

**MEMOIR OF THE REV. JOSEPH STIBBS  
CHRISTMAS; WITH FAREWELL LETTER  
TO THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN  
SOCIETY OF MONTREAL, AND LETTER  
FROM THE REV. HENRY WILKES**

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Memoir of the Rev. Joseph Stibbs Christmas; With Farewell Letter to the American Presbyterian Society of Montreal, and Letter from the Rev. Henry Wilkes by E. Lord

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**E. LORD**

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# MEMOIR

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REV. JOSEPH STIBBS CHRISTMAS.

By E. LORD.

WITH

FAREWELL LETTER TO THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN SOCIETY  
OF MONTREAL.

AND

LETTER FROM THE REV. HENRY WILKES, D.D.

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## MEMOIR.

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THE subject of the following memorial, JOSEPH STIBBS CHRISTMAS, was born April 10th, 1803, in Georgetown, Beaver county, Pennsylvania. His parents had thirteen children, of whom he was the eighth. His father was descended from an ancient family of the north of England. Having passed the early part of his life in London, he removed to this country and settled in Pennsylvania, in 1784. His maternal grandfather, Joseph Stibbs, likewise from London, came to this country and settled in the then colony of Virginia, prior to the revolution.

From his earliest years the extraordinary versability and ardor of his mind were displayed both in his studies and in his more active employments. He discovered a restless spirit of inquiry into every subject to which his attention was directed, and at the same time a taste for rural scenery, an inventive and imitative turn, and a remarkable fondness for drawing and painting. A communication from one of his relatives states that before he was eight years old he had a room appropriated to himself, where he practised drawing maps and painting, and that he became so devoted to the use of his pencil as to subject himself to severe privations, in order to indulge that propensity.

He continued to cherish this passion for painting till near the close of his terms at college; and at one period it engrossed nearly all his time and attention, and was designed to be the object of his future life. He accordingly studied and wrote much on this and its kindred arts. Several of his manuscripts on this subject are preserved, some treating it by way of analysis, others of criticism; some consisting of notes and observations on the history of painters and painting, and some defending the art, as a pursuit for life, against the objections of his friends and acquaintances. From these papers, and from some letters which were addressed to him, it appears that he continued to practice this art with increasing facility and very flattering success; and that he was encouraged to send one of his original pieces in oil to the exhibition at Philadelphia.

In addition to this, he gave himself at the same time to the kindred, and, to a genius and temperament like his, no less fascinating, art of poetry. Did his papers furnish nothing but what remains of his first sixteen years on this subject, they would suffice to show that he possessed those rare talents and qualities which fitted him to excel in whatever he undertook. He pursued with this the same method as with every other subject upon which he bestowed any considerable attention; he analyzed it, studied its history, principles, and relations, and then practised. Having once possessed himself of a subject in this manner, it seemed to occupy a fixed place in his mind, and to be ever ready to be used at pleasure.

As an illustration of the bold which poetry and painting had gained on him, and of his success in the cultivation of them, it may suffice to mention his "Poem in two cantos" entitled "THE ARTIST"; prepared for the public contest be-