

ADDRESSES

—AND—

HISTORICAL SKETCHES

—DELIVERED AT—

THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

—OF—

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES

—OF—

UPPER AND LOWER TEN MILE.

—BY—

DRS. BROWNSON, ALLISON AND WILSON,

—AND—

REV. MESSRS. ATKINSON AND GLENN.

WASHINGTON, PA.:

F. WARD, BOOK AND JOB PRINTER, REPORTER JOB OFFICE.

1879.

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CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

COMMEMORATIVE OF

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE REV. THADDEUS DODD,
AS PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF TEN MILE IN
SEPTEMBER, 1779.

HELD AT

RINGLAND'S GROVE, WASHINGTON COUNTY, PA.,

THURSDAY, AUGUST 28, 1879.

ADDRESSES

OF

DRS. BROWNSON, ALLISON AND WILSON,

AND

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1879.

LIFE AND CHARACTER
OF
REV. THADDEUS DODD,

BY

REV. JAMES ALLISON, D. D., EDITOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN
BANNER, PITTSBURGH, PA.

I can hardly tell why I, a son of a native of the Cumberland Valley, should have been invited to take part in the services of this day, commemorative of the descendants of a New England ancestry. Probably it was to show the agreement in doctrine and church polity between the Scotch-Irish of the Cumberland Valley—that prolific hive from which Presbyterianism has swarmed not only all over this country but also to the ends of the earth—and those who removed from Guilford, Conn., where the churches at that time were substantially Presbyterian, to Morris County, N. J., and there took the Presbyterian name, whose sons and daughters afterwards left the quiet homes and cultivated fields of New Jersey and made what was then the long and difficult journey to these hills and valleys, covered at that time with the magnificent forest through which prowled wild beasts and what was far worse—infuriated savages thirsting for slaughter.

God made all things out of nothing. His resources are inexhaustible. He can supply whatever may be needed for any emergency. Twenty years ago, when the great crisis in our national history was nigh at hand, some were alarmed because they had persuaded themselves that we had no statesmen or military commanders, adequate to the demands of the great occasion. But when the decisive hour had arrived it was discovered that the nation had the legislators, the military leaders and the President it

needed for the tremendous emergency. A short time ago one of our Presbyterian journals raised a cry of alarm for the future of the benevolent schemes of our church after the death of some six persons upon whom they are largely dependent now. It is not necessary for us to trouble ourselves, on this account now, since when these noble men and women are called away, others will be raised up to take their places. When a work is to be done for the church or the world the instrument by which it is to be done is always provided.

One hundred and six years ago a company comprising several families left Morris County, New Jersey and directed their course hither. They were the descendants of those who long years before had left Guilford, Conn., then and now one of the most delightful places in New England, and came to New Jersey. Some of these could trace their family history back to those who came to Plymouth on the Mayflower. In education, culture and inherited literary taste they had advantages even superior to those which had been enjoyed by most of the Scotch-Irish moving at that time in the same general direction. Hence it would be natural for them to expect some qualifications in a pastor which would not be looked for by some who were making new homes in the same neighborhood. They had no pastor to go with them, but there was then and had been for several years preparing one who would follow them, minister to their souls in sacred things and educate their sons and make himself an imperishable name.

That same year, 1773, "a pale, slender youth with jet black hair, dark, piercing eyes, and a countenance highly expressive of mental power and activity graduated at Nassau Hall, better known as Princeton College. His name was Thaddeus Dodd. His father, John Dodd, had been born in Guilford, Conn., April 15, 1703; himself had been born in Newark, N. J., March 18, 1740. Afterwards his parents removed to Mendham in the same State where he was reared among the same people and under the same religious influences as those whom he was afterwards to serve in the gospel.

