

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
A Memoir of the Author,
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AND
An Historical Introduction,
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ber of society, this town an agreeable, peaceable, benevolent inhabitant, the College of New Jersey a father; and I have lost a friend."

CHARLES TENNENT.

THE youngest child of Tennent, of Neshaminy, was born in the county Down, May 3, 1711, and was baptized by the Rev. Richard Donnell. He is said* to have learned the trade of a saddler. After studying with his father, he was taken on trials by Philadelphia Presbytery in May, 1736; in June, at Neshaminy, he was examined on the evidences of his piety, and was licensed Sept. 20. He was called, April 6, 1737, to Pilesgrove and vicinity; but the call was not put into his hands. He soon after was ordained, by Newcastle X Presbytery, the pastor of Whiteclay.

In November, 1739,† Whitefield assisted him at the sacrament; he preached from the tent to eight thousand persons. Among the hearers was Mrs. Douglass, the sister of Charles Thomson, Secretary to Congress, and the grandmother of the Rev. James W. Douglass, of Fayetteville. She describes Whitefield as bathed in tears during nearly all the service. It was a glorious day. The effect was happy and extensive. To his delight, he found there a family named Howell, who had heard him at Cardiff and Kingswood. In the following year he was there on a like occasion; some opposers being present, Whitefield felt peculiar pleasure in singing the 23d Psalm:—

" My table thou hast furnished,
In presence of my foes;
My head thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows."

A separation took place in the congregation: the Old Side joined with Elk River. On the union of the synods, some of the most zealous friends of the Revival forsook Tennent and went over to the Seceders, being unable to understand how it could be right to enter into fellowship with those they had been taught to regard as heart-enemies to the power of religion. "Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord." Tennent was dismissed from his charge in 1763, and settled at Buckingham, now Berlin, on the

* Letter of a Covenanting Presbyterian.

† Log College, Whitefield's Journal.

Eastern Shore of Maryland. "There was a great stir about religion," said Davies, in 1751, "some four years ago in Buckingham, on the sea-shore, and a place called the Ferry, which were then without a minister."

Of his success there little is known; he was involved in difficulties that threw a gloom over his closing days. He died in 1771. His son, the Rev. Wm. M. Tennent, was licensed before his death: his granddaughter, Miss Stewart, died a few years ago, in advanced life.

He is said to have been a good preacher, but high-spirited and hasty. Davies joins him with his brothers in high praise:—

"Surviving remnant of the sacred tribe,
Who knew the worth these plaintive lays describe,
Tennents, three worthies of immortal fame,
Brothers in office, birth, and heart, and name."

AARON BURR

WAS the son* of Daniel Burr, of Upper Meadows, in Fairfield, Conn., a descendant of Jehu Burr, an early settler of Springfield, Mass., and of the Rev. Jonathan Burr, who came from Redgrave, in Suffolk, in 1604, and was the minister of Dorchester, Mass. Aaron was born Jan. 4, 1715–6, and was baptized March 4. He graduated at Yale in 1735.

The year after† he took his first degree, he spent in the college; and it is supposed that he then met with a saving change of heart, and became not only almost, but altogether, a Christian. The relation of this important event I have extracted out of his private papers, and shall give you his own words, as follows:—

"This year God saw fit to open my eyes, and show me what a miserable creature I was. Till then, I spent my life in a dream; and, to the great design of my being, had lived in vain. Though before I had been under frequent convictions, and was drove to a form of religion, yet I knew nothing as I ought to know. But then I was brought to the footstool of sovereign grace; saw myself polluted by nature and practice; had affecting views of the divine wrath I deserved; was made to despair of help in myself, and almost concluded that my day of grace had passed. These convictions held for some months, greater at some seasons than at others;

* MS. Letter of N. Goodwin, Esq., Hartford.

† Funeral Sermon, by Rev. Caleb Smith.