

THE HISTORY
OF THE
INDEPENDENT OR CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA,
FROM ITS ORIGIN TILL THE YEAR 1814;
WITH AN APPENDIX:

CONTAINING

**THE SPEECH OF THE REV. WILLIAM TENNENT, A. M. IN THE
COMMONS HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, CHARLESTON, S. C. JANUA-
RY 11, 1777, ON THE PETITION OF THE DISSENTERS FROM
THE CHURCH THEN ESTABLISHED IN THAT STATE; PRAY-
ING FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE EQUAL
RIGHTS OF ALL RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS.**

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THE HISTORY

OF THE

INDEPENDENT OR CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA.

THE church in Charleston, S. C. now known by the appellation of the Circular Church, was constituted between the years 1680 and 1690.* The persons who formed it, with few exceptions, were Presbyterians, chiefly from Scotland and Ireland—congregationalists from Old and New England, and French Protestants who had been lately exiled from France by the revocation of the edict of Nantz. These substantially agreed in doctrines and modes of worship, but differed in their respective forms of Church government. Some of the early proceedings of the Church were probably unrecorded. It is certain that the records of others were lost.† No Church acts

* A letter written in 1750 by the Church to the Rev. Drs. Guyse, Doddridge and Jennings, states, "that upwards of sixty years ago they had been a church." This carries us back to a period anterior to 1690. But it could not be farther back than 1680, for in that year Charleston began to be built.

† The Church records were in the possession of the rev. Mr. Livingston in 1713, who lived in a wooden house on White Point. In the fall of that year a violent hurricane beat off the weather-boards of the house, carried away the book which contained the Church records, and the furniture of the rooms on

dated prior to the year 1724 can now be found. In that year, forty-three persons, probably heads of families, subscribed their names to a call which they forwarded to the Rev. Mr. Bassett, inviting him to be their minister or pastor. This was expressed in the following words:

“In the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *Amen.*

“We the members of the Presbyterian Church in Charlestown, and others resorting to this public place of worship, having made our application to the Rev. Messrs. Colman and Cooper, ministers of the gospel in Boston, to send us a pious, able, ordained Presbyterian minister, and they having prevailed with you, the Rev. Mr. Nathan Bassett, to come amongst us; we, therefore, being very well satisfied of your ability and capacity, to take upon you the pastoral charge of us, not only from the character given of you by the reverend gentlemen above mentioned, but by our own experience, do humbly beseech and invite you, the Rev. Mr. Nathan Bassett, to accept and take upon you the office and charge of a minister or pastor over us, to administer unto us God’s holy word and ordinances, and to do and perform whatsoever else does appertain or anyways belong to a minister of the gospel. And on our part, we do solemnly promise and declare, in the presence of God and this congregation, that we will at all times endeavour to behave and carry ourselves towards you as becomes Chris-

the lower floor. It also obliged the family to seek shelter in the fire-place above stairs. This statement is given by Josiah Smith, Esq. who received it from old Peter Dart, a black man, who in 1713 waited on the rev. Mr. Livingston—was with him in the time of the hurricane, and narrowly escaped from its ravages.

tians to do to a minister of Jesus Christ; and as you will dispense unto us your spiritual things, so we shall not be wanting constantly to administer unto you of our temporal; humbly desiring that you'll please to accept of this our call and invitation.

Luke Stoutenburgh	John Simmons
John Carmichael	Samuel Eveleigh
John Fraser	Garret Van Velsen
John Ballantine	Henry Peronneau
John Ellis	Solomon Legare
Joseph Masscy	Timothy Bellamy
Joseph Bany	Francis Holmes, junr.
Samuel Morris	Ebenezer Simmons
Daniel Townsend	Anthony Mathewes, junr.
Henry Varnor	John Milner
William Scott	Benjamin Massey
Moses Plummer	Henry Saltus
John Jeffords	James Ballantine
Stephen Bedon	James Mathewes
Robert Fladger	Dun. Campbell
John Bohannan	Joseph Moody
Thomas Barksdale	Anthony Mathewes
John Mellins	Miles Brenton
Benjamin Jones	Jeremiah Milner
Robert Bohannan	George Ducat
Thomas Holton	Nathaniel Mariner.
Edgar Wells	

The original building used by the Church was only forty feet square, and must have been very slight; for as early as the year 1729 a subscription was opened for rebuilding it, "as having by long time gone to decay, and become very old and out of repair." This was subscribed by one hundred and

four persons, who put down their names for different sums, varying from one hundred pounds to one pound ten shillings, and amounting in the aggregate currency to eight thousand three hundred and twenty-two pounds and fifteen shillings. A supplementary subscription as necessary to complete the building was opened in 1731. This amounted to three hundred and thirty-four pounds. The building being completed and enlarged twenty-two and a half feet in length, and a base added for the steeple, the pews therein, forty-seven in number, subject to an annual assessment, were assigned in 1732 to subscribers according to their respective claims as contributors. Numerically arranged they were as follows:

- Pew No. 1 for Samuel Fley
 2 — Anthony Mathewes, senr.
 3 — John Milner and Mary Ellis
 4 — Daniel Crawford
 5 — James Payne
 6 — Samuel Morris
 7 — Mary Betson and Charles Pinckney
 8 — Samuel Jones
 9 — Garret Van Velsen
 10 — John Stone
 11 — Solomon Legare, junr. and James
 Ballantine
 12 — Ebenezer Simmons
 13 — Joseph Bany and Luke Stoutenburgh
 14 — Stephen Bedon
 15 — Daniel Townsend
 16 — Henry Peronneau, junr.
 17 — Henry Peronneau, sen.
 18 — Joseph Moody
 19 — Solomon Legare, sen. and William
 Warden
-

Pew No. 20 for Isaac Holmes

- 21 — Thomas Cooper
- 22 — John Dart
- 23 — Elizabeth Holmes
- 24 —
- 25 — John and Edmund Atkin
- 26 — John Fraser
- 27 — James Mathewes
- 28 — Samuel Eveleigh
- 29 — Anthony Mathewes, junr.
- 30 — John Bee and Elizabeth Massey
- 31 — George Ducat and William Cleland
- 32 — Benjamin Savage
- 33 — Mary Owen
- 34 — Alexander Peronneau
- 35 — George Hisket
- 36 — Kath. Joor
- 37 — Andrew Allen
- 38 — John Simmons
- 39 — Thomas Lamboll
- 40 — Othniel Beale
- 41 — Paul Jenys
- 42 — Miles Brenton
- 43 — Joseph Massey
- 44 —
- 45 — John M'Kay
- 46 — Henry Livingston
- 47 — Jeremiah Milner.

The first three ministers of the Church are supposed to have been Congregationalists; the next two were Presbyterians: the sixth was a Congregationalist. During his incumbency the Presbyterians separated from the Church, and formed a new one on the plan of the established religion of North Britain. So

many of these were natives of Scotland that they were as much known by the name of the Scotch as of the Presbyterian Church. Their separation, which originated in 1731, was completed on the 23d of June, 1734, when divine service was first performed in their new house of worship erected in Meeting-street, to the southward of Tradd-street. The original Church in Meeting-street, in the oldest records now extant, is solely called Presbyterian, and shortly afterwards indiscriminately, or conjunctly, Presbyterian, Congregational, or Independent. After this separation it in a great measure adopted its first appellation, as a Presbyterian Church, but continued to call its pastors from both denominations indiscriminately, leaving them to associate with their brethren of either form of Church government, or with neither as they chose; but prohibited them in every case from introducing their peculiar opinions respecting ecclesiastical polity into the Church over which they were called to preside. Inconveniencies resulted from an undefined way of doing Church business, which prevailed till the middle of the eighteenth century. Though the members renounced all extrinsic authority in derogation of their claim of independent self government, yet some considerable time elapsed before they established rules for the systematical management of their own concerns; the evil cured itself; but not until they were involved in unpleasant contentions resulting from the want of a fixed constitution, and rules for self government. In 1748, the Rev. Mr. Fairweather, a licensed but unordained preacher from New-England, had been employed for one year to assist the Rev. Josiah Smith (who was then an invalid) in the discharge of his pastoral functions. At the termination of his term of service, a Church meet-

