

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

OF THE

FOUNDER, AND PRINCIPAL ALUMNI

OF THE

LOG COLLEGE.

TOGETHER WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE REVIVALS
OF RELIGION, UNDER THEIR MINISTRY.

COLLECTED AND EDITED

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CHAPTER VII.

MEMOIR OF THE REV. JOHN TENNENT.

Birth—Religious Exercises and Conversion—Entrance into the ministry—Settlement at Freehold, Monmouth County—Great Success—Early Death.

ALTHOUGH John Tennent was younger than his brother William, being the third son of the Rev. William Tennent, Sen. ; yet, on several accounts, it seems expedient to place the short memoir of him, before that of his elder brother. It would seem from all that we can learn respecting these men, that John was licensed to preach the gospel before William. This was probably owing to the fact, that William Tennent, jr. suffered much loss of time by severe sickness, as will hereafter appear. Or, it may have been the case, that William was engaged longer than his brother, in assisting his father in teaching, in the Log College. But, whatever may have been the case, it is certain, that the Rev. John Tennent was settled in the ministry, some years before his brother ; and that the Rev. William Tennent was not settled as a pastor, until after the death of his brother John, when he became his successor in

the church at Freehold, as will appear when we give a memoir of him ; and it is principally on this account that we place John, foremost.

The third son of the Rev. William Tennent, sen., was born in the county of Armagh, in Ireland, in the year 1707, Nov. 12, and was therefore only nine years of age when his father came to America. The whole of his education he obtained under the paternal roof, and in the Log College, which his father had founded at Neshaminy.

Of his conversion to God, we have an interesting narrative, from the pen of his brother Gilbert, written after his death, and prefixed to some of his sermons, which were published in a pamphlet after his decease.

“ His conviction of his sin, danger, and misery, was the most violent in degree, of any I ever saw. For several days and nights together, he was made to cry out in the most dolorous and affecting manner, almost every moment. The words which he used in his soul-agony were these, ‘ O my bloody, lost soul ! What shall I do ? Have mercy on me, O God, for Christ’s sake.’ Sometimes, he was brought to the very brink of despair, and would conclude, ‘ surely God would never have mercy on such a great sinner as he was.’ And yet his life was unstained with those scandalous extravagances, by which too many in their youth are ensnared. His natural predominant sin was rash anger ; and the

worst I ever knew him guilty of, was, some indecent haste in this way, on account of which he was afterwards exceedingly humbled, and against which he became very watchful. His passionateness cost him many a deep sob, heavy groan, and salt tear. After it pleased God to confer his grace upon him, he was remarkably altered in this particular, and gained in a great measure, an ascendancy over his besetting sin. Whilst under conviction, his distress was such as to induce him to make an open confession of his sins to almost all that came near him, and also to beg their prayers in his behalf, at a throne of grace. And this he did in the most earnest, and beseeching manner. His dolorous groans, and vehement importunity were such, as greatly to affect even strangers who came to see him. And he earnestly and frequently begged of God, that He would humble him to the dust, and beneath the dust.

“One morning, about break of day, after great wrestling through the night and day preceding, he took occasion to speak as surprisingly as ever I heard any mortal, about the morning star, longing and praying that the blessed Jesus, the true, the bright, the beautiful morning Star, who brought the light and day into a dark world, would appear in mercy to his poor soul. And then, at the rising of the sun, he entreated that the Sun of righteousness might shine upon his disconsolate, dejected, wretched soul, with beams of mercy and salvation. His heart

appeared to be sick, sore-sick, with panting after Christ ; so as to be ready to burst in pieces. I have through the riches of free grace been favoured with the sight of many a convinced sinner, but never did I behold any other in such a rack of acute and continued anguish, under the dismal apprehensions of impending ruin and endless misery, from the vengeance of a just and holy God.

“ Perceiving such evident signs of deep conviction, humiliation, and earnest desire, I offered to him for his comfort all the most encouraging invitations and promises, adapted to his case ; and sometimes endeavoured to persuade him that he had an interest in these promises, since God had wrought in him those conditions on which the blessings were suspended. But although this would sometimes yield him a temporary relief ; yet in a little while he would break forth again with the most doleful lamentations ; complaining that no promise in the book of God belonged to him ; and denying that any of those conditions to which the promises were made, had been wrought in him. The truth is, his wound was so deep that none but God’s arm could heal it. But it pleased God, after an agony almost uninterrupted for four days and four nights, during which he cried out incessantly as described above, that he would make his consolations as eminent and conspicuous as his convictions had been severe. It is worthy of remark, that for some time before it

pleased the Almighty to shed abroad the beams of his love and mercy on his soul, he was much exercised with sorrowful and piercing reflections on account of his hypocrisy. He judged himself to be at pharisee and a hypocrite, for crying out as he had done ; and yet the sharpness of his inward pain was such, that he could not prevent it, therefore, he would have all people out of the room, that he might pray and mourn, alone.

