

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

BY

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CHAPTER XVII.

THE REV. WM. ROBINSON.

An Englishman—Occasion of his Emigration—Teaches in New Jersey and in Delaware—Is converted—Joins the Presbyterians—Studies at the Log College—Seeks out the Destitute—Taken up in Virginia—Permitted to proceed—Visits Cub Creek—Conversion of David Austin—Sent for to Hanover—Extraordinary Religious awakening—Success of his labours—Mr. Davies's Letter to Mr. Bellamy—Preaches in New York with his wonted success—Also in Maryland—Died early—None of the circumstances of his end have come down—Left no writings.

CONCERNING the early history of this successful evangelist, very little is known. The only account which the writer has met with, is that found in a note, in the "Life of the Rev. Dr. Rodgers," by the Rev. Dr. Miller. It is here stated, "that Mr. Robinson was the son of a wealthy Quaker in England. Being permitted to pay a visit of a few weeks, to an aunt in the city of London, from whom he had considerable expectations, he greatly overstaid the time which had been allowed him; and becoming deeply involved in the dissipations of the town, he incurred large debts, which he knew his father would never pay, and which his aunt refused to discharge. In this situation, fearing to return home, and unable to

remain longer in London, he determined to quit his native country, and seek his fortune in America. In this determination, his aunt reluctantly acquiesced, and furnished him with a small sum of money for the purpose. Soon after his arrival in America, he had recourse for subsistence to teaching a school in New Jersey, in the bounds of the presbytery of New Brunswick. He had been for some time engaged in this business, without any practical sense of religion, when it pleased God to bring him to a knowledge of himself, and the way of salvation, in a remarkable manner. He was riding at a late hour one evening, when the moon and stars shone with unusual brightness, and when every thing around him was calculated to excite reflection. While he was meditating on the beauty and grandeur of the scene which the firmament presented, and was saying to himself, how transcendently glorious must be the Author of all this beauty and grandeur, the thought struck him with the suddenness and force of lightning, 'But what do I know of this God? Have I ever sought his favour, or made him my friend?' This happy impression, which proved by its permanency and its effects, to have come from the best of all sources, never left him until he took refuge in Christ as the hope and life of his soul."

It appears from some circumstances of the life of the Rev. Samuel Davies, that Mr. Robinson also taught a classical school in the state of Delaware;

for it is mentioned that Mr. Davies, when a boy was one of his pupils ; and his parents, we know, resided in the state of Delaware.

After Mr. Robinson's conversion, he determined to devote his life to the service of God, in the work of the holy ministry ; and having fallen in with the Presbyterians, he connected himself with that church ; and the uncontradicted tradition is, that he pursued a course of preparation for the ministry, in the Log College ; and after the usual trials, was licensed to preach the gospel, by the presbytery of New Brunswick ; and after some probation, was ordained by them as an evangelist.

Mr. Robinson, soon after his ordination, determined to go and visit the "lost sheep of the house of Israel ;" that is, the distant and dispersed settlements of Presbyterians, in the states south of New Jersey. The Presbyterians from the north of Ireland, between the years 1720 and 1730, had come over to America, in large numbers. They generally landed at New Castle, or Philadelphia, and then proceeded to the interior of the country. In the frontier of Pennsylvania, they were greatly infested by the hostile incursions of the Indians, which induced them to turn their attention to the western parts of Virginia, and North Carolina. In some instances, whole congregations, driven from their homes by the savages, removed in a body, with their ministers, to a region less exposed to the incursions of their murderous foe. The

valley between the Blue Ridge and the North mountain—a fine lime-stone farming county—was first occupied by these Irish Presbyterians; the Germans, who now possess a large part of this fertile region, came in afterwards. In many places, all along the frontier were small groups of Presbyterians, who were entirely destitute of the public means of grace. To these scattered sheep, Mr. Robinson directed his benevolent attention; feeling something of the zeal which actuated Paul, he did not wish to build on another man's foundation, but to preach Christ where he had not been named. In another respect, he resembled Paul, for he went forward, fearless of danger, and as it would seem, without even inquiring whether the laws of the colonies into which he was going, would allow itinerant preachers to pass through the land. Accordingly, he had penetrated but a short day's journey into the Old Dominion, and reached the town of Winchester, when he was apprehended by the civil authorities; and it appearing that he had transgressed the laws of the colony, a mittimus was made out by the magistrate, to send him to Williamsburg, the then seat of government; for they were at a loss what disposal to make of him. The sheriff to whom he was committed, having set off on the journey, began to think that it would be a useless thing to conduct his prisoner to a place so distant, and finding that he was a sensible, well disposed man, he assumed the responsibility of

