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THE PULPIT

AND INTELLIGENCER OF THE

ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN

CHURCH.

CONSISTING OF

SERMONS BY THE MINISTERS

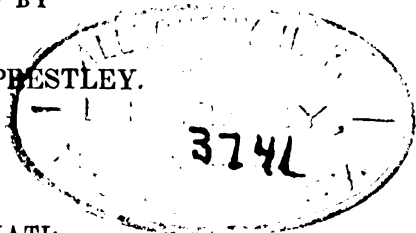
OF THE FIVE SYNODS.

AND

DENOMINATIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

EDITED BY

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BIOGRAPHY.

THE REV. MATTHEW LIND.

BY REV. JOHN D. DALES, D. D.

In the early settlement of this country, there was a great scarcity of well-qualified and faithful ministers of the gospel; and the means of furnishing them did not exist at all, or were of an exceedingly limited kind. This state of things was painfully felt by large numbers of those persons especially, who had left their homes amid the privileges of the various branches of the Presbyterian family in Scotland or the north of Ireland, and here found themselves and their children destitute of almost all the means of grace. At the contrast their hearts sickened within them; and as might be expected, almost at once their eyes were directed back with longing desires to their native lands for men to break unto them the bread of life. Sometimes the most touching appeals would be addressed by letter or petition to the supreme judicatories of their respective churches, or to some of the individual ministers of those bodies. And sometimes men would be taken from their households and their labors, and sent across the wide waste of waters, (at that time no light undertaking,) that by the living person the anxious desire of them that felt themselves well-nigh ready to perish might be the more earnestly and effectually pressed.

Nor were these calls in vain. From all the Presbyterian bodies, and especially from the Reformed Presbyterian and

the two branches of the Secession—the Burger and the Antiburger—men came out who had little less than apostolic zeal for the truth of God and for the salvation of souls. In many of them was much of the same mind which was also in Christ. They loved their work, and they loved not their lives unto death. Their labors were severe and abundant, and the blessing that followed in many instances was lasting and rich.

The Rev. Matthew Lind was born in Cairn Castle, about four miles from Larne, in the county of Antrim, Ireland, about the year 1732, (whither his father had removed from Scotland near the close of the previous century.) After having diligently and successfully passed through the prescribed course of study, (principally in Glasgow, Scotland,) Mr. Lind was solemnly set apart to the gospel ministry by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, and settled in the pastoral charge of a Reformed Presbyterian Church in the parish of Aghadowey, near Colerain, in the county of Londonderry. His congregation was (as all congregations should be felt to be) an important one, and at once he gave himself wholly to his work. His course of reading, though not as extensive and varied as the vast increase of books in these latter days would have tempted it to be, was most thorough; and his preparation for the pulpit were of the most careful and instructive kind. His pastoral oversight was tender and faithful, and his diligent attention to visitations and catechisings from house to house gave constant force to his labors in the pulpit from Sabbath to Sabbath. As might be expected from such a course and an eminently guileless and becoming deportment in his daily walk, he was greatly beloved by his people and esteemed among his brethren.

After several years' labor in this charge he was waited on by a commission that was sent out in 1773 from a settlement of excellent people residing in Dauphin county, Pa., and belonging to the Reformed Presbyterian Church. This commission was instructed to procure at least two ministers, one of whom should be the Rev. Matthew Lind, if it were

possible to remove him; and the other was left to the commissioners' own choice. After considerable deliberation and prayer, Mr. Lind decided that it was his duty to yield to this call of the head of the church, whose people were so emphatically fainting and scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. The late Rev. Alexander Dobbin was the other minister selected to become his companion and fellow-laborer. They sailed shortly after their decision was made, and landed in Philadelphia early in the year 1774, and together with the Rev. Mr. Culbertson these two brethren organized during that year the first Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in this country.

Passing from Philadelphia to the people who had invited his labors, Mr. Lind was shortly afterwards settled over a united charge, part of it being in Dauphin county, and part at Stony or Slate Ridge in Cumberland county, and here he labored with zeal. Where there had been a famine for the bread and the water of life, he was instrumental, by his diligence, his unceasing prayers, and the sweet unction of his preaching, to provide feasts of fat things; and the people greatly grew in grace and in the knowledge of the gospel under his ministry. The times, however, were troublous. By step after step the mother country had provoked the resistance of the thirteen colonies, and at length that war broke out which resulted in their entire separation from Great Britain, and the establishment of a free and independent government. In this struggle, it is understood that, like the great body of the Presbyterians of every name, Mr. Lind strongly sympathized with the colonies, and never ceased his interest in their cause, until in common with the country at large, he could rejoice in the blessings of free institutions and a free people. This struggle also led him and his brethren to see deeply the necessity of the churches in this country taking a position separate from all their former connexions abroad, and especially that there should be a greater visible union here among all those who were of generally like precious faith and usage in the worship of God. Accordingly, after

