

## SKETCHES OF PASTORS.

Rev. John Jamison, although not pastor of the present organization, may be considered the first of the ancestors of the present worshipping people. Mr. Jamison came to America from Scotland in November, 1782, and was the first settled pastor north of the Conemaugh river and west of Black Lick creek. He crossed the mountains on horses with three children. He came from the Associated Burgher Synod of Scotland and united with the Associated Reform church on this country. Mr. Jamison traveled over quite an extensive territory as a "supply" – from New York to South Carolina but his principal labors seem to have been in a territory embracing what is now the northern part of Westmoreland county and the southern half of Indiana county. He was installed pastor of Brush creek, Hannastown and Conemaugh, but was released from Brush creek and Hannastown and his whole time given to Loyalhanna (probably now New Alexander) and Conemaugh, 11<sup>th</sup> October, 1793. He was charged with misconstruing the action of the Synod in reference to Watt's psalms, days of fasting and thanksgiving usually observed in connection with celebrations of the Lord's Supper, &c., &c. These charges were preferred against him at a meeting of Synod held in Philadelphia the 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1795. Mr. Jamison was found guilty and suspended by Synod. He was the a member of the Second Associated Reformed Presbytery of Pennsylvania. These dates and circumstances are taken from his own writings, as there seems to be some dispute concerning them.

Rev. David Blair was installed pastor in 1818. He is living at present writing. [For further notice see biographical sketch of Rev. D. Blair.]

Rev. Thomas Gilkerson was ordained and installed pastor on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October, 1840. [See personal sketch.]

Rev. William Conner, installed the 5<sup>th</sup> of April, 1859. [See personal sketch.]

Rev. D. W. Collins, D. D., installed the 4<sup>th</sup> of January, 1865. [See History of Blairsville U. P. Congregation.]

Rev. William McKirahan, installed the 14<sup>th</sup> of November, 1876. He is a descendent of one of two brothers, all of whose kindred were killed in Scotland during the Persecutions. The two brothers fled to the North of Ireland with their guns. On attempting to land they were fired upon by Roman Catholics. Their boat sinking, they took to the water, where on the brothers was shot through the heel, which bled profusely, he singing to rise no more. The other swam through his brother's blood and escaped. Samuel McKirahan came to this country in 1796, settled in Washington county, Pa., and afterward moved to Ohio, where John, the father of the subject of this sketch, was born. Mrs. I. L. McKirahan, a daughter of Rev. J. M. Johnston, is a relative of Rev. John Jamison. The first members of the congregation were James McLane and family, Moses Thompson and family, Samuel Barr and family, William Crawford and family, Nicholas Coleman and family, Henry Kirkpatrick and family, John Matthews and family, and probably others. The first elders were James McLane, Moses Thompson and James Matthews. This was, in all probability, 1797.

Rev. William Conner was born in Allegheny county, Pa., the 17<sup>th</sup> of May, 1799, and died the 28<sup>th</sup> of September, 1863. He graduated at Jefferson College, Pa., and studied theology (by consent of Monongahela Presbytery) under the care of Rev. Alex. McCahan, at Canonsburg, Pa. He was licensed to preach in the year 1837, by his own Presbytery, and installed pastor of Unity congregation, in Allegheny county, Pa., 1849. He was settled over Conemaugh in 1859. Here he served his Master till he was called home. Mr. Conner was a man of fine personal appearance, and by his style and manner commanded the attention of all who heard him. He was a preacher of very considerable power. The following is one of the resolutions passed by his Presbytery in view of his death:

*Resolved*, That the removal of our brother we sustain the loss of a faithful watchman of Zion's walls; a good presbyter, and one free from the fear of man that bringeth a snare, shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God.