letting him go on his missionary tour. Mr. Robinson proceeded along the valley, every where finding new settlements of Presbyterians, until he reached the waters of James River. The writer has heard an old man who was among the first settlers of the country round about Lexington, then called the Forks, say, that he had heard Mr. Robinson preach in that settlement, soon after it was formed. But, the inhabitants in the valley, not extending any farther to the south-west, he returned, and crossing the Blue Ridge, at Rock Fish gap, proceeded to the south, across the country, until he reached Cub Creek, then in Lunenburg, now Charlotte. Here he found a pretty large settlement of Presbyterians, where he stopped and preached; and here as in all other places, his ministry was attended by the Spirit of God: sinners were awakened and converted, and the people of God were greatly strengthened and comforted. I have conversed with an old man, when I was young, who was living in this settlement at the time, and was afterwards an elder in the church organized there. His name was Robert Weakly, born in Pennsylvania; and though brought up among the opposers of the revival, he was led by curiosity to hear the Rev. Samuel Blair preach, and was brought under deep conviction; and after many trials, he hoped, to a sound conversion. From which time, he connected himself with the "New-Lights," as they were called. This man, late in

life, having removed into Halifax county, where he had no opportunity of attending on the Lord's Supper in his own church, and being debarred from the communion by the Baptists among whom he lived, unless he would submit to be immersed, was at length induced to go down with them under the water; but though thus nominally a Baptist, his heart was as truly Presbyterian as ever. He was a man of eminent and long tried piety, and had a good report from all of every name, whether in the church or out of it.

This man informed me, that under Mr. Robinson's first sermon, a remarkable conversion of a half-breed Indian, one of the wickedest of men, had taken place, under unusual circumstances. When notice was given to his family of a sermon at the *Stand*, by a travelling preacher, his wife wished to go, but he positively forbade her, but said he would go himself. His name was David Austin. When the congregation had collected, he was seen lying outside of the assembly, under a tree, asleep. And thus he lay, until the preacher took his text, which he uttered in a thundering voice, "Awake, thou that sleepest," Austin sprang to his feet, as if pierced with a dart, and fixing his eyes on the preacher, never removed them, but drew nigher and nigher to the *Stand*, until at the close, he was observed standing at the preacher's feet, and the tears streaming from his eyes. After a few days of pungent

conviction, he received comfort by faith in Christ, and became one of the most eminent Christians in all the land. His talent for administering consolation to distressed consciences was so well known, that he has been sent for, as far as thirty miles, to converse with a lady under spiritual darkness and distress of mind. I have heard a pious old mother in Israel say, that she had heard Mr. Davies and Dr. Waddel, and the Smiths, converse on religion, but she never heard any one whom she found so much comfort in hearing, as old David Austin.

A remarkable attention to religion in the county of Hanover, existed at this time, without the aid of the ministry. Some persons from that place being on a visit to Cub Creek, when Mr. Robinson, on his way to Carolina, visited that settlement, then called "The Caldwell Settlement," gave an account, upon their return, of the preacher they had heard. Upon hearing this account, the serious people of Hanover inquired, at what time Mr. Robinson expected to return from Carolina to Cub Creek; and they immediately resolved to send two of their number to meet him at the time specified. It so happened, however, that the information received was not correct; for when the messengers arrived at Cub Creek, they found to their disappointment, that he had passed several days before. Determined, however, not to go back without him, they pursued after him through a very rugged, mountainous

country, and overtook him at Rockfish, at the foot of the Blue Ridge. Mr. Robinson upon hearing the state of things in Hanover, did not hesitate to go with the men; but in order to reach the place before the Sabbath, it became necessary to ride one whole night. And when he arrived, the leaders of the dissenting congregation were much perplexed and concerned, lest his doctrines should not accord with those which from books they had imbibed; therefore, before he was introduced to the congregation, they took him into a private room and asked him, what was his opinion of such works as Luther on the Galatians, Boston, Bunyan, &c., and when he expressed the warmest approbation, they were delighted above measure. But as it will be gratifying to the reader to see the whole of the letter which Mr. Davies wrote to Mr. Bellamy, in which the narrative of Mr. Robinson's visit to Hanover is contained, it shall be here inserted.

