

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,
BY THE REV. WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, D.D.

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ALEXANDER McDOWELL,*

A NATIVE of Ireland, offered himself to Donegal Presbytery, September 4, 1739, and is stated to have come from Virginia. The McDowell family had settled on Burden's Tract in 1737; and it is probable that Thomson, while visiting the new settlements, became acquainted with the young man and brought him to the presbytery. He was licensed, July 30, 1740: in the spring he was sent to Virginia, supplications having been made by North Mountain, James River, Rockfish, Joy Creek, Buck Mountain, South Branch of Potomac, and by the Marsh, in Maryland. He was ordained, October 29, 1741, to go as an evangelist to Virginia; and in the fall he was directed to itinerate in Newcastle Presbytery. West Conococheague, White Clay, and Elk River, asked for him. He seems to have settled at Nottingham; for, in 1743, he was, at the request of Alison, joined to Newcastle Presbytery, that he might answer the supplication of White Clay and Elk River; and, as the price of this favour, Newcastle Presbytery was directed to supply Nottingham for a year, and, in 1744, it was placed under their care.

The synod's school was intrusted to him, and was for several years at Elk, and finally, in 1767, at Newark, Delaware. In 1754, he declined to have the whole burden of the school. Matthew Wilson was appointed to teach the languages, and to receive twenty pounds yearly. McDowell, "from a sense of the public good," continued to teach the other branches. On the union he gave up the charge of Elk, and it united with East Nottingham, under James Finley, the latter being the New-Side portion which had withdrawn from Elk River in 1741. In April, 1760, Conococheague asked for him. In 1767, the school at Newark was chartered as an academy by the Proprietary, John Penn. Dr. Ewing, and Hugh Williamson, M.D., visited Great Britain to solicit funds for its endowment: they were very successful, and Ewing brought back six or seven thousand dollars. In 1771, Newark Academy had seventy-one students.

McDowell died January 12, 1782, having never married.

* A person of the same name, born in Ireland, graduated at Harvard University, and was settled as pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Coleraine, Massachusetts, September 28, 1753, and was dismissed in 1761.