His parents were poor in this world's goods but rich in faith. They early instructed their son in the Bible and Shorter Catechism and sought to make him know his sins and to lead him to Christ his Savior. To have such parents is more honor than to have sprung from king's and queen's who knew not God. These

parents and the people around them still felt the impulses of the glorious revivals in that region under the labors of Whitefield and the Tennents. And Thaddeus was more or less affected by these influences from early boyhood. For long years he had been the subject of serious impressions and of severe struggles. In him the "Law-Work," as it was then called, by which is meant conviction of the holiness and justice of God's law and of the evil and power of sin, was deep and thorough. Would to God, we had more of it to-day, in our preaching and religious experience! It was not until his twenty-fourth year that he obtained peace and comfort. To him this event was one of the intensest solemnity. Of the day on which he dated his conversion, July 18, 1764, he afterwards wrote: "All that could be done or heard was the need of a Savior. Undoneness without Christ. This was a day of divine power," of the evening of that day, he used these words: "This was a night of the utmost consequence to me—never to be forgotten; for if I am not deceived, it will be a matter of everlasting rejoicing." He was born into the kingdom in a great revival which continued several years, along with some to whom he was afterwards to be pastor. It is a great loss for any one to enter the ministry who did not at the time of his conversion or afterwards pass through a general awakening and revival of religion. When God has a great work for any one to do in the church he almost always prepares him for it by an universal outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Reformation did not spring primarily from opposition to the absurdities, follies, falsehoods, cruelties and uncleanness of the church of Rome. Luther was not awakened by the ecclesiastical abominations around him, but by a conviction of his personal unworthiness and sinfulness before God. And when he had found pardon and peace through justification by faith, then he began his mighty assault on Rome which practically had substituted other things for faith in Christ. The Reformation rightly understood was a mighty revival of religion. McMillan, Smith and others of the early Presbyterian ministers of Western Pennsylvania, were fitted for their great work here by a powerful revival in Princeton College, while they were students there. The Home and Foreign Missionary Societies of this country sprang in a great measure from the revivals of 1802. The revival of 1857 prepared the christian people of this country for the religious duties required by the necessities of war. In like manner Thaddeus Dodd was fitted for the work to which he was

eventually called by a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost. This colored, molded and directed his whole after-life.

Previous to making a confession of faith—indeed in boyhood—his love of learning was most noticable, and he even then looked forward with earnest desire to the possibility of obtaining a collegiate education. He read much and studied Mathematics, Latin and probably Greek under the direction of ministers of the gospel, as was done by many others in those days who afterwards became distinguished. In the meantime he taught school to provide the means of present subsistence and also support while attending College—if this great privilege should be granted to him. I may be wrong, but I often think it a great pity that the old custom of students having in view one of the learned professions, engaging in teaching has almost died out. Its advantages in the way of intellectual discipline, in acquiring a knowledge of human nature and in forming the habit of self-reliance cannot be easily over-estimated. But it was not until seven long years after making a confession of faith and in the thirty-first year of his age, that Thaddeus Dodd was permitted to enter Princeton College then under the Presidency of the celebrated Dr. John Witherspoon. He was graduated in the fall of 1773. Among his classmates were Rev. Drs. James Dunlap, John McKnight, John B. Smith, and Rev. Wm. Graham. He was one year and a half in College with Dr. John McMillan, though not in the same class. Soon after graduation he went to Newark, N. J., when he married Miss Phœbe Baldwin and entered upon the study of Theology under the direction of Rev. Dr. McWhorter. One year later he removed to Morristown, N. J., and continued the same line of study under Rev. Dr. Johnes who had been his first instructor in Latin. He was licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of New York, but there is no existing record of the date at which this took place. Through the winter of 1776-7 he suffered from a severe attack of inflammatory rheumatism. But in the month of March, though still feeble, he started upon a journey to the West. After preaching in parts of Virginia and Maryland, he crossed the mountains, visited the settlements on George's Creek, Muddy Creek, and Dunlap's Creek and then came to Ten Mile. He remained here until August, preaching in private houses, in the woods and in Lindley's and Bell's forts. After his return to the East he was ordained by the Presbytery of New York as an evangelist on some day of the week preceding Sabbath, October

19, 1777, as there is a record of baptisms by him on that Sabbath in which it is said that this was the first Sabbath after his ordination.

