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AND OTHER EMINENT MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH.

Including a Description of the Historic Decorations of the Pan Presbyterian Council of 1880,

By REV. HENRY C. McCOOK, D. D., LL. D.

Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following—PSALM XLVIII, 12, 13.

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summed and adorned his religion to the end of his days."

Blair, Rev. John, a brother of the Rev. Samuel Blair, was born in Ireland, and was educated at the Log College, and licensed by the New Side Presbytery of New Castle at its earliest sessions. He was ordained, December 27th, 1742, pastor of Middle Spring, Rocky Spring, and Big Spring, in Cumberland county, Pa., and gave two-thirds of his time to Big Spring, dividing the remainder between the others. During his ministry here he made two visits to Virginia—the last in 1746,—preaching with great power in various places, organizing new congregations, and leaving an enduring impression of his piety and eloquence. The incursions of the Indians led him to resign his pastoral charge, December 28th, 1748. He seems to have remained without a settlement till 1757, when he accepted a call from the church at Fagg's Manor, which had been rendered vacant by the death of his brother. Here he continued nearly ten years, and succeeded his brother not only as pastor of the church, but as head of the school which his brother had established. In this latter capacity he assisted in the preparation of many young men for the ministry. In 1767 he was chosen Professor of Divinity and Moral Philosophy in the College of New Jersey, and was elected President before he was thirty years of age. But soon after his election, intelligence was received from Scotland, that Dr. Witherspoon, who had previously declined the position, would, in all probability, if the call were repeated, accept it. As soon as this was known to Mr. Blair, with a modesty and magnanimity worthy of record, he immediately wrote to the President of the Board, declining the office, and accepted a call to Wallkill, in the Highlands of New York, May 19th, 1769. He died December 8th, 1771.

During the excitement growing out of the question concerning the examination of candidates on their experience of saving grace, one of the Old Side published "Thoughts on the Examination and Trials of Candidates." On this pamphlet Mr. Blair published "Animadversions," dated "Fagg's Manor, August 27th, 1766." He also published a reply to Harker's "Appeal to the Christian World," entitled "The Synod of New York and Philadelphia Vindicated." He left behind him a treatise on regeneration, orthodox, and ably written; it was published shortly before his death, with the title, "A Treatise on the Nature, Use, and Subjects of the Sacraments, on Regeneration, and on the Nature and Use of the Means of Grace." The preface is dated "Goodwill, alias Wallkill, December 21st, 1770." It was reprinted by Dr. James P. Wilson, in his collection of Sacramental Treatises.

A writer in the Assembly's Magazine says of Mr. Blair: "He was a judicious and persuasive preacher, and through his exertions sinners were converted and the children of God edified. Fully convinced of

the truth of the doctrines of grace, he addressed immortal souls with that warmth and power which left a witness in every bosom. Though he sometimes wrote his sermons in full, yet his common mode of preaching was by short notes, comprising the general outlines. His labors were too abundant to admit of more, and no more was necessary to a mind so richly stored with the great truths of religion. . . . His disposition was uncommonly patient, placid, benevolent, disinterested and cheerful. He was too mild to indulge bitterness or severity, and he thought that the truth required little else but to be fairly stated and properly understood. Those who could not relish the savor of his piety, loved him as an amiable and revered him as a great man: Though no bigot, he firmly believed that the Presbyterian form of government is most Scriptural, and the most favorable to religion and happiness."

Dr. Alexander expressed the opinion that Mr. Blair, "as a theologian, was not inferior to any man in the Presbyterian Church in his day."

Blair, Rev. John Durburrow, was born at Fagg's Manor, Pa., October 15th, 1759. He was a son of the Rev. John Blair, who was ordained, December 27th, 1742, pastor of Middle Spring, Rocky Spring, and Big Spring, in Cumberland county, Pa., and who afterwards succeeded his brother as both pastor of the Church and teacher of the School at Fagg's Manor. He graduated at the College of New Jersey in the year 1775. After his graduation he was appointed, on the recommendation of Dr. Witherspoon, Principal of Washington Henry Academy, in Virginia, where he remained for a number of years. October 28th, 1784, he was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Hanover. Soon after this he received a call from the church in Pole Green, in Hanover, of which the Rev. Samuel Davis had been pastor while in Virginia, and having accepted the call, was ordained to the pastoral office. About 1792 he was induced to remove to Richmond, and open a classical school. At the same time he began to gather a church, holding his services in the Capitol. In due course of time a building was erected for his congregation, on Shockoe Hill, where he officiated during the remainder of his life. He died, January 10th, 1823. Mr. Blair was highly esteemed in the community. He was a man of benevolence, of polished manners, and fitted to adorn any company. As a preacher he was solid and orthodox. His style was graceful and polished, and his delivery was in perfect keeping with his style. One of his peculiarities was that he was never willing to marry any one who had not been baptized, and sometimes, when he discovered at the moment when the ceremony was about to be performed that the bride had not received baptism, he would abruptly pause and proceed to administer it.

Blair, Rev. Samuel, was born in Ireland, June 14th, 1712. He came to America while quite young,

and was educated at the Log College at Neshaminy, under the Rev. William Tennent. Having completed his classical and theological study, he was licensed to preach, November 9th, 1733, by the Presbytery of Philadelphia, and in the following September accepted a call to Middletown and Shrewsbury, N. J. Here he continued about five years, but there are no records remaining to indicate the amount of success that attended his labors. In 1739 he received a call to the Church in New Londonderry, otherwise called Fagg's Manor, in Pennsylvania. This call he accepted, and removed to his new residence in November, 1739, but his installation did not take place until April, 1740. Shortly after his settlement at Fagg's Manor he established a classical school, which produced such men as Davies, Rodgers, Cumming, James Finley, Robert Smith and Hugh Henry, "as scholars, preachers, pastors, patriots, in their piety and success," says Webster, "a noble company, a godly fellowship, showing the Church what manner of men the apostles and martyrs were."

In connection with Mr. Blair's ministry at Fagg's Manor, there occurred, in 1740, a very remarkable revival of religion. The number of the awakened increased very fast; scarcely a sermon or a lecture through the whole Summer failed to produce impressions, and many persons afforded very hopeful, satisfying evidence that the Lord had brought them to a true acceptance of Christ.

Mr. Blair made a tour of preaching through New England in the Summer of 1744. He was a prominent actor in those scenes which, in his day, agitated and finally divided the Presbyterian Church. He agreed with Gilbert Tennent in his opinions, and co-operated with him in his measures, and, of course, rendered himself obnoxious to the "Old Side" party in the Church. In his doctrinal views he was a thorough Calvinist, as appears from his "Treatise on Predestination and Reprobation."

Mr. Blair's last illness was contracted from his going, upon an urgent call, and in an enfeebled state of body, to meet the Trustees of New Jersey College. As he approached his end, he expressed the strongest desire to depart and be with Christ, and but a minute or two before his departure, he exclaimed, "The Bridegroom is come, and we shall now have all things." The monument over his remains in the burying ground of Fagg's Manor bears the following inscription:—

"Here lieth the body of
THE REV. SAMUEL BLAIR,
Who departed this life
The Fifth Day of July, 1751,
Aged Thirty-nine Years and Twenty-one Days."

"In yonder sacred house I spent my breath;
Now silent, mouldering, here I lie in death;
These lips shall wake, and yet declare
A dread Amen to truths they published there."

Mr. Blair was grave and solemn, yet cheerful, pleasant, even facetious, witty. He had great power

as a preacher. Mr. Davies regarded him as excelled by none he had heard in England and Scotland. "When," says he, "in 1753, I passed the meeting-house where I had so often heard the great Mr. Blair, I could not help crying out, 'Oh, how dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'" "He was," says Dr. Finley, in his funeral sermon, "a public blessing to the Church, an honor to his people, an ornament to his profession, who 'magnified his office.' He spoke as he believed, he practiced as he preached, he lived holy, and died joyfully."

Blair, Samuel D. D., a son of the Rev. Samuel Blair, of Fagg's Manor, Chester county, Pa., was born at that place in the year 1741. He graduated at the College of New Jersey with honor, in 1760, at the age of nineteen. He afterwards served as tutor there for about three years—from 1761 to 1764. He was licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of New Castle, in 1764. He was popular as a preacher from his first appearance in the pulpit. His discourses were written out in full, with great care, and his elocution was at once chaste and impressive. Indeed, he seems to have been a young man of fine talents and more than ordinary acquirements for his age.

In November, 1766, Mr. Blair was installed pastor of the old South Church in Boston, as a colleague of the Rev. Dr. Sewall. On his way thither, after his acceptance of the call, he was shipwrecked in the night, losing his wardrobe and manuscripts, and escaping narrowly with his life. His exposure, on this occasion, injured his health and the loss of his sermons, which he had written with great care, depressed his spirits. He resigned his charge October 10th, 1769. He received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of Pennsylvania, in 1790. After resigning his charge at Boston, he took up his residence at Germantown, now a part of Philadelphia, where he passed the remainder of his life, in retirement and devotion to his books, except that he served two years as chaplain in Congress, and preached at other times, occasionally, as opportunity offered. He died in September, 1818. Dr. Blair was a man of polished manners, and of amiable and generous disposition. He was also a superior scholar, a well-read theologian and an eloquent pulpit orator. He published two sermons, one of which was occasioned by the death of the Rev. Dr. John Blair Smith, Philadelphia, 1799.

Blake, James, Elder in the Third Presbyterian Church, Indianapolis, was born in Berlin, Adams county, Pa., March 3d, 1791. He came to Indianapolis in July, 1821, and was closely associated with Mr. James M. Ray, his life-long friend, and with other pioneers. They were men of integrity, morality and religious principles. Their spirit gave character to this infant community. Much of the commercial prosperity and spiritual growth of this city are due to the