ing was called to determine on his future standing in the Church. A unanimous vote of both members and supporters was given, that he should be engaged as an assistant minister for another year. After this was concluded, and some of the voters had withdrawn, it was suggested to the meeting "that Mr. Fairweather preferred being a co-pastor." In the same day a vote was taken on this new view of the subject, and it appeared that a majority of the members and supporters who remained, on a joint and equal vote of both, were in favour of his being co-pastor. This was objected to by several members in full communion, and particularly by Mr. Thomas Lamboll, who entered in the Church book (immediately after the record of the preceding transactions) a statement (in his own hand-writing) of his objection to the validity of the last vote. This entry was in the following words: "I, Thomas Lamboll, do declare that I was present at the above-mentioned meeting, and publicly voted for Mr. Fairweather's being assistant: but when it was immediately moved to put the question, whether he should be co-pastor, I opposed and voted against that motion as irregular, repugnant to and tending to undo the vote which had been unanimous, and ought to be conclusive in the affair in hand, at least for the present time: and as some of those which had voted first were gone, I also withdrew; giving public notice thereof before the question for Mr. Fairweather's being co-pastor was put: for I conceived that a vote of a part of the congregation could not supersede the unanimous vote of the whole."

March 23, 1750.

(Signed,)

THOMAS LAMBOLL.

Another declaration on the same subject was in like manner recorded in the Church book as follows:

“ *March 23, 1750.*

“ I, Thomas Lamboll, do declare that I was present when the above-mentioned Mr. Fairweather, in the meeting-house, did read a paper or writing from the pulpit to the congregation, purporting his answer to a (pretended) call to him to be co-pastor (which I never saw or heard of before.) That in his said answer, he particularly expressed his refusal of the acceptance of the office of assistant, into which he had been voted; for which reason and public refusal, I conceived that the Church was disengaged from him, and accordingly withdrew. THOMAS LAMBOLL.”

In consequence of this versatibility in the acts of the Church, some considered Mr. Fairweather as an assistant, some as co-pastor. It was contended by others, that all connexion between him and the Church was dissolved, on the idea that his election as a co-pastor was invalid, and that he had declined the office of an assistant. Unpleasant discussions arose between his friends and opposers. After officiating more than a year to a divided congregation, in which a majority of the communicants was against his being co-pastor, he left the Church, the province, and the denomination of Christians with which he had hitherto associated; but after some time returned in the character of an Episcopal minister. Peace was gradually restored to the Church, and a repetition of such irregularity was prevented, by adopting, in 1750, a fixed rule for choosing a pastor or minister; which was as follows:

“ That hereafter the sole power of nominating, as well as of displacing or suspending the pastor or mi-

nister of this Church, shall be only in such freemen as are members for the time being, admitted by consent of the pastor and members of the said Church, into full communion therewith; and which have contributed to the support thereof, at least two years then last past; *provided also*, that in case of any dispute, no such nomination to, or suspension, or removal from the said pastorate, shall be good, or valid, unless two thirds of such supporting members shall concur therein."

" But whenever an assistant shall be judged necessary to the said pastor or minister, such other freemen as have been supporters of the said Church, for two years then last past, may also be admitted to vote for, and choose such an assistant by plurality of votes."

OF THE PASTORS.

The Church, since its formation about one hundred and twenty-five years ago, has had fifteen pastors; the first three, the Rev. Messrs. Pierpoint, Adams, and Cotton, were settled and died, or resigned within or about the last fifteen years of the seventeenth century. Nothing farther of consequence is known of them: their successors were as follows:

4, Rev. Archibald Stobob took charge of the Church in the autumn of 1700, and resigned it in 1704.

5, Rev. William Livingston became pastor in 1704, and died after the year 1720.

6, Rev. Nathan Bassett was settled in 1724, and died of the small-pox in 1738.

7, Rev. James Parker in 1740 arrived in Charleston from England, and died in 1742.

8, Rev. Josiah Smith took charge of the Church in 1742, and resigned about 1750.

9, Rev. James Edmonds was settled in December, 1754, and resigned about 1767.

10. Rev. William Hutson settled, in connexion with Mr. Edmonds, 1757, and died in 1761.

11, Rev. Andrew Bennet was settled as pastor with Mr. Edmonds, in 1762, and resigned in 1763.

12, Rev. John Thomas was installed pastor of the Church in 1767, and died at New-York in September 1771.

13, Rev. William Tennent entered on the pastoral charge of the Church in 1772, and died at the High Hills of Santee in August 1777.

14, Rev. Dr. Hollinshead entered on the pastoral charge of the Church in 1783, and is now (1814) living.

15, Rev. Dr. Keith was settled as co-pastor with Dr. Hollinshead, in 1788, and on December 14, 1813, died of an apoplexy in seven hours from its first attack.

Mr. Stobo, the first Presbyterian minister in South Carolina, was a Scotchman, who, near the end of the seventeenth century, left his native country, attached to an expedition for making a British settlement on the isthmus of Darien; this having failed, the unfortunate adventurers were obliged to decamp. On their return homeward, the Rising Sun, a ship of sixty guns, in which many of them had embarked in the year 1700, was lost, with all on board, in a hurricane near Charleston bar. Mr. Stobo, one of the passengers, was invited by a deputation of three members of this Church to preach while the Rising Sun tarried for supplies. He accepted the invitation, and came up to Charleston with the deputation on the day before the hurricane commenced. His life was thus providentially saved. He lived nearly half a

century afterwards, and became the founder of a numerous family, and also of several Churches on the Presbyterian plan in different parts of the province, particularly at Wilton, Pon Pon, James' Island and Cainhoy.*

The Rev. William Livingston was from Scotland or the north of Ireland. Of his birth, education, and the other circumstances of his early life, nothing certain is known. Tradition has informed us that he was a respectable and useful preacher. He left one daughter and three sons. Of the issue of one of his sons, George Livingston, in the fourth and fifth degree of descent from the Rev. Mr. Livingston, there are now living in Charleston, Mrs. Tunno, her two daughters, and her son John Champneys Tunno, a youth of great expectation. Six great-grand children, four males and two females, descendants of the same rev. gentleman by another branch of his family, are also now living near Dorchester of the name of Stewart.

The Rev. Mr. Bassett was from New-England, and educated in the university of Cambridge, near Boston, and from which, in 1719, he obtained the degree of A. M. He died in the thirty-seventh year of his age, after he had faithfully and acceptably dis-

* Mr. Stobo had two sons and two daughters. One of his grand-daughters, Miss Ann Stanyarn, is now living. Of his descendants with the surname of Stobo none is known to be now alive but his great-great-grandson, Morton Wilkinson Stobo. One of the Rev. Mr. Stobo's daughters married Mr. Bullock, who migrated to Georgia, where her descendants are both numerous and respectable. His other daughter married Mr. Stanyarn. The names and number of the descendants of these branches of the family cannot be ascertained; but among them are two now living, who were baptized by the name of their common ancestor. One of these is called Stobo R. Perry, the other Stobo Redon.

charged the duties of the pastoral office nearly fifteen years. He was settled in Charleston on the recommendation of the Rev. Drs. Coleman and Cooper, of Boston, to whom the Church had applied to send them "a pious, able, ordained Presbyterian minister."

The Rev. James Parker was an Englishman, born in Leicester, educated under Dr. Latham, in Findern, ordained to the ministry in London, and for five years had been a settled minister at Gravesend. In 1740 he was sent out to Charleston by the Rev. Dr. Isaac Watts, and three other dissenting ministers in London, to whom the Church had applied for a minister. This application was made by a letter dated in December, 1738, which is stated to be the act and deed of the whole Congregational Presbyterian Church of Christ, lately under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Bassett. Mr. Parker left a widow, who afterwards married Mr. George Inglis, merchant, in Charleston. He also left two sons, James and George, of whom nothing is known farther than that they died young.

