

F

159

P25D7

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

F 159

Chap. Copyright No.

Shel. P 25 D 7

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





75844 #1

HISTORY

OF

PAXTON CHURCH.

BY THE PASTOR:
WILLIAM W. DOWNEY.

1732--1877.

“Ask for the old paths”---JER. 6: 16.

HARRISBURG, PA:
INDEPENDENT STEAM BOOK AND JOB PRINT.
1877.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1877, by
WM. W. DOWNEY,
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington, D. C.

HISTORY

OF

PAXTON CHURCH.

*Three miles east
of Harrisburg, Pa.*

BY THE PASTOR:
WILLIAM W. DOWNEY.

16
13000
"Ask for the old paths"---JER. 6: 16.



HARRISBURG, PA:
INDEPENDENT STEAM BOOK AND JOB PRINT.
1877.

π

F 159
.P.25 17

6
6
6
6
6

PREFATORY NOTE.

In the case of the authorities I have consulted I have given direct and immediate references to them on the same pages on which they are quoted. The minutes of Donegal and Carlisle Presbyteries are the only exceptions. Here I have indulged my own discretion in the use of quotation marks: 1. Because in giving time and place of the meetings of Presbytery, the minutes can be readily consulted. 2. Because in many instances, for good reasons, brevity, clearness, &c., I have altered the language of the minutes to such an extent that I would scarcely be justifiable in using quotation marks. My preference has been to adhere to the language of the minutes, and I have done so whenever it was not at too great a sacrifice of brevity, style, or some other cardinal virtue of writing. In the interests of truth I have been compelled to give rather a dark showing of the Quakers. The period covered by this history, however, was full of disturbing elements. An insuperable antipathy and bitter animosity existed between the Quakers and the Scotch-Irish settlers of the front er. I do not wish it to be understood that any representation of the Quakers of that day, is at all an expression of my views of that great brotherhood. When men are angry they will do much that they will not do when they are in a good humor; so, in coming from that period to the present, we come from "Philip drunk to Philip sober," from the Quaker intoxicated with rage against the "Paxton Boys," to the quiet, law-abiding, useful Quaker citizen of to-day.

INTRODUCTION.

The records of our old Churches being chiefly made up of the internal history of individual congregations, recounting principally in tables of statistics the circumstances of their growth, relieved occasionally by the recital of some event which once possessed a slight local interest, but now has lost even that, and having nothing to commend them to favorable attention and interest except a certain sort of curiosity about the days of our fathers, which soon wearies of detail, they must necessarily be more or less statistical, scrappy and uninteresting. They must be but a rapid narration of disconnected events, changing the subject in many instances almost with the rapidity of the lexicon. The more strictly and exclusively historical they are, the greater must be their lack of interest. Almost the only redeeming feature to which any interest will attach, will be the dragging out from the archives of history many old Presbyterian customs. These, when brought forth into the light of day, with the dust of age brushed off, will present vivid contrasts with our present practice and polity. They will show how in some things our fathers were much more strict than we; while in others, they were not near so strict. In gathering together the records of our churches, and putting them in permanent form for preservation, we want strictly correct and accurate history, however dry and uninteresting it may be. Hence, to be true at once to history and to our needs, these articles ought not to take the form of discourses, but rather of brief and accurate historical sketches.

With all the necessary material securely stored in one place, well bound, and systematically ticketed and labeled to facilitate reference, the future historian of American Presbyterianism will have an easy task compared with that of our pioneer historians, who were compelled to ransack everything, even down to old faded, worn out, and half lost family records, considering even these choice morsels, and eager to lay hands on them, in order to gather up the disconnected, disjointed shapeless mass of stuff, which then is still to be woven into the smooth, connected, consecutive, and ever gently expanding web of history.

All honor to our noble Assembly for the conception of the grand and vast design. All honor for her timely, skillful and grand appeal to the two high and noble motives which ever have actuated, and ever will actuate American Presbyterians—patriotism or love of country, and love for our grand, old, historic Presbyterian church. She is a member of that great family of Reformed Churches, Calvinistic in doctrine and Presbyterian in polity, constituting the mighty pillar on which the hopes of unborn centuries rest. She is the conservative centripetal force which binds the rim of speculation fast to the hub of truth. Without her potent and wholesome influence, speculation coursing on its way in giddy revolu-

tions, whirling along with its frenzied fury, would long since have broken into transcendentalism, or some other form of *nihilism*. Thus are we all privileged, and we should alike feel obligated, to bring forward all our little stones, however small, trifling and insignificant they may appear singly, and lay them upon the wall, to help make up that massive and magnificent structure, the historic temple of our common Presbyterianism. This Presbyterianism is the spiritual mother of us all. This is the Presbyterianism which, in an age of compromise, never compromised a single truth; in an age of intensest hatred, unlike maddened and infuriated Puritanism and Independency, never trampled upon a fallen foe; and yet in the midst of the severest and most hotly contested conflicts, and the most wearying and hopeless ones as well, in her unswerving fidelity to truth, honor and right, never blanched or quailed before a standing one. It behooves us then to draw out the little thread of old Paxton's history, which along with myriads of others constitutes the mighty cable, or forms a link in that massive golden chain of Presbyterian history, which links Eden to Paradise Regained, the fallen to the glorified humanity.



HISTORY.

Paxton Church is situated three miles east of Harrisburg, and a little more than one-eighth of a mile north of the Reading Turnpike. As it is one of the oldest Churches in the State, her history will not fail to interest many outside of her present membership. She is the mother of the Presbyterianism of the neighboring city of Harrisburg. Nor would it be possible to estimate the number of magnificent Churches of the young and queenly cities of the great West, and congregations which are at once an ornament to their society and a most stable element in their religion, to which Paxton has been one of most fruitful of mothers.

It seems impossible to commence the history of Paxton Church at the beginning. No Sessional records have been preserved dating further back than June 21st, 1845, under the pastorate of the Rev. John M. Boggs. Nor have any congregational records been preserved save a few scattered statistics of baptisms, marriages, deaths, admissions, dismissions and the like. The Presbyterian records furnish the only source of material previous to this date. The earliest notice of this Church we have been able to discover is given in the records of the Presbytery of Donegal. Its date is October 11th, 1732. It was on the occasion of the first meeting of that Presbytery, which was constituted that day out of a portion of the old Presbytery of New Castle, in accordance with an order of Synod, given in September immediately preceding. The meeting was held at the old Donegal Church. The ministers embracing this new Presbytery were Messrs. Anderson, Thomson, Boyd, Orr, and Bertram. Mr. Thomson was chosen Moderator, and Mr. Bertram, Clerk.

At this early date both Paxton and Derry, though without a bench of Elders, were organized and equipped according to the ideas of that day, sufficiently at least to be enrolled among the Churches of Presbytery, and present a call for a minister which was found in order. They were already united in one pastoral charge. When we view their position, strength and influence coupled with the fact that that was an age of slow growth, it is evident that both must have been in existence as preaching points some considerable period before that time. So they are considerably older than the old Presbytery of Donegal. How far Paxton antedates 1732, is uncertain; but certainly it was a central and public place of worship before 1730. Before the pastorate of Mr. Bertram (1732), Mr. Anderson had for some indefinite period preached at Paxton as a supply, but never became pastor. Could we have access to the minutes of the Presbytery of New Castle,

previous to 1732, we might be able to trace the history of Paxton further back, possibly to its beginning. But the fact that Mr. Bertram was the first pastor, coupled with the additional fact that there was no session organized until after the beginning of his pastorate, clearly shows, that when we reach back to 1732, we are not far from her origin; and have most probably met old Paxton in the early bloom of her youth, and in the early morning of her history.

It is an interesting fact worthy of being remembered, that the first item of business which came before Donegal Presbytery, was from the congregations of Paxton and Derry. From the minutes of October 11th 1732, we read: "This day appeared George Renick and others from Paxton and Derry, requiring an answer to their call, given to the Rev. Mr. Bertram, at Philadelphia, when the Presbytery of New Castle met, producing their subscriptions to his support, which subscriptions were attested by Mr. Anderson. Whereupon Presbytery, asking Mr. Bertram, if he had considered said call, and requiring his answer in relation thereunto, he declared his acceptance thereof, and that he would take the people's subscriptions, without any other obligation, for his support."

On Wednesday, the 15th of November, 1732, Donegal Presbytery met at Swatara according to appointment to install Mr. Bertram pastor of Paxton and Derry. Mr. Anderson had by appointment notified the congregations some time previously, and no objection was made to the installation. Mr. Thomson presided and preached the sermon.

MR. BERTRAM'S PASTORATE.

"The congregation of Paxton and Derry with the concurrence of the Presbytery, appoints Thomas Koster, George Renick, William Kunningham, Thomas Hays, for Paxton side; and for the other side of the creek, Rowland Chambers, Hugh Black, Robert Campbell, John Wilson, William Wilson, James Quigley, William McCord and John Sloan, to take care that the subscription for Mr. Bertram's maintenance be paid, and to collect the same until the congregation be better regulated.

"Presbytery appoints the representatives aforesaid to assist Mr. Bertram, in congregational affairs, until the erection of a formal session.

"The congregation did make over to Mr. Bertram and his heirs, their right and title to the plantation commonly called 'The Indian Town' purchased from the Indians, over and above their subscriptions; and promised to deliver him all papers relating thereto."

Having started very near the fount whence the stream of Paxton's history begins to flow, we find Mr. Bertram was her first pastor. His remains were committed to the dust in the old Derry grave-yard.*

Viewing the action of Presbytery relative to Mr. Bertram's call to Paxton and Derry, and his installation over these congregations, we see that, in matters of this kind, our fathers were far less strict constructionists of Presbyterian order and

* Mr. Bertram's tomb-stone, in the old Derry grave-yard, records this fact.

polity than we are. In our day, a call for a pastor could scarcely be made out by an assembly of people wholly unorganized, without a single Church officer; and yet, when presented to Presbytery, be found in order, and put into the hands of the minister called. In regard to the general principles regulating ecclesiastical government our fathers were far more lax than we are. But they were more strict in individual requirements for church membership, for holding office in the Church, and especially in all judicial cases. And yet this comparison is by no means disparaging to our Church of to-day. If there was a Judas among the twelve, of course there will be many more among the thousands of names which now appear upon the roll of our communicants. While, then, the true ends of ecclesiastical government and discipline may be occasionally thwarted and defeated; still, it cannot be questioned but that the Presbyterian Church of 1876, is as jealous and watchful of her purity and integrity in both doctrine and life, as any noble, intelligent, disciplined and working band of Christians, standing up for Jesus, His cross and His gospel, have ever been. When we consider the exceedingly heterogeneous elements which make up American society and civilization, and so the working and controlling power of the Church, we have reason abundantly to thank God and take courage, in view of the sweet harmony and peace, and the generous, hearty and efficient co-operation, which pervade all her counsels for her rapid and wide-spread extension. Indeed, I cannot help but feel that we get along much better than if we were all Scotch-Irishmen.

The truth is, our fathers were extremists on these points. In fact, the denominations generally were more bigoted and exclusive then than now. The catholic spirit of the gospel was neither so well understood, nor so influential. Consequently, had not brought forth its fruit in the inter-denominational comity so characteristic of the present age.

The same spirit which fostered denominational exclusiveness, influenced our fathers also in their dealings and judgments one with another, making them severe and critical. Their very training and discipline, too much characterized by narrowness and intensity, especially in the family, not leaving room for a diversity of opinion on non-essentials, rendered hearty co-operation on any extended scale almost impossible. While the School-men were wasting time, and in many instances finished culture and splendid talents, in ridiculous efforts to settle the vexed problem as to how many angels could stand on the point of a needle at the same time, lost souls were going to perdition. So it has ever been of every age and every Church which pays almost exclusive attention to its theology, disregarding and ignoring the claims of that large and important class, *the lost*; while He whom they call their Master plainly declares, that the specific end for which He came into the world was, (Luke 19: 10), "to seek and to save that which was lost."

Allowing but little latitude to the private discretion and general good judgment of their members, the Church courts of the days of our fathers maintained a most rigid surveillance over all the interests of the Church and its members, which, for minuteness of detail, was oppressive and burdensome, and not infrequently very amusing. The Church was small, and its interests requiring general ecclesiastical legislation but few. This gave the Church courts very little to do. The higher judicatories were obliged to hunt up business to transact, that their

meetings might not appear entirely without a purpose. To avoid this dearth of business, they encroached upon the rights and usurped the prerogatives of the lower courts. Presbyterian records were to a great extent made up of what belonged peculiarly to Sessional records. It is not to be wondered at that Sessions became careless about preserving records, lax in enforcing discipline, and indifferent to all manner of business, when Presbytery persistently relieved them of the burden. If Presbytery preserves our Sessional records, where is the necessity of our troubling ourselves to keep them, was the practical logic of the Sessions. It is doubtless largely owing to this fact that so few of the Sessions of those early days preserved records, and that the large part of such records as have been preserved, are so meagre and scanty as to be almost absolutely worthless. During the long period of Paxton's history preceding 1845 there has not been preserved the scratch of a pen in the shape of Sessional records. In view of the great dearth of such records, it is most fortunate that the Presbyterian minutes of that period, are so largely made up of Sessional matter. Otherwise, so far as I am aware, it would be impossible to procure the material for a history of Paxton.

So again, Presbytery often thrust itself between Church Sessions and their members in *judicial cases*, in which the Session itself had original jurisdiction. Under no circumstances could Presbytery have the authority to proceed in any such case before allowing the Session the privilege and the opportunity to take action. It could then come properly before the Presbytery by an appeal, or by an exception to the action of the Session. As a youth grows up to manhood, if you persist in withholding confidence in his judgment and capacity, and always treat him as a child, he may at last be persuaded that he is only an overgrown child, and will continue dependent upon you to such an extent perhaps, that he will never act for himself even in the most trivial affairs, but must harass and perplex you to know what he is to do in *so important and critical a juncture*. Just so it was with the Sessions. The Presbyteries reposed no confidence in their capacity, and treated them as though they were incompetent to attend to Sessional matters, until the Sessions really began to think so themselves. Ever treated as children, like children, they began to refer all sessional matters without touching them to the mother Presbytery for her counsel and decision. Indeed, the Session appeared completely over-ridden and ignored. To judge from the practice of the early Presbyteries, we would certainly conclude that they considered the Session, so far as an authoritative Church court is concerned, a more unnecessary appendage than the Synod is now considered by some in the form of a useless fifth wheel superadded to the ecclesiastical machinery of Presbyterianism.