Shortly after this he left New Jersey with his wife and daughter three years old and a son still younger, accompanied by two brothers and their families. On the 10th of November they arrived at Patterson's Creek, Hampshire County, Va. and after hearing of the formidable attack which had been made by the Indians upon Wheeling and the consequent alarm and confusion prevailing in all the frontier settlements, it was thought best not to proceed any farther at that time. But in a few days he crossed the mountains alone, came to Ten Mile, preached in the forts and baptized the children. In a short time he returned to his family and it is not known that he visited this place again until he brought his family and settled down permanently in the fall of 1779, one hundred years ago. In the interval he had not been idle but busily engaged in preaching the gospel in the adjacent parts of Virginia and Maryland where no churches seem to have been then organized, at least there were no church buildings, as all the services were held at private houses or in the woods. He was entreated to remain and inducements apparently stronger than any held out by Ten Mile were brought to bear upon him, but he had given his pledge to the people here—his heart was here—and hither he came in September, 1779.

That we may have a correct view of the character, life and work of Rev. Thaddeus Dodd, I will endeavor to present him in these relations.

1. He was a man of intelligence, culture and wonderful self-reliance. Though his parents were in very limited circumstances they were well instructed in the Bible and were thoughtful people, and those with whom he had been reared were of similar character. During his many years of preparatory work he had been brought into association with scholars and men conversant with public affairs. He had been a successful teacher and had reached middle life before coming hither. His manners and general bearing were those of a cultivated christian gentleman. He was a lover of music, had studied it as a science, and had an ear quick to detect the least want of harmony or any discord. He delivered sermons and addresses on music; and as a consequence there was better signing at Ten Mile than in any other of the western churches; and I have been told that superior singing has

been a characteristic of this church ever since. Through his influence Dr. Watt's Psalms and Hymns were used exclusively from the very beginning of his labors; and the habit of "reading out the lines" ceased here as early as 1792.

The evidences of his self-reliance are many. His father died leaving his mother with eleven children, so that he inherited little if anything from the parental estate. Nevertheless he persevered, studied, taught school and acquired a literary and theological education when there were no Boards of Education to assist deserving young men having the ministry in view. And when licensed he was not content to remain in the East but looked out upon the opening fields of the West as his appropriate place of labor notwithstanding the deprivations, trials and dangers to which he would be subjected. Nor did he shrink from the undertaking although the support promised was small and somewhat precarious. One man, Mr. Lindley, agreed to furnish the flour and another, Mr. Cook, agreed to supply meat and others furnished different articles but unfrequently he and his people were compelled to flee to one of the forts for protection from Indian ferocity. He gave a remarkable exhibition of self-control one afternoon when on the way to Bell's Fort where he had an appointment to preach in the evening. He observed three Indians evidently bent on mischief seeking to conceal themselves, and judging it best to give no indication of being aware of their presence he passed along without hastening his speed in the least. And it is due to Mrs. Dodd to say that on several occasions of great danger to herself and family she displayed a presence of mind which entitles her to the highest admiration.

2. Mr. Thaddeus Dodd was a scholar and an educator. Dr. John McMillan is admitted to have been at the head of those noble ministers of the gospel who laid the foundations of the church and education in Western Pennsylvania, in enterprise, breadth of view, boldness of design and force of character. These qualities by common consent gave him his high and honored position of leader. But Mr. Dodd was the most learned of the whole number. He had been a student more or less all his life, and his attainments had been brought into practical requisition by teaching others. He was a proficient in the Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages. The Greek and Hebrew texts, each neatly written in its appropriate characters, prefixed to some of his discourses show his familiarity with the original languages of the Scriptures. But

he excelled in the Natural Sciences and Mathematics—of the latter he became an ardent student when only sixteen years of age.

