

DOCUMENTS
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Roeters Hooper, living at his mills opposite to Trenton on reasonable terms.

ROBERT LETTIS HOOPER.

—*The Pennsylvania Journal*, No. 821, August 31, 1758.

To his Excellency FRANCIS BERNARD, Esq; Captain General, and Governor in Chief, in and over His Majesty's Colony of New Jersey, and Territories thereon depending in America, Chancellor and Vice Admiral in the same.

We His Majesty's dutiful and loyal Subjects, Ministers of the Presbyterian Churches in the said Colony, take this Opportunity to congratulate your Excellency, that a kind Providence has preserved you, your Lady and Family, thro' the common Dangers of the Sea, and the far greater, arising from a vigilant, exasperated and too often cruel Enemy, and brought you in Health and Safety among us. We beg leave to express our Gratitude to our Most Gracious Sovereign, the best of Kings, for appointing to the First Seat of Government in the Colony, a Gentleman of your Excellency's distinguished Character and Abilities. From your accurate Knowledge, Sir, of the Constitution, just sense of Liberty, and the common Rights of Mankind, we promise ourselves the full Enjoyment of all our civil and religious Privileges while we continue in the firm Attachment to His Majesty, and Succession in His illustrious House, for which the People of our Profession have always been distinguished, and which we shall always endeavour to promote; and while we form our Conduct on these Principles, we presume upon your Excellency's favourable Opinion of us.

We earnestly beseech the only wise God, *by whom Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice*, to direct your Excellency to those measures that shall most effectually

contribute to the general Advantage of Religion, the Fear of God, and the Suppression of all open Violations of His Laws. This is the most certain Spring of public Prosperity, will reflect the Highest Honour on your Excellency's Administration, and be the most likely Means to obtain the divine Blessing on every Branch of it. That you may thus act, and obtain the Approbation of your Royal Master, the Testimony of your own Conscience, and, finally, the gracious Acceptance and Welcome of our common Lord, with a *Well done, good and faithful Servant*, is the Prayer of

SIR,

*Princc-Town, Aug. Your Excellency's most obedient
and most humble Servants*

Signed by Order, JOHN PIERSON¹

WILLIAM TENNENT.²

¹For a sketch of the Rev. John Pierson, see N. J. Archives, XIX., 274, note.

²William Tennent was born at Antrim, in the North of Ireland, June 3, 1705, the son of the Rev. William Tennent, who married, May 15, 1702, a daughter of the Rev. Gilbert Kennedy. The Rev. William Tennent came to America in September, 1716, with his wife, four sons and a daughter. He was the founder of the famous "Log College," that celebrated training school for Presbyterian ministers, among whom his own four sons were justly distinguished. He died May 6, 1746.

William Tennent, 2d, is most widely known from the story that has been told of his falling into a trance for three days, during which time "he felt himself wafted along under the guidance of a superior being, till at a distance he beheld an unutterable glory; he saw an innumerable host of happy beings, and heard their songs of praise with rapture. He thought, 'Well, blessed be God, I am safe at last, notwithstanding all my fears.' He was about to join the happy company, when someone came to him and said, 'You must go back.' It was like a sword through his heart; with the shock he awoke." Having studied divinity with his brother Gilbert, he was ordained October 25, 1733. He married the widow of John Noble, of New York. He took a deep interest in the mission of David and John Brainerd among the Indians of New Jersey. A notorious horse thief, Tom Bell, having impersonated the Rev. John Rowland, and in that guise ridden off with a fine animal, Mr. Rowland was indicted for the theft, in 1741. Mr. Tennent and two of his elders testified on the trial that at the time of the theft they were in company with Mr. Rowland in Maryland, one hundred miles or more from the scene of Tom Bell's exploit. Rowland was thereupon acquitted, but by a curious perversion of justice Tennent was indicted for perjury. The story handed down by tradition is that on the day appointed for trial a man and a woman arrived from Maryland, having been miraculously warned in a dream that they must come to Trenton to avert impending danger to Mr. Tennent: they knew that his account was true. Thereupon the prosecution was abandoned. These extraordinary occurrences were narrated in a manuscript addressed to Elias Boudinot, LL. D., by Dr. Thomas Henderson, a physician of Freehold, who was not born until more than ten years after the time laid for the trance, and a year or two after

To which his Excellency was pleased to return the following Answer.

GENTLEMEN,

I am much obliged to you for your kind Congratulations on my safe Arrival in this Province, and for your expressions of the good Opinion you have conceived of me. The Maintenance of religious Liberty is expedient in all his Majesty's Dominions; but is most essentially necessary among a People composed of Persons of many different Persuasions; I shall therefore be very careful to preserve your religious as well as your civil Liberties, and shall use the best Means to promote that Spirit of Benevolence, and brotherly Love, which is the true and proper Character of the good Christian. I thank you for your good Wishes, and shall endeavor to deserve them, by a conscientious Execution of the great Trust that is reposed in me; by which Means only I can expect those Rewards that are promised to good and faithful Servants.

Francis Bernard.

the horse-stealing episode. He received the stories from his father, an elder in Mr. Tennent's church, who died in 1771. Dr. Henderson's MS. is in the library of the N. J. Historical Society. It was communicated by Dr. Boudinot to the *Evangelical Intelligencer*, and published in 1806, under the title "Memoirs of the Rev. William Tennent, late pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Freehold, New-Jersey," and thence transferred to book form, running through numerous editions. Many publishers subjoined the attractive addendum to the title: "In which is contained, among other interesting particulars, An Account of his being THREE DAYS in a TRANCE, and apparently lifeless." An edition printed at Salem, Mass., in 1814, is a very small 12mo, 3x5 inches, pp. 129. A Wilmington edition, 1819, contains 72 pp., in much smaller type, and is 3½x5½ inches. In a paper read before the N. J. Historical Society, September 11, 1851, the late Judge Richard S. Field gave some interesting details regarding the defence of Mr. Tennent on the indictment for perjury, in 1742, and expressed the belief that the two miraculous witnesses had been hunted up and brought forward through the well-directed intelligence and energy of his counsel, three of the ablest lawyers in the country.—*N. J. Hist. Soc. Proc.*, VI., 30. Mr. Tennent's manner "was remarkably impressive, and his sermons, though seldom polished, were generally delivered with indescribable power; what he said seldom failed to instruct and please. He was remarkable for a pointed attention to the particular circumstances of the afflicted in body and mind. Eminent as a peacemaker, all were charmed with his converse. His hospitality and domestic enjoyments were proverbial. More than six feet high, of a spare, thin visage, erect carriage, with bright, piercing eyes, his countenance was grave and solemn, yet at all times cheerful. He lived above the world, with such clear views of heavenly things as seemed to give him a foretaste of them."—*Memoir*. He died March 8, 1777.