



The first page of Timothy Alden's *Catalogus Bibliothecae Collegii Alleghaniensis*, 1823 (from the archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)

Icons of Learning: William Bentley's Library and Allegheny College

by Bruce M. Stephens

IN 1823, a lengthy pamphlet entitled *Catalogus Bibliothecae Collegii Alleghaniensis*, compiled by the Reverend Timothy Alden, issued from the press of Thomas Atkinson of Meadville, Pennsylvania. The Reverend Mr. Alden, first president of Allegheny College in Meadville, proclaimed boldly in the same year that his institution's library was "the first, except one, as to the excellence of the selection and in point of value, belonging to any collegiate institution in the United States."¹ That Alden's claim was not mere institutional one-upmanship has been substantiated by a distinguished modern bibliographer who notes that "in addition to Harvard, it is probably also correct to say that among non-teaching institutions only the Library Company of Philadelphia and Jefferson's collection at the Library of Congress were better."² This is rather remarkable company for a small, struggling liberal arts college, and the question is thus: how did one of the most important library collections in America, and such a sizeable cultural inheritance of New England, come into the possession of a frontier outpost of learning early in the nineteenth century?

The donation of his library by the Reverend William Bentley (1759-1819) to Allegheny College is something more than a case of nineteenth-century philanthropy. It is an indication of the cultural hopes and intellectual aspirations of this Unitarian clergyman and his vision of the new nation. Bentley's library represented to him the

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1 Timothy Alden, "Letter to the Germans of Pennsylvania" (Meadville, Pa., 1823), in the Rare Book Room of the Lawrence Lee Pelletier Library, Allegheny College, Meadville, Pa. The Rare Book Room also contains a copy of Timothy Alden's *Catalogus Bibliothecae Collegii Allegheniensis* (Meadville, Pa., 1823), 139 pp.

2 Edwin Wolf II, "Some Books of Early New England Provenance in the 1823 Library of Allegheny College," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 73 (Apr.-Oct. 1963): 13.

preservation of the past, of the classical and Christian heritages upon which the foundations of the new nation would be built; the literary traditions which his books represented would serve as the refiners of taste, sentiment, and manners for a rising generation. As a Harvard-educated clergyman, Bentley quite naturally placed himself in the vanguard of those responsible for setting the moral tone that would shape America's cultural destiny. He bemoaned the quality of books found in the library of the college in Cambridge and in the book stores in Boston, and he made out lengthy book orders which he sent with the seafaring captains of his Salem congregation on their voyages, in the hope that they would bring back intellectual treasures from Europe. He filled his bookshelves with works in Hebrew and Greek, by the church fathers, on church history, Biblical criticism, medieval philosophy, and Protestant theology.

It was these more "useful" books which Bentley bequeathed to the struggling college in Meadville, as a reflection of his own high estimate of the power of human rationality and of books as a way of disseminating classical and Christian values, in this case not to the sons of Boston Brahmins but to the sons of rustic farmers and small-town merchants. These too could be made into "gentlemen" through the development of moral, rational, and aesthetic faculties. The development of character was of paramount importance, and this was to be acquired through contact with those primary agents of religion and morality — books. And Bentley collected books by the hundreds with a passion befitting the bibliophile and with a conviction that his library would be a reflection of his own piety, intellect, and religious toleration. The removal of this valuable repository from New England soil involved a sequence of events and decisions which, beyond Bentley's pique with Harvard College, reflected his own best hopes for American society.

II

Timothy Alden (1771-1839) laid claim both to a distinguished New England family name — as a direct descendant of John and Priscilla Alden — and to a distinguished New England educational tradition as one of the sons of Harvard, class of 1794, whose commencement this twenty-three-year-old scholar addressed in Syriac. Alden was subsequently ordained as a Congregationalist minister and assumed an associate pastorate in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He was in line for the position in Oriental languages at Harvard, but was undone by academic politics and had to content himself vocationally first as

librarian to the Massachusetts Historical Society and then as principal of a boarding school in Newark, New Jersey. Then, in 1815, at the urging of his cousin, Major Roger Alden, who was serving as a land agent for the Holland Land Company in northwestern Pennsylvania, Alden moved with his wife and family to the small village of Meadville.

Alden was much impressed with the opportunities of the West, particularly with the prospects of establishing an institution of higher learning through which the resources of classical culture and Christianity would be made available to the sons of pioneers. A timely inheritance freed him from the burden and necessity of a full-time pastorate so that his energies could be devoted to the pursuit of his vision of a seminary of learning west of the Alleghenies. The young minister promptly entered negotiations with select townspeople who eagerly lent support to his efforts, convinced that

the example of our venerable ancestors, who early made provision for the liberal and pious education of their sons; the nature of our government, the welfare of which depends, in no small degree, under Almighty God, on the prevalence of knowledge, virtue, and religion, the eventful period in which we live, plainly indicating that the time is nigh at hand, when there will be an unprecedented call for the labours of the heralds of the gospel, afford additional arguments on the expediency of our present undertaking.³

At the same meeting during which the above statement was drawn up, Timothy Alden was designated as President and Professor of Oriental Languages and Ecclesiastical History in the budding institution of higher learning, and in the style of college presidents from that day to this, was promptly sent on a fund-raising campaign to the eastern seaboard.

Alden returned from his travels to report a collection of \$461 in funds and books valued at \$1,642, with a donors list headed by John Adams and including the names of other prominent New England families. Perhaps the most timely and finally fruitful of Alden's visits was to the Reverend William Bentley, pastor of the East Church in Salem, Massachusetts. Bentley (1759-1819), though several years Alden's senior, knew the aspiring young college president and had invited him as an occasional guest to the house in Salem where he roomed and boarded. Bentley was present at Alden's graduation from

³ From *The Crawford Weekly Messenger* (June 1815). Quoted in Ernest Ashton Smith, *Allegheny — A Century of Education* (Meadville, Pa., 1916), 14-15. Biographical information on Timothy Alden may be found in this same source, especially Chapters I and II, and in *The Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. I, 149-50.

Harvard, followed with some displeasure the manner of Alden's dismissal as associate pastor of the Portsmouth congregation, and answered a request for Alden to serve as a supply preacher. A January 1814 entry in his famous *Diary* notes a visit with "Mr. Alden of New York, formerly of Portsmouth, N.H., and of Marblehead. He has with him the plan of a Biographical work, has lately finished the Catalogue of the N.York Historical Society into which I have been introduced, and has a project of a settlement at a place to be called Aldenburg, upon the Alleghaney, 90 miles from Pittsburg and about 30 from Presque Isle, Erie. He had all the locations and plans with him."⁴

There were a number of things which made Bentley and Alden kindred spirits. Both were graduates of Harvard, each was a specialist in language (it was reported that Bentley knew twenty different languages), both were ardent naturalists, each participated actively in Freemasonry, each was an avid collector of books, both were instrumental in the affairs of the American Antiquarian Society, and both were collectors of information and trivia — Bentley through his *Diary* and Alden through his five-volume *Collection of American Epitaths and Inscriptions* (1814). The theology of the two men was a point of contrast — Bentley was a liberal Unitarian and Alden remained a more orthodox Congregationalist. But theology was not a matter either man took with considerable seriousness, and their differences were certainly not significant enough to stand in the way of a friendship and a mutual respect that was to result in a most remarkable legacy for Timothy Alden's college.

As his *Diary* readily attests, Bentley was an astute observer of virtually every aspect of the natural, the human, and the divine drama. Few developments in the areas of botany, zoology, geography, politics, economics, history, theology, or the affairs of Harvard College passed his notice. He made the annual trip to Cambridge for the college's commencement exercises, visits to book stores and chats with the owners, reunions with old friends (among whom was Judge Winthrop, whose library he admired greatly). A faithful alumnus of Harvard, Bentley was not uncritical of the college's shortcomings; for example, while attending Alden's graduation in 1794, he grumbled that "the library has had few late editions."⁵ Indeed, with the death of President Willard in 1804, the college did enter a period of decline, and we

⁴ William Bentley, *The Diary of William Bentley, D.D.* (Salem, Mass., 1914), vol. IV, 232. There are passing references to Alden throughout the *Diary*.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. II, 98.

have already noted the academic machinations in which Alden was caught in his bid for the professorship of Oriental languages, events which displeased Bentley. By 1807, Bentley's patience with his *alma mater* was so tried that he would write, "the president lately elected is of narrow education. The professor of Divinity has no elocution, the professor of Oriental languages has not Oriental literature. The Tutors are youths; the college is in deep distress."⁶

Bentley's political views further served to distance him from his *alma mater*, and his strong support of Thomas Jefferson contrasted sharply with the prevailing Federalist views of Harvard's board of overseers. Finally, Bentley's relations with Harvard were further strained by the college's tardiness in awarding him the coveted Doctor of Divinity degree. While the crimson D.D. was finally awarded him in September of 1819 (Bentley died in December of the same year), he never really forgave Harvard for its late recognition of his career. Prior to the Harvard award, an exchange of correspondence with Timothy Alden had already determined the content of Bentley's will and the future fate of his valuable library.

Timothy Alden wrote to Bentley in April of 1819, inviting him to become a trustee of Allegheny College, and boasting of its students that "a late exhibition of the specimens of elocution would have been highly applauded even at Harvard College."⁷ Alden took the occasion to express further the hope that the Salem clergyman would show "a willingness to encourage our hearts and strengthen our hands by a bestowment from the riches of your extensive and invaluable library. I hope that you will become the executor of your own will so far as to remember an institution which will gratefully record in its pages every generous deed for the literary benefit of present and future generations here to be trained to knowledge, piety and virtue."⁸

Alden's letter struck a responsive chord, and Bentley acknowledged the following month "the high honor done in recording my name among the friends of your rising institution." He also recorded his strong attachment to New England figures and institutions, while at the same time acknowledging the contributions of the citizens of Pennsylvania to the young republic. "We love to keep our first affinities and friendships as the basis of our hopes, in whatever forms our names or talents may be employed. When you write with enthusiasm

⁶ Ibid., vol. III, 289.

⁷ Letter of Timothy Alden to William Bentley, Apr. 8, 1819, at the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

⁸ Ibid.

for your college, it pleases me to find that you haven't forgotten Cambridge. It is yet the best thing in our country. In no way should Pennsylvania suffer itself to be excelled. We began before it in Massachusetts, but were taught civil liberties from it. We were taught justice to the Indians by it, and we never knew religious liberty until it instructed us to get it."⁹ Perhaps few New Englanders have ever spoken more kindly or generously of Pennsylvanians! But then came the all-important paragraph of Bentley's letter:

In regard to books, which we consider as our tools, we are more willing to bequeath them than to miss or want them. Mr. Jefferson, who repeatedly has assisted a learned friend through me, in that last notice of his inability to serve, observes that he had given up his library, and that service was not as formerly in his power. I have made a record of my good intentions, but I shall not decline a visit from you and shall reward it with such things as you may point out as immediately useful to you.¹⁰

Alden was ecstatic and responded to Bentley in a letter of August 1819, reporting his hopes for the college, listing specific book needs, and gently massaging Bentley's ego with the observation that from the vantage point of his frontier outpost it was clear that "light, taste and knowledge have ever been travelling from the East." He further seized the occasion to remind Bentley that in the matter of bestowing honorary degrees, two or three distinguished sons of Harvard had been neglected. Of course Alden had his own reasons for bitterness toward his *alma mater*, noting that regarding Allegheny College, "Harvard is determined not to acknowledge in her Catalogue anything from us — not even to acknowledge that we have an existence as a sister institution," all of which left Alden "exceedingly hurt." "However, we can exist without them," and Alden was willing to let the whole matter "be thrown into Mather's heap of unaccountables."¹¹

Bentley had in fact made "a record of my good intentions" in his will, dated May 8, 1819: "I make my last will and I give my nephew William Bentley Fowle, one thousand dollars. I give all my German books, New England printed books, manuscripts and cabinet, with my paintings and engravings, to the American Antiquarian Society. I give all my classical and theological books, dictionaries, lexicons and Bibles to the College at Meadville, Pennsylvania."¹² Alden was in-

⁹ Letter of William Bentley to Timothy Alden, May 28, 1819, in Smith, *Allegheny*, 32.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Letter of Timothy Alden to William Bentley, Aug. 26, 1819, at the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

¹² Will of the Rev. William Bentley, D.D., at the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

formed in a letter of January 6, 1820, from William Bentley Fowle, of the contents of his uncle's will and that "a considerable part of his library will become the property of the Institution under your care."¹³

Thus these icons of learning, nearly seven hundred volumes from the Bentley library, were carefully crated and carted across the Alleghenies to Meadville, somewhat to the chagrin of authorities at Harvard, the residents of Salem, and the members of the American Antiquarian Society, all of whom had vested interests in keeping the entirety of the Bentley collection in New England. But Bentley's example actually served to start an exodus of books from Massachusetts to Meadville. Isaiah Thomas, the famous printer of Worcester, Massachusetts, was so inspired by Bentley's donation that he bequeathed over four hundred volumes to the Allegheny library. He also took some delight in informing Alden that, "I have heard, viz., that the good people of Salem and the government of a neighboring university and also some other literary institutions, are not pleased that the Dr. did not remember them in his will. . . ." ¹⁴ But the ripple effect of the Bentley donation was not yet finished, for Judge James Winthrop of Cambridge (son of John Winthrop, the late professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at Harvard, whose library Bentley so admired) was about to deliver three tons of books for Allegheny, over 3,100 volumes of New England's finest. Thus, in all, over 4,200 volumes made their way across the mountains to Meadville to take up positions in the newly completed Bentley Hall, a handsome model of Federalist architecture that still acknowledges the generosity of the college's first major benefactor.

III

Timothy Alden had achieved a major coup in dislodging so many valuable books from New England soil.¹⁵ His ties of friendship with

13 Letter of William Bentley Fowle to Timothy Alden, Jan. 6, 1820, at the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

14 Letter of Isaiah Thomas to Timothy Alden, Feb. 3, 1820, in the Rare Book Room of the Lawrence Lee Pelletier Library, Allegheny College, Meadville, Pa.

15 Among those receiving a copy of Alden's 1823 *Catalogus* was Thomas Jefferson, who wrote from Monticello to Timothy Alden that, "I had not expected there was such a private collection in the U.S. We are just commencing the establishment of a university in Virginia but cannot flatter ourselves with the hope of such donations as have been bestowed upon you." Letter of Thomas Jefferson to Timothy Alden, Feb. 14, 1820, in the Rare Book Room of the Lawrence Lee Pelletier Library, Allegheny College, Meadville, Pa.

William Bentley account, at least in part, for his success. We have noted also Bentley's chagrin with Harvard and his dissatisfaction with the affairs of the school, despite his conviction that it was "yet the best thing in our country." There may have been, however, other factors contributing to Bentley's decision to will a sizeable portion of his library to a struggling institution of higher learning on the western foothills of the Alleghenies.

Bentley's place in American letters has been justifiably established through his *Diary*, an invaluable source of information and insight into the world of a bustling New England seaport town in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The *Diary* abounds with information on births, deaths, local gossip, family problems, shipping news, weather reports, real estate transactions, civic improvements, ecclesiastical rivalries, town visitors, militia musters, and so on indefinitely. Bentley, a confirmed bachelor, turned to his diary and made a nightly entry, recording his candid impressions of people, places, and events.

It must be remembered, however, that first and foremost, Bentley was the pastor of a local congregation, and that fifty-two Sundays a year for thirty-six years, he climbed into the pulpit of East Church and held forth. If Bentley's reputation had been staked upon the sermons he delivered, he would have long since been forgotten. He was, from all evidence, a terrible preacher. His disjointed, rambling sermons resemble his famous "cabinet" in which he collected all the trinkets and paraphernalia brought to him from around the world by his seafaring constituents. One never knew what might come out of the cabinet on its opening; his sermons were similarly jumbled. They reflect a mind filled with interesting information, but possessing little sense of how to organize it in a coherent or meaningful way.¹⁶

There are, however, certain recurring themes in Bentley's sermons (which, unlike the *Diary*, never found their way into print) that give insight into the man and his motivation to donate his books to Allegheny College. One such theme is his unquestioning faith in the value and role of education.¹⁷ He evidently felt that salvation is as readily

16 Bentley had instructed his nephew to destroy all of his personal handwritten manuscripts upon his death. Fortunately these instructions were not carried out, and there are in addition to the published *Diary*, four volumes of sermon notes at the American Antiquarian Society and one sermon notebook, plus twenty-eight complete sermon manuscripts in Bentley's handwriting at the Essex Institute in Salem, Mass.

17 See for example, "The Papers of William Bentley," vol. 32, Sermon No. 1349, at the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

available through the academy as it is through the church. Bentley was active in the affairs of the schools in Salem (where he founded a singing school for young girls), watched with intense interest the development of curriculum and faculty at Harvard, and, in general, remained abreast of developments in higher education with a conviction that the future course of both the individual and society depended upon the success or failure of the educational enterprise. Although Bentley's *Diary* and sermons do not reflect a keen interest in westward expansion (in many ways he remained a very parochial figure, turning down both Jefferson's invitation to become president of his new university in Virginia and an invitation of the United States Congress to become its chaplain), nevertheless Bentley was moved by Alden's plea for the west and was sensitive to the role education would play in the development of the American character on the frontier.

Bentley's unflagging confidence in the saving powers of education is in turn related to a second recurring theme in his sermons — his relentless emphasis upon the formation of character.¹⁸ Although his personal copy of Aristotle's *Ethics* is devoid of marginal notes or underlinings (Bentley seems to have had an aversion to marking his books in any way), and the copy is not well worn, somewhere along the way Bentley absorbed as much Aristotle as he did of the New Testament. As he gazed out upon his congregation Sunday after Sunday, and as he watched with increasing unease the lavish houses his parishioners were building in and around Salem, the investments both foreign and domestic that they were making, the profits that they were turning, and the squabbles they were having, he became increasingly absorbed with the question of the formation of character and the nature of virtue. To be sure, there may be a tinge of envy in those *Diary* entries recording visits to homes richly furnished with the latest imports, when Bentley's own salary was meager at best and even, at times, unpaid in full. But Bentley was genuinely concerned about the nature of the emerging American character. What were these people becoming in the new nation? — just what manner of character was emerging? Bentley did not always like what he saw, and was forthright in his criticism of individuals and groups both through his sermons in public and his diary in private. Could it be that in their anxious quest for mammon these New Englanders were forsaking the resources of their classical and Christian heritage in favor of a mess of pottage? Bentley

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Sermon No. 1321. There are notes for nearly 3,000 of Bentley's sermons.

believed that the donation of his library, especially of its classical and theological works, to a school closer to the context of the frontier, in which the future of the American character would be worked out, would be his contribution to solving the problem of the emerging national character. He looked to a fellow New Englander, Timothy Alden, and to his college as the person and institution through which both individual and public happiness might best be promoted through the development of character formed by the influences of the classical heritage and the Christian tradition.

Finally, Bentley looked upon religion primarily as a restraining influence in society, tempering and disciplining affections and passions that otherwise would run unchecked.¹⁹ There is an inevitable tension between religion and society, as the former seeks through institutions and instruction to bring sobriety and stability to the latter. Religion and education together serve as rational, calming, and stabilizing forces that bring a sense of harmony and well-being to both the individual and society. Together, religion and education would tame the unchecked forces of society, a task challenging enough in Salem, where all the accoutrements of civilization and Christianity were at hand, but an almost insuperable task on the frontier, where both civilization and Christianity seemed to be in short supply. From the vantage of his Salem study, which Bentley had no interest in leaving, he may well have concluded that the removal of his valuable classical and theological books to Allegheny was the most viable and permanent contribution he could make to insuring the stability of society, promoting the continuity of civilization and Christianity, and providing a helping hand to the development of the American character.

IV

If one of the dozen or so young scholars under Alden's tutelage wandered into the president's office at Allegheny desiring to borrow a book from the Bentley collection, what were some of the choices? We can make here only a few random observations about the collection, bearing in mind that the portion of Bentley's library at Allegheny contained no works printed in New England and therefore virtually no titles by American authors. The majority of the theological works were by English divines of the standing order as well as by nonconformists, including collections of sermons, ecclesiastical histories,

19 Many of Bentley's sermon notes and sermon manuscripts reflect this interest and concern on his part.

and general theological treatises. Among the sermon collections were the ten volumes of *Sermons* (London, 1730) by Samuel Clarke (1675-1729), the great English rationalist whose Aryan tendencies and Unitarian preferences were well known. There were two volumes of *Sermons on Several Subjects* (London, 1726) by Francis Atterbury (1662-1732), whose fame as a preacher elevated him to the position of chaplain to King William and Queen Mary. A volume of sermons by Joseph Butler (1692-1752), the Bishop of Durham and author of the famous *Analogy*, was one of several works representative of natural religion. Nine volumes of the *Sermons* (Paris, 1772) by the French divine Jacques Bousset, along with several other works by this scholar, occupied considerable space in the collection. *Sermons on Sundry Subjects* (London, 1732) by the eloquent preacher, dissenter, rationalist, and anti-Trinitarian James Foster (1697-1753), as well as a volume of *Sermons on Public Occasions* (London, 1763) by Thomas Herring, the Archbishop of Canterbury, were included. Two volumes of *Sermons* by the prolific writer and controversialist Samuel Horsley (1733-1806) could be found along with his *Tracts in Controversy with Joseph Priestley Relative to the Divinity of Christ* (Gloucester, 1789). The nonconformist Unitarian minister and Aryan Richard Price (1723-1791) was represented in his *Sermons on the Christian Doctrines . . .* (London, 1787). There were four volumes of *Several Discourses Preached at the Temple Church* (Edinburgh, 1770) by Thomas Sherlock (1678-1761), and the Boyle lectures of 1708 by the naturalist and mathematician William Whitson were collected as *Eight Sermons*.

Works in ecclesiastical history included four volumes by George Bull (1634-1710) on *Important Points of Primitive Christianity* (London, 1714); three volumes by Jeremiah Jones on *The New and Full Method of Settling the Canonical Scripture of the New Testament* (London, 1776); eleven volumes by the nonconformist divine, patristic scholar, and apologist Nathaniel Lardner (1684-1768) on *Works Containing the Credibility of the Gospel History* (London, 1788). Thomas Newton's (1704-1782) popular *Dissertation of the Prophecies* (New York, 1794), along with Zachary Pearce's *Commentary with Notes on the Evangelists* (London, 1777) were representative Biblical commentaries.

Finally, general theological works included Samuel Clarke's *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (London, 1719), and William Dedham's (1657-1735) *Phisico-theology, or a Demonstration of the Attributes of God from His Works of Creation* (Glasgow, 1745); James Gifford (1740-1813), a gifted Unitarian writer, was represented by his

Elucidation of the Unity of God Deduced from Scripture and Reason (London, 1783). Other general theological works included James Oswald's *Appeal to Common Sense in Behalf of Religion* (Edinburgh, 1768) and William Paley's much read and used *Natural Theology* (Philadelphia, 1802). There were several works by Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), one of Bentley's favorite authors, including his four-volume *History of Early Opinions Concerning Jesus Christ* and his four volumes of *Notes on all the Books of Scripture for the Use of the Pulpit and Private Families* (Northumberland, 1803); also included was a collection of Unitarian pamphlets by Priestley and others. William Warburton's *Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion Opened and Explained* (London, 1753) and Daniel Waterland's *On the Divinity of Christ* (Cambridge, 1720) complete our random survey of representative items included in the Bentley collection. It was an eclectic assemblage of books, representing the spirit of the collector, a man open to a diversity of views and receptive to a variety of opinions.

V

This rather selective list of books from the Bentley collection indicates that generally these were not works for popular consumption or theological novices; they were not things that preachers would turn to first in the preparation of sermons, or that students in rhetoric classes would find immediately useful. How, then, were the books used? Who actually consulted them and for what purpose? They were probably not read by Timothy Alden, who was too busy raising money and holding his floundering college together. The one other professor, who was also pastor of the local Presbyterian church, may have made occasional use of the collection, but for the most part his time was consumed in the tasks of the parish round. Some of the handful of students who attended the college may have received occasional permission to consult one of the works, but as we have seen, by and large the library did not contain basic undergraduate texts. Among the townspeople there were persons noted for their interest in liberal religion, and the collection certainly contained titles of interest to them.

In the end, did it really matter if *anyone* read these often ponderous volumes of theology, church history, and Biblical commentary? The value of the books rested less in their content than in their mere presence as icons of learning — symbols of higher education and classical culture lending credibility and prestige to the fledgling college

unavailable through any other means. The power of education and religion was embodied in these tomes, and the forces of reason, order, and civility, so dear to the heart of William Bentley, would, like the powers attached to the ark of the covenant of old, accompany these volumes wherever they went.

There is a tinge of pathos to the fact that Timothy Alden was forced by lack of funds to turn the key on Bentley Hall in 1831 and to live out his latter days in even further obscurity, first as the founder of a girls' school in Cincinnati, and finally as the pastor of a small Congregational church in Sharpsville, Pennsylvania. Ironically, the college then fell into the hands of Methodists who, at least for William Bentley, represented those very things he spent his life struggling against, i.e., unreason, revivalism, emotionalism, and disorder. It was through his legacy of a generous donation of books, that the spirit of William Bentley would now have to be felt in the ongoing struggle to civilize and Christianize the young republic. ■

100 DOLLARS REWARD.

Broke from the custody of the subscriber, last night, at the Inn of Mr. Brubaker, near Brownsville, a mulatto man named **PATRICK**, aged between 45 & 50 years; he has lost all his upper fore teeth; has a heavy black coat of hair, and a pair of moderate sized whiskers; his height is not precisely known, but suppose it to be about 5 feet 8 inches.---He had on when he went away a drab coat and blue cassinet pantaloons, considerably worn, and other articles of clothing, which he may change. A few days since, the middle joint of the middle finger of the right hand was dislocated, and has, at this time, a bandage around it---he wears a white mitten, and frequently carries his hand in a sling. **PATRICK** is passionately fond of ardent spirits, and tobacco; and never fails to drink to intoxication whenever he has the opportunity. He is by trade a first rate Cooper, and a tolerable Shoemaker. I will give the above reward for his apprehension and confinement in goal, so that I shall be able to get him.

J. M. SAUNDERS.

March 12th, 1829.

*Reward notice for an escaped slave, Western Pennsylvania, 1829
(from the archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania)*