Letter from Mr. Davies, minister of Hanover, Virginia, to Mr. Bellamy of Bethlehem, in New-England.

“ June 28, 1751.

“ REV. AND DEAR SIR :—

“ If the publication of a narrative of the rise, progress, and present situation of religion in Virginia, may not only gratify good people, but (as you give me reason to hope) animate their prayers for us, and also encourage preachers to come into these parts, I should charge myself with a criminal neglect if I refused to publish the marvellous works of the Lord among us. I hope I may observe without the umbrage

of calumny, what is but too evident to serious people of all denominations among us, that religion has been, and in most parts of the colony still is, in a very low state. A surprising negligence in attending public worship, and an equal surprising levity and unconcernedness in those that attend. Family religion a rarity, and a solemn concern about eternal things, a greater. Vices of various kinds triumphant, and even a form of godliness not common. But universal fame makes it needless for me to enlarge on this disagreeable subject, Before the revival in 1743, there were a few who were awakened, as they have told me, either by their own serious reflections, suggested and enforced by divine energy, or on reading some authors of the last century, particularly Bolton, Baxter, Flavel, Bunyan. There was one Mr. Samuel Morris who had for some time been very anxious about his own salvation, who after obtaining blessed relief in Christ, became zealous for the salvation of his neighbours, and very earnest to use means to awaken them, This was the tendency of his conversation ; and he also read to them such authors as had been most useful to himself, particularly, Luther on the Galatians, and his Table Discourses, and several pieces of honest Bunyan's. By these means some of his neighbours were made more thoughtful about their souls ; but the concern was not very extensive. I have prevailed on my good friend just now named, who was the principal private instrument of promoting the late work, and therefore well acquainted with it, to write me a narrative of its rise and progress, and this, together with what he and others have told me, I shall present to you, without any material alterations.

“ In the year 1740, Mr. Whitfield had preached at Williamsburgh at the invitation of Mr. Blair, our late commissary. But we being fifty miles distant from Williamsburgh, he left the colony before we had an opportunity of hearing him. But in the year 1743, a young man from Scotland had got a book of his sermons preached in Glasgow, and taken from his mouth in short hand, which after I had read with great benefit, I invited my neighbors to come and hear it ; and the plainness and fervency of these discourses being

attended with the power of the Lord, many were convinced of their undone condition, and constrained to seek deliverance with the greatest solicitude. A considerable number met to hear these sermons every Sabbath, and frequently, on week days. The concern of some was so passionate and violent, that they could not avoid crying out, weeping bitterly, &c. And that, when such indications of religious concern were so strange and ridiculous, that they could not be occasioned by example or sympathy, and the affectation of them would be so unprofitable an instance of hypocrisy, that none could be tempted to it. My dwelling-house at length was too small to contain the people, whereupon we determined to build a meeting-house, merely for reading. And having never been used to social extempore prayer, none of us durst attempt it. By this single mean several were awakened, and their conduct ever since is a proof of the continuance and happy issue of their impressions. When the report was spread abroad, I was invited to several places to read these sermons, at a considerable distance, and by this means the concern was propagated. About this time, our absenting ourselves from the established Church, contrary, as was alleged, to the laws of the land, was taken notice of, and we were called upon by the court to assign our reasons for it, and to declare what denomination we were of. As we knew but little of any denomination of dissenters, except Quakers, we were at a loss what name to assume. At length, recollecting that Luther was a noted reformer, and that his books had been of especial service to us, we declared ourselves Lutherans; and thus we continued, until Providence sent us the Rev. Mr. William Robinson. This Mr. Robinson was a zealous, laborious minister of Christ, who by the permission of the presbytery took a journey through the new settlements in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina. He founded a Congregation at Lunenburgh.* In Amelia† also, a county somewhat nearer us than the former, his labours were extensively blest: and while he was there, some of our people

* Now Charlotte.