Again, Presbyteries maintained the same jealous watchfulness over *Church members* as our Church Sessions. For a young man never to be put upon his honor, but to feel that he is beset by constant watchfulness and suspicion, fosters deceit. So it was with the too jealous care of Presbyteries for Church members. The people felt that they were constantly watched and suspected, that Presbytery reposed no confidence in their honor and integrity of principle and character. The instinctive perversity of human nature rebelled against this, and a sense of wounded honor recoiled from it as well. Because of this constant suspicion and rigid surveillance they were frequently guilty of misdemeanors, which perhaps under other

circumstances and a different system of training, they would never have dreamed of. And so it often happens, that at a single meeting of just one of those little Presbyteries, a greater number of wicked criminal and judicial cases, and frequently for nameless crimes, were brought before the attention of Presbytery, than now come up before all the Presbyteries of our vast Assembly in a decade of years. The minutes of many meetings of Presbytery are little less than a foul, black record of impurity and uncleanness. If there is any lesson which the past experience of our Church has taught us, it is this: that it is injudicious and unwise to exercise too severe a censorship, and too little trust and confidence in our fellow-men. It is as great a mistake in the family as in the Church. The only use the Presbytery seemed to have for the Church Session was as a sort of detective committee, whose duty it was to hunt up everything in their congregation which any evil disposed person might think called for legislation and discipline, and report it to the next meeting of Presbytery, that that body might play the part of publisher to as many scandals as could be discovered and invented, and brought before it. In reading their minutes one's heart is pained at the frequent recurrence of innumerable scandals, many of which ought never to have been noticed, while many others ought to have been settled by the Session, and never found their way into Presbytery, and a large portion of the remainder should have been buried in oblivion, and not allowed to blacken and deface the records of Presbytery.

There is no more fruitful source of dissatisfaction, or of disintegration to a Church than this interminable confusion with reference to the proper limits to the jurisdiction of its different judicatories. One of the main features of Presbyterian government is, that it derives its power and authority from the consent of the people—the governed. That consent is expressed both by a lay representation possessed of equal authority in the Church courts with the ministry, and by the exercise of the right of suffrage. The people elect their own officers; and tolerate and practice female suffrage too. Hence, the interests and rights of the people are to be represented. The judicatory, which is nearest to the people and most adequately represents them, is the Church Session. To ignore the jurisdiction of the Session is to ignore the connecting link between the people and the higher judicatories, between the people and the general principle of governmental authority, and involves the ignoring of the rights of the people. Such a tendency is fraught with the greatest danger alike to true Presbyterianism and true Church government. Rather than submit to such an infringement upon the rights of Sessions and Church members, the great majority of our Churches of to-day would turn in the opposite direction, toward Congregationalism, and follow it even to the extreme of Independency. Whatever our fathers may have been, or not been, they certainly were not very good ecclesiastical lawyers. This is true down to a comparatively recent date; and to this day the limits to the jurisdiction of Presbytery, or to its power and authority inside of its jurisdiction, are enshrouded in dense haze and mist. Hitherto the attention and learning of the Church has been devoted almost exclusively to doctrinal theology. Hence the crude forms and cruder practice of ecclesiastical polity in the past. In the future this much neglected department will demand and receive a far larger share of attention. The signs of the times

plainly indicate a great sifting and no small change of the ideas of Presbyterian polity and order at present prevailing in the Church.

On at least five different occasions, at as many different meetings of Presbytery, Paxton and Derry even ordered to pay up their arrears to Mr. Anderson.

On September 6th, 1733, during the sessions of Presbytery at Upper Octorara, "Mr. Bertram presented a list of men nominated by the congregations of Paxton, and Derry, to be set apart for Ruling Elders. Presbytery ordered that they be again published, and intimation given that if any objection be made against any of them, said objection be given in due time."

Presbytery met at Nottingham, April 2nd, 1734. On the third day, (April 4th) "Mr. Bertram, by advice of his Session, represented to Presbytery that a certain member of his congregation was encouraged by the congregation of Paxton to defend an action about boards, &c. in the civil law, that said person was cast with considerable costs which the congregation, *nemo contradicente*, agreed to pay by a proportionable distribution, with which some members afterwards refused to comply. Presbytery after due consideration of the same, ordered that the aforesaid charges and costs be equally defrayed by all the members of said congregation under pain of suspension from Church privileges."

Wednesday, August 28th, 1734. Presbytery met at Paxton by way of visitation. Mr. Bertram, though the pastor of the Church, had been appointed preacher for the occasion. The congregation had already received due notice of this intended visitation. Mr. Bertram "preached with approbation" from 2nd Cor. 4:5. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus, the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." "It was asked whether Mr. Bertram had performed his duty as a gospel minister, in the several branches thereof, and maintained a conduct and a behavior suitable to his station. The representatives of both societies answered affirmatively—to their great satisfaction and spiritual edification. The said representatives being asked about the conduct of the elders in both societies replied that they had no objection, nor much time to make trial of their behavior, said elders being but lately invested with that office. It was likewise asked whether any proper methods were used to collect Mr. Bertram's salary. They answered that suitable methods had been devised, and they hoped, would be duly prosecuted. The elders of both societies were called in, and asked concerning the general behavior of their minister in the congregation, and his particular conduct in managing sessional affairs. They replied: "As to the former, his conduct was exemplary and agreeable. As to the latter, in consequence of the very recent formation of the session, they had not opportunity for much experience with them. Mr. Bertram was then called in, and asked whether the people had performed their duty to him in all respects. He replied that he had no general complaints, but was not fully satisfied with reference to his house. As to the payment of his subscriptions, he had not computed his book accounts, but expected to be capable to give a particular account thereof against our next meeting."

Pastor and people were getting along very harmoniously. Neither had complained of the other, nor had had any reason to do so. Certainly pecuniary matters were not in a very bad condition when Mr. Bertram had not even thought it worth while to cast up his salary accounts. Such, however, were the inquisitorial processes to which congregations were frequently subjected by the early Presbyteries,

not only regardless of their needs and wishes, but oftentimes even without any previous intimation, official or otherwise. Besides, Presbytery had met, and must have something to do. As they could find nothing else, they thought they might as well do that. Having disposed of this matter which was altogether aside and incidental, they proceeded to investigate the difficulty about the boards, which was the real object of visitation, and was both legitimate and necessary.

"A supplication was presented by some persons of Paxton congregation, complaining of their being suspended from Church privileges, for their not contributing to the payment of the charges of a certain law suit prosecuted against George Renick by Patrick Martin. The parties having been heard and removed, Presbytery proceeded to the consideration of the whole affair; and noticed that in what was testified by several persons, there were strong insinuations that Patrick Martin, in some steps which he took, had a very guilty hand in bringing said charges on the congregation. Hence, Presbytery think it their duty to make further inquiry into his conduct in this affair. Presbytery then adjourned until the next morning; and required all parties to attend who could give any light in this business."

On the following day, (August 29th, 1734), "this supplication of some of the members of Paxton church was resumed. George Renick with several others represented several things to Presbytery to make it appear that Patrick Martin's conduct was culpable in reference to the occasion of the above charges and costs, especially in two particulars, viz., his not fulfilling a certain contract, concerning the sawing of 1,000 feet of plank for Mr. Bertram's house; as also his commencing a suit at law against George Renick, for the pay due to him for the sawing of said plank.

"Patrick Martin was then heard in his own vindication in these two particulars. Much was said by parties and evidences on both sides. At length the parties were removed, and Presbytery came to discourse of the whole affair. All the members having deliberately offered their reasonings upon the same, Presbytery, at last came to an unanimous judgment of the whole affair in the following particulars.

"*First*, That whatever probability there may be from circumstances, and however it be evident that the congregation understood it so, that Patrick Martin was by bargain obliged to saw part of the above plank of white oak, yet it does not appear to us clearly, that he was by bargain obliged to do it, and therefore we cannot convict him of breach of bargain in relation to said plank.

"*Secondly*, That however Patrick Martin alleges that he was provoked by hard and abusive words from George Renick, together with the disagreeable conduct of some other persons, in reference to the payment for sawing of said plank, yet it appears from various plain evidences of matter of fact, circumstances of the whole affair, and Patrick's own concessions before us, that he commenced said law suit, not so much for fear of losing his payment, as from human and sinful resentment against George Renick and some other persons, and that therefore he is guilty in a very sinful manner, of exposing our holy religion, and particularly this congregation to ridicule and contempt before the world by going to law before

such as are without, and that so precipitately, without exercising any reasonable desire of patience towards the people, to give them time for payment of said money or wages, especially considering that Mr. Bertram had offered to pay said money or wages in behalf of said people from whom it was due.

Thirdly, That George Renick and the congregation were exceedingly guilty in not taking up said law suit when they knew it was commenced, thereby having a guilty hand in exposing themselves and our profession to contempt, as above, excepting such as declared themselves against its continuing in the law.

Fourthly, That however the eleven supplicants plead their own payments to Patrick Martin in their own justification for not contributing to the expenses of the above law suit, yet we think them guilty also on their part in choosing rather to hazard a breach in the congregation for the sake of so small a trifle, as was laid upon each of them, and by the payment of which much trouble and confusion might have been saved; and it is our judgment that said supplicants should pay their proportion of the charges of said law suit, as they cherish the peace of the congregation.

Fifthly, That George Renick and the men who bargained with Patrick Martin are guilty of a great oversight in not taking care to be more clear and distinct in making said bargain with Patrick Martin; and also that George Renick was much in the wrong in giving such provoking language to Patrick Martin, as had a visible tendency to provoke him to take the severe measures which he took, notwithstanding any provocations alleged.

Sixthly, That our brother Bertram acted with an unjustifiable precipitancy, in admitting Patrick Martin to sealing ordinances before and without any judicial inquiry into his above conduct, especially seeing that he knew that many of the congregation were offended with said Patrick Martin on that account.

In sum, That Presbytery does lament and bewail a spirit of contention and uncharitable stiffness of temper that appear to prevail so much among the professors of religion in our day, that so many appear to choose deliberately to sacrifice the peace of Christ's Church to their own private interests and humors; and we earnestly entreat that the people of this congregation in particular, may be persuaded to put on a spirit of meekness, mutual forbearance, and charitable condescension towards one another, lest, if they bite and devour one another, they be consumed one of another, lest they gratify the great enemy of Christ and His Church by casting it down to the ground before it be well begun to be built.

Upon reading the above judgment, the Moderator asked all the persons mentioned therein whether they would submit thereto. In answer to which all who were present submitted. Only four of the supplicants were absent, upon which it is ordered that said persons shall express their compliance with said judgments before the ministers that assist Mr. Bertram at the sacrament, in order to be treated as orderly members."

October 16th, 1734. Mr. Bertram reported to Presbytery at Donegal "that both parts of his congregation had appointed persons to take care that his subscriptions be duly collected, by which he hoped that affair would soon be brought to a good pass; and that they are taking measures to put his house in good habitable order."

"Mr. Bertram, Mr. Anderson and others reported that the four persons belonging to Paxton concerned in Presbytery's judgment given at the last meeting, who were then absent, had declared their acquiescence in and submission to said judgment, before the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in that place."

April 2nd, 1735. Mr. Bertram reported to Presbytery at Donegal "that something had been done towards the finishing of his house, and that the congregation intend to finish that work as soon as possible."

On the following day, (April 3rd), Mr. Bertram represented "that some of his people of Paxton, have not yet fulfilled the design of an order of Presbytery given when met there last September, relating to the paying up the charges of the law suit to which said minute refers. Presbytery recommended to all persons concerned to take care speedily to pay their proportion of said charges, and so prevent all occasion of the Presbytery making any further inquiry about this matter."

At a meeting of Presbytery at Chestnut Level, June 10th, 1735, Mr. Bertram's Elder reported, "that some of the people have as yet done nothing toward the repairing of his house. Presbytery recommended earnestly to the people of Paxton and Derry to be more forward and expeditious in that business."

During the session of Presbytery at Nottingham, October 9th, 1735, Mr. Bertram and his Elder represented to Presbytery "that inasmuch as Mr. Bertram is under an intolerable burden of labor and fatigue, in the discharge of the work of the ministry to both parties of the congregation to which he stands related, it is their desire that some of the ministers may be appointed at a convenient time to go into and reason with the people of said congregation and inquire into their circumstances, as to their ability to be separated into two distinct congregations, and support themselves, in order that Mr. Bertram, being eased of part of his burden, may be able to go on with more comfort in the discharge of his duty to whichever part of said people he shall be determined to continue with."

"Presbytery, in view of said motion and desire, ordered Mr. Anderson to meet Mr. Craighhead on his return from over the river, and to convene that people at the meeting house of Derry for the purpose aforesaid, and make report of what appears, to Presbytery at its next meeting. The day appointed for said meeting was the second Wednesday of November. The aforesaid brethren were further ordered to inquire how accounts stood between Mr. Bertram and said people."

This committee fulfilled its appointment and presented a written report which was received by Presbytery at Middle Octorara, November 20th, 1735. With it they presented "a supplication from the Session, in the name of the congregation of Derry, desiring that it should be separated from Paxton as a distinct congregation, and that their bounds might be fixed, so that they might be able to take steps to procure supplies."

Lazarus Stewart appeared at this time also to prosecute a supplication from Manada Creek for a new erection.

"Presbytery, considering both these affairs, think it not convenient to come to a determination until they be better informed about the distance and situation of those people. Therefore Presbytery appoints Mr. Anderson and any other

brother whom the standing committee above appointed shall see convenient to serve with him, to perambulate the bounds and borders of the congregation of Derry and people of Manada some time next Spring, and said committee shall appoint which brethren shall make report of what they can discover to the Presbytery at its next meeting. Said brethren were ordered to take particular notice of the situation of the meeting house of Manada, its distance from the meeting house of Derry, and Mr. Anderson was ordered to take an Elder with him. This committee is empowered to fix the bounds of said people, and to determine concerning the situation of the meeting house of Manada.

"Presbytery also defers to do anything in relation to Mr. Bertram's release from any part of his charge until our next meeting, at which time we expect to be better acquainted with the circumstances and ability of the several parts of Mr. Bertram's congregation."

The committee met at Octorara, December 10th, 1735, and added to its number Mr. Thompson. At a meeting of Presbytery at Octorara, April 14th, 1736 the perambulation committee reported its mission unfulfilled in consequence of severe weather. Mr. Bertram being absent, Presbytery deferred taking any action looking to the dividing of his charge until its next meeting.

During the meeting of Presbytery at Notingham, May 26th, 1736, Derry was appointed as the place, and the first Wednesday in September the time for the next meeting. A committee consisting of Mr. Anderson, Andrew Gilbraith, and one of the Elders from Paxton, William Maxwell, were ordered to meet on the preceding Tuesday at Derry to perambulate the bounds between that people and those of Manada.

Presbytery met at Derry according to appointment Wednesday, September 1st, 1736. Mr. Anderson reported that the committee appointed to perambulate the bounds between Derry and the people of Manada had fulfilled its mission, and gave in the sentiments of the committee in writing. After some debate Presbytery approved the judgment of the committee; that the people of Manada be separated into a distinct congregation, and that the place where they have begun to build a house is the most suitable place for a meeting house for said people. Lazarus Stewart engages to Presbytery that all persons who belong or shall join themselves to this new Church, and are in arrears to Mr. Bertram, shall pay up.