“One morning, when I went to see him, I perceived a great alteration in his countenance ; for he, that an hour before had looked like a condemned man going to be put to some cruel death, now appeared with a cheerful, gladsome countenance, and spoke to me in these words, ‘O brother, the Lord Jesus has come in mercy to my soul. I was begging for a crumb of mercy with the dogs, and Christ has told me that he will give me a crumb.’ Then he desired me to thank God in prayer, which I did more than once. He also requested me to praise God by singing part of a psalm, which I complied with, and sang the 34th. It was, indeed, surprising to hear this person singing the praises of God with more clearness, energy, and joy, than any of the spectators who had crowded in, on this extraordinary and solemn occasion. And that, especially, when it is considered, that now it was ten o’clock in the forenoon, whereas, at three o’clock in the same morning, he was speechless for some minutes,

and thought by all present to be expiring, in death. The consolations of God had such an influence upon him, that about an hour or two afterwards, he walked about thirty rods to see his brother William, who was then extremely sick, nigh unto death, and thought by most to be past all human hope of recovery. He said, he must see his brother, to tell him what God had done for his soul, that he might praise God on his account before he died. And when he entered the room where his brother was lying, his joy appeared to overflow, and he addressed him in the following words: ‘O brother, the Lord has looked with pity on my soul. Let the heavens, earth, and sea, and all that in them is, praise God!’ But being exposed too soon to the cool air, he fell into a fever, and then called in question that eminent discovery of God’s love, which he had experienced. But it was not long before he was again comforted; and from this time, a great change in his conversation was manifest. And while he experienced many seasons of the sealing of God’s covenant love; yet in the intervals, he was often dejected, and distressed with doubts and fears, respecting his own State.

“He gave the best evidence of a change of heart in the conscientious and diligent performance of all Christian duties; even of those most opposite to our corrupt nature, such as secret prayer and fasting. He was a tender-hearted courteous relative, and of

a very sympathetic spirit. His respectful and affectionate treatment of his reverend and aged father and his kind mother, merits an honourable mention. His great soul disdained any thing that was mean, and inclined him to the most noble and generous actions that were within his power.

“He was endowed by his Creator with a natural quickness of apprehension, copiousness of fancy, and fluency of expression, which served to qualify him eminently for the office of a preacher. He had made no contemptible progress in the learned languages, and also in philosophical and theological studies; but he particularly excelled in the polemical and casuistical branches of divinity. He was well known to be an expert disputant and casuist; but that which crowned his other attainments, and made them appear with beauty and lustre, was, his unfeigned and eminent piety.

“His attainments in the Christian graces were eminently conspicuous in the following particulars. First, his humility. He was wont to speak of himself in the most abasing terms; saying, that he thought himself one of the worst creatures the creation bore. And on his dying bed he desired his relations to forbear any funeral encomiums upon him, when he was gone; for he declared with vehemence that he was not worthy of them. When admitted to preach, he would often, in his private studies, take the Bible in his hand, and would walk up and

down the room weeping and mourning, that although there was a treasury of precious truth contained in that blessed book, he understood so little of them. A sense of the greatness of the ministerial work, and of his ignorance and unfitness for it, was often a very oppressive burden to him. It was a striking evidence of the low opinion which he entertained of himself, that he never could be persuaded that a holy God would bless the labours of a person every way so mean and so unworthy as he felt himself to be. And when informed that certain persons had been convinced under his ministry, he could not for some time believe that the work was genuine, until further conviction was afforded, by bright and incontestable evidences.

“His love to Christ was manifest to all who had the opportunity of hearing his earnest and importunate prayers. Indeed, Christ and him crucified was the end at which he aimed, the sacred centre in which all the lines of his life terminated. Christ was the object of his supreme love, and highest admiration.

“He possessed also a flaming zeal for the establishment and promotion of the Messiah’s kingdom. It was his oft repeated petition, that God would make him serviceable to his church; and that he would not suffer him to live merely to devour the alms of the church, but that he would rather remove him to himself, before he became useless.”