† Now Cumberland.

sent him an invitation to come and preach at our reading house. Being satisfied about the soundness of his principles, and being informed that the method of his preaching was awakening, we were very eager to hear him. On the 6th of July, 1743, he preached his first sermon to us from Luke xiii. 3, and continued with us preaching four days successively. The congregation was large the first day, and vastly increased the three ensuing. 'Tis hard for the liveliest imagination to form an image of the condition of the assembly, on these glorious days of the Son of man. Such of us as had been hungering for the word before, were lost in an agreeable surprise and astonishment, and some could not refrain from publicly declaring their transport: we were overwhelmed with the thoughts of the unexpected goodness of God, in allowing us to hear the gospel preached in a manner that surpassed our hopes. Many that came through curiosity were pricked to the heart, and but few in the numerous assemblies on these four days, appeared unaffected. They returned alarmed with apprehensions of their dangerous condition, convinced of their former entire ignorance of religion, and anxiously inquiring what they should do to be saved. And there is reason to believe there was as much good done by these four sermons, as by all the sermons preached in these parts before or since. Before Mr. Robinson left us, he successfully endeavoured to correct some of our mistakes, and to bring us to carry on the worship of God more regularly, at our meetings. After this we met to read good sermons, and began and concluded with prayer and singing of psalms, which till then we had omitted. The blessing of God remarkably attended these more private means, and it was really astonishing to observe the solemn impressions begun or continued in many, by hearing good discourses read. I had repeated invitations to come to many places round, some of them 30 or 40 miles distant, to read. Considerable numbers attended with eager attention and awful solemnity, and several were in a judgment of charity turned to God, and thereupon erected meeting-houses, and chose readers among themselves, by which the work was more extensively carried on.

“Soon after Mr. Robinson left us, the Rev. Mr. John Blair paid us a visit ; and truly he came to us in the fulness of the gospel of Christ. Former impressions were ripened and new ones made on many hearts. One night in particular, a whole house full of people was quite overcome with the power of the word, particularly of one pungent sentence, and they could hardly sit or stand, or keep their passions under proper restraint. So general was the concern during his stay with us, and so ignorant were we of the danger of apostacy, that we pleased ourselves with the thoughts of more being brought to Christ at that time, than now appears to have been, though there is still the greatest reason to hope that several bound themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten. Some time after this, the Rev. Mr. Roan was sent us by the presbytery of Newcastle. He continued with us a longer time than any of the former, and the happy effects of his ministrations are still apparent. He was instrumental in beginning and promoting the religious concern in several places where there was little appearance of it before. This, together with his speaking pretty freely about the degeneracy of the clergy in this colony, gave a general alarm, and some measures were concerted to suppress us. To incense the indignation of the government the more, a perfidious wretch deposed, he heard Mr. Roan utter blasphemous expressions, in his sermon. An indictment was thereupon drawn up against Mr. Roan, (though by that time he had departed the colony,) and some who had invited him to preach at their houses, were cited to appear before the general court, and two of them were fined. While my cause was upon trial, I had reason to rejoice that the throne of grace is accessible in all places, and that helpless creatures can send up their desires unseen, in the midst of a crowd. Six witnesses were cited to prove the indictment against Mr. Roan, but their depositions were in his favour ; and the witness who accused him of blasphemy, when he heard of the arrival of Messrs. Ten-
nent and Finley, fled, and has not returned since ; so that the indictment was dropped. But I had reason to fear being banished the colony, and all circumstances seemed to threat-

en the extirpation of religion among the dissenters in these parts. In these difficulties, having no person of a public character to appear in our favour, we were determined to acquaint the Synod of New-York with our case. Accordingly four of us went to the Synod, May, 1745, when the Lord favoured us with success. The synod drew up an address to our governor, the honorable Sir William Gooch, and sent it with Messrs. Tennent and Finley, who were received by the governor with respect, who gave them liberty to preach among us. By this means the dreadful cloud was scattered for a while, and our languid hopes revived. They continued with us about a week, and though the deluge of passion in which we were at first overwhelmed, was by this time somewhat abated, yet much good was done by their ministry. The people of God were refreshed, and several careless sinners were awakened. Some, that had trusted before in their moral conduct, and religious duties, were convinced of the depravity of their nature, and the necessity of regeneration, though indeed there were but few unregenerate persons among us at that time, that could claim so regular a character, the most part indulging themselves in criminal liberties, and being remiss in the duties of religion, which alas ! is too commonly the case still in such parts of the colony as the late revival did not extend to.

“After they left us, we continued vacant for a considerable time, and kept up our meetings for reading and praying in several places, and the Lord favored us with his presence. I was again repeatedly *presented* and fined in court for absenting myself from Church, and keeping up unlawful meetings, as they were called ; but the bush flourished in the flames. The next that were appointed to supply us, were the Rev. Messrs. William Tennent and Samuel Blair. They administered the Lord’s Supper among us ; and we have reason ever to remember it as a most glorious day of the Son of Man. The assembly was large, and the novelty of the manner of the administration, did peculiarly engage their attention. It appeared as one of the days of heaven to some of us ; and we could hardly help wishing we could, with Joshua, have delayed the revolutions of the heavens to

prolong it. After Messrs. Tennent and Blair were gone, Mr. Whitefield came, and preached four or five days, which was the happy means of giving us further encouragement, and engaging others to the Lord, especially among the church people, who received the gospel more readily from him than from ministers of the Presbyterian denomination. After his departure, we were destitute of a minister, and followed our usual method of reading and prayer, at our meeting, till the Rev. Mr. Davies, our present pastor, was sent us by the presbytery, to supply us a few weeks in the spring, 1747 ; when our discouragements from the government were renewed and multiplied ; for, upon a Lord's day, a proclamation was set up at our meeting house, strictly requiring all magistrates to suppress and prohibit, as far as they lawfully could, all itinerant preachers, &c. which occasioned us to forbear reading that day, till we had time to deliberate and consult what was expedient to do ; but how joyfully were we surprised before the next Sabbath, when we unexpectedly heard that Mr. Davies was come to preach so long among us, and especially that he had qualified himself, according to law, and obtained the licensing of four meeting-houses among us, which had never been done before. Thus man's extremity is the Lord's opportunity. For this seasonable interposition of Divine Providence, we desire to offer our grateful praises, and we importune the friends of Zion, to concur with us.

“ Thus far Mr. Morris's narrative. Then the Rev. Mr. Davies proceeds to give an account of the state of their affairs since he came among them in April, 1747.— ‘Upon my arrival, I petitioned the general court to grant me a license to officiate in and about Hanover, at four meeting-houses, which, after some delay, was granted, upon my qualifying according to the act of Toleration. I preached frequently in Hanover, and some of the adjacent counties ; and though the fervour of the late work was considerably abated, and my labours were not blessed with success equal to those of my brethren, yet I have reason to hope they were of service, in several instances. The importunities they used with me to settle with them were invincible ; and

upon my departure, they sent a call for me to the presbytery. After I returned from Virginia, I spent a year under melancholy and consumptive languishments, expecting death. In the spring of 1748, I began slowly to recover, though I then looked on it only as the intermission of a disorder that would finally prove mortal. But upon the arrival of a messenger from Hanover, I put my life in my hand, and determined to accept of their call, hoping I might live to prepare the way for some more useful successor, and willing to expire under the fatigues of duty, rather than in voluntary negligence. The Hon. Sir Wm. Gooch our late governor, always discovered a ready disposition to allow us all claimable privileges, and the greatest aversion to persecuting measures; but, considering the shocking reports spread abroad concerning us by officious malignants, it was no great wonder that the council discovered considerable reluctance to tolerate us. Had it not been for this, I persuade myself they would have shown themselves the guardians of our legal privileges, as well as generous patriots to their country, which is the character generally given them. In October, 1748, besides the four meeting-houses already mentioned, the people petitioned for the licensing of three more, which with great difficulty was obtained. Among these seven, I have hitherto divided my time. Three of them lay in Hanover county, the other four in the counties of Henrico, Carolina, Louisa, and Goochland. The nearest are twelve or fifteen miles distant from each other, and the extremes about forty. My congregation is very much dispersed, and notwithstanding the number of the meeting-houses, some live twenty, some thirty, and a few forty miles from the nearest. Were they all compactly situated in one county, they would be sufficient to form three distinct congregations. Many of the church people also attend when there is sermon at any of these houses. This I looked upon at first as mere curiosity after novelty, but as it continues, and in some places seems to increase, I cannot but look upon it as a happy token of their being at length thoroughly engaged. And I have the greater reason to hope so now, as experience has confirmed my former hopes. Fifty or sixty families having thus been happily

