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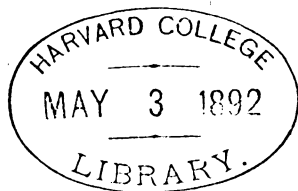
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SCOTCH-IRISH SOCIETY OF AMERICA.

THE SCOTCH-IRISH IN THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF
NORTH AMERICA.

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Among the older ecclesiastical bodies of Presbyterians in the United States is the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. This body claims to be a lineal descendant of the Reformed Church of Scotland. The line of descent may be easily traced in history. During the twenty-eight years of persecution that ensued in North Britain after the restoration of Charles II., the Church of Scotland was greatly divided in sentiment. The General Assembly had not met from 1651 to 1690, and those who adhered to the position and principles of the Church as held from 1638 to 1649 were not numerous.

At the accession of William and Mary to the throne of Britain, Presbyterianism as established in Scotland was hampered with so many Erastian principles that a considerable number of intelligent and pious men and women refused to enter the Established Church. These were sometimes designated as Cameronians and Covenanters. They lived without a stated ministry for more than sixteen years. At length, by the accession of Rev. John McMillan in 1706, and Rev. Mr. Nairn in 1643, the Reformed Presbytery of Scotland was constituted. Through this Presbytery Reformed Presbyterians in Scotland, Ireland, British America, the United States, Northern India, and Syria have received their ministry according to Presbyterian order. By ministers regularly deputed to the American colonies from the Reformed Presbyteries of Scotland and Ireland, a Reformed Presbytery was constituted on this continent in 1774. In 1781-82 this Presbytery was dissolved, the three ministers, Revs. Cuthbertson, Lynd, and Dobbin, entering into a union with an Associate Presbytery, thus forming what was known as the Associate Reformed Church. Cuthbertson was a Scotchman; Lynd and Dobbin were from Ulster, Ireland. Thus in her first ministry the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America was Scotch-Irish. Her membership were of the same origin, although perhaps not in the same ratio.

In 1798, in the city of Philadelphia, the Reformed Presbytery was reconstituted by Rev. James McKinney and Rev. William Gibson with ruling elders. Both these ministers were of Scotch-Irish descent. Under the care of this Presbytery were congregations in the New England, Middle, and Southern States. Under its direction as candidates for the ministry were Alex. McLeod, S. B. Wylie, and John Black, who soon became eminent as doctors of divinity. In the year 1800 the Reformed Presbytery passed a resolution excluding those who held slaves from communion in the Church. Such an exactment at so early a date tended to restrict membership; although if similar ground had been taken at the same period by other ecclesiastical bodies, the late Civil War might have been averted, and a better feeling between the North and South maintained.

The Reformed Presbytery as it increased in numbers was divided into the Northern, Middle, and Southern Committees. In 1809 these Committees were organized into Presbyteries, and they in turn constituted the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. The Synod adopted also the acts of the Reformed Presbytery, of which it became the orderly successor.

In 1823 the General Synod was constituted according to a certain ratio from the different Presbyteries. Meanwhile the Church extended her boundaries North, South, East, and West. Accessions from the North of Ireland were numerous. Both the ministry and membership were Scotch-Irish. In the Reformed Presbyterian Church the Scotch-Irish have always found the order of worship and the Church polity to which they had been accustomed. The sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ in Church and in State has always occupied a prominent place in the teaching and testimony of this denomination. To this doctrine she clings, believing it to be the bulwark of civil and religious liberty.

In 1833 an unhappy division took place in the Reformed Presbyterian Church upon the question of the relation of the Church to the government of the United States.

The General Synod was meeting in Eleventh Street, Philadelphia, and was in the act of organizing when, because the officers of the Synod refused to recognize certain unrighteous acts of discipline performed by a subordinate court, about half the ministers and ruling elders present withdrew and organized another Synod in Cherry Street. This unhappy division has never yet been healed. The General Synod leaves the matter of taking part in the government-

al affairs of the nation with the consciences of her membership. The historic position of this Church is "that no connection with the laws, the officers, or the order of the State is forbidden, except what truly involves immorality."

The men who gave form and scope to Reformed Presbyterianism on this continent were Rev. James McKinney, William Gibson, Samuel B. Wylie, John Black, Alex. McLeod, Gilbert McMaster, and James R. Wilson. The last five became distinguished as doctors in divinity. They were all of Scotch-Irish descent with the exception of Dr. Alex. McLeod, who was a Scotchman by birth, and they were all men of high attainments in literature, science, and theology. They constituted indeed, a grand galaxy of intellect, of culture, of eloquence, and of fidelity to conscience and to truth. What tongue or pen can measure or describe the influence which these Scotch-Irish ministers, together with the Scotch-Irish under their ministerial care, exerted upon the communities in these United States where their lot was cast.

For many years Dr. S. B. Wylie was professor of the Latin and Greek languages in the University of Pennsylvania. At the same time he was pastor of a large congregation in the city of Philadelphia, and professor in the theological seminary of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Dr. John Black held the chair of Latin and Greek in the Western University at Pittsburg from its establishment until his resignation, and was for forty-eight years pastor of the first Reformed Presbyterian congregation of the same city. Dr. Alex. McLeod, by his eloquent discourses on the War of 1812, grandly vindicated the course of the United States in that struggle, and roused the patriotism of American citizens in defense of right. His lectures on the Apocalypse constitute a clear and logical as well as eloquent exposition of a mysterious book. For thirty years he was the pastor of one of the largest congregations in New York City. Dr. Gilbert McMaster, in addition to a successful pastorate in Duaneburg, N. Y., of more than thirty years, published a volume on civil government, which has been widely read, and in every sentence reflects the scholar and the polished writer. For some years he was professor in the theological seminary of the General Synod. Dr. Wilson was eminent also as a preacher and professor.

These men left their impress upon New York, Pennsylvania, and the West, but particularly on the three cities, New York, Philadelphia and Pittsburg. They were the pioneers in the United States in the promulgation of that robust faith and regard for

human and divine law which have been everywhere characteristic of the race to which they belonged.

In the bosom of the Reformed Presbyterian Church were nourished and trained the late James Pollock, Esq., ex-Governor of Pennsylvania; Gen. Crawford, whose services in the late civil war were so conspicuous on the side of the Union; Maj. Crawford, his brother, and their late venerable father, who was eminent in letters and in theology! Indeed, in every department of usefulness—in the halls of legislation, in the forum, in medicine, in agriculture, in commerce, in science, and in theology—the Reformed Presbyterian Church has had her representatives, who have made their mark, and aided illustriously in shaping and developing the present position and civilization of these United States.

The Mecklenburg declaration, which formed the germ of the Declaration of Independence, was, beyond doubt, the outcome of those covenants which, in so far as their principles are applicable to all lands, the Reformed Presbyterian Church has always held sacred and binding until the ends of them be effected.

The General Synod has always been missionary in its operations. So early as 1836 this Synod established a mission in Northern India, and in 1837 the Presbytery of Soharanpen was organized in connection with said Synod. The result has been that a large number of native converts have been trained for the ministry, and they are now doing good service among their fellow-men. In 1863 the Synod established a Freedmen's Mission in Alexandria, Va., and for a considerable time conducted the enterprise through several ministers and female teachers.

In 1883 the Synod established a native mission at Burki, Northern India. In 1884, at considerable expense, the Synod brought Mr. Charles G. Scott, a native of India, to the United States and graduated him both from the Theological Seminary of the Church and from the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Scott is now doing missionary work at Medjaffernagen, and has taken possession of Patiala as a mission field. The Mission at present numbers two native missionaries, eight catechists, four zenanas, sixteen boys in the orphan school, and a congregation of thirty communicants, and about fifty adherents.

The Church under the care of the General Synod has one theological seminary, located in the city of Philadelphia, with a Faculty of three professors—namely, David Steele, D.D., Rev. Mr. Gailey,

Rev. J. Y. Boice—all of Scotch-Irish descent. This seminary is among the oldest in the United States, having been organized in 1809, with the late Samuel B. Wylie, D.D., as its first professor.

The Presbyterianism of this Church has never been a matter of custom or convenience, but a form of Church government, regarded as having its sanction and authority in the word of God. The doctrinal principles to which adherence is given both by ministers and members are embodied in the Westminster Confession of Faith, Catechism, Larger and Shorter, and Reformation Principles Exhibited. The book of Psalms in the best attainable version, whether prose or metrical, or both, is the matter of praise in all the congregations of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Endeavoring to be true to her history and name, this Church has always been an advocate of all the moral and scriptural reforms, designed to promote order and the well-being and happiness of the people both in the Church and in the commonwealth. Hence Sabbath observance, family religion, and the training of children in the fear of God, have always been reckoned a matter of supreme importance.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church is so largely made up of Scotch-Irish that every element of her history in the United States brings out some prominent features of the race. Whatever may have been the modifications of the race in other climes, or in other denominations, nowhere do we believe are the prominent features of the Scotch-Irish race more marked and manifest than as these are found in the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States. Another prominent trait of the race, as found in this ecclesiastical body is that, whether the person be an American by birth or adoption, he is attached to the republican form of government adopted by the United States. Hence, he rejoices in the achievements of the young republic, admires her galaxy of States, is ready to defend her flag, and prays that her distinguished greatness and Christian civilization may be the pole-star of the nations of the globe.