Rev. Josiah Smith, A. M. was born in Charleston in 1704. He was the grandson of Langraves Thomas Smith, who, in 1693, had been governor of the province, and was the first native of Carolina who obtained a degree from a college. In about twelve months after the year 1725, in which Mr. Smith had proceeded A. B. in Cambridge college, he commenced preacher, and continued steadily to perform his official duties for twenty-three years, but was then in a great measure disabled for the remainder of his life. His ministerial functions were at different periods performed in Bermuda, at Cainhoy, and in Charleston. When the Rev. George Whitefield was forbidden to preach in the Episcopal Churches, Mr. Smith opened to him his Church, and declared to

the world his decided approbation of the character and doctrines of that indefatigable preacher and fascinating pulpit orator, in a sermon which he preached and afterwards printed from the words of Elihu, "I said, I will answer also my part; I also will show my opinion."

Mr. Smith published an octavo volume of sermons in 1752, and several single ones on particular occasions; all of which were well received.

In the years 1749-50, he received three strokes of the palsy,* from which he never recovered so far as to be able to articulate distinctly. He nevertheless continued to compose and print sermons. His de-

* This paralytic affection of the Rev. Mr. Smith rendered him for more than thirty years incapable of performing the duties of his office, and the inadequate support he had received for the preceding twenty-three years of active service, put it out of his power to provide for the extraordinary emergency. He

as therefore in a great degree dependent on his eldest son, Josiah Smith, for the means of living. It pleased God to furnish the son with the ability and the heart to repay to a kind parent the obligations he was under to him for maintenance and education in the helpless years of infancy. This duty was tenderly and affectionately performed, and the dutiful son now reaps his promised reward, for in his eighty-fourth year, his erect stature, capacity for business, and comparatively good health, demonstrate that he has fewer of the marks of old age than are frequently found in those who are twenty or even thirty years younger. "*Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*"

The providential affliction of the Rev. Mr. Smith suggested to the Church in its latter days of prosperity, the expedience of providing a permanent fund for the support of elderly and disabled ministers and their families. This has been so uncommonly prosperous that the few objects within the strict letter of the act incorporating it do not exhaust one half of the interest of its capital. In this manner a kind Providence has overruled a partial temporary evil for a general and permanent good.

light was so much in preaching, that he begged as a favour that he might be permitted to deliver a sermon once in every month in the Church lately under his pastoral care. This was conceded, and his friends gave him a patient hearing, though the palsy had so far affected his utterance that they understood but little of what he said. When independence was declared, his age and infirmities put it out of his power to render his country any active service, but his heart and his prayers were with the friends of America in every period of the revolution. When Charleston surrendered, he became a prisoner of war, and was paroled as such. He discovered no disposition to return to his allegiance as a British subject, but honourably observed his parole. In the year 1781, the royal commanders compelled Mr. Smith, with his son's family, of which he was one, though in the seventy-seventh year of his age, to leave Charleston. He was with them safely landed in Philadelphia, and shortly after, in the month of October of the same year, died there.

His venerable age, distinguished eminence in the Church as a man of learning and piety, his steady patriotism and personal sufferings in the cause of liberty excited a general sympathy in his behalf. Though he died a stranger in a strange land, he was particularly honoured. His funeral was respectably attended by the citizens of Philadelphia, and by most of the Carolina exiles then in that city. The Presbyterians of Philadelphia directed that his body should be buried within the walls of their Arch-street Church, and between the remains of his two friends, the reverend Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Finley, D. D. late president of Princeton college.

Mr. Smith left two sons, Josiah and George, and two daughters: one of the latter married captain Edward Darrel, the other Daniel Bordeaux, Esq. The issue of these four children of the Rev. Mr. Smith, now, 1814, living is forty-nine.

Rev. James Edmonds, an Englishman by birth, was invited to officiate in Charleston from a Church at or near Cainhoy. He next removed to a Church at Newport, in Georgia, and afterwards became an itinerant preacher, doing much good in many parts of Georgia, South and North Carolina. While labouring in this vocation he became blind and died in Charleston in 1794, aged seventy-one years. He adorned his profession by a life of fervent piety, and his example was a practical sermon. One of his two daughters is now living.

Rev. William Hutson was a follower of the celebrated George Whitefield, and came with him from England about the year 1740. Mr. Hutson commenced preacher in 1743, and first officiated at the orphan house in Georgia, and afterwards in Prince William's parish in South Carolina, in the dissenting Church of Stony-creek. In 1757 he was called to officiate in Charleston. He was an eloquent preacher, an exemplary Christian, and an accomplished gentleman. By his first wife, the widow Chardon, he acquired a considerable estate, and by her had two sons, Richard and Thomas, and four daughters. Of these none survive but his youngest daughter, Mrs. Barnwell. One of his four daughters was married to Arthur Peronneau, merchant; one to the unfortunate colonel Isaac Hayne; one to major Wigg, and one to general Barnwell. The surviving issue of his son Thomas, and of his four daughters, now

amounts to ninety-nine.* Mr. Hutson died in 1761 of an apoplectic fit, in the forty-first year of his age.

Rev. Andrew Bennet was a native of England, and educated under the Rev. Drs. Conder and Gibbons, in London. He came to Charleston from Philadelphia, where he had been an assistant preacher to the Rev. Mr. Cross, of the Presbyterian Church in Market-street. He went from Charleston to Bermuda, and afterwards to Barbadoes, on account of ill health, and there died in the year 1804. He was esteemed a pious, able, and eloquent preacher: but bad health greatly obstructed his ample capacity for usefulness. Having no family he bequeathed two thousand dollars to the society established in Charleston for the relief of elderly and disabled ministers and of the widows and orphans of the clergy of the Independent or Congregational Church in the state of South Carolina.

Rev. John Thomas was born in Wales, and educated at a dissenting academy there. In early life he was sent from England by the Rev. Drs. Conder and Gibbons, dissenting ministers of London, to whom the Church had applied by letter to procure for them a suitable minister. The Rev. Josiah Smith preached a funeral sermon on the death of Mr. Thomas, in which he observes as follows:

* On the fourth of July, 1814, only fifty-three years after the death of the Rev. Mr. Hutson, and only a few yards from the spot in which he stately preached, his great grandson, Robert Hayne, Esq. inheriting the genius and eloquence of his venerable ancestor, delivered an oration on the anniversary of the independence of the United States, which, for correct patriotic American sentiments, for thoughts that breathe and words that burn, and for forcible elocution, has seldom been equalled, and rarely, if ever, surpassed by any thing on the same occasion.

“ He was a man of superior genius, and adorned with many excellent natural gifts. His conceptions were clear, his judgment solid and piercing—he well knew how to distinguish, and had a good taste and relish for the polite parts of learning. If we consider him as a minister, he *prayed as a seraph*. His compositions were ingenious, methodical, and rational; he was a man of fire and pungency, nor was he a stranger to the art of addressing the passions. His principles were sound and orthodox—a thorough Calvinist, *though* he was much *on the side of liberty* and moderation, and loved good men of all persuasions, yet would he contend for the primitive faith and purity. The guilt, pollution, and propagation of original sin—the divinity of Christ—the redeeming efficacy of his blood—his full and proper atonement—the influences of his spirit—the necessity of faith to a sinner’s justification before God, and of good works to his salvation, were doctrines which he often insisted upon, and strongly defended against Arians, Socinians, and others.”

Mr. Thomas left two daughters, one of whom married Samuel Beach, esq. the other Adam Gilchrist, merchant; they are both now living, and have eight living descendants—his widow is still alive, at the age of sixty-nine years.

