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An outline history of the
Presbyterian Church in West



AN
OUTLINE HISTORY
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN
WEST OR SOUTH JERSEY,
FROM
1700 TO 1865.

A DISCOURSE

Delivered October 3, 1865, in the First Presbyterian Church, Bridgeton, New Jersey,


BY APPOINTMENT OF THE PRESBYTERY OF WEST JERSEY.

WITH AN APPENDIX
FROM 1865 TO 1869.



PHILADELPHIA:
ALFRED MARTIEN,
1214 CHESTNUT STREET.
1869.

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Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1869, by
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PREFATORY NOTICE.

The Presbytery of West Jersey, October 3d, 1865, adopted this resolution :

“ *Resolved*, That the thanks of the Presbytery be given to Mr. Brown, for his discourse, and that the matter of printing it be given to a committee consisting of Messrs. Brace, Hubbard and Brown, with power to act in the premises.”

The printing has been delayed, partly because no plan was adopted to meet the expense; and partly because the writer believes that the history is incomplete. He consents to the present publication mainly lest the results of many hours of labor may be irretrievably lost.

The authorities consulted or quoted are manuscript Minutes of the Presbyteries of Abington, Philadelphia, New Brunswick, and West Jersey; also Minutes of particular churches. Historical Sermons by Rev. B. S. Everitt, of Blackwoodtown, and Rev. S. Beach Jones, D. D., of Bridgeton.

Papers obtained from the children of Rev. Jonathan Freeman, respecting the West Jersey Missionary Society, and reports of its missionaries.

Important papers in possession of Enoch Fithian, M. D., of Greenwich, &c., &c.

The printed authorities, are :

History of Salem, by Col. R. G. Johnson, 1839.

Historical Collections of New Jersey, 1844.

Webster's History of the Presbyterian Church.

Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church, by Rev. Charles Hodge, D. D.

Pastor of the Old Stone Church. (Martien, 1858.)

History of Cumberland County, by L. Q. C. Elmer, 1869. Originally in Bridgeton Chronicle, 1865.

Historical Letters in Woodbury Constitution, 1850, by Allen H. Brown.

The Log College, by Archibald Alexander, D. D.

Records of Presbyterian Church, by Presbyterian Board of Publication, from 1706, and others which will be noticed.

DISCOURSE.

JOHN vi. 17—20. "And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship; and they were afraid. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid."

To write the history of the Presbyterian Church in West or South Jersey is a pleasant task, but attended with no little difficulty. Instead of pursuing the full history of each church, which would be too great an undertaking, it seems better to attempt the outline history of successive periods, or rather of the successive revivals of missionary zeal. The history of these will involve not only their success, but their failures and the causes of their decline. The survey of the past will suggest also the intimate and reciprocal relation between revivals of religion and missionary zeal, and show how quickly the decline of vital godliness arrests the extension of the Church.

The text is not simply a motto. It is emblematical. Herein may be found an allegory. In that little ship with its chosen twelve, were centred the hopes and destiny of the Church of God for succeeding ages. We need not inquire what would have been the dire results could it have foundered, and its crew perished? for a sleepless eye watched over it; an almighty hand upheld them, and the eternal purposes of an unchang-

ing Jehovah must be accomplished. It may not be fanciful to suppose that the tempestuous sea and the contrary wind represent or illustrate the opposition and persecution, aye, all the adverse currents, against which the Church of God must make headway: that the laborious rowing of the disciples for five and twenty or thirty furlongs indicates the necessity of the diligent use of God's appointed instrumentalities to advance the Church of Christ: that the appearance of the Saviour at the moment of their greatest danger and perplexity guarantees to the Church in its greatest extremity, comfort, safety and final success. The disciples had waited in expectation of the Master's coming, but it was now dark and the heavens were growing black with unusual darkness, and since Jesus had not yet come to them, they must launch forth in obedience to his instructions and in faith upon his promise.

The text allegorically well suits also the history of our own Church for one hundred and sixty-five years, during which, the Spirit of God, coming sometimes as a gentle breeze and sometimes like a rushing mighty wind, has borne it onward and still onward against all opposing influences. Like a vessel, or like an ark propelled by oars, our Church moves slowly, yet surely, while sturdy arms are pulling. When they suspended their labors, the impetus already secured carries it forward with diminishing velocity for a little season. Then it is borne backward by the adverse current, unless with new energy the laborers renew their toil—or a new band of men replace those, who are exhausted and worn out by fatigue. Sometimes dark and furious tempests have driven our struggling bark far backward on its course, and a long, long time has elapsed ere it recovered its former position.

FIVE PERIODS.

If for convenience we seek to divide the retrospect into periods we reckon,

I. From the beginning of the last century to 1741, when, after, and during the great revival, the Church was divided: a period of forty years.

II. Then from 1741, reckoning seventeen years of separation, and seventeen years of reunion, a period of thirty-four years, we reach the Revolutionary War in 1775. This period was in the main, one of progress and prosperity, and was succeeded by one of darker aspect.

III. From that war, 1775 to 1820, forty-five years elapsed, during which the Church was not so prosperous.

IV. From 1820 to 1839 or 1840, a new impulse was given. This was accelerated by the formation of the Presbytery of West Jersey.

V. From 1840 to 1865. An outline History of the Presbytery of West Jersey for a quarter-century.

These five divisions will be considered separately.

FIRST PERIOD.

From the establishment of the Presbyterian Church in this country about 1700, to its division in 1741.

An occasional glance at contemporaneous civil affairs, will help us to appreciate the causes which affected the Church's prosperity.

STATE OF THE COUNTRY.—RELIGIOUS DESTITUTION.

The Proprietors of the Province of New Jersey, who had purchased the rights of Lord Berkely and Sir George Cartaret, ceded to the Crown the right of government in 1702. Whereupon Queen Anne united

East and West Jersey into one province, and put it and New York under Lord Cornbury.*

William Penn defined the line of partition to be "From the east side of Little Egg Harbor River straight North through the country to the utmost branch of the Delaware River."* The term (New) West Jersey was applied more extensively than in our day, and must have included a large part of Warren and Hunterdon Counties, as well as Burlington and all the southern counties. The population was supposed to be at that time (1702): In East Jersey 12,000—in West Jersey 8,000,—total 20,000; and the militia amounted to 1400 men.

The country around Upper Freehold was in 1706 a wilderness full of savages. Gilbert Tennent would have been called in 1726 to Norwalk, Connecticut, had not the Fairfield Association interposed their judgment that he ought not to be taken from so destitute a region as the Jerseys.†

Deists abounded so sadly in New Jersey, that Joseph Morgan of Freehold wrote a treatise against them [1721]. He says, "Formerly, Presbyterians were scarcely less hated than Papists, but a happy change has taken place, and they are regarded with favor."†

Thomas Chalkley, a travelling friend from England, wrote in 1726, from Cohansey: "I went through the wilderness over Maurice River . . . through a miry boggy way, in which we saw no house for about forty miles except at the ferry."‡

It was in this period that William Tennent, Sen., came from Ireland, removed to Neshaminy in 1726, and there

* Historical Collections of New Jersey, pp. 20, 29.

† Webster's History of the Presbyterian Church, pp. 323, 336, 337.

‡ Dr. Beeseley's Sketch of Cape May County, p. 191.

established a school, which its enemies in derision called The Log College;* but which in fact became a theological seminary. The Presbyterian ministers who came across the ocean had enjoyed a liberal education, but there was no college in any of the Middle States, where young men seeking the ministry could obtain the requisite learning. No young man could enter the Presbyterian ministry until the Log College was Instituted, without going to Scotland or New England for his education, and this amounted pretty nearly to closing the door against all candidates who were brought up in the Presbyterian Church. The Church therefore had to depend, for a supply of ministers, on emigration from Scotland, Ireland or New England, and chiefly from Ireland.

Eleazar Wales was directed in 1734 to join with Andrews in writing to the Rector of Yale for a minister to visit the destitutions of West Jersey.†

In 1735 a supplication from Gloucester having been brought into the Synod and referred to the Presbytery of Philadelphia, a similar application was made to the Rector for an approved preacher.

In 1739 the clerk of the Presbytery of New Brunswick was directed to "write to Mr. Edwards, of Northampton, a relation of the necessitous circumstances of divers places in this country in respect of the Gospel ministry, in order to excite him to speak to some pious candidates there to come this way and help us in the Lord's work." But a kind letter was received from Mr. Edwards signifying that there was no prospect of obtaining help from them.‡

* Log College, p. 42.

† MS. Minutes, pp. 11, and 13.

‡ Webster, p. 407.

EARLIEST CHURCHES.

COHANSEY.* As we survey the moral destitution we discover one bright spot in West Jersey. The torch which was lit in Connecticut and borne from Fairfield to the banks of the Cohansey, though sometimes flaming and sometimes flickering, has never been extinguished.

Mr. Andrews, of Philadelphia, in 1708 endeavoring to persuade Joseph Smith to come from Massachusetts and settle at Cohansey, said, "They are the best people in this neighborhood."†

The early records of the Cohansey Church were destroyed by fire. Dr. Hodge in his history makes this one of the three oldest Presbyterian churches in New Jersey.‡ The others were Freehold and Woodbridge. The first mention of Fairfield,§ (or Cohanzie) on the Presbyterial records, was in 1708. The first Presbytery organized was that of Philadelphia in 1705. Rev. B. B. Hotchkin in his account of the origin of Fairfield Church dates its organization back to 1697, or even earlier. Judge Elmer thinks that the church was established not later than 1690.|| Rev. Thomas Bridges is the first minister known to have preached there. In 1695 he came to Cohansey and located lands. He is said to have been called away to Boston in 1702. The first building, a temporary structure of logs, succeeded by a frame edifice, stood in the old New England Town graveyard on the bank of the Cohansey about one mile from the old stone church. In that graveyard sleep the bodies of Rev. Howell Powell,¶ (deceased 1717), Daniel Elmer, (deceased 1755) and William Ramsey, (deceased 1771).

* In old writings often spelled Cohanzie, Cohansie, and Cohanzy.

† Webster, p. 324.

‡ Old Stone Church, pp. 20, 21.

§ The name of the Township.

|| Elmer's History.

¶ The place of Mr. Powell's interment cannot be recognized. See "Pastor of Old Stone Church," p. 28.



The Old Stone Church of Fairfield, N. J. 1780. See page 37.

The other churches belonging to the First Period were Greenwich, Cape May, Gloucester, Woodbury, Quihawken, Pilesgrove and Deerfield. Of none of these except Pilesgrove and perhaps Deerfield, can we give positively even the year of their organization. Some few incidents of their early history must suffice.

GREENWICH. The earliest records of Greenwich are supposed to have perished in the fire which consumed the parsonage in 1739. There still exists a copy of a deed of gift [March 24th 1717] whereby Jeremiah Bacon conveys an acre of land for the people called Presbyterians on the north side of the Cohansey, to build and establish a meeting-house for the public worship of God. Mr. Samuel Black is the first minister who is known to have labored at Greenwich. Who supplied the church after Mr. Black until 1728, is unknown. At this date Ebenezer Gould was installed pastor. In 1736 and again in 1739 difficulties occurred, when he removed without being dismissed.

CAPE MAY. The early records of Cape May are lost. John Bradnor was the first pastor.* Mr. Bradnor, a candidate for the ministry from Scotland, was willing to serve them, but had no authority to preach. In this emergency, three of the nearest ministers, Messrs. Davis, Hampton, and Henry, on their own responsibility, examined and licensed him in March, 1714. The parsonage was purchased of the Rev. John Bradnor in 1721.†

GLOSTER. The first notice of Gloster is in 1719, when John Clement was employed by the Presbytery of Philadelphia to preach at Gloster and Pilesgrove.‡

The ancient city of Gloucester, or Axwamus, was laid

* Log College, pp. 10, 11.

† Hist. Collections of New Jersey, p. 123.

‡ Webster, p. 371.

out by Thomas Sharp in 1689, from Newton Creek to the Sassackon or Little Timber Creek,* with ten streets running East and West, and two North and South, with a market-place and Town Bounds for the gambols of the boys. At that time it contained according to Oldmixon one hundred houses, and thither the young people of Philadelphia resorted for amusement and refreshments. After the public buildings at Gloucester were burned in 1787, and Woodbury was made the shiretown, Gloucester began speedily to decline, and was reduced from one hundred houses to a dozen.

Whitefield preached at Gloucester in April and October 1740.

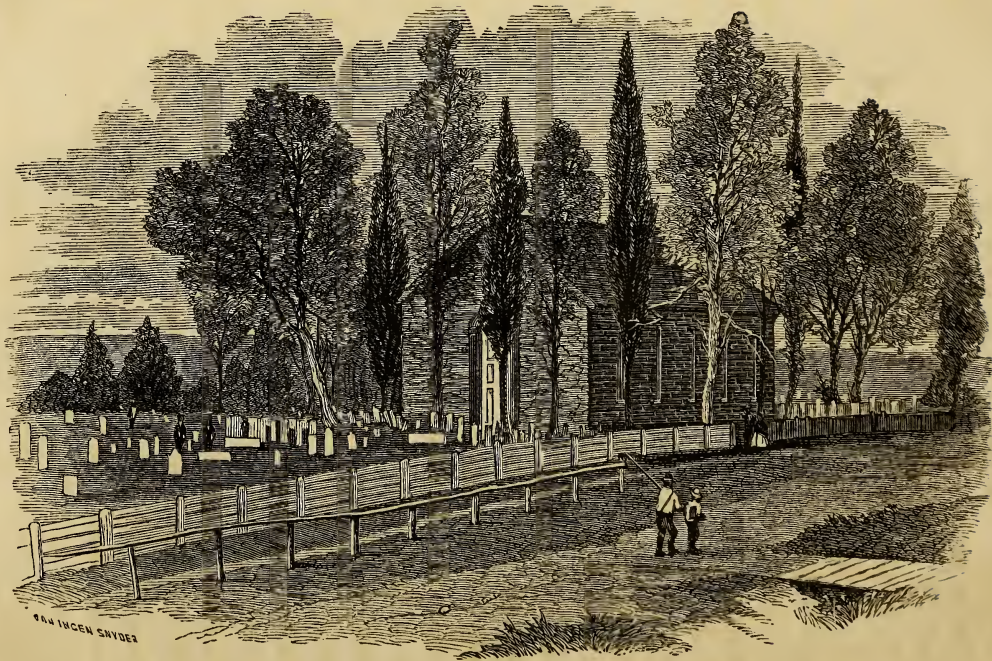
WOODBURY. Of Woodbury it is recorded that Joel (son of David) Evans was licensed by Philadelphia Presbytery, Sept. 17th, 1741, and supplied Woodbury and Deerfield.†

The minutes of the Session in 1799 state: "Of the origin of this Presbyterian congregation we can obtain no certain account. Probably it was formed early in the present century. The original deed for the land on which the church was built was made between John Tatem on the one part, and Alexander Randall and others August 10th, 1721. During that summer the church was erected. The congregation being small remained without a stated pastor, but was occasionally supplied by travelling ministers and others, until Mr. Benjamin Chestnut, the first minister, was ordained in 1752."

The first building stood at the northern edge of the present village of Woodbury, and the site is now used as a burial ground.

* Mickle's Reminiscences of Gloster, pp. 35, 61, 65.

† Webster, p. 349.



Presbyterian Church, Deerfield, N. J. 1771. Remodeled 1859. See page 61.

QUIHAWKEN. The earliest notice which we have found of Quihawken or Penn's Neck, is that in connection with Pilesgrove it called David Evans in 1741.*

PILESGROVE. Although the present church of Pittsgrove, or Pilesgrove, was organized by David Evans in 1741, there are indications of a congregation of some kind seeking supplies during the preceding twenty years, being associated sometimes with Gloster, and sometimes with Deerfield, and finally with Quihawken. [See *Webster*, pp. 371, 505 : 349 and 446. MS. Minutes Presbytery of Philadelphia, Vol. i. pp. 12, 42, 73.]

DEERFIELD. Deerfield was a neighbor of Pilesgrove and sometimes a rival. The existence of a house of worship at each of the two places was almost contemporaneous; but Deerfield first had a house of worship, as is proved by their opposition in 1739 to the erection of another so near as Pilesgrove for fear that it would tend to their own damage.†

Rev. John Davenport,‡ one of the pastors, records in 1795: "About the year 1732 a number of families from different places settled in Deerfield. The remoteness of their situation from congregations in which the gospel ministry was settled, induced them to form a design to build a house for public worship, which design was happily executed in or near the year 1737." "A good and convenient log building," says Colonel Johnson in his history of Salem County.

Supplies were received at different times. When destitute of preaching, the people met together on the Lord's day for public worship. About the year 1740

* Webster, p. 349.

† See Minutes of Presbytery of Philadelphia, Vol. i. p. 73.

‡ Son of James Davenport, who was the companion of Whitefield.

Rev. Samuel Blair visited this branch of the Zion of God; a divine energy attended the dispensation of the word; numbers were hopefully brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Next came the Rev. Gilbert Tennent, whose ministrations were also crowned with success. Next came the Rev. Samuel Finley, whose labors were evidently owned of God. Other ministers visited this little flock and had the inexpressible satisfaction of seeing the work of the Lord prosper in their hands; the finger of the Almighty was visible; a glorious harvest of souls was reaped; the influences of the Divine Spirit were shed down in rich abundance, and precious additions were made to the Church of Christ.

Such were the churches, so far as we have any knowledge of them. Few in numbers and widely scattered, they were only partially supplied. In the poverty of men and means, they were joined together at great inconvenience. Thus Deerfield and Pilesgrove were united, though distant six miles: or Pilesgrove with Quihawken, a distance of eighteen miles: again, Glosster and Pilesgrove, a journey of twenty miles. Such was the destitution of ministers that just before the great revival and the great division, Old Cohansey seems alone to have sustained the stated ministrations of the gospel, and had Daniel Elmer for a pastor. Even this church had its share of trials and troubles. From 1708 to 1728, three of its ministers, viz: Exell, Hook and Paris, had fallen under the censure of Presbytery, the latter two seriously. Such facts afforded to the New Brunswick party some color of excuse to question the piety of certain ministers of that day.

Too often, ministers who came across the ocean were not men of the best character. They were often mere

adventurers and sometimes had crossed the Atlantic to escape from the censure incurred, and even presented fraudulent credentials.*

LOW STATE OF RELIGION.—REVIVAL.—SCHISM.

A recollection of some of the prominent facts connected with the great revival and schism is necessary to a clear understanding of the condition of the South Jersey churches. It is also pertinent to inquire what was the general state of religion antecedently? The Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church, by the Rev. Charles Hodge, D. D., in two volumes large octavo, gives a full account. For the benefit of those, who have not access to that work it may be allowable to extract and condense some of its statements. In pages, from the fifteenth to the twenty-fourth, may be found Blair's description of the low state of religion in Pennsylvania: Thompson's concessions in his reply: the author's opinion: Increase Mather's lamentation over the declension of the second generation of Puritans: Trumbull's admission to the greater declension of the third and fourth generation, all tending to the same conclusion. In Scotland there had been a general decay in the power of religion from the revolution in 1688, to the time of which we are speaking. In England the case was far worse. Before the rise of the Methodists, says John Newton, the doctrines of grace were seldom heard from the pulpit, and the life and power of religion were little known.

The ministers composing the Presbyterian Church in this country were sound in the faith, as were also their people, and there were no diversities or contentions

* Log College, p. 42.

among them respecting the doctrines of the gospel.* But revivals of religion were nowhere heard of, and an orthodox creed and a decent external conduct were the only points on which inquiry was made, when persons were admitted to the communion of the church. Indeed, it was very much a matter of course for all who had been baptized in infancy to be received into communion at the proper age, without exhibiting or possessing any satisfactory evidence of a change of heart, by the supernatural operations of the Holy Spirit.

Again, in the Constitutional History, from pages twenty-four to seventy, we are informed that the rise of the Methodists in England, and the extensive revival of religion in Scotland were contemporaneous with the revival in this country. The revival was most general and remarkable throughout New England, where Trumbull estimates, perhaps too favorably, that in the term of two or three years, thirty or forty thousand souls were born into the kingdom of God. In New Jersey the revival began in Freehold in 1730—32, and in eight or ten succeeding years spread through Newark, Elizabethtown, New Brunswick, and other places. That the revival was genuine but faulty, must be conceded. Immediately after this excitement, in New England especially, the state of religion rapidly declined, errors of all kinds became more prevalent than ever. In the Presbyterian Church the same rapid decline of religion does not appear to have taken place.

“In those times there was too little discrimination between true and false religious feeling. There was too much encouragement given to outcries, faintings, and bodily agitations as probable evidence of the power of

* Log College, pp. 16, 17.

God.* There was in many, too much reliance on impulses, visions, and the pretended power of discerning spirits. There was a great deal of censoriousness and of a sinful disregard of ecclesiastical order. The disastrous effects of these evils, the rapid spread of false religion, the dishonor and decline of true piety, the prevalence of erroneous doctrines, the division of congregations, the alienation of Christians, and the long period of subsequent deadness in the church, stand up as a solemn warning to Christians, and especially to Christian ministers, in all times to come. . . . Yet we are not to forget or undervalue the great good, which was then accomplished. In many places there was little of these evils, especially in New Jersey and Virginia. . . . To the Presbyterian Church particularly, the revival was the commencement of a new life, the vigor of which is still felt in all her veins."

7 In 1739, Whitefield appeared and exerted a powerful influence.

The revival was the occasion of the schism in the Presbyterian Church.† Two acts of the Synod hastened this event. In 1737 the Synod passed an act against the intrusion of ministers into the bounds of other congregations, and in 1738 the act requiring, before licensure, a college diploma, or in its stead a certificate from the examining committee appointed by Synod. This the New Brunswick Presbytery disregarded, and hence after much contention and confusion, June 1, 1741, the New Brunswick party withdrew from Synod.

Tennent, Davenport, Blair, and Finley and others, denounced their brethren, and urged the people to leave their unconverted ministers, and establish separate meetings.‡

* Hodge's Constitutional History, Part II. pp. 100, 101.

† *Ibid.* p. 103.

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 135, 140.

“The great schism was not the result of conflicting views, either as to doctrine or church government. It was the result of alienation of feeling produced by the controversies relating to the revival. In these controversies the New Brunswick brethren were certainly the aggressors. In their unrestrained zeal they denounced brethren whose Christian character they had no right to question. They disregarded the usual rules of ministerial intercourse, and avowed the principle, that in extraordinary times and circumstances such rules ought to be suspended. Acting upon this principle, they divided the great majority of the congregations within the sphere of their operations, and by appealing to the people, succeeded in overwhelming their brethren with popular obloquy. Excited by a sense of injury, and alarmed by the disorders consequent on these new methods, the opposition party had recourse to violent measures, which removed none of the evils which they suffered, and involved them in a controversy with a large class of their brethren, with whom they had hitherto acted in concert. These facts our fathers have left on record for the instruction of their children.”*

Dr. Alexander’s testimony is: “We of the Presbyterian Church are more indebted to the men of the Log College for our evangelical views, and for our revivals of religion, than we are aware of. By their exertions, and the blessing of God on their preaching, a new spirit was infused into the Presbyterian body.”†

SECOND PERIOD—1741 to 1775.

We now enter upon the Second Period, and notice the condition of the South Jersey Churches at the time of the division.

* Constitutional History, Part II. pp. 207.

† Log College, pp. 36, 37, 40.

At the time of the schism, Cohansey, *i. e.*, Fairfield, had Daniel Elmer for its pastor, and adhered to the Old Side until his death, but was rent by the dissensions of the times.

Pilesgrove, with Quihawken, obtained David Evans and adhered to the Old Side until his death.

Greenwich and the infant Deerfield were destitute. Gloucester in vain looked to New England, and from isolated and forsaken Cape May, was heard a feeble cry for help.

The zealous Evangelists of the New Brunswick party seeing only two pastors over these extended wastes, may well have been excused for overstepping the ecclesiastical boundaries and going to these vacancies and destitutions, and *we* may be indebted to *them* more than we are aware of.

At the meeting of the New Brunswick Presbytery on the second day after the schism, applications were made for supplies from eighteen places, almost all of which were out of the bounds of the Presbytery, and came for the most part from fragments of old congregations.*

Both before and after the schism, Gilbert Tennent proceeded to evangelize in West Jersey.† Campbell and Rowland were directed to visit Cape May and Greenwich. Finley labored with zeal and success in Deerfield and the adjoining congregations.

GREENWICH IN COHANSEY. Whitefield visited West Jersey in the spring of 1740. Gilbert Tennent followed him in the summer, and while Whitefield was preaching again, November 19th, the Holy Ghost came down

* Constitutional History, pp. 136, 162.

† Webster, pp. 159, 471, and 505.

again like a rushing mighty wind at Cohansey.* Some thousands were present, the whole congregation was moved, and two cried out. New Brunswick Presbytery was constantly importuned for supplies, and their most promising candidates were sent to Cohansey, among them was William Dean in 1744.†

In 1742, Greenwich supplicated for Finley, and being ordained as an evangelist he spent much time in the vicinity, but did not settle. Greenwich was left vacant by Gould's removal at the commencement of the revival. It was fully enlisted on the side of its promoters.‡

FAIRFIELD IN COHANSEY. This congregation divided§ during Elmer's ministry, even his own son went to Greenwich to hear Andrew Hunter. At Elmer's request, Cowell, McHenry, and Kinkaid were sent by the Synod in 1754 to endeavor to remove the difficulties complained of, in his congregation; but all proceedings were stayed by his death.||

William Ramsey succeeded Elmer as pastor at Fairfield, when the two fragments of the church were reunited and adhered to the New Side.¶ He was received by Abington Presbytery, May 11, 1756, and was ordained and installed December 1st of the same year. According to his record in 1759 the members were seventy-eight. In 1765 there was a powerful revival of reli-

* Greenwich is on the north side and Fairfield on the south side of the Cohansey river. Each place was often designated as Cohansey. It is not strange that consequently mistakes have been committed. Compare Webster pages 403, 505, with Elmer's History. Whitefield's labors appear to have been mainly at Greenwich in Cohansey, if at all at Fairfield in Cohansey. The people of Greenwich held to the New Lights; those of Fairfield to the Old Side, during Elmer's life. The New England element prevailed at Fairfield. The Scotch and Irish at Greenwich.

† Webster, pp. 403, 404, 526.

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 489, 505.

§ Some went over the river to worship with the New Lights.

|| Webster, p. 404.

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 670.

gion, and about sixty new members were added to the church.

CAPE MAY. At Cape May the revival was felt, but the congregation was feeble in numbers and resources. This, one of the oldest congregations, was among the first that had a pastor, and then remained vacant nearly thirty years. Beatty visited the people and laid before the Synod their distressed state. In 1743 New Brunswick Presbytery sent William Dean to supply them. Davenport spent the winter of 1750-51 at Cape May with little or no success, except on the last day. Lawrence was called, but long delay occurred before his installation, which was not until June 20, 1754. Of his ministry little is known.*

DEERFIELD. Deerfield joined Greenwich, being united with the New Side in settling Andrew Hunter, who drew many from Fairfield to him.†

PILEGROVE. Pilesgrove with Quihawken obtained David Evans in 1741, as already mentioned, and adhered to the Old Side until his death in 1751, when it passed over to the New Side. Evans drew up a church covenant, which was signed by twenty-five males and twenty-four females, all communicants, on April 30, 1741. It has been a mystery, how could he find forty-nine new members in a thinly settled country? Webster suggests, "Either the church had become extinct, or it was not to his mind."‡ Had there been a church of some other denomination now changing its ecclesiastical relation? or will the excitement of the revival times, and perhaps the division, account for this apparent reorganization? (See above, page 13.)

The Presbytery of New Brunswick in 1751, learn-

* Webster, pp. 526, 542, 546.

† *Ibid.*, p. 505.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

ing from Elder Reeves that Mr. Hunter's congregation are very deficient in paying his salary, "do judge said people to be greatly in fault. . . . In the meanwhile do judge that Mr. Hunter should preach at Greenwich one-half, at Deerfield one-fourth, and at Pilesgrove one-fourth of his time.*

QUIHAWKEN. Quihawken, or Penn's Neck, seems to have received a new impulse. In 1748 a deed of trust for one-fourth of an acre of land was executed for the building of a house of worship. We may reckon this as another of the fruits of the revival. Had there been a congregation previously?†

WOODBURY and HEAD OF TIMBER CREEK. In 1750 a call was presented to New Brunswick Presbytery, from Woodbury and Head of Timber Creek, for Mr. Chestnut, and a call from Penn's Neck at the same time, and as Mr. Chestnut requested time to consider, he was appointed till the next meeting of Presbytery to supply one-third of his time at Penn's Neck, and the other two-thirds at Woodbury, in case they shall provide him a house to live in. But in case they do not, and the congregation of Penn's Neck do, then he must give two-thirds at Penn's Neck, and one-third at Woodbury.‡

BLACKWOODTOWN. The revival spirit carried church extension to Timber Creek, now Blackwoodtown. The deed for the ground was given by John Blackwood, a Scotchman, in 1751.§ The first settled minister was Benjamin Chestnut, who entered the College of New Jersey, and graduated in 1748, being a member of the first class connected with the institution. It is doubtful whether there was any church organization separate

* MS. Minutes, p. 7.

† MS. Minutes, p. 107.

‡ *Presbyterian*, April 26th, 1856.

§ Everitt's MS. Sermon, pp. 9, 11, 14, 24.

from Woodbury before 1769, at which time the members of Timber Creek are supposed to have been not much less than fifty.

ALOES CREEK. The church of Aloes Creek belongs to this revival period, though we have not a history of its organization. Webster says, there was a church at Log Town, on Aloes Creek, in 1750. It was afterwards supplied by Greenman.*

The church of LONGACOMING also belongs to this period. A more particular account of it will be given in connection with the labors of Rev. John Brainerd.

Upon the death of the pastors of Fairfield and Pilesgrove, all the Presbyterian churches in South Jersey came under the ecclesiastical supervision of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, and when the Presbytery of New York cast its weight with New Brunswick, and the Synod of New York was organized in 1745, then, or soon afterwards, all these churches looked to the Synod of New York as the highest ecclesiastical tribunal.†

PRESBYTERY OF ABINGTON.

The inconvenience of great distance from the Central Presbytery was felt and doubtless led to the formation of a more compact body. In 1751 a number of the Presbytery of New Brunswick petitioned to be erected into a distinct Presbytery.‡ Accordingly the Synod of New York did erect that part of the said Presbytery that live in Pennsylvania, together with those who live in New Jersey to the southward of Philadelphia, bordering upon Delaware, into a distinct Presbytery, by

* Webster, p. 656.

† See the name of Andrew Hunter on its roll in 1746, absentee. He and Elder Francis Brewster were present in 1747, at Maidenhead.

‡ Records of the Presbyterian Church, p. 246.

the name of the Presbytery of Abington. This Presbytery was organized at the time appointed, May 20, 1752, and consisted of Gilbert Tennent, Richard Treat, Charles Beatty, Andrew Hunter, Daniel Lawrence, John Campbell, and Benjamin Chestnut, ministers. Mr. John Todd absent on a mission in Virginia. Five elders were present, but from what churches is not stated, viz: David Chambers, William Adams, John Wigton, Thomas Armstrong, and Hugh Hamilton.

The churches of South Jersey seem to have flourished under the fostering care of this Presbytery, so long as it existed, from 1752 to 1758. During these six years Presbytery diligently appointed supplies for vacancies at Cape May, Pilesgrove, Penn's Neck, Woodbury, and Timber Creek. In 1755 we find the first mention of supplies for Egg Harbour, and for each succeeding year they were appointed, probably as often as once a month. Among these were Greenman, Lawrence, Chestnut, Ramsey, and Martin. The last act of Presbytery was to appoint Mr. Lawrence to supply two Sabbaths at Egg Harbour. The frequent record of days of fasting and prayer by the Presbytery of Abington, especially at every ordination, is worthy of serious attention.

Among the important ecclesiastical acts were two ordinations and three installations.

Nehemiah Greenman, a licentiate of New York Presbytery, educated at the expense of David Brainerd, was, after careful trials, ordained with fasting and prayer, and installed pastor of Pilesgrove Church, Dec. 5th, 1754. He gave one-fourth of his time to Penn's Neck. Messrs. Treat, Hunter, and Beatty officiated at his ordination.*

* Webster, p. 656.

In the same year a committee consisting of Messrs. Hunter, Chestnut, and Beatty, installed the Rev. Daniel Lawrence over Cape May, and in 1756 Presbytery received William Ramsey, as above stated, and installed him pastor over Fairfield. The manuscript minutes mention difficulties at Deerfield, also at Timber Creek, where Presbytery thought that Mr. Chestnut was not wholly free from blame. Yet, in comparison with previous turbulent times and great destitutions, may we not accommodate the words, "Then had the churches rest throughout this region, and were edified?"

REUNION OF SYNODS.

In 1758, after seventeen years of separation, the two Synods were united under the title of The Synod of New York and Philadelphia.

As a consequence of the reunion, it became necessary to remodel the Presbyteries. The Presbytery of Abington was therefore merged in that of Philadelphia, which was reconstructed with thirteen ministers, of whom five labored (it is supposed) among the nine churches of West Jersey. We can readily suppose that joy and gratitude at the happy result—the long desired reunion of the two Synods—would stimulate to new efforts.

MISSIONS TO INDIANS.

We soon find the attention of the Synod occupied with the care of Indian missions in New Jersey. David Brainerd had already accomplished his work among the Indians, and entered into his rest, 1747.

While Mr. Gilbert Tennent was in Great Britain on account of the College of New Jersey, a friend to the conversion of the Indians put into his hands two hun-

dred pounds sterling to be used by the Synod of New York in sending missionaries to these heathen tribes. This seems to have excited for a time a considerable missionary spirit among the ministers in connection with the Synod. Several pastors, who had charges, went on temporary missions, and Mr. John Brainerd devoted himself wholly to the work among the tribes who resided in New Jersey.*

The reflex or reciprocal influence between foreign and domestic missions at this period, is worthy of more careful study. This may be more fully seen in the Life of Rev. John Brainerd,† by the late Rev. Thomas Brainerd, D. D. In 1760 the Synod appointed John Brainerd to succeed his brother David, and ordered collections to be made for his support. This was after the annuity from the Society in Scotland had been suspended.‡

CONTEMPORANEOUS CIVIL AFFAIRS.§

This time of peace in the Church was a period of war in the country. The prospect of the British Colonies was at one time gloomy. At the first meeting of the reunited Synod, a day of fasting and humiliation for sin was appointed. It was in 1755 that General Braddock was defeated by the French and Indians in ambush, and the name of GEORGE WASHINGTON began to be resplendent. In 1762, after hostilities had raged eight years, a general peace was concluded. Thus was an end put to the desolating wars with the Indians. During these wars, four hundred colonial privateers had cruised with successful vigilance, and twenty-four thousand provin-

* Log College, p. 55.

† Published by the Presbyterian Publication Committee, Philadelphia, 1865.

‡ Records, pp. 299, 300.

§ Grimshaw's History. Historical Collections, New Jersey.

cial soldiers coöperated with the English regulars in North America.

When called upon by Mr. Pitt, the celebrated British minister, the Assembly of New Jersey instead of raising reluctantly five hundred men, doubled that number, and to fill the ranks in season, offered a bounty of twelve pounds per man, increased the pay of the officers, and voted a sum of fifty thousand pounds for their maintenance. They, at the same time, directed barracks to be built at Burlington, Trenton, New Brunswick, Amboy, and Elizabethtown, competent each for the accommodation of three hundred men. . . . This complement of one thousand men, New Jersey kept up during the years 1758, 1759, and 1760, and in the years 1761 and 1762, furnished six hundred men, besides in the latter year a company of sixty-four men and officers, especially for garrison duty, for which she incurred an average expense of forty thousand pounds per annum.

The deleterious influences of these wars upon the state of religion, and the happy effects of peace, we can now appreciate in part. Soon, other public excitements agitated the colonies and—the Mother Country demanding remuneration for the expenses of the war, without the right of representation—then began the encroachments and resistance, which in ten or fifteen years culminated in rebellion, revolution, and desolating wars, and finally resulted in victory and independence.

PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH.

Before the storm-cloud of war burst in its fury, the ministers of our Church seem to have labored diligently and faithfully over a large missionary field. One, conversant with the relative position of localities, will re-

cognize them as itinerants, supplying churches at remote distances. Thus, in Old Monmouth county, Elihu Spencer, who spent the winter of 1746 with John Brainerd at Bethel, New Jersey, in 1761 joined New Brunswick Presbytery, and supplied Shrewsbury, Middletown Point, and Amboy, a route twenty miles in length, and in 1764 was directed to visit the sea-coast towards Egg Harbor.*

Charles McKnight, having removed from Cranberry and Allentown, accepted a call in 1767 to Middletown Point, Shark River, and Shrewsbury, a route of twenty or thirty miles.†

John Brainerd's testimony as to the state of religion at this period is important. He wrote from Brotherton, August 24, 1761, to Mrs. Smith, thus: "I spend something more than half my Sabbaths here at Brotherton,‡ the rest are divided. At this place I have but few white people. The reason is, because this is near central between Delaware [River] and the sea, and the English settlements are chiefly on them. The other places are in the midst of the inhabitants, and whenever I preach there, I have a large number of white people that meet to attend divine service. But besides these, I have preached at eight different places on Lord's days, and near twenty on other days of the week, and never fail of a considerable congregation—so large and extensive is this vacancy. Two large counties, and a considerable part of two more, almost wholly destitute of a preached gospel, except what the Quakers do in their way, and many of the people but one remove from a state of heathenism."§

* Webster, pp. 587, 589.

† *Ibid.* p. 486.

‡ In Burlington County, at the Indian Mill, or Shamong, four miles from Atsion. Not the Shamong station on the Delaware and Raritan Railroad. See Brainerd's Life, chapter xli.

§ Sprague's Annals, vol. iii. p. 152.

The two large counties, of which he speaks as almost wholly destitute, were probably Burlington and Gloucester, including the present Atlantic, and the two others, of which a considerable part were destitute, were probably Monmouth and ——?

Most diligent, commendable and encouraging were the efforts of John Brainerd and his contemporaries, to supply these destitutions and meet the calls of the people on the sea-coast for the gospel. Brainerd's* letter to Enoch Green is an invaluable link in the chain of evidence. He writes to him from Trenton, June 21, 1761, like a veteran itinerant, giving advice to his younger brother, who girds on the harness for a six weeks' tour on horseback along the shore. The field is from Tom's River to Tuckahoe. He mentions only one meeting-house, but gives the names of seventeen heads of families, at whose houses meetings are usually held, viz., at Tom's River, Goodluck, Barnegat, Manahocking, Wading River, Great Egg Harbour, and Tuckahoe, and advises him to make appointments for Mr. Smith and Mr. McKnight, who will succeed him. To go from one extreme of this field to the other would demand a ride of between 100 and 150 miles by the shortest route, and in his entire journey Mr. Green probably rode three or four hundred miles.

From the second volume of the Minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia it appears that frequent supplications for supplies were presented, and that appointments were made for Great Egg Harbour and Little Egg Harbour, and in 1762 supplies were requested for Barnegat Shore. Webster, (page 568) says: "There was in 1767 a new Presbyterian meeting-house at Barnegat, and probably as early there was one at Manahawken."

* See Van Rensselaer's Presbyterian Magazine, 1852, p. 471.

We have no other testimony, not even tradition, to confirm this statement, but we have read in a book imported from Scotland, that "among the whites eight houses for public worship have been erected since Mr. Brainerd's settlement, and more will be."

The next important witness is the Rev. P. V. Fithian.* In 1775 he journeyed from Cohansey to Egg Harbour and the Forks of Little Egg Harbour. His journal proves that in the interval, since Mr. Green's visit, (1761) fourteen years previously, several houses of worship had been erected. Besides preaching at private houses, he preached at Mr. Clark's Little Log meeting-house near Pleasant Mills and Batsto, where he met Mr. Brainerd, and observed a fast-day. Next preached at Brotherton to Mr. Brainerd's Indians. Also at Clark's Mill meeting-house, two miles from the present Port Republic. Here was a frame house and an organized church, and here, he adds, they gave me a dollar. Then he preached at Cedar Bridge, or Blackman's meeting-house, at Bargaintown, where a house was built of planks placed perpendicularly. The deed for Blackman's meeting-house was given by Andrew Blackman in 1764.† Documentary evidence is also found of two other Brainerd churches, which Mr. Fithian does not mention. One was at Wading River, in Burlington County, for which the land was conveyed by the will of John Leake, bearing date 1777. Probably it had been occupied previously. The other was at Longcoming, proof of which is found in the minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1767, and confirmed by the words of Mr. Safford, who was employed by the West Jersey Missionary Society in 1821.

* Original journal in possession of Dr. Enoch Fithian, Greenwich, N. J. See Woodbury Constitution, 1850.

† See Letters in Woodbury Constitution, 1850.

The following extract proves that there was a Presbyterian congregation at Longacoming, and that in all probability it was at that time not inferior to the congregations of Timber Creek and Woodbury.

1767—"A call was brought into the Presbytery signed by the principal members of the congregations of Timber Creek and Longacoming, for Mr. Chestnut to take the pastoral charge of them, but as there are none from Woodbury attending the Presbytery, or that have their names affixed to that call, although it is expected that they will unite with those congregations in being a part of Mr. Chestnut's charge, the Presbytery do not think that the way is yet clear to proceed in that matter, and in the meantime do appoint him to preach and perform pastoral duties to that people in such proportion as shall be agreed by them."

Mr. Safford's words in 1821 are: "I visited Longacoming at the request of Dr. Janeway. It is fourteen miles in a north-eastern direction from Philadelphia, and contains twelve or thirteen houses. Here was formerly a church under the care of Mr. John Brainerd. It is now extinct. There are, however, four persons residing in the place who belong to the Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia. I was told by aged persons that I was the only Presbyterian clergyman who had preached among them for thirty or forty years. They greatly desire missionary labor. Their cry is, 'Come over and help us.'" The indenture, whereby Samuel Scull conveyed three acres of land in Longacoming to five individuals, was made in the sixth year of our Sovereign Lord, George the Third, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, &c., in the year 1766.

Mr. Fithian was surprised to find how fastidious were the people in Egg Harbour, and especially at

the Forks, respecting preachers and preaching, and remarks:

“I have said that the people here are nice in their taste concerning preaching. It is not without reason. They have had subjects for comparison. Mr. Brainerd and Mr. Clark enumerated the following gentlemen, who have occasionally, and some of them *very often*, preached here as supplies. Messrs. Brainerd, Tennent, Smith, Benj. Chestnut, Hunter, Spencer, Dr. James Sproat, Charles Beatty, Wm. Ramsey, Nehemiah Greenman, Green, J. Clark, S. Clark, McKnight, McCracken, Mitchell, Watt, Boyd, Gravis, Brockway, Van Artsdalen, Hollinshead, McClure, Frisby, Keith, and Andrew Hunter, Jr.”

Here are the names of twenty-six Presbyterian ministers, besides Mr. Fithian, who left their flocks in Cape May, Philadelphia, and other places, and travelled long distances on horseback, that they might seek and feed the few scattered sheep in the wilderness. Mr. Greenman at one time left his congregation at Pilesgrove, and spent six months on the shore, and almost made an engagement to settle there.

How true are the words of Dr. Archibald Alexander* respecting itinerant labors to lay the foundation of churches in the new settlements: “Much more of this kind of labor was done by the fathers of the Presbyterian Church in this country than by their sons in our age.”

Thus, onward—onward—and upward, against all opposing currents, the Presbyterian Church steadily made headway, planting her colonies and erecting her standard in the name of the Lord, even to the commencement of the Revolutionary War.

* See Home and Foreign Record, 1850, pp. 4—6, on the magnitude and importance of Domestic Missions.

THIRD PERIOD.—FROM 1775 TO 1820—FORTY-FIVE YEARS.

We here quote from the last page of the Constitutional History:

“The effects of the Revolutionary War on the state of our Church were extensively and variously disastrous. The young men were called from the seclusion of their homes to the demoralizing atmosphere of a camp; congregations were broken up; churches were burnt, and in more than one instance pastors were murdered; the usual ministerial intercourse and efforts for the dissemination of the gospel were in a great measure suspended, and public morals in various respects deteriorated. From these effects it took the Church a considerable time to recover; but she shared, through the blessing of God, in the returning health and prosperity of the country, and has since grown with the growth and strengthened with the strength of our highly favored nation.” In estimating the effect of the war upon the churches of New Jersey, it is to be remembered also that this State was the battle-ground of many a hard fought contest. British soldiery destroyed the church of John Brainerd at Mount Holly, and probably his dwelling.

Six years after the end of the war, viz., in 1789, the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church was held. Its statistics are valuable and instructive. The churches reported were four hundred and nineteen. The number of ministers—one hundred and seventy-seven—is comparatively small. The number of probationers—one hundred and eleven—is relatively large.

There is a volume of significance in the fact, that after eight years of war and six years of peace, while

two hundred and fifteen churches were supplied with ministers, almost an equal number, two hundred and four, were vacant.

Restricting our view to this region, we learn that in 1788-89, James Watt supplied Cape May; Andrew Hunter supplied Woodbury; George Faitoute supplied Greenwich, and these other churches are recorded *vacant*, viz., Fairfield, Deerfield, Pittsgrove, Penn's Neck, and Timber Creek.

We cannot depict minutely the effects of the war on each particular church, but a few prominent facts will illustrate the subject. If *all* the churches had suffered like that of Timber Creek, as its historian has graphically described, their condition had been deplorable indeed.

Of Penn's Neck church, Colonel Johnson tells us that the Rev. Samuel Eaken was its stated preacher from 1773 until 1777, when, having rendered himself obnoxious to the Tories by his zeal in the cause of American liberty, he was compelled to withdraw.* Next to the Rev. George Whitefield, Mr. Eaken was esteemed by our old people the most eloquent minister, who had ever preached in our country. It was related of him that he was so warm a Whig that he never entered the pulpit without imploring the Lord "to teach our people how to fight, and to give them courage and perseverance to overcome their enemies." From the removal of Mr. Eaken until 1797, twenty years, the people had no regular preaching, but only occasional supplies.

Deerfield also affords an illustration of the times. How long Enoch Green labored in Egg Harbour we cannot determine, but he was called thence to settle at

* The Presbyterian, April 26, 1856.

Deerfield, and installed 1767. He and Philip V. Fithian married daughters of Beatty. Both became chaplains in the army, and both died of camp fever or dysentery. At the battle of White Plains Mr. Fithian fought in the ranks.

John Brainerd, failing in health, was called from the Egg Harbour missions in 1777 to succeed Mr. Green in the church of Deerfield, but not installed. There he died and was buried in 1781. Two sons of Recompence Leake, deacon of Deerfield church, were studying for the ministry in Princeton, and were very promising young men. They also died of camp fever.*

The deaths among the ministers of our Church in this region at that period were remarkable. Just before the war, William Ramsey died in 1771; Benjamin Chestnut died 1775; Andrew Hunter died July 23, 1775; Enoch Green died Dec. 2, 1776; Philip V. Fithian died Oct. 9, 1776; Nehemiah Greenman died July 25, 1779; John Brainerd died March 18, 1781.

Had the Lord a controversy with our Zion? Why did he take away so many, who might have been pre-eminently useful in propelling or guiding our Church through those stormy times?

The historian † of Blackwoodtown says:

“In 1776, John Brainerd preached in the church here a sermon glowing with patriotism. His text was Psalm cxliv. 1, ‘Blessed be the Lord, my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.’ He appealed to the people to enlist and fight for their country. The audience was deeply impressed. Tears flowed freely; stout hearts and strong wills that day resolved to join the army. Randall Morgan and his two sons; Lazarus Pine and his sons; John Hedger; David

* Mrs. E. Thompson.

† Everitt's Sermon, p. 27.

Morgan; Richard Cheesman and son, served in the war. Others, no doubt, also enlisted. Thus deprived of its main pillars, the little band, without a shepherd, became scattered. The old church was neglected and fell to decay." . . . "By the end of the war, however, there was a sad decline in the church. Lazarus Pine, of all the leading men, was alone left. No additions were made to the church, and everything was sadly dilapidated; so that near the close of the last century there seems scarce a trace of a living church. The old church, now windowless and doorless, served only as a playhouse for boys by day, and a stable for mules or horses by night. The old tavern . . . on the opposite corner, furnished at times a drunken rabble, that held fiendish orgies about the holy ground, and the burial place of our fathers was rooted over by running swine, and pastured by drovers' herds. The community had sunken to a very low depth of degradation. As an instance of that, at a tavern, not far from here, a sleighing party were holding their midnight dance, and one of their number fell down dead. Those devotees of Bacchus only stopped long enough to remove the corpse to the side of the room and cover it with a blanket, and then went on with their wild revel."

As we shudder at this picture of moral desolation, we appreciate the feelings of Nehemiah, (chapter ii.,) as he surveyed by night the broken down walls of Jerusalem. We are constrained to inquire, if none exceeded Presbyterian ministers in patriotism and love of liberty, did any other churches suffer so much the injurious consequences of war as the Presbyterian Churches? Let us turn from the sad scene of desolation and seek some light to relieve the picture.

What though the arch enemy of God and man has

for a season scattered and driven back our fleet with an overwhelming sea of destruction, there remains in that old Scotch keel, laid long ago at Timber Creek, some living material. Though seemingly a hopeless wreck, yet upon examination, it is found worthy to be repaired and rebuilt. The church, though reduced so low, was not extinct, and in 1799, it had *two* or *three* members.*

Even in those troublous times, there arose at Fairfield, walls of stone to replace the wooden structure.† “Stone had been collected for a new building, on a new site, in 1775. But the trials and privations of the Revolution suspended the work until the year 1780, when it was resumed, and the building completed in that and the succeeding year. In the meantime, the old house had so decayed that it became necessary to remove the seats and the pulpit, and place them under the large old corner tree, where Mr. Hollinshead was accustomed to preach.”

Thus during the war, stern necessity drove them to build—God in his infinite mercy rewarded their labors, and zeal, and self-denial, in building the walls in troublous times, by a signal revival of religion in 1780–81. The next spring, forty-eight new members were added, and the succeeding winter, forty-six more, followed by a few others—in all during these years one hundred and fifteen.‡

In 1788 Mr. Osborne found only one hundred and twenty-five members.‡

* Blackwoodtown Church, erected in 1848, was lengthened in 1862, by an addition of twenty feet, and was reopened August 14th, when the Rev. Benjamin S. Everitt delivered the historical discourse, which has been quoted in the preceding pages.

In 1869, the church reports one hundred and fifty members and much prosperity.

† Old Stone Church, Elmer, pp. 109, 110.

‡ See Elmer's Letters and History.

After the war, we discover signs of recuperation and growth in the erection of a church at Bridgeton.

BRIDGETON. Sensible of the inconvenience of attending public worship in the neighboring churches, the people of Bridgeton determined about the year 1774 to build a house for public worship, and to form a congregation in Bridgeton, on or near the lot where the old session house recently stood.* The Revolutionary War coming on soon after, the business was relinquished. In 1788 the subject was revived, but because of disagreement respecting its location, the site was not determined until 1791. The work was begun in 1792, and in the same year the house was inclosed. In May, 1793, a lottery was obtained for raising two thousand dollars for the purpose of finishing the building, which was drawn in January, 1794.

In May, 1795, the house was opened and dedicated by Mr. Davenport of Deerfield.

Although possessed of a house, the people still felt unable to support the gospel alone, and made a proposition to Greenwich to unite with them, as a collegiate church, under the name of the United Churches of Greenwich and Bridgeton, with but one set of church officers, and one church-session for both churches, and that for the present, the officers of Greenwich shall control both churches; but in filling future vacancies, elections shall be held and officers chosen alternately at each church. Greenwich did not agree to the proposal, and this plan was relinquished. Application was then made to Presbytery for a separate congregation in Bridgeton, and the prayer was granted in October, 1792. In their memorial to Presbytery, it was stated that the population of the town of Bridgeton was at that time *three*

* Dr. Jones' MS. Sermon, pp. 25, 36, 40, 54, 55.

*hundred.** Two years elapsed before they obtained a pastor, but they had occasional supplies from Presbytery, and worshipped in the Court-house. In 1794 the two churches united in calling, and secured Mr. Clarkson, as pastor.

Not until 1823 and '24, did the church of Bridgeton venture to sustain the gospel alone. The separation was speedily accomplished, and thus terminated, April, 1824, the collegiate relation, which had existed for thirty years.

That the Greenwich church felt aggrieved, is evinced by an extract from their formal protest, viz.,

“In justice to ourselves, we declare that this separation has not been sought for on our part, and if in the event, it should be attended with inconvenience or prejudice to either of the churches, we absolve ourselves from the consequences, and enter this our dissent to the manner in which the separation has been effected, for the satisfaction of those who may interest themselves in the subject, and for the information of our successors and posterity.

Signed,

THOMAS E. HUNT, *Clerk.*”

In the light afforded by the origin of this most important church, let us not fear to establish churches in villages now containing only three hundred inhabitants, and let us not despise the day of small things. The erection of the house of worship was retarded not only by the war, but by the vexed and vexatious question, on which side of the creek shall it be located?

If two churches, such as Greenwich and Bridgeton,†

* Population in 1869 estimated 7,500, with three Presbyterian churches.

† The First Church of Bridgeton was enlarged in 1861, and reopened in November of that year. By an extension of about thirty feet, forty pews were added on the floor of the house, but the galleries were not extended. Total cost of improvements, \$6,560.

could live conjointly under one pastoral care for thirty years, and the one grow from its birth to vigorous life and self-sustentation, why should newly organized churches at this day, at no greater distance from each other and with far less ability to sustain the gospel, demand that each must have a separate pastor as the essential condition of their infant existence, or abandon all hope, and expire? Enlightened by the events of history, posterity may be excused while indulging a smile of amusement or of amazement at the apprehensions of our Greenwich fathers, when they solemnly washed their hands of all responsibility for the evil consequences which might ensue upon the separation of two such churches as Bridgeton and Greenwich, after thirty years of union.

From the commencement of the Revolutionary War to 1820, a period of forty-five years, we know of no efforts to extend the Presbyterian Church in West Jersey other than that already recorded, notwithstanding that supplications were made to Presbytery from Dennis's Neck, Stow Creek, and other places. Negative evidence is not always conclusive. We can only say, that we find no substantial record, nor substantial results of efforts. But from what we do know of the Rev. Jonathan Freeman's labors in 1820, the desire is awakened to obtain information respecting his efforts during the fifteen earlier years of his pastorate at Bridgeton.

At the beginning of this century there was strong political excitement, from which the ministry did not escape. Soon after, another war with England agitated the whole country. We should remember, too, that the soil of New Jersey, now made productive by marl and other newly discovered fertilizers, began to be impoverished, and consequently many families emigrated to

Western States. All these things must have exerted an unfavorable influence upon the churches. We note the absence or feebleness of the missionary spirit, and we infer that the state of religion was not always flourishing. We hear no more of supplications for supplies from Barnegat Shore, no more of appointments for Egg Harbour. The Brainerd churches at Longacoming, Wading River, Clark's little log meeting-house, Clark's Mill meeting-house, Blackman's meeting-house, and others now unknown, were neglected, abandoned, and swept away into oblivion, until in our own day the discovery of their burial grounds, and deeds, and ruins, afforded to the Presbytery of West Jersey the first knowledge that they ever had existed, and occasioned as much wonder as would the discovery of the cities of an extinct race. We are surprised that Penn's Neck and Aloes Creek did yet survive, and had vigor enough in 1797 to secure a pastor, and even in 1803 had together eighty communicants, at the very time when the two churches of Woodbury and Timber Creek were reduced to seven members.* Mr. Pictou so reported in 1802 and 1804. Once, we wondered what were the causes of the decline of Aloes Creek and Penn's Neck churches. We now wonder that they lived so long, when we read that for twenty years, and again for nine years, the people had no regular preaching, but only occasional supplies, and for another period of seven years had only an annual supply.† How many, rather how few, of our present self-sustaining and larger churches could outlive thirty-six years of pulpit vacancy? Let history teach us a lesson upon the duty of church sustentation, as well as of church extension.

There must have been a strong, deep attachment to

* Everitt's MS. Sermon, p. 33.

† The Presbyterian, April 26, 1856.

the principles of the Presbyterian Church, when they died out with so much difficulty. Why, even down to 1821 there was Presbyterian life, for Mr. Perkins,* missionary of the West Jersey Missionary Society, wrote: "In addition to what I have before said of Penn's Neck, I remark, that at present (1821) a good deal of anxiety is manifested by a number of respectable and wealthy families here to join with the people of Woodbury in settling a minister."

We come now to the

FOURTH PERIOD.—FROM 1820 TO 1840.

This period claims a distinct consideration, simply because, compared with the preceding, there was a remarkable revival or impetus given to missionary effort. Copies of the first and second annual reports of the Domestic Missionary Society of West Jersey, written by the Rev. Jonathan Freeman, president of the Society, are at hand. Some condensed extracts will prove interesting. The first report laments that efforts to secure laborers had not been more successful, having secured only two licentiates, and these for only a short period. It says, "There are in West Jersey about 80,000 inhabitants, and a number of good missionary stations. Among this whole population there are, it is believed, not more than seven regularly educated ministers of Christ. We have been too much overlooked by our General Assembly in their appointment of missionaries. In West Jersey there has been a lamentable deficiency of missionary exertions. We must look out young men of piety and talents among ourselves, and educate them for the ministry, and thus supply our domestic wants, &c."

* Many years pastor at Allentown, N. J.

The second annual report indicates a successful experiment and an encouraging prospect. Messrs. Caruthers, Perkins, King, and Safford, had performed twenty-nine weeks of missionary labor. Their duties were to preach; to visit families, and schools, and catechize, where practicable; distribute tracts, and supply those who were destitute of the Bible. Collections received by them were paid into the treasury of the Society.

The reports of these brethren are preserved, whence it appears that Salem, Cumberland, and Cape May Counties were the principal fields of their labor: *e. g.*, They preached at Haines' Neck, Penn's Neck (where the Presbyterian meeting-house was yet standing) at Salem, Sharptown, Woodstown, and Thompson's Bridge. At Millville, Buckshutem, Mauricetown, Ewing's Neck, Leesburgh, and Port Elisabeth. At Townsend's Meeting-house, the Court House, and Dennis' Neck. Also at Longacoming, Blackwoodtown, and Woodbury. They recommended Port Elisabeth, Haines' Neck, and Penn's Neck, as worthy of continued and permanent occupation.

Mr. Freeman's report continues: "A missionary spirit has been excited; prejudices against the Presbyterian interest removed, or softened to a considerable extent. And the directors believe that as soon as our principles, government, and discipline are more fully known, they will be much more extensively embraced. In the town of Salem, the corner-stone of a new Presbyterian church was laid in the beginning of March. The building is fifty feet by thirty, and will probably be finished by the first of October. If missionary services can be obtained for that quarter stately, in a short time, it is confidently believed, that in Salem, and a sta-

tion about twelve miles distant, a minister might be comfortably supported.

“The moral darkness and irreligion in West Jersey are truly lamentable in several places visited by the missionaries. One half of the expense of the missionaries has been paid by the Board of Missions, under the direction of the General Assembly.”

Jonathan Freeman died Nov. 17, 1822, and, so far as we know, the West Jersey Missionary Society died with him. But its spirit still lived. The impulse given, carried our Zion onward for a season, and its permanent monuments appeared in the foundation of the churches of Salem and of Maurice River, the latter having been first established at Port Elisabeth, and afterwards transferred to Millville.

SALEM. We find an interesting notice of the church of Salem, dated Nov. 15, 1824: “The church has been organized about three years, and has increased from six to thirty-one members. The number who generally attend the ministry of Mr. Burt is about two hundred. The congregation have agreed to give Mr. Burt three hundred dollars per annum and his fire-wood, and find him a house to live in. The people are mostly of common circumstances. Now the sum, which can be conveniently raised among the people, will not exceed two hundred and fifty dollars. From the attention given to the ministry of Mr. Burt, it is confidently expected, by the goodness of Divine providence, that in a few years the society will be so far increased in numbers, that they may be enabled to support their minister without the aid of their brethren elsewhere. At present, they will be thankful to their Christian friends for any pecuniary assistance they may feel disposed to confer upon the infant church in Salem.”

MILLVILLE. The church of Millville was organized August 12th, 1820, at Port Elisabeth, under the name of the First Presbyterian Church on Maurice River, by the Rev. Messrs. Ethan Osborne and Jonathan Freeman, appointed by the Presbytery of Philadelphia to that duty. It began with twenty-one members, including three ruling elders, viz., Nathaniel Foster, Jeremiah Stratton, and Samuel S. Barry. The meetings for public worship were transferred to Millville, by a kind of common consent, because the members resided here mainly.*

The letters of the young missionaries of the West Jersey Missionary Society show most conclusively that their labors prepared the way for the organization of these two churches. How far such explorations in West Jersey, and perhaps other parts of the State, by zealous young ministers and candidates from Princeton, and their reports of destitution, may have led to the Bible movement, we know not; but from the close succession of time, we may safely infer that one was the cause and the other the effect.

BIBLE DISTRIBUTION.—FORTY THOUSAND DOLLAR SCHEME.

In 1827, a movement was begun in Princeton to supply every family in the State with the Bible, and students of the Seminary and College went everywhere, carrying the word. This was the first systematic effort of the kind in the United States. But when they found many families to whom the Bible was a sealed book, because of ignorance and inability to read, another work seemed necessary. And as a direct result, in 1828-29,

* The edifice was erected in 1837. Its corner-stone was laid by the Rev. Mr. Kennedy, of Bridgeton. Dedicated in June, 1838, by the Rev. Mr. Blythe, of Woodbury. Enlarged in 1854, and re-dedicated February 4th, 1855, by the Rev. Samuel Beach Jones.

another scheme was devised, originating in Monmouth County, to raise \$40,000 in two years, for the support of missionaries and schools in New Jersey.

The testimony of Dr. Samuel Miller is definite, viz., "The project of raising a large sum of money within two years, to be devoted to the support of missionaries and schools in New Jersey, doubtless took its rise in some measure from the successful effort to supply the State with the sacred Scriptures, and in part from an effort made in the spring of 1827, by the ladies of Princeton, to establish schools in the region of country commonly denominated the Pines; to the importance of which they directed the attention of the churches, by addressing a circular letter to the ladies of the different Presbyterian congregations in the State. Such, in the providence of God, is often the connection between plans designed for promotion of his glory and the welfare of men."

From various causes, the enterprise was only partially successful. After two years, a statement of the Proceedings of the Corresponding Executive Committee of the New Jersey Missionary Society, signed by the Rev. Samuel Miller, chairman, and the Rev. George S. Woodhull, secretary, was given to the public. From this document, it appears that the Committee employed, as agents, the Rev. Robert Baird, the Rev. Job F. Halsey, and Mr. W. H. Cox. Of \$18,000 subscribed, only \$1300 were paid by the end of the first year, and the total received and available in the two years was only \$4,463.39.

The Committee paid about one-third to the agents; nearly one-third to teachers for salary and expenses, and one-fifth to support young men in obtaining an education, and five hundred dollars to the Domestic

Missionary Society of New Jersey. They aimed to combine religion with the ordinary instruction of the school, and being compelled to educate suitable teachers, they aided twenty-one members of Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist churches, in fitting themselves for the business of teaching. Directly, or indirectly, they secured the erection of school-houses or chapels, at Butcher's Works, Turkey, Bowne's Tavern, and Patterson, in Monmouth county; also at Gouldtown, in Cumberland, and at Sprout Hill in Sussex county. Thus were the Committee constrained to combine the various works, which are now distributed among the three Boards of Domestic Missions, Education, and Church Extension. With all the embarrassments which they had to encounter, much good was undoubtedly accomplished, and more would have been, had the original plan been executed. The partial failure of their efforts should not discourage; but rather serve as a beacon light to warn us of the dangers upon which they fell, and point out to us the better way.

FIFTH PERIOD.—FROM 1839-40 TO 1865.

We now arrive at the fifth and last period, from the organization of the Presbytery of West Jersey to the present time.

Ministers and elders of the Southern section of New Jersey, "believing that the Presbyterian Church might erect her standard with great advantage to the cause of Christ, at many points in this region, if exertions systematic and persevering were seasonably employed. . . . therefore petitioned that the pastors and churches south of Trenton be constituted as a distinct Presbytery, to be called the Presbytery of West Jersey."

After much difficulty and long delay, the object was

obtained, and November 5th, 1839, this Presbytery was organized.

CEDARVILLE. While these efforts were in progress, the church of Cedarville was established, October 23, 1839, with thirty-nine members, thirteen male and twenty-six female, from the Fairfield church.* Its building was erected in 1839, (size 51 by 37 feet,) and was enlarged in 1851, by the addition of twenty feet to its length, at an expense of \$2500. The want of a church had been felt even twenty years previously, as an extant subscription proves.

A meeting of the inhabitants of Cedarville was held in the Friendship schoolhouse, January 21st, 1819, when it was resolved, that it is the sincere desire of this meeting to continue united to the Presbyterian Congregation of Fairfield.

“*Resolved*, That it is the opinion of this meeting, considering the circumstances of many of the inhabitants of this place are such as to render it almost impossible for them to attend the preaching of the gospel in the old meeting-house, that the building of a meeting-house in this place is necessary for the accommodation of the inhabitants. Amos Fithian subscribed four hundred dollars, and he and Amos Westcott, and Henry Howell, of Cedarville, and Sheppard Gandy, of Philadelphia, were appointed to solicit donations.”

Was this another result of that missionary revival? Was not Amos Fithian twenty years in advance of his contemporaries? The question was brought to a vote of the congregation, when forty-three voted for, and forty-five against the proposition.†

SECOND CHURCH BRIDGETON. The Second Church of Bridgeton arose during the same period of excitement

* The old Fairfield Church had united with the New-school Branch.

† See Elmer's Letters.

which rent the Church into the Old and New-school branches, but it did not come under the Presbytery of West Jersey until 1850.

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY. The colporteur enterprise of the American Tract Society deserves more than the brief acknowledgment, that the employment of its colporteurs on the coast and in the Pines during the years from 1842-3 to 1846, did much to arouse the attention of the Presbyterian Church to explore its unknown land in South Jersey. It was as an agent of this society that the writer first explored this region.

The subsequent progress of our Zion and its extension, attest the wisdom of the separate organization of West Jersey Presbytery. So soon as they had launched forth, the members girded themselves, with steady and sturdy strokes, to propel the bark. At the second meeting of Presbytery, a report was introduced in which the hand of the Rev. Samuel D. Blythe, of Woodbury, is visible. It says* "the extent of territory under the care of Presbytery is very great,† and the amount of ministerial labor that can be devoted to it is exceedingly small. We speak of course, of our own denomination. On this Presbytery must devolve the work of supplying these destitutions, if it is to be done. We need not expect that others can or will do it for us. . . . Were it possible to engraft upon our own admirable system of pastoral relation that of itinerating labor, it is believed that in a few years many flourishing churches of our Lord Jesus Christ could be established at points, where the means of grace from any ministration are now enjoyed but to a limited extent." The report then recommends several openings for the organization of churches.

* Minutes, vol. i. p. 18.

† About one third of the State nominally.

Accordingly, in a short time, churches were established at Williamstown,* September 9, 1840; at Camden, September 27, 1840; and at May's Landing, with eight members, January 4, 1842.

The church of Camden was disbanded temporarily in December, 1841, but was reorganized or rescuscitated in 1846, under the labors of Rev. Giles Manwaring, and has now become two bands. Edifices for public worship were erected at these three points, and subsequently at Franklinville, Gloucester, Cape Island, Tuckahoe, Leeds' Point, Fislerville, Bass River, Woodstown, Swedesborough, Elwood,† Atlantic City, Westville, Somer's Point, and Hammonton. Two chapels also have been erected for school purposes and public worship, the one at Estelville, and the other at Absecon;‡ besides a separate building for the parochial school at Leeds' Point. Thus seventeen church edifices, two chapels, and one schoolhouse have been erected under the auspices of the Presbytery of West Jersey. Connected with these are twelve church organizations, not including Bass River, where a church was organized by Burlington Presbytery, with eight members from Tuckerton Church,§ February 24th, 1861.

Three of the edifices, and two of the organizations enumerated above, have been transferred to other

* WILLIAMSTOWN Church, original size, 44 by 36 feet: value \$2500: corner stone was laid, July, 1841: dedicated, May, 1842: enlarged by an extension of sixteen feet, and the addition of an end gallery, spire and bell, it was reopened in December, 1859. The expense of these additions and surrounding improvements amounted to three thousand dollars, of which two thousand dollars were paid by the pastor's brother, John R. Ford, then living in New Brunswick, now in the city of New York.

† The sunburnt bricks, composed of lime and sand, used in the first building at Elwood, crumbled, and a second edifice of wood was erected on the opposite side of the railroad.

‡ Sold for a public schoolhouse in 1868, after the erection of the church.

§ Tuckerton Church had been organized with five members, January 30, 1859.



Presbyterian Church, May's Landing, N. J., 1844.

Presbyteries, viz., Gloucester to Philadelphia, Camden and Bass River to Burlington.

A church was organized at Cape May Court House Dec. 1st, 1856, but was dissolved by act of Presbytery, October 7th, 1863.

In the two Presbyteries which cover the original territory of West Jersey Presbytery, south of Trenton, are twenty-seven buildings and twenty-one church organizations, which had no existence twenty-six years ago. This statement does not include the rebuilding of churches by old congregations. All those enumerated in West Jersey Presbytery are upon ground newly occupied, excepting the church of Cape Island, which was formed from the Cold Spring congregation.

In 1843 the Presbytery of West Jersey was transferred from the Synod of Philadelphia to the Synod of New Jersey.

The work of Church Extension was quickened by the action of Presbytery* introduced in 1853, and adopted April 1854, viz: "In view of the expansion of the missionary field now cultivated by the Presbytery, and of the increased demands on the time of the members, and in the belief that if this whole work were placed under the special care and supervision of some individual, who should be charged with the duties of exploring the whole field, selecting suitable places for church efforts, collecting money for the church edifices, and performing other services, we would much more rapidly attain the realization of our missionary schemes, Presbytery resolved to appoint one† of its members to devote his whole time to this work."

This supervisory agency was extended to the eastern

* Minutes, vol. ii., p. 25.

† The writer of this discourse.

end of Burlington Presbytery, which West Jersey had previously occupied with a missionary laboring at Batsto, Bass River, and Tuckerton.

In 1857 this agency was further extended to the upper coast (nominally within the bounds of New Brunswick Presbytery). This last extension of the field was reluctantly permitted by West Jersey,* and with the limitation to the period of six months.

The Presbytery of New Brunswick had already manifested an interest in its missionary field; but one especially important result of this superintendence was the appointment of influential men as committees, who explored the unknown territory of their respective Presbyteries, as they had never before done. Consequently, they became interested; the people anxious for Presbyterian services were encouraged, and the committees bearing back to churches and Presbyteries their report, awakened a missionary zeal which still burns brightly.

CONCLUSION.

Brethren, we have together followed the stream of history to the present time, and must omit, among many things of interest, all discussion of the influence of the Presbyterian Church upon the cause of education; also the praiseworthy efforts to erect parsonages.

Now, looking backward to the olden time, a vision rises to our view. We discern the pioneers of our Church, who, like early discoverers seeking to explore a new continent, launched forth in the name of the King of kings and Lord of lords, whose royal commission is, "Go preach my gospel, and take possession of the land for the Redeemer, who bought you with his

† Minutes, vol. ii., pp. 148, 149.

blood." Having reached the coast, entering a broad bay, they find a magnificent river, and essay to examine its banks and explore its tributary branches, eager to plant colonies and to erect the standard of the cross. But, adverse currents of infidelity and worldliness retard their progress. Anon, jealousy and strife among the officers produce jarring counsels, and they sail for a season in different directions; but thereby more colonies perchance were established in the name of the great King. Again, we see pilots of experience taken from them, when they seemed to be most needed! Then, with
 ✓ Vivid lightning and the artillery of heaven, a tempest scattered the fleet, paralyzed the mariners, wrecked some of the lighter craft, and though others outli- the storm, they bore evidence of the conflict, and recovered their former position and beauty only after much time had been lost, and great labor had been expended. A long and increasingly prosperous voyage succeeded; but again have we been called to pass through stormy scenes. Even now portentous clouds arise on the ecclesiastical horizon. It is now dark, and we are waiting for the second coming of Jesus Immanuel.

What is our duty? Having launched, it is too late to retrace our course. Some advise to take in the sail! Then there is more need to bend to the oars. We must be aggressive or retrogressive. Our position is critical. To stand still is impossible. If we make not strenuous exertions to go forward, we shall be borne insensibly and irresistibly backward.

Brethren, we have been studying the history of the past. Know ye not that we are making history for posterity to study? The history of the Presbyterian Church in this region for the next year, and it may be

for many years, depends, under God, upon your action now.

Are any ready to say that enough has been done? They discourage the hearts of the people, when they say we be not able to go up and take possession of the land.

To you, members of this Presbytery, is committed the guidance and management of the ark of God. Paul said, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved;"—thus does the doctrine of God's decrees involve the means, and God's purposes shall not be accomplished without appropriate instrumentality.

Remember Freeman's words: "We must look out young men of piety and talents among ourselves, and educate them for the ministry, and thus supply our domestic wants."

Remember the words of Blythe, respecting the importance of ingrafting upon our admirable system of pastoral relation that of itinerating labor.

The success of the Church demands steady persevering work. Nothing good can be accomplished without painstaking effort. The farmer, the merchant, the mechanic, attain no success without unremitting toil. Even so the Church will accomplish nothing without continual offerings of prayer, and time, and money.

It is a favorite theory among us, that the Church is a sufficient organization, fully equipped for its great work, viz., Send ministers, let them organize churches; ordain elders; form a Presbytery, and you have a missionary organization adequate to every good work. Apply the theory to practice, extend far and wide the Church in its organism, and as the whole includes its parts, you have all that is requisite. But this essential work had been neglected from the days of John Brainerd until

the formation of the Presbytery of West Jersey. During these nearly sixty-five years we have no evidence that Presbyterians made any well defined, systematic, persevering efforts to extend and sustain their own much beloved Church, with all its blessings and benefits, over this wide extent of territory, where their fathers were the pioneers. The efforts made, however important and useful, did not accomplish the great work. They were spasmodic in action, temporary in their design, or merely voluntary movements not under ecclesiastical control. Even when attempts in the right direction were made to establish the Church, they were feebly prosecuted or too soon suspended.

Our fathers did not overestimate the amount of money required, nor the importance of the work, when they resolved to raise \$40,000; but they did err, when they acted as if the work could be completed in two years, and suspended their enterprise when they had raised only one-tenth of the sum. No! no! It is a life-long, a perpetual work. Fifty thousand dollars might now be raised, and be wisely expended, but the work would not then be ended.

We do not depreciate Bible distribution, nor colporteur labor, when we maintain, that if every house were filled with Bibles, and the ground covered with good books and tracts by the acre, there would nevertheless be need of a settled ministry, and the stated assemblies of the people for public worship. These auxiliaries to the pastor and the itinerant, deserve our more diligent regard; but they cannot be equivalents, and they must not be made substitutes for God's divinely appointed and chief instrumentalities. With God's blessing they may save souls; but in comparison with the organized church, are as a raft or a life-preserver, which may save

a man from drowning, but which he would not choose in preference to the staunch life-boat, or the gallant ship, for a long and perilous voyage. If our ecclesiastical polity is not adapted to the poor, then it lacks one essential element of the spirit of Christ. If our plans contract the affections and efforts of ministers and people within the narrow bounds of their own little parish, and cherish not a practical sympathy for the destitute and perishing of the world beyond, then is our system indeed defective.

That there is a defect somewhere, is felt and acknowledged by many. Chapter XV. of the Form of Government, provides for the ordination of Evangelists to labor in frontier or destitute settlements. Chapter XVIII. respecting missions, is very brief, and merely permissive, not imperative. There is no law requiring Presbyteries to explore the outlying territory which geographically belongs to them. The demands of churches upon their own pastors, leave them little or no opportunity for missionary tours. No law requires the employment of Evangelists. There is no rule regulating the employment of licentiates and of ministers without charge. In many ways the power, the dormant talent of the laity, both men and women, might be developed and organized, and made more efficient. All these subjects are left to occasional and contingent action. The extension of the Church has seemingly depended upon personal enterprise and individual zeal. The consequence has been, that when the individual died, the work has declined until it has been wholly abandoned. Why should not our ecclesiastical system provide that another catch the standard from the falling soldier of the cross, and bear it on to further conquests? Our system of pastoral relation well suits a settled,

stationary population; but to supply destitute regions and keep abreast with the unexampled increase of population, and the growth of railroads,* towns, and cities in the far West, and even in *West Jersey*,† different tactics are demanded.

We do not advocate the general adoption of the itinerant system, but we do deplore the fact, that we have gone to the opposite extreme, and seem to have forgotten the true duties, if not the name of Evangelist. A judicious combination of some Evangelists with some pastors, and some teachers, and a discreet employment

* Only in recent years have railroads penetrated South Jersey, and now nearly three hundred miles of iron track give ready access to its towns and villages. The Camden and Atlantic Railroad was opened in 1854. Subsequently the Raritan and Delaware Bay Railroad traversed Monmouth, Ocean, and Burlington counties. The West Jersey Railroad and its connections extend to Bridgeton, Salem, Millville and Cape Island. These and other shorter roads have opened many thousands of acres of wild land to speculation and improvement. Old settlements have received a new impulse. Cities, towns and villages spring up in the wilderness, to astonish both the intelligent and the incredulous. Among the new settlements are Vineland, Atlantic City, Elwood, Hammonton, Fruitland, Shamong, Manchester, and many others.

† OUR STATE RESOURCES. Marcus L. Ward, Governor of New Jersey, in his annual message to the Legislature in 1868, said: "New Jersey is the thirtieth State of the Union in size, and the twentieth in population: the twelfth in the total value of its farms, and the first in the value per acre of its farm lands. Second in the value of market garden products, and probably almost as high in the value of small fruits. As a manufacturing State, New Jersey stands sixth in the amount of capital invested, and also in the annual value of its manufactured products. There is still at least a quarter of the State," (mainly in South Jersey,) "more than a million of acres, susceptible of easy improvement and cultivation, which is still uncleared. It is now coming into market rapidly, and needs only to be known, to be quickly taken up. For purposes of fruit culture, and market gardening, these lands are not inferior to the oldest and richest parts of the State. The population of the State in 1865 was 773,700, and the ratio of increase to 1860, was thirty-seven and twenty-seven hundredths per cent., an increase more rapid than in any other of the States east of the Alleghanies, or than in any of the older States in the Mississippi valley. Since 1860, the rate of increase has been quite as rapid as before that time."

Governor Ward must have reckoned Illinois, Missouri and Arkansas, not among the older, but among the newer States, because their rate of increase exceeded that of New Jersey. Even with this explanation, the facts derived from the census are truly surprising, and should arouse the Christians of New Jersey to their corresponding responsibility and duty.

of lay members in other departments, would tend to the rapid enlargement of Zion. Let us prove whether an educated Presbyterian ministry, itinerating from place to place, year after year, in a defined circuit, preaching the gospel, proclaiming repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation, organizing churches, administering sacraments, promoting the cause of education, will not become the most powerful instrumentality for elevating the people to the eminence to which their natural talents are fitted, and for developing most completely the resources of their country.

Brethren of the ministry and eldership, if we do sincerely and honestly believe the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church to be in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, and do approve its government and discipline to be the best for ourselves and our families, then, by our ordination vows, and by the command of Christ, "Go, preach my gospel," we are bound to pray, and give continuously, and labor energetically for its extension. This we may and ought to do, with perfectly kind and fraternal feelings towards all other evangelical Christian churches. The command is not, Wait until the perishing and destitute come to you for the gospel; but, Go, carry it to them. You would not expect the wounded dying soldier to come to you for the cup of water; but a sufficient inducement to carry it to him, is your knowledge of the fact that he is dying for want of it. So, go to those who are perishing for the want of that living water, of which, if a man drink, he shall never thirst.

The history of the Church has ever been, and we may suppose ever shall be, with varying results, a succession or alternation of strifes, and struggles, and contendings

for the faith between the hosts of God's elect and the powers of darkness. What! though individual churches die, and even denominations be blotted out of existence, yet the Church of Christ still lives. But, when the strife is over, may we, entering into the wide haven of peace, meet many, who, by God's blessing upon these feeble missionary efforts, shall be saved from everlasting wreck and ruin.

Now, after eighteen years of labor (1865) among you, and about to retire to a more limited field of labor, if I knew that we should meet no more, and that my work was ended, my last counsel would be: As you value God's blessing on your own souls, and on your own churches, cultivate the missionary spirit. And if in tempestuous times a selection or difference must be made, take care—as you would of the lambs of a flock, or of the infant members of a family—take special care to cherish the young and the feeble churches, for the older and more established are better able to outlive the storm.

Ask yourselves, what would have been the fate of the churches, which you now happily serve, had they been neglected and forsaken by our fathers one century ago, or even one generation? Then view by faith, not fancy, what may be the destiny of the churches, which are now and shall yet be established and fostered by your care: and may God add his blessing.



West Presbyterian Church, Bridgeton, N. J., 1869.

VAN INCEN SWAER

APPENDIX.

SINCE the delivery of this discourse, progress has been made in church organizations and in church erection.

CHURCHES HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED

At Waterford, with eight members, April 25, 1866.

At Berlin, with seven members, July 10, 1867.

At Glassborough, with ten members, Oct. 14, 1867.

At Somers' Point, with four members, March 31, 1868.

At West Bridgeton, with one hundred and seventeen members, March 16, 1869.

At Bunker Hill, with eleven members, June 14, 1869.

CHURCH EXTENSION.

Some congregations, such as Cold Spring, Deerfield,* Greenwich, and Woodbury, have repaired and improved their houses of worship, but we mention here particularly only those which have recently made provision for the accommodation of larger audiences.

EDIFICES ENLARGED BY THE OLDER CHURCHES.

MILLVILLE. The church at Millville was enlarged in 1868, by "the addition of two wings, each 30 by 20 feet. A tower also was built, suitable for a bell," and the appearance of the building was entirely altered. The whole expense was about \$5,500.

* In 1859, the church at Deerfield was remodelled and enlarged by the addition of twenty-five feet, at an expense of \$3,000.

THE SECOND CHURCH OF BRIDGETON having been remodelled in the front, and extended in the rear, was re-opened on the first Sabbath of May, 1869. The building was extended twenty feet, and a pulpit recess of eleven feet added. The audience-room is now 90 by 41 feet—total length of building, 108 feet.

These improvements, including fourteen hundred dollars for furniture, and five hundred dollars for the organ, cost \$7,900.

NEW BUILDINGS ERECTED BY THE OLDER CHURCHES OF SALEM, PITTSGROVE, AND EVEN FISLERVILLE.

SALEM. The corner-stone of the new church at Salem was laid July 17, 1854. The house was dedicated October 15, 1856. Cost of building, \$22,000; furniture, \$1,200; land, \$4,000—total, \$27,200. Dimensions, 83 by 49 feet, with spire 165 feet from the ground.

PITTSGROVE. The new church erected at Pittsgrove is 81 by 51 feet, and including projecting tower and pulpit recess, is 91 feet in length, the tower and spire 125 feet. Corner-stone laid July 14, 1864. Dedicated August 15, 1867. Cost of building, \$21,150; furniture (and \$700 for bell,) \$4,186—total, \$25,336.

FISLERVILLE, OR CLAYTON. Fislerville was an outstation of the church of Williamstown. In 1853, August 18th, a church of six members was organized. At the same time a house of worship, which cost \$1300, was dedicated. In 1866, the church was separated entirely from Williamstown. It is now self-sustaining by the providential liberality and energy of a few persons, and is making rapid progress.

The corner-stone of the new church at Clayton was laid June 18, 1868. The basement was dedicated July

28, 1869. The edifice, 65 by 40 feet, will probably cost \$13,000.

A handsome parsonage also has been erected recently by the same individuals.

NEW EDIFICES ON NEW GROUND.

The new edifices named below have been erected upon ground which has been more recently occupied. With the exception of Absecon, their church organizations are recent.

WATERFORD. Corner-stone laid June 14, 1866. Dedicated January 3, 1867. Size 50 by 32 feet; spire, 90 feet. Cost of building, \$2,727; furniture, \$317—total, \$3,044.

ABSECON. Corner-stone laid November 16, 1865. Dedicated June 20, 1867. Dimensions 50 by 32 feet; posts, 20 feet; spire, 105 feet. Cost of building, \$4,400; furniture, bell, and organ, \$700; land, four acres, \$1000—total, \$6,100.

BERLIN, formerly called Longacoming. Corner-stone laid September 8, 1868. Estimated to cost about \$4,000.

GLASSBOROUGH. Cost \$1,800; was dedicated June 16, 1869.

BUNKER HILL. Corner-stone laid June 14, 1869. Estimated cost, \$1,700.

WEST BRIDGETON. Chapel, 60 by 33 feet, was dedicated July 4, 1869. Corner-stone of the church was laid July 3, 1869. Dimensions of the church, 100 by 53 feet, with spire 162 feet; material, light Chester stone, with Trenton brown stone trimming. Estimated cost of the whole work, \$45,000. Samuel Sloan, Architect, has kindly furnished the engraving.

SUMMARY.

The Presbytery of West Jersey was organized in 1839, with eleven churches, and now reports twenty-seven churches, and 2835 communicants.

The Presbytery of Burlington was formed in 1849, and took from that of West Jersey the churches of Mount Holly, Columbus, and Burlington; and from New Brunswick, the churches of Plumstead, Plattsburgh, and Bordentown. It was afterwards strengthened by the accession of Allentown, from New Brunswick, and of Camden, from West Jersey, and now reports 14 churches, and 1134 communicants.

The Presbytery of Monmouth was organized January 11th, 1860, out of New Brunswick Presbytery, and now reports 13 churches, and 1794 communicants.

In the territory east and south of a line drawn from South Amboy to Bordentown, and embracing one-half of the State of New Jersey, (formerly under the care of New Brunswick and the Philadelphia Presbyteries, but now under the care of West Jersey, Burlington, and Monmouth,) are fifty-four organized churches—Gloucester might be added. The two New-school churches—sisters of Cedarville, triple children of old Fairfield in Cohansey—should not be forgotten; thus reckoning fifty-seven. And if we add three churches organized by the other Branch at Beverly, Vineland, and Atco, the Presbyterian Church may reckon 60 churches, with 6461 communicants in 1869.

Thus the churches have increased, since 1839, about threefold, and the membership nearly fivefold.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to compute the cost of all the new houses of worship, which must exceed in number the new organizations.

Inscriptions on Tomb-Stones.

The burial places of Ministers who have preached the gospel in our churches in former generations, and even their names, are known to comparatively few. In some instances the silent tombstone records all, or nearly all, that we know of them.

To recall and perpetuate their memory, and to pay an affectionate tribute to those who have more recently deceased, the Committee here annex the inscriptions on the tomb-stones of all the Presbyterian Ministers who have been buried in the present territory of the West Jersey Presbytery, so far as they are known.

AT COLD SPRING CHURCH, OR CAPE MAY.

In Memory of
the Rev'd

MR. DANIEL LAWRENCE,

who departed this Life
April 13, 1766.

In the 48th year of his age.

In yonder sacred house I spent my Breath
Now silent mouldring here I lie in Death:
Those silent lips shall wake and yet declare
A dread Amen to Truths they published there.

In Memory of

the REV. JAMES WATT,

who departed this life
19th Nov'br 1789

Aged 46 years.

If disinterested Kindness, Integrity
Justice and Truth

Deserve the Tributary Tear
Here it is claimed.

To the MEMORY of

the REV'D DAVID EDWARDS, a Native

of Carmarthanshire, South Wales and
Pastor of this Church for 10 years.

He departed this life on the 30th of December
A. D. 1813. Aged 39 years and 4 months.

AT FAIRFIELD IN COHANSEY.

In the old burial ground on the Cohansey Creek

REV. HOWELL POWELL

was buried. He died before September 1717. His grave cannot
be recognized.

In Memory of

the Rev. Mr. DANIEL ELMER,

late Pastor of CHRIST'S Church
in this Place.

who departed this life
the 14th Day of January A. D. 1755.
Aged 65 Years.

Beneath this Stone lie interred
the Remains of
the Rev'd WILLIAM RAMSEY, M. A.

For sixteen years a faithful Pastor of the
Presbyterian Church in this Place.
Whose superior Genius and native Eloquence
Shone so conspicuously in the Pulpit
As to command the attention and
Gain the esteem of all his Hearers.
In every Station of Life he discharged
His duty faithfully.
He lived greatly respected,
And died universally lamented
November 5th 1771 in the 39th year
Of his Age.

In the later burial ground of the Fairfield Congregation at the
Old Stone Church, stands a marble shaft to the memory of
REV. ETHAN OSBORN. From the memorial vol-
ume the following inscription is copied.

Front—Erected August 21st 1858. to the memory of **REV.**
ETHAN OSBORN, born in Litchfield. Conn. August 21, 1758:
died full of faith, and in the hope of a joyful resurrection, May 1,
1858, aged 99 years, 8 months and 10 days.

Right—Graduated at Dartmouth 1784, licensed 1786, called
to Fairfield 1788, ordained 1789, and resigned his charge 1844
having been pastor of this Church 55 years.

Rear—A soldier of the Revolution, a good man, a faithful
minister of the Gospel.

Left—He obeyed the command—"Go preach my Gospel."
His children in the flesh and in the spirit lie around him.

AT GREENWICH IN COHANSEY.

Beneath this Stone
Are deposited the Remains of
the REV. ANDREW HUNTER, A. M.

For 30 years the Pastor of this Church.
He was a judicious Divine, a
Zealous Preacher, and
An eminent example of
Piety, Charity and public Spirit.
He finished his Labors and entered into
The joy of his LORD, July the 28th 1775.
Aged 60 years.

To
 my Husband
REV. BENJAMIN TYLER,
 who died June 26th 1842,
 Aged 37 years.
 The memory of the just is blest.

AT BRIDGETON.

SACRED
 to the memory of
the REV'D JONATHAN FREEMAN, A. M.

Who having sustained
 with fidelity & success,
 the pastoral relation
 to this Church,
 for seventeen years,
 died November 17th, 1822,
 in the 58th year of his age,
 He was born at Woodbridge, N. J.
 A. D. 1765;
 Settled in the gospel ministry,
 First at Hopewell, N. Y.
 A. D. 1793;
 Then at Newberg, N. Y.
 A. D. 1797;
 And finally in this place,
 A. D. 1805.
 He exhibited,
 in the discharge of every
 Ministerial duty,
 and in every social relation,
 an edifying example:
 And the people, once his charge,
 Have erected this memorial
 of his worth,
 and of their attachment.

AT DEERFIELD.

The Rev. Enoch Green and John Brainerd were buried in the church, beneath the aisles, which were originally paved with bricks. Simeon Hyde was buried near, but without the walls.

Sacred
To the Memory of

the REV'D ENOCH GREEN

who departed this life
December 2d. A. D. 1776
in the 42d year
of his age.

Having obtained a Liberal Education and gone through the usual course of Theological studies he was ordained to the Gospel Ministry in 1766. He was called to be Pastor of the church at Deerfield, which he served at the altar of his God during his appointed time.

“For* nearly seventy years the grave of **JOHN BRAINERD** was unmarked even by a stone; but recently a friendly and generous hand has placed over his ashes a little slab, about twenty inches by thirty, on which are inscribed” his name and the date of his death, March (18), 1781.

He was born February 28th, 1720.

In Memory
of the

REV. SIMEON HYDE

Late Minister of the Gospel
in this place
who was ordained on the 25th
day of June *Anno Domini*
1783,

And departed this Life on the
10th day of August following.

He was the Son of
JAMES and SARAH HYDE
of Norwich
State of Connecticut.

* Life of John Brainerd. Page 435.

AT PITTS GROVE.

Here rests in Hope
of a blessed Resurrection
the body of the Rev'd

MR. DAVID EVANS.

Who exchanged this Life for a better,
February the 4th, 1751.
Aged near 69 years.

Who e'er Thou art, with Sympathy draw near;
Send forth a Sigh, or drop a silent Tear.
The faithful Pastor watches now no more;
The painful Lab'rer rests: the Loss deplore.
Ye his remaining Flock, revolve the thoughts
The sacred Truth, which he so often taught.
Then may it justly to your Praise be said,
He preaches still tho' rang'd among the Dead.

Sacred

To the Memory of the

REV'D NEHEMIAH GREENMAN;

Pastor of the Presbyterian Church at
Pittsgrove.

Mr. Greenman was born at Stratford,
In the State of Connecticut. July the 4th
1721. Was educated at the College in
New Haven, and was ordained and
Installed at Pittsgrove 1753, where he
continued to officiate as a Minister until
July the 25th 1779, when he departed
this life in the 59th year of his Age.

Mr. Greenman's success in his office
Gives us reason to hope that he will have
many Jewels in his Crown: Especially
from the congregation, where he stately
Laboured.

In memory of

REV. BUCKLEY CARLL

Who departed this life May 22d, 1849,
In the 80th year of his age.

For three years and a half he was Pastor of the Presbyt'n Church
in this place. Was then transfer'd to the first Presbyt'n
Church in Rahway; of which he continued Pastor for the
space of 23 years, when broken down by disease he retir'd
from the active service of the ministry and spent the
remainder of his days in much weakness and pain.
"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord"

In Memory of
 the **REV'D ISAAC FOSTER, A. M.**

For three years Pastor
 of this Church.

He was born at Wallingford in the
 State of Connecticut,
 April 2d, 1755:
 And died in this place
 June 17th, 1794.

Possessing a Mind firm, resolute and active:
 A Genius vigorous and comprehensive:
 A Heart tender, candid and ingenuous
 And by divine grace formed to the love
 Of Evangelical truth and piety:
 He uniformly exhibited
 A manly and consistent deportment,
 Made rapid advances in knowledge:
 Was happy in every domestick relation,
 Faithful in ministerial duty,
 Beloved by the people of his charge,
 Successful in winning souls to Christ,
 Patient under bodily infirmities
 And undismayed
 By the King of terrors.

REV. GEO. W. JANVIER

Died

June 9, 1865,
 In the 82d year
 of his age.

He was ordained
 Pastor of the Pittsgrove
 Presbyterian Church
 May 12, 1812.

And continued to
 minister to this people
 his only charge
 until near the close
 of his life, a period
 of 46 years.

“And he was not; for God took him.”

“And they that be wise
 Shall shine as the brightness
 of the firmament;
 And they that turn many
 to righteousness as
 the stars, for ever
 and ever.”

AT WOODBURY.

Sacred

To the memory of

REV. SAMUEL D. BLYTHE,

Nearly 5 years Pastor

of the Presbyterian
Church in this place.

Born, March 27, 1804:

Died, June 23, 1843.

REV. WILLIAM GRAHAM

who fell asleep in JESUS

December 18, 1856,

in the 58th year of his age

the 34th of his ministry

and the 9th of his pastorate

in the

Presbyterian Church

in Woodbury.

As a preacher

he was earnest and solid

as a pastor active and laborious;

judicious in counsel:

of affable manners and warm affections;

faithful to admonish; skilful to console;

an example to his flock.

By their affection

this stone

is erected to his memory.

"The morning cometh."

AT BLACKWOODTOWN.

In memory of

BENJAMIN CHESNUTT,

who was ordained and installed as

Pastor

over the churches of Woodbury

and Timber Creek

A. D. 1751.

Resigning Woodbury in 1753

After 21 yrs of ministerial labour

in Timber Creek, now Blackwoodtown.

He died respected and regretted

on 21st July 1775.

The Church of Blackwoodtown

placed this stone over his dust in 1851.

The memory of the just is blessed.

AT SALEM.

REV. JOHN BURTT

First Pastor of the Presbyterian
Church, Salem, N. J.

Born in Ayrshire, Scotland.

May 23d, 1789.

Died March 24, 1866.

“I have fought a good fight
I have finished my course
I have kept the faith.”

REV. DANIEL STRATTON

Born Sept. 28, 1814.

Died Aug. 14, 1866.

“Faithful unto death I will
give thee a crown of life.”

A tablet in the church adds:

To the

REV. DANIEL STRATTON

For Fourteen years
The Faithful and Beloved
Pastor of this church
This Memorial is erected
By his Bereaved
Congregation.

“He being dead, yet speaketh.”

AT MILLVILLE—ON A PLATE OF CAST IRON.

In

Memory of
the Reverend

ABIJAH DAVIS

who departed this life
August 7th, 1817, in the 54th year
of his age.

Here lies the man, whom storms
could never make meanly complain;
Nor could a flattering gale make
him talk proudly. He, unconcerned,
could calmly read his unborn destiny,
in all its pleasing or its frightful
form.

AT LEED'S POINT—ON A MARBLE SHAFT.

Front.

Erected by a bereaved
Congregation and many friends.

REV. JAMES M. EDMONDS

Born at Cold Spring, N. J.

June 1, 1827.

Married at Frankford Pa.

March 18, 1858.

Died at Absecon N. J.

March 23, 1858.

Right.

Licensed by
The Presbytery of West Jersey
At Salem, April 19, 1855
And Ordained at
Leeds Point
Oct. 8, 1856.

Left.

As a Friend,
Modest, cheerful, affectionate:
As a Christian,
Humble, conscientious, zealous:
As a Preacher,
Evangelical, instructive; persuasive.
Beloved and mourned of all,
but most of all by the children
of his Sabbath Schools and
Academy.

Rear.

Therefore watch and remember
that by the space of three years
I ceased not to warn every one night
and day with tears. Acts xx. 31.

A tablet was inserted by his Pupils in the wall of the school-house at Absecon, bearing these words :

Dedicated to

REV. JAMES M. EDMONDS

The Founder of this Institution.

Beloved while living,

Mourned when dead,

His memory is cherished

By his Pupils.

Born at Cold Spring, N. J. June 1, 1827.

Died at Absecon March 23d, 1858.

“Be ye followers of me as I also of Christ.”

1 Cor. xi. 1.

AT ABSECON—ON AN OBELISK.

Front.

To the Memory of
JAMES S. MAYNE
 Born at Revallagh
 Antrim County, Ireland.
 August 17, 1826.
 Died at Absecon
 August 30, 1860.

Right.

Licensed to preach the Gospel
 by the
 Presbytery of Philadelphia
 April 7, 1859.

Left.

Consecrated
 Conscientious
 Self Sacrificing.

Rear.

This is a faithful saying and worthy of
 all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came
 into the world to save sinners, of whom
 I am chief. *1 Tim 1. 15.

* This text was selected by himself.

The age of Mr. Powell, of Mr. Chestnut and Mr. Hyde, is unknown. The average age of the others—twenty-three in number—is very nearly fifty-one years.

NOTE.—We are indebted to Ethan Osborn Thompson, Samuel Sloan, and Rev. John W. Dulles, D.D., for the use of engravings.

It did not enter into the scope of this work, to record fully the earlier missionary efforts of New Brunswick Presbytery, in Monmouth Co., &c., If seemingly they have been slighted, they are worthy of a separate history.

ERRATA.

Page 17, for 1839 read 1739.

Page 35, sixteenth line, read, Andrew Hunter died July 28th.

Page 62. The notice of Salem does not belong to the "Appendix." Its proper place is page 44, as a foot note.

