

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  
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## ROBERT WOTHERSPOON,

A NATIVE of Scotland, wrote to the presbytery in 1713, enclosing his credentials as a probationer. The people of Apoquinimy petitioned that he might be ordained and settled among them; but they were informed that this could not be done until they presented a formal call. They did so; and he was ordained to the sacred function and office of the ministry to the Presbyterian congregation at Apoquinimy, May 13, 1714. T

Gabriel Thomas,\* in his work on Pennsylvania, published in London in 1695, speaks of Apoquinimy as the place where goods come to be carted into Maryland. Settlements began to be made on the three branches of Drawyers Creek, as early as 1671,—chiefly from Holland and England. In 1703, the Venerable Society was asked for fifty pounds, in aid of North and South Apoquinimah, † which were about to build Episcopal churches. They were styled, in Latin, Appoquenomen and Quinquenium, the last being the original name for St. George's, and had for their missionary, in 1707, Mr. Jenkins, a Welshman,—the Episcopalians at St. George's having the Church services in their native tongue, the Welsh. X

On the 10th of May, ‡ 1711, Isaac Vigorue, Hans Hanson, Andrew Peterson, and Francis King, bought an acre of land and built on it a meeting-house. The spot has been used ever since as the site of the house of God.

Wotherspoon, in 1715, bought a farm, which still belongs to his descendants. He died in May, 1718.

Hans Hanson sat in presbytery in 1714; Thomas Heywood, (Hyatt,) in 1715; and Elias Naudain in synod in 1717.

## DAVID EVANS,

A NATIVE of Wales, was probably the son of David Evans, Esq., an elder in the Welsh Tract Church. A Baptist church was organized in Wales in 1701, and the members came to Philadelphia in September of that year. They remained a year and a half at Pennepek, but could not hold fellowship with the church there,

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\* New York Historical Society's Library.

† Hawkins.

‡ Rev. George Foot's Historical Discourse at Drawyers.

because of disagreement about laying on of hands after immersion. Thirty thousand acres having been bought in Delaware, the newly-arrived church removed thither and settled in the neighbourhood of the Iron Hill.

x Welsh Presbyteran congregations existed in Pencader, or the Welsh Tract, and in Tredryffryn, or the Great Valley, in Chester county, as early as 1710; for in that year the presbytery agreed that David Evan had done very ill in preaching or teaching in the latter place, and he was censured for acting irregularly and for invading the work of the ministry. As the most proper method, to advance him in necessary literature, and prepare him for the ministerial work, he was directed to lay aside all other business for a twelvemonth, and apply himself closely to learning and study under the direction of Andrews. Liberty was given to Andrews, Wilson, and Anderson to take him on trials, and at their discretion to license him.

In 1711, a committee of presbytery examined him, and approved of his hopeful proficiency, and he was allowed to preach as a candidate for one year, under the direction of Andrews, Wilson, and Anderson. In the next fall, David Evans a candidate, was chosen clerk of presbytery, his penmanship being careful and in the extreme curious. The people of Welsh Tract and Great Valley petitioned that he might be ordained; but, though he had made considerable proficiency, it was voted that he should continue to study as before.

In 1713, he graduated at Yale College, and was sent at the request of the people to reside at Welsh Tract and preach there. They gave him a unanimous call, and, after a thorough examination and the usual trials, he was ordained, Nov. 3, 1714. There being divers persons in the Great Valley with whom he was concerned, they were declared a distinct society from his pastoral charge.

He was the recording clerk of Newcastle Presbytery for six or seven years. For his services each member gave him a half-crown.

“An opinionative difference” between him and Samuel James gave his brethren no small trouble; they dismissed it and labored to pacify the excitement arising from it, but their healing letters and healing sermons did no good. He was dismissed in 1720, and was called to Great Valley; but he declined to accept it for several years. He was one of the first supplies sent to Sadsbury, West Branch of Brandywine, and Conestoga. When he removed to Tredryffryn, he was directed to spend one-fourth of his time at Sadsbury.

He printed his sermon at the ordination of Treat, of Abingdon. On page 49,\* he says, “That it is a wonder to see any gracious,

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\* Quoted by Franklin in his defence of Hemphill.

truly considerate, wise man in the ministry. It is no wonder to see thousands of ignorant, inconsiderate, carnal ministers; but it is a wonder to see any truly understanding, considerate, gracious ones."

He brought in a protest after all the business of synod was done in 1727; but after three years he declared his hearty concern for his withdrawal, and desired to be received as a member again. Having declared his adopting the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, he was unanimously received as a member, and, for his ease, was joined to Philadelphia Presbytery.

Early in the spring of 1738,\* he presented to the presbytery his scheme for supplying the English Presbyterians in the Valley. In December, 1739, the presbytery met, and heard the charges brought against him by Timothy Griffiths for suspending his elders from office. He was cleared, and the accuser blamed and debarred from church privileges; but the charges were renewed in the spring, with a complaint of his heterodoxy, his not preaching enough in Welsh, and his church tyranny. The only point on which he was thought censurable, was his laying aside the elders and saying he would make no use of them.