The circumstances of Mr. Thomas’s death are worthy of notice, both in a moral and medical view. Six months before he died he was in good health; but in two or three hours of philanthropic exertion contracted a chronic disease which brought him to his grave. In the first three months of 1771 he paid particular attention to instruct and prepare for death a man who was condemned to suffer the highest penalty of the law. In the course of his conversations with

this unfortunate man, Mr. Thomas had abundant reason to believe that he was a true penitent, and the subject of a saving change. This naturally produced a strong attachment and a disposition to serve him; every kind office was rendered to him while living, and measures were adopted to save him from dissection after he was dead. His body was kept private till the shades of night afforded a screen to carry it over Ashley river to James' Island for interment. Mr. Thomas, with a few religious friends attended the corpse, and at ten o'clock, P. M. in a cold blowing March night, consigned it to a grave. Mr. Thomas performed in the open air the religious services usual at funerals. On this solemn but unseasonable occasion he was instantly seized with a violent cold, which speedily produced a spitting of blood, and other symptoms so alarming, that in the summer following he obtained leave from his church to go to the northern provinces for the recovery of his health; all was in vain. The adventures of this single night laid the foundation of a consumption, which eventuated in his death in the twenty-sixth year of his age.

The Rev. William Tennent, A. M. was born in New-Jersey, in the year 1740, and educated at the college of Princeton, while the Rev. Aaron Burr was its president; and there, in 1758, he received the degree of A. B. and in about two years after was licensed to preach. His ancestors were distinguished for their learning and piety, and ranked high among the most successful of the earliest promoters of religion and literature in the middle British colonies. Mr. Tennent was first settled as a preacher in Connecticut. After he had officiated there eight or ten years he was invited to the pastoral charge of the Independent Church in Charleston, and arrived there in 1772.

As a man of learning, eloquence, and piety, he was in high estimation. While gliding on through life, devoted to study, and the discharge of his clerical duties, the American Revolution commenced: he was possessed of too much vigour of mind to be indifferent to this great event. It so thoroughly absorbed his capacities as to give a new direction to his pursuits; he speedily comprehended in prospect the important changes it was likely to produce, and engaged in the support of it with all his energies. Ardent zeal, and distinguished talents, made him so popular, that contrary to the habits and customs of the people, they with general consent elected him a member of the provincial congress, and afterwards of the commons house of assembly. Such was the urgency of public affairs, that committees and congresses of the people, then their only legislators, were on pressing emergencies in the habit of meeting on Sundays, for the despatch of public business. In the different hours of the same day, Mr. Tennent was occasionally heard both in his church and the state-house, addressing different audiences, with equal animation on their spiritual and temporal interests. He rarely introduced politics in the pulpit, but from the general tenor of his conduct, it was evident that his whole soul was in the revolution, and that he considered success in it as intimately connected with the religion, liberty, and happiness of his native country. He wrote sundry anonymous pieces in the newspapers, rousing the people to a proper sense of their political duties and interests, while their liberties were endangered; but printed nothing with his name except two sermons, and a speech delivered in the commons house of assembly in South Carolina, on the justice and policy of putting all religious denominations on an equal footing.

Strongly impressed with the rights of all men to free and equal religious liberty, he could not consent to receive toleration as a legal boon, from those whose natural rights were not superior to his own. He drew up an argumentative petition in favour of equal religious liberty—united the different denominations of dissenters in its support, and procured to it the signature of several thousands. When this petition was made the subject of legislative consideration, he delivered an eloquent speech in its support.* This carried conviction to the breasts of many, that establishments of particular sects of religion were partial, oppressive, and impolitic. His valuable life was terminated in the thirty-seventh year of his age at the High Hills of Santee, while discharging a filial duty, in bringing his aged and lately widowed mother from New-Jersey to Carolina. He left five children; two sons, William and Charles, and three daughters; all of whom are now living and have living issue, twenty-seven in number. One of his daughters married Mr. Charles Brown, one Dr. Joseph Hall Ramsay, and one Mr. Samuel Smith. The Church erected a monument to his memory in their Archdale-street house of worship, of which he was the father. On it is the following inscription:

* For a copy of this speech see the Appendix.

In memory
of the Rev. William Tennent, A. M.
pastor of this Church,
and principally instrumental in the
erection of this building,
dedicated to the worship
of Almighty God,
who died at the High Hills of Santee
August 11th, 1777,
in the thirty-seventh year of his age.
He was distinguished
for quickness of perception,
solidity of judgment,
energy and firmness of mind,
for inflexible patriotism
and ardent public spirit,
for the boldness with which he enforced
the claims of the Deity,
and vindicated the rights of man.
As a preacher he was prompt,
solemn, instructive, and persuasive—
of every social virtue he was a bright example.
“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”

The Rev. Dr. Hollinshead was born in Philadelphia, and educated at the college in that city, in which he was admitted to the degree of A. B. in 1770. He was licensed in 1772 by the presbytery of Philadelphia to preach the gospel, and soon after settled in Fairfield, Cumberland county, New-Jersey. From this place in 1783 he was translated to Charleston on the invitation of the Congregational Church to be its pastor. In 1793 the college of Princeton conferred on him the degree of D. D. He still lives, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, and, therefore, his eulogy

cannot now be proper; but it may be mentioned, without offending against either truth or delicacy, that he has already served the Church longer than nine of the eleven ministers who were his predecessors; and that during his incumbency, the Church has greatly increased in numbers and respectability.

The Rev. Dr. Isaac Stockton Keith was born in Bucks county, Pennsylvania, January 20th, A. D. 1755, and was educated in the grammar school and college of Princeton, New-Jersey, when the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon was president. His diligence and progress in his studies were so great, that at every examination of the school he was honoured with a premium. In 1775 he was admitted to the degree of A. B. His pious parents from early youth dedicated him to the ministry, and his own inclination concurred with their fond anticipations. Soon after he left the college he commenced the study of divinity, under the direction of the Rev. Dr. Robert Smith of Pequea, in Pennsylvania, and in 1778 was licensed by the presbytery of Philadelphia to preach the gospel. After itinerating for a short time, he settled in Alexandria, in Virginia, and continued there in the exercise of his ministerial functions till the year 1788, when he accepted an invitation from the Congregational Church in Charleston, to be co-pastor thereof, in connexion with the Rev. Dr. Hollinshead. He there served the Church with ability and fidelity for twenty-five years, a period exceeding that of any one of his eleven deceased predecessors. In 1791 he was constituted D. D. by the university of Pennsylvania. He was thrice married; first to Miss Hannah Sproat, daughter of the Rev. Dr. Sproat of Philadelphia; second, to Miss Catharine Legare, daughter of Mr. Thomas Legare, esq. of Charleston: third, to Miss Jane Hux.

ham, a native of Exeter, in England, and daughter to Mr. William Huxham, who had resided many years in South Carolina. As a man, as a Christian, and as a preacher of the gospel, Dr. Keith was respected and beloved. On all the relations of life in which he was placed, he reflected honour—given to hospitality and abounding in charity, his heart and his house were open to the stranger, and his purse to the indigent: the spirit of the gospel marked his intercourse with men; it influenced the whole of his deportment, and impressed a distinctive character on all his transactions. “He rejoiced with those that did rejoice, and wept with those who wept.” In pastoral visits to the sick and afflicted he was indefatigable: to their impressible minds he presented divine truths with such sympathy, affection, and discretion, as with the blessing of God often terminated in the happiest result. He was fond of assembling children round him, and of conversing with them in a pleasant cheerful manner, mingled with instruction. Though not a parent he had deeply imbibed the spirit of a judicious affectionate Christian parent. Many were the books which he gave in presents to adults, but more to children, under such circumstances of love and affection as could scarcely fail of ensuring an attentive perusal of their important contents. His heart overflowing with love to God and man, disposed him to spend and be spent in promoting the glory of the one and the happiness of the other. In the work of the ministry he was diligent, laborious, and successful; and he was well furnished with gifts and graces for its faithful discharge. Sensible that souls were committed to his care, he shaped his instructions, admonitions, and warnings, according to this dread responsibility. Jesus Christ was the centre and the sum of his sermons.

