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THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PHILADELPHIA, FOR THE YEAR ENDING JANUARY 11, 1917.

In presenting the Annual Report of the Executive Council, it is taken for granted that the organization, purposes, and work of The Presbyterian Historical Society are so well known that only the salient features of the year need be mentioned.

The Society is composed of 352 members; 39 of this number being Life Members. During the year the following members have passed to their reward: Rev. James Y. Boice, D.D., a member of the Council, Mr. John Mellhenny, a Life Member of the Society, Mr. Edward P. Borden, Rev. Francis Brown, D.D., LL.D., Daniel B. Cobb, Rev. Julius A. Herold, Rev. James D. Moffat, D.D., LL.D., Walter E. Rex, Esq., and Rev. Robert Laird Stewart, D.D.

While the increase in the number of members of the Society during the year has been gratifying, exceeding that of any previous year, 77 new names having been added, yet there should be at least 1,000 members. The Society is not a local organization, as some seem to think, but national, and should command the attention and support of all the members of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches throughout the country.

THE SCOTCH-IRISH IN AMERICA.*

BY THE REV. LOUIS F. BENSON, D.D.

In writing *A History of the Presbyterian Church in America from Its Origin Until the Year 1760*, the Rev. Richard Webster began his narrative with a view of the "State of Ulster during the Reigns of James I and Charles I." In thus putting forward the Ulster Plantation as the *fons et origo* of our American Presbyterianism, Mr. Webster was as simple-hearted and complacent as though he were tracing to the Netherlands the origin of the early Dutch Reformed Church in New York. And one who is familiar with the proceedings of our Scotch-Irish societies has become aware that there are still with us some who share the viewpoint of Mr. Webster in contemplating the origins of our American Presbyterianism.

This method of dealing with the facts of church history by our kindly but resolute Scotch-Irish brethren, may seem perhaps akin to that method of dealing with the facts of nature which has been described as "the pathetic fallacy." But when we come to deal not with the Presbyterians in America, but with *The Scotch-Irish in America*, Mr. Webster's point of view may be frankly approached and held with tenacity. There is no "historical doubt" that the Scotch-Irish in America came mostly from Ulster. And it is a special merit of Mr. Ford's history of them that he, too, begins with a survey of the Ulster Plantation. What Ireland was at the time of the Plantation, the Scotch migration to Ulster, the Scottish Undertakers, and the formative influences that entered into the making of the type of character and life conveniently denominated "Scotch-Irish"—these are precisely the subjects upon which much ought to have been said and too little has been said in current histories of the Scotch-Irish in America. And a full and adequate treatment of them consti-

* *The Scotch-Irish in America*. By Henry Jones Ford, Professor of Politics in Princeton University. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N. J.; London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press. 1915.

tutes the special strength of Prof. Ford's work, covering as it does perhaps one third of the book. As to the racial elements that enter into the making of the Ulsterman, he does not share the common opinion that the Ulsterman had as large a share of Celtic blood as the Lowland Scotsman, and for his evidence he prints as an appendix a careful study of "The Making of the Ulster Scot," by the Rev. Dr. James Heron, of Belfast.

The remainder of Prof. Ford's book is devoted to the successive emigrations of the Scotch-Irish to the American colonies, their settlement in New England, New York, and New Jersey, and the South, and especially in Pennsylvania; and their great influence in the making of the Presbyterian Church, in the spread of education, in the Revolutionary War, and in the establishment of these United States of America. It is possibly in dealing with the part the Scotch-Irish played in New England and New York that the author effects the greatest enlargements of one's estimate of their contribution to American life.

No less than five chapters are devoted to the part of the Scotch-Irish in the making of the Presbyterian Church. In these the narrative is always interesting, the facts freshly gathered, and sometimes freshly illuminating, and the conclusions compelling up to the point of a full acknowledgment of the great contribution of the Scotch-Irish to the constituency, the influence, and the organization of the Church.

But the facts nevertheless are ranged in the wake of a definite thesis, and are gathered in proof of it and in illustration of it. The thesis is precisely that of Mr. Webster (of whom the author acknowledges himself as in this respect a disciple), that Ulster is the historic source of American Presbyterianism. We may quote the author's own presentation of his thesis:

"Owing to the usual mode of treatment which regards Presbyterianism as a phase of the Puritan movement, the architectonic character of the Scotch-Irish influence does not stand out with the distinctness that is its due. Thus Dr. Briggs in his *American Presbyterianism* first mentions the Puritan set-

lements in New England. A much older *History* by the Rev. Richard Webster gives a more correct view of genetic order, by taking Ulster as the starting point of the history of the Presbyterian Church in America. The still older *History* by the Rev. Charles Hodge regards the beginnings of American Presbyterianism as involved in Puritan emigration to America. All these historians have solid grounds for the positions they have taken, but for a clear understanding of the matter certain distinctions should be borne in mind. We must distinguish between Puritanism and Presbyterianism; between Presbyterianism and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America" (pp. 325, 326).

The train of thought underlying this passage, and indeed expressed in it, we understand to be something like this: In studying American Presbyterian origins we may ignore altogether the Huguenot, German, Dutch, Scotch, and Irish strains that entered into it; but the English Puritan strain we cannot ignore, it is too obvious and influential. The early Presbyterian churches, that in Philadelphia and those to the east and south of it, look so much as though established by an extension of "the Puritan movement," that we must not think of them as Presbyterian at all. We must distinguish between Puritanism and Presbyterianism; and having thus eliminated Puritanism, we have left to us Ulster as "the starting point of the history of the Presbyterian Church in America."

Now what we understand to remain in our author's mind as the definition of American Presbyterianism after the Puritan elements are eliminated, is its definite outward organization as Presbytery. He fixes his attention therefore upon that gathering of ministers at Philadelphia in the first decade of the eighteenth century, which organized somewhat loosely and indeterminately what he and we may agree to call the first Presbytery. That all of these men were Scotch-Irish our author does not claim. He admits that "the membership of the Presbytery was pretty evenly divided between Irish Presbyterians and New England Presbyterians, but the formative influence undoubtedly proceeded from the Scotch-Irish mis-

sionary Makemie" (p. 332). Precisely what is included in the phrase "formative influence" is uncertain. We presume that these men, Scotch-Irish and Puritan alike, gathered in obedience to a common feeling that the time had come for some sort of an organization of Presbyterian interests. We presume, moreover, that the virile Makemie took, certainly in part, perhaps wholly, the leadership in bringing these men together to execute what had become in the minds of all a necessary step forward. What we do not presume, and what we cannot see, is why or how Makemie's virility or his good leadership relates American Presbyterianism to Ulster as its source, or how "it appears that both in historical connection and in nature of organization the Presbyterian Church in the United States was a Scotch-Irish enterprise" (p. 396).

It is just at this point—at the moment when the developing enthusiasm of our author culminates and finds expression in the succinct and striking announcement that "the Presbyterian Church in the United States was a Scotch-Irish enterprise"—that the candid reader is compelled to hesitate, to say the least, and very likely to part company altogether with the author of this interesting book.

Is this conclusion offered to us, we venture to ask, as serious history? Is it the net result of a thorough-going, impartial, and philosophical review of the origins of American Presbyterianism? To us, at least, holding a brief neither for the Scotch, the Scotch-Irish, the Puritan, or any other of the elements so happily fused in the Presbyterian Church in America, but very appreciative of them all, our author's complacent characterization of that church as "a Scotch-Irish enterprise" is lacking not so much in Scottish humor or in Irish audacity, as in plain American gumption.