

A  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
*Presbyterian Church in America,*

FROM ITS ORIGIN UNTIL THE YEAR 1760.

WITH  
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF ITS EARLY MINISTERS.

BY THE  
REV. RICHARD WEBSTER,  
LATE PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MAUCH CHUNK, PA.

WITH  
*A Memoir of the Author,*  
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AND  
*An Historical Introduction,*  
BY THE REV. WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, D.D.

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JOSEPH M. WILSON,  
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in the pulpit, when commencing the morning services, and giving out these words in the 116th Psalm:—

“Dear in thy sight is thy saints’ death;  
Thy servant, Lord, am I.”

Davenport, under date of May 29, 1753, mentions to Bellamy that, a few weeks before, Mr. Campbell, “a zealous and useful young minister, was struck in the pulpit with a dead palsy, and died in little more than a week after.” He was about forty.

His daughter Mary was but two years old at that time. She married General William Harris, of the Valley, and, after a widowhood of twenty-five years, was gently called away in 1838, in her eighty-fourth year. She left six sons, of whom may be mentioned Dr. William Harris and Dr. Thomas Harris, of Philadelphia.

The churches continued vacant for many years, Charlestown yearly seeking supplies from Newcastle Presbytery, and New Providence at length uniting with Abingdon and Norriton, in settling Dr. William M. Tennent.

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## JOHN ROAN,

A NATIVE of Ireland, was brought up as a weaver. He studied at the Log College, and taught on the Neshaminy, probably while completing his theological course. He had, for one of his pupils, Dr. Rodgers, of New York, for several years. He was licensed by the New-Side Presbytery of Newcastle, and sent to Hanover, in Virginia, in the winter of 1744. He continued for a longer time than either Robinson or Blair, and the happy effects of his ministrations were visible and lasting. In several places which he visited in the neighbourhood, a religious concern commenced, where there was little appearance of it before, and increased; and this, with his free comments on the Established Church, led to a vigorous attempt to silence him, and suppress “the New Light” altogether. Affidavits were laid before Governor Gooch, charging him with blasphemous language and saying that the adherents of the Episcopal way were damned, and worshipped the devil. The governor delivered a vehement charge to the grand jury. An indictment was prepared, April 9, 1745, against Roan, (though he had left the colony,) on the information of James Axford, for re-

flecting upon and vilifying the Established religion in divers sermons preached at the house of Joshua Morris, in James City parish, on the 7th, 8th, and 9th of January, before a numerous audience unlawfully assembled.

The governor's charge was published. "Without a breach of charity, we may pronounce that 'tis not liberty of conscience, but freedom of speech, they so earnestly prosecute." An order, forbidding any meetings of Moravians, Muggletonians, and New Lights, was issued, for which there was some show of reason, it being the memorable 1745, when the Pretender made his last attempt on the Crown. In the next month, the people of Hanover sent Samuel Morris and three others to lay the case before the conjunct presbyteries. They sent an address to the governor by the hands of Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Finley. Before they arrived, Axford confessed himself perjured, by fleeing and never returning. The indictment was tried, October 19; but the six witnesses, cited by the attorney-general, fully proved that he had uttered none of the expressions imputed to him.

It is probable that he had been ordained before this time. He was soon after settled over the united congregations of Derry, Paxton, and Mount Joy. The latter was in Adams county, and is now Great Conewago. It was a division of Black's congregation of Conewago, and had one-fifth of Roan's time.

Brainerd passed through Paxton and Derry in the fall of 1745; but in his printed journal no mention is made of Roan. As he rode along, September 11, he had a very importunate invitation to preach,—the people being gathered at the meeting-house; but he could not, by reason of weakness. He was annoyed by the rudeness of irreligious fellows at a tavern where he lodged in Paxton. "The Pextang Boys" were hearers of Roan, as well as of Elder.

The union of the synods placed Roan in Donegal Presbytery; and points of difficulty continually arose, which admitted of no compromise. The licensing of William Edmeston was the occasion of much uneasiness. He was a student of Sampson Smith's and a prominent witness in his defence. These were no recommendations in the eyes of Roan; and he declared himself dissatisfied with what the majority accepted as evidence of the young man's piety. Edmeston prosecuted Roan for various things, to the effect that he was a party and a principal mover in a conspiracy to destroy Smith by perjured or dishonest witnesses. The trial was protracted, and was in the last degree insulting; trivial questions without end were asked, and persons were sworn as witnesses, seemingly only to annoy them. It ended in Edmeston's going to England for holy orders. Some friend recommended him to the Bishop of London for a parish in Maryland,

which the Lord-Proprietary of Maryland very highly resented; "giving an idea," says Bishop White, "of the reception a bishop would probably have, if sent over to that province."

Roan, towards the close of life, informed the presbytery that his congregations were deeply sunk in debt. He was sent on missionary tours, and, at one time, spent eight weeks on the South Branch of Potomac.

He died, October 3, 1775, and lies buried at Derry meeting-house, on the Swatara, with this inscription:—

"Beneath this stone  
Are deposited the remains  
Of an able and faithful,  
Courageous and successful  
Minister of Jesus Christ."

"Truths for once told on a tombstone," says the author of "Mark Baneroft's Tales."

William Graham, of Washington College, Virginia, was a member of his church, and received from him the education preparatory to entering Nassau Hall, and his theological training.

## DAVID BOSTWICK

WAS born in New Milford, Connecticut, in 1721, of parents who were from Scotland. He entered Yale College, but, before graduating, left, and completed his studies with Burr, at Newark. For some time he was his assistant in the Academy.

He was ordained, by New York Presbytery, pastor at Jamaica, Long Island, October 9, 1745. Burr preached from 2 Timothy ii. 16, and Pemberton exhorted the minister and people.

Davies heard him preach, during the synod in 1753, an excellent sermon on Acts ii. 11. "He has, I think, the best style, extempore, of any man I ever heard." He heard him the next evening on "Godliness is Profitable for all Things," and was much charmed with both his matter and his language. The next day being the Lord's day, he preached in the evening, "When Christ who is your life shall appear." "My pleasure under his sermon was renewed and increased."

The next year he was appointed on a mission to Virginia and North Carolina, but it is not probable that he went.

He continued at Jamaica ten years, enjoying the respect and