These were distinguished for their manly sense, evangelical piety, and searching truth. The divinity of Christ, and atonement through his blood, were with him essential doctrines. He deemed that sermon of little value which had not in it something of Christ. The doctrines of grace were his usual topics, and he stated and defended them with zeal and ability. The entire depravity of the human heart—the absolute necessity of being born from above—the necessity of divine influences to change the heart and to sanctify the soul, were with him articles of primary importance, and urged on the consciences of his hearers as indispensably necessary to a correct view of the gospel. In his preaching he was particularly attentive to the dispensations of Providence. Epidemic diseases, destructive fires, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, and unusual convulsions of the elements, were never suffered to escape his public notice. They were always the subjects of appropriate prayers and sermons, and made tributary to the instruction of his hearers. He was among the first in the United States in aiding with pecuniary support the interest of evangelical missions and translations of the Holy Scriptures in the East. Of the Charleston Bible Society he may in some respects be called the father. On Monday, the 13th of December, 1813, he zealously and successfully advocated a motion, the object of which was to send the Scriptures in their native language to the French inhabitants of Louisiana, and in the course of the next thirty hours he was called to the bosom of his father and his God, after he had served his generation fifty-eight years and eleven months. He died childless, with an estate of about thirty thousand dollars at his disposal. Of this he bequeathed a considerable part for the most

important and beneficent uses.* The Church directed a monument to be erected to his memory in the Circular Church, with the following inscription:

Sacred to the memory of
The Rev. Isaac S. Keith, D. D.
for 25 years a beloved co-pastor of this Church,
from which he was suddenly removed by death
on the fourteenth of December, 1813,
in the fifty-ninth year of his age.

He was
a learned, amiable, and successful minister
of the gospel of Jesus Christ:
In prayer copious and fervent;
in doctrine clear and evangelical;
in exhortation warm, affectionate, and persuasive:
In his pastoral intercourse,
and in his private and public deportment,
he adored the doctrine
of his Lord and Saviour.
His charity to the poor,
his hospitality to the stranger,
his patronage to the meritorious,
his munificence to the Church,
his suavity of manners and unwearied activity
in the cause of humanity and religion,
conspired to render him
dear to his people and society at large.
His mourning congregation,
in testimony of his merit and their affection,
erect this monument.

* Besides a large legacy left to the Church of which he was pastor, to be hereafter particularized, Dr. Keith bequeathed about five thousand dollars to the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. To each

On the 22d of August, 1814, the Rev. Benjamin Morgan Palmer, A. M. was elected co-pastor in the place of the Rev. Dr. Keith. He had served the Church the preceding seven months in the capacity of a temporary supply, and for ten years anterior to that temporary appointment had been settled in Beaufort, S. C. as pastor of the Congregational Church in that place. He was the fourth of the sixteen children of Mr. Job Palmer, who had been a worthy member of the Independent Church in Charleston for the preceding forty-two years. He was also the grandson of the Rev. Samuel Palmer, who, for forty years immediately prior to the year 1775, in which he died, had been the only minister, and for the greater part of that period the only physician of Falmouth, in Barnstable county, Massachusetts, where he was much beloved and respected.* Mr. Benjamin Palmer was

child named after himself or either of his three wives (about twenty in number,) he bequeathed a copy of Woodward's edition of Dr. Scott's Commentary on the Bible. He had a motive for every thing he did: they who knew him intimately think themselves warranted in believing, that in selecting this work as a donation to his young namesakes, he meant to inculcate on them a high veneration for the Bible as the best of books, and to inform them that his own construction of its important contents was in unison with that which is given by Dr. Scott in his invaluable commentary.

* The Rev. Mr. B. M. Palmer spent the summer of 1810 in the northern states for the benefit of his health, and part of it at Falmouth. This unexpected visit from the distance of a thousand miles, of a clerical grandson of their former beloved pastor, was highly gratifying to the Congregational Church of that place. They, particularly the gray-headed veterans in that county of longevity, received him with transports of joy. Their then minister, the Rev. Mr. Lincoln, after closing the religious services of the evening, invited his clerical brother Palmer, just arrived, and then attending as a hearer, to address the congregation. Mr. Palmer accepted this invitation, intending to

born in Philadelphia in about two weeks after his parents had arrived there in the character of exiles, driven from Charleston in the year 1781 by the then British paramount power in South Carolina. On the termination of the revolutionary war the whole family returned to Charleston. Mr. B. M. Palmer's classical education commenced in Charleston college, when it was under the superintendence of the Rt. Rev. bishop Smith. In the year 1797 he was removed to Princeton college, when the Rev. Dr. Samuel S. Smith presided over that institution. There, in 1800, he was admitted to the degree of A. B. This extensive course of education was not entered upon without serious and deliberate consultation. The buddings of Mr. Palmer's genius inspired hopes that he might easily be made a scholar. His correct orderly habits and early religious impressions pointed him out as a suitable person to be educated with a view to the ministry; but there were difficulties in the way. The times were hard—money scarce—education dear—his father's family large. In this crisis the Rev. Dr. Keith interposed with his usual ardour in doing good, and urged with all his energies of persuasion that the promising youth should be put forward in a collegi-

speak only for a few minutes; but animated from the consideration of his being in the vicinity of the bones of his ancestors, and of his standing in the place of his grandfather, and speaking to a congregation among whom his father had been born, and his father's father laboured as a gospel minister for forty years, he was insensibly urged by his feelings to continue his extemporaneous address for nearly an hour, to the great satisfaction of his hearers, who rejoiced that their late pastor, though he had ceased from his labours for thirty-five years, still lived in the person of his grandson, devoted to the same profession, in the exercise of which his venerable ancestor had been so useful to them.

ate course of studies, and he seconded his arguments with more than advice. A generous friendship between the parties was thus commenced. It was excited on one side by gratitude, and fanned into flame on the other by frequently repeated acts of disinterested benevolence. The attention of the Church on their late bereavement by the much lamented death of Dr. Keith, was naturally turned towards Mr. Palmer, as being known to them from his infancy to be distinguished for correct conduct, respectable for his genius and literary attainments, for his fervent piety, and in his adult years for the distinguished excellence of his compositions for the pulpit. With the exception of the Rev. Josiah Smith, he was the only Carolinian that had ever been offered as a pastor for their Church, though it had been constituted above one hundred and twenty years. In addition to these strong recommendations, he was known to have possessed the fullest confidence of their lately deceased beloved pastor, and also his highest esteem and applause as an able, faithful, and accomplished preacher. The circumstances of the case were particular, and seemed to point out that the hand of God was in the matter. Mr. Palmer's congregation in Beaufort was so small as to be unequal to his comfortable support. His friend, Dr. Keith, had long urged him to leave that place and come to Charleston, and open school there for his immediate support, till Providence opened another door for the regular exercise of his ministerial functions: in the meantime, having it in view to supply a vacant Presbyterian Church on John island, with preaching every Sabbath during the winter months. On the 15th of November, 1813, exactly twenty-nine days before his death, Dr. Keith wrote to Mr. Palmer, just recovering from distressing sick-