On the following day, (September 2nd, 1736), Presbytery instituted an inquiry into Mr. Bertram's release from one part of his charge. The people of Paxton were asked what they could afford yearly for the support of their minister. They replied, they were willing to engage for the sum of sixty pounds, one-half in money, the other half in hay, flax, linen, yarn or linen cloth at market price.

The people of Derry promised the sum of £55 to be paid in like manner. "Both congregations declare that though they will allow their minister the benefit of surplus subscriptions, yet they would expect a congregational discharge yearly on the payment of said respective quotas. Both engage to choose collectors for their respective quotas. It was further agreed by the people of Manada and Derry, and ordered by the Presbytry, that those living upon the borders of the two congregations, that is, between the two meeting houses and beyond the Swatara Creek, shall on or before the first of November next declare in an orderly

way (that is, before some of the Elders or principal men of the congregation whom they make choice of), whether they will join with the congregation of Derry or of Manada, and after the first day of November next none who now dwell in bounds shall be at liberty to make or alter their choice in this matter but by the convenience of both congregations, or by order of Presbytery."

"The congregations of Paxton and Derry being interrogated, both declare that it is their earnest desire, that Mr. Bertram may be continued with them as their minister and pastor." Mr. Bertram was asked which of these two congregations he wished to adhere to. He requested that he might have liberty to deliberate on this point until the next stated meeting of Presbytery. Presbytery ordered Mr. Bertram to give his answer during the approaching meeting of Synod either verbally or in writing.

Presbytery met in Philadelphia, September 16th, 1736 during the Session of Synod. Mr. Bertram, being asked to which of the two congregations he preferred to adhere, replied, to Derry. Presbytery approved and Paxton was declared vacant. It was recommended to Derry "speedily to improve upon the glebe-land that was talked of in order to make it habitable for Mr. Bertram, that his easement of travel might be obtained. "In the mean time Mr. Bertram was to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to the people of Paxton that fall. Mr. Thomas Craighead was appointed to supply the congregation of Manada the last Sabbath of that month, (September), and Paxton the first Sabbath in October. The people of Paxton were requested to pay their arrears to Mr. Bertram as soon as possible.

October 26th, 1736. Lazarus Stewart reported to Presbytery at Donegal that nothing had yet been done toward the payment of arrears due to Mr. Bertram because they had not yet received from him a list of said arrears. He declared the people ready to pay up these arrears immediately upon the reception of a list of them. No reports were made concerning the fulfillment of appointments by supplies for the people of Paxton and Derry by reason of the absence of these parties.

On the following day, (October 27th), Mr. Craighead having arrived, was questioned relative to the fulfilling of his appointments. He reported all fulfilled except at Paxton. His reason for failing to meet his appointment at this place was that he understood from a letter received from two of the Elders of that congregation, that the people would not come out to hear him. Several persons from that congregation being present were heard concerning this matter. The substance of what they said was in justification of their rejecting Mr. Craighead's visit. After considerable debate Presbytery unanimously adopted the following resolution: "The people of Paxton have shown such disrespect to our Presbyterial order and authority, that we look upon ourselves as under such discouragement, as to Presbyterial care and oversight and provision for the people, that we cannot think it our duty to appoint them supplies until they acknowledge their fault in rejecting our appointment as to Mr. Craighead, and until we have more assurance from them than we now have, that our appointments with respect to them will meet with more kindly entertainment.

"And we judge also with respect to Mr. Craighead, that he was in that matter

also faulty, that notwithstanding the discouragement he had, yet he being Presbyterially appointed, should have staid till the Sabbath and attempted to have preached, until they had actually shut the doors against him."

This resolution was read in the hearing of the people of Paxton who were present. They immediately retired for consultation. David Wilson then declared as their representative that he would make no reply, until they should return home and consult the congregation.

Presbytery's "committee," or rather commission, met at Donegal, February 8th, 1736. Before this committee appeared, William Renick and William Maxwell as commissioners from the people of Paxton. In the name of that congregation they declared "that they were sensible of and sorry for the disregard of the Presbytery's order which they were guilty of in refusing or discouraging Mr. Craighead to preach among them, and acknowledge that it was their sin and fault, and withal desire that the committee may appoint them supplies as they judge convenient for the future. "Their acknowledgment was accepted. Mr. Sankey was appointed to supply them the three following Sabbaths of February, then two Sabbaths at Manada, and then again at Paxton the last two Sabbaths of March. The committee also, in pursuance of Mr. Bertram's request forwarded by letter, recommended to the people of Paxton to pay up their arrears to him as speedily as possible.

April 6th, 1737. At Chestnut Level, Presbytery again appointed Mr. Sankey to supply Paxton and Manada until its next meeting.

June 23rd, 1737. At Notingham, Presbytery received a supplication from Paxton requesting the appointment of one of its ministers to moderate a congregational meeting for making out a call before the next meeting of Presbytery. This request elicited considerable discussion, but was finally denied. Mr. Sankey was again appointed to supply Hanover (Manada) and Paxton.

August 31st, 1737. At Middle Octorara, "a supplication was presented from the people of Paxton, and a verbal application from the commissioners of Pennsylvania, desiring Presbytery to apply to the Presbytery of New Castle for a hearing of Mr. Wilson, or some other probationer of that Presbytery. "In answer to these requests, the next day, (September 1st), Presbytery ordered Mr. Black to write to the Presbytery of New Castle, "to acquaint Mr. Elder that it is our desire, that he may procure credentials from that Presbytery, in order to join with us for the supply of our vacancies." Mr. Alexander was appointed to supply Paxton the third and fourth Sabbath of that month, (September).

At the next meeting of Presbytery at Pequa, October 5th, 1737, Mr. Elder was present with his credentials. The next day, (October 6th), Presbytery appointed him to supply Paxton four Sabbaths, and Mr. Samuel Craven for two Sabbaths.

After Mr. Bertram's resignation, September 16th, 1736, Paxton was vacant over eighteen months. But, as we have seen, she was well supplied. Mr. Bertram having been installed November 15th, 1732, his pastorate extended over a period of just three years, ten months and one day. Continuing in charge of Derry, Paxton and Derry were henceforth for a considerable period two separate charges with different pastors.

November 16th, 1737. Mr. Elder reported to Presbytery at Derry that he had fulfilled his appointment at Paxton. A supplication was presented the same day from the congregation of Paxton, requesting Presbytery to appoint one of its members to preside in making out a call for Mr. Elder. The Moderator was appointed to preside at this meeting at discretion before the next meeting of Presbytery. He was also ordered to be present with and assist Mr. Bertram in filing accounts with the congregation of Paxton. Messrs. Anderson and Bertram were appointed to select a subject for a homily for Mr. Elder as a part of trial to be delivered at the next meeting, provided no difficulty attend the call of Paxton to him. Mr. Elder was appointed to supply Paxton until the next stated meeting of Presbytery.

At Donegal, April 12th, 1738. A supplication from a considerable part of the congregation of Paxton together with a call for Mr. Elder was presented to Presbytery. A supplication from a small number of said congregation was also read. After hearing both parties by their commissioners, and some serious discussion upon the subject, it was unanimously agreed that said call be presented to Mr. Elder for consideration. By reason of the circumstances of the case, Mr. Elder desired the Presbytery to retain the call under its care for some time. Presbytery consented. Mr. Elder was appointed to supply Paxton until the next meeting; and to deliver at that time a homily from (John 3: 36), "He that believeth on the son, hath everlasting life."

At the Forks of Brandywine, June 29th, 1738, Presbytery again presented this call to Mr. Elder. This time he accepted it. The stipends promised were £60 in money. Salaries were then paid sometimes half in money and half in commodities, such as bacon, hay, flax, linen yarn, linen cloth, and various other articles at market prices. Occasionally the salary was entirely made up of these commodities, without a farthing in money. Such was the case with Mr. Sankey, the first pastor called to the Hanover Church.

Mr. Elder was ordered to prepare a common head on "The Necessity of a Divine Revelation," and a lecture on the third epistle of John to be presented at the next meeting. At Hanover, August 30th, 1738, Mr. Elder delivered the common head assigned him which was approved. He was ordered to prepare a Presbyterial exercise on Rom. 8: 6, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." The following day, (August 31st), Presbytery promised at their next session to give an answer to the Paxton supplication as to their desire that Mr. Elder's ordination be forwarded before winter.

October 17th, 1738. Mr. Elder delivered before Presbytery at Pequa the Presbyterial exercise recently assigned him, which was approved. He delivered, too, a lecture on the third epistle of John, which was also approved. Next day, (October 18th), Mr. Elder was ordered to deliver a popular sermon from Psalm 119: 165, at the next meeting, the third Tuesday of the following December at Paxton. His ordination was fixed for the second day of that meeting. Mr. Black was appointed to preside. Mr. Elder's extempore trial too was fixed for that meeting. Paxton congregation was ordered to pay up Mr. Bertram's arrears before next meeting.

December 21st, 1738. Presbytery met at Paxton pursuant to adjournment.

Mr Elder opened the meeting with a popular sermon from Psalm 119, verse 165, "Great peace have they which love the law: and nothing shall offend them." The sermon was approved. His extempore trials were then taken up. These were approved also. Next day, (December 22nd), Mr. Bertram's arrears were considered. After considerable discussion, Presbytery ordered "that after the ordination of Mr. Elder, he and the Session take care that none of those who are deficient as to what they were to pay Mr. Bertram by note or otherwise, be admitted to any Church privileges till they have satisfied his claims."

MR. ELDER'S PASTORATE.

Mr. Sankey had notified the congregation of the approaching ordination according to appointment. Mr. Alexander Craighead proclaimed to the people that Presbytery was ready. No objection was made. Presbytery proceeded to the ordination. Mr. Black preached the sermon from 2 Tim. 2: 15, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Mr. Elder was then ordained, received as a member of Presbytery, and his name added to the roll of its ministers. Paxton was Mr. Elder's first charge, and he remained her pastor as long as he continued preaching. He came into the Presbytery as a licentiate October 5th, 1737, and was ordained and installed pastor of Paxton December 22nd, 1738, a little more than fourteen months after he had come into the Presbytery.*

This young divine, afterwards Paxton's venerable pastor, was one of the most popular preachers of his day. Presbytery never lost an opportunity of hearing him, and during his connection with Donegal Presbytery he preached more frequently before that body than any other man in it. He preached the opening sermon at three successive meetings of Presbytery. March 6th, 1744, he opened Presbytery at Donegal with a sermon from Philip. 1: 23, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." November 6th, 1744, he opened Presbytery at Hanover with a sermon from Deut. 29: 19, "And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst." Again, on March 26th, 1745, he opened Presbytery at Derry with a sermon from Rom. 8: 18, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." He was much sought after too for ordina-

*Sherman Day, in his "Historical Collections of the State of Pennsylvania" p. 274, asserts that Mr. Elder was the first pastor of Paxton and Derry. This is incorrect, Mr. Bertram was the first pastor. (See note page 8; also minutes of Donegal Presbytery for 1732.) Paxton had one pastor (Mr. Bertram), and Derry two (Messrs. Bertram and Roan) before Mr. Elder.

On the same page of the same volume this same accurate (?) author asserts that the first meeting house at Paxton "is said" (opportunistly thought of) "to have been erected about the year 1740." This is at the very least, ten years too late—most probably more. (See minutes of Donegal Presbytery for 1732.)

tion and installation occasions; and among others, delivered the sermon at the installation of Mr. Black at the Conewago Church. At the Forks of Brandywine July 1st, 1741, he was made Moderator for the ensuing year. He was one of the best clerks in the Presbytery, and frequently filled that position. October 29th, 1741, at Donegal he was appointed one of a committee to visit the Derry congregation, inquire into, and if possible, settle some difficulties between that people and their pastor, Mr. Bertram. April 6th, 1742, Presbytery met at Paxton. Mr. Elder was appointed on a committee with Messrs. Black and Sankey, to meet at Mr. Sankey's on the first Wednesday of May following, to revise the Presbyterial minutes and insert them in the "minute book." November 10th, 1747, he opened Presbytery at Donegal with a sermon from Psalm, 119: 60, "I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments." He was clerk for the years 1748 and 1750. These are recorded as a few of the many interesting little incidents connected with his history. We propose now to go a little deeper into his history and present a brief outline sketch of his character.

On December 12th, 1740, certain persons from Paxton appeared before Presbytery at Middle Octorara, and charged Mr. Elder with preaching false doctrine. These persons were cited to appear before Presbytery at its next meeting with their witnesses, and make good their charge. It does not appear from the Presbyterial records that any attempt was ever made to substantiate this charge against Mr. Elder's orthodoxy; and he continued an honored and esteemed member of his Presbytery. This charge may have been a thrust aimed at Mr. Elder's peace and usefulness by some evil disposed persons, anxious to injure him. I am rather disposed to think, however, that it naturally grew out of the uniform custom and practice of the Church at that day.

The large proportion of the early ministers, through the settlements and Presbyteries from Philadelphia westward, were from Scotland or the North of Ireland, and the Presbytery of Donegal derives its name from the northwestern county of the province of Ulster, in the North of Ireland. They came generally while yet in early life. By reason of the dearth of either facilities or opportunities necessarily consequent upon the more or less roving life in the sparsely settled wilderness of America, they made little advance in theology beyond what they had attained to before coming over. Even in the Scotch universities, divinity was far from the advanced and learned science it is to-day. In our own country, young men studying divinity pursued their studies with some pastor. They secured as much theology perhaps as he taught, and frequently no more. There were no Theological Seminaries, and no divines whose special province it was to teach technical theology. Ministers, busily engaged with pastoral duties, Church extension, and the manifold interests incident to the conquest of the new country for King Immanuel, had neither the leisure, nor the means and opportunity to make themselves skilled and able theologians. So, there was but little advance in systematic theology. They read the old received text books of the Church, Calvin, Channock, Howe, Baxter and others, together with Matthew Henry's commentary, the confession of faith and the catechisms. When once through these, they thought they had made an end of theology. They were accustomed to look upon these grand old leaders of religious thought with the utmost veneration; and

would no sooner tolerate any disagreement with them than with Isaiah or Paul. Though they would have denied it had the question been formally put to them, yet they practically received these men as inspired.

