

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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within a month, "Defensive War consistent with Christianity,"—the animadversions on which he repelled, in 1748, by a third pamphlet:—"Defensive War Defended."

In 1748, he printed a Fast-sermon, and one preached before a sacramental solemnity; in 1749, on the "Display of Divine Justice in the Propitiatory Sacrifice of Christ;" in 1756, one before Captain Vanderspiegel's company; in 1758, several on important subjects; and, amid his closing days, he issued an "Address on the Late Invasion of American Liberty by the Stamp Act." Most of these are very rare, being scattered in public libraries. They are all creditable to his abilities, were serviceable in their time, and, having served their generation, have passed into oblivion.

ARCHIBALD McCOOK

WAS received as a student from Ireland, by Newcastle Presbytery, in March, 1726, and was licensed, September 13, having subscribed the Westminster Confession. He was sent to Kent, in Delaware, embracing Dover, St. Jones, and Mother Hill, was called March 28, 1727, and ordained June 7. Houston proclaimed, and Thomson preached. He died before September.

The desolate condition of the people in Kent attracted the attention of the presbytery in 1714. Anderson was sent as a monthly supply; Gelston went as a candidate, in 1715; and the next year they had occasional supplies in connection with Cedar Creek, in Sussex. Cross preached for them monthly for several years, and Hook, Thomas Evans, Steward, and Hutcheson visited them. They had also Mr. Peter Finch, probably from England, for a season. After McCook's death, they had supplies for several years.

EBENEZER PEMBERTON,

THE son of one of the pastors in Boston, was born in 1704, and graduated at Harvard in 1721. When licensed, he was employed as chaplain at Castle William.*

* Robbins's Second Church, Boston.

On the dismissal of Anderson, he was sent by the Boston ministers to New York; and, at the request of the congregation, made in April, they ordained him in his native town, August 9, 1727. Colman preached the sermon,* from Mark ix. 38. He dwelt on the young man's leaving his beloved mother, and the city in which his father had laboured; on his being called to the head-city of a province; and on the goodness of God in having formed and endowed him for his service, and inclined and spirited him for this distant and important work. He reminded him of the hand of God in uniting the affections of the flock on him, and presents, as a motive to faithfulness, the piety of his parents and grandparents. He bids him prepare the beaten oil and the sweet incense for the sanctuary, contend earnestly against the common errors of the day, maintain the doctrine, worship, and discipline established from the beginning, assert expressly the Trinity, the true and real Godhead of Jesus, and justification by faith, insist on the observance of the Lord's day, and urge the duty of family worship and family government. He concludes, "The God of New England, before whom our fathers walked, go with you and give the blessing of Abraham to thee and to thy seed."

The New York congregation informed the synod that they were satisfied with all Dr. Nicoll's proceedings, and desired them to admit Pemberton as a member. This they declined to do, but not out of any disrespect to him. They appointed a committee (all New Englanders) to settle the difference between the Presbytery of Long Island and the congregation. The difficulty was settled by causing Inglis, Blake, and Leddell to make over by deed all their right to the meeting-house to the ministers of Edinburgh, and to Dr. Nicoll, in trust for the congregation; and by requiring Nicoll to release those three from all bonds and obligations they were under to him on account of that property; and by exacting of him a bond of two thousand pounds to the ministers of Edinburgh, not to alienate his right therein, and, when reimbursed, to transfer all his right to them. They required also a bond from him of two thousand pounds to Pierson, Cross, and Dickinson, obliging himself to concur with persons appointed by Edinburgh Presbytery, in selling such pews as the majority of the congregation chose. The congregation was allowed to choose five representatives or managers of the property. Pemberton, at his request, was received as a member, by the committee, without hearing what the presbytery had to offer. The synod refused to sanction his reception, and then proceeded unanimously to receive him, leaving it to him and the congregation to join what presbytery they pleased.

In 1735, he was moderator of the commission at the trial of

* Massachusetts Historical Society's Library.

Hemphill; and his sermon on that occasion, from Luke vii. 35, being cavilled at, he published it.

Whitefield came to New York in November, 1739, and was denied the use of the court-house. The commissary, before being asked, refused him the church. Dominie Boel declined to admit him to the Dutch Church, and Whitefield would not officiate in the meeting-house tendered by the Presbyterians. He attended Trinity Church in the morning, and preached in the afternoon in the fields, and in the evening in the Presbyterian meeting-house. Pemberton wrote to him, that he had left the town under a universal concern; and that, to meet the wants of the people, he had appointed a lecture. Many were deeply affected; and some of the loose and profligate were ashamed, and set on reformation.

Whitefield* wrote to him, November 28, 1739, "I have been much concerned, since I saw you, lest I behaved not with that humility towards you which is due from a babe to a father in Christ; but you know how difficult it is to meet with success and not be puffed up with it; and, therefore, if any such thing was discernible in my conduct, oh, pity me, and pray to the Lord to heal my pride. All that I can say is, that I desire to learn of Jesus to be meek and lowly in heart; but my corruptions are so strong, and my employ so dangerous, that I am afraid."

