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# 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.

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PHILADELPHIA:

JOSEPH M. WILSON,

No. 27 SOUTH TENTH STREET, BELOW CHESTNUT ST.

1857.

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I pray you, leave off scolding at the presbytery: it does your congregation great damage. But what shall we do? Read the Proverbs of Solomon through, with a desire to know your duty, and you will find a hundred things pat to your case."

The Rev. David McGregoire was the son of the first pastor at Londonderry, New Hampshire, and was ordained pastor of the Second Church in that town (now Derry) in 1735, and was, at this time, in his forty-fifth year. In January, by the advice of the presbytery, the congregation, in an informal manner, (for "there\* was no vote, nor any thing like a regular call,") sent an invitation to him to become their minister. President Burr attended the meeting of Boston Presbytery, in April, at Pelham, to urge that body to consent to his translation. He returned, and brought an account of a considerable prospect of obtaining Mr. McGregoire; but "I did not observe any remarkable rejoicing among many of the people occasioned by it. They are quite still. Mr. Spencer, and Mr. William Livingston, [afterwards Governor of New Jersey,] are now gone to Boston, to have the matter finally determined. Mr. Burr expects he will accept the call before he comes to see us. I fear he knows little of our circumstances. Did he only know this one thing,—that the people's affections are still attached to Mr. Bellamy beyond any man living,—it would be very discouraging to him."

The presbytery met, May 14, at Boston, and declared they had no authority to remove a minister out of their bounds. McGregoire saw no encouragement to adventure himself among a people so divided among themselves, and with so many cleaving, with unabated desire, to Bellamy.

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## ROBERT HENRY,

A NATIVE of Scotland, graduated at Nassau Hall in 1751, and was soon after licensed by New York Presbytery. In May, 1752, Tehicken, in Bucks county, Pennsylvania, asked leave of Abingdon Presbytery to employ him, and, in the fall, the synod, having heard from Davies the necessitous yet hopeful prospects in Virginia, sent him thither. He preached for some time without being licensed by the governor, and was unmolested. Newcastle Presbytery ordained him before 1753, his field of labour being in what was then Lunenburg county, and where Robinson had been

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\* Hazard to Bellamy.

greatly successful. He was installed, by Hanover Presbytery, June 4, 1755, the pastor of what are now Cub Creek, in Charlotte, and Briery, in Prince Edward.

After his installation, Todd\* and Davies preached five days, with "comfortable evidences of the presence of God with us every day. Many were awakened. One was the nearest image of the trembling jailor I ever saw. Divine power was felt by many hearts who had never heard a New Light before." Davies was in Lunenburg in June, 1756, and preached eleven or twelve times in thirteen days, with encouraging appearances of success. "I think Mr. Henry's and Mr. Wright's labours continue to be blessed in those parts. At the sacrament, in that wilderness, there were two thousand hearers and two hundred communicants: a considerable number of thoughtless creatures are solicitously inquiring about religion." Davies said, in 1757, "My honest friend Mr. Henry has had remarkable success, the last winter, among the young people."

Cub Creek was settled from Pennsylvania. Caldwell, who drew the attention of the synod to the new settlements in the valley in 1738, having ended his days on the Roanoke, Donegal Presbytery sent supplies to Cub Creek, on Round Oak, in 1744; and the synod sent Black to Buffalo, and Craig to Roanoke, in 1751.

The Briery congregation grew out of the conversion of Joseph Morton and his wife. He had been noted for his skill as a land-hunter, †—in finding eligible tracts in the unsettled wilderness. The horses ran wild through the woods, "against which no feller had come up:" "horse-pens" were prepared on the creeks to capture them. A most beautiful, gentle mare, taken by Morton in a pen, was given to his wife.

Little Joe Morton and his wife were eminently pious. He was the first elder, and, until they had a settled minister, more like a pastor than an elder. He convened the people on the Sabbath, read a sermon, and catechized the children. Few have left behind a sweeter savour of piety. He was never spoken of without veneration. His widow long survived him,—“a mother in Israel.” Their children all became pious, and a large number of their grandchildren.

In May, 1755, Henry ‡ refreshed McAden by the relation of his success. Several were hopefully brought in, and scarce a Sabbath passed without some appearance of the power of God. Wright says, "Seventeen were awakened, in 1757, under an occasional

\* Gillies.

† Dr. Alexander.

‡ McAden's Journal: in Dr. Foote's Sketches of North Carolina.

lecture of his. He had two hundred communicants, besides forty coloured members."

He also gave a portion of his time, every fourth Sabbath, to Falling River. Morgan Edwards\* says, "There was an 'awful delusion' on Falling Creek, in Pittsylvania, soon after the Separate Baptists came there."

He removed to Steel Creek, North Carolina, in 1766, and died May 8, 1767,—a plain man, † of devoted piety. As he rode on his solitary way, he dropped the bridle, and, lifting up his heart and voice and hands in prayer, suffered the quiet, faithful beast to take his own time. Often his horse stopped at Mr. Morton's door, with his good master still engaged in worship, as if alone in the forest.

Faithful in his preaching to all, his principal success was among the servants. He led them to Jesus, and they became eminent for their growth in grace and knowledge of the truth.

His widow long survived him.

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## JOHN SMITH

WAS born in England, ‡ May 5, 1702.

He is said to have received a degree from a university: perhaps he graduated at Yale, in 1727, though not marked in italics in the catalogue.

His father, Thomas Smith, with a few others, forsook the ministry of Anderson, and, by the aid of the trustees of Yale College, obtained Jonathan Edwards, then nineteen, to preach for them. He referred with delight to his pleasant intercourse with Madam Smith and her son John.

He was admitted the minister of Rye and White Plains, in West Chester county, probably May 15, 1729, being ordained by the Fairfield Association. The long tract of forty years, like the Arabian desert, is relieved by no cooling stream, no living verdure;—nothing but a solitary date, scattered here and there, meets the eye, as it wanders over nearly half a century of the good man's toil.

He came with Edwards, in 1752, and met the Synod of New York. Soon after, he joined New York Presbytery, and became a member of Dutchess Presbytery in 1763.

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\* MS. History of Virginia Baptists.

† Dr. Alexander.

‡ Bolton's West Chester County.