Not only would they brook no disagreement with these divines on points on which they had expressed themselves; but advancing further still, they would not even allow any additions to be made, conceiving them to have given a complete and exhaustive system of theology. Posterity might perhaps climb as high and know as much as they did; but soar above them and know more—never. The idea never occurred to them, that while the Bible was complete and could receive no additions, it might still remain a little larger and fuller than their theologies, and might contain a few wholesome truths which had not yet been transcribed. The only wonder is, that they did not abandon sermons entirely, and just read from the pulpit these old books. The solution doubtless is, that the phraseology of these books must often be translated into the popular dialect, before their teachings can be grasped by the popular comprehension. Still they loved the formulated phraseology of the books; and used it whenever they thought the people would comprehend it, and also whenever the preacher himself did not comprehend it. If they did not comprehend it, of course they could not express it. What more simple in such a dilemma than just to borrow thought, expression and all from the books. How handsomely a dearth of ideas may be covered up by the stately and magnificent tread of a lumbering, tedious, long-drawn-out, formulated phraseology. When any minister, of more than ordinary originality and ability, weary of this monotony, hungering and thirsting for some little variety, or fired by his own original, clear and definite grasp of his subject, presented it in a style and language a little peculiar to himself, if any brother was half a sleep, or a little dull of comprehension, and did not at once perceive that it was a familiar subject and train of thought in slightly different dress it would not be long before some misgivings would be expressed as to the speaker's orthodoxy, and dismal forbodings lest he should introduce innovations into the Church. Unfortunately for the prosperity of the Church all these men are not dead yet. I know too many of them, could pick them out, lay my hands on them, and call them by their names. Alas, that the wide-spread and richly wholesome influence of many a majestic intellect is nipped in the bud by the intolerable stupidity of many who see no deeper than the surface, and not half so far as to-morrow's sun-rise.

This is the devil's way of getting rid of men he fears. He makes use of the envy and jealousy of their weaker brethren. There are plenty of men in the ministry whom the devil would not remove if he could. They are just to his liking. They may not be wicked men. They may be good enough in their way. But they are too weak to make their people think, too indolent to set the good example of an active Christian life. They just make no impression, exert no influence, and let their people pursue the even tenor of their way. That is all the devil wishes. He will compromise with any good man on those terms. If Christ were to take him around to all the Churches, and permit him to turn out every minister he wished, you would be surprised to find how many churches would retain their pastors.

From all we can learn of Mr. Elder, he was pre-eminently a man who, in an

age of borrowed thought, did his own thinking. When he stood in his pulpit, he spoke out the results of that thinking in the fear of God, without much regard to the predilections of man. The truth is, he was in advance of his age. His brother ministers did not comprehend his views, motives and purposes; and so, fail to sympathize with them. His anxious desire and earnest efforts to secure a more thoroughly trained ministry, were constantly protested against by weaklings who feared that men like themselves could never climb up to the standard. He was constantly hampered by the spirit of a false conservatism so prevalent in his day, and still too prevalent in some quarters. True conservatism is that which conserves and develops the life and energies of the Church by a healthy growth and progress. This false conservatism, fearing lest it should make a mistake, would stand still forever. It is stagnation, death, infidelity to obligation, to duty, and to God. It has let millions of souls drop in perdition through its inaction, and then sent after them the card of its sympathy written all over with its good intentions.

Not only was Mr. Elder one of the ablest men of his day, remarkable for clearness and fore-sight, but he was also most tenacious of his opinion, and honest and out-spoken in the avowal of it. Nor could any man be more inflexibly honest and careful in conforming his conduct and life to his own convictions of right. So far as his influence could accomplish that end, he made all with whom he came in contact do the same. He maintained perfect discipline and order among his people, and his was one of the best regulated congregations in the Presbytery. He was noted for studied accuracy, and always took care to have both justice and the form of law on his side. This feature of his character may be readily illustrated by an incident from the history of Paxton Session which occurred during his pastorate. At Derry March 27th, 1745, Robert Armstrong of Paxton appeared and gave in a supplication containing a charge against the Session of Paxton. Presbytery ordered a copy of said charge to be given to that Session immediately, and that both parties be prepared for trial at the next meeting. April 5th, 1745 at Donegal, Presbytery entered upon the consideration of the libel against Paxton Session. Though the charge had been entered in an irregular manner, Presbytery entertained it. Presbytery considered the matter on the 4th, read what papers were given in, heard the parties implead one another, but did not pass judgment until the 5th. Having met, the parties were called in. Robert Armstrong not appearing, "several persons declared that they heard said Armstrong say last night, he would go home, and attend no longer, for the Presbytery would act partially." Presbytery then read the minutes of Paxton Session relating to the matter, and approved of the conduct of the Session. Said Armstrong was judged to be "a litigious, contentious person, as appears by the minutes of the Session, by the whole of the debate, as also by his conduct in bringing in a paper stuffed with falsehoods and slanderous reflections upon the Session of Paxton. Upon the whole we judge him worthy of censure, and that he continue under suspension from Church privileges till he acknowledges his sinful conduct, and profess amendment." It was further ordered that a copy of this minute be read publicly in the Paxton meeting house.

The minutes of Donegal Presbytery from September 28, 1745, to June 1747, a period of one year, eight months and twenty-one days, have been lost.

The minutes too from October 9th, 1750, to June 5th, 1759, a period of eight years, seven months, and twenty-six days, have been lost.

September 16th, 1760 Presbytery held a "pro se nata" meeting at Paxton to consider a call from Middle Spring to Mr. Carmichael of Brunswick Presbytery.

To resume our sketch of Mr. Elder, we notice that he was one of the most rigidly candid and honest men in his Presbytery. This appears from the following item of history: A certain Wm. Edmiston had been licensed by Presbytery. Mr. Roan, pastor of Derry, protested against the licensure on the ground that the examination was by no means satisfactory, referring as much to the examination on his experimental acquaintance with religion, as that respecting his literary and theological attainments. He evidently entertained some misgivings with reference to Mr. Edmiston's character. Mr. Elder agreed with Mr. Roan and joined him in the protest. Mr. Edmiston was licensed notwithstanding their objections. He was very much incensed against these two men for objecting. They were decidedly able and influential men in the Presbytery and were warm friends. About this time, too, the Old and New Side controversy was effecting a schism in the Church, which broke out with tremendous fury in quite a number of the Presbyteries. The main issue of this controversy was, the manner of testing the fitness of candidates for the ministry and the Lord's table by an examination into religious experience.

In order to avoid injudicious licensures, Messrs. Roan and Elder endeavored to introduce a more thorough examination as a permanent standard. Mr. Edmiston construed this as a personal affront. The majority of the Presbytery opposed these efforts to raise the standard of licensure, and so far sided with Mr. Edmiston. Encouraged by this he now raised the cry of persecution in order to secure the sympathies and co operation of the members of Presbytery.

October 13th 1763 Mr. Edmiston introduced into open Presbytery at Donegal, a charge against Mr. Roan, accusing him of "prevarication and wilful falsehood of a pernicious tendency." Many members of the Presbytery, and Mr. Elder among them, at once looked upon this charge as without serious foundation. With very good reason they interpreted it as simply a partisan thrust at Mr. Roan. This was the signal for the marshaling of arms. And this case proved chiefly the occasion for the members of the Presbytery to range themselves on either side for this long, fierce and bitter controversy of the Old and New Side. Mr. Elder sided warmly with his friend, Mr. Roan. They both adhered to the Old Side. Conceiving Presbytery did not do justice in this case, Revs. John Elder and John Steel June 22nd 1764 in open Presbytery at Derry, declared their intention to cease from active membership in the Judicatory. They presented their declination in writing, setting forth at large their intentions, with their reasons for such a step, and requesting said declination to be entered in the minutes of Presbytery. It is as follows.

"To the Reverend Presbytery of Donegal, now sitting at Mr. Roan's meeting house in Derry, the representation of the subscribers humbly sheweth, that we have to our grief observed, that ever since the new modeling of Presbyteries, nothing but contention and party spirit have prevailed in this Presbytery, to the wounding of the interests of Christ's Church, and the dishonoring of religion,

whereby the hearts of many Christians are saddened and greatly offended. As we apprehend, the above evils are on the growing hands with little or no probability of matters altering for the better. It appears to us that nothing less than forming this Presbytery into two will, in any measure, remedy the above grievances, which decision we are fully resolved to apply for at the next meeting of Synod in concurrence with other brethren of this Presbytery. In the mean time we declare we have no peace in our minds, to continue acting members in this Presbytery, till we receive the advice and judgment of Synod on said affair, wherein we hope we shall find freedom to acquiesce. We therefore request this Presbytery, to enter on their records this our declinature from sitting and acting till we are favored with the Synod's judgment, still reserving to ourselves a liberty to act as members, if it please God to grant us more light and clearness. Subscribed at Derry this 22nd day of June 1764."

This paper was presented by Messrs. Elder and Steel, but signed by four others in addition. Their names are John Beard, Sampson Smith, Joseph Tate, and Robert McMordie.

Though this action of Presbytery more materially affected another, Mr. Roan still, Mr. Elder's nice, discriminating, delicate sense of justice was outraged, and he was the first to project a paper renouncing the jurisdiction of Presbytery. Strange to say, Mr. Roan never signed this paper, but continued his connection with the Presbytery. Of those who signed it, all returned to the Presbytery sooner or later except Mr. Elder. He never returned. He had done no wrong. He had nothing to take back, Presbytery had done wrong, he thought. She refused to revoke her action. So long as that action stood upon her minutes without being disapproved, so long there existed for his remaining separated from Presbytery, the same reason which first induced him to sever his Presbyterial connection. So his sound logic and common sense told him. He could not go back consistently with his own past record and convictions of right. His clear, stern conscience would not allow him to act inconsistently. So he kept aloof; he did right; and his course shamed all his associates who went back. Thus is brought to light that uncompromising honor and integrity so necessary to round out the full orb'd character of the true Christian soldier. He was a grand and noble man.

A little more than three years subsequent to the events we have just been narrating, on October 14th, 1767, Mr. Robert Montgomery presented to Presbytery at Middle Spring, an appeal from a judgment of Paxton session. Presbytery appointed Mr. Strain to write to Mr. Elder, requesting him and his session to attend their next meeting to be held at Derry on the 16th of December following, to inquire into Robert Montgomery's appeal. The 16th of December came; Presbytery met at the appointed place; and there in waiting for them was the following laconic and characteristic reply from Mr. Elder; "Neither I nor any of my session choose to appear."

Mr. Elder as we have seen, left the Presbytery of Donegal, June 22nd, 1764. Some time afterward, it is uncertain how long, he united with the second Presbytery of Philadelphia. Such was his influence among his people that he carried his Church with him. After the termination of Mr. Roan's pastorate, Derry

secured the services of Mr. Elder for a part of his time, and again became united with Paxton as one pastoral charge. Derry too followed him to the second Presbytery of Philadelphia. Mr. Roan, the preceding pastor of Derry, died October 2nd, 1775. It was not until after this time that Derry became again united with Paxton, and secured the pastoral services of Mr. Elder. Mr. Elder continued his connection with the second Presbytery of Philadelphia until the formation of the Presbytery of Carlisle in May 1786. Whatever material there may be for a history of Paxton and Derry during this interval (1764-1786) must be chiefly contained in the minutes of the second Presbytery of Philadelphia. Not having been favored with access to those minutes, I cannot give much of a history of the religious life of these Churches during this period. Rev. Alfred Nevin, in his "Churches of the Valley," p. 264, says: "Paxton and Derry, it would seem, were united to the congregation of Donegal in the year 1768, for in the Presbyterial records of that date, reference is made to an authentic account produced by a commissioner for the congregation of Paxton, Derry and Donegal, from which it appeared they were in arrears to the Rev. John Sloan, their pastor.

Mr. Elder was a pious, conscientious good man, and an able and wise preacher, counsellor, and ruler in the Church. This much we have seen. But he was more. He was a brave man, and a skillful and judicious officer. His pastorate covered a serious and troublous period. It covered the period of the French and Indian war, the border conflict with the Indian, and the ever memorable war of independence—the far famed American Revolution. The provincial Governor of Pennsylvania appointed him Colonel of the provincial militia whose duty it was to defend the border against the Indians. He frequently preached with his trusty rifle well charged, close behind him in the pulpit. A gun might perhaps be seen here and there among the congregation hanging against the wall on pins. Most of the rifles were stacked outside. A solitary sentinel, ever on the alert, looking in every direction through the trees, and listening attentively to hear every rustle of the leaves and every crack of a dry stick, ready to sound the alarm at any moment, walked to and fro upon his beat in front of the stack of arms.

"On one occasion a party of Indians came down to the river to murder the people of this settlement. They formed a camp in the thicket, back of Mr. Elder's mill-dam. They designed falling on the people when at worship in Paxton Church. They were supposed to have come on Monday, and after waiting several days, they came to the conclusion that the congregation would not assemble, and went off. They left the settlement by the way of Indian town gap. On their way off they murdered several persons, and took a prisoner from whom it was afterward ascertained that they had been encamped here several days." On another occasion an Indian

*It would be difficult to conceive how a greater number of errors could be crowded into so small a space. 1. Paxton was never connected with Donegal. Through an inadvertency in transcribing it is so stated in the minutes for 1768, p. 292. These few lines (about five) are all in the whole volume that could have led Mr. Nevin to make such a mistake. Had the minutes been consulted in other places, they would have corrected themselves. Hence, we infer, after consulting this point alone in the whole volume, he presumed to write a history of Paxton covering that period. 2. Either he or his publisher misread the pastor's name. It was not John Sloan, but John Roan. No "Rev. John Sloan" was ever pastor of Paxton. Mr. Roan himself was never pastor of Paxton, but was pastor of Derry at that time. 3. Had Mr. Nevin been at all acquainted with Paxton's history, he would have known that the Rev. John Elder was pastor at Paxton at this very period, had been for thirty years previously, and continued to be for twenty-two years subsequently.

spy watched the congregation at Paxton Church with a view to bringing in a body of Indians upon them. Finding every man armed, he withdrew.

Mr. Elder was Colonel of that gallant and daring band of youths known as the Paxton Rangers, or Paxton Boys.* This body of men was made up chiefly from the townships of Paxton and Donegal, and in part of the young men from the congregations of Paxton, Derry and Hanover. Many of them were members of Mr. Elder's congregation. They ranged the settlements from the Blue mountain to the river, and were at once a protection to the settlement, and a terror to the Indians.

PAXTON BOYS.

This was that noble, generous, and chivalrous band, causelessly, unbecomingly, and thanklessly vilified and slandered by the whole family of cowardly Quakers. They lived on the fat of one of the richest garden spots of the world, slaked their thirst at the fresh, sparkling fountains of this beautiful valley, from Lancaster to Philadelphia, and lay them down at night to refreshing slumbers and sweet repose in conscious security, because between them and all danger, along the extended frontier, stood that living wall of as generous and gallant blood as ever coursed through the veins of freemen—a band which would have graced the "Ironsides" of Cromwell, or the dashing cavaliers of Prince Rupert. And yet we are told, "few, but Quakers, think that the Lancaster Indians suffered anything but their just deserts." † Alas, for the decay of gratitude. They saved the Quaker's life. The Quaker, almost alone, turns round and howls "*murderer*."