He wrote from Upper Marlborough, December 8, "Till now I have had neither time nor leisure to answer your kind letter. Blessed be God, who has opened the heart of some of his people at New York to receive the word! May he enable you to water† what his own right hand hath planted, and grant to your labours a divine increase! Oh that the Lord would be pleased to send forth experimental labourers into his harvest! for I fear, among you, as well as in other places, there are many who are well versed in the doctrines of grace,—having learned them at the university,—but notwithstanding are heart-hypocrites and enemies to the power of godliness. I use this freedom, because I love simplicity. I confess I am but a child in grace as well as years.

At his second visit, October, 1740, "the Holy Ghost came down as a mighty rushing wind."

Dr. Nicoll‡ wrote to Nicholas Spence, agent of the Church of Scotland, that "the effects were visible in the town, particularly in our congregation and in my own family. Little children followed Mr. Pemberton to his lodgings, weeping, and anxiously con-

* Whitefield's Letters.

† Pemberton had set up a lecture, on account of the increased desire for religious instruction. Steward, in his published journal, scoffs at this, and says, "Some pretend to water what God has planted, by setting up lectures: they daub with untempered mortar, and say there is no need of giving an account of your conversion."

‡ Gillies's Collections.

cerned about the salvation of their souls. The good Lord hath stirred up Gilbert and William Tennent, Burr, Mills, (of Ripton,) Leonard, (of Goshen,) and Davenport, and spirited them, in his mercy, to water it; but Satan is using (May 20, 1741) his utmost endeavours to drive some of them to extremes." Pemberton was sent for to Connecticut College, and preached twice a day while absent. He printed his sermon preached at Yale, April 19, 1741, immediately after Tennent's visit. The subject was, "Know Christ."

In May, he attended the synod, with his elder, Nathaniel Hazard,* and both signed the protest against the exclusion of the New Brunswick party. Hazard sat in synod as an elder in 1728. His place of business was at the store of Thomas Noble, at the "Old Slip:" he advertises "likely negroes, and a prime lot of old Cheshire cheese."

Pemberton preached, September 13, 1742, at Stratfield, Connecticut, on the duty of committing our souls to God, from 2 Tim. i. 12. This discourse was printed, as also the funeral sermon of Dr. Nicoll, his valued friend, the church's benefactor.†

A petition was addressed by the congregation, March 12, 1746, to the associated ministers of Boston, seeking aid to enlarge the church. A copy of this document is preserved in Dr. Stiles's papers, signed by J. Royal, William Smith, Jeremiah Owen, William Eagles, Joseph Millikin, P. Jackson, and P. V. B. Livingston. They state that, when the church was first built, there were not more than seventy or eighty belonging to it; that differences grew up among the original undertakers of the building, and that for four years after Pemberton's settlement, the congregation continued small: after a time, six of the eight windows were glazed, having before been boarded. In 1739, showers of heavenly influence descended, with an increase of gifts in the minister. The congregation grew till the floor was filled and three galleries; and now they needed to repair, enlarge, and add a steeple and bell. Being about to engage an assistant minister, they would be unable, if not aided, to bear the whole expense of refitting the house.

The years from 1740 to '50 were years of rapid increase. Mr. Cumming was settled as assistant minister. Whitefield was in New York eight days in the summer of 1747. "People flock rather more than ever: the Lord vouchsafes us solemn meetings."

* A native of Newtown, Long Island, and descendant from one of the early settlers there. His son, Nathaniel Hazard, was the friend and constant correspondent of Dr. Bellamy; his second son, Samuel, was a merchant in Philadelphia, and a steadfast and invaluable member of the Second Church.

† Dr. Sprague's Collection at Princeton.

He wrote to Pemberton from London, November 14, 1748, urging him to come thither and solicit funds for Nassau Hall. In 1739, the Synod of Philadelphia had endeavoured to prevail on him to "go home to Europe" to obtain funds for erecting a seminary. The Synod of New York, in 1751, proposed it to him: he had* no family at the time, and was willing to go; and a committee was sent "immediately" to treat with his people.

It was his† settled purpose to have gone; but his people and Mr. Cumming hindered it. His intention of going caused great uneasiness among his people, and created dissatisfaction towards him in the minds of some.

By death and removal,‡ he was left without an elder or deacon. Mr. Hazard removed to Philadelphia. On the death of Dr. Nicoll, trustees were chosen to manage the affairs, by those who were bound for the payment of the church debts, and out of their own number. Troubles arose. The trustees complained because Pemberton insisted on having, by virtue of his office, a seat in their board and a voice in the temporal affairs. The matters in controversy passed from the presbytery to the synod in 1752. They decided that the church property belonged to those, without distinction of name or nation, who conformed to the general plan of the Scottish Church, as practised by the New York Synod; that the pastors had no right, by virtue of their office, to preside over the board of trustees, and that Cumming was imprudent in insisting on doing so; that the trustees had acted faithfully and much to the advantage of the church. They commended Cumming for insisting that parents who present children for baptism shall pray in their families, and condemned the plan of carrying round a paper to get subscriptions to introduce a new version of Psalms. Davies, Finley, and Beatty, as a committee, after careful inquiry, nominated Israel Horsefield and David Vanhorne;§ and they were elected elders. Though empowered to recommend Watts's Psalms if they thought proper, the committee declined to do so, recommending to both parties moderation and forbearance.