At his request he was dismissed, and accepted a call to Pilesgrove and Quihawken,† in West Jersey. Either the church organization at Pilesgrove had become extinct, or it was not to his mind; for a church covenant‡ was signed, April 30, 1741, by himself and twenty-five others. Among the signers were Isaac Van Meter, Henry Van Meter, Cornelius Newkirk, Abraham Newkirk, Barnet Dubois, Lewis Dubois, and Garret Dubois.

He adhered to the Old Side on the division of 1741: so did his sons. Samuel succeeded him at Tredyffryn. Joel graduated at Yale in 1740, was licensed by Philadelphia Presbytery, September 17, 1741, and supplied Woodbury and Deerfield. In April, 1742, Mr. Vandyke, from Appoquinimy, desired that he might be sent to them. He died before May, 1743.

He printed in Franklin's Gazette what Samuel Finley calls "sullen remarks" on Tennent's letter to Dickinson; and, in 1748, published his "Law and Gospel; or, Man wholly ruined by the Law and recovered by the Gospel," being the substance of several sermons preached in 1734, at Tredyffryn, from Galatians iii. 10; Romans i. 16. He adds to his name A.M. and V.D.M.

The following paper§ is curious and interesting:—

\* MS. Records of Philadelphia Presbytery.

† In the neighbourhood of Salem; probably Penn's Rock.

‡ New Jersey Historical Collections.

§ Mr. W. E. Dubois, of Philadelphia.

*A petition in the behalf of Jonathan Dubois,\* a hopeful beginner in learning.*

TO ALL OUR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS IN SOPUS OR ANYWHERE ELSE, ETC.

This is to acquaint you that Jonathan, the son of Barnet Dubois, (the bearer hereof,) hath been at learning these three-quarters of a year, in order to the gospel ministry, and proceeds in learning hopefully, as also does his cousin John,† the son of Lewis Dubois, his school-fellow. But, his parents not being well able to bear the charges of his learning without assistance, we, therefore, on behalf of the said Jonathan, earnestly desire and beg, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, that his near relatives, and any others that are able, would open their hearts and hands and contribute out of their earthly possessions for the carrying on of so good and necessary a work, unto which the Lord and owner of all that you have, now by his providence, calls you. We entreat you, Christian brethren, to manifest the sincerity of your Christian faith and love, by being rich in good works, (1 Timothy vi. 17, 18, 19,) being assured that they who sow bountifully shall reap also bountifully. I add no more, at present, but all sincere wishes for your temporal, spiritual, and eternal happiness, by the mercy of God the Father, through the merits of God the Son, by the sanctification of God the Holy Ghost. Amen. And so rest

Yours, in the gospel of Jesus Christ,

DAVID EVANS, *Minister.*

*Pilesgrove, in Salem county, in West New Jersey, May 7, 1745.*

Be it known to all whom it concerns that the moneys which Barnet Dubois formerly collected at Sopus and elsewhere, for our public religious affairs, were honestly laid out according to the tenor of the petition."

The congregation of Pilesgrove had met with great discouragements in their endeavours to have the gospel settled among them, and in 1739, the commission of the synod allowed them to build on the site they had chosen. To accomplish the erection, they sent a messenger to Esopus and other parts of Ulster, in New York, to their relatives, to solicit help.

Evans is said to have been eccentric and high-spirited. His preaching gave such offence on one occasion to a person at Pilesgrove, that, rather than listen a moment longer, he jumped out of the church window.

He died before May, 1751. In his will,‡ he expresses the hope

\* The pastor, for many years, of the Reformed Dutch Church, in Bucks county, Pennsylvania.

† Died in 1745, at New London, while pursuing his studies with Alison.

‡ On record at Trenton.

that his people would settle a student from the College of New Jersey, and leaves a sum of money to be given to his successor for his encouragement.

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### JOHN BRADNER.

ON his arrival from Scotland, Hampton and Henry, on good and sufficient reasons, took him on trial, and licensed him in March, 1714. He was called to Cape May, and ordained May 6, 1715. He removed, in 1721, to Goshen, in Orange county, New York, and died before September, 1733.

His son, Benoni, is said to have been born in 1733. He graduated at Nassau Hall, in 1755; but by whom or where he was licensed or ordained, does not appear: it was not in our connection. He was settled at the Nine Partners, in Dutchess county, and in June, 1786, became the minister of the Independent Church in Blooming Grove, in Orange. Consumptive, and troubled with shortness of breath, he lived to the age of seventy-one, and died, January 29, 1804, after a long and distressing illness. He was a trustee of the Morris County Society for Promoting Religion and Learning, from its formation.

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### HUGH CONN.

HE was born at Macgilligan, in Ireland, about 1685; and, having studied at the school in Foghanveil, (Faughanvale,) he graduated at the University of Glasgow.

The trade from the Patapsco to Great Britain gave rise to a Presbyterian congregation in Baltimore county; and their application to the London merchants brought their case under the eye of the Rev. Thomas Reynolds, minister in London; and, through his agency, the Rev. Hugh Conn came over to be their minister. He sent letters by him to several members of the presbytery, with the pleasing intelligence that he designed to continue his bounty (which was £30 per annum) for the furtherance of the gospel. Conn's credentials were approved; and in September, 1715, Mr. James Gordon presented a call for him from the people of Balti-