

A
HISTORY
OF THE
Presbyterian Church in America,

FROM ITS ORIGIN UNTIL THE YEAR 1760.

WITH
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF ITS EARLY MINISTERS.

BY THE
REV. RICHARD WEBSTER,
LATE PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MAUCH CHUNK, PA.

WITH
A Memoir of the Author,
BY THE REV. C. VAN RENSSELAER, D.D.

AND
An Historical Introduction,
BY THE REV. WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, D.D.

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

PHILADELPHIA:
JOSEPH M. WILSON,
No. 27 SOUTH TENTH STREET, BELOW CHESTNUT ST.
1857.

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before the house a paper from the two ministers, stating that they were not empowered, by the Classis of Amsterdam, to ordain. The matter was dropped.

In September, 1710, he joined the presbytery, being the minister of the Low Dutch congregation of Neshaminy, in Bucks county, Pennsylvania; Mr. Lenard Vandegrift being his elder. By whom he had been ordained does not appear. In 1711, one of his elders was sent to presbytery, to state that his absence was caused by his being disabled through sickness. The next year he was charged with bigamy; but the evidence was not sufficient to prove the crime, neither was his vindication such as to take off the scandal wholly; he therefore consented, as the presbytery proposed, to desist from preaching till his innocence was completely established by proof of his first wife's death. The day after the presbytery broke up, he brought papers in his behalf, which were seen by all the members, and left by them with Andrews, McNish, and Hampton, to consider if they were sufficient to clear him of the imputation. They thought they were not; besides, a new charge of falsehood was brought. On inspecting a letter from his mother, they learned that his wife was alive. Drunkenness, swearing, and "light carriage" were also fastened on him. "He ran out of the country;" and, from 1715, he is passed over in silence.

GEORGE GILLESPIE

WAS born in 1683, in the town of Glasgow, and educated in the ancient university founded there centuries ago. He was licensed by Glasgow Presbytery early in 1712, and came to New England in the spring, furnished with recommendations from Principal Stirling to Cotton Mather, and "certificates of his conversation." The situation of Woodbridge had been made known to the ministers in Boston; Mather heartily recommended Gillespie to that divided people. He was "at first generally liked, being of an excellent character and laudable carriage, and his management being to universal satisfaction." The hope of his uniting the discordant parties was cheering; but Wade's factious course divided them still more.

In September, the presbytery approved of his credentials; and, "if Providence make way for his ordination by a call from any congregation, Andrews, McNish, Anderson, and Morgan are ordered to ordain him." The presbytery recommended him again to the congregation of Woodbridge:—"We shall strengthen his hands and encourage his heart to try a while longer, waiting for

the effect of our renewed essays for peace and quietness among you."

x He wrote to the presbytery; and Henry prepared an answer, informing him that the people of White Clay had petitioned for a minister, and, if he left Woodbridge, he was ordered first to supply that people.

He was ordained by a committee of three, May 28, 1713, having received a call from the people of White Clay Creek. He preached, the day before, on Gal. iv. 4, 5, and delivered an exegesis on "An Christus pro omnibus et singulis sit mortuus?" These were to good acceptance, as also his examination in the original languages, philosophy, and theology.

Red Clay, Lower Brandywine, and Elk River, besides White Clay, seem to have formed his charge for several years. Abraham Emmet, who subsequently appears as an elder from Elk River, petitioned for a new erection in 1719, and was refused.

Gillespie was zealous for strict discipline, and three times entered his dissent* when offenders were dealt with too leniently for their immoralities. He informed his presbytery that he would publish his animadversions on the synod's undue tenderness in a certain case; but he was strictly forbidden by them to do so. The Philadelphia papers, in 1735, advertise his "Treatise against the Deists or Freethinkers, shewing the Necessity of Revealed Religion: for sale by John Cross, at the Drawbridge, in Front Street." No copy is known to exist. Was it occasioned by Hemphill's course?

+ He is said to have organized the congregation of the Head of Christiana, and he served it till his death.

Zealous for the interests of the church, he was remarkably punctual in attendance on presbytery and synod, and in bringing something for the fund.

x On the question of the Protest he did not vote, having in all the previous trying sessions sought the peace of Jerusalem: he withdrew with the excluded brethren, and joined with them, and published a letter to the New York Presbytery in their defence. In February, 1743-4, he made a public, formal acknowledgment of his error in having done so, before Newcastle Presbytery; and he was cordially welcomed to membership. Soon after, Franklin published his "Remarks† upon Mr. Whitefield, proving him a man under delusion: Rom. xvi. 17; 1 John iv. 1."

In discussing the terms of union, he objected to being required to acknowledge the events generally styled "the Great Revival," as "a glorious work of grace." He had seen so many sad issues

* Morgan said, "Pious Mr. Gillespie entered his dissent" against the limited suspension of Walton, in 1722.

† In the hands of Rev. Dr. Dickey, of Oxford, Pa.

of hopeful beginnings, so many lamentable things in the proceedings of the chief actors, such sad confusions and wide-spread divisions, that his heart trembled for the ark of God.

He died January 2, 1760, aged 77. Alison, who knew him, calls him "that pious saint of God." It was left to a generation "that knew not Joseph" to lavish on his name epithets of contumely. A long life passed in the service of Christ, unchronicled by the men of his own day, is summed up in a few bare sentences. The storm leaves a record of its progress and its power, but the dew and the summer breeze "return not void" to Him that sent them; though unobserved, they are not useless. Yet we would gladly see some record of a good man's life,—something more noteworthy than that, in 1750, the synod allowed five pounds towards the building of his meeting-house, or that he urged his brethren to remonstrate against the opening of a play-house in Philadelphia.

Josiah JOHN MACKEY. †

THE earliest congregation that had a minister was the first to become extinct. Colonel Anthony Lawson was the leading man on the Eastern Branch of Elizabeth River, Virginia, when Makemie came there, in 1683. His descendants resided at "the new town," near Norfolk, until a recent date. George Keith, who was often in that neighbourhood, having a daughter married at Kicketan, (now Hampton,) said that Princess Anne county could not maintain a Church minister, the tobacco was so very poor. The congregation in Lynnhaven parish, on Elizabeth River, is mentioned by Commissary Blair as existing at the close of the seventeenth century.

Makemie* owned a house and lot in Elizabeth River, and gave them, by his will, to the congregation of Rehoboth, leaving it doubtful whether the Presbyterians in Norfolk county needed no aid, or were so greatly diminished that any efforts for the maintenance of "our way" in that neighbourhood would be useless. In 1710, the presbytery sent word to Dublin Presbytery that "in all Virginia there is but one small congregation at Elizabeth River, and a few families favouring our way in Rappahannock and York."

Henry, in 1713, made "complaint to the presbytery of the melancholy circumstances Mr. John Mackey, in Elizabeth River, labours under." Hampton, being about to write to him on an

* Spence.

† See 3 Magazine 5.