

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.

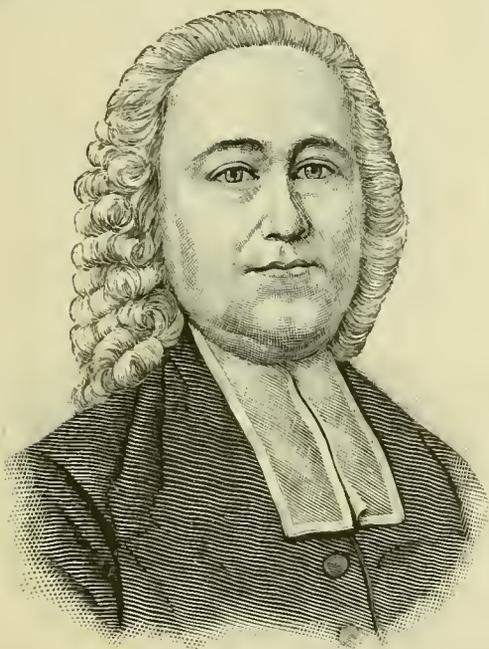
Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following—PSALM XLVIII, 12, 13.

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patience. Though he had sensibility to character as well as other men, yet he was willing to encounter disgrace rather than neglect preaching the Truth, however offensive to the sinful, whom he wished to reclaim.

Towards the close of the year 1740, and in the beginning of the year 1741, he made a tour in New England, at the request of Mr. Whitefield. An astonishing efficacy accompanied his labors. Visiting various towns, he was everywhere remarkably useful. In this tour, the dress in which he commonly entered the pulpit was a great coat, girt about him with a leathern girdle, while his natural hair was left undressed. His large stature and grave aspect added a dignity to the simplicity, or rather rusticity, of his appearance.



REV. GILBERT TENNET.

In 1744 he removed to Philadelphia and took charge of the Second Congregation. "Here," says Webster, "his feet were blistered in traversing the streets and visiting such numbers of distressed souls. He called on Franklin to point out suitable persons from whom to solicit aid in erecting a house of worship. The philosopher told the 'enthusiast' to call on everybody; he did so, and built the church." In 1753, Mr. Tennent, at the request of the Trustees of New Jersey College, went to England to solicit funds for that Institution. After a life of great usefulness, he died, in much peace, about the year 1765.

For more than forty years, Mr. Tennent had enjoyed a habitual, unshaken assurance of his interest in redeeming love. In his manner, he was affable, condescending and communicative. He was endeared

by his frankness and undisguised honesty, eminent for public spirit and great fortitude; his mind was enriched by much reading, and his heart was laden with a rich experience of divine grace. As a preacher, he was equaled by few; his reasoning was strong, his language forcible, and often sublime, his manner warm and earnest. With admirable dexterity he exposed the false hope of the hypocrite, and searched the corrupt heart to the bottom. He said of some of his earliest sermons that he begged them, with tears, of the Lord Jesus. Among Mr. Tennent's numerous publications were two volumes of sermons.

Tennent, Rev. John, the third son of Rev. William Tennent, Sr., was born in the county of Armagh, in Ireland, November 12th, 1707. The whole of his education he obtained under the paternal roof, and in the Log College which his father had founded at Neshaminy. After passing the usual trials before the Presbytery of Philadelphia, he was licensed to preach the gospel. November 19th, 1730, he was ordained pastor of the Church at Freehold, N. J., where his labors were attended with prudence, diligence and success.

Mr. Tennent died April 23d, 1732, in the twenty-fifth year of his age. 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 graveyard near to the church where he preached, and where his tombstone may yet be seen.

As far as can be judged from the accounts which have come down to us, there is reason to believe that, both in piety and talents, Mr. Tennent was not inferior to any 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."

Tennent, Rev. William, Sr., was born in Ireland, in 1673. He received a liberal education, but at what college or university is not known. It is probable, however, that he obtained his learning at Trinity College, Dublin, as he belonged originally to

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



REV. WILLIAM TENNENT, SR.

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