

ENCYCLOPÆDIA
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

INCLUDING THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN ASSEMBLIES.

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AND OTHER EMINENT MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH.

Including a Description of the Historic Decorations of the Pan Presbyterian Council of 1880,

By REV. HENRY C. MCCOOK, D. D., LL. D.

Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following—PSALM XLVIII, 12, 13.

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the Episcopal Church of Ireland, in which he took orders. After entering the holy ministry, he acted as chaplain to an Irish nobleman, but there is no evidence that he was settled over a parish in that country. He remained in Ireland until he was past middle age. With the hope of enjoying more liberty of conscience, and having greater facilities for doing good than in his own country, he removed to America, landing at Philadelphia, September 6th, 1718, with his family, consisting of his wife, four sons and one daughter.

Soon after his arrival in this country, Mr. Tennent applied to the Synod of Philadelphia to be received as a minister into their connection. The Synod, after "due deliberation," agreed to receive him. This was done September 17th, 1718. Being thus



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introduced into the Presbyterian Church, he went, in November following, to East Chester, N. Y., where he continued, probably as a stated supply, for about eighteen months. In May, 1720, he removed from thence to Bedford, Westchester county, N. Y., and took charge of the church at that place, of which he was pastor till August, 1726. After leaving Bedford, he went to preach at Bensalem and Smithfield, in Bucks county, Pa. Subsequently, and soon after, but at what precise date it is not easy to decide, he accepted a call from the Church at Neshaminy, in the same county, where he remained till the close of his life. He had two congregations, distinguished as the Upper and Lower. Soon after his removal to Neshaminy, being deeply impressed with the importance of a well educated as well as pious ministry, he

established a school at which young men might acquire the requisite qualifications for the sacred office (See LOG COLLEGE). Whitefield, who had visited this institution, wrote to a friend in Philadelphia, July 15th, 1740: "I rejoice you have been at Neshaminy. I can say of Mr. Tennent and his brethren, as David did of Goliath's sword: 'None like them.'"

Mr. Tennent was, by his position at Neshaminy, a member of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, but when the division of the Synod took place, he attached himself to the New Brunswick Presbytery, to which his sons, Gilbert and William, belonged. For some time before his death his health was so feeble that he was unable to perform the duties of the pastoral office, and his pulpit was supplied by the Presbytery. He died at his own house in Neshaminy, May 6th, 1745, aged seventy-three, coming to the grave in a good old age, like a shock of corn, fully ripe. He was buried in the Presbyterian burying-ground, where his tomb may yet be seen.

A writer in the May number of the *Assembly's Magazine*, for the year 1805, says of Mr. Tennent: "He was eminent as a classical scholar. His attainments in science are not so well known, but there is reason to believe that they were not so great as his skill in language. His general character appears to have been that of a man of great integrity, simplicity, industry and piety." "To William Tennent, above all others," says Rev. Richard Webster, "is owing the prosperity and enlargement of the Presbyterian Church. Other men were conservative, and to their timely erection of barriers we owe our deliverance from the 'New Light' of Antrim; others were valiant for the truth, and exerted by the pen a wide influence on the age; many were steadily and largely useful in particular departments and in limited spheres; but Tennent had the rare gift of attracting to him youth of worth and genius, imbuing them with his healthful spirit, and sending them forth, sound in the faith, blameless in life, burning with zeal, and unsurpassed as instructive and successful preachers.

Tennent, Rev. William, Jr., the second son of the Rev. William Tennent, Sr., was born June 3d, 1705, in the county of Armagh, in Ireland, and was just turned of thirteen years when he arrived in America. He applied himself, with much zeal and industry, to his studies, and made great proficiency in the languages, particularly in the Latin. Being early impressed with a deep sense of divine things, he soon determined to follow the example of his father and elder brother, by devoting himself to the service of God in the ministry of the gospel. He studied theology under the direction of his brother Gilbert, who had pastoral charge of the Church at New Brunswick, N. J.

In October, 1733, he was installed pastor of the Church at Freehold, N. J. After a life of great usefulness, he died at Freehold, March 8th, 1777, aged seventy-one. He was the friend of the poor. The

public lost in him a firm asserter of the civil and religious rights of his country. Few men have ever been more holy in life, more submissive to the will of God under heavy afflictions, or more peaceful in death.