years of deliberation, these brethren—comprising the entire ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church—and eleven of the Associate—being all the ministers of that excellent body, except Rev. Messrs. Marshall and Clarkson—united in forming at Pequa, Pa., on the 13th of June, 1682, the Associate Reformed Church. That union had long been devoutly desired—was frequently prayed for—and at length was made on the principle of forbearance among brethren, who had mutual confidence in their own and each other's attachment to the truth and the cause of God, their common Saviour. And though there was, as is always to be expected, an honest and conscientious opposition on the part of some of the union, yet it may be said that the prominent actors in it generally, approved of it more and more the longer they lived, and many have risen since to praise them for their work.

Sometime during the following year, Mr. Lind was released at his own request from the charge which he had now held for about nine years, and accepted a call to the united congregations of Greencastle, Chambersburgh, West Conocogogue, and Great Cove, (now McConnellsburgh,) in Franklin county. In this scattered and trying, but important charge, he labored with much of the energy and success of his early years. Increasingly large numbers waited on his ministry, and many were led to the Savior to whom he loved to preach. He had great pleasure in visiting destitute places and vacancies; and in several of these, to this day, his memory, and that of his excellent son,* is precious for such labors of love. His seat was usually filled in the church courts, and his consels and opinions were always well received. In his person Mr. Lind was large, and in his latter years inclined to corpulency. He was remarkably comely and attractive in his form, mild and amiable in his countenance, persuasive and winning in his manners. And over all this, and far excelling

*The Rev. John Lind, of Hagerstown, Md.

every natural characteristic, there was a lovely spirit of simple, consistent, and ever-present piety, manifesting that his walk was with God, and that he *felt* that he was an ambassador for Christ, and a minister of the gospel.

But the period for the termination of his labors drew on. In the year 1797 or '8, he accidentally received a fall from his horse; and though he partially recovered, he was never able afterwards to attend fully to the duties of the ministry, but gradually declined until the 21st day of April, 1800, when he calmly breathed his last, and entered into rest. He was greatly beloved in life, and deeply lamented in death. The following obituary notice of him, prepared by his friend and immediate successor, the Rev. John Young, of Greencastle, will show how he was esteemed by those who had known him long and well:—

“On Monday, the 21st of April, 1800, the Rev. Matthew Lind, late pastor of the congregations of Greencastle, Chambersburgh, West Conacogeague, and Great Cove, under the inspection of the First Associate Reformed Presbytery of Pennsylvania, departed this life, aged 68 years and 8 months. Endowed with talents for deep investigation, he, happily for himself and others, employed them chiefly on subjects of theology. A laborious student all his life, he rarely, if ever, appeared in the pulpit without giving ample proof of his being master of his subject. Feeling himself the importance of divine things, and knowing that men cannot be saved without *receiving the truth in the love of it*, it was his anxious endeavor to inform the understanding of his hearers, and to impart to their hearts the animation and warmth of piety. Often have crowded auditories had their attention astonishingly riveted for hours together, whilst with singular ability he has unfolded the sublime mysteries of the gospel, and traced the various exercises of Christian life. He was indeed a workman that needed not to be ashamed, having received from his Master a rare talent of rightly dividing the word of truth. Having entered the ministry about the year 1760, he remained in the punctual discharge of his offi-

cial duties till within less than three years of his decease. Finding the infirmities attending his advanced age increased by a fall from his horse, he applied to the Presbytery and obtained a release from his pastoral charge. Since that period he failed gradually, till it pleased his Master to call him hence to receive the reward which he has promised to bestow upon the good and faithful servant. It would be injustice to his memory not to observe, that in private life he was an ornament to the Christian character, and recommended the doctrines which he publicly taught by the silent energy of an eminently holy example. In him the church has lost one of her most instructive and useful teachers, his widow an affectionate husband, his children a tender parent, his servants a kind master, and his numerous friends and acquaintances one who was a stranger to dissimulation, whose heart felt the sympathies of friendship, and glowed with genuine benevolence to all."

His remains lie interred at Brown's Mills, near the place of his former residence, about four miles from Greencastle. On the stone which affection has erected over his grave, the following simple but expressive words are inscribed :

"To the memory of the Rev. Matthew Lind, who, after having served God in the gospel of his Son for nearly forty years, and performed with exemplary tenderness and fidelity the duties resulting from his several relations in life, fell asleep in Jesus on the 21st of April, 1800, aged 68 years and 8 months. 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.'"

—*Christian Instructor.*