When Mr. John Tennent had finished his preparatory studies in the Log College, he presented himself to the presbytery of Philadelphia; and after passing with credit the usual trials he was licensed to preach the gospel.

Soon after Mr. Tennent's licensure, he visited the congregation of Freehold, in the county of Monmouth, New Jersey; which was now without a pastor. This congregation owed its origin to some Scotch people who were cast on the Jersey shore; the vessel *Caledonia*, in which they sailed, having been stranded on our coast. These people, being thus by the Providence of God cast upon this land, determined to take up their abode in the country, near to the place where they reached the shore; and being Presbyterians, they were not content to live without the ordinances of public worship, according to the creed and usages of the church of Scotland. They, accordingly, set about building a house of worship; which was situated a few miles east of the present church of Freehold; where the remains of the old building, and a grave-yard, are yet to be seen. For some time, this congregation was supplied by the Rev. Joseph Morgan; but he having left them early in the year 1730, they invited young Mr. Tennent to preach to them, as a candidate. Being a young man of uncommon modesty and humility, he was very reluctant to go; and even after he had consented to visit them, as his brother

William, in his letter to Mr. Prince of Boston, informs us, he regretted the engagement very much; for it seemed to him, that they were a people whom God had given up for the abuse of the gospel. But though he went under this cloud of discouragement, his first labours among this people were remarkably blessed. On his first visit, he preached four or five Sabbaths, and found stirred up among the people a serious disposition to attend to the concerns of their souls, and to search the scriptures to see whether the things which they heard from the pulpit were so. And he was assisted to preach with so much freedom, that he told his brother William, that he was fully persuaded, that Christ Jesus had a large harvest to bring home, there; and though they were a poor broken people; yet if they called him he would go to them, though he should be under the necessity of begging his bread. On the 15th of April, 1730, they assembled and gave him an unanimous call, which he accepted, and was ordained, November 19th of the same year.

“His labours in this congregation,” according to his brother Gilbert, “were attended with three notable qualities, prudence, diligence, and success.” Though the time was short which he was permitted to remain among them, yet his labours were abundant. His race was swift and vehement; and his heart was so fixed on the work of God, that he could not be persuaded to desist from his public labours,

even when his body was emaciated, and debilitated by a consumptive disease ; and when, in the judgment of physicians, it was prejudicial to his broken constitution.

“ In his public discourses, not to mention the justness of his method, the beauty of his style, and the fluency of his expression, by which he chained his not unwilling hearers to his lips, he was very awakening and terrible to unbelievers, in denouncing, and describing with the most vehement pathos and awful solemnity, the terrors of an offended Deity, the threats of a broken law, and the miseries of a sinful state. And this subject he insisted much upon, because, he with many others, found it the most effectual and successful means to alarm secure sinners. He used a close, distinguishing, and detecting method, in the application of his sermons ; which, with his pungent mode of expression, was very piercing and solemn. But, as Dr. Watts observes of Mr. Gouge, he knew the pity of Emanuel’s heart, as well as the terrors of Jehovah’s hand.” He was as tender and compassionate in his addresses to gracious souls, as faithful to brandish and apply the law’s lancet to the secure : and he was as willing to do the one as the other. But indeed he was very cautious of misapplying the different portions of the word to his hearers ; or of setting before them only a common mess, and leaving it to them to divide among themselves, as their fancy and humour

directed them; for he well knew that was the bane of preaching.

“Once more; he was a successful preacher. When he was under trials for the ministry, he was much exercised with doubts, difficulties, and distresses about his call to this great and awful trust; but it pleased God to dissipate these clouds, and to afford to his perplexed and anxious mind abundant satisfaction respecting this matter, by the numerous seals which crowned his public labours: for as the famous Rutherford says, ‘it is not probable that God would seal a blank.’ It may truly be said of him, that he gained more poor sinners to Christ, in that little compass of time which he had to improve in the ministerial work, which was about three and a half years, than many in the space of twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years. Many souls have, and will have reason, through eternity, to bless God that ever they saw him. But though he was thus honoured with the smiles of heaven upon his labours; and though favoured with the kind regards of a loving and generous people, who had it been possible would have plucked out their own eyes and have given them to him; so that no minister before was ever the object of a more respectful regard and sympathy; yet was he far from being exalted in his own mind, but through grace retained a just, grateful, and humble sense of God’s distinguishing goodness, and his own unworthiness.