I cannot presume to occupy in this history, the space necessary for a satisfactory and exhaustive account of that celebrated event of the colonial history of Pennsylvania, known as the "Paxton Massacre." It is so intimately connected with our history, however, that we cannot pass it by in absolute silence. To do so would be injustice to the noble young men of this congregation who took part in it, and who, by some, have been handed down to posterity as murderers. It would be injustice to their noble pastor, one of the grandest men of any age or clime, their military commander who, from the more conservative standpoint of his reflecting mind and maturer life, exerted himself to the utmost to check the ardent ebullition of their youthful blood, and yet saw nothing indefensible in their conduct.

The first classification of the American Indians is into two great families of tribes, Iroquois and Algonquin. The miserable remnant of the so-called friendly Indians left at Conestoga in 1763 was most probably a mixture of a great number of tribes both of the Iroquois and the Algonquins, and their mongrel offspring. In 1762 occurred the conspiracy of Pontiac, the most profound and comprehensive Indian plot on record. All the whites in America were to be attacked on the same day, and doubtless driven into the Atlantic Ocean. Immediately upon the heels of this followed all the horrors of the Pennsylvania border wars with the Indians. The infernal fury of the savage was all let loose. He burned the provision, house and barn of the settler, and murdered him and his family

*Days' His. Col. Penna, p. 235.

† Princeton review, vol. 8, p. 672.

at the dead hour of night. He crept stealthily upon him and shot him as he plowed in the field or chopped in the forest. As he passed along the road the swift-winged messenger of death sped on its fatal errand from some tree, or bush, or rock. The mother in the kitchen, preparing the meal for the toiling husband and father, the son or daughter at the well, the little two-year-old toddling around the house in play, all alike were the victims of the tomahawk and scalping knife. The helplessness of womanhood, and the innocence of childhood were no protection. The whole frontier appeared a general blaze. Not an individual was left beyond Carlisle. On both sides of the Susquehanna, for five miles, the woods are filled with poor families and their cattle, who makes fires, and live like the savages.* The ingenuity displayed in inventing the most excruciating methods of torture, would have reflected credit upon a master of the Spanish Inquisitorial art.

TREACHERY OF THE CONESTOGAS.

The friendly camp at Conestoga maintained a most suspicious intercourse with the hostiles. Mr. John Harris, father of the founder of Harrisburg, a peaceable and industrious man, who, says Mr. Elder, was the first person to introduce the plow on the Susquehanna, visited these Indians and gave them pacific counsel. Mr. Elder frequently visited the Indians at Conestoga, Pequehan, and Big Island, and was much respected by them. He had frequently represented to the Christian Indians the wrong they were doing to the whites by admitting *stranger* Indians among them: conduct which made them suspected of treachery.† Messrs. Elder, Harris, and others did all that could be done to induce the Governor to remove the Indians from Conestoga, when they saw that the black cloud of Indian treachery was about to burst in a furious and fatal storm, over the devoted heads of the Conestogas themselves. September 13th, 1763, Mr. Elder wrote to Governor Hamilton as follows: "I suggest to you the propriety of an immediate removal of the Indians of Conestoga, and placing a garrison in their room. *In case this is done, I pledge myself for the future security of the frontier.*"‡ Mr. John Harris writes: "The Indians here, I hope your honor will cause to be removed to some place, as I don't like their company. I have this day cut holes in my house, and am determined to hold out to the last extremity."|| The Governor, Robert Hunter Harris says, in reply, that he can give the frontiersmen no aid whatever, but commends their zeal, and urges them to act with caution and spirit."§

It was the prevailing opinion throughout the settlement, that the murdering, marauding Indians were concealed among the Conestogas, and that the Conestogas were their spies. A suspicion so universal led to increased watchfulness, and this to discovery. A scout reported to Matthew Smith of Paxton, one of the "Rangers:" "Tom followed the Indians to the Big Island; from thence they went to

* Princeton review, vol. 8, p. 652.

†Days' His. Col. p. 278.

‡Days' His. Col. p. 278.

||Princ. Rev. vol. 8, p. 654.

§Princ. Rev. vol. 8, p. 654.

Conestoga; as soon as we heard of it, five of us, rode off for the village. I left my horse under their care, and cautiously crawled when I could get a view; I saw Indians armed; they were strangers; they outnumbered us by dozens."*

The border war was raging in all its fury. Here were the Conestogas, beyond a doubt, harboring the hostiles. What was to be done? Must they apply to the Government? This had been done repeatedly. Their petitions had been disregarded, and they had been spurned with contempt from the presence of the Government. Just take care of your own pets; we ask no favors and no help, is the interpretation of Mr. Elder's promise, that if the Indians were removed, he would pledge himself "for the future security of the frontier." Even this was denied them. The Government was Quaker, and saved nothing for the security and prosperity of the Scotch-Irish frontiersmen. It loved the Indians better than the flowers of its own subjects who defended them from the Indians.

The murderers of their friends, their relatives, their brothers and sisters, their gray-haired fathers and mothers, were harbored on the manor of Conestoga; and the Conestogas were the pets of the Government. It was a clear case in which the mother had cast off her child. The Government had cast off her subjects; the subjects had not rebelled. What must they do? Must they follow the example of the Government, and cast off those whom by all means they are bound to defend? The gray-haired father and mother lean upon the strong arm of their brave and manly son for protection. The younger brother, bright fair-haired boy—and the sister, the angel of comfort and order, the bright ornament of the family circle, put in the strong claim of a brother and sister for defence. The young wife, in all the bloom of ripe and beautiful womanhood, who makes his heart the home of every joy, and the family hearthstone a little paradise, how lovingly she clings to him, as with all the tender devotion of a woman's nature, she claims his protection. And all the little wee-things, toddlin' round, terrified and alarmed, how tenaciously they cling to his finger and coat, as each one pours into his ear the plaintive cry, "Father, don't let the Injuns kill us;" and e'en from the cradle comes the sudden startled shriek of alarm for protection. Now imagine, if you can, a man amid these surroundings, coolly reply, "Yes, we are strong enough, with one bold stroke we could demolish our enemies and give permanent peace and security to the settlement—we know well where they are—they are among the Conestogas. But the Conestogas are the friends of the Government; and our first allegiance is to the Government—we must let them alone even though they kill you." No, the logic of that man's heart, and the purest and noblest affections will be: if such criminals are the pets of the Government, the Government must be the pet of the devil; and the sooner we overthrow both, the better for the cause of humanity. Laws are to protect the life and property of subjects. The laws of this Government are a protection to hostile criminals, and a license to murderers and thieves. Fine spun theories about the relation of subjects to Government, their corresponding obligations, and the great duty of loyalty, are all so much sophistical jargon and nonsense here. A man's purest and noblest princi-

*Smith's Narrative in Days' His. Col. p. 279.

ples will not allow him to be bound in a finely woven mesh like this. He will burst through the tangled web of sophistry, and leaving it scattered in a thousand shreds behind him, his heaven-born instincts will tell him his duty in a case like this.

DESTRUCTION OF THE CONESTOGA CAMP.

Is it true that their first allegiance was to such a Government? Or, was it not rather to those wives and children, who, unless this bold stroke was promptly made, would soon be murdered or left widows and orphans? Self preservation by universal consent is the first law of nature. Self preservation here was the destruction of the Conestogas. So thought the Rangers; and they were correct. Far from committing murder, none of them thought their conduct was of questionable propriety. Not malice, not revenge, not even a desire to rid themselves of the Indians simply; but, duty, as already shown, impelled them to do as they did. No alternative was left. They could only do as they did. This is perfectly clear to any unprejudiced mind. And this is the strong point all their leaders made in their defense. "What else could we do?" they ask. "We were compelled to do as we did." Captain Lazarus Stewart thrusts into the teeth of Governor Penn the charge, that after the representation of the true condition of affairs given by Messrs. Elder, Harris, Shippen and others, the Governor had so plainly seen the absolute necessity for removing the Indians, that he promised to do so. Yet he never did it. It was plainly a conspiracy of the Government against the noblest colony of its settlers. It protected the murderers of the settlers in the very heart of the settlement, and yet forbade the settlers to chastise them. What could they expect from such a Government? What was left but an appeal to arms, and the God of justice and of battles? The Rangers, resting their cause upon these facts, repudiated with righteous scorn the charge of murderers; and with the utmost confidence based upon them their appeal to God, to history, and to posterity. Shall history disappoint the confidence of these noble men who have grounded their appeal upon so impregnable a foundation? Nothing was left but for them to arm themselves, mount their horses, and make an end of the Conestogas. This was done by a body of the Rangers variously estimated at from twenty to fifty, on the memorable night of December 14th, 1763. The preparatory scenes of that night are thus described by one of the historians: "Rifles were loaded, horses were in readiness. They mounted; they called on their pastor to lead them. He was in the 57th year of his age. Had you seen him then you would have beheld a superior being. He had mounted, not to lead them on to destruction of Conestoga, but to deter them from the attempt; he implored them to return, he urged them to reflect; 'pause, pause, before you proceed.' It was in vain; 'the blood of the murdered cries aloud for vengeance; we have waited long enough on Government; the murderers are within our reach, and they must not escape.' Mr. Elder reminded them that the guilty and the innocent could not be distinguished." Innocent! can they be called innocent who foster murderers? Mr. Elder rode up in front, and said, as your pastor, I command you to relinquish your design,' 'give way then' said Smith, 'or your horse dies,' presenting his rifle; to save his horse, to which he was mach attached, Mr. Elder drew him

aside, and the Rangers were off on their fatal errand."* From a letter dated Paxtang, December 16th, 1763, written to Governor Penn, it would appear that the above narrative of Day is incorrect; and that Mr. Elder did not meet the Rangers in person but hurried after them an express with a *written message*, giving his protest against their course. Quite a number of the Indians were absent, doubtless on marauding expeditions when the Rangers attacked their camp.† It was soon afterwards ascertained that a number of the Conestogas had been placed for protection in the workhouse in Lancaster. Several of these were noted leaders of marauding parties; and one had murdered "the parent" of one of the Rangers. December 17th, 1763, a body of Rangers led by Captain Lazarus Stewart hastened to Lancaster and completed the destruction of the Conestogas. Their intention was to make prisoners of these Indians, and take the principal Indian outlaw to Carlisle jail for safe keeping and for trial. But the Indians, having made an effort to escape, were put to death to a man. No children were killed by the Rangers. No acts of savage butchery were committed.

Mr. Elder, it seems, protested against this second raid also. "A few of us met to deliberate; Stewart proposed to go to Lancaster, storm their castle, and carry off the assassin. It was agreed to, the whole plan was arranged. Our clergyman did not approve of our proceeding further. He thought everything was accomplished by the destruction of Conestogne, and advised us to try what we could do with the Governor and council. I with the rest was opposed to the measure proposed by our good pastor. It was painful for us to act in opposition to his will." The Rangers were divided into several companies. Their captains were, Lazarus Stewart, Matthew Smith and Asher Clayton. Matthew Smith was a member of Paxton Church. It is most probable that Capt. Lazarus Stewart was either the son or nephew of Lazarus Stewart who was an Elder in the congregation of Manada or Hanover, and one of the founders of the Hanover Church. It is possible, he was the same person.

When the news of the destruction of Conestoga reached Philadelphia, Governor Penn issued a proclamation respecting it. Though stilted and pretentious in style, it made about as much of an impression upon the province as a snow-flake upon the bosom of the sea. All but Quakers sympathized with the Rangers.

In the midst of the excitement occasioned by this event, Mr. Elder wrote to Governor Penn January 27th, 1764:

"The storm which had been so long gathering, has at length exploded. Had Government removed the Indians from Conestago, which had frequently been urged, without success, this painful catastrophe might have been avoided. What could I do with men heated to madness? All that I could do, was done; I expostulated; but life and reason were set at defiance. And yet the men in private life virtuous and respectable; not cruel, but mild, and merciful.

"The time will come when each palliating circumstance will be calmly weighed. This deed magnified into the blackest of crimes, shall be considered as one of

*Days' His. Col. p. 278.

†The pitiful fling of the crafty Franklin concerning this attack, must be regarded as an inaccurate and untrue representation, born of the artful trickery of one who was at that time practicing some of the lowest arts of the politician's craft.

those youthful ebullitions of wrath caused by momentary excitement, to which human infirmity is subjected."

The provincial authorities issued two proclamations, offering rewards for the actors in this event. As all but Quakers sympathized with the Rangers, and heartily approved of their action, it was impossible to arrest them. So, all the voluminous thunder of these proclamations wasted itself inside the limits of the Quaker settlements. As usual the blood-thirsty proved the cowardly. The Quaker who thirsted for the blood of the Ranger, would have been the last man to attempt to arrest him. Though a reward of £200 was offered for the ring-leaders, none were ever arrested but Lazarus Stewart, and he escaped.

THE PHILADELPHIA RAID.

In 1764 the Paxton Boys made a demonstration as far as Germantown, in the neighborhood of Philadelphia. The design of this movement, according to the legion of Quaker pamphleteers of the day, was to murder all the Indians protected by the Government in and around Philadelphia, and to kill all the Quakers. This is all false, as a moment's consideration will show.

First. Unlike the Quakers, the Paxton Boys harbored no vengeance. They had destroyed the camp that had endangered their settlement. As they had anticipated, that event brought permanent peace to the settlement, clearly showing that if the Government had removed the Indians, as they had been requested so frequently to do, there would have been no difficulty on the border, and no murders in the Paxton settlement. So far their purpose was accomplished. All they had asked respecting the treacherous Conestogas was their removal. Why then would they go out of their way to kill Indians who could do them no harm. And as for the abusive and cowardly Quakers, they did not consider them worth such a waste of ammunition.

Secondly. To have rushed into the city of Philadelphia for the accomplishment of such large designs with the mere handful of men in Germantown, would have been such rashness as the Paxton Boys were not guilty of. With all their bold and noble daring, they were not fool-hardy. Their plans were laid with such consummate skill, as always to secure successful results. And they accomplished their end here, as we shall presently see.

Thirdly. Had such been their design, with the strong sympathy of the entire frontier, they could have raised several thousand men just as easily as the two hundred then at Germantown. The intense alarm of the Quakers, and the knowledge that they richly deserved the full vengeance of the Paxton Boys, led them to attribute to the Rangers such fell designs.

The true design of the Rangers was far more practical. Proclamations had been issued against them, and rewards offered for them. But for this the timid Quakers would have been saved all their fright. The Rangers made this demonstration. They marched a small body of troops, variously estimated at from five hundred to fifteen hundred, across the province, from the border almost to the very limits of Philadelphia. This taught the government two lessons. First, that the Rangers would meet no opposition from the great body of the settlers. Secondly, that they would everywhere meet the most hearty sympathy and approval; and be

hailed as the valiant defenders of the border, who had blessed the settlements with a new era of peace. This brought the government to terms. Yesterday, they intended to execute all the leaders. To-day, they treat with one of those leaders, Captain Matthew Smith, at Germantown. The Quakers still vehemently protest, and insist "that the soldiers ought to exterminate such infamous wretches." The government, however, learned a lesson of prudence from this demonstration. Many of the very men who had recently clamored for the blood of the Rangers, with Dr. Franklin at their head, in their negotiations with Captain Smith, consent that this "ring-leader of the Rangers, along with James Gibson, be received into the city as commissioners for the borderers, and be allowed a respectful hearing upon the whole subject of border grievances. The Rangers have now completely accomplished their end. After the termination of these negotiations, they enter the city, go to the barracks and see the Indians, ride around and view the city, take a good laugh over the monstrous scare they have given the Philadelphians; and then leaving Smith and Gibson to transact all further business, they leisurely begin their homeward march. And now the ring-leader, upon whose head a reward had been set, walks the streets of the Quaker city in broad day light, and no man dare lay hands on him. Nay more, he even makes bold to tell the Government plainly of its injustice, and of the wrongs which were heaped upon the settlers, and Government hangs its head in shame and listens to the lecture. What more could the Rangers desire than this? Has not their end been accomplished?

It is impossible adequately to describe the intense excitement and consternation in Philadelphia while the Rangers were in the vicinity. Here is but one among many instances of the terror of the people. February 5th, 1764, early in the morning an alarm was given. The Paxton Boys were coming down Second street. Multitudes rushed to the barracks. Even Quakers bewildered by the intense alarm, had exchanged their creed for old rusty fire-locks. The command to the artillery to open their rude, fiery and destructive throats upon the enemy, was already quivering on the lips of the cool and gallant Captain Loxley. Just in time to save their valuable lives, the enemy was discovered to be a company of mounted butchers from Germantown, already armed, and coming in hot haste to help defend the mighty Quaker city, against that formidable army of a corporal's guard of cavalry, without a single bombshell or a siege gun, and some miles distant from the city.

It is difficult to perceive how any one, in the face of the plain facts in the case, can doubt that the Rangers were justifiable in the destruction of the camp at Conestoga. Some of these men stood in the very forefront of the community. They were highly intelligent and virtuous men of commanding influence, and consistent Christian men withal. They performed well the duties of their position in the family, in society, and in the Church. They were good citizens and loyal subjects.

They did not consider themselves a *cruel band of banditti*. They repudiated with scorn the charge of being murderers; and, with intelligence, calmness and reason, made a most confident appeal to God and to history, to vindicate their purity and integrity in both heart and life. Smith and Stewart could both speak

and write with no mean ability. Stewart's declaration * in his defense reminds one forcibly of the speech of the celebrated Robert Emmett, a young Irish barrister, made in his own defence. It is both vigorous and eloquent. It reflects the purity of the man's heart; and it is a thorough vindication of his inflexible integrity and regard for justice, and his consummate bravery as well. It is replete with moral as well as physical courage.

Neither did the great body of the settlers, either Scotch-Irish or German, regard them as *lawless banditti*. They sympathized with the Rangers, approved their course, and fully justified it. They looked upon them as the brave defenders who had delivered the settlements from the Indians, doubly treacherous and revengeful during these border wars, because of their intense exasperation and disappointment, over the defeat of the conspiracy of Pontiac.

From Mr. Elder's position, it would perhaps have been inexpedient for him to have led the Rangers on their fatal errand that memorable December night; especially as it was rendered wholly unnecessary by the thorough competency of his accomplished captains, Smith and Stewart. But why he felt constrained to dissuade them from the execution of their design is difficult to see, except that his personal attachment to themselves and their families was so great, that he did not like to see them embark in an adventure which so endangered their lives. In so far as the grand principles of right, duty, and justice are concerned it is impossible to see why he could not lead them that night with as clear a conscience, and as clear a conviction that he was doing his duty, as ever a commander carried with him, when he led his troops to battle and to victory. Nobly doing right and duty as were these Rangers, they deserved far better than the half-way vindication they received even at the hands of their good pastor.

They were guilty of no dire crime. Nor can they any more justly be charged with youthful indiscretion, or an unfortunate ebullition of youthful wrath or blood, "caused by temporary excitement." The ample proof of this is that there is not the slightest evidence, nor the slightest occasion to think, that a single one of these men ever afterwards expressed regret for the bloody, but necessary, work of that night. They gloried in it as a duty they owed their gray-haired fathers and mothers, their wives and children, and their fair sisters; as the necessary and decisive stroke which broke the power of their enemy, and proved the harbinger of peace to the distracted settlement. They would have done it again. From the 14th to the 27th of December none faltered. Some of the same men who made an ash-heap of Conestoga on the night of the 14th were in Lancaster on the 27th. Nor did they afterwards regret it. Smith in his narrative does not regret it. In his bold appearance in the presence of the Government and the Quakers in Philadelphia he does not regret it. So far from it, he fearlessly thrusts the whole blame on the Quaker who cared nothing for the life of his noble brother on the frontier, and the partial, unfaithful, and inactive Government which failed to remove the treacherous Indians even after repeated requests, and serious warnings of the dangers impending over them. Stewart in his memorable declaration, establishes the justice of his cause, and never once regrets his course. Though a disagreeable and

*Days' His. Col. p. 280.

severe task, it was a duty, and their consciences were clear. It will not do to answer these were hard-hearted and cruel men who cared nothing for right and duty. We have already learned better.

These heroes needed no extenuating, palliating, white-washing, half-way defences, making scape-goats of human infirmities; no, not even from their venerable pastor. Not needing them, they were grateful to no one for them. On the other hand, with all their heart, they repudiated them with scorn and disdain. They preferred to stand, as they did stand, on the dignity of their manhood, the inflexible integrity of their character, and the spotless justice of their cause. The man whose conscience is so tender that he cannot fully justify their course, had better let their defence alone. They would neither be satisfied with it, nor thankful for it.

Their course is not often or lightly to be imitated it is true. Its justification is the circumstances of that period marked by the border wars. A distracting and troublous time, to which was added oft-repeated and the grossest provocations on the part of their own Government, affording the strongest of reasons, made it a duty for the Rangers to do what it does not often become the duty of men to do. Had they failed to discharge this duty, they would have proven recreant to the higher trusts God had committed to their care, the lives and fortunes of their families and relatives, which imposed upon them obligations a thousand fold stronger than any which bound them to a traitorous and merciless Quaker Government. If it was wrong for the Rangers to exterminate the Conestogas, it would be wrong for a man to kill the midnight assassin or robber, who had stealthily made his way through locks and bolts, and bars to his bed-side. It may be replied, the Indians had not yet broken into the houses of the settlers. No, but they are known murderers and robbers. They murder and steal in some house nearly every night. The authorities will neither arrest nor remove them; so, each settler felt that the murder of himself and family was only a question of time. It may be a week hence. It may be to-night. Either he, with his wife and children, must die; or, the Indians must die, which it would be depended on who got the first fire. With such a feeling night after night, how could the Ranger lay him down to rest in peace, or feel that he had discharged his duty to that wife and those little ones, till he has first mounted his horse, galloped to Conestoga, and shot his Indian. He might be so generous that rather than attack the Indians, he would abide his time and become a victim to Indian treachery and cruelty. But he had no right to sacrifice the lives of his family. To do so would argue a love for the Indian exceeding that for wife and children. To do so would prove him as merciless and cruel as the Quaker. Only one whose life, or whose range of study and observation at least, has extended over the most troublous periods of human life and history, knows how to appreciate a state of society and affairs, in which a system of regulation may become absolutely necessary, and righteous before God and man. Such an one knows that a desperate case requires a desperate remedy. If still the mental and moral organism is so delicate and sensitive that it must and will scent blood, and from certain quarters there comes nothing but the perpetual howl of murder! murder! murder! then by all means, let the foul stigma of murder attach where it belongs, and dash the murderous blood of the treacherous Indian

thick and fast all over the Quaker Government. But that a single drop of it shall be laid to the charge of these noble Rangers, misrepresented, maligned, and persecuted all through history, in the name of justice I protest. They confidently demanded and expected of history a complete and thorough vindication. Until this righteous demand is complied with, history will never render an impartial verdict in this case, nor do justice to the memory of that noble band who, with so little thought of self, braved the most imminent danger in the discharge of stern duty. History owes them no less; and certainly, the payment of the debt has already been long enough delayed. It is to be regretted that the name of a single hero of that company has been lost. Their names should be inscribed high up upon the immortal roll of honor of Pennsylvania's best and noblest sons.

CARLISLE PRESBYTERY.

In the life and history of the Church proper we left Mr. Elder in the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, when he was just about to make his next transition.

In May 1786, the Old Presbytery of Donegal was re-formed. Out of part of it were formed the Presbyteries of Baltimore and Carlisle. On the 17th of October following, the Presbytery of Carlisle met for the first time at Lower Marsh Creek. At this meeting Mr. Elder came into the Presbytery from the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, bringing with him his congregations of Paxton and Derry. His history and that of the two Churches are henceforth identified with that of Carlisle Presbytery.

PAXTON CHURCH.

Thursday, April 12th, 1787, during the sessions of the Presbytery at Carlisle, a representation and petition of a number of the inhabitants of Harrisburg and others in the township of Paxton, was laid before Presbytery and read. The said representation sets forth that these people desire to be considered as a Presbyterian Congregation, and to have supplies appointed them by the Presbytery; and that in order to promote peace and harmony between them and the Paxton congregation, some proposals had been made to, and considered, though not accepted by that congregation, a copy of which was also laid before the Presbytery. Mr. Elder, also gave a representation of the state of the case as concerning these people and Paxton congregation. The Presbytery, upon considering the case, agreed to propose the following articles to the consideration and acceptance of those people, which may have a tendency to preserve peace and union in that part of the Church:

1. That Harrisburgh shall be considered as the seat of a Presbyterian Church, and part of the charge of the Rev. John Elder, in which he is to preach one third of his time.
2. That Mr. Elder's salary, promised by the congregation of Paxton, shall be continued and paid by the congregation in common, who shall adhere to these two places of worship, viz: Paxton and Harrisburgh.
3. That the congregation thus united may apply for and obtain supplies as assistant to the labors of Mr. Elder, to be paid by the congregation in common.

4. That when the congregation may judge it proper, they shall have a right to choose and call a minister as a colleague with Mr. Elder, to officiate in rotation with him.

"Dr. Davidson and Mr. Waugh are appointed to attend at the Church in Lower Paxton on the last Tuesday in May next, to moderate and assist in the above matter."

June 19th, 1787, Dr. Davidson and Mr. Waugh reported to Presbytery at Big Spring that their appointment at Paxton had been fulfilled, and that the following articles had been agreed to by Mr. Elder, his congregation, at Harrisburg :

1. That the congregation shall have two stated places of public worship, the one where the Rev. Mr. Elder now officiates, the other in Harrisburg.

2. That the Rev. John Elder shall continue to have and receive during his life or incumbency, all the salary or stipends that he now enjoys, to be paid by his present subscribers, as he and they may agree, and continue his labors in Derry as usual.

3. That for the present the congregation may apply to the Presbytery for supplies, which when obtained, the expenses shall be defrayed by those who do not now belong to Mr. Elder's congregation, and such as may think proper to join with them ; and should such supplies be appointed when Mr. Elder is to be in Paxton, then he and the supply shall preach in rotation, the one in the country, and the other in town. But should Mr. Elder be in Derry, then the supplies shall officiate in town.

4. That the congregation when able, or they think proper, may invite and settle any regular Presbyterian Minister they or a majority of them may choose and can obtain, as a co-Pastor with Mr. Elder, who shall officiate as to preaching in the manner specified in the 3d proposal.

Mr. Elder continued a member of Carlisle Presbytery until his death ; but was seldom present at its meetings, in consequence of the constantly increasing infirmities of advancing years. From this time until he resigned his charge in 1791, Presbytery frequently appointed supplies to assist him in his large and important field.

On the 13th of April 1791, at Mr. Elder's request, by a letter forwarded to Presbytery at Middle Spring, that body dissolved his pastoral relation with Paxton and Derry. Thus was closed a useful and eventful pastorate, covering a period of over fifty-two years. * He died July 17th, 1792, only fifteen months after he resigned his charge at the advanced age of eighty-six years. He was seventy years of age when the Revolutionary War began. Dear, good, great, brave, grand old man, scarcely had he laid aside his armor, and dropped the mantle of

* Mr. Elder's tombstone says, he officiated at Paxton 56 years. Other sources say, 60 years. These are incorrect. He came into the Presbytery of Donegal as a licentiate from the Presbytery of New Castle, October 5th, 1737. He died July 17th, 1792. So he only lived 54 years, 8 months and 12 days after coming into Donegal Presbytery. But he was not Pastor of Paxton the whole of this time. He was ordained and installed Pastor of Paxton December 22d, 1738. The pastoral relation was dissolved April 13th, 1791. His pastorate covered 52 years, 3 months and 21 days. He preached as a supply at Paxton some months before he became Pastor.

his ever memorable pastorate, when, full of years, and full of labors, he was numbered with his fathers; and he was not, for God took him; in an age of vacillation and compromise like the present, would that the watch-towers of Zion were manned by many such noble, inflexible, uncompromising, bold soldiers of the cross, as the Rev. John Elder.

April 11th, 1792, at Chambersburg, Harrisburg, Paxton and Derry presented a supplication to Presbytery "requesting liberty to apply to the Presbytery of Philadelphia for a further hearing of Mr. Cathcart, and for a further hearing of Mr. Greer, and for supplies, and for Mr. Greer in particular."

MR. SNOWDEN'S PASTORATE.

On Wednesday, October 3d, 1792, the United Congregations of Derry, Paxton, and Harrisburg presented a supplication to Presbytery at Lower Marsh Creek for supplies, for Mr. Greer particularly. They also asked permission to apply to the Presbytery of Philadelphia for the labors of Mr. Nathaniel R. Snowden. This request was granted.

April 10th, 1793, Mr. Snowden was received into Presbytery at Carlisle as a probationer from the Presbytery of Philadelphia. A call was presented to Mr. Snowden through Presbytery from the congregations of Harrisburg, Paxton and Derry, each congregation engaging to pay him annually the sum of £50; and Mr. Snowden declared his acceptance of it. October 1st, 1793 Presbytery met at Paxton. On the following day Mr. Snowden was ordained, and installed Pastor of the United congregations of Paxton, Derry, and Harrisburg. Mr. M'Pherrin preached the sermon, and Dr. King presided and delivered the charge.

