

# Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanters.

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## ORIGINAL.

### CAUSES OF THE LOW STATE OF RELIGION IN THE CHURCH.

BY REV. ISAIAH FARIS.

The present state of the church suggests the question, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

This question is not intended to suggest a doubt as to either the existence or the skill of the physician, nor yet as to the efficacy of the remedy which he prescribed, but only astonishment that, under such favorable circumstances, the health of those who profess to have submitted themselves to the treatment of the great physician is not recovered. Where there is no ground for doubt of either the character of the physician or the fitness of the remedy, there is room for suspicion that the patient is either refusing or neglecting to appropriate and apply the remedy put in his hand.

The beginning of our spiritual life is our being born of the Spirit, and its development is the effect of the continual communication of his influences in the "sanctification of the Spirit." The cause of the low state of religion might then be told in few words—the *lack of the Spirit*. But to answer the question in this summary way, would be talking to little more purpose than if a physician would tell you that his patient was dying for *want of vitality*. You would still want to know the *cause* of this lack of vitality. As the Spirit is the source of all life, if we lack the Spirit we must be lifeless. But why do we lack the Spirit? Our Saviour represents God as more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him than an earthly father is to give his son bread. There can then be no doubt that one cause of the low state of religion in the church is the *want of prayer for the Spirit*.

When Jesus departed from his disciples after promising to send them another comforter before many days, it appears that they never rested, but continued instant in prayer till the promise was

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## ECCLESIASTICAL.

### SKETCHES OF THE MINISTRY OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA.

W. M. GLASGOW, BALTIMORE, MD.

NUMBER THREE.

WILLIAM MARTIN,

Was born in the parish of Loughgilly, County Antrim, Ireland, May 16, 1781. He was trained in the strictest manner by a faithful Covenanter parentage, and graduated from the University of Glasgow, Scotland, in 1753. He studied theology under Rev. John McMillan, and was licensed by the Reformed Presbytery of Scotland, October 10, 1756. He was ordained by the Reformed Presbytery of Ireland, and installed pastor of the congregation of Vow in the County Antrim, Ireland, July 2, 1757. He came to America with a colony of his people in 1772, and settled on Rocky Creek, Chester District, South Carolina, where he bought a tract of land one mile square, and his people took up bounty land. He was the first Covenanter minister settled in the south, and in 1774, his people built a church two miles east of Catholic, where he preached, but was dismissed in 1777, for intemperate habits. His adherents built another church near by, which was burnt by the British and Tories in 1780. He was a whig and did not scruple to use his influence for the cause of the colonists. The hand of power was laid upon him in June, 1780, and he was confined in prison at Rocky Mount and Camden, South Carolina, until the following Christmas, when he was brought before Lord Cornwallis at Winnsboro. On the day of his trial before Lord Cornwallis, he stood before him erect, with his grey locks uncovered, his eyes fixed upon his lordship, and his countenance marked with frankness and benevolence. "You are charged," said his lordship, "with preaching rebellion from the pulpit. You, an old man, and a minister of the gospel of peace, charged with advocating rebellion against your lawful sovereign, King George the Third. What have you to say in your defense?" Nothing daunting, Mr. Martin replied, "I am happy to appear before you. For many months I have been held in chains for preaching what I believe to be the truth. As to King George, I owe him nothing but good will. I am not unacquainted with his private character. I was raised in Scotland; educated in her literary and theological schools; was settled in Ireland where I spent the prime of my days, and emigrated to this country some eight years ago. As a king, he was bound to protect his subjects in the enjoyment of their rights. Protection and allegiance go together, and when the one fails the other cannot be exacted. The Declaration of Independence is but a reiteration of what our Covenanted fathers have always maintained. I am thankful you have given me liberty to speak, and will abide your pleasure whatever it may be." He was released. Lord Cornwallis was accustomed to take a morning and an evening ride down the road from his quarters. Colonel Winn, Minor Winn and another whig, concealed themselves in a thicket, rifle in hand, intending to cut him off. They were discovered and apprehended by a party of Tories and were condemned to be hung. Minor Winn took the sentence greatly to heart and sent for Mr. Martin to come and pray with him. The British soldiers had cut down some trees for firewood and had piled the brush in heaps, behind which Minor kneeled in prayer, joined by Mr. Martin, and their exercises were continued in full view of the gallows, until the fatal hour had arrived, when, by fife and drum, they would be marched to the scaffold. Instead of this they were marched to the headquarters of Lord Cornwallis and pardoned. During this year, Mr. Martin suffered many annoyances from the British, but remained true to his principles of civil and religious liberty. In the winter of 1780, he went to Mecklenberg, North Carolina, on account of the disturbed state of the country in the Chester district. After the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, October 19, 1781, he returned to South Carolina and took charge of the society around Catholic. In 1785, he was again dismissed for his conduct, and his services became unacceptable to the people. In 1793, he was restored to privileges, and made a member of the committee of the Reformed Presbytery of Scotland, with Revs. King and McGarragh, to judicially manage the affairs of the church in America. He continued to preach at the

Jackson's Creek church, Wolf Pen or Wolf Pit meeting house near Winnsboro, and at private houses in all the settlements between Statesville, North Carolina, and Louisville, Georgia. Coincident with his good preaching he continued his bad habits until the meeting of the Reformed Presbytery at the house of John Kell, when seven charges were brought against him, among which were habitual drunkenness and the holding of slaves, and he was deposed by that court from the ministerial office March 12, 1801. He did not cease preaching, however, till shortly before his death. He sold all his land and made over his effects to his family and a nephew named for him. He died of a fever, brought on by an injury received by falling from his horse, October 25, 1806, and was buried in a small graveyard near his cabin. He was a large fine-looking man, a proficient scholar, an eloquent preacher and an able divine. His war sermon after the defeat of Buford, was a masterly and thrilling discourse. Many amusing anecdotes are told about him. Rev. D. S. Faris relates: "In those days sleeping in church was prevented by rising up and standing until the spell was broken. One day Mr. Martin observed a man standing who had on a pair of new breeches. He stopped in the midst of his sermon and said, "Mon, ye may sit down noa, they hae a' seen your new breeks." At another time he publicly asked his brother, "Davy, how comes it ye are so late the day?" The reason was that the prayer at the house where he called to borrow a saddle, was terribly prolonged. While Mr. Martin had contracted the bad habit of intemperance which hindered his usefulness, there is no doubt of his soundness in the faith of the Christian religion, of his faithfulness in presenting the principles of the Covenanter church in the Carolinas, and of his death in the hope of a glorious resurrection, of which, evidence was given before his departure.

#### DAVID TELFAIR,

Was born in Monteith, Scotland, in 1735. He was educated in Edinburgh, and licensed by the Burgher Synod of the Secession Church in the fall of 1759. He was ordained by the same court and installed pastor of the congregation of Bridge-of-Teith, Scotland, April 6, 1760. In the spring of 1766 he was appointed as a missionary to America and settled in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania. He was received into the Associate Church by the Presbytery of Pennsylvania, at Neshaminy, June 9, 1767. He continued in this body about two years, when he was dismissed. In the spring of 1769, he returned to Scotland, and, after itinerating for three years, again came to America and preached in new settlements as opportunity was afforded, without any ecclesiastical connection. He was supply to the old Burgher Church, in Shippen street, Philadelphia, for several years. He was received into the Covenanter Church by the Reformed Presbytery at Stony Ridge, Cumberland county, Pennsylvania, August 12, 1780. He preached with general acceptance among the scattered societies for two years. He went with Revs. Cuthbertson, Lind and Dobbin, into the Associate Reformed Church at its formation June 13, 1782. He preached throughout the Cumberland valley for a few years and became pastor of a congregation in Philadelphia, where he died in 1796.

#### MATTHEW LIND,

Was of Scotch parentage and was born at Cairn Castle, county Antrim, Ireland, March 10, 1732. He received the rudiments of an education in his native isle and graduated from the University of Glasgow, Scotland, in 1759. He studied theology in Edinburgh, and was licensed by the Reformed Presbytery of Scotland, April 17, 1762. He was ordained by the Reformed Presbytery of Ireland, and installed pastor of the congregation of Aghadowey, near Londonderry, Ireland, August 21, 1763. After ten years of faithful labor in his native country, he was appointed to accompany Rev. Alexander Dobbin as a missionary to America, and arrived in New Castle, Delaware, December 13, 1773. He, with Revs. John Cuthbertson and Alexander Dobbin, organized the Reformed Presbytery of America, at Paxtang, Dauphin county, Pennsylvania, March 10, 1774, at which time he was assigned to the churches of Paxtang, in Dauphin county, and Stony Ridge, in Cumberland county. He went into the Associate Reformed Church at its formation June 13, 1782. In 1783, he removed to Franklin county, Pennsylvania, where he became pastor of the united congregations of Green Castle, Chambersburg, West Conococheague and the Great Cove. In 1797, he was thrown from his horse and was so badly injured that he became unfit for ministerial

duty and resigned his charge March 13, 1798. He died from a disease brought on by his injuries, at his home near Green Castle, Franklin county, Pennsylvania, April 21, 1800, and was buried in the old graveyard at Brown's Mills. He was large and corpulent in person, comely in his appearance and winning in his manners. He was a laborious student all his life. He was an eloquent speaker and large audiences had their attention astonishingly riveted for hours, while with marked ability he unfolded the truth of the gospel to them. In private life he was an ornament to the Christian religion, and recommended the doctrines he so powerfully proclaimed by the silent energy of an eminently holy and exemplary life. The following remarkable event in his history, and the supposed cause of his willingness to come to America, is related by Rev. Dr. Stanley, a cotemporary clergyman, and recorded in "Dr. Sprague's Annals of the Presbyterian Church." A rumor got abroad that he had officiated in a clandestine marriage of a young gentleman of high birth and expectations to a farmer's daughter. Mr. Lind denied unequivocally the alleged fact; but the circumstances were such that even his denial did not allay suspicions. So strong was the feeling on the subject that the case was eventually brought to the notice of the Presbytery, and a committee was sent to investigate the rumors against him. By this time two men were found to come forward and state that they had seen Mr. Lind celebrate the marriage, and they named the place where it was performed. Mr. Lind persevered in his denial, and also succeeded in adducing testimony respecting his movements on the evening when the marriage was said to have taken place, which availed so far that the committee could not venture to condemn him. But, while he was ecclesiastically acquitted, public opinion was strongly against him and he felt deeply the embarrassment. Many years after he left Ireland, an eminently pious man who had long been under Mr. Lind's pastoral charge, was one evening sent for in great haste to visit an aged neighbor, who was a notoriously wicked man, and who was at the point of death. He hastened to the house and addressed him in reference to his spiritual condition and prospects. His remarks seemed to be entirely unheeded, and the aged sinner requested that he might be alone a few moments with the neighbor. The room being cleared he proceeded to relate: "I am dying, but I cannot die without making to you a statement that will surprise you. You have no doubt often noticed the very striking resemblance between myself and the Rev. Matthew Lind. You remember also the report that he had married, (naming the parties,) and how earnestly and perseveringly he denied the charge. Mr. Lind was innocent—I am the person who committed the offence—for a bribe, and under the strongest obligations of secrecy, I personated Mr. Lind. I dared not reveal the truth until now, and I will leave it with you to use after my death." Mr. Lind's first wife was a cousin of Robert Fulton, who built the first steam vessel and launched it from Jersey City in 1807.

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### ORDINATION OF T. H. ACHESON.

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Mr. Acheson was ordained to the office of the ministry and installed pastor of Hopkinton congregation, by a commission of Iowa Presbytery, September 23, 1886. Revs. W. J. Sproull and C. D. Trumbull, being present, were invited to sit as consultative members and to take part in the services of the occasion. Mr. Acheson was examined in Hebrew by Rev. W. J. Sproull; in Greek, Church History and Church Government by Rev. T. P. Robb; in Theology and Personal Religion by Rev. C. D. Trumbull. He delivered as trials for ordination a lecture on John 15:1-8, and a sermon on John 12:26, "Father, glorify thy name." His examination and trials for ordination were heartily sustained. The ordination sermon was preached by C. D. Trumbull from Acts 11:24: "He was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." Rev. T. P. Robb led in the ordination prayer and gave the charge to the young pastor. Rev. W. J. Sproull gave the charge to the people.

Thus, after long waiting (almost four years), the eyes of the congregation of Hopkinton again beheld their teacher. A reception was made for the youthful pastor and his bride the day following the ordination, which was a very enjoyable occasion. May the relation thus constituted be long continued and prove pleasant and profitable to pastor and people, and may their mutual efforts redound to the glory of God.

C. D. TRUMBULL, *Clerk of Commission.*