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HISTORY

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OF

FAGG'S MANOR,

CHESTER CO., PA.

1730---1876.

A DISCOURSE DELIVERED JULY 2, 1876,

BY THE PASTOR,

Rev. W. B. NOBLE.

PARKESBURG, PA.:

A. H. POTTS & CO., BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS,
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An Historical Discourse.

THE historian is fortunate who has a worthy subject; and in the preaching of a historical discourse, which our General Assembly has recommended to all its ministers, I deem myself highly favored in having for my theme the ancient and honored church of Fagg's Manor. Certainly, as members of this congregation, we have reason to be proud of our antecedents, and to cherish an ardent attachment toward our church. Though her home has always been amid the retirement of the country, Fagg's Manor has not been unknown to fame. Nor has she been without a beneficent and wide-reaching influence, for from her quiet shades have gone forth many men of God to spread abroad the knowledge of His truth, and build up in this and other lands the institutions of His kingdom. But it is not to foster our pride that I attempt to recount her story to-day, but to deepen our gratitude to God for what He hath wrought, to increase our love for the church in which our happy lot is cast, and to stimulate us to the godly lives and zealous labors of those who have gone before us. History is especially useful for its examples. It tells us what men have done, and shows what men can do again. It fires our minds with the enthusiasm of its heroes, and incites us to emulate their achievements. It calls upon us to be worthy successors of those who have gone before us, to rear a beautiful superstructure on the solid foundation they have laid, and to carry forward to its widest and highest consummation the work they have so gloriously begun.

Many circumstances combine to give interest to the history of this church. Its early origin, long and vigorous life, and continued prosperity; the hallowed associations connected with the names of Blair, Tennent, Whitefield, Davies, White,

Hamilton and other men of God who have trodden its ground and preached within its sacred precincts; its connection with that wondrous revival of religion which one hundred and forty years ago pervaded the land, in which Fagg's Manor received its first baptism of the Holy Ghost, and its characteristic, not yet lost, of a REVIVAL church; these are enough to make its history interesting to all Christians, still more to Presbyterians, and most of all to those whose family names are engraved upon the tombstones of its cemetery, and whose privilege it is to inherit the rich legacy laid up by their ancestors' labors and prayers.

ORGANIZATION.

The early settlers of this region, the founders of this church, were natives of the north of Ireland, or, as they are commonly called, the Scotch-Irish. Of the settlement of Scotch Presbyterians in Ireland, and the ensuing oppression of landlords and intolerance of the established church which drove multitudes of them from that country to this, it is not our province to speak. Suffice it to say that during the second quarter of the last century they were flocking to America in large companies, seeking here that civil and religious liberty, for the love of which they have always been distinguished. In 1728, 3,100 Presbyterians emigrated from Ireland; in 1729, the year before our church was organized, the number of such emigrants was 6,000, and before the middle of the century the rate was 12,000 per annum for three years. These emigrants landed at various ports, and spread over the country from New Jersey and Pennsylvania to the Carolinas and Georgia. Those who settled this immediate region seem to have landed at Newcastle and other points in Delaware, and to have spread gradually northward along the beautiful streams which water the country.

Wherever they went they carried with them their religion, and as soon as the cabins of pioneers began to multiply in any region, the house of God was reared in their midst, and congregations began to assemble themselves together. The church of Elk River, now called the Rock church, was founded in 1720, Upper Octorara in the same year, New London in 1726, and at last when the country was thickly enough settled to justify an organization between Octorara and New London, which were fourteen miles apart, Fagg's Manor was founded in 1730. It is said* New London opposed the organization of this church, fearing that the country could not support two churches which were only six miles apart. The prosperity of both churches for a century and a half has proved the fear to be groundless.

At what place the first preaching service was held by this congregation, or at what time the first house of worship was erected are matters of some uncertainty. There is a tradition† that the first sermon was preached at Cochranville, or where that village has since grown up. But the first house of worship was undoubtedly erected upon the present church property, although the land upon which it stood was not purchased until 1742 when the congregation was about to rebuild, and a deed was not secured until 1759. The tract of land from the north-west corner of which the church property was cut off, comprised five thousand acres and allowance, and was granted by William Penn to his daughter Letitia, afterwards Mrs. Aubrey. In honor of Sir John Fagg, a relative of the Penn family, it was called Fagg's Manor, or Sir John Fagg's Manor. Hence the name of the church. It was at first called New Londonderry, from the township in which it is located, but this name soon gave place to Fagg's Manor, by which it has been known ever since. The large tract of land just mentioned descended from Mrs. Aubrey to her nephew William Penn, from him

*Webster.

†Mr. David Hayes received it from his father.

to his daughter Christiana Gulielma Penn, who conveyed to the trustees of this church 9 acres and 28 perches of land for a consideration of seven pounds sterling.

Organized in 1730, the church was without a pastor for nearly ten years. Ministers of the gospel were few and scarce. In the rapid growth of the country, and the opening up of new fields of labor, the supply could not keep pace with the demand, especially when the main source of supply was far away beyond the sea. In 1734 the congregation earnestly petitioned the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh, Scotland, to send them a minister or a candidate for settlement. But the Presbytery replied that they were unable to grant the request.* At last, nine years after the founding of the church, God sent to His people a man after His own heart; and it is to this day the pride of Fagg's Manor church, that her first pastor was one of the greatest and best men of the land, one who had few equals and no superiors even in that galaxy of illustrious names which illuminated the wondrous era of revival in which he lived—the gifted and godly Samuel Blair.

Rev. SAMUEL BLAIR.

FIRST PASTOR.

He was born in Ireland, June 14, 1712, and came to America in early youth. He received his classical and theological education in the school of Rev. Wm. Tennent, Sr., at Neshaminy, Bucks county, Pa., a school which became widely celebrated as the "Log College," and which was the Alma Mater of some of the most illustrious ministers of that day. Having finished his studies at this school, Mr. Blair was licensed at Abingdon, Pa., November 9, 1733, by the Presbytery of Philadelphia. In 1734, when he was only

*McKerrow's History of Scottish church, via Webster.

twenty-two years of age, he became pastor of the churches of Middletown and Shrewsbury, N. J. He does not seem to have met with much success in that field of labor, "the people of both his congregations being very irreligious."

In the year 1739 a very earnest call was extended to him by the church of Fagg's Manor, and the Presbytery of New Brunswick, of which he was a member, and to which he referred the matter for decision, "after mature deliberation advised him to accept the call, as they were of opinion it would introduce him into a wider field of usefulness." Accordingly he was dismissed to the Presbytery of Newcastle, commenced his labors here in the beginning of November, and was installed the following April, (1740).

It was not to be expected that a congregation which had been for ten years without a pastor, and dependent for religious instruction upon occasional supplies, would evince a high degree either of knowledge or piety. Mr. Blair describes the state of religion at his coming as low. He says, "religion lay as it were a-dying." But he found a people awaiting him who were hungering for the bread of life, ready to give serious and thoughtful attention to his words. And soon his labors were crowned with glorious success. He had preached here but four months, and was not yet formally installed, when a powerful revival of religion began to be experienced, one of the waves of that tide of revival which swept the country from Massachusetts to Georgia, and which has made the names of Whitefield, Tennent and Blair famous in the history of American Presbyterianism.

Historians love to describe the great and decisive battles of their country, to linger upon every detail which adds lustre to their heroes, to fire their readers with an enthusiasm which shall induce imitation of heroic deeds. And since in this great victory and wide-reaching conquest of the Redeemer's kingdom, Fagg's Manor was one of the earliest and most glorious battle-grounds, we shall do well

to linger for a little time upon the story of what God wrought for his people here.