October 7th, 1795, at Lower Marsh Creek, Mr. Snowden applied to Presbytery for liberty to resign his pastoral charge of the congregation of Derry. A commissioner appeared from said congregation, and declared their consent that Mr. Snowden's request should be granted; but Paxton congregation, another part of Mr. Snowden's charge, requested by letter that nothing decisive should be done in the matter at present, but that a committee be appointed to inquire into the circumstances of the case. Presbytery, after deliberating on the matter, appointed Dr. Davidson and Messrs. Waugh and Cathcart a committee to meet at Paxton Church on Tuesday the 3d of November next, at 11 A. M. to hear all the parties concerned, and to issue the whole business as circumstances may appear; and also to appoint supplies in case Mr. Snowden should be released from any part of his charge. The parties concerned are ordered to meet the committee by commissioners at said time and place. The Clerk was directed to furnish the parties with a copy of the above minute.

November 3d, 1795, this committee met at Paxton agreeably to the order of Presbytery. Dr. Davidson was called to the Chair, and Mr. Cathcart was appointed Clerk. All the papers relative to the business were laid before the committee; and commissioners from each congregation were heard at considerable length. The committee then resolved that Mr. Snowden's labors at Derry be discontinued, and said congregation be released from their obligation of paying him salary from the present time; that he continue to officiate at Paxton as formerly, and the rest

of his time at Harrisburg until the next meeting of Presbytery; at which time the congregations of Harrisburg and Paxton are desired to signify to Presbytery their sentiments with regard to their present union in order that the business may be finally issued. The committee reported their action to Presbytery at Big Spring.

April 12th, 1796, on the following day the commissioner from Derry arrived. Presbytery resumed the consideration of Mr. Snowden's connection with Derry, read addresses from the congregations of Paxton and Harrisburg, and heard their commissioners. From the representations made upon this subject it appeared:

1. That both Mr. Snowden and the Derry people still desire the relation between them to be dissolved agreeably to their former request.

2. That the Paxton people, by a considerable majority, have declared their determination to hold a connexion with Derry, and separate from Harrisburg; and petition to have the pastoral relation between Mr. Snowden and themselves dissolved.

3. That the Harrisburg congregation declare their willingness to continue their relation with Mr. Snowden, in connection with Paxton, or with both Paxton and Derry or by themselves; and that they will put forth their best efforts for his comfortable support. To this Mr. Snowden fully consented except with regard to Derry.

"Upon serious consideration Presbytery judged that the pastoral relation between Mr. Snowden and the congregations of Paxton and Derry should be dissolved—and it is hereby dissolved;" and he is, henceforth, the pastor of Harrisburg only. This pastorate lasted only about two years and six months. Harrisburg is a daughter of Paxton, had been a preaching point during Mr. Elder's pastorate, but now for the first time became a distinct and separate charge and attained her full majority, (April 13th, 1796), and Mr. Snowden was her first pastor.

From this time the pulpits of Paxton and Derry were filled with a commendable degree of constancy and regularity by supplies appointed by Presbytery. Presbytery was now generally well furnished with a goodly number of licentiates seeking permanent charges, who were well suited for this work. So there was no necessity for any congregation remaining long vacant. Out of the number of licentiates sent to supply the vacant Churches, these Churches very generally soon found a pastor.

MR. WILLIAMS' PASTORATE.

October 2d, 1798, at Upper West Conococheague, (Mercersburg), a call from each of the congregations of Paxton and Derry to Mr. Joshua Williams was presented and read to Presbytery. Derry was to have two-thirds of his time, and to pay him annually £120; Paxton, one third, and to pay annually £60. Mr. Williams took these calls under consideration.

April 10th, 1799, at Carlisle, Mr. Williams signified to the Presbytery his acceptance of the calls from Paxton and Derry.

October 1st, 1799, Presbytery met at Derry, and heard and sustained Mr.

Williams' popular sermon from 1 Peter 2: 2. "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word." On the following day he was ordained, and installed Pastor of Paxton and Derry. Mr. Cathcart preached the sermon from 1 Cor. 4: 2. "Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." Mr. Waugh presided and gave a charge.

June 30th, 1801, a *pro-re-nata* meeting of Presbytery was held in Carlisle. The meeting was called in the interest of Rev. Joshua Williams, to take into consideration some matters of uneasiness that has arisen in one of his congregations, which he considered sufficient ground for the dissolution of his pastoral relation. Presbytery proceeded at once to hear Mr. Williams at full length on the grounds of his uneasiness, and the reason for his application for a dissolution of the pastoral relation. Robert Robeson and Robert Moody, commissioners from Derry, were also called upon to declare whether the congregation, having had due notice of his design, acquiesced in Mr. Williams' request. They replied "that they had nothing to object, as Mr. Williams appeared to be so unhappy in his present connection, that he was not likely to be any longer useful or comfortable."

Paxton had no commissioner present. But Mr. Waugh informed the Presbytery, that he had cited that congregation to attend at this meeting; and that he was authorized by them to declare their acquiescence in whatever may be done with respect to the other part of Mr. Williams' charge. Presbytery judged there were sufficient reasons for this request, and accordingly dissolved the existing relation with both congregations. This pastorate lasted only one year and eight months.

October 6th, 1802, before Presbytery at Carlisle, Rev. Joshua Williams and commissioners from Paxton and Derry were heard fully on some arrears of salary which he contended he was justly entitled to, and which the congregations considered themselves justifiable in with-holding. Presbytery judged the pleas of the commissioners unsatisfactory, and that the salary should be paid up, agreeably to the original stipulation, until the time that the pastoral relation of Mr. Williams with that people was dissolved.

October 5th, 1803, at Middle Spring, Mr. Williams represented to Presbytery that Paxton and Derry had not yet paid their salary arrears. The Moderator was appointed to write to them stating, "that if these arrearages are not discharged before the next meeting of Presbytery," Presbytery "will be under the disagreeable necessity of with-holding from them that attention and regard which they pay to the Churches under their care." After the pastorate of Mr. Williams, Paxton and Derry were vacant nearly six years. During this long interval, they were dependent on Presbytery for supplies.

September 24th, 1805, at Carlisle, Presbytery granted permission to Paxton and Derry to prosecute a call for Mr. Hutchinson, then a licentiate under the care of Huntingdon Presbytery. Whether this call was ever presented, or Mr. Hutchinson declined it is impossible to tell. No further mention is made of it; and representatives of the congregations appeared at Presbytery the next Fall with a call for another man. The next day, September 25th, 1805, Presbytery having received assurances from some of the leading members of Paxton that the

salary arrears due Mr. Williams from them would shortly be paid up, consented to grant them supplies for the ensuing Winter.

September 23d, 1806, before Presbytery at Carlisle a call was presented from Derry to Mr. James R. Sharron promising the sum of £120 per annum for two-thirds of his time. A call from Paxton was also presented to Mr. Sharron at the same time in connection with Derry promising £60 per annum for one-third of his time. Mr. Sharron took them into consideration. On the following day, September 24th, 1809, Mr. Sharron declared his acceptance of these calls.

April 14th, 1807, Presbytery met at Lower Marsh Creek and was opened by Mr. Sharron with his popular sermon for ordination from Galatians 5: 6. "For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love." The sermon was sustained. After a satisfactory examination, Mr. Sharron was ordained. Mr. P. Davidson preached a sermon from 2 Cor. 2: 15. "For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish." Mr. Denny presided and gave the charge. On Friday, May 29th, 1807, Mr. Sharron was installed by a committee of Presbytery, consisting of Messrs. Snodgrass, Herron and Brady. Mr. Brady preached the sermon, and Mr. Herron presided.

MR. SHARRON'S PASTORATE.

During the period from 1808-9, considerable repairing was done to the "Meeting House," and the "Retiring House," at an expense of over £109. The "Retiring House" was a small building used for meetings of Session, and as a study by the pastor during the interval between the morning and the afternoon service. In 1812, a new roof was put on the wall around the grave-yard. Among the names of the subscribers to these different objects are: Rutherford, Elder, Gray, Walker, M'Clure, Cowden, Gilchrist, Foster, Sherrer, Wilson, Chamberlain, Crouch, Espy, Fulton, Cochran, Stephens, Wiggans, Calhoun, Simpson, Whitley, Carson, Ritchey, Ross, Burd, Larned, Awl, Allison, Hatton, Patton, Stewart, Hayes, and others. Many of these names are still familiar in the congregation. Many more are familiar to those who have often read the inscriptions upon the tomb-stones which mark the last resting place of the sacred dust that is treasured up in the old Paxton grave-yard.

Mr. Sharron's pastorate continued until his death, which occurred April 15th, 1843. This pastorate covered nearly thirty-six years, and was the longest in Paxton's history except Mr. Elder's. It was one so marked by quietude and peace as to be very unfruitful of history. There seems to have been no material disturbance in his charge during this entire period. Mr. Sharron was a quiet, unobtrusive man, beloved and trusted by his brethren. He received his share of the favors of Presbytery without display, and bore his share of the burdens without complaint. His character and disposition so perfectly combined the two important traits of justice and clemency, that he was frequently selected by Presbytery to perform the delicate task of reconciling serious differences springing up in congregations, either between different portions of the congregations themselves or between the congregations and the Presbytery. In such cases, the course he recommended was generally pursued, with but little deviation.

October 4th, 1843, at McConnellsburg Presbytery received a letter from the congregation of Paxton, requesting leave to obtain the services of the Rev. John M. Boggs, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Donegal, for the ensuing six months. This request was granted.

April 9th, 1844, at Shippensburg, a call from the congregations of Paxton and Derry for Mr. Boggs was presented to Presbytery. It was found in order, and was ordered to be put on file until the way be opened for putting it into the hands of Mr. Boggs.

October 1st, 1844, Presbytery met at Paxton. Mr. Boggs presented a dismission from the Presbytery of Donegal, and was received as a licentiate under the care of Presbytery. The call from Paxton and Derry was put into his hands. He signified his acceptance and requested that his ordination be postponed to the next stated meeting of Presbytery, in order to allow him with the consent of the congregations, the opportunity to attend Princeton Theological Seminary during the Winter. This request was granted.

MR. BOGGS' PASTORATE.

April 9th, 1845, at Newville, Presbytery ordained Mr. Boggs. Mr. Watson preached the sermon. Mr. Moody presided and propounded the constitutional questions; Mr. M'Ginley gave the charge to the candidate. Messrs. Morris and Murray were appointed a committee to install Mr. Boggs at discretion.

October 6th, 1847, this pastoral relation was dissolved. This brief and uneventful pastorate presents nothing worthy of special notice.

MR. MITCHELL'S PASTORATE.

September 28th 1849, Presbytery met at Upper church, Perry county. "A call was presented to the Presbytery on the part of the United Congregations of Derry and Paxton, asking for the pastoral services of Andrew D. Mitchell, the congregation of Derry promising him as a compensation the sum of two hundred dollars, and the congregation of Paxton the sum of three hundred dollars in yearly payments." Mr. Mitchell accepted this call. April 9th, 1850, he delivered before Presbytery at Paxton his trial sermon for ordination from Rom. 8:1. "There is therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." On the following day, (April 10th), Mr. Mitchell was ordained. "Dr. Moody preached a sermon from 1 Cor. 2:1-3. "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." Rev. George D. Porter presided, proposed the constitutional questions, made the ordaining prayer, and gave the right hand of fellowship. Rev. Robert Johnston delivered the charge to the pastor; and Rev. O. O. McClean gave the charge to the people. This pastoral relation was dissolved February 12th, 1874.

PRESENT PASTORATE.

The call to the present pastorate was made out November 24th, 1874. It was presented before Presbytery at Duncannon and accepted April 13th, 1875. The installation took place on Thursday, April 29th, 1875. Rev. Daniel Pacific preached a sermon from Philip 3:13. "But this one thing I do." Rev. T. H. Robinson, D. D., presided, proposed the constitutional questions, and delivered both the charges.

It is well known that for a number of years this hoary sentinel of truth has been undergoing great depletion by emigration. It is the same melancholy and fatal process which has bled to death her neighboring sisters of Hanover and Derry. Her sons and daughters, in a continuous stream, have been going far hence. Their places are supplied by good people, but of a different name. Their houses and lands are occupied, but alas, their places in the dear old church are not. And their vacant seats remain the sad memorials of lost treasures—lost to us for a season—but not for an instant lost to God, or to His church; for the limits of that church exceed those of old "Paxtang Meeting-house" And many a gem of Paxton Presbyterianism has taken root, and grown up with fresh beauty, vigor and power, over our western plains and in our western cities.

Such is a brief sketch of the history of old Paxton. She has numbered honored and influential men among her pastors. The difficulties incident to the age in which some of them lived were great. Some of the ablest and leading spirits of that early day were kept in check, and the wheels of progress well nigh fast locked through a lack of intelligent sympathy and co-operation. Such things are necessarily incidental to the development of a new field. Had all our fathers been as a few we have named we cannot estimate what the rapidity of the Church's progress might have been. In the face of the opposition with which they had to contend, it is a marvel of diligent perseverance and faithful endurance, that they accomplished so much.

In the heavy mists of age the bad and the obscure are lost. It is only the strong, bright light that breaks through that mist, and reaches down to us. Hence, so many superficial observers can see only good in the days of old, and only evil, in the present. I have not suffered my vision to be obscured by the fascinations, charms and mists of the olden time. I have tried to tell the simple truth. I have commended the virtues of our fathers. I have not hesitated to let in the clear day light of truth upon their faults. I am not of the number of those who think everything good died with the days of old, and that the present age is doomed for the dogs and the devil. On the contrary I maintain that in spite of all that is amiss in it, this is the grandest age that either world or Church has ever known; and I expect the next to be grander still. I believe God has a purpose rolling down through the centuries, silently but progressively, and that it will continue to roll on, until it has attained to its full dimensions, and accomplished its end. In my humble opinion, the history of American Presbyterianism is but fairly begun. It has all these years been only climbing up, and has but just reached the platform, from which it must take a new survey of wider range, and over more extended plains, and eagerly push on to the rapid, succes-

sive and successful accomplishment of grander deeds. I can join most heartily in that universal chorus which swells throughout our land, and thank God our fathers were as good, noble and great as they were, if you will only allow me to add, I would wish they had been better still. I believe in a past perfection no more than in a present one. Sanctification was then, as it is now, a progressive work.

What is left for us is perpetually to invoke the choicest blessings of high heaven, that their sons may be better, greater, noble men than our fathers were, and better know, love and serve our fathers' God. Then, largely through the influence of American Presbyterianism, and especially the sanctity with which she guards the American Sabbath, throughout the world it shall be known that ours is the land whose God is the Lord. One of the greatest victories yet achieved, and largely through the influence of American Presbyterianism, has been gained in this centennial year, and in the same noble city whose honored bells first rang out in clarion notes the liberty peal of 1776. It was the victory over a Continental Sabbath. A new campaign has but just begun; and this is only one of a series of still grander and more glorious victories which lie not far beyond.

Then, let us gird up our loins for the conflict. Liberty's star, both civil and religious, is in the ascendant, and has well nigh reached its zenith. Her Goddess has passed on to the front, and is leading the van; and as soon as the roar of the guns is hushed, and the smoke cleared up from the battle-plain, the victors' palm shall be placed in our hand, and the crown of triumph shall drop upon our brow.

—:0:—

OUR FATHERS' CALL TO WORSHIP.

Come linger near these sacred walls,
And listen to the many calls,
That come from 'neath yon broken sod;
"This is our Bethel; worship God."

These stones stand guard o'er sacred dust,
Here lie the righteous and the just,
Who came up to this mount of old,
Communion with their God to hold.

Good news from heaven did here engage,
The serious thought of ripe old age;
And this old sentinel of truth
Guarded the steps of blooming youth.

The droppings of God's holy Word
They pondered deeply as they heard.
Their solemn quiet was not fear,
It was, "Be still, for God is here."

With sin they waged a ceaseless strife :
The gospel blossomed in their life,
Brought fruit in holy counsel given,
Which points their off-spring too to heaven.

The savage howl, the Indian dart,
Could bring no terror to their heart ;
Their souls must feed on heavenly food,
And to God's House to go was good.

The wild alarm, nor small nor great,
Could change a heart so consecrate ;
For come what will, or gain or loss,
They'll hear the story of the cross.

With Luther's mighty purpose strong,
They move their quiet way along,
To worship at this saintly pile,
Though Indians spring from every tile.

These were our Fathers ; where are they ?
Gone to the land of endless day.
These lamps they hung out as they trod,
To lead our souls to heaven and to God.

Divines may preach and argue too,
To leave the bad, the good pursue ;
Sound sermons with faith's wars be rife,
Their proof was best--a holy life.

At this their solemn trysting-place,
We'd meet with Thee, O God of grace,
Our souls to Thee by faith unite,
And on our hearts Thy precepts write.

Here at the altar where they stood,
We'll wash afresh in cleansing blood ;
And here again renew our tryst,
Our lives to Thee we give, O Christ.

And when the life of faith is done,
The warfare o'er, the victory won,
Our battle-flag all furled at last,
And through the gates of glory passed.

We'll join the Assembly of the blest,
With all our Fathers, enter rest ;
We'll hail our King 'upon His throne,
And know e'en as ourselves are known.

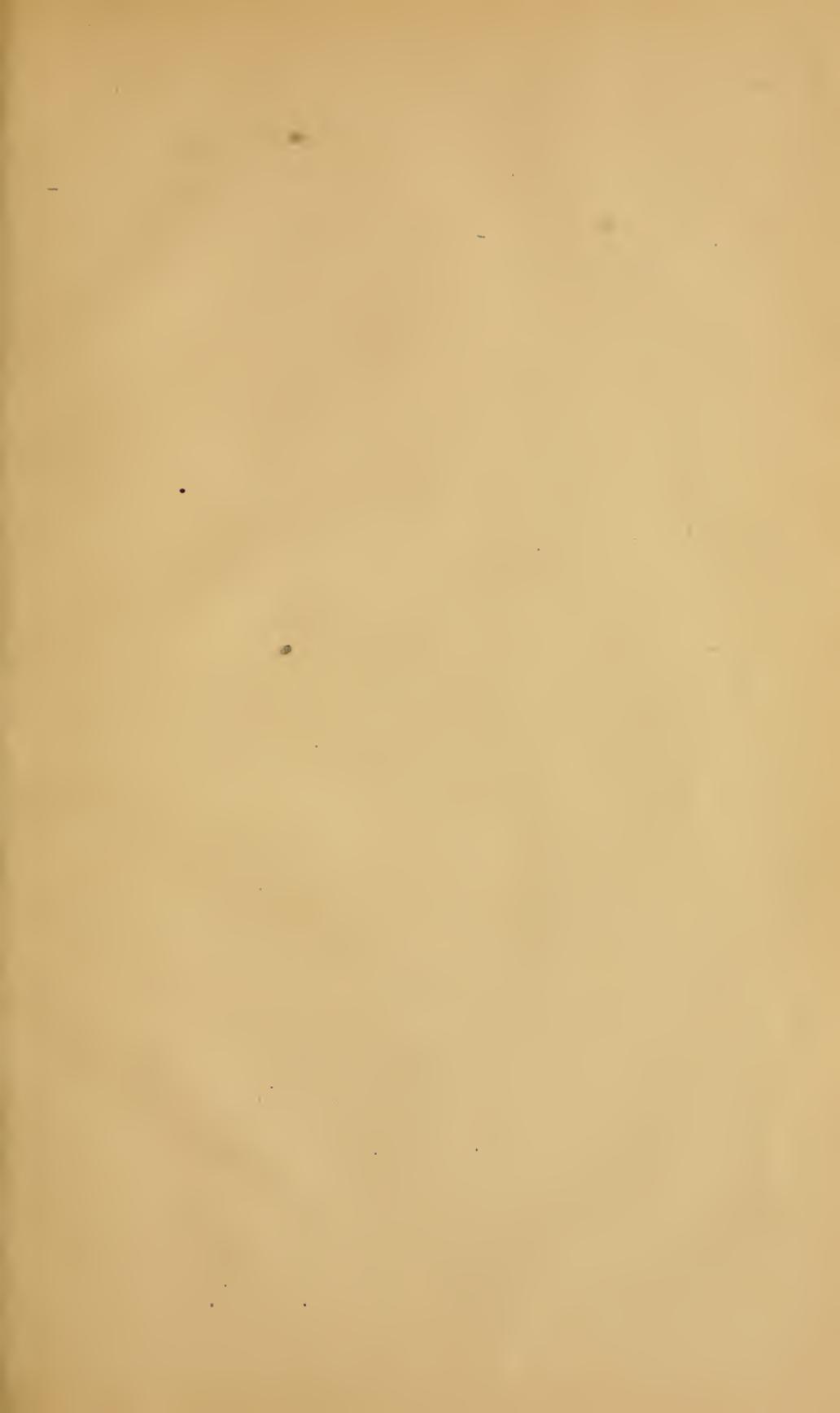
PASTORS OF PAXTON CHURCH.

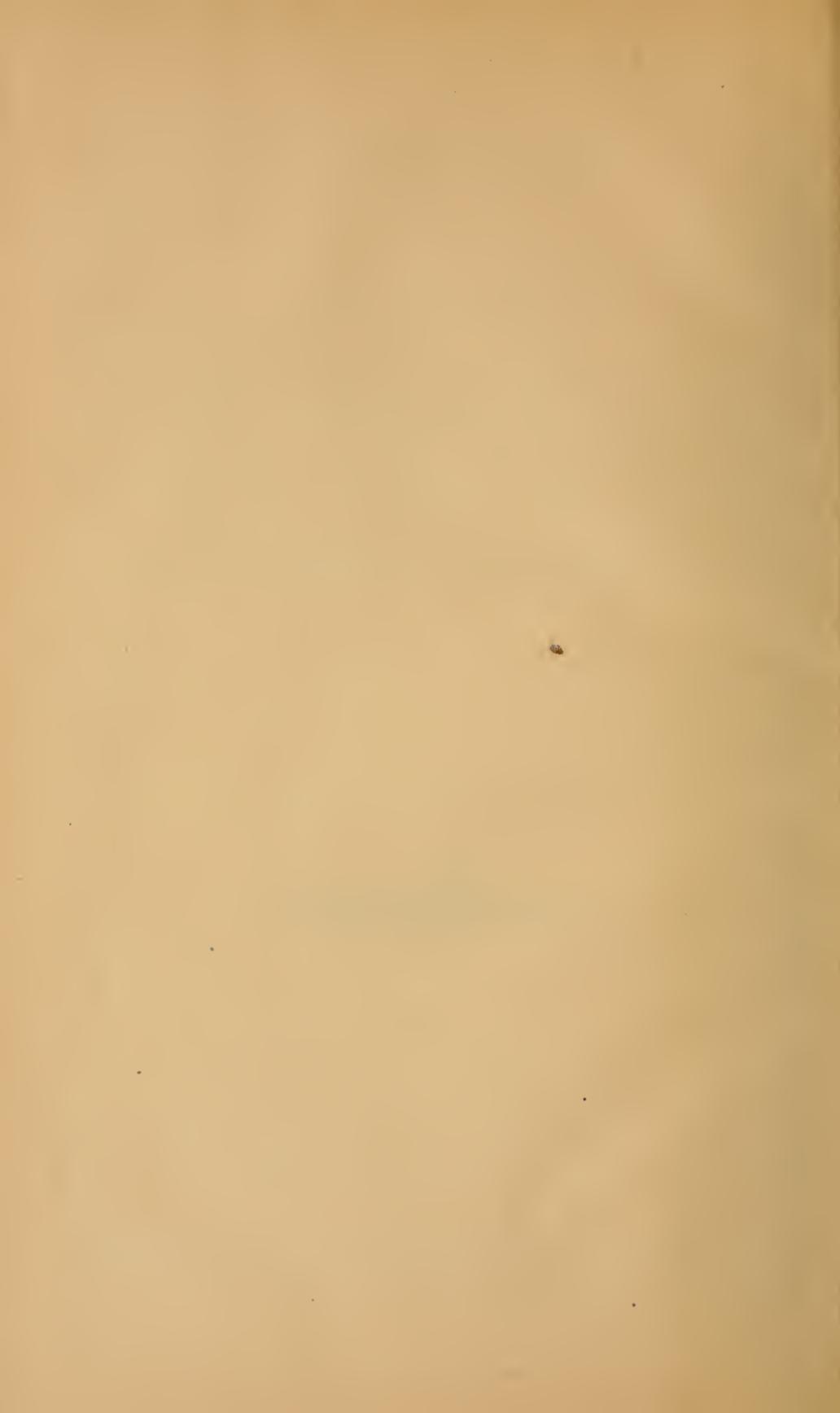
PASTORS OF PAXTON CHURCH.	INSTALLED.	RESIGNED.	PASTORATE.
1. William Bertram.....	15th Nov. 1732.....	16th Sept. 1736..	3 years, 10 months.
2. John Elder.....	22d December, 1738..	13th April, 1791..	52 years, 3 months.
3. Nathaniel R. Snowden.	3d October, 1793.....	13th April, 1796..	2 years, 6 months.
4. Joshua Williams.....	2d October, 1799.....	30th June, 1801..	1 year, 8 months.
5. James R. Sharron.....	29th May, 1807.....	18th April, 1843*.	35 years, 10 months.
6. John M. Boggs	9th April, 1845.....	6th Oct. 1847....	2 years, 5 months.
7. Andrew D. Mitchell....	10th April, 1850.....	12th Feb. 1874....	23 years, 10 months.
8. William W. Downey....	29th April, 1875.....		1 year, 10 months.

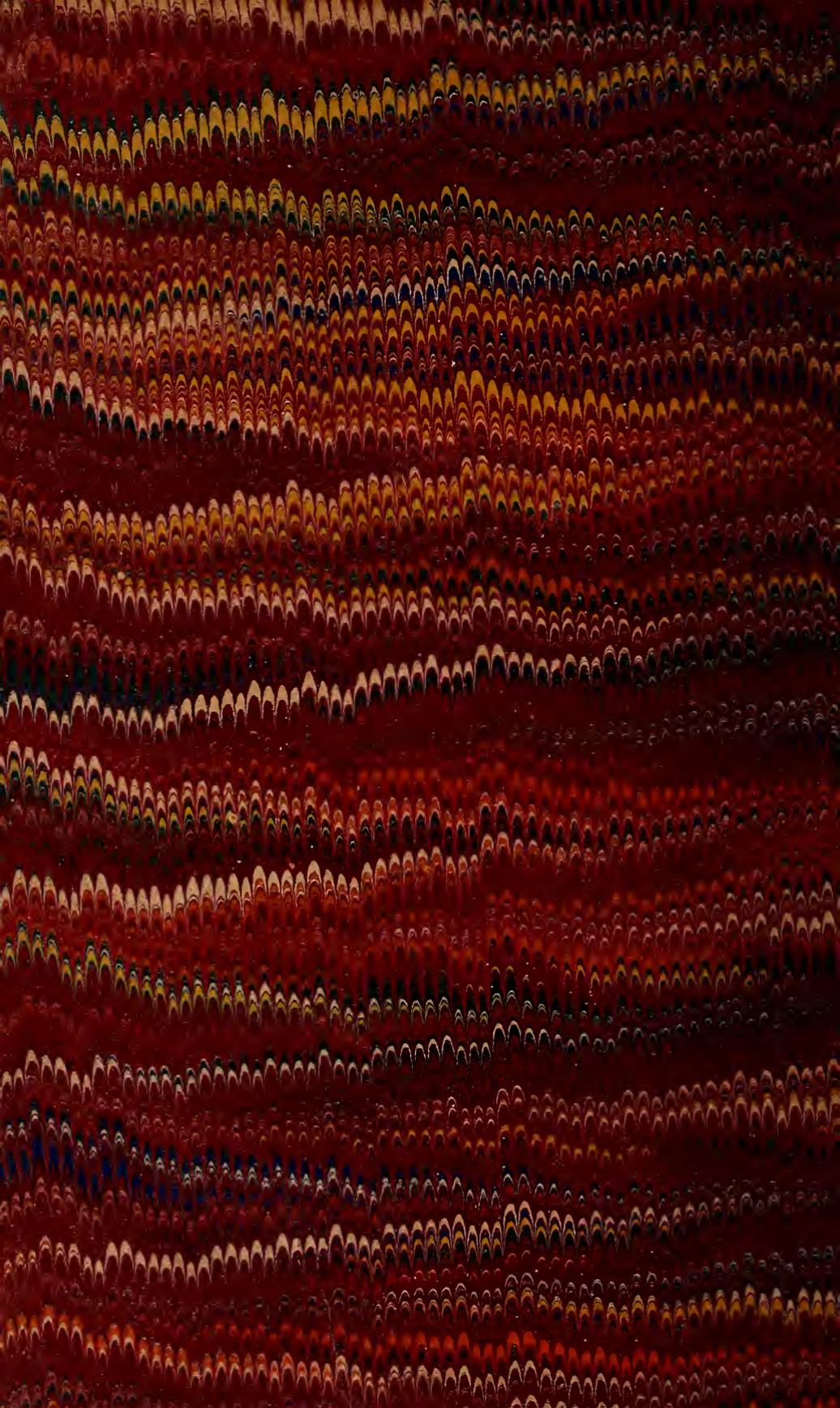
Present Ruling Elders are: Joshua Elder, Sr., John B. Rutherford, David R. Elder, Jackson G. Rutherford. * Mr. Sharron did not resign; but died while pastor at the above-mentioned date.



X









LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 365 011 A