entangled in the net of the gospel by their own curiosity, or some such motive. There are about three hundred communicants in my congregation, of whom the greatest number are in the judgment of rational charity, real Christians. Besides some, who, through excessive scrupulousness, do not seek admission to the Lord's table. There is also a number of Negroes. Sometimes I see an hundred and more among my hearers. (Psal. lxxviii. 31.) I have baptized about forty of them within these three years, upon such a profession of faith as I then judged credible. Some of them, I fear, have apostatized; but others I trust, will persevere to the end. I have had as satisfying evidences of as sincere piety from several of them, as I ever had from any person in my life, and their artless simplicity, their passionate aspirations after Christ, their incessant endeavours to know and do the will of God, have charmed me. But alas! while my charge is so extensive, I cannot take sufficient pains with them for their instruction, which often oppresses my heart.

“There have been instances of unhappy apostacy among us; but, blessed be God, not many in proportion to the number brought under concern. At present there are a few under promising impressions; but, in general, a lamentable security prevails. Oh, for a little reviving in our bondage! I might have given you a particular account of the conversion of some persons here, as indeed there are some uncommon instances of it, but I shall only observe in general, that abstracting from particular circumstances, the work of conversion has been carried on in such steps as are described by experimental divines, as Allein, Shepherd, Stoddard, Flavel, &c. And nothing confirms me more in the truth of their opinions concerning experimental piety, than this agreement and uniformity as to the substance, in the exercises of those that can make the fairest claim to saving grace. There is one Isaac Oliver here, whose history, could I write it intelligibly to you, would be very entertaining. He has been deaf and dumb from his birth, and yet I have the utmost reason to believe he is truly gracious, and also acquainted with most of the doctrines, and many of the historical facts of the Bible. I have seen him represent the cru-

cifixion of Christ in such significant signs, that I could not but understand them. Those that live in the house with him, can hold conversation with him very readily. There is so much of the devout ardour of his soul discovered at times, as is really affecting, and I have seen him converse in signs about the love and sufferings of Christ, till he has been transported into earnestness, and dissolved in tears. The above Mr. Morris, with whom he lives, has told me, that eight years ago, he appeared remarkably changed, and ever since is very conscientious in the whole of his behaviour; generally delights to attend both public and family worship, though he cannot hear a word; and is observed sometimes to retire to secret prayer, though he signifies that he is praying with his heart, when about his business, or in company, which is peculiarly practicable to him, as in all places he enjoys retirement. I could relate several peculiarities about him; but as they are unintelligible to myself, or might seem incredible to those that are unacquainted with him, I omit them. So much, however, I know of him, that I cannot but look upon him as a miraculous monument of Almighty grace, that can perform its purposes on men, notwithstanding the greatest natural or moral impediments; and I submit it to the judgment of others, whether a person so incapable of external instructions, could be brought to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven any other way than by immediate revelation. Besides the people here, several of my brethren, who have been here, particularly Messrs. Samuel Blair and John Roan, can attest this relation. I forgot to inform you, in its proper place, that the Rev. Mr. Davenport was sent by the synod to Hanover last summer, and continued here about two months. And, blest be God, did not labour in vain. Some were brought under concern, and many of the Lord's people much revived, who can never forget the instrument of it.