In 1753, Pemberton was blamed by some of the people for neglecting family visiting, the session for introducing Watts of their own accord, and both ministers for neglecting to recommend the Catechism in baptism, and for praying when asked at funerals. This was a matter of intolerable offence to the Scotsmen: they could not endure "orations" at funerals. The committee dismissed these charges, and lamented the injurious and contemptuous

* Mrs. Catharine Pemberton died in June, 1751, having, in her last years, passed through "very melancholy scenes of affliction and pain."

† Jonathan Edwards to Erskine.

‡ MS. Records of Trustees of New York Congregation.

§ David Van Horne died November 13, 1775, aged sixty-three.

treatment on both sides. No one opposed Cumming's request to be dismissed; but a number of gentlemen strongly remonstrated against giving up Pemberton. The committee advised him to stay for a while, and make a further trial; and, if at the end of a month he had no success in healing the divisions, he was to be released.

Visiting Boston, he received a unanimous call to the New Brick Church, and immediately wrote* to the synod, desiring that he might be set at liberty. He was dismissed; and the Presbytery of New York addressed† a letter of high commendation in his favour to the ministers of Boston. He was installed, March 6, 1754. He was greatly admired, and his preaching was largely attended. But, towards the approach of the Revolution, his people, being zealous Whigs, were pained by the sight of Governor Hutchinson in the front pew, and standing high in the esteem of their minister. They withdrew; but the favour of Hutchinson preserved the church edifice from the desecration and ruin which befell the other places of worship. His salary was poorly paid, and he generously forgave the arrears. The Baptists, being without a house, were welcomed to an equal use of the church,—Dr. Stillman preaching alternately with the pastor. A vain attempt had been made to secure the Rev. William Tennent, Jr., afterwards of Charleston, as a colleague. The want was, in a measure, supplied by the Rev. John Lathrop, of the New North Church, whose congregation had been despoiled of their sanctuary by the British; and, on the death of Pemberton, the two societies united. The pastoral relation of Pemberton was virtually dissolved in February, 1774: from that date he received no salary. During the war he retired to Andover, and died, September 9, 1779.

Dr. Chauncey told President Stiles that Pemberton would go to the death for Edwards's distinguishing tenet:—refusing church privileges to the unregenerate.

He published his sermons at the ordination of Wilmot and Brainerd. In 1750, he printed a memoir‡ of his mother, as a preface to her "Meditations," and dedicated it to her third husband,—Henry Lloyd, Lord of the Manor of Queen's Village. Her second husband was John Campbell, of Boston, the publisher of the first newspaper in that town.

He corresponded with Doddridge. One of his letters, dated December 16, 1743,§ is preserved; it was in answer to an inquiry

* MS. Records of the Trustees.

† Dr. Robbins's History of Second Church, Boston.

‡ Massachusetts Historical Society's Library.

§ Doddridge Correspondence, by Humphreys.

concerning the injustice said to have been done to the Moravians by the Dissenters in America. He denies that there was any ground for such a story. "With us, they are evidently endeavouring to draw off the affections of the people from the soundest and most zealous ministers in these parts." His valued friend, Mr. Noble, had already forsaken him.

Davies said, "Mr. Price is by far the best orator I have heard in London. He is an affable, affectionate gentleman, and is the likeliest man to Mr. Pemberton, both in conversation and in the pulpit, that I have seen." The Hon. William Smith, father of the historian, said, "His deficiency in delivery was natural, but surprisingly mended with great pains taken."

DANIEL ELMER

WAS born in Fairfield, Connecticut, in 1690, and graduated at Yale in 1713. He married soon after, and, "for some time, carried on the work of the ministry" in Brookfield,* Massachusetts. The General Court allowed the town twenty pounds for three years, to aid in sustaining the gospel. Elmer received only half of this encouragement, having left before 1715. Where he spent the next twelve years is not known. In 1728, he settled at Fairfield, in Cohanzy. At the declaring for the Confession, in 1729, he was the only minister who professed himself unprepared to act. Time was granted him to consider; and the next year he informed the synod that he had declared before the presbytery his cordial adoption of the Confession and the Catechism.

Whitefield visited West Jersey in the spring of 1740. Gilbert Tennent was there in the summer; and, while Whitefield was preaching (November 19) on Wednesday, the Holy Ghost came down "like a mighty rushing wind" at Cohanzy. Some thousands were present. The whole congregation was moved, and two cried out.

At the separation in 1741, Elmer and his elder, Jonathan Fithian, though present at the opening of the sessions, seems to have gone home before the Protest was introduced. He adhered to the Old Side. The congregation divided; even his own son occasionally went to Greenwich to hear Andrew Hunter.

Finley spent much time in the vicinity; and New Brunswick

* The Rev. Dr. Joseph J. Foot's Historical Discourse at Brookfield.