not otherwise be bro't into view or who are struggling with poverty wh. hinders their advancement towards the work of the ministry.

Many, I know, are of opinion, that this whole business cannot be in better hands, than the Presb. Branch of the A. E. S. Now without discussing at all the merits of this question, I would simply remark, that a large and respectable portion of our people will do nothing for education, if this plan be pursued. They are resolved not to be auxiliary to any Society wh. is not under the control of the church. Now the fact is, that the A. E. S. will do ——¹ as much if we do [nothing]² all we can, as a church, as if we lay still and did nothing. I greatly regret that the spirit of party has become so dominant. The proceedings of the last G. A. were marked by a spirit which has never appeared before in the same undisguised form. And the truth is, that the two parties, in all these great concerns must act separately. Those, therefore, who are by their theological opinions thrown over to the side of old Presbyterianism, should endeavour to get all those with whom they act to come forward in the support of the cause of Education.

I have written to you, partly at random; not knowing the leaning of your mind, on this interesting topic: but wishing to give you the opportunity of throwing in your weight of influence in that scale wh. we wish to preponderate. It is, I am persuaded, the purpose of most concerned to have no dispute or collision with A. E. S. Let all who are pleased with their system act freely in giving them their support, without incurring the least censure or annoyance from us. I did all I c^d. to prevent collision between the two Miss^y. Boards, but it was unavailing, and it may be so in this case—*But we must do our duty.*

¹ A word is obliterated.

² Erased.

We have nothing new or remarkable here. My own health has been comfortable, & my family have much reason to be thankful for this blessing. The attendance in the Sem. is less full than for some time—The college is full & doing well—

I am with kind respects to
Mrs. McDowell your friend &c.

A. ALEXANDER

Rev. Dr. McDowell.

[Endorsed]

The Reverend

William A. McDowell D. D.

Charleston

S. C.