We are so fortunate as to have a narrative of this great revival at Fagg's Manor, from Mr. Blair's own pen. It was written about four years after the revival for publication in the "Christian History," a religious magazine printed at Boston. It would be most satisfactory to quote this narrative entire, but time will permit extracts only. After speaking of the previous low state of religion, Mr. Blair says: "It was in the spring Anno Domini 1740, when the God of Salvation was pleased to visit us with the blessed effusions of his Holy Spirit in an eminent manner. The first very open and public appearance of this gracious visitation in these parts, was in the congregation which God has committed to my charge. The congregation has not been erected above fourteen or fifteen years from this time;* the place is a new settlement, generally settled with people from Ireland, (all our congregations in Pennsylvania except two or three, chiefly are made up of people from that kingdom). I am the first minister they have ever had settled in the place. Having been regularly liberated from my former charge in East Jersey, above one hundred miles north-eastward from hence, (the Rev. Presbytery of New Brunswick, of which I had the comfort of being a member, judging it to be my duty for sundry reasons to remove from thence), at the earnest invitation of the people here I came to them in the beginning of November, 1739, accepted a call from them that winter, and was formally installed and settled amongst them as their minister the April following. There were some hopefully pious people here at my first coming, which was a great encouragement and comfort to me. I had some view and sense of the deplorable condition of the land in general; and accordingly the scope of my preaching, through that first winter after I came here, was mainly calculated for persons in a natural, unregenerate estate. I

*The narrative is dated August 6, 1744.

endeavored, as the Lord enabled me, to open up and prove from His word the truths which I judged most necessary for such as were in that state to know and believe, in order to their conviction and conversion. I endeavored to deal searchingly and solemnly with them; and through the concurring blessing of God, I had knowledge of four or five brought under deep convictions that winter. In the beginning of March, I took a journey into East Jersey and was abroad for two or three Sabbaths. A neighboring minister who seemed to be earnest for the awakening and conversion of secure sinners, and whom I had obtained to preach a Sabbath to my people in my absence, preached to them, I think, on the first Sabbath after I left home*. His subject was the dangerous and awful case of such as continue unregenerate and unfruitful under the means of grace. The text was Luke xiii: 7. 'Then said he to the dresser of his vinyard, behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?' Under that sermon there was a visible appearance of much soul-concern among the hearers, so that some burst out with an audible noise into bitter crying (a thing not known in those parts before). * * *

* * * The news of this very public appearance of deep soul-concern among my people, met me one hundred miles from home. I was very joyful to hear of it, in hopes that God was about to carry on an extensive work of converting grace among them. And the first sermon I preached after my return to them was from Matt. vi: 33. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.' After opening up and explaining the parts of the text, when in the improvement I came to press the injunction in the text upon the unconverted and ungodly, and offered this as one reason among others why they should now henceforth

*This minister is supposed to have been either Mr. Craighead, afterwards famous in North Carolina; or Mr. Gillespie.—Footnote.

first of all seek the kingdom and righteousness of God, viz: that they had neglected too, too long to do so already; this consideration seemed to come and cut like a sword upon several in the congregation, so that while I was speaking upon it they could no longer contain, but burst out in the most bitter mourning. I desired them, as much as possible, to restrain themselves from making a noise that would hinder themselves or others from hearing what was spoken. And often afterwards I had occasion to repeat the same counsel. I still advised people to endeavor to moderate and bound their passions, but not so as to resist or stifle their convictions. The number of the awakened increased very fast; frequently under sermons there were some newly convicted and brought into deep distress of soul about their perishing estate. Our Sabbath assemblies soon became vastly large, many people from almost all parts around inclining very much to come where there was such appearance of the divine power and presence. I think there was scarcely a sermon or lecture preached here through that whole summer but there were manifest evidences of impressions on the hearers, and many times the impressions were very great and general; several would be overcome and fainting; others deeply sobbing, hardly able to contain; others crying in the most dolorous manner; many others more silently weeping, and a solemn concern appearing in the countenance of many others. And sometimes the soul-exercises of some (though comparatively but very few) would so far affect their bodies as to occasion some strange, unusual bodily motions. I had opportunities of speaking particularly with a great many of those who afforded such outward tokens of inward soul-concern in the time of public worship and hearing of the word; indeed many came to me of themselves in their distress for private instruction and counsel; and I found, so far as I can remember, that with by far the greater part their apparent concern in public was

not just a transient qualm of conscience, or merely a floating commotion of the affections, but a rational, fixed conviction of their dangerous, perishing estate."

The "Narrative" goes on to describe at considerable length the general results of this awakening, the seriousness and thoughtfulness of the people, their attention to the study of the Bible and other good books, strict observance of the Sabbath, religious conversation, an eagerness for preaching, which induced extra services on week days, etc. It then gives a statement of the general scope of Mr. Blair's preaching during this interesting period, which deserves quoting, both as an evidence of the soundness and clearness of his own views, and as an example worthy of imitation by all ministers of the word. It is as follows: "The main scope of my preaching through that summer was, laying open the deplorable state of man by nature since the fall, our ruined, exposed case by the breach of the first covenant, and the awful condition of such as were not in Christ, giving the marks and characters of such as were in that condition; and moreover, laying open the way of recovery in the new covenant, through a Mediator, with the nature and necessity of faith in Christ the Mediator, etc. I labored much on the last mentioned heads, that people might have right apprehensions of the gospel method of life and salvation. I treated much on the way of a sinner's closing with Christ by faith, and obtaining a right peace to an awakened, wounded conscience; showing that persons were not to take peace to themselves on account of their repentings, sorrows, prayers and reformations, nor to make these things the grounds of their adventuring themselves upon Christ and His righteousness, and of their expectations of life by Him; and, that neither were they to obtain or seek peace in extraordinary ways, by visions, dreams or immediate inspirations; but by an understanding view and believing persuasion of the way of life, as revealed in the gospel, through the suretyship, obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ, with a view

of the suitableness and sufficiency of that mediatory righteousness of Christ for the justification and life of law-condemned sinners; and thereupon freely accepting Him for their Savior, heartily consenting to and being well pleased with that way of salvation, and venturing their all upon His mediation, from the warrant and encouragement afforded of God thereunto in His word, by His free offer, authoritative command, and sure promise to those that so believe. I endeavored to show the fruits and evidences of a true faith, etc.”

An account is also given of some special cases among the converts, among others that of a gentleman named Hanse Kirkpatrick, who had subsequently been made an elder in the church, and who died triumphantly in May, 1744, shortly before this narrative was written. And—showing the interest of this faithful shepherd in the lambs of the flock, in an age when the conversion of children was regarded with more suspicion than at present—the experience of two little girls is recited, aged respectively nine and seven years, with whom the pastor conversed frequently, and in whose piety he had entire confidence. He adds, “there are likewise other young ones in the place of whom I know nothing to the contrary, but what they continue hopeful and religious to this day.”

The narrative is attested by the elders of the church, an attestation valuable to us as giving the names of the session at that time. The names are James Cochran, John Ramsay, John Love, John Smith, John Simson and William Boyd. Appended is the following postscript: “One of our elders not having had an opportunity of seeing this letter before it was sent away, his name is not here subscribed.” We are curious to know what the missing name was, that we may complete the roll of session, but are in doubt. It was probably John Hayes. All these names are held in honor among us, and with the exception of Simson are still familiar patronymics in the congregation. The families who bear them have been devoted and efficient friends of

the church in all its history, and have furnished many men of intelligence and piety to sit in the session, or conduct the temporal concerns of the church.

During this season of precious revival, the evangelist George Whitefield preached at Fagg's Manor upon two occasions. One was on a Thursday in the month of May (1740), the other on Saturday, the 22d of November of the same year. On both occasions there was an immense multitude present. At his first visit the crowd was estimated at twelve thousand. The interest was intense. "Look where I would," writes Whitefield in his journal, "most were drowned in tears. The 'word was sharper than a two-edged sword.' Their bitter cries and tears were enough to pierce the hardest heart. Oh, what different visages were then to be seen! Some were struck as pale as death,—others lying on the ground,—others wringing their hands,—others sinking into the arms of their friends,—and most lifting up their eyes to heaven, and crying out to God for mercy. I could think of nothing when I looked at them so much as the great day. They seemed like persons awakened by the last trump and coming out of their graves to judgment."

Of the schism which rent the Presbyterian church in America soon after this great revival, we may not speak at length. It was brought about partly by difference of views as to the qualifications of candidates for the ministry, partly by circumstances connected with the revival*. There was no controversy between the two parties on doctrinal points. The separation occurred in 1741. Many congregations were rent in twain. At Upper Octorara for example, the two meeting houses of the Old Side and New Side frowned at each other across the road. New London, whose pastor, Rev. Francis Alison, was one of the leaders of the Old Side party, went bodily with that branch. And Fagg's Manor, following the lead of its pastor, went with the New Side.

*For an incident at Fagg's Manor see Webster pp. 147.

Samuel Blair was a leading spirit of the New Side party. Possessing brilliant talents and commanding eloquence, he had, although quite young, attained wonderful popularity and influence. He was moreover a man of sterling piety and sound judgment. In the controversy he pressed to the very fore-front of the battle, and did more than any other of his party, unless perhaps we except Rev. Gilbert Tennent, to bring about the rupture. In this his elders, James Cochran and John Ramsay, who represented the church at two successive meetings of Synod, stood by him as faithful henchmen, the former putting his name to a protest against the exactions of the Old Side party, and the latter marching out of the house with the New Side upon their withdrawal from the Synod.

It is hard for the Presbyterian church to stay divided. That old controversy is remembered only by the student of history. The rent was soon made whole. Greater and wider separations have, since that time, divided the church, but they could not last; those which remain must soon yield to the spirit of union which pervades the whole body. Possessing independence of spirit, depth and earnestness of conviction, and firmness bordering upon obstinacy, Presbyterians are more ready for war than most denominations of Christians. But when the way opens for reconciliation, no people are more ready for peace, and few as sincere and cordial in the burial of past differences. We value that stern conscientiousness of Presbyterians, which makes them fight, rather than be unfaithful to their convictions of truth or duty: we hold above all price that undying brotherly love, whose mighty influence reaches across every breach, and binds the whole body together in one.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Blair did not live to see the healing of this division. Had he lived, we would no doubt have had from him such expressions of regret and conciliation as we have from his coadjutor, Gilbert Tennent. But foreseeing its probability before he died, he did not oppose

it; and exhorted his people in his last advice to "be not obstinate against the union, nor thereupon separate from the church, or endeavor to make any rent or schism in it."

Our first pastor was great, not only as a preacher, but as a teacher. Following the example of his illustrious preceptor, he established here at Fagg's Manor a school for the training of godly young men for the ministry. This school became very popular, and was the Alma Mater of some of the most illustrious divines of the last century. Here were educated such men as Rev. Samuel Davies, the eloquent preacher and learned president of Princeton College; Rev. John Rodgers, D. D., pastor of the First Presbyterian church of New York city; Rev. James Finley, Rev. Hugh Henry, Rev. Robert Smith, and others who have exerted a wide and beneficent influence. Of this part of Mr. Blair's work it would be pleasant to speak more at length. It was a mighty instrument of good in his hands. Who can estimate the service rendered to the world in the training of even one godly minister to preach the gospel? But from Fagg's Manor there went forth not one but many, and these men of talent and devotion, who had imbibed the learning, and caught the spirit of their illustrious teacher, whose names have become famous in the church's history, and whose labors were of inestimable service in establishing the Redeemer's kingdom in this land. "These were giants in those days."

Samuel Blair continued in the pastorate of this church until his death. Abundant in labors, he exerted his activity not only at home but abroad. He preached wherever there was an opportunity to do good. He made missionary journeys through Maryland and Virginia, preaching as he went. Profoundly interested in the cause of education, he took an active part in the founding of the College of New Jersey, frequently riding on horseback from here to Princeton, a distance of about one hundred miles, to attend the meetings of its trustees. Such incessant toil no physical

frame could long endure. The light which shines so brightly, rapidly consumes its oil. Sickness laid him low, and after an affectionate parting address to his congregation, sent through the elders and a few others whom he called to his bedside, he died on the 5th of June, 1751, at the early age of 39 years. His grave is with us. In our cemetery, near the spot where he stood to proclaim the everlasting gospel, he sleeps awaiting the resurrection. His epitaph is as follows:

“In yonder sacred house I spent my breath,
Now silent mouldering here I lie in death,
These silent lips shall wake and yet declare
A dread Amen to truths they uttered there.”

Rev. Samuel Finley, of Nottingham, preached his funeral sermon, and Rev. Samuel Davies composed elegiac verses to his memory. Both praise in glowing terms his genius, his piety and his self-sacrificing labors.

Several anecdotes have come down to us illustrative of Mr. Blair's pulpit power, and the estimation in which he was held. When Rev. Samuel Davies returned from his visit to Europe his friends wished to know his opinion of the celebrated preachers he had heard in England and Scotland. After speaking in terms of high commendation of such as he admired most, he concluded by saying that among all those great men, he heard none that could surpass his former teacher, the Rev. Samuel Blair.

Dr. Archibald Alexander narrates the following: “We remember many years ago to have conversed with an aged man, who was brought up in Pennsylvania, and had been awakened under Mr. Blair's ministry. He informed us that when a wild young man he had been induced by the fame of Mr. Blair to ride far to hear him preach; but passing the house where the minister lodged he saw him walking in the yard with his arms folded; “and,” said he, “the very sight of him threw me into a tremor from which I did not recover until I saw him in the pulpit, and heard him with awful

emphasis give out the text, 'Except a man be born again,' etc. From that moment I fell under the deep conviction that I was a lost and ruined sinner, and this impression never left me entirely until I hope I was born again."

Dr. Alexander relates another also. "In 1795," he says, "we conversed with an aged man above eighty who had been an elder in the church of Fagg's Manor in the time of Samuel Blair, of whom he could not speak without tears; but he seemed to think the world was entirely changed, for he said, 'I hear no man preach now as did Samuel Blair.'"

Mr. Blair left a family of ten children, eight of whom grew up. Four of his daughters married ministers, Rev. John Carmichael, pastor of the church of Forks of Brandywine; Rev. Wm. Foster, pastor of Upper Octorara church; Rev. George Duffield, of Philadelphia, Chaplain with Bishop White of the Continental Congress, and Rev. David Rice, of Virginia, who afterwards removed to Kentucky. Another daughter married Mr. James Moore, a farmer; another, Mr. Sanderson, a merchant; and still another, Dr. Samuel Edmiston, a physician, of Fagg's Manor. The last mentioned was the mother of Mrs. Margaret D. Turner, a venerable member of this church, now in her 91st year. Mrs. Turner is thus a grand-daughter of Rev. Samuel Blair. There was also a son, Samuel by name, who entered the ministry and gave promise of great usefulness. He was called to the Old South church of Boston, but feeble health soon terminated his labors there, and he retired from the active work of the ministry.

After the death of Rev. Samuel Blair, the pulpit was vacant for six years. Ministers were still scarce. In May, 1755, a call was extended to Rev. Benjamin Hoit, (or Hait) a graduate of Princeton College, and licentiate of the Presbytery of New Brunswick. Mr. Hoit, however, accepted a call to Amwell and the Forks of Delaware. Rev. Benjamin Chestnut supplied this church, in connection with several other churches, for a short time. In the spring of 1757, a

revival of religion was enjoyed here under the able and forcible preaching of Rev. George Duffield, who was temporarily supplying the pulpit. Mr. Duffield was a son-in-law of Rev. Samuel Blair.

Rev. JOHN BLAIR.

SECOND PASTOR.

In the same year the church succeeded in securing a pastor, Rev. John Blair, a younger brother of the first pastor. He was born in Ireland in 1720, was educated at the Log College, and was licensed by the New Side Presbytery of Newcastle. He seems to have been full of the missionary spirit and zealous for the wide extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. His first settlement was in the churches of Big Spring (Newville), Middle Spring and Rocky Spring in Cumberland county, Pa., then on the very frontier of civilization, where the war-whoop of the savage was still heard. There he was ordained and installed December 27, 1742. During his pastorate in that region he made frequent preaching tours, especially southward, penetrating twice to the Valley of Virginia, preaching wherever he went with great acceptance and power, and organizing churches in destitute regions. He "visited the Valley and places east of the Ridge in 1745, and again in 1746, and during his last visit he organized the congregations of North Mountain, New Providence, Timber Ridge and Forks of James*." In Hanover, Va., afterwards the pastoral charge of the celebrated Samuel Davies, and where Mr. Blair had been preceded only by Rev. Wm. Robinson, his preaching had wonderful effect. Mr. Morris says, "truly he came to us in the fulness of the gospel of Christ. Former impressions were ripened

*Foote, pp. 119.

and new ones made on many hearts. One night in particular a whole houseful of people was quite overcome with the power of the word, particularly of one pungent sentence; and they would hardly sit or stand or keep their passions under proper restraint. * * * There is reason to hope that several bound themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten[†]."

Mr. Blair labored at Big Spring for six years. But hostile bands of Indians continued to ravage the new settlement, many of his people, impoverished and discouraged, withdrew to the more densely populated regions, and he at last followed them. He resigned his charge, December 28, 1748. He seems to have remained without a charge more than eight years, but we can not suppose such a man to have been either idle or unsought. In July, 1754, we find him with Rev. Samuel Finley in New York city, supplying the pulpit of the First Presbyterian church and endeavoring to harmonize contending factions in the congregation. And the congregation talk of extending him a call. In the meetings of Synod we find him taking an active part in those measures which look toward, and finally result in the union of the Old Side and New Side. We find his name on all the committees of conference which were appointed, and he was one of the commission to draft a plan of union, upon which plan a union was effected, May 29, 1758, after a separation of seventeen years. John Blair seems from this to have been eminent as a peacemaker.

In 1757 Mr. Blair accepted a call to Fagg's Manor, and took up both in church and school the work from which his sainted brother had been removed. In both departments he was eminent and successful. He was fully as learned a man and as profound a theologian as his brother, though he does not seem to have equalled him in the fire of pulpit eloquence. Both church and school flourished, and the latter continued to send out able men to preach the gospel.

[†]Ibid, pp. 133.

Mr. Blair's pastorate lasted ten years. In 1767 he was elected Professor of Divinity and Moral Philosophy in the College of New Jersey. He also officiated as President of the College for two years, until the arrival of Rev. Dr. Witherspoon, when he severed his connection with the College, and accepted a call to the church of Wallkill, N. Y. There he labored until his death, which occurred December 8, 1771. "In his last sickness he imparted his advice to the congregation, and represented to his family the necessity of an interest in Christ. A few nights before he died he said, 'Directly I am going to glory—my Master calls me, I must be gone*.'" "

During the pastorate of Mr. Blair, a deed for the church property was obtained from Miss Penn. The date of the instrument is June 15, 1759. The grantees were Job Ruston, James Coughran (Cochran), William Boyd and David Ramsay, all of Chester county, and John Taylor, of Lancaster county. We recognize in James Cochran and William Boyd two of the elders who had certified to Rev. Samuel Blair's narrative fifteen years before.

In order to secure the property forever for church purposes, a deed was made the next year by these five gentlemen, to a Board of Trustees, consisting of Rev. John Blair, John Smith, Moses Ross, David Simpson, David Fleming, Montgomery Kennedy, James Gilleland, John Culbertson, John Caruthers and Stephen Cochran, Sr.

The name of JOB RUSTON, which stands at the head of the first list, is one which deserves the remembrance of the church, and one of his acts is especially worthy of record and imitation. By his will he bequeathed to his executors, Thomas Love and James Boyd the sum of one hundred pounds "to be by them laid out so that the interest may be paid toward the support of a gospel ministry that shall be the pastor and preacher in the meeting-house in Fagg's Manor in Londonderry township, Chester county."

*Log College, pp. 296.

The interest of the legacy was used as directed for many years. The principal was at last used in the erection of the present church building*.

This seems to be the proper place to mention two of our distinguished men, who were born, one during Rev. John Blair's pastorate, the other during his brother's.

JAMES ROSS, LL. D., was born about a mile south-east of Russelville, and therefore within the bounds of Fagg's Manor church. He was one of the first professors of Dickinson College, Pa., and afterwards taught the classics in Chambersburg and Philadelphia. He was eminent as a linguist. He wrote and published a "Grammar of the Latin Language," which was for many years a favorite text-book, and was extensively used, until superseded by those of more modern date. Besides the grammar, he edited several elementary Latin books. He translated the Shorter Catechism into Latin, and taught it in his school. He also compiled a Greek grammar, no portion of which was in English. It was entirely Greek and Latin. He was very fond of composing and reciting Latin verse, and a large quantity of manuscript in that language was found among his papers after his decease. He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia. He was tall and well-proportioned, dignified but courteous and affable in his demeanor, an honest, upright man, of spotless moral character, and artless as a child. He died July 6, 1827, in the eighty-fourth year of his age. He was twice married but left no descendants.

*The first wife of Mr. Ruston seems also to have been an exemplary person. Her virtues, as recorded on her tombstone, are, like her husband's, worthy of imitation at the present time. The quaint inscription on the broken and almost buried stone which covers her grave, reads as follows:

“HERE LIETH THE BODY OF MARY,
WIFE OF JOB RUSTON,
WHO DIED THE 19TH OF JUNE, 1757.
AGED 39 YEARS.

She bore unto him in 22 years twelve children.

“The dame that lieth underneath this tomb,
Had Rachel's face, and Leah's fruitful womb,
Abigail's wisdom, Lydia's open heart,
With Martha's care, and Mary's better part.”

REV. NATHANIEL IRWIN, whose name stands on the list of Moderators of the General Assembly, was born at Fagg's Manor, October 17, 1756. He was educated at William and Mary College, Va., and the College of New Jersey at Princeton, at the latter of which he graduated in 1770, cotemporary with James Madison, David Rittenhouse, Judge Hugh H. Breckinridge and others who subsequently rose to eminence. He succeeded Rev. Charles Beatty as pastor of Neshaminy church in Bucks county, Pa., where he was ordained and installed May 18, 1774, and remained until his death, March 3, 1812. He was a man of varied and extensive information, possessed great scientific knowledge, and was passionately fond of music. He exerted a wide influence in church and state, and for several years exercised much control over the politics of Bucks county. He was instrumental in having the county seat removed to Doylestown, its present location. A caricature was circulated at the time, which represented Mr. Irwin in his shirt sleeves, with a rope around the court house, pulling in the direction of Doylestown with all his might. He was the first to encourage John Fitch in his steamboat invention. Fitch's autobiography is addressed to Mr. Irwin in token of his gratitude for the encouragement received from him. Mr. Irwin was accustomed to ride to church on an old mare called Dobbin, and is said to have composed his sermons as he jogged along the road. He was Moderator of the General Assembly in '1801*.

After Mr. Blair's removal occurs a long vacancy of fourteen years, characterized by many earnest but unsuccessful attempts to secure a pastor. Perhaps the young ministers of the day were too modest to step into the pulpit of the Blairs. In 1768 a call was extended to Rev. William Foster, a son-in-law of Rev. Samuel Blair, and a very talented and popular preacher. But Mr. Foster received at the same

*I am indebted for the sketches of Dr. Ross and Rev. Mr. Irwin, to J. Smith Futhey, Esq., of West Chester, Pa., whose antiquarian knowledge and zeal well entitle him to the appellation of the "Old Mortality" of the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.

time a call from Upper Octorara, and another from White Clay Creek and Head of Christiana, and much to the chagrin of the other churches, Octorara carried off the prize. In August of the same year a call was presented to Mr. McCreary, but was not accepted. The following October, Mr. John Woodhull was called. Mr. (afterwards Doctor) Woodhull was the grand-father of Rev. Gilbert Tennent Woodhull, now a professor in Lincoln University. He had received his collegiate education at Princeton, and had studied theology here in the school of Rev. John Blair. While engaged in his theological studies here, "he was strongly solicited by some pious young men who had been his classmates in college, from New England, to come over and study with them there, under the direction of an eminent divine of that region, alleging that they enjoyed there superior light. They pressed the invitation so urgently that he resolved on this change of situation, and went home to obtain his father's approbation. This was granted, the arrangements made, and the time set for his departure from Long Island. The morning came, and he awoke, he thought, as well as usual, and sprang with alacrity out of bed; but in attempting to dress he found himself unable to stand, and was forced to lie down, when he was seized with an alarming fever which confined him there for many weeks. This dispensation of Providence he considered of great importance, as influencing materially the whole course of his after life. He returned to Mr. Blair, finished his preliminary studies, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Newcastle, August 10, 1768."* Very shortly after his licensure occurred an event which, no doubt, obtained him the call to Fagg's Manor, and we think, had he been as ready as before to mark the teachings of Providence, must have settled him here. He was preaching one night "very unexpectedly"† in the house of Mr. John Love, when a great awakening took place, and about sixty persons, most of them young,

*Funeral Sermon, pp. 24. †Do., pp. 25.

were converted. Notwithstanding this, Mr. Woodhull declined the call to Fagg's Manor and settled at Leacock; Lancaster county. He afterwards removed to Freehold, N. J., and became eminent both as a preacher and teacher, training many candidates in his own house for the work of the ministry.

The next attempt of the church to secure a pastor was a call extended in October, 1774, to Rev. Samuel Stanhope Smith, son of Rev. Robert Smith, of Pequa, and nephew of Rev. Samuel Blair. But this attempt too was unsuccessful, and Mr. Smith went away to settle at Cumberland and Prince Edward, Va., and to become in due time the President of the College of New Jersey. In May, 1776, James Grier was called, and in 1779 Mr. Keith, both of the Philadelphia Presbytery. But these attempts too were unsuccessful.

In the year 1775, the congregation, still without a pastor, entered upon the erection of a new church. It was a substantial and commodious stone structure, and stood between the sites of the present church and parsonage. Most of the material of which it was built was used again in the erection of the present church. We have as records of this work two small account books, one containing the accounts of Thomas Armstrong, Treasurer of the congregation, and receipts for money to him from Samuel Cunningham, builder; the other, entitled "The Trustees' book for the meeting-house of Fagg's Manor, containing a true copy of the subscriptions taken from the original paper, divided into six quarters as entered in this book." The collectors of the six "quarters" were Thomas Love, John Ramsay, John Ross, James Boyd, Wm. Sterritt and Robert Cochran. The total amount of the subscriptions recorded in this book is £608, 11s. 6d. There is also a piece of paper containing a statement of settlement with Samuel Cunningham, dated May 16, 1783, in which his bill foots up £576, 11s. 8d. Whether this represents the total cost of the building or only the cost of erection, I can not decide.

The church building was commenced the year before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and the severing of the colonies from the mother country. And by the time it was completed the nation was in the midst of a bloody war. What trials the congregation underwent in the building of a church at such a time, and what part they took in the struggle for national freedom, we have no means now of ascertaining. But of their fidelity both to the cause of God and their country, we have no room to doubt.* Where were Presbyterians to be found in those days of trial, who were unwilling to hazard their all for the cause of civil and religious liberty? It was for these blessings they sought these shores. First to resist the oppressions of the king, first to counsel separation from the mother country, first to draft declarations of independence, Presbyterians were not found wanting when the day of trial and conflict came.

Rev. JOHN E. FINLEY,

THIRD PASTOR.

While the war was still raging the church of Fagg's Manor at last secured a pastor, Rev. John Evans Finley. He was the oldest son of Rev. James Finley who had been a pupil of Samuel Blair, had settled at East Nottingham or the Rock church, Md., and afterwards removed to Rehoboth and Round Hill in western Pennsylvania in 1734. John E. Finley was ordained and installed here August 22, 1781.

* That the congregation furnished its quota of men for the war of independence seems almost certain from the fact that two members of the session were commissioned officers, and as both were men of character and influence, they would not be without a following from their own region. Gen. Samuel Cochran and Lieut. Thomas Love were brave soldiers and men of earnest piety. Though differing in rank they were bosom friends, and occupied the same tent when in camp. And from their tent was heard to arise every day, morning and night, the voice of song and prayer as in their "family worship," they sang one of Rouse's psalms, and knelt together before the throne of grace.

He married a daughter of one of his elders, Mr. Job Ruston, of whom I have already spoken. He remained here for twelve years, when the pastoral relation was dissolved (October 15, 1793), and he removed to Bracken, Ky. After laboring there for a short time he settled in the church of Red Oak, Ohio, where he died in 1800.

The Finley family has been a noted one in the church. Our pastor's uncle, Rev. Samuel Finley, was pastor of Nottingham church, and afterwards President of Princeton College; his father, James, as before mentioned, was a minister. Three of his brothers were elders at Rehoboth, and his nephew, Rev. Robert M. Finley, is still living at Wooster, Ohio.

An old account book kept by Mr. Finley, and now in the possession of the Misses Love, shows that his salary was paid for the most part in wheat, and that he received it directly from the individual subscribers and kept an account with each one. At the end of the year a statement was made, and the accounts remaining unpaid were handed over to the treasurer of the congregation for collection. The treasurer at that time was Mr. James Boyd. On the last page of Mr. Finley's book is this statement in his own hand writing: "The call engages the congregation to make up four hundred bushels of wheat, tho' the subscription amounts to five hundred or upwards. Four hundred at 6s. 8d. amounts to £133, 6s. 8d., which sum being multiplied by six produces eight hundred pounds, (£800). I suppose I will have to give credit for near £500—please make up the remaining three as fast as you can.

Sep. ye 25, 1787.

JNO. E. FINLEY."

The multiplication by six by which this salary reaches the respectable sum of £800 is a reduction from a specie standard to the depreciated circulating medium of the times. The large proportion of the salary remaining unpaid is suggestive either of culpable delinquency or hard times; and that the latter is the true explanation we learn from other

sources. During the last quarter of the last century the tide of emigration was setting strongly westward, that tide which has never yet turned, but rises higher year by year. Many Presbyterian families were removing to Western Pennsylvania, and settling in that region which through their instrumentality has attained the honor of being called the "back bone of Presbyterianism." The churches of the east were sadly depleted, some almost extinguished by this emigration. In the birth of new institutions the mother's life was put in jeopardy. This church, like others, suffered. Mr. Finley's account book foots up the loss by death and removals in one year and finds it to be one hundred and forty or one hundred fifty bushels of wheat, more than one-third of the pastor's salary. No wonder pastors became discouraged and turned their faces, like their people's, westward. Mr. Finley's father and brothers had gone to the west, and driven by necessity he at last followed. His application for a dissolution of the pastoral relationship was based on the ground of an insufficient support, owing to deaths and removals. Three commissioners were appointed by the congregation to accede in their behalf to this request. This they did by a written paper, as follows: "We, the subscribers, members of the congregation of Fagg's Manor, represent that some years since our pastor, the Rev. John E. Finley, informed us that by deaths and removals the subscription fell greatly short of our promise, and so much as to render his life uncomfortable with us. We have tried various methods of redress, but in vain. He now tells us that he is under the necessity of applying to Presbytery for a dissolution of his pastoral relation to this society, and for that purpose means to call a pro re nata meeting in York Town the last week in August. With sorrow it is, but in justice to him, we must concur with his request.

JOHN ROSS,
 THOMAS LOVE,
 JOHN RAMSAY."

Among the earliest and best gifts which Fagg's Manor gave to the young west was

REV. JOHN McMILLAN, D. D.,

the celebrated founder of Jefferson College at Canonsburg, Pa. He was born within the bounds of this congregation November 11, 1752, prepared for college in Rev. John Blair's school, (until Mr. Blair went to Princeton), and in that of Rev. Robert Smith at Pequa, graduated at Princeton in 1772, studied theology under Rev. Robert Smith and was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of New Castle, October 26, 1774. In the summer of 1775 and in the following winter he spent some time preaching in Western Pennsylvania, mostly at Chartiers and Pigeon Creek churches, and was called to the pastorate of these churches in March, 1776. Having been ordained by the Presbytery of Donegal at Chambersburg on the 19th of June, and married at Forks of Brandywine on the 6th of August to Miss Catharine Brown, a daughter of one of the elders of that church, he entered upon his work, and throughtout a long life toiled vigorously and successfully for the cause of religion and education. Dr. McMillan has been styled the Apostle of Western Pennsylvania. When he commenced his labors in that region the country was a wilderness. The now populous and wealthy city of Pittsburg was a straggling village. So great were the privations and perils to be endured that he did not take his wife with him for more than two years after their marriage, and when at last they settled at Chartiers, after accomplishing on horseback the long journey of three hundred miles, their home was but a rude log cabin, their furniture was extemporized from boxes and boards, and their food confined to the barest necessities of life. But they did a grand work for the cause of Christ, and from the depth of that wilderness the fame of John McMillan has spread far and wide. Besides building up his congregations, and, by widely extended labors, laying the foundation of the Presbyterian church in Western Penn-

sylvania, he was also zealous for the cause of education. He founded the first classical school west of the Alleghanies. And this school under his fostering care grew into a college, —Jefferson College at Canonsburg, Pa.,—an institution whose alumni are found almost everywhere throughout the United States, and one which well deserves the name of a nursing mother to the church for the large number of ministers and foreign missionaries who have been her sons.

Dr. McMillan died November 16, 1833, at the advanced age of eighty-one. It is by no means the least of Fagg's Manor's clustering honors that she gave birth to the Apostle of Western Pennsylvania.*

Rev. PATRICK DAVIDSON.

FOURTH PASTOR.

After Mr. Finley's removal occurred a vacancy of five and a-half years. In April, 1798, a call was extended to Mr. Patrick Davidson, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Newcastle, but was declined by him on account of the insufficiency of the support promised. It was, however, renewed in October of the same year and accepted. Mr. Davidson graduated at Dickinson College, September 30, 1795, studied theology under Rev. Nathan Grier at the Forks of Brandywine, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Newcastle, October 5, 1797. He began his ministry here the first Sabbath of December, and was installed the following April, (1799). His pastorate was, however, of short duration. Only one year afterward (April, 1800) he applied to Presbytery for a release on the ground that "although the congregation had done all that was reasonable, yet certain

* A very interesting sketch of Dr. McMillan's life and labors may be found in Rev. F. J. Collier's "Chartiers Church and Her Ministers." For full details of his labors and their fruits in the college and church, see the "Centenary Memorial of the Planting and Growth of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania."

unpleasant circumstances had occurred which destroyed his comfort and hindered his usefulness." He removed to the bounds of the Presbytery of Carlisle, and was installed at Tom's Creek on the third Tuesday of October, A. D. 1800. His last pastoral charge was at Bladensburg, where he died.

Coming to the boundary between the old century and the new, we have reached also the border-land between past generations of men, and the one now upon the stage of action. There are still a few members of this church who were living when Rev. Patrick Davidson was pastor. But they are very few. Perhaps the names of Mrs. Margaret D. Turner, Mrs. Martha Ross, Mrs. Snead, Capt. Hugh Daniel and Mr. Joseph Ramsay, comprise the whole list. Mrs. Turner remembers Mr. Davidson as well as some of the ministers who supplied the pulpit during the vacancy which succeeded his removal; among them she mentions Rev. David McConoughy, D. D., and Rev. Charles Cummings.

Rev. ROBERT WHITE.

FIFTH PASTOR.

Another long vacancy occurred, this time of more than nine years. On the 9th of September, 1809, calls were extended by three separate pastoral charges, Upper Octorara and Doe Run, White Clay Creek and Head of Christiana, and Fagg's Manor to the same minister, Mr. Robert White, a young licentiate of the Presbytery of Newcastle. Forty-one years before the same three congregations had contended over the person of Rev. William Foster, and Upper Octorara and Doe Run had won the victory. This time Providence favored Fagg's Manor, and she obtained a pastor under whose untiring labors she entered upon a new career of prosperity.

Robert White was born in 1783, in Montgomery county, Pa., near the village of Trappe. He labored on the farm until eighteen or nineteen years old. Having become about this time a subject of converting grace, he was seized with a strong and irrepressible desire to enter the ministry, and his parents, who at first did not encourage his doing so, at last gave their consent. He entered the Academy at Norristown where he became distinguished for classical and mathematical attainments. He never entered college, but he was considered by those who knew him, and especially by his brethren of the Presbytery of Newcastle, as in no respect inferior in scholarship to those who held college diplomas. He studied theology under Rev. Nathan Grier, pastor of the church of Brandywine Manor, who was celebrated in his day for having prepared quite a number of young men for the gospel ministry. He was licensed to preach in the spring of 1809. On the 1st of June in the same year he was married to Miss Nancy Grier, eldest daughter of his preceptor, and on the 14th of December following was ordained and installed at Fagg's Manor.

Mr. White's ministry here was long, laborious and eminently successful. His pastorate was the longest in duration in the history of this church, lasting twenty-six years, and ending only with his death. In labors he was abundant. Besides tilling his farm with an industry and skill which commanded the respect of his rural parishoners, he toiled incessantly in his ministerial work, preaching the gospel in the church and from house to house, visiting, catechizing and attending prayer-meetings in all parts of the congregation. In his pastoral visiting he usually walked, as did also most of his people in attending church. Mrs. Martha Ross and Mr. Hugh Daniel, both of whom live on the borders of the congregation, four or five miles from the church, tell us that it was their habit to walk to church in their youth, and that from all parts of the congregation the people came to the house of God on foot. Rev. Thomas Love says that

more than eighty years ago when he was an infant his mother carried him before her on a horse to the old church to present him to the Lord in baptism. Carriages were almost unknown. The aged or feeble came on horseback, the strong and the young walked, the young people of both sexes not unfrequently carrying their shoes until they came near the church and wearing them only during their stay for the two sermons.

An extract from a letter recently written me by his son, Rev. N. G. White, will illustrate Mr. White's untiring zeal and devotion. He says, "In his preparation for the pulpit my father wrote in a very small hand and in a very small book, then committed to memory, never taking his manuscript out of his pocket in the pulpit. He preached twice every Sabbath, and often at night during the week at points quite remote from his home, always returning after preaching, sometimes as late as one or two o'clock in the morning. He held two communions annually in his church, and always observed four days of service at each time, Friday being observed as a congregational fast day. On the Sabbath he always preached what was then called the 'action sermon' himself, the assistant preaching after the communion services were over and after an interval of thirty minutes. Tables and tokens were used at that time, the tables usually numbering about five;—on one occasion I remember there were seven. His labors on a communion Sabbath were very great. Oh, how often have I seen the perspiration from his temples seem to vie with the tears which streamed from his eyes, as he with so much earnestness besought men to be reconciled to God and to love and obey 'the precious Savior.' [This was the title he invariably gave the Divine Redeemer.] He observed the old method of pastoral visitation during the winter months of one year, and the following winter held public examinations on the Shorter Catechism in the different districts of the congregation."

Mr. White might have said with His Master, "the zeal of

thine house hath eaten me up." His naturally strong constitution broken by toil and exposure, he died at the age when men are usually in their prime, the early age of fifty-two. He died September 20th, 1835, more than forty years ago. Men are living here yet who were by but little his juniors. His beloved wife survived him thirty-five years. They sleep together now in our cemetery, near the grave of Samuel Blair.

Mr. White seems to have had for a considerable time a premonition of approaching death. In his funeral sermon, preached by Rev. Samuel Martin, D. D., from 1 Cor. xv:55, "O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory?" occurs the following passage: "A little more than two years have elapsed since in a full meeting of this congregation the Rev. Robert White, over whose departure from life we now mourn, arose, and with deep solemnity, stated the pre-impression which he had, that the time of his removal was not far distant. I shall not soon forget the mingled flood of sorrow and surprise which flowed from every heart on that occasion. After he had assured us of his unwavering confidence in the presence and support of his precious Savior in passing through the valley of death, in the presence of you all he made the request of me that I should preach his funeral sermon from the words on which I have addressed you. In reply to his request I stated that being far his senior, the probability was that it might be his office to preach mine. According, however, to his expectation the events alluded to have taken place. That in view of death his heart did not shudder when these words were suggested to him as the subject of a funeral discourse, we all had evidence in the grave and calm composure with which he uttered them. When death did come to perform his deed of woe, it found him ready. The fell tyrant would indeed have robbed him of soul and body; but Jesus, who had long been his life, was nigh at hand 'to save his soul from death, his eyes from tears, and his feet from falling.' Those

who were present during his affliction had ample testimony that his affections were set on things that were above, and that while his heart and his flesh were failing, God was the strength of his heart, and was longed after as his portion forever."

Of his preaching, and his earnestness and constancy in prayer, Dr. Martin says, "In preaching the gospel he used great plainness and simplicity of speech as it becomes those who would that all should understand. He wisely mingled doctrinal with practical truths, that while the heart might find a sure foundation whereon to rest its hopes, it might be stimulated to seek acquaintance with the manner of building upon it; and that strong confidence might prompt to every exertion to obtain the reward set in prospect. With how holy an unction sacred truth fell upon his hearers, from lips that were inspired to speak, by an heart warm with the love of Jesus and anxious for dying souls, ye, the people of his charge can tell. With what ardor his desires rose to heaven from this desk* in your behalf, ye are witnesses. The retirement in the evening shade, the closet, the family, whether at home or abroad, bear witness how heavy upon his heart his people's dangers lay; and how unwearied his strivings at the throne of grace were for their deliverance."

A ministry so earnest could not fail to be successful. Mr. White was the first of our pastors to keep any records, and his book is merely a register of baptisms, marriages and deaths, and the reception and dismissal of members. [Dr. Hamilton was the first to keep minutes of the meetings of session.] Nevertheless Mr. White's book is valuable as an index of the prosperity and growth of the church under his ministrations. And its record is one of uninterrupted success. His labors were ushered in by a revival. The first year of his ministry twenty-four persons were added to the church. And all along through the years there were con-

*The pulpit from which Mr. White preached in the old church is still used in the lecture room of the present building.

stant accessions, some years comparatively few, but in others a great many, rising in the year 1822 to the number of one hundred and four received within the year, again in 1832 to fifty-six, and altogether making four hundred and seventy, or an average of twenty admissions per annum for the twenty-three and a-half years which the register covers.* Truly God honored his devoted servant and crowned his abundant labors with success.

Mr. White left two sons, both of whom entered the ministry. The younger, Rev. Robert McCrea White, graduated at Amherst College and Princeton Theological Seminary, and settled in the church of Fairview, which he served with great success for eleven years. He was a man of brilliant talents, and inheriting his father's consuming zeal, he soon exhausted in his Master's service both body and mind. Says Rev. Mr. Collier, "When he took charge of the congregation at Fairview, there were forty members worshipping in a dilapidated building. At the close of his pastorate there were nearly four hundred members, and they had a handsome new edifice in which they held their religious service. Mr. White was a very earnest, instructive and attractive preacher. His oratory was brilliant and fervid and he was gifted with a voice peculiarly rich and pleasing in the quality of its tones. His zeal in the cause of Christ led him to overtax his physical strength. During the summer months it was his custom to preach three sermons on the Sabbath, besides teaching a large bible class of over eighty members. In consequence of his arduous and unremitting labors, his eyes and throat became affected, and he suffered from derangement of the mind. It was hoped when he resigned his charge at Fairview and accepted the call to Chartiers, that his physical and mental condition would be improved by rest and the change of residence, but in this expectation he and his friends were doomed to disappointment."† As just intimated, Mr. White accepted a

*The last entry is June 2, 1833, a year and a-half before Mr. W's. death.

†Chartier's Church, pp. 34.

call to Chartier's, the church which Dr. McMillan founded. He was installed there in October and died on the 14th of December, 1848, in his thirty-fourth year.

The elder brother, Rev. Nathan Grier White, graduated at Dickinson College and Princeton Theological Seminary, and settled in the churches of McConnellsburg, Green Hill and Wells Valley, in Fulton county, Pa., which he served with acceptance and success for thirty and a-half years. In the fall of 1864 he accepted a call to Williamsburg, Blair county, Pa., where he is now laboring.

Rev. N. G. White and his sister, Mrs. Martha W. Fullerton, are the only surviving members of our former pastor's family. She was the youngest of his children. She married Rev. Robert S. Fullerton, of Ohio, and went with him to Futtegurh, Northern India, in 1850, where they labored as missionaries for fifteen years. They were in that country and shut up in the Fort of Agra during the great Sepoy rebellion. Her husband having fallen a victim to the exhausting climate and his arduous labors, Mrs. Fullerton returned to her native land. She now resides in West Philadelphia.

Besides his own sons two other young men went out from Fagg's Manor as ministers of the gospel in the time of Mr. White. They were another pair of brothers, Thomas and Robert Love. Robert settled in the churches of Harmony and Oxford, N. J., and after a ministry of six years died October 9, 1838, at the early age of thirty-one years. Thomas, the elder of the two, is still living and resides at Hockessin, Delaware. He has retired from the active work of the ministry after a long and faithful service as pastor of Red Clay Creek church for nearly forty years. The Love family has been a prominent one in Fagg's Manor church from the beginning. John Love was one of the first elders, and in each generation since one or more of his descendants have been members of the session. His son, grandson, and great grandson, like himself were elders, and his lineal

descendant of the fifth generation, Mr. J. Hamilton Ross still retains the succession. And here may be the proper place, though in the order of events its time is later, to speak of another member of this family, whose life was laid down in the service of the Master. Eliza Ross, daughter of James and Martha Ross, married Rev. George Simpson, of Honeybrook, in this county, and went with him as a missionary to the Gaboon, on the western coast of Africa. The young missionaries entered upon their work with enthusiasm. But soon the unhealthy climate began its ravages upon Mr. Simpson, and he was laid aside from work. They were advised to return home, but they could not bear to abandon a work in which their hearts were so bound up. A voyage on the river was attempted as a means of restoring health. The vessel sank and they were both drowned. "Lovely and pleasant in their lives, in their death they were not divided." And was not heaven as near from the far off river of Africa, as from the farm-house among the hills of the Octorara? And will they not hear the resurrection trumpet there as well as in the cemetery at Fagg's Manor? What is the bottom of the sea, but the "hollow of God's hand?" (Isaiah xi: 12.)

Rev. ALFRED HAMILTON, D. D.

SIXTH PASTOR.

After Mr. White, the next pastor was Rev. Alfred Hamilton, D. D. He was born in Wheeling, W. Va., in April 1805, received his classical education at Jefferson College and the University of Pennsylvania at Pittsburg, and his theological at the Western Theological Seminary. He was a member of the first class graduated at this institution. After completing his studies he spent two years as an agent

of the Tract and Education Society, and in this capacity traveled over a great part of the west on horseback. After this he labored as a domestic missionary in Kentucky, and organized the church of Elizabethtown, with which he remained several years. Coming to Pennsylvania on a visit, he preached at Fagg's Manor, and a call was extended to him November 17, 1835, two months after the death of Mr. White. He commenced his labors here on the 20th of March, and was installed on the 14th of May, 1836. He is the first pastor who has left a record of the proceedings of session, and thus let us see something of the inner workings of the church in its history. The session upon his accession consisted of nine elders, Messrs. Henry Reece, John Turner, Andrew McNeil, Abraham Ross, James Love, John Rankin, James Ross, John Y. McNeil and John A. Love. A tenth, Mr. Robert Cochran, had died about two weeks before Mr. Hamilton was called. With this strong force of elders, not always harmonious it is true, yet men full of zeal for the church of God, Mr. Hamilton carried on the work vigorously, and not without considerable success. We can not trace in detail the events of his ministry, but will glance at some of its characteristics.

One of these was strictness in discipline. That upon his coming the state of morals in the community was not all that could be desired, is evident from the records. The pastor and session seem to have set about reformation at once, and to have pursued the work with zeal and fidelity. Soon after the pastor was installed, a meeting of the session was held whose exercises were prayer and "free conversation in regard to the state of religion in our church, and respecting the conduct of the members generally," and "it was agreed that Mr. Hamilton should prepare a pastoral letter to be read to the congregation." The session met frequently, and many communicants were called before them from time to time to answer for various misdemeanors. Discipline was conducted in a calm, patient and thorough manner, without partiality,

and with such tenderness and wisdom as to result almost universally in the reclamation of the offender. These efforts for the purification of the church had the most salutary effect not only upon the persons most nearly concerned, but upon the whole community. As the years went on cases of discipline became fewer and almost ceased, the condition of morals was vastly improved, and the success of the church was greatly enlarged in the work of saving men.

Dr. Hamilton's ministry was also characterized by instruction and effort in the matter of benevolence. Before his time little had been done in any of our Presbyterian churches to develop the liberality of the people, and to impress upon them their duty to a world lying in sin. There was little zeal in the missionary cause, and little self-sacrifice in behalf of the perishing. In his time, the church was just awaking to some sense of duty in the matter, and Dr. Hamilton not only instructed his people faithfully, but set before them an example in his own generosity. Among the papers left by him are a number of subscriptions for Foreign Missions, Home Missions, and other branches of benevolent work; and while it can scarcely be claimed that these show any remarkable success, they certainly indicate systematic, diligent and persistent effort on the part of the pastor. A weekly subscription also for benevolent objects ranging in its amounts from one-fourth of a cent to ten cents per week, indicates that Dr. Hamilton understood the principle of regular, systematic beneficence as laid down by the Apostle, (I Cor. xvi: 2) and as applied more recently among us to the support of the church.

Education was another subject upon which Dr. Hamilton was profoundly interested, and in the promotion of which he took an active part. In the spring of 1849 his session, with whom he had no doubt talked frequently on the subject, passed the following resolutions: "1st, That in the judgment of this session the establishment of parochial schools is a matter of great importance. 2d, That we will countenance

and encourage the establishment of one in the east room of the basement of the church this spring. 3d, That we will give it our influence, and aid our Moderator in getting up and sustaining such a school at this time."

This was the germ of an academy which Dr. Hamilton, in imitation of his illustrious predecessors, the Blairs, carried on for some years. He built a house for a school-room, which he named Blair Hall, and enlarged his house for the accommodation of boarders; and had the academy been as successful financially as in other respects, it would no doubt have remained to this day, a blessing to the community. We regret to say that it involved its founder in loss and financial embarrassment. But it did a good work in its day, and many in this present congregation have reason to remember it gratefully, as the fount of knowledge from which they drank in early youth.

We have a memorial of Dr. Hamilton's pastorate in the present church edifice. It was commenced in 1845*. The old church was torn down that its material might be used in the new, and for over a year the congregation was houseless. But the services of the sanctuary were not discontinued. Dr. Hamilton preached regularly, sometimes in the Beulah Baptist church at Russelville, the use of which was kindly granted for part of the time; and sometimes in the grove beside the rising walls of the new church.

Churches are not often built without herculean labor on the part of the pastor. This one was no exception to the rule. There was, at the outset, some opposition to the undertaking from some to whom the old church was dear by reason of its hallowed associations, and from others who deemed it good enough and a new one unnecessary. And, as is always the case, it was no easy task to raise the needed

*The corner stone was laid on Monday, the 9th of June, with appropriate services. The deposit was a brief history of the church, a list of the session, trustees, building committee and master-workmen, a Confession of Faith, Rev. S. Blair's history of the great revival here in 1740, several of the county papers, etc., in a glass jar inclosed in a tin case.—*Sessional Record*.

money. Dr. Hamilton worked laboriously and persistently. He pressed his people to the performance of duty, and led the way by giving largely of his own means for building the house of the Lord. And when the congregation was discouraged, he preached them a sermon (Feb., 1846,) from Neh. iv: 6. "For the people had a mind to work."