ness, as follows: “Be assured, my friend, that I have felt much for you, not only on account of your bodily sufferings, but also of your difficult situation and discouraging prospects in Beaufort. With the Rev. Mr. Bihear (I believe you have his most excellent letter on the life of faith,) “your ways seem to be in some sense hedged up with thorns, and grow darker and darker daily.” But with him I persuade myself you can at the same time say, “yet I distrust not my God in the least.” “The Lord will provide,” should be the believer’s consolation in all his necessities; and the assurance that “he will direct the paths of those who acknowledge him in all their ways,” should be your encouragement in all your uncertainties and perplexities. It seems as if a variety of circumstances were combining to indicate that your residence cannot be much longer continued in Beaufort, as without a considerable change, not perhaps to be soon expected in the present state of our country, the means of supporting your family are likely to fail you. But what shall you do? Or whither shall you go? I wish I could tell. Perhaps *the finger of Providence will point out to you where and how you are to be next employed*; and perhaps a visit to Charleston, and your spending some time here, as soon as you can conveniently come, may be the means of placing you *on a ground a little higher* than that on which you now stand, so that you may be able to see *a little further and more clearly around you*.” Mr. Palmer accordingly came to Charleston, and after much serious consultation and anxious mental conflict, assented to the recommendation of his friend—issued proposals for opening a school, and on the forenoon of the 14th of December, 1813, sent off to his Church in Beaufort a letter of resignation of its

pastorship. In two hours after this was done Dr. Keith was struck with an apoplexy, and in seven hours more breathed his last. Many of the hearers of Dr. Keith, impressed with firm belief that "our times are in God's hands," that he "sees every thing from the beginning to the end," that "in all his comprehensive view past and future are concentrated in the focus of the present moment," were struck with this remarkable coincidence, and indulged the hope, that the good God who while he afflicts with one hand is apt to support with the other, had, in his kind providence, brought Mr. Palmer to Charleston to be the successor of his much loved friend Dr. Keith. These hopes, founded on a rational and scriptural interpretation of the leadings of Providence, have been realized to a great majority of the Church, who view their new pastor as a precious legacy bequeathed to them by his deceased predecessor.

Of the Church, in and after the Revolutionary War.

Prior to the independence of the United States, the members of this Church, in common with the other dissenters from the Church of England, laboured under great disadvantages. They had to build their own houses of worship, and maintain their own ministers, while they were taxed in common with the other inhabitants for the expense of building Episcopal churches, and supporting Episcopal ministers. This was not all: their churches being unknown in law, could not recover legacies left to them; and could only hold property through the intervention of trustees; a mode of tenure often attended with loss, and always with trouble. These inequalities were done away by the state constitution of 1778, and af-

terwards more explicitly by that of 1790. The mode of equalizing the different religious denominations adopted in S. C. was peculiar to itself; it was grounded on the liberal idea that it was more generous to raise the low to a proper common level, than to depress the high from that pre-eminence to which they had been exalted by royal authority. With this view the name of an established religion was retained, but on such a broad bottom as comprehended every denomination of Protestant Christians, giving to each of them equal rights and capacities, but withholding public pecuniary support from all. The Protestant Christian religion was therefore declared by law to be the established religion of the state. It was further enacted, that any society consisting of fifteen persons or upwards, should be an established Church and entitled to incorporation, on petitioning for it, after they had subscribed in a book the five following articles:

1. There is one Eternal God, and a future state of rewards and punishments.
2. God is to be publicly worshipped.
3. The Christian religion is the true religion.
4. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are divinely inspired, and are the rule of faith and practice.
5. It is lawful, and the duty of every man being therunto lawfully called, to bear witness to truth.

These articles were readily subscribed by the Church, but were not considered by its members as going far enough; they therefore added an explanation of their particular creed as follows:

“ Although we acknowledge that the foregoing articles do not contain any thing contrary to truth, yet, as they do not discriminate truth from error. and

are no ways declaratory of those distinguishing truths, which this Church has always heretofore acknowledged, and at this time do recognise to be the Scripture doctrines of grace: and as the foregoing articles are now received by this Church, merely in compliance with the requisitions of the legislative body of this country, and in order to entitle it to the privileges of establishment and incorporation, least any person should take occasion from them to attempt to introduce any doctrines into this Church, not heretofore received and acknowledged by it as Scripture doctrines, we lay down the following three articles as the fundamental doctrines of this Church:

“ 1. That there are three distinct persons mentioned in the Scriptures, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; to each of whom the name of God is properly given, divine attributes are ascribed and religious worship is due; that these three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are one God, the same in substance, power, and glory.

“ 2. That the Scriptures reveal and declare man to be a fallen creature; that by his transgressions of the law of God he has lost the divine image in which he was at first created, and incurred the displeasure of God, and subjected himself to the penalties annexed to the breach of his most holy law, and is become so wholly impotent, that he can do nothing meritoriously to atone for his guilt, recover the forfeited favour of God, and restore the divine image in his depraved soul.

“ 3. That the Scriptures reveal a method of recovery for fallen man through the divine interposition, to accomplish which the Eternal Father gave his only begotten Son to become a substitute for man; that the Eternal Son voluntarily submitted to this appoint-

ment and substitution, and in the fulness of time, took upon him our nature, and was made under the Law, to which he paid a perfect obedience, and died as a sacrifice and atonement for human guilt: that by his active and passive obedience, he perfected and brought in an everlasting righteousness, by the imputation of which through faith, mankind are again restored to the lost image and forfeited favour of God, and delivered from the curse of the law: that the Holy Ghost, by his enlightening influences and saving operations on the human heart, is the author and efficient of that faith by which we apprehend the righteousness of Christ, and through which we are made partakers of the blessings of Grace. ”

The constitution of South Carolina, adopted in 1778, having removed the legal impediments which heretofore had prevented dissenting churches from being incorporated, the Church, whose history we are reviewing, promptly availed itself of its new right, and was, on its own request, constituted by the legislature a corporate body. All the living trustees, in whom was vested the legal estate of the property of the Church, and the heirs of others who were dead, conveyed their trust-rights to the church by its corporate name. The benefits resulting to the Church from the Revolution were great, but not without alloy. Its funds, which in 1778 amounted to eighteen thousand eight hundred and fifty-seven dollars, were loaned to the state treasury, and in common with all other cotemporaneous evidences of debt, were subjected to a depreciation, by which, in 1783, they were reduced to three thousand five hundred and fifteen dollars and sixty-five cents. In consequence of the Revolutionary War, the Church was for a time broken up. It remained without a settled minister for

six years, and divine service was wholly discontinued in it for nearly half of that period.* When the British evacuated Charleston, they left the shell of the venerable ancient building, but nothing more. The pulpit and the pews had been taken down and destroyed, and the empty enclosure used first as an hospital for their sick, and afterwards as a storehouse of provisions for the royal army. Even the rights of sepulture in the church-yard were denied to the families of worshippers who were in Charleston after its capitulation, in the character of prisoners of war. Of the former worshippers in the Church, about thirty-eight heads of families had been exiled by the conquerors, partly to St. Augustine in the year 1780, and partly to Philadelphia in 1781. Confiding in their numbers and the purity of their motives, these took on themselves to act for the whole, and their doings, were afterwards confirmed by an act of the Church. Neither despairing of their country nor of their church, even while the royal army was in quiet possession of Charleston, the exiles providentially convened in Philadelphia, anticipating a speedy departure of their enemies, took provisional measures for supplying and recognising their Church as soon as it should be emancipated. The members who had continued to reside with the British in Charleston

* The bombardment of Charleston commenced on the 12th of April, 1780. In part of the interval between its commencement and the surrender of the town on the 12th of May following, the Rev. Mr. Edmonds performed divine service in the church to a few worshippers, mostly women and invalids; for the men were by night and day on the lines. While he was engaged in this duty a bomb-shell fell in the church-yard: the worshippers instantly dispersed and retired to their usual places of abode. Divine service was wholly intermitted from that day for the two years and eight months which followed.

began from the time of its evacuation, in December, 1782, to devise means for repairing their dilapidated place of worship—A subscription was opened for raising a sum of money to defray the expense of repairing it; to this many of the inhabitants, though not particularly connected with the Church, liberally contributed.—A general sympathy was excited in behalf of a Church which had so pre-eminently suffered in the revolutionary contest. The repairs, which cost six thousand dollars, were urged with so much expedition, that the renovated house was opened for divine service on the 11th of December, 1783, with an excellent and appropriate sermon by the recently arrived pastor of the Church, the Rev. William Hollinshead, afterwards D. D. This, his first sermon in Carolina, was preached on the day appointed by congress for returning thanks to Almighty God for the blessings of peace and independence. On this joyful occasion, the sensations of the restored members and of others on the return of their exiled associates, the reorganization of their ancient Church in an improved house, after its dilapidation and the dispersion of its members, and the settlement of a new and highly esteemed pastor, are more easily conceived than described.

The return of peace, and the flattering prospects from independence, encouraged the Church to complete a project which had originated in the year 1772, for building a new house of worship, in so close a connexion with the one already established in Meeting-street, that the two houses might be considered as one Church. This, under the fostering zeal of the Rev. Mr. Tennent, had progressed so far, that before the Revolution the walls of a new house of worship, which had been located in Archdale-street, were com-

pleted, the whole covered, and most of the pews put up. In this unfinished state it was left through the eight years of revolutionary war, and for a short period after its termination. Very soon after the old Meeting-street church was recognised, an increased demand for pews pointed out the propriety of opening a subscription for raising money to complete the unfinished shell of the new church in Archdale-street. This was accomplished for about six thousand dollars, and it was opened for public worship by the Rev. Dr. Hollinshead on the 25th of October, 1787. In the next year, Isaac Stockton Keith, afterwards D. D. was regularly settled as co-pastor. The worshippers in both houses formed but one corporate body, and they severally heard, or might hear, two distinct sermons from two preachers, who preached alternately in each house the same sermon in both on the same day. By this arrangement the labour of the ministers in preparing sermons was diminished one half; and yet the natural desire of variety was gratified in those hearers who steadily worshipped in the same house. This arrangement was adopted by a great majority, but from it there were six respectable dissentients, viz: Thomas Lamboll, Henry Peronneau, Arthur Peronneau, Charles Warham, Mark Morris, Daniel Legare, junr. The minority considered the union of two houses of worship as one Church to be contrary to the spirit of congregational polity, particularly to that fundamental article that every church is a distinct independent self-governed society: the majority considered the arrangement they had adopted, to be no more a departure from congregationalism than the common practice of employing two ministers to officiate in one and the same house. In their opinion, the circumstance of the service be-

ing alternately performed in two houses, did not materially alter the case. The discussions on this subject led to an examination of the records, and a serious investigation of the real character of the Church, as to its denomination and form of government: the result, as unanimously adopted by the members and supporters on the 5th of February, 1775, on the report of a committee appointed to inspect the records, and to draw out from thence what respects the constitution of the Church, was substantially as follows:

“ That this Church never has adopted any one distinguished name, platform, or constitution, in a formal manner, nor declared of what denomination of dissenters it is, but suffered itself to be called either Presbyterian, Congregational, or Independent: sometimes by one of the names, sometimes by two of them, and at other times by all the three.

“ We do not find that this Church is either Presbyterian, Congregational, or Independent, but somewhat distinct and singular from them all.

“ That the main thing this Church has had in view ever since the year 1732, was not so much to define exactly the particular mode of their discipline, and to bind their hands up to any one stiff form adopted either by Presbyterians, Congregationalists, or Independents, as to be upon a broad dissenting bottom, and to leave themselves as free as possible from all foreign shackles, that no moderate persons of either denomination might be afraid to join them.

“ This free and liberal plan has been so much in their view, that for many years they would not take any name at all, but considered themselves only as a certain society of Christians, worshipping in a brick meeting-house, and had no hesitation about the denomination of their minister, so be he was a Protestant

Pædo-baptist dissenter from the Church of England, a moderate man, and willing to leave them free: and it appears that if they have latterly adopted the word Congregational, it is with no other idea than that they acted as a congregation, disconnected from all others; not supposing themselves, on account of this name, bound up to every stiff rule laid down by a meeting at the Savoy, or at Cambridge, in New-England; many of the rules there adopted could, perhaps, by no means be put into practice here, nor would ever be assented to by this Church, who have never bound their hands by the forms of the Savoy or the Cambridge, more than by the Westminster directory; reserving it in their own hands, from time to time, to act as circumstances and conscience might require in their disconnected situation.

“ Its constitution is to have no absolute invariable form, but to act upon the freest and most liberal principles, as occasion may serve and edification direct.

“ And although its lands were given, and legacies left to it at different times, under different names, according to the idea of the donors, yet those names have never been formally adopted by any act of the Church, nor are we obliged to adopt or act upon any one of those forms.

“ But it also appears,

“ That although this church is upon so broad a bottom, yet that it might not be liable to any interruptions in the disposal of its temporalities and in the choice of a minister, and might keep itself free in its actions, it has established

Laws for The choice of managers,

—————The introduction of voting supporters—

—————Election of ministers.

“ These laws do not interfere with the peculiarities of any denomination of dissenters.”

From this document it appears that the church is a free ecclesiastical democracy. It has neither vestrymen, elders, or any other order of men who have pre-eminence. In all the secular or pecuniary concerns of the Church, they who pay pew rent are called supporters, and all such have equal rights and votes, and a majority decides every question submitted to them. In the spiritual concerns of the church, they who are partakers of the communion are called members and have some peculiar privileges. They have the sole right of appointing deacons, and in conjunction with the ministers have the sole right of admitting new members to the communion. In the election of a minister they have the sole right of fixing the time of proceeding to an election; but in the election itself, their votes and the votes of the supporters are of equal effect. They also have a negative so far in the business of dismissing a minister, that their concurrence on a separate vote by themselves, is an essential prerequisite to any proceedings on that subject by the supporters, and in all the spiritual concerns of the church a member can vote though he pays no pew rent.

To these outlines of the government of the church it may be proper to subjoin a general view of its doctrines. It never was so much its intention to build up any one denomination of Christians as to build up Christianity itself. Its members were therefore less attached to names and parties than to a system of doctrines which they believed to be essential to a correct view of the gospel plan of salvation. These have been generally called the doctrines of the reformation—of free grace—or of the evangelical system. The minister who preached these doctrines

explicitly and unequivocally, was always acceptable whatsoever his creed might be in other respects, or to whatsoever denomination he might belong. On the other hand, where these were wanting, no accordance in other points—no splendour of learning—no fascination of eloquence could make up for the defect.

The doctrines above stated have always been the doctrines of this Church, but they were formally adopted as such in its constitution ratified on the 20th day of August, 1804, as follows: “It is now farther declared that the view of the Holy Bible which is taken, and the construction which is given to its contents by this Church, is the same as is taken and given in the confession of faith, and the catechisms of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, ratified by the General Assembly at their session in May 1805.

In fifteen years after divine service began to be performed in the Archdale-street church, Josiah Smith, the treasurer, informed the Church that all the pews in both houses of worship were taken up, and a number of applicants for some time past, had been turned off from the want of pews to supply them—whereupon it was resolved “that a committee be appointed to examine into the practicability of making an alteration or addition to the houses of worship, so as to make room for more worshippers.” In the course of fourteen months’ investigations on this subject, the enlargement of their houses of worship in length, breadth, and height—the inclosure of one of them with a new brick wall, with an elongation at the end, and then pulling down the old walls—the building of a new and third house of worship, on a separate and distinct lot—the building of a new and enlarged house

of 100 feet by 60, on the site of the old Meeting-street church, previously pulled down, were all distinctly examined and successively rejected. In lieu of these abortive projects, it was on the 13th of February, 1804, resolved to build an entire new brick church of a circular form, of 88 feet interior diameter. The arguments in favour of this form were: that it was the least expensive mode of enclosing any requisite area of a church—that it admitted of such a location of the pulpit and pews, as brought the whole audience more completely in view of the preacher, and of the preacher in view of the hearers than any other of the usual forms of churches—that it required less exertion of the voice of the preacher to be heard than would be necessary in another form of equal area—that it was favourable to distinct hearing, in the pews most distant from the pulpit.*

