



HISTORY

OF THE

Reformed Presbyterian Church

IN

AMERICA:

WITH SKETCHES OF ALL HER MINISTRY, CONGREGATIONS,
MISSIONS, INSTITUTIONS, PUBLICATIONS, Etc.,
AND EMBELLISHED WITH OVER
FIFTY PORTRAITS AND
ENGRAVINGS.

BY

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he was heard with marked attention. He was honored with the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Washington College in 1857.

ERASMUS DARWIN McMASTER, D. D., LL. D.:

Son of Rev. Dr. Gilbert and Jane (Brown) McMaster, was born in Mercer, Mercer County, Pennsylvania, February 4, 1806.* In 1808, his parents removed to Duaneburgh, New York, where he was carefully trained in religious duties and literary studies by his father, graduating from Union College in 1827. He studied theology under the care of his father, was licensed by the Northern Presbytery, June 16, 1829, and preached in the vacancies a year. He connected with the Presbyterian Church, being received by the Albany Presbytery, October 18, 1830. He was ordained by the same Presbytery, installed pastor of the congregation of Ballston, New York, February 13, 1831, and resigned this charge, April 24, 1838. This was his only pastoral charge. He was inaugurated President of Hanover College, Indiana, November 7, 1838, where he continued in office for six years. He was inaugurated President of Miami University, Ohio, August 13, 1845, and resigned, August 9, 1849. The same fall he accepted the professorship of Systematic Theology in the Presbyterian Seminary of New Albany, Indiana, and was forced to abandon the office in 1858, because he was in favor of the abolition of human slavery, which system the Presbyterian Church heartily endorsed. It was in the General Assembly which met in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 30, 1859, that

* *Presbyterian Historical Almanac*, Vol. 9, p. 171.

he made his celebrated speech on the motion to postpone the election of Professors of Theology in the Chicago Seminary, because this question of slavery was agitating the minds of the public, and the Assembly had not the courage to come out in favor of abolition. For several years he lived in comparative retirement at Monticello, Indiana. He removed to the home of his brother, the Rev. A. S. McMaster, D. D., in Poland, Ohio, where he resided three years. In the spring of 1866, he was unanimously elected professor of Systematic Theology in the North West Seminary, of Chicago, Illinois, where he was inaugurated with great demonstration, September 10, 1866. Soon afterwards he was prostrated with a severe attack of pneumonia, from which he died very suddenly, in Chicago, Illinois, December 10, 1866, and was buried, according to his wish, in the family burying ground near Xenia, Ohio. He never married. He was confessedly one of the great men of the Presbyterian Church in America. Endowed by nature with the noblest powers of intellect, blessed with the greatest advantage of receiving a thorough education, and early possessed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, he was enabled at an early period of his life to take a high position in the Church. As a scholar, theologian and preacher, he was of the first rank. He never forgot his early training in the Covenanter Church, and frequently made reference to the principles of that Church as the guide of his actions. He was a life-long and consistent opponent of the whole system of human slavery, and, for the holding of this high

position, frequently brought odium upon himself. His rare powers, profound humility, independence of thought, convictions of right, affectionate sympathy and Christian philanthropy, marked him as one of the noblest servants of Christ. He was honored with the degree of Doctor of Divinity by Union College in 1841, and that of Doctor of Laws by Miami University in 1864.

GILBERT McMASTER, M. D., D. D.:

Son of James and Mary (Crawford) McMaster, was born in Saintfield, County Down, Ireland, February 13, 1778.* He received every opportunity of acquiring an education in his native land, came with his parents to America in 1791, and settled in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. He pursued a liberal course of study in the Franklin Academy, under the superintendence of the celebrated James Ross, LL. D. In 1798, he was engaged as a teacher in Shippensburgh, Pennsylvania, and soon afterwards entered Jefferson Academy at Canonsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he finished the course in 1802, just before the establishment of Jefferson College. He then began the study of medicine, finished the course in 1805, and settled as a physician in Mercer, Pennsylvania. In 1807, Drs. Alexander McLeod and S. B. Wylie sought an interview with him at Pittsburgh, and informed him that the Presbytery of which they were members had resolved to exercise their authority in persuading him to yield his scruples and enter upon the work of the ministry. In this case he recognized the voice of Providence, and he obeyed. Having studied theology a year or so under

* Sprague's Annals. *Presbyterian Historical Almanac*, Vol. 5, p. 387.