The church was finished in December, 1846. Worship was held in it for the first time on the 17th of that month, which day had been appointed for the dedication. But a severe snow-storm prevented the gathering of the congregation. It was dedicated four days after, on the 21st, "when Rev. R. P. DuBois, of New London, preached the sermon, Rev. James Latta, of Upper Octorara, gave out the hymn, and Rev. J. M. Dickey, of Oxford, made the prayer of dedication."

The church is a very substantial stone building 70x55 feet, two stories high. The audience-room, exclusive of the gallery over the vestibule, is 54½x51 feet, height of ceiling 20 feet, and contains 114 pews. The lecture-room is 51x21 feet, and is divided into two rooms at pleasure by folding doors.

Of those who were active and efficient in the building of this house of God, no name deserves more honorable mention than that of Joseph Ramsay, who, at the advanced age of eighty-eight, is still a regular attendant upon its ordinances. Then in his prime, Mr. Ramsay gave both time and means to the promotion of the work, toiling on the building, collecting money, and lending a helping hand wherever it was needed. Elected many years ago to the eldership, he declined to serve the church in that capacity; but he has, nevertheless, served it long and well in other departments of the Master's work.

Besides this church building, two others stand as monuments of Dr. Hamilton's untiring zeal. One of them is at Elizabethtown, Ky., his first field; the other at Mattoon, Ill.,

his last field. In the latter church the present writer preached for a year of his ministry, and thus has had the honor of twice succeeding to the labors of this devoted servant of God.

At least two revivals were enjoyed during Dr. Hamilton's ministry here, one in the next summer after the completion of the church (1847), as a result of which fifty-one persons were received upon profession of faith at one time; the other in the summer of 1852, when forty-four were received at the October communion. Of the latter, the sessional record of October 30th says: "During the summer previous to this date a very precious work of grace was enjoyed. The communion service in May was connected with much earnest prayerfulness, and a protracted meeting followed, the influence and exercises of which continued with deep interest for nearly three months." It also speaks of the Sabbath, when the fruits of this revival were gathered as "a deeply solemn and interesting day."

Dr. Hamilton continued in the pastorate of the church for twenty-three years, honored and beloved by his people. Besides his scholarly attainments, and his ability as a preacher, he was eminent for his social qualities and his amiable character. He was the friend of all, a welcome guest in every house; beloved by the children, and, like a good shepherd, knowing them all by name; kind to the poor, full of sympathy for the suffering, and looked to for comfort and counsel by all who were in any distress.

In the spring of 1859, he received a call to the church of Aurora, Ill. Discouragements, arising chiefly from his pecuniary embarrassments, had tended to loosen the bond which bound him to this people. He accepted the call; his people, though very loth to give him up, consented to his removal, and the pastoral relation was dissolved in the end of May, 1859. The strain of parting was even more severe than had been anticipated. The congregation felt that they had done wrong in letting him go, and it is said Dr. Hamil-

ton never ceased to regret the step until his dying day. He settled at Aurora, afterwards at Mattoon, Ill.; from thence he removed to Chicago, where he died in September, 1867. His body rests in Oakwood cemetery.

The following solemn and touching words in his own handwriting stand upon the last page of his session book: "The whole results of my labors for this people for twenty-three years, will be reviewed above. I pray God I and they may be prepared for that review. Grace only can enable me to pass it safely. The souls I have instructed and received into this church, will they all appear in white before the throne? And those who attended my whole ministry there, and yet were not converted, how shall we meet in the judgment day? The children too of the Sabbath-schools with and for whom I labored, what will become of them? Oh, my Father in heaven, prepare that congregation to meet me, and me to meet them in thy judgment presence. May they be better served than I was able to do. May they render their present and future pastors all that sympathy, attentive kindness, prompt remuneration, and spiritual obedience for which I often sighed, and which every pastor needs. May our mutual errors and defects be forgiven, and we accepted for the Beloved's sake. Amen. My record is and will be reviewed on high."

We close the book with a feeling of love to the man who has thus shown us his heart.

Rev. JUSTUS T. UMSTED.

SEVENTH PASTOR.

After a vacancy of a year, the church extended a call to Rev. Justus T. Umsted. He accepted the call, and was

installed November 7, 1860. He was born in Chester county, Pa., in the congregation of Forks of Brandywine, pursued his classical studies at the University of Pennsylvania, and his theological at Princeton, N. J. He spent his first year of ministerial labor at South Bend, Ind.; the next three years at Muscatine, Iowa, the following six at Keokuk in the same State. The incidents of Mr. Umsted's ministry here are still fresh in the minds of the congregation, and their story needs but brief recital. Extending through the troublous times of the late war, his pastorate was not without its seasons of anxiety and discouragement. But his ministry was successful, in regard both to the temporal and spiritual prosperity of the church. Under the former head we may class the building of the parsonage, a substantial and commodious brick house; the repair and improvement of the house of worship, which have made it quite attractive and comfortable; and the gradual increase of the pastor's salary from \$800 to \$1200 per annum. Both pastor and people merit praise for the zeal and liberality shown in these good works. The spiritual prosperity of the church is indicated by the crowning event of Mr. Umsted's ministry, the great revival of 1865, precious in the memory of many here, in which one hundred and fifty-seven persons at one time joined themselves unto the church of God. The whole number of additions to the church during the eleven and a half years of this pastorate were two hundred and ninety-one, more than one-half of whom, as just stated, were received at one time. The annual average was a little over twenty-five.

In May, 1872, Mr. Umsted received a call to the church of St. George's, Del. This he accepted. His ministry here closed on the 26th of that month, "after"—as he has stated in the session-book—"a ministry of nearly twelve years in harmony and peace."

Rev. WILLIAM B. NOBLE.

EIGHTH PASTOR.

The present pastor began his labors with the church on the 1st of September, 1872, and was installed on the 15th of October following. Of this pastorate it is ours not to write, but by God's help to make the history, leaving to those who shall come after to recount its story. We pass to

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE CHURCH.

The present officers of the church are as follows:

ELDERS: William Wilson, Jesse Johnson, ordained in 1852; Robert N. Brown, Joseph Smith, ordained in 1859; John A. Morrison, M. D., J. Hamilton Ross, ordained in 1874.

DIRECTORS: J. Armstrong Turner, Robert Russell, J. A. Morrison, M. D., J. Ramsay Hayes, James Ramsay, William Potts.

The whole number of communicants is three hundred and seventy*. One hundred and thirty-seven have been added to the church within the last four years, an annual average of thirty-four.

Eleven Sabbath-schools are carried on by the church, having an attendance of teachers and pupils amounting to about five hundred.

The financial support of the church is obtained by what is called the "voluntary" or "envelope" plan, under which (as here operated) each contributor pledges a certain sum, and pays this sum monthly in envelopes provided for the purpose. This plan was adopted three years ago, and has been wisely administered by the directors, and heartily supported by the congregation. Previous to its adoption, the income of the church fell short of its necessary expenses. The new method has increased the income about forty-five

*While this discourse is going through the press, the church has enjoyed another precious revival, resulting in the hopeful conversion of about seventy-five souls.

per cent., and the congregation, enabled thereby, has generously advanced the pastor's salary to \$1500 per annum.

We have traced the history of Fagg's Manor church from its organization to the present time. We can go no further, save in hopeful anticipations. On account of the scarcity of records from which to draw information of that part of the past which is beyond the memory of those now living, our work is necessarily imperfect. Even to gather the materials of the present brief narrative has been a work of no little labor. But brief and incomplete as it is, does it not contain enough to stimulate us who are called to carry on the history, to noble endeavor in the work of the Lord? Shall we disgrace our antecedents? Shall we be degenerate sons of noble sires? Shall we esteem it a light thing that in the privileges of this church, highly honored of God in all its history, we have so goodly a heritage?

We have looked to the past; let us now look to the present and the future, to our own work for the perpetuity and progress of our beloved church. And let us remember that in our onward course we are "compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses," who look down upon us from the battlements of heaven, and cheer us on, by their holy example here, and glorious reward there; yea, that above them all stands One who says to each of us, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life."

FINIS