In July 1841, Dr. Carnahan then President of Princeton College wrote thus: "The following anecdote will show the estimation in which your father's mathematical talents and attainments were held by his cotemporaries in College. Before the death of Chief Justice Kirkpatrick, who was a trustee of this College, Albert B. Dodd, our present professor of Mathematics, was nominated in the Board of Trustees for the Mathematical Chair, and the Judge remarked that he was not acquainted with the candidate, and did not know his reputation as a Mathematician; nevertheless he could vote for him most cheerfully: he liked the name: that he never knew a Dodd (and he was acquainted with many of them), that was not born a Mathematician. That there was one Thaddeus Dodd in College, when he was a student, who seemed to understand Mathematics by instinct; that all the students applied to him for aid when anything difficult occurred in their Mathematical studies. He presumed the candidate was of the same stock and he would vote for him." And Albert B. Dodd, afterwards so distinguished was really a grandson of a brother of Thaddeus Dodd.

Like other ministers of that day he saw the need of more ministers and that to be effective they must be taken from and reared among the people for whom they are to labor. He felt the importance of a better common school education, and in order to promote it he visited the schools and counseled and encouraged instructors. But for the special purpose of educating young men for the ministry Mr. Dodd erected a building a short distance from his own dwelling in which he opened a classical and mathematical school in the spring of 1782, of the five students present at the opening four are certainly known to have been then looking to the ministry of the gospel as their life work. This school was successfully conducted for three years and a half. And he had nearly all the intervening time several students under him whose studies he directed. In the beginning of 1789, Mr. Dodd accepted the appointment of principal to the Academy opened in the town of Washington on the 1st of April of that year, with the understanding that he was to hold the office only for one year, as he did not wish to relinquish the pastorate at Ten Mile, at the expiration of the year he was constrained to continue three months longer. Sometime during the following winter the Court

House, one of whose rooms had been occupied by the Academy was burned and no other suitable building could be obtained. The proprietor of the town when asked to donate a lot on which to erect an Academy building declined. Had it not been for the mistaken parsimony of this man and the want of sufficient enterprise in others there never would have been two rival Colleges in this county only seven miles apart.

3. But I wish to speak particularly of Mr. Dodd as a pastor and a preacher. As a christian his reputation was unsullied. As a pastor he was watchful of the flock: he sympathized with his people: he fed them with knowledge: and he won the affection and respect of the young by a deep and active interest in all that pertained to their well-being. Owing to the weakness of his lungs his voice was not strong but his enunciation was remarkably distinct and his emphasis marked by correctness so that he could be heard by large audiences. His sermons were delivered with much tenderness of feeling, and generally from notes carefully prepared, for they were thoroughly studied, and the power of concentrating his thoughts was a marked characteristic.

The key to the preaching and ministerial character of Mr. Dodd may be found in the subject of the sermon delivered at Pigeon Creek, Sept. 19, 1781, at the organization of the Presbytery of Redstone according to the appointment of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, in Philadelphia, May 16, 1781. Three ministers were present, John McMillan, James Power and Thaddeus Dodd and three elders. The sermon was preached by Mr. Dodd. Judging from the subjects of sermons it is our misfortune to be compelled to hear now-a-days, at the opening of our Ecclesiastical Courts including the General Assembly, we would naturally suppose that he preached on the true theory of the church: the grandeur of its work: the difficulties in the way of its progress: the peculiarities of its present condition: its final triumph. But nothing of this kind was attempted by Mr. Dodd. His text was, Job 42: 5, 6, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Here was a grand, personal, searching revival sermon, laying him who delivered it and those who heard it low, that they might properly feel their need of Christ and of the power of the Holy Spirit. Any other kind of a sermon at that time would have been considered by those ministers a grand impertinence. This sermon was the key-note

not only of the ministry of Mr. Dodd but also of that of his co-laborers.

It too often happens now that if a youthful minister is sent out into one of the new States or Territories it is soon reported to the newspapers that he has organized a church, and quickly following comes an appeal for money to aid in building a house of worship, which upon examination we find is to be Gothic in style, with stained glass windows, oiled pews, carpeted aisles, the latest form of book racks, walnut pulpit, cabinet organ, heater in the cellar and bell on top of the roof. But when we ask about the church membership, it is not unusual to find that it consists of two or three very good women and one man who is probably a very wind-broken, ring-boned, spavined, knock-kneed and generally dilapidated kind of a christian, who for the lack of any better material has been made an elder!

