

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.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, by
JOSEPH M. WILSON,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of
Pennsylvania.

STEREOTYPED BY L. JOHNSON & CO.
PHILADELPHIA.

"25th, Tenth month, 1657." He was probably either the father or grandfather of Eleazer Wales, who graduated at Yale in 1727, and settled at Allentown, New Jersey, in 1730.

Crosswicks, or Crossweeksung, was an early Quaker settlement. An Episcopal church was proposed to be erected there in 1702. Morgan probably refers to it when, in his Latin letter to Mather, in 1721, he speaks of two congregations suddenly grown up twenty miles from Freehold, and where formerly were only seven Presbyterian families. He began to preach there in May, 1720, and prepared the way for Walton. The Presbyterians had a meeting-house before 1722. In 1730, the synod considered a supplication from Crosswicks, and directed Andrews to reply. Wales soon after settled there; but he asked leave, September 19, 1734, of Philadelphia Presbytery, to resign, on account of inadequate support: his statement being confirmed by the representative of the congregation, Mr. Ingliss, he was dismissed. He was directed to join with Andrews in writing to the Rector of Yale for a minister to visit the destitutions of West Jersey. He was called to Millstone, September 19, 1735, and joined East Jersey Presbytery, within the bounds of which it lay.

He was one of the first members of New Brunswick Presbytery, and the only New Englander, besides Treat, who was excluded by the Protest. He is mentioned incidentally, once or twice, in Whitefield's Journal, as having come to Amwell and New Brunswick to meet him. His name is also seen in Brainerd's diary, among the contributors to the support of his mission. Kingston is entered as giving £5 11s.

No notice appears of Kingston or Millstone among the congregations highly favoured during the Revival.

Wales died in 1749.

RICHARD TREAT,

BORN at Milford, Connecticut, September 25, 1708, was a descendant or near relative of Governor Robert Treat, an early settler of that town. He graduated at Yale in 1725, and was ordained by Philadelphia Presbytery, and installed pastor of Abingdon, Pennsylvania, December 30, 1731. David Evans preached on the occasion, showing that it was a wonder to see a godly, considerate man in the ministry.

Treat, in 1739, while hearing Whitefield preach, was convinced of his formal state, notwithstanding he held and preached the doctrines of grace.

Whitefield* was at Abingdon, April 17, 1740, and says, "God has lately shown mercy to him. He was deeply convinced, when I was here last, that he had not experienced the saving power of the gospel. Soon after I went away, he attempted to preach, but could not, and told his people how miserably he had deceived himself and them. He desired them to pray for him, and has ever since continued to seek Jesus Christ, sorrowing. He is now under deep convictions and a very humbling sense of sin. He preaches as usual, though he has not a full assurance of faith, because, he said, it was best to be found in the way of duty. I believe the Lord is preparing him for great services. I observed a great presence of God in our assembly, and the word came with a soul-convincing and comforting power to many."

He had before acted with the majority of the synod; but now, becoming, in their judgment, "a ringleader in destroying learning and good order," he was excluded in 1741. With his neighbour Tennent, of Neshaminy, he joined New Brunswick Presbytery. A division in the congregation ensued; and, when Philadelphia Presbytery met (March 19, 1742) at Abingdon, Treat demurred to their jurisdiction, and they referred the matter to synod. In May, Benjamin Jones, Malachi Jones, Archibald McClean, Benjamin Armitage, and others, asked the presbytery for advice; and they were directed to settle the matter as should be most for the glory of God. The next spring, the papers were laid before the synod; and, on their recommendation, the presbytery sent supplies to Abingdon as often as they could.

Whitefield often preached in the graveyard to a great course from all the region round. Treat's labours were also largely blessed.

When the Presbyterians at Milford, Connecticut, asked New Brunswick Presbytery to ordain Jacob Johnson for their minister, they declined, but sent Treat to heal the difference. He failed; for they of Milford, instead of succumbing to Congregational despotism, made out a call for him, August 10, 1743. The presbytery advised him not to accept it, and sent them Sackett, of Bedford, Lamb, of Baskingridge, and Youngs, of Southold. New Haven Association† retaliated by closing their pulpits against all the members of New Brunswick Presbytery.

Treat published his sermon‡ preached, in 1747, at the ordination of Lawrence, in the Forks of Delaware, and on the death of President Finley.

In 1751, Abingdon Presbytery was formed, for the convenience of the ministers of Brunswick Presbytery residing in Pennsylvania and West Jersey. It was merged in Philadelphia Presbytery on the union.

* Whitefield's Journal.

† Tracy's Great Awakening.

‡ Connecticut Historical Society.

He died, November 20, 1778, surviving many years all who had been in our ministry before him, and being revered as a peace-maker and a man full of good works. He laboured to the close of his days, having preached on "the West Branch of the Forks" (Allen township) shortly before his decease.

The Rev. Joseph Treat, colleague with Dr. Rodgers in the city of New York, was his son. Another of his sons was settled there as a physician.

ROBERT CATHCART,

A LICENTIATE from Ireland, was received by Newcastle Presbytery, April 15, 1730, and was sent to supply Middletown, Delaware county, Pennsylvania, and Brandywine, Kent, and Lewes, in Delaware. In December, he was called to Kent, but declined, and settled at Brandywine, and, probably, at Middletown.

In 1720, an address from some people in Birmingham, on Brandywine, was read in synod, and McGill was appointed to preach to them. The next year they were directed to apply to Newcastle Presbytery, and are described as people on Brandywine, White Clay, and the north side of Red Clay. Laing was the supply of White Clay and Brandywine in the spring and summer of 1723; and the 22d of August is noted by the presbytery for a remarkable freshet of White Clay Creek, as though it had risen in its might to wash away all remembrance of Laing's Sabbath-day bathing. In the fall, McGill was there; and then Creaghead served them for several years. In 1727, they called the Rev. Patrick Vance, of Burt, Ireland; and the presbytery sent the call to him in Ireland. In 1729, they had the services of John Tennent. A meeting-house being contemplated by the people of Brandywine and Middletown, the fears of White Clay Congregation were aroused, and the intervention of the presbytery was invoked. Leave was given them to build.

In 1740, Cathcart began to preach in Wilmington.* The undertakers of the meeting-house, Captain Chambers and Captain Hutchinson, obtained a gift from the synod's fund of fifty pounds, and a loan of thirty pounds.

Cathcart signed the Protest in 1741; and, as Whitefield

* Thomas Chalkley, a Friend, in September, 1736, being there, says, "It is a newly-settled town on Christiana Creek, which, I believe, will be a flourishing place if the inhabitants take care to live in the fear of God."