

THE

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BIOGRAPHY.

LIFE OF THE REV. WILLIAM TENNENT.

Among the duties which every generation owes to those which are to succeed it, we may reckon the careful delineation of the characters of those whose example deserves, and may invite imitation. Example speaks louder than precept, and living practical religion has a much greater effect on mankind than argument or eloquence. Hence, the lives of pious men become the most important sources of instruction and warning to posterity; while their exemplary conduct affords the best commentary on the religion they professed. But when such men have been remarkably favoured of God, with unusual degrees of light and knowledge, and have been honoured by the special and extraordinary influences of his Holy Spirit, and by the most manifest and wonderful interpositions of divine Providence in their behalf, it becomes a duty of more than common obligation, to hand down to posterity the principal events of their lives, together with such useful inferences as they naturally suggest. A neglect of this duty, even by persons who may be conscious of the want of abilities necessary for the complete biographer, is greatly culpable; for, if the strictest attention be paid to the truth of the facts related, and all exaggeration or partial representation be carefully avoided, the want of other furniture can be no excuse for burying in oblivion that conduct, which, if known, might edify and benefit the world.

The writer of these memoirs has difficulties of a peculiar kind to encounter, in attempting to sketch the life of that modest,

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RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

THE following very interesting letter from the Rev. Gideon Blackburn, missionary among the Cherokee Indians, in the state of Tennessee, to the chairman of the standing committee of missions, has been lately received. Can wealthy christians read it, and not offer him some assistance! The second Indian school which he has opened, he will have to provide for principally himself. The funds of the General Assembly, already burdened to the utmost, can afford him but little, perhaps no relief.

Maryville, Jan. 27, 1806.

REV. SIR,

I sensibly feel the need of friendly counsel. Could I but sit beside you a few minutes, it would probably relieve my mind; however, I am relieved by the consideration that *Jesus* reigns.

Early in this winter, an Indian, named Quotoquiske, three of whose sons and step-sons I have at school, went to Charlestown to lay in some goods, as he is engaging in the line of merchandizing, and took with him one of the boys, who was so advanced as not only to be an interpreter, but also to do business for his father. During their stay in the city, the boy became infected with the small-pox, though it never was discovered until he had reached the borders of the nation on his return home. The Indians incautiously flocked round him, as he passed through the towns, to see what was the matter, and before he arrived at home on the 18th instant, it is probable he had spread the infection pretty generally. I was immediately notified, and went without delay to the school, knowing that none of the master's family, except himself, had ever had the small-pox; and also, that the children had scarcely all returned after a short vacation I had given them at the beginning of the year. The most of them came through the neighbourhood of the infected family, which was only eight miles from the school. I found thirteen only had arrived, and several of the rest, as I expected, were in the neighbourhood of the disease. I, therefore, thought proper to forbid their coming on, till it should be determined whether they were infected. The case was truly critical! the poor little dear children earnestly begging of me to do something to save them, and I had nothing in my power; as I had made immediate inquiry of the faculty

for the vaccine matter, but was told there was none in the state; and should I inoculate with the variolus matter, and any of the children die, the other Indians would undoubtedly be offended, and the institution would be ruined. To remove them to the settlements would have been both hazardous and expensive; as some bad fellows, who are disaffected, would have immediately reported that I was kidnapping the children; and, likewise, as I had laid in provisions for the season, it would have been costly to remove fifty miles through the wilderness. To force the poor little crying things to face the danger, by disbanding the school, appeared cruel; I, therefore, determined to keep those who were at the school together, using such simple preventatives or preparatives as were in my power, hoping they might escape, until you might have it in your power to send me the vaccine matter, which, if it could seasonably arrive, might not only save the school, but a large share of the nation. Oh! how humanity, especially if aided by sincere piety, drops the tender tear at the reflection of so distressing a disorder raging amongst, and hurrying into eternity, poor savage souls, unacquainted with their destiny or their God! Can the civilized world be clear of guilt, in so long neglecting the rescue of poor heathens from their savage state? The Lord has made us treasurers of his bounty, and loudly called on us to give of his own to save his savage offspring; and oh, how many christians refuse to comply, or do it so sparingly as to be inadequate to answer the end!

In August last, in answer to the pressing request of that part of the nation, I established another school, in the lower part of the nation, which consists of from twenty-five to thirty-two scholars. They are learning to admiration. I shall have it shortly in my power to send you specimens of their industry and progress, which will surprise you. This school I have opened, trusting in God that he will bring about some means to defray its expense. Had I sufficient to carry on education, by christian teachers, to the extent the Indians would now desire, a few years would raise in the forests civilized families and magnificent churches; but my poverty, and the wants of a little family, tie my hands. This, together with the continuation of the affliction in my leg, which often obliges me to climb the craggy cliff

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when I cannot ride, by the help of my crutch, causes me to sit down in the lonely forest and vent my wishes in tears of distress. But, glory to God! the day is coming when the heathen shall be given to Jesus, and the treasures of the rich shall bear the tidings of the gospel to the ends of the earth. I shall then see accomplished what I ardently desired; what, in pain indescribable, I laboured to effect, but could not.

I wish to see you in May, if the greatness of the fatigue I have to undergo, and the intenseness of the pain I suffer, does not make it impossible. I have also a poor little family for whose support I am obliged to labour, at every hour I can spare from my parochial or missionary labours. May the Lord soon build up Zion, and make her a praise in the earth.

I am, &c.

GIDEON BLACKBURN.

Rev. Ashbel Green.

Extract from the Report of the Directors of the Missionary Society, to their eleventh General Meeting, held in London, on the 8th, 9th, and 10th of May, 1805.

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AFRICA.

THE DIRECTORS in the next place advert to the state of our missions in South Africa, of which, however, through the interruption of direct and regular communication with the Cape, they are not enabled to speak so particularly as they wish. From our excellent brother Dr. Vanderkemp, no intelligence has been received later than Feb. 29th, 1804; that intelligence, however, was highly satisfactory; as it not only assured us of the continuance of his valuable life, and the restoration, in some degree, of his health; but affords fresh occasion to thank the Lord of the harvest for the powerful influences of the Holy Spirit crowning his labours, and those of Mr. Read, his faithful colleague, with considerable success.

The particulars of this success we have obtained from the Annual Report of this mission, for the year 1803, drawn up by brother Read, and to which the Doctor refers in his letter. This Report after long delay, has come to hand, and contains important information. The gospel, which proved, in many happy instances, the power of God to the salvation of the poor Hottentots, became a stumbling-block and a rock of offence to many of the Boors, who notwithstanding the name of christians, which they undeser-

vedly bear, laboured to keep the Hottentots in total ignorance of the gospel, and were enraged at the missionaries, the diffusion of whose light discovered and condemned their horrid acts of oppression and murder. Irritated to the highest pitch, they laboured to seduce the people into drunkenness, whoredom, and other vices, and to prejudice their minds by the most injurious falsehoods; they would have rejoiced to destroy the lives both of the missionaries and their disciples, and when they could not effect this, they committed depredations on their property.

Amidst these difficulties and dangers, our brethren were sometimes on the point of determining to leave their situation. But the Lord by his good providence interposed in their favour, and on the arrival of the Dutch governor Jansens they obtained protection while they continued there; and, as was mentioned in a former report, the seat of the mission was removed by the advice of the Governor, to a spot now called Bethelsdorp, where, we presume, the labours of our brethren are yet continued. A settlement was formed at this place, in which a church and habitations were speedily constructed, the walls and roof of which are composed of reeds; extensive gardens were also planted, and every prudent measure adopted to procure a supply of corn, and various kinds of vegetables for the use of the little colony. A plan of this settlement has lately been forwarded from Holland, and will appear, probably, in the next number of our transactions. Their school consists of about 30 or 40 children, of whom 20 could read and spell.

Our brethren, during their dangers and trials, consoled themselves in the expectation of being soon joined by brother Irvin, who had long waited at the Cape for a conveyance to Algoa Bay; but it has pleased the sovereign Disposer of human events to disappoint their hopes and ours; for the vessel in which he sailed was wrecked on the coast, and the Society was deprived of a truly devoted servant of Christ, whose labours at the Cape and its vicinity, especially among the soldiers, had been eminently useful. By the loss of this vessel our brethren were also disappointed in their expectation of receiving a printing press, cash, and other supplies, sent out by this society for their use; but, says the Doctor, "we lay our hands upon our mouth, and say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away,'" he also adds, with truly