

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
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AND
An Historical Introduction,
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Meribah, it was to him as "waters that pass away," when he wrote his "Irenicum."

Davies knew Thomson as a neighbour in the ministry, and, in 1751, speaks highly* of his judgment, and hopefully of his piety, and says, "He acknowledged the Revival had done much good in Hanover, and rejoiced in seeing the prosperity of religion."

He did not live to see the union; but, on the proposal to prepare the way for it, he hastened to Philadelphia from Virginia, to assist with healing counsels. He lived long enough for Tennent to do his writings justice, and to vindicate his sentiments; long enough to obtain, from the devoted admirer of Samuel Blair, unsolicited testimony to his judgment and his delight in the promotion of the work of God.

His discourse entitled "An Overture, urging the Synod to adopt, by a public agreement, the Standards of the Scottish Church," was answered by Dickinson; his "Examination of the New Brunswick Apology" was a treatise on the government of the church, and called forth a reply from Samuel Blair; his sermon on Convictions was attacked by Samuel Finley, but is deservedly commended as an excellent exhibition of the truth.

JOHN PIERSON

WAS born in 1689, and graduated at Yale in 1711.

The Rev. Abraham Pierson was an Independent, and, with a company of like sentiments, came to Lynn, in Massachusetts, and from thence removed to Southampton, on Long Island. But, when the Long Island towns put themselves under the Connecticut jurisdiction, he, with those of the ancient way, settled Branford, in the colony of New Haven, as their brethren in Hartford settled Hadley, that they might not be partakers in the growing laxity of discipline. The colonies of New Haven and Connecticut united; and the aged Pierson, like another Moses, said to his people, "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount;" and they arose and took their journey and settled the town of Newark, in New Jersey. There he died. His son, being "a moderate Presbyterian," left Newark, and became the Rector of Yale. His Presbyterianism was that of Connecticut, in distinction from the Independency of his father.

Woodbridge had vainly† endeavoured, in 1669, to secure for its pastor the younger Pierson, then settled in Newark. They built

* Letter to Bellamy.

† Newark Sentinel.

a meeting-house thirty feet square, and, after passing through many uncomfortable seasons, obtained a pastor who served them faithfully through a long life.

In 1715, Andrews wrote pressingly to the people of Woodbridge, urging them to use utmost diligence to have a minister ordained among them. At that time, Pierson was preaching there, and a call was offered to him the next year. He was ordained there, April 29, 1717, before a very great assembly. Andrews, Morgan, and Orr were assisted on the occasion by the venerable Prudden, of Newark, and Dickinson, of Elizabethtown.

He is said* to have employed no elders in the management of church affairs; but this tradition is inconsistent with the record, his elder at synod, in 1742, being John Ball; probably, also, Moses Rolph attended in several previous years.

He published a treatise on the "Intercession of Christ," and a sermon preached before the Presbytery of New York, May 8, 1751, on "Christ, the son of God, as God, Man, Mediator."

His wife, Ruth, daughter of the Rev. Timothy Woodbridge, of Hartford, died in 1732, aged thirty-eight. Dickinson printed his sermon at her funeral.

In 1753, he resigned his pastoral charge and settled at Mendham, New Jersey, and was the minister there for ten years. He then removed to Long Island, and resided on the farm of his second wife, Judith Smith. On her decease, he removed to Hanover, New Jersey, and closed his days under the roof of his son-in-law, the Rev. Jacob Green. He died August 23, 1770, aged eighty-one.

JONATHAN DICKINSON

WAS the grandson of Nathaniel Dickinson, one of the first settlers of Wethersfield, Connecticut, who, with his minister, Mr. Russell, and "the aggrieved brethren in Hartford," purchased and settled Hadley and the adjoining towns in 1659. His estate was rated, on his removal, at two hundred pounds,—one of the largest in the town. His son Hezekiah lived in Hatfield, where Jonathan was born, April 22, 1688. He graduated at Yale, in 1706. His father dying soon after, his mother married Thomas Ingersoll, of Springfield.

He came to Elizabethtown in 1708, and soon after married Jo-

* Dr. Azel Roe's MS. History of Woodbridge: quoted by Dr. Hodge.