Mr. Tennent was well skilled in theology, and professed himself a moderate Calvinist. The doctrines of man's depravity, the atonement of Christ, the necessity of the all-powerful influence of the Holy Spirit to renew the heart, in consistency with the free agency of the sinner, were among the leading articles of his faith. With his friends, he was at all times cheerful and pleasant. He once dined in company with Governor Livingston and Mr. Whitefield, when the latter expressed the consolation he found in believing, amidst the fatigues of the day, that his

acquainted with all the members of the remarkable Tennent family, published a memoir of the Rev. William Tennent, Jr., in which the following interesting incident of his history is related:—

"After a regular course of study in theology, Mr. Tennent was preparing for his examination, by the Presbytery, as a candidate for the gospel ministry. His intense application affected his health, and brought on a pain in his breast and a slight hectic. He soon became emaciated, and at length was like a living skeleton. His life was now threatened. He was attended by a physician, a young gentleman who was attached to him by the strictest and warmest friendship. He grew worse and worse, till little hope of life was left. In this situation his spirits failed him, and he began to entertain doubts of his final happiness. He was conversing one morning with his brother, in Latin, on the state of his soul, when he fainted and died away. After the usual time he was laid out on a board, according to the common practice of the country, and the neighborhood were invited to attend his funeral on the next day. In the evening his physician and friend returned from a ride in the country, and was afflicted beyond measure at the news of his death. He could not be persuaded that it was certain, and on being told that one of the persons who had assisted in laying out the body thought he had observed a little tremor of the flesh under the arm, although the body was cold and stiff, he endeavored to ascertain the fact. He first put his own hand into warm water, to make it as sensible as possible, and then felt under the arm, and at the heart, and affirmed that he felt an unusual warmth, though no one else could. He had the body restored to a warm bed, and insisted that the people who had been invited to the funeral should be requested not to attend. To this the brother objected, as absurd, the eyes being sunk, the lips discolored, and the whole body cold and stiff. However, the doctor finally prevailed, and all probable means were used to discover symptoms of returning life. But the third day arrived, and no hopes were entertained of success but by the doctor, who never left him, night nor day. The people were again invited, and assembled to attend the funeral. The doctor still objected, and at last confined his request for delay to one hour, then to half an hour, and finally to a quarter of an hour. He had discovered that the tongue was much swollen, and threatened to crack. He was endeavoring to soften it by some emollient ointment, put upon it with a feather, when the brother came in, about the expiration of the last period, and mistaking what the doctor was doing for an attempt to feed him, manifested some resentment, and, in a spirited tone, said: 'It is shameful to be feeding a lifeless corpse;' and insisted, with earnestness, that the funeral should immediately proceed. At this critical and important moment the body, to the great alarm and astonishment of all present, opened its eyes, gave a dreadful groan, and sunk again into apparent death. This put an end to all thoughts of burying him, and every effort was again employed, in hopes of bringing about a speedy resuscitation. In about an hour the eyes again opened, a heavy groan proceeded from the body, and again all appearance of animation vanished. In another hour life seemed to return with more power, and a complete revival took place, to the great joy of the family and friends, and to the no small astonishment and conviction of very many who had been ridiculing the idea of restoring to life a dead body.

"Mr. Tennent continued in so weak and low a state for six weeks that great doubts were entertained of his final recovery. However, after that period he recovered much faster, but it was about twelve months before he was completely restored. After he was able to walk the room, and to take notice of what passed around him, on a Sunday afternoon, his sister, who had staid from church to attend him, was reading in the Bible, when he took notice of it and asked her what she had in her hand. She answered that she was reading the Bible. He replied: 'What is the Bible? I know not what you mean.' This affected the sister so much that she burst into tears, and informed him that he was once well acquainted with it. On her reporting this to the brother, when he returned, Mr. Tennent was found, upon examination, to be totally ignorant of every transaction of life previous to his sickness. He could not read a single word, neither did he seem to have any idea of what it meant. As soon as he became capable of attention he was taught to read and



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work would soon be done, and that he should depart and be with Christ. He appealed to Mr. Tennent whether this was not *his* comfort. Mr. Tennent replied: "What do you think I should say, if I was to send my man, Tom, into the field to plow, and at noon find him lounging under a tree, complaining of the heat and of his difficult work, and begging to be discharged of his hard service? What should I say? Why, that he was an idle, lazy fellow, and that it was his business to do the work that I had appointed him."

In *The Assembly's Missionary Magazine*, in 1806, the Hon. Elias Bondinot, LL.D., who was well

write, as children are usually taught, and afterwards began to learn the Latin language, under the tuition of his brother. One day, as he was reciting a lesson in Cornelius Nepos, he suddenly started, clapped his hand to his head, as if something had hurt him, and made a pause. His brother asking him what was the matter, he said that he felt a sudden shock in his head, and now it seemed to him as if he had read that book before. By degrees his recollection was restored, and he could speak the Latin as fluently as before his sickness. His memory so completely revived that he gained a perfect knowledge of the past transactions of his life, as if no difficulty had previously occurred. This event, at the time, made a considerable noise, and afforded not only matter of serious contemplation to the devout Christian, especially when connected with what follows in this narration, but furnished a subject of deep investigation and learned inquiry to the real philosopher and curious anatomist.

"The writer of these memoirs was greatly interested by these uncommon events, and, on a favorable occasion, earnestly pressed Mr. Tennent for a minute account of what his views and apprehensions were while he lay in this extraordinary state of suspended animation. He discovered great reluctance to enter into any explanation of his perceptions and feelings, at this time, but being importunately urged to do it, he at length consented, and proceeded, with a solemnity not to be described.

"While I was conversing with my brother," said he, "on the state of my soul, and the fears I had entertained for my future welfare, I found myself, in an instant, in another state of existence, under the direction of a superior being, who ordered me to follow him. I was accordingly wafted along, I know not how, till I beheld at a distance an ineffable glory, the impression of which on my mind it is impossible to communicate to mortal man. I immediately reflected on my happy change, and thought, Well, blessed be God! I am safe at last, notwithstanding all my fears. I saw an innumerable host of happy beings surrounding the inexpressible glory, in acts of adoration and joyous worship; but I did not see any bodily shape or representation in the glorious appearance. I heard things unutterable. I heard their songs and hallelujahs of thanksgiving and praise, with unspeakable rapture. I felt joy unutterable and full of glory. I then applied to my conductor, and requested leave to join the happy throng; on which he tapped me on the shoulder, and said, 'You must return to the earth.' This seemed like a sword through my heart. In an instant, I recollect to have seen my brother standing before me, disputing with the doctor. The three days during which I had appeared lifeless seemed to me not more than ten or twenty minutes. The idea of returning to this world of sorrow and trouble gave me such a shock, that I fainted repeatedly.' He added, 'Such was the effect on my mind of what I had seen and heard, that if it be possible for a human being to live entirely above the world and the things of it, for some time afterwards I was that person. The ravishing sound of the songs and hallelujahs that I heard, and the very words uttered, were not out of my ears when awake, for at least three years. All the kingdoms of the earth were in my sight as nothing and vanity; and so great were my ideas of heavenly glory, that nothing which did not in some measure relate to it could command my serious attention.'"

Tennent, Rev. William, a son of Rev. William Tennent, of Freehold, N. J.; was licensed by the Presbytery of New Brunswick in 1761, and ordained the next year. Soon after he went to Virginia on a missionary tour, by order of the Synod, where he remained six months. In 1765, he became pastor of a Congregational Church at Norwalk, Conn., but retaining his connection with the Presbytery. In 1772 he accepted a pressing call to an Independent Church in Charleston, S. C., where he was received with great favor, and soon wielded a commanding influence, both in the pulpit and out of it. Mr. Tennent was an active and flaming patriot, and a noble preacher. He died August 11th, 1777.

Tennent, William Mackay, D. D., was a son of Rev. Charles Tennent, of Delaware, and a nephew of William and Gilbert Tennent. He was ordained June 17th, 1772, as pastor of the Congregational Church in Greenfield, Conn. In December, 1781, he accepted a call to the Presbyterian Church at Abington, Pa., where he continued until his death, December, 1810. In 1797 Dr. Tennent was Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. Dr. A. Alexander, who knew him personally, represents him as a man of great sweetness of temper and politeness of manner, and as distinguished for his hospitality. In his last hours he was blessed with an uninterrupted assurance of the favor of God.

Ter-centenary Celebration. An overture from the Synod of Toledo, and also one from the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, came before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, at its sessions in Chicago, A. D., 1871, asking the Assembly to take order for the celebration, during the year 1872, of the three hundredth anniversary of the completion of the work and life of John Knox in Scotland, the organization of the first Presbytery in England, and the martyrdoms of St. Bartholomew's Day in France. The Assembly recommended the observance of this Ter-centenary year to all the Synods, Presbyteries and congregations, and a committee of three, the Moderator (Rev. Z. M. Humphrey, D. D.) being chairman, was appointed to secure an address or addresses, to be delivered during the sessions of the Assembly of 1872. The purpose of this action was to revive in the hearts of the clergy and awaken in the hearts of the people an intelligent interest in the noble army of martyrs and confessors who, from the very earliest ages, have professed, defended and suffered for the Scriptural doctrine and order known as Presbyterianism. The ultimate aim was to deepen the attachment of Presbyterians to their Church and its pure and apostolic principles of faith and government.

The arrangements for carrying out the provisions of the General Assembly were most heartily entered upon. In the Assembly of 1872, convened in the city of Detroit, a special meeting was held, at which admirable addresses were made by Rev. Edward P. Humphrey, D. D., of Louisville, Ky., and Rev. Samuel M. Hopkins, D. D., of Auburn, N. Y. The meeting was marked by the most profound enthusiasm and interest. The theme of Dr. Humphrey's address was "JOHN KNOX," that of Dr. Hopkins, the "HUGENOTS."

During the year, similar celebrations were held by Synods, Presbyteries, communities and congregations throughout the entire bounds of the Church. Never before had there been so many and so well-used opportunities to spread among the people intelligence of the noble men, the historic deeds, and the Scriptural principles of the Presbyterian Church. The people