"Thus, dear Sir, I have given you a brief account of what I am persuaded you will readily own to be the work of the Lord. We claim no infallibility, but we must not fall into scepticism. If we could form no judgment of such a work, why should we pretend to promote the conversion of men, if

we cannot have any satisfying knowledge of it, when it appears? Indeed, the evidence of its divinity here is so irresistible, that it has extorted an acknowledgment from some from whom it could hardly be expected. Were you, Sir, a narrow bigot, you would, no doubt, rejoice to hear that there are now some hundreds of dissenters in a place, where, a few years ago, there were not ten; but I assure myself of your congratulations on a nobler account, because a considerable number of perishing sinners are gained to the blessed Redeemer, with whom, though you never see them here, you may spend a blissful eternity. After all, poor Virginia demands your compassion, for religion at present is but like the cloud which Elijah's servant saw. Oh that it may spread and cover the land!

“As to other counties where dissenters are settled.—There are two congregations, one in Albermarle, and one in Augusta county, belonging to the synod of Philadelphia, that have ministers settled among them: but those that have put themselves under the care of the New Castle presbytery (which are vastly more numerous), notwithstanding their repeated endeavours, are still destitute of ministers. There are as many of them as would form five distinct congregations, three at least in Augusta, one in Frederick, and one at least in Lunenburgh and Amelia.* Notwithstanding the supplies our presbytery have sent them, some of them, particularly Lunenburgh, have been both a year together without one sermon. I hope one of them may soon be provided by a pious young man, Mr. Todd, sent by New Brunswick presbytery, but I have no prospect as to the rest; for I can now count up at least six or seven vacant congregations in Pennsylvania, and two or three in Maryland, besides the five mentioned in the frontier counties of Virginia, and a part of my own congregation, which I would willingly declare vacant, had they opportunity of obtaining another minister. And there are but twelve members in New Castle presbytery, and two or three candidates that are pre-engaged to vacancies in Pennsylvania. We have indeed of late li-

* Now Charlotte, and Cumberland.

censed several pious youths, but our vacancies increase almost as fast as our ministers, by the settlement of new places, or the breaking out of religious concern in places where there was little before; and some of our most useful members are lately called home by death; such as Messrs. Robinson and Dean, and now Mr. Samuel Blair. May the Lord induce faithful ministers from New England, or wherever they might be spared, to come and help us! While these congregations have been destitute of settled pastors, itinerant preaching among them has, by the blessing of God, been very useful. Mr. Robinson underwent great hardships in North Carolina, without much success, by reason of the fewness and savage ignorance of the inhabitants; but the case is now happily altered. A new congregation, I think upon Pee-dee river, sent a petition lately to our presbytery for a minister. Besides this, I hear of several other places in North Carolina, that are ripening very fast for the gospel. 'O that the Lord would send forth faithful labourers into his harvest!' Mr. Robinson was the instrument of awakening several in Lunenburg and Amelia, with whom I lately spent a fortnight, at their earnest desire; and there is a prospect of doing much service, were they furnished with a faithful minister. I met with most encouragement in a part of Amelia county, where very few had heard any of my brethren. The assemblies were large even on week days, and sometimes there appeared much solemnity and affection among them. There appears great probability of success, if they had a faithful minister. It was really afflicting to me that the necessity of my own congregation constrained me to leave them so soon. In Augusta, there is a great number of solid lively Christians. There was a pretty general awakening there some years ago, under the ministry of Messrs. Dean and Byram. I believe three ministers might live very comfortably among them. In Frederick county, there has also been (as I am informed by my brethren who have been there) a considerable awakening some years ago, which has had a blessed issue in many, and the congregation have been seeking a minister these several years. In Maryland also, there has been a consider-

able revival (shall I call it ?) or first plantation of religion, in Baltimore county, where I am informed Mr. Whittlesey is likely to settle. In Kent county, and Queen Anne's, a number of careless sinners have been awakened and hopefully brought to Christ. The work was begun and chiefly carried on by the instrumentality of that favoured man Mr. Robinson, whose success, whenever I reflect upon it, astonishes me. Oh ! he did much in a little time, and who would not choose such an expeditious pilgrimage through this world ? There is, in these places, a considerable congregation, and they have have made repeated essays to obtain a settled minister. There was a great stir about religion in Buckingham, a place on the sea-shore, about four years ago, which has since spread and issued in a hopeful conversion in several instances. They also want a minister. But the most glorious display of divine grace in Maryland has been in and about Somerset county. It began, I think, in 1745, by the ministry of Mr. Robinson, and was afterwards carried on by several ministers that preached transiently there. I was there about two months, when the work was at its height, and I never saw such a deep and spreading concern : the assemblies were numerous, though in the extremity of a cold winter, and unwearied in attending the word ; and frequently there were very few among them that did not give some plain indications of distress or joy. Oh ! these were the happiest days that ever my eyes saw. Since that, the harvest seems over there, though considerable gleanings, I hear, are still gathered. They have of late got Mr. Henry for their minister, a young man, who, I trust, will be an extensive blessing to that part of the colony. I shall prize it, dear Sir, as a great blessing, if you and others of the Lord's servants and people in distant parts, favour us with your prayers. And shall be glad to correspond with them. Our acquaintance with the various parts of the church, qualifies us to adapt our prayers to their state. May your Divine Master bless you and succeed your ministrations, and pour out his Spirit on the land where you reside. I am, &c.*

* " May 22d, 1745, Mr. G. Tennant and Mr. Davies, being at Edin-

Not only in Hanover, but in all the places, where Mr. Robinson preached, there were permanent fruits of his labours. The writer has seen and conversed with a number of persons who were brought to serious consideration under the ministry of this successful evangelist. Old John White, who resided near Charlestown, in Jefferson county, and who was the father of judge White of Winchester, was one of Mr. Robinson's great admirers, and I believe, brought to the experimental knowledge of the truth under his ministry. Old Mr. Hoge, the father of the Rev. Dr. Moses Hoge, who was a Seceder, in-

burgh, as agents for the trustees of the college of New-Jersey (an institution that promises well, if the Lord vouchsafe it his blessing, for the success of the gospel,) Mr. Davies informs, that one Mr. Brown is lately ordained in Augusta county, where there were sundry congregations vacant ever since their first settlement; that he has the care of two meetings, and as he is a youth of piety, prudence, and zeal, there is reason to expect that his labours will be of service in that wilderness, not only in his own more peculiar charge, but in the neighboring places that have no minister of their own. Also, that Mr. John Wright, who supplies Mr. Davies' charge in his absence, has wrote, that since he has officiated in his place, there are considerable appearances of success in Caroline and Henrico, where Mr. Davies was apprehensive he labored much in vain. When Mr. Davies left Virginia in August, last, there was a hopeful appearance of a greater spread of religious concern among the Negroes. A few weeks before he left home, he baptized in one day fifteen Negroes after they had been catechised for some months, and given credible evidences of their sincerely embracing the gospel. He also says, that Isaac Oliver, the dumb man mentioned in his letter above, has behaved as one would expect from such promising beginnings, his conduct being such as becomes the profession of the gospel."

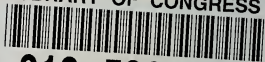
formed the writer, that he often heard Robinson when he preached at Opekin and Cedar Creek, in Frederick county; and while he admitted that he preached the gospel faithfully, and with great zeal; yet said, there was a want of method in his discourses. After Mr. Robinson's return from this interesting tour, he laboured in the state of New York, with his usual success; and also in some congregations in Maryland, where there was a blessed work of grace under his ministry.

Probably Mr. Robinson, during the short period of his life, was the instrument in the conversion of as many souls, as any minister who ever lived in this country. The only circumstance relating to his person which has come down is, that he was blind of one eye; so that by some he was called "the one-eyed Robinson."

We are also entirely ignorant of the circumstances of his death. This event we know occurred before the year 1751, in which Mr. Davies wrote his letter to Mr. Bellamy, for it is mentioned with grief in that communication. If we mistake not, Mr. Davies has celebrated the labours and successes of this servant of God, in one of his poems; and Mr. Tennent, somewhere, speaks of him as "that wonderful man." Mr. Robinson was never married, and had, it is believed, no relatives in this country; and as far as appears never printed anything, nor left any of his writings to be a memorial to posterity of his

fervent piety and evangelical spirit. It is not even known, where his body rests ; but his glorious Master whom he served so faithfully in the gospel, will know where to find it, when He shall come to resuscitate the bodies of his saints.

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