“As he drew nearer to his end, his love for his people, and concern for their welfare increased. He would often express himself to one of his brothers, in such language as the following, ‘I am grieved for my people, for I fear they will be left to wander as sheep without a shepherd; or get one that will pull down what I have poorly endeavoured to build up.’ His brother, who watched with him in his sickness, has frequently overheard him in the deep silence of the night, wrestling with God by prayer, with sobs and tears, for his people. Yea, when so reduced by consumption that he could scarce walk alone, he bore the pains of this lingering disease with unbroken patience, and silent submission to his Father’s pleasure, until it pleased God to open a door of escape to his captive soul, through the ruins of his decayed frame.

“On Saturday evening—the last evening of his life—he was seized with a violent pang of death which was thought by his attendants to be the last; from which unexpectedly recovering, and observing a confusion among them, he addressed one, whom he saw uncommonly affected, with a cheerful countenance, in the following words, ‘I would not have you think the worse of the ways of holiness, because you see me in such agonies of distress, for I know there is a crown of glory in heaven for me, which I shall shortly wear.’ Afterwards, in the night, he often prayed, ‘Come Lord Jesus!—O Jesus, why

dost thou linger?’ Some time before day, he repeated with humble confidence the last words of David, ‘Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire.’—2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

“About the break of day, he called his brother William to prayer, and earnestly desired him to implore Heaven for his speedy removal, for, he said, he longed to be gone. About eight or nine o’clock of the next day, which was the Sabbath, his desire was granted; when it pleased his Master to translate him to that great assembly of the just, ‘the church of the firstborn, there to celebrate an eternal Sabbath, in praises and songs of triumph.

“A few minutes before he expired, holding his brother William by the hand, he broke out into the following rapturous expressions; ‘Farewell, my brethren, farewell father and mother; farewell world, with all thy vain delights. Welcome, God and Father—welcome, sweet Lord Jesus! Welcome death—welcome eternity. Amen! Then, with a low voice, he said, ‘Lord Jesus, come Lord Jesus!’ And so he fell asleep in Christ, and obtained an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of his God and Saviour.”

He was buried in the grave-yard near to the church, where he preached, and where his tombstone may yet be seen. The Rev. Jonathan Dickin-

son, of Elizabethtown, composed for his tomb-stone, the following epitaph :

“ Who quick grew old in learning, virtue, grace,
Quick finished, well-yielded to death's embrace :
Whose mouldered dust, this cabinet contains,
Whose soul triumphant, with bright seraphs reigns ;
Waiting the time 'till heaven's bright concave flame,
And the last trump repairs his ruined frame.”

Much praise cannot be awarded to the poetry of the foregoing epitaph, but it serves to show in what estimation Mr. Tennent was held, by one of the most eminent theologians of his day.

His death occurred on the 23d day of April, 1732, in the twenty-fifth year of his age.

Mr. Gilbert Tennent, with the memoir of his brother John, published also one of his sermons. The subject is “ Regeneration ;” and is treated in a clear, discriminating manner.

As far as can be judged from the accounts which have come down to us, respecting this young pastor, and from the aforesaid discourse, there is reason to conclude, that both in piety and talents, he was not inferior to any one of his brothers ; and that if he had lived to the usual period of human life, he would have been “ a burning and a shining light” in the church.

The people of his charge were greatly attached to him, and exceedingly lamented his death. There is still extant, the fragment of an old manuscript

book, kept by the session of his church, in which is contained the following entry :

“ A mournful providence and cause of great humiliation to this poor congregation, to be bereaved, in the flower of youth, of the most laborious, successful, well-qualified, and pious pastor, this age afforded ; though but a youth of twenty-four years five months and eleven days.” In this record, he is called, “ the reverend and dear Mr. John Tennent.”

It may be gratifying to some to know the names of some of the principal families which constituted the congregation of Freehold, which have been taken from the record before mentioned. Among them we find Ker, Craig, Forman, Anderson, Newall, Gordon, Lloyd, Crawford, Henderson, Robinson, Rhea, Watson, Wilson, Campbell, Covenhoven, Little, Cumming, English, &c.

CHAPTER IX.

REV. WM. TENNENT'S LETTER.

The Rev. William Tennent's Letter, to the Rev. Mr. Prince, of Boston, giving the character of the revival in Freehold, N. J.

The following letter is introduced here, because it gives an account of the fruits of the ministry of the Rev. John Tennent. It is given literally from Prince's Christian History.

“FREEHOLD, *October 11th*, 1744.

“REV. AND DEAR SIR,

“I desire to notice thankfully the late rich display of our glorious Emanuel's grace, in subduing by his word and Spirit, multitudes of sinners to himself, both in this and other lands. O may he go on ‘conquering and to conquer,’ until he has subdued all things unto himself! Neither can I think but that the writing of a history of the great things our Lord has done among us, has a tendency to, and will by the blessing of God upon it, excite generations yet unborn to praise his glorious name, and thereby his honour will be advanced, and his triumphs increased! Most gladly, therefore, do I comply with

your request, and herewith send such an account as I can, of what the Lord has done among us. But herein, as I must be very general, having never made any memorandums in writing of the Lord's work here, so I trust I shall be strictly true, for the Lord hates a false witness.

“This place lies southwest from New York, and is distant from it about fifty miles. It was the first, in the East Jersey, on the west side of the Raritan River, which was settled with a gospel ministry. This was owing, under God, to the agency of some Scotch people, that came to it; among whom there was none so painful in this blessed undertaking, as one Walter Ker, who in the year 1685, for his faithful and conscientious adherence to God and his truth, as professed by the Church of Scotland, was there apprehended, and sent into this country, under a sentence of perpetual banishment. By which it appears, that the devil and his instruments lost their aim in sending him from home; where it is unlikely he could ever have been so serviceable to Christ's kingdom as he has been here. He is yet alive; and blessed be God, he is flourishing in his old age, being in his 88th year.

“But to return; the public means of grace dispensed here, were at first, for a season, too much like a miscarrying womb and dry breasts; so that the major part of the congregation could not be said to have so much as a name to live. Family prayer

was unpractised by all, a very few excepted ; ignorance so overshadowed their minds, that the doctrine of the new birth when clearly explained and powerfully pressed upon them, as absolutely necessary to salvation (by that faithful preacher of God's word, Mr. Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen, a Low Dutch minister, and some other English ministers who were occasionally here,) was made a common game of ; so that not only the preachers, but professors of that truth, were called in derision *new-born*, and looked upon as holders forth of some new and false doctrine. And, indeed, their practice was as bad as their principles, viz. loose and profane.

“In the year 1729, their minister removed from them, and they were so grievously divided among themselves, that it appeared improbable they would ever agree in the settlement of another. In this miserable, helpless, and almost hopeless condition, they lay, and few among them had either eyes to see, or hearts to bewail their woful, wretched circumstances. Thus they seemed to be cast out, as the prophet Ezekiel represents it in the 16th chapter of his book, and the 5th verse. But the Lord who is rich in mercy, of his unexpected and unmerited love, passed by them lying in their blood, and said unto many of them since that day, *Live* ; and live they shall to all eternity.

“About this time, my dear brother John (who is now with Jesus) was licensed as a candidate for

the sacred ministry : a youth, whom the Author of every good gift had uncommonly furnished for that important trust. To him application was made by some of the congregation, intreating that he would supply them for a time ; to which, with the leave of the presbytery, he consented. But ere he went, he often told me, that he was heartily sorry he had engaged to go among them ; for it seemed to him that they were a people whom God had given up for their abuse of the gospel. But the Lord's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways ; for when he had preached four or five Sabbaths in the place, which was the whole time he tarried among them at first, the Lord so blessed his labours, engaging people to attend to the things which were spoken, and in stirring them up to search the scriptures whether these things were so or not, and withal enabling him to preach to them with such uncommon freedom and earnestness, that he told me he was fully persuaded Christ Jesus had a large harvest to bring home there ; so that, though they were a poor broken people, yet if they called him he would settle among them, albeit he should be put to beg his bread by so doing. April the 15th, 1730, the congregation unanimously called him ; which he accepting of, was ordained the 19th of November following, and continued with them until April 23d, 1732, and was then translated to glory.

“During his short time, his labours were greatly blessed; so that the place of public worship was usually crowded with people of all ranks and orders, as well as professions, that obtained in that part of the country, and they seemed to hear, generally, as for their lives: yea, such as were wont to go to those places for their diversion, viz. to hear news or speak to their tradesmen, &c., even on the Lord’s day, as they themselves have since confessed, were taken in the gospel net. A solemn awe of God’s majesty possessed many, so that they behaved themselves as at his bar, while in his house. Many tears were usually shed when he preached, and sometimes the body of the congregation was moved or affected. I can say, and let the Lord alone have the glory of it, that I have seen both minister and people wet with their tears, as with a bedewing rain. It was no uncommon thing to see persons in the time of hearing, sobbing as if their hearts would break, but without any public outcry; and some have been carried out of the assembly (being overcome) as if they had been dead.

“Religion was then the general subject of discourse, though they did not all approve of the power of it. The holy Bible was searched by people on both sides of the question, and knowledge surprisingly increased. The terror of God fell generally upon the inhabitants of this place; so that wickedness as ashamed in a great measure hid itself; fro-

icking, dancing, horse-racing, with other profane meetings were broken up. Some of the jolly companions of both sexes, were constrained by their consciences to meet together, the men by themselves, and the women by themselves, to confess privately their abominations before God, and beg the pardon of them.

“Before my brother’s death, by reason of his bodily weakness, and inability on that account to officiate publicly, I preached here about six months. In which time, many came inquiring what they should do to be saved, and some to tell what the Lord had done for their souls. But the blessing on his labours to the conviction and conversion of souls, was more discernible some months after his death, than any time in his life; almost in every neighbourhood—I cannot say in every house—there were sin-sick souls, longing for and seeking after the dear physician, Jesus Christ: several of whom, I no ways doubt have, since that time, sincerely closed with him, and are healed; glory, glory to his holy name be given, for ever and ever, Amen!

“Sometime after my brother’s decease, the congregation called me to labour among them, statedly; which I accepted, and was ordained, October the 25th, 1733. Thus my Lord sent me to reap that on which I had bestowed but little labour. May this consideration be blessed to make me thankful and humble, while I live.

“I must further declare to the honour of God, that he has not yet left us, although awfully provoked by our crying crimes; but ever since that more remarkable outpouring of his Spirit has continued to bless his own ordinances, to the conviction, conversion and consolation, of precious souls: so that every year, some, more or less have been in a judgment of charity added (savingly,) to his mystical body: to his holy name be all the glory. In the mean time, I would have it observed, that two or three years last past, have afforded fewer instances of this kind, than formerly. However, through grace some have been lately awakened who are even now seeking Jesus sorrowing. What the number is of those who have tasted the sweet fruits of the Redeemer's purchase in a saving manner, in this congregation, I cannot tell: it is my comfort that the Lord will reckon them; for he knows who are his: and indeed none but the omniscient God is equal to the difficult province of determining certainly concerning the internal states of men. Yet I may be bold to say, that to all appearance, both old and young, males and females, have been renewed; though none so young as I have heard of in some other places. Some negroes, I trust, are made free in Christ; and more seem to be unfeignedly seeking after it. But after all that the Lord has been pleased to do among us, I am persuaded that the greater number, by far, are yet in the gall

of bitterness and bond of iniquity. This makes me sometimes ready to wish, that I had in the wilderness the lodging-place of a wayfaring-man, that I might leave my people and go from them; or rather that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for them! Such as have been converted were every one of them prepared for it by a sharp law-work of conviction, discovering to them in a heart-affecting manner, their sinfulness both by nature and practise, as well as their liableness to damnation for their original and actual transgressions. Neither could they see any way in themselves by which they could escape the divine vengeance; for that their whole life past, was not only a 'continued act of rebellion against God, but their present endeavours to better it, such as prayers, &c. were so imperfect, that they could not endure them, and much less, they concluded, would a holy God. They all confessed the justice of God in their eternal perdition; and thus have been shut up to the blessed necessity of seeking relief by faith in Christ alone. It would be endless to mention the evils they complained of; viz. ignorance, unbelief, hardness of heart, hatred against God, his laws, and people worldliness, wandering of heart in duty, pride, sensuality, sloth, &c. With what grief, shame and self-loathing have I heard them bewail their loss of time, and neglect of the great gospel salvation. Those

that were communicants before their awakening, have with trembling declared that their unworthy partaking grieved them more than anything ever they did ; for hereby they had as it were murdered the Lord. It is almost incredible to relate, the indignation that such awakened sinners expressed against themselves, on the account of their sinfulness. They looked upon themselves to be mere monsters of nature, and that none were worse if any so bad. Others signified that they could not find their pictures out of hell, and that they were just fit companions for the damned, and none else. Let it be here noted, that some who have expressed themselves in the manner I have mentioned, were before taken for believers both by themselves and others, being sober and regular in their walk.

“The sorrows of the convinced, were not all alike, either in degree or continuance. Some have not thought it possible for them to be saved, if God would vindicate the honour of his justice ; but these thoughts continued not long at a time, blessed be God. Others thought it was possible, but not very probable, because of their vileness. The greatest degree of hope which any had, under a conviction that issued well, was a maybe ; ‘peradventure, or maybe, God will have mercy on me,’ said the sinner. Some, in coming to Jesus, have been much rent with blasphemous and other horrible temptations, which have turned their moisture

into the drought of summer ; who now through pure grace serve God, without such distractions, in gladness and singleness of heart. The conviction of some has been instantaneous ; by the Holy Spirit's applying the law to the conscience, and discovering to the eye of the understanding, as it were, all their heart deceits very speedily ; by which they have been stabbed as with a sword. But the conviction of others, has been in a more progressive way. They have had discovered to them, one abomination after another, in life ; and from thence were led to behold the fountain of all corruption in the heart ; and thus they were constrained to despair of life by the law, and consequently to flee to Jesus as the only door of hope, and so rest entirely on his merit for salvation.

“ After the aforesaid sorrowful exercises, such as were reconciled to God have been blessed with the Spirit of adoption, enabling them to cry, Abba, Father. But some have had greater degrees of consolation than others, in proportion to the clearness of the evidences of their sonship. The Lord has drawn some out of the horrible pit of distress and darkness, and brought them into the light of his countenance. He has filled their hearts with joy, and their mouths with praises ; yea, given them the full assurance of faith. Others have been brought to peace in believing ; but have not had so great a *plerophory* of joy ; yet they go on in a religious

course, trusting in the Lord. The way they have been comforted is either by the application of some particular promise of holy scripture, or by a soul-affecting view of the way of salvation by Christ, as free, without money and without price. They were enabled to behold the valuable mercies of the covenant of grace, freely tendered to the vilest transgressors, that were poor in their own eyes, sin-sick, weary and wounded, together with the ability and willingness of the Lord Jesus to relieve them from all the evils, they either feared or felt. With this way of salvation their souls were well pleased, and thereupon, have ventured their case into his hands, expecting help from him only ; who has given them both peace and rest ; yea, filled some of them with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I remember not of any that received their first comforts otherwise. Some few have retained their confidence in God ever since, without any considerable questionings of their state, although they have not always tasted the comforts of it. But the most, by far, have questioned all, and doubted it was a delusion. This I suppose is generally owing to the remains of corruption, which blot the evidences of grace in good men, so that they can hardly read them ; and particularly, to the awful sin of unbelief ; together with the prevalence of a legal spirit, which presses them to perfect holiness on pain of death, and because they cannot

obtain that, they conclude they are unsanctified, and have no right to Christ. I might add the ignorance of mortification; they seem to think that in the justified, sin is killed in its being, as well as governing power; and, therefore, because they feel their old sins sometimes stirring in them, they conclude that all is wrong; nay, although they hate the doctrine of perfection as held by some, yet because they are not perfect they think they have no grace. But however distressing it is to them to feel their imperfections, it helps to persuade me that they are regenerate; else it would not be so; sin would not be their chief burden, in a general way.

“However, our Lord who comforts those that are cast down, even the wonderful Counsellor, teaches them, that he not only saves those who have been sinners before conversion, but even such as after it, find a law in their members warring against the law of their minds, which too often causes them to do the things they would not; and enables them to reflect upon what they have and do daily experience, and compare it with the evidences of grace in the word of God. The blessed God does likewise give them renewed tastes of his love, even after missteps; and thus they are established in faith and hope, so that they have a prevailing persuasion of their interest in Christ; except it be in times of desertion and temptation, with which some are more

exercised than others, for reasons best known to a sovereign God.

“Doubtless, Sir, you will desire to know, what effects this work produces on the minds and manners of its subjects. I answer, they are not only made to know, but heartily to approve of the great doctrines of the gospel, which they were before either ignorant of or averse to, (at least some of them) so that they do harmonize sweetly in exalting free, special, and sovereign grace, through the Redeemer Jesus Christ; being willing to glory only in the Lord, who has loved them and given himself for them, an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour.

“I cannot express, with what satisfaction I have heard them speak of the new covenant method of salvation. They have spoken with such affection and clearness, as I have thought was sufficient to convince an atheist, that the Lord was their Teacher. The alteration in some, from almost gross ignorance to such clear gospel light, and in others from such corrupt principles, as the Papists and Quakers hold, to the believing acknowledgment of the truth, none but he that made the understanding could effect. They approve of the law of God after the inward man, as holy, just, and good, and prize it above gold, yea, much fine gold. They judge it their duty as well as privilege to wait on God in all the ordinances of his own institution, although they expect to merit nothing thereby. A reverence for God's command-

ing authority, and gratitude for his love, conspire to incite and constrain them, to a willing, unfeigned, universal and unfainting obedience to his laws : yet they declare that in everything they come sadly short of what they ought to do, and bitterly bewail their defects. But blessed be God, they are not discouraged in their endeavours to reach forward, if by any means they may apprehend that for which they are apprehended of God ; and in all things they acknowledge that they ought to look to Jesus as the author and finisher of faith, whose alone it is to work all good in them and for them, to whom be glory for ever. They are not unmolested in their way by enemies, both from within and from without. Yet, they profess that the comforts which they receive do more than compensate all their labour, were there no good to be expected hereafter : and surely, as the psalmist observes, ‘in keeping God’s commands there is a great reward.’ But to proceed :

“They have not all made alike proficiency in the Christian course ; neither are they all equal in religious endeavours ; nor any at all times alike lively. They are sometimes obstructed in their religious progress by coldness and deadness ; but this the blessed Jesus removes at times, by the influence of his Holy Spirit ; then, O then, their hearts are enlarged, and they run the sweet way of God’s commandments with alacrity and delight, they love all such as they have reason to think, from their

principles, experience, and practice, are truly godly, though they differ from them in sentiment in lesser things, and look on them to be the excellent of the earth. They rejoice in Zion's prosperity ; glorifying God on that account, and feel a sympathy in her sorrows. They do prefer one another before themselves, in love ; except, under temptation, which they are ready to confess and bewail, when they are themselves ; generally accounting that they are the meanest of the family of God, and unworthy of the blessing ; yea, the most so of any living, all things considered. In a word, the sapless formalist is become spiritual in his conversation ; the proud and haughty are made humble and affable ; the wanton and vile, sober and temperate ; the swearer honours that venerable name he was wont to profane, and blesses, instead of cursing ; the Sabbath-breaker is brought to be a strict observer of holy time ; the worldling now seeks treasures in the heavens ; the extortioner now deals justly ; and the formerly malicious, forgive injuries ; the prayerless are earnest and incessant in acts of devotion ; and the sneaking self-seeker, endeavours the advancement of God's glory, and the salvation of immortal souls.

“Through God's mercy we have been quite free from enthusiasm ; our people have followed the holy law of God, the sure word of prophecy, and not the impulses of their own minds. There have not been that I know of, among us, any visions, except

such as are by faith, namely, clear and affecting views of the new and living way to the Father through his dear Son Jesus Christ: nor any revelations but what have been long since written in the sacred volume: nor any trances but such as all men now living shall meet with, for it is appointed for all men once to die.

“It may not be amiss to inform you, that many who have been awakened, and seemed for a time to set out for Zion, are turned back. Yea, of those who have been esteemed converts, some have made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience; though, glory to God, there have not been many such; yet some of them who have thus awfully apostatized, were highly esteemed in the church. By this, our good and gracious God has given check to too high an esteem of our own judgment, concerning the spiritual states of others, (an evil which is too common among young converts) and awfully warned all that stand, to take heed lest they fall. Many, I have cause to fear, have been hardened in their impieties and unreasonable prejudices against vital religion, by the backslidings of some professors. ‘Wo to the world, because of offences!’ But in the mean time, blessed be God, Wisdom is and will be justified of her children.

“This, Sir, is as particular an account, as I can at present give of the Lord’s work, in this place. If my Lord will accept it as a testimony for him, it

will be a greater honour than ever I deserved. I need your prayers, and earnestly desire them. O beg of God, that I may be faithful to the death, and wise to win souls. I am with all due respects, yours in the dearest Jesus,

WM. TENNENT."

"ATTESTATION to the preceding Account by the Ruling Elders and Deacons of the Congregation of Freehold.

"We the subscribers, Ruling Elders and Deacons of the Presbyterian congregation of Freehold, having had perfect knowledge of the circumstances of this place, some of us from the first settling of it, and others of a long time, do give our testimony to the truth in general, of the above letter of our Rev. pastor. May the Lord make the same of use for the carrying on his glorious work begun in these lands, and make the name of the dearest Jesus glorious from the rising to the setting sun.

WALTER KER,	ROBERT CUMMING,
DAVID RHEA,	JOHN HENDERSON,
WILLIAM KER,	SAMUEL KER.

Freehold, in New Jersey, October 11th, 1744."