

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
An Historical Introduction,
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PHILADELPHIA:
JOSEPH M. WILSON,
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scendants was Governor of Maryland, and was educated under Samuel Finley, at Nottingham.

"His will is dated October 15, 1715; he died before September, 1717."

The elder from Rehoboth, in 1710, was Pierce Bray; in 1718, John Dridden, (Dryden,) whose descendants still reside there.

JAMES ANDERSON

WAS* born in Scotland, November 17, 1678, and was ordained by Irvine Presbytery, November 17, 1708, with a view to his settlement in Virginia.† He sailed March 6, 1709, and arrived in the Rappahannock, April 22; but, the state of things not warranting his stay, he came northward, and was received by the presbytery, September 20. He settled at Newcastle.

He was directed to write, in conjunction with Wilson, to the Synod of Glasgow; and the application was answered by sending hither Wotherspoon and Gillespie.

In 1714, out of regard to the desolate condition of the people in Kent county, he was directed to supply them monthly on a Sabbath, and also to spend a Sabbath at Cedar Creek, in Sussex.

An effort seems to have been made, after the acquittal of Makemie, to have the city of New York supplied with a minister of our church. Vesey‡ wrote to a friend December 2, 1709, "that the Dissenting preacher is likely to gain no ground." His stay was brief; but the people kept together, and met for worship, with few interruptions, and with a gradual increase of numbers, till 1716, when they took measures to form a regular congregation. The next year found them strong enough to undertake the support of a minister, being doubtless encouraged by promises from the ministers of Glasgow. They presented§ their call for Anderson, by the hands of Mr. Thomas Smith and Mr. Gilbert Livingston, to Newcastle Presbytery during the first meeting of synod. They considered the matter, and, having heard Anderson's reasons for removal, referred it to the synod: a large committee was appointed to meet at Newcastle and "audit" the objections of his people and fully determine the affair. The commissioners attended the committee, and Anderson was allowed to accept the call.

Public worship was held in the City Hall. The original friends

* Miller's Life of Rodgers.

† Albany Documents.

‡ Anderson to Principal Stirling, of Glasgow.

§ MS. Records of Newcastle Presbytery.

of Presbyterianism seem all to have passed away. Prominent among their successors were Patrick Macknight, Dr. John Nicoll, Gilbert Livingston, Thomas Smith, William Smith, and William Livingston.

The bold, free, handsome signature of P. Macknight, at the head of the representatives, indicates his position as a merchant and a man of property. He was from the North of Ireland. Dr. Nicoll was a graduate of Edinburgh University,—a physician of eminence; he died October 2, 1743, aged sixty-four. Gilbert Livingston was the youngest son of Robert Livingston, son of the venerable minister of Ancrum,—and was the grandfather of Dr. Gilbert R. Livingston, of Philadelphia. William Livingston was the nephew of Robert, and father of the Governor of New Jersey. Thomas Smith was from England: he lived to an advanced age. William Smith was a native of Newport-Pagnel, in England, and came to New York in 1715 in the same ship with James Alexander, who, like Smith, became distinguished as a lawyer and an opponent of an arbitrary executive. He was afterwards a judge, and a member of the King's Council.

In 1718, Dr. Nicoll, Macknight, Gilbert Livingston, and Thomas Smith purchased a lot on Wall Street, near Broadway, and, in the following year, built a church. Besides the donations in the city, the Legislature of Connecticut directed a collection to be taken up throughout the colony for their benefit.

Cotton Mather* wrote to Dr. Nicoll (January 20, 1719–20) the following letter “to be communicated:”—

“BRETHREN:—

“We are very sensibly touched with grief at the information you give us of the strange difficulties under which your evangelical affairs are labouring. But, since it is from you only we have been informed of them, this gives us a little hope they may not grow to the extremity you may be afraid of. The opposition your work suffers from the great adversary is but an argument that it is a work of God; and if you keep looking up to Him, who is infinitely stronger than he that is in the world, you may soon see all the opposition happily conquered. But it would be a wisdom in the opposers to consider seriously who and what they may be acting for. As for us, we have never yet had any disadvantageous representations of worthy Mr. Anderson made to us; nor shall we receive any thing to his disadvantage without first giving him and you an opportunity of vindication. May the glorious Lord,

* Mather MSS. American Antiquarian Society. Wodrow wrote to Mather, January 23, 1713, “I presume to give my kindest regards to Mr. James Anderson, my old acquaintance.” He desires to hear of the condition of our brethren in Pennsylvania and Maryland, and thereabouts.—*Wodrow Correspondence.*

who knows the services and patience of his ministers, be near his faithful minister,—a God of patience first and then of consolation. It has been a trouble to us that we have been able to do so little among our people for your assistance in your laudable design of erecting an edifice for the worship of God.”

Macknight and Nicoll, with Joseph Blake, John Leddel, and Thomas Inglis, representatives of the congregation, wrote (May 9, 1720) a letter* of thanks to the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, Members of Council, and Representatives of the General Court of Connecticut. A twelvemonth before, they had applied to their honours, “for a brief for a general and voluntary contribution for assisting in building our house of worship, which, being begun, we could not finish without the charitable aid of others; which was cheerfully and readily granted. Now, with rejoicing, we crave leave to acquaint this assembly that, by the assistance we experienced from Connecticut, we were not only encouraged to go on with our begun building,—which otherwise was like to drop and go to ruin,—but were able also to get it under roof, so that now with joy we enjoy the ordinances dispensed to us therein. We heartily thank you for your opportune, free, and voluntary liberal aid to a small despised handful, which, we hope, designs nothing else but the honour of the glorious Lord and the eternal good of their souls and their children’s.” The sum raised in Connecticut was less than they expected,—“the charity of some having been cooled by false and malicious reports dispersed through the colony. However, we do not blame anybody but ‘the accuser of the brethren,’ who hath indeed all along opposed the good work with the utmost malice. But this does not in the least discourage us, but rather demonstrates to us that the work is God’s, who, as he has brought it this length, will undoubtedly finish it in opposition to Satan and all his instigations.”

The congregation† petitioned the King’s Council (March 4, 1719–20) to incorporate, by letters-patent under the great seal of the province, the ministers, elders, and deacons of the Presbyterian congregation in the city of New York. They style themselves Scots, from North Britain, and state, that they have erected a house for the worship of God after the manner of the Presbyterian church. They urge their request on the ground of the great inconvenience of vesting the title to their property in certain individuals, which they must do until incorporated. This application was signed by Anderson and the five representatives. The president of the council was Peter Schuyler; the members, A. Depeyster, Rip Van Dam, John Barberie, Thomas Byerly, and

* MSS. in Secretary of State’s Office, Hartford.

† Case of the Scots Presbyterian Congregation in New York.

John Johnston. The vestry of Trinity Church appeared by counsel to oppose, and the request was refused.

On the 19th of September, they renewed their petition,—Governor Burnet* being come to the province and appearing friendly. With him there was a discrepancy between appearance and intention. He was for the Church, right or wrong, by fair means or foul: he rent the French congregation by his illegal interference, and deceived the Presbyterians by much fair speech.

The council were, A. D. Philipse, George Clarke, Robert Walter, Caleb Heathcote, and John Byerly,—probably all Churchmen. Counsel was heard on both sides; and the council declined to act, because no instance had occurred of granting corporate privileges to a body of Dissenters.

Their petition, dated May 10, 1724, was transmitted to the “Lords of Trade;” and the Attorney-General for Ireland, Richard West, gave his opinion that, in the general and abstract view of the thing, there was nothing in the request unreasonable or improper.

On the 16th of May, 1730, the church was completed, being eighty feet long by sixty feet wide.

The Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, in 1719, invested a collection in goods, and sent them to New York. The Synod of Philadelphia gave a tenth of the nett produce to aid in the support of Anderson, and sent to their Scottish friends “heartly thanks for their kindness to the interest of religion in these wilderness parts.”

The letters to Boston and Connecticut had referred to malicious reports, widely dispersed, against Anderson, and which had cooled the charity of some towards the infant church. Gilbert Livingston and Thomas Smith were much dissatisfied, and complained to the synod of the Presbytery of Long Island in regard to the settlement of Anderson. The synod heard their representations, and, by a large majority, decided that the proceedings were regular. The two gentlemen also complained of two sermons of Anderson’s; they were read, and approved as orthodox and godly in substance, though the terms in some passages were not so mild and soft as they could have wished. Dr. Nicoll was present in synod as an elder; Andrews and Dickinson wrote to Livingston and Smith; Jones, Gillespie, and Evans wrote to the congregation.

These gentlemen† petitioned the council not to grant corporate privileges to the congregation, as this would confirm the property

* The “Address of the Presbyterian Ministers of New York and Long Island” to him in October, 1720, contains a high compliment to his father’s memory, the historian.—*Bradford’s Weekly Mercury*.

† Documentary History of New York, third volume.

to Anderson and those who adhered to him. They asked that they might be released from the bonds which they, jointly with Macknight and Nicoll, had given for the land and the building, as Macknight was about to go to Europe, and they had experience enough of Nicoll's instability and other faults.

The matter was not healed. The source of the difficulty is wholly to be guessed at. Andrews calls it "a squabble."*

The trustees of New Haven College sent missionaries, at the request of Smith, to erect a new congregation. The synod (in 1721) approved of the action of Long Island Presbytery; but, having received a letter from the trustees, desiring the synod to send some of their number to confer with them on the interest of religion in general and the unhappy difference in New York, the synod directed the presbytery to meet with them. The conference was held at Stamford, in October, but was fruitless. The synod approved of the presbytery's management of the affair.†

Jonathan Edwards,‡ barely nineteen, preached to Smith and his friends from August, 1722, till April 26. He loved to remember the pleasant days spent there, and his delight in the society of the pious Madam Smith and her son,—probably the Rev. John Smith, of Rye.

The separation terminated on Edwards's departure.

In the "Antiquarian Library" at Worcester, Massachusetts, is a letter from Rebecca Nicoll, to Cotton Mather, (May 23, 1723,) representing that the whole difficulty lies with Smith, and Grant and his son, and intimating that they were unreasonable. They "had a meeting by themselves; but most of Grant's family went to the English church." Mr. Grant reports, "that the Boston ministers engage £60 yearly to aid the separate meeting. We have a faithful pastor, as all who know Mr. Anderson acknowledge him to be. It is a shame to send aid to humour a part of two families. Madam Smith has a letter, confirming the report of aid. Ten of the people are very scandalous. Mr. Jephson

* The narrative given in the preface to the Records of the Trustees of the Congregation was drawn up twenty years after by William Smith, who takes no notice of this original difficulty between "the undertakers," but refers solely to the subsequent difficulty between Dr. Nicoll and the minister, and presents the view taken of the matter by Dr. Nicoll. Dr. Rodgers has added a marginal note, that Anderson was a graceful, popular preacher, and a worthy man.

† Morgan to Mather, October 31, 1722:—"Our synod have justified all that the Long Island Presbytery have done in the affair of New York. I only stood up and dissented; more would, but have been mistrusted to have had a hand in setting up the separate meeting; but all knew that I was against that being set up, for I look upon it as a very hurtful thing."—*American Antiquarian Society*.

‡ Immediately on being licensed, in consequence of an application from a number of ministers, who were intrusted to act in behalf of the Presbyterians of New York, he went thither. "I had," Edwards says, "abundance of sweet religious conversation in the family of Madam Smith." After leaving, "sometimes I felt my heart ready to sink with the thoughts of my friends in New York."

and his family have returned to us. Her excuse for writing was, 'having been one of your flock.'"

Dr. Nicoll took a voyage to Scotland, and engaged the General Assembly to assist them; and, by their order, a large collection was taken up.

New troubles were in store for Anderson; the representatives and elders complaining of Dr. Nicoll to the presbytery and synod. Without consulting the representatives, (trustees,) he had applied to the payment of the church debt, the money sent from Great Britain, and refused to cancel or deliver up the bonds paid with the public money. He disregarded the presbytery, would not attend the synod when notified, and, as though the church were his property, applied to Boston for a minister. The synod (in 1726) pronounced his conduct unjustifiable, and wrote to the ministers in Boston not to countenance him till he gave satisfaction.

Anderson at once desired liberty to remove from New York, and the congregation was allowed to call another minister in an orderly manner, as soon as they paid the arrears now due.

He was called, September 24, 1726, to Donegal, on the Susquehanna, and accepted it. His removal did not heal the difficulty: the arrears were not paid till 1730. The synod gave leave to his friends, Blake, Leddel, and Inglis, to "join as to sacramental communion" with any of our neighbouring congregations.

Application was made by Andrew Galbraith to Newcastle Presbytery, August 1, 1721, for supplies for Chicken's Longus, (Chiquesalunga;) and Gillespie and Cross were sent. Rowland Chambers renewed the request next year. In May, 1723, Conestoga applied; but Hutcheson failed to go, being unable to obtain a guide thither; in the fall, he and McGill were sent to Dunngaal. In 1725, Donegal obtained one-sixth of Boyd's time; and he served them till they called Anderson. He was installed the last Wednesday in August, 1727. In September, 1729, he gave every fifth Sabbath to the people on Swatara, and joined the congregation of Derry.

The Presbytery of Donegal held its first meeting October 11, 1732, and consisted of Anderson, Boyd, Orr, and Bertram. As early as September, 1735, the emigration to Virginia attracted the attention of Thomson, of Chestnut Level; and he proposed to Donegal Presbytery to employ an itinerant in Virginia. The overture was "simply approved;" that is, fully, as in Romans xii. 8:—"He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity,"—without stint or abatement: so they concurred in his plan heartily. Each year brought up the case of the back-parts of Virginia; and in April, 1738, the presbytery approved of the plan of John Caldwell to ask the synod to send a deputation to wait on the Virginia government and solicit its favour in behalf of our interest there. The synod wrote to the governor, and sent Anderson to bear the letter, providing

supplies for his pulpit, and allowing for his expenses "in a manner suitable to his design."

Caldwell was a member of Thomson's congregation, having come with four single sisters from county Antrim. He removed to Frederick county; then to Campbell and Prince Edward's. He was the father of Caldwell, of Elizabethtown, and of Major John Caldwell, of Virginia, who was shot by a Tory during the Revolution. John C. Calhoun was his great-grandson.

Anderson performed his mission satisfactorily. In April of the next year, the presbytery blamed him for having sent Dunlap from New England to Virginia without knowing any thing certainly of his ecclesiastical standing. This was probably the Rev. Robert Dunlap, who settled in Maine.

He married* *Mistresse Suitt Garland*, daughter of *Sylvester Garland*, of the Head of *Apoquinimy*, February, 1712-13. She died December 24, 1736. He married *Rachel Wilson*, December 27, 1737. His son, *Garland Anderson*, was one of the witnesses of *Andrews's* will, in 1742. He married *Jane*, daughter of *Peter Chevalier*, of Philadelphia: he died early. His daughter *Elizabeth* married *Samuel Breeze*, and resided in New York, a woman of great excellence.

Anderson died July 16, 1740, probably on his return from a visit to *Opequhon*, and just in the trying emergency when he was needed to stand in the breach. A worthless fellow sought to bring a reproach on him after his death, and the presbytery promptly came forward with a declaration that he was high in esteem for circumspection, diligence, and faithfulness as a Christian minister.†

Blair, in his answer to "The Querists," speaks of him as pressing forward, at *Fagg's Manor*, to dispute with *Whitefield*, almost before he had finished preaching. He afterwards, at *Newcastle*, proposed to have some conference with *Whitefield*, but was told that, since he and his friends had made their queries public, he could have no communication with him except through the press.

His brother, the Hon. *John Anderson*,‡ of *Perth Amboy*, was made, in 1712, one of the Council of the Province, in place of *William Pinhorne, Esq.* Governor *Hunter* was obliged to excuse himself to the government at home for having displaced an obstinate Churchman to make way for a man of sense who was a Dissenter. He died in March, 1736, aged seventy-three, being then President of the Council.

* From his family Bible: copied by Mr. Hazard.

† His correspondence with Principal *Sterling*, of Glasgow, is preserved in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh.

‡ Albany Documents. "A Scotch Presbyterian who had the command of a ship of the Darien Company, and enriched himself by plundering it." Rev. Mr. *Henderson*, of Dover, Delaware, wrote thus to England, to involve Governor *Hunter* in trouble.