A proposition for pulling down the old building, which might have lasted several years, and erecting a new circular one, at the expense of \$60,000 on its site, would at first have been promptly rejected, but

* Some of these advantages with respect to hearers in some parts of the church were diminished, and an unpleasant echo introduced, in consequence of a partial departure from the complete circular form, which had been recommended by the original projector, and by Mr. Mills, the ingenious architect who delineated the plan of the present circular building. The substitution of a right line in place of a segment of a circle, in the front of the church, was adopted by the building committee, to favour the erection of a steeple on the western extremity of the church opposite to the pulpit, and is supposed to be the cause of the echo. Mr. Mills has since completed a church in Philadelphia, of a larger area, wholly on the circular form, in which there is no echo. In it a low voice, very little above a whisper, can be distinctly heard at the distance of 90 feet, over the gallery, and directly across from the two extreme points of the interior diameter.

from the agency of Providence, which over-rules the hearts of man, it was after repeated deliberations, peaceably and unanimously adopted.*

For the two years which elapsed between the pulling down of the old building and the finishing of the new circular one, the worshippers were accommodated with the use of the South Carolina Society's building, in Meeting-street, for the performance of divine service. On the 25th of May, 1806, the circular church was opened in the presence of a numerous congregation, with an appropriate sermon of each of its co-pastors: the other house of worship was for that day shut. The pews in the new circular church were free to every person for three Sundays—after which they were appropriated. When all demands came in, it was found that the expense of the building so far exceeded the estimate, that a large sum must be raised from the pews. To make the most of this source of income, was a matter of some delicacy and difficulty. The descendants of the founders, and of other old members, had claims to be accommodated with pews at a reasonable rate, as all the funds which had been acquired for a century past, were given up in the first instance to defray the expenses of the building. In their behalf, it was urged that they should have the first choice of pews, and that the surplus should be sold to

* On this occasion the venerable treasurer of the church gave an example worthy of imitation by the minority of all deliberative bodies. The opposers of the circular form were at first very numerous; but they all successively came into the measure, with the exception of Mr. Josiah Smith. When he perceived the change that had taken place, and the final question was about to be put, he walked out; but gave up all opposition, and continued from that day to be, as he had always been before, a most active, disinterested, zealous friend of the church.

the highest bidders. To their reasonable claims the necessities of the church were opposed. The size of the church and the number of the pews* (166, exclusive of those in a large gallery) furnished the means of an amicable compromise. It was agreed, after an animated discussion, that sixty pews should in the first instance be sold to whosoever might be the highest bidders; and afterwards the surplus should be assigned on a valuation to the former worshippers, who, in proportion to their respective claims as contributors to the old church, should have a priority of choice. To favour the sale, an agreement was made with Mr. William Payne, that he should have the first choice of a pew, on his consenting to pay for it \$300 in cash, and to discount all that it sold for beyond that sum, in lieu of his commission for doing the whole business of the church, as its auctioneer and accountant. Under these circumstances he purchased for himself the first choice of a pew for \$605. This so enhanced the value of the subsequent sales, that \$20,390 was raised in one day from the sale of sixty pews at auction. The remaining ones on the ground floor, were chiefly distributed on a fair valuation, amounting in the whole to \$25,550 among the unsupplied former worshippers and others. In every case a fixed annual rent varying from \$8 to \$30, and in one case to \$40, was imposed on every pew, in addition to the original purchase money. By these means upwards of \$40,000 was secured to pay for the building,

* The northern half of the gallery, was gratuitously given to the negroes. And it accommodates about four hundred of them, who are orderly, steady, and attentive worshippers. The south gallery has not yet been appropriated. It is reserved for the future disposal of the church, and, in the meantime, it is free to all such persons as choose to worship there.

and an annual income of \$3,978 (when the pews on the ground floor are all rented, and the rent thereof punctually paid) towards defraying the salaries of ministers, and other contingent expenses. To the pew-holders, a fee simple title to their pews was given by the corporation, subject to be sold for pew rents due by their owners to the church, but not for any other debt whatever. The building was commenced with inadequate funds, and without any subscription, but with a strong reliance on Providence, that the pews, added to the old funds, would raise a sufficient sum to pay for the building, and be an annual source of income for all necessary expenses. These bold hopes were realized. This pleasing result, the great unanimity that prevailed in every stage of the critical business of pulling down one house and erecting another in its place, and the satisfactory peaceable appropriation of the pews, all call aloud for the gratitude of this highly favoured church.

Of the Benefactors to the Church.

1704. Frances Simonds, widow of Henry Simonds, planter, gave a lot of land, on which the old White Meeting was built, 100 by 130 feet. Agreeable to the designs of her husband long before his decease.
1707. Frances Simonds also bequeathed another plot of garden ground adjoining the preceding, and one large silver cup marked H. S.
1730. Andrew Allen, merchant, gave a part of three several town lots, which forms a part of the burying ground.
1730. Lydia Durham bequeathed a moiety of yearly rents arising on houses and her lands on the bay of Charleston, subject to some deductions.

1730. Robert Tradd, the first male child born in Charleston, bequeathed to Miles Brenton, Thomas Lamboll, and Garret Van Velson, and to the survivor or survivors and their successors, the sum of one thousand pounds, current money, upon trust, that they should put out the said sum to interest, yearly, on good security, and pay the clear profits thereof, yearly, forever, unto such minister or preacher successively, as should from time to time officiate in the Presbyterian church in Charleston, aforesaid, (of which society the Rev. Mr. Bassett was then minister) according to the form and discipline of the same, to be and remain to the proper use and behoof of such ministers and preachers, for their better support, &c.
1731. William Warden gave a slip of land now part of the burying ground.
1732. Thomas Ellery gave a piece of ground adjoining the above.
1737. Samuel Eveleigh, bequeathed 500*l.* for a pew free of rent to his heirs.
1740. Charles Peronneau bequeathed 1,500*l.*
1745. James Mathewes bequeathed 200*l.*
1754. Henry Peronneau bequeathed 500*l.*
1756. Benjamin D'Harriette bequeathed 500*l.*
1760. John Mathewes bequeathed 400*l.*
1761. Theodora Edings bequeathed 200*l.*
- Ann Mathewes bequeathed 500*l.*
1768. George Mathewes bequeathed 350*l.*
1769. William Dandridge bequeathed 350*l.*
1770. Mary Heskit bequeathed 200*l.*
1774. Alexander Peronneau bequeathed 500*l.*
1776. Othniel Beale bequeathed 150*l.*

In 1776—and partly in 1786, eighty-three ladies subscribed and paid for the purpose of building a pulpit in the Archdale-street church \$650.

1779. Sarah Stoutenburg bequeathed \$1005. The current money in this year was so far depreciated as to be worth on an average not more than fourteen for one.

— Josiah Smith presented to the church a lot of land on Archdale-street, and two tenements which in 1774, anterior to depreciation, cost him 4,000*l.* currency. The buildings were removed and placed on King-street, and now bring in an annual rent of 300 dollars. The south wall of the church is built on part of said lot.

Mrs. Mary Lamboll Thomas, in 1777, gave 2,660*l.* towards the purchase of another lot and tenement. This was by depreciation reduced to 1360*l.* 4*s.* 10*d.* and the church paid a balance of 904*l.* 18*s.* 5*d.* due on the purchase; subject in like manner to depreciation.

1780. Mrs. Mary Ellis bequeathed 3000*l.* in indents, which was depreciated by law to 129*l.* 5*s.* sterling.

1784. George Smith bequeathed a pew in St. Michael's church, which being sold in 1787 produced \$300.

1792. Dr. Richard Savage bequeathed 50*l.* sterling.

— John Scott, jun. bequeathed 150*l.* sterling.

1799. Widow Ruth Powell bequeathed 100*l.* sterling.

1801. Mrs. Frances Legare bequeathed a house in Trade street, subject to the payment of 100*l.* to the Baptist Church fