

ROSZEL, STEPHEN G. (1770-1841).
Stephen G. Roszel letter, 1804.

Emory University
Pitts Theology Library
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Roszel, Stephen G. (1770-1841).
Title: Stephen G. Roszel letter, 1804.
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 411
Extent: .1 cubic feet (1 box)
Abstract: The collection contains one handwritten letter by Stephen G. Roszel to Leonard Cassell on the topic of Methodist church government.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted access.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

Source

Removed from Robert Paine papers (MSS 404).

Custodial History

This single letter was donated along with a larger collection of letters written to Bishop Robert Paine, 1799-1817 (MSS 404). It is uncertain whether the letter was collected by Paine himself, or added to Paine's letters at a later date.

Processing

Processed by Brandon Wason, April 2016.

Collection Description

Biographical Note

Stephen George Roszel was born in Loudoun County, Virginia on April 8, 1770. His mother, Sarah Roszel, had been the class leader of the first Methodist society in Loudoun County. Stephen entered the Methodist ministry in 1789 under the direction of Bishop Francis Asbury. He was initially a traveling preacher, but in 1794 he applied for a local position so that he could support his siblings. Then, in 1807 he became an itinerant minister stationed initially in the Baltimore Circuit and later in Baltimore City. He continued to function in that role until his death. Roszel died at Leesberg on May 14, 1841. His activities were met with positive results, participating in a number of revivals. He was also very comfortable at the pulpit, despite not being a very eloquent speaker. Nathan Bangs, the Methodist theologian and historian, remembered Roszel thusly: "He had a ready command of thought and language, and as a debater had very few superiors. The qualities of his mind and heart were strong and practical, rather than speculative, beautiful or graceful. He never quailed before an opponent, and was never prevented by consideration of delicacy from saying any thing that would tend to his discomfiture." Roszel also preached and wrote against the topic of abolitionism in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Biographical Source: William Sprague. *Annals of the American Methodist Pulpit*. Vol 7. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1861. Pages 179-81.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains one letter, written by Stephen G. Roszel (from Baltimore) to Leonard Cassell (in Anapolis), dated December 21, 1804. The letter is written on a large folio sheet of paper (49.5cm x 41.5cm), folded in half to make four pages. One page contains the address and postal information, while the remaining three pages are full of writing. The address to Cassell was delivered in the care of George Wells. Cassell (also spelled Cassel) was a young and zealous Methodist preacher in the Baltimore Annual Conference who died at 24 years of age in 1809 due to yellow fever. George Wells is potentially the same individual who helped to establish a Methodist society in Baltimore shortly after Francis Asbury preached at Fells Point in 1772.

The complete circumstances of the letter are unknown, although Roszel mentions previous correspondence with Cassell and makes mention of Cassell's views on the topic of the bishopric. In this letter Roszel acknowledges that the nascent Methodist Episcopal Church will need to make adjustments in terms of its government, yet he maintains that such adjustments be kept to a minimum. He suggests that revolution of church government is a slippery slope and highlights the fractured Methodist churches in Great Britain and Ireland as a negative example. Roszel expresses the opinion that there should be some flexibility in church government and that, for example, policies that work for "civilized nations" would not necessarily work well for "barbarous nations." He also upholds the office of the modern bishop and draws on scriptural proof to make his point that bishops, elders, and presbyters are not one in the same office, an opinion apparently entertained by Cassell. Countering Cassell's now-lost plans for the church, Roszel offers his own plans for the future of the Methodist Episcopal Church including his stances on the appointments of a new bishop, delegates, and presiding elders.

Arrangement Note

Collection consists of only one letter.

Container List

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	Stephen G. Roszel letter to Leonard Cassell, 1804 December 21.
