

A
HISTORY
OF THE
Presbyterian Church in America,

FROM ITS ORIGIN UNTIL THE YEAR 1760.

WITH
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF ITS EARLY MINISTERS.

BY THE
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WITH
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mediation of those who upheld his right to membership with them.

As an illustration of this mild and forbearing spirit, the following letter will serve as an example:—

ANDREWS TO PIERSON.*

“PHILADELPHIA, August 3, 1742.

“REV. AND DEAR SIR:—

“As you desired me, when here last, to give you account of things that should happen here from time to time, so, old friendship, conscience of duty, and inclination, prompt me to gratify you in that regard. Being now entered into the sixty-ninth year of my life,—and so know it can't be long before, in the course of nature, I shall be called to give up my account,—and being lately threatened with death by a surfeit contracted by the excessive heat, (from which indisposition I am scarcely recovered,) I thought myself obliged to open my heart and ease my mind a little to you. And, as what I am about to say will be the entire fruit of brotherly love and Christian friendship, I hope and desire that, though my sentiments may not be agreeable to yours, and may seem to bear too hard on some late transactions, yet, considering our state of imperfection, in which none is secured from being sometimes deceived, I trust your piety and candour will cause you to put the best of constructions upon them. I must, therefore, dear brother, tell you, that, according to my opinion and that of all sober, judicious, unprejudiced persons I speak with about it, the ‘Protest’ given in last synod is chargeable with at least three imperfections. I don't mean simply as to the matters of complaint contained in it, (those against whom it is levelled must, in that respect, answer for themselves;) but that any thing of that nature should be exhibited at that time seems to me liable to no mean exceptions. In short, then, I take it to have been needless, unseasonable, and unkind.

“1. I take it to have been altogether needless; for I cannot apprehend any need or necessity can be pretended for it, unless it were to tell the world you were not guilty, or had no

* Transcribed from the original, in the hands of Dr. Sprague.

hand in the excluding protestation which you represent as a criminal action. If this were the reason (and I can see no other of any consequence,) nothing could be more needless. Everybody knew you were not here when it was done, and, therefore, could not possibly have any hand in it. But it may be replied, if we hadn't done as we did, people might think we agreed to it or connived at it. I answer, your disapprobation might have been declared in synod, and entered on the minutes, without such a public and noisy procedure, which would have sufficiently saved your credit, if there was any danger of it,—as I apprehend there was none, for I never heard of any thing suggested that had the least hint that way.

“2. To me it appears to have been egregiously unseasonable. We were at that time, and some time before, on motions and endeavours—as was, I think, on all hands professed—about ways and means of accommodation and healing the doleful rent and divisions among us. Now, in my poor judgment, that transaction had a direct tendency to prevent, or at least retard. Let it be considered that all men have their weaknesses and imperfections; and that an inclination not to be undervalued or despised more or less obtains with all men. Now, let any body look impartially into the nature and tendency of that protestation, and see whether it hath not a direct tendency—especially considering the public clamorous circumstances of it—to exasperate the spirits of the former ‘Protesters,’ and render them abundantly more unfit and indisposed for accommodation and passing by grievances than they were before. I desire you will not take it amiss if I tell you that it appears to me in that aspect, and not to me only, but to all indifferent persons I hear speak of it. It appears to me a stumbling-block in the way of peace and concord, (though I don't believe designed so,) and the most material one of that nature which has been thrown in the way all along, not so much from the nature of the thing, as the eminent quality of some persons concerned in it. My dear brother, look over it again, and say if it don't look like a design, (though I won't suffer myself to imagine it was so,)—if it don't carry an aspect of an intention to disgrace, vilify, and ruffle the passions of the ‘Protesters,’ and consequently, put

them out of humour, and indisposed for that glorious and necessary work of coalition which all profess to be aiming at? My dear friend, I shall look upon it as my duty, and hope I shall not be wanting in endeavours, to prevent such an evil effect; but if the transaction be looked on with an impartial eye it bears too much of that aspect. I am willing to think myself mistaken, not being willing to harbour any wrong notions of my old, dear, valuable friends.

“3. As for the third particular, I think myself equally concerned with my neighbours,—viz.: unkindness. I am at a loss to make the matter agree with the friendship that is professed. Did not you know how sorely we have been handled, and what loads of affliction we have laboured under, and particularly myself, your old, sincere, unfeigned friend and brother, by the enormous doings of these men? Did not you know these things, which we have suffered, to the wounding of our souls, disturbance of our peace, and almost to death? Surely you could not be altogether ignorant of it. If so, to do a thing, as if designed on purpose to throw us in the dirt, and give our enemies, that have sought our ruin and to deprive us of all comfort of life, advantage to trample on us and render us despicable and useless in the world,—I say, it looks very strange from friends. I bless God that I do not perceive it hath done us any harm as to our particular charge and business, which is, to me, a wonderful providence; but if you had come on purpose to weaken our hands, I do not see how a more direct method could have been taken. Suppose we were in the wrong in our sentiments, and don't agree with you in our notions of some men and things: as long as we profess sincerity and conscience, and are in other things, I hope, tolerably regular,—and nobody can convict us of hypocrisy in our profession,—one would have expected pity from old friends, and not such a blow under the fifth rib, when there was really no need of it, by opening a door to let in our enemies to devour us. Truly, my dear brother, it appears astonishing to me. But I will stop my pen, (perhaps it has run too far already,) and tell you my thoughts. I don't impute it to old friends: it was chiefly the transaction of one man, who, in an ostentatious, noisy manner—so my old friends shall be such still; some say *dux femina facti*; if so, more is the

pity. I was going for an appendix to compare the former protest (wherein I had no hand) with this, and see if I could not make this look as black as that. But I forbear, and pray the Lord open all our eyes, rectify our mistakes, and keep us from being biassed by human favour, affection, or example, but sincerely follow the things that tend to true Christian peace and truth, that so we may give in our account with joy.

“Let there be no diminution of affection or stagnation of correspondence.

“Let us compassionate each other’s weaknesses; and, if you reckon me, as Gilbert does, an enemy to God’s work, or call me devil, my Christian charity towards my good old friends shall, I hope, remain inviolate. Pray, take in good part these uncouth lines, because the effort of the sincere affection and to deliver the soul of

“Your old friend and brother,

“J. ANDREWS.

“You may let this go to next town, *sed non ultra*. Having heard the Moravians twice, think their doctrine the same as Whitefield’s when he first came here. Divers dead last week of the heat. Pray the Lord make us ready.”

In New England and parts adjacent, while many separated from the standing order, and became strict Congregationalists, a number invoked councils to relieve them from lukewarm or insufficient pastors, or to countenance them in forming new congregations.

The Irish Presbyterians there were not united. The Rev. John Caldwell preached in the old church of Londonderry, N.H., on the Trial of the Spirits; and the Rev. David McGregoire, of the second church in the town, to whom “the wondrous work now making its triumphant progress through our land was agreeable,” preached on the same text with widely different doctrine and inferences. Both sermons were printed. Caldwell, during Davenport’s stay in Boston, preached before the Presbytery of Boston, in the French meeting-house, a sermon on the false prophets, full of personal allusions and incidents and instances taken from Whitefield’s writings and those of his friends. Tennent had described the old Pharisees