This was not the method adopted by Mr. Dodd, who was the second Presbyterian minister settled west of the Allegheny mountains. He laid the foundations deeply and broadly. Though his labors had been accompanied with indications of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit from the beginning, it was not until two years after his permanent settlement here, on the 15th of August, 1781, that a church was organized; and it was not until nearly two years later, the third Sabbath of May, 1783, that the Lord's Supper was administered for the first time. That service was held in a barn, and Dr. McMillan "assisted." It was a time of the power of the right hand of the most High. While the people had been shut up in a fort because of the attacks of the Indians, and afterwards God had poured out his Holy Spirit, and a glorious revival had been in progress for months. And now at the first administration of the Lord's Supper forty-five made a confession of faith. But a house of worship was not erected until 1785. From that first communion the heart of the pastor was made glad by continued accessions to his church by arrivals from New Jersey and upon confession of faith. In the meantime several seasons of special refreshing had been experienced. In the summer of 1792—there were no summer vacations then in the churches—an unusual manifestation of the divine presence was felt by the people. There was great earnestness in prayer. The attendance upon preaching and the meetings for prayer greatly increased. This encouraging state of things continued through the winter, and Mr. Dodd labored most zealously, but

at the same time his system was rapidly yielding to the power of pulmonary consumption which had been long preying upon him, and on the 20th of May, 1793 he died triumphing in faith. When the warrior falls on the field, he wishes to die in the hour of victory. When General Wolf lay mortally wounded on the plains of Abraham, before Quebec, he was told that the French were retreating: "Then," said he, "I die content." Mr. Dodd died just at the time of a great victory in the name of the Lord Jesus. For as the fruits of the revival which had been in progress for some time, more than fifty were admitted to the communion of the church a short time after his decease. All felt that a prince and a great man in Israel had fallen. His funeral sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. McMillan on the 21st of May, 1793, from Revelations 14; 13, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors: and their works do follow them."

In his family relations Mr. Dodd was most happy. His wife was worthy of him, and their children rose up and called them blessed. They had two sons and three daughters; both of the sons were physicians, and the elder of them was also a minister of the Gospel. This son is said to have possessed a clear and strong mind, enriched by manly culture and varied learning; remarkable gentleness and amiability of temper; great practical wisdom; a tranquil and steady piety; high devotion and loyalty as a friend; in short, a combination of qualities, a character complete, harmonious and symmetrical in an unusual degree. He was the second successor of his honored father, and was installed as pastor of the Ten Mile congregations, in Mr. Joseph Rigg's Sugar Camp, "with", as Dr. Wines declares, "the open canopy of heaven for a temple, the snow for a carpet, and the wind whistling through the leafless branches of the trees as an accompaniment to the solemn music, as it pealed forth from a choir of hundreds of voices." All the children of Mr. Thaddeus Dodd are dead, but there are known to be living, of the second generation, 10; of the third, 47; of the fourth, 63; of the fifth 1. There have been among them one minister of the Gospel, two elders and two deacons in the Presbyterian Church, six physicians and one lawyer. To-day, thirty-five of the descendents of Mr. Dodd are members of the church of Lower Ten Mile, of whom one is a candidate for the ministry. Among all these descendents there has never been a

habitual drunkard and all of them who have come to the years of accountability, with the exception of probably five or six, have made a confession of faith in Christ. Thus is the family of Mr. Dodd an overwhelming refutation of the base slander often heaped upon the families of ministers of the Gospel, that they are ungodly.

I said that the Rev. Thaddeus Dodd died May 20th, 1793, but he lives and will live forever. He lives in the family he reared: he lives in the churches he founded: he lives in the words of the glorious Gospel which he preached, the power of which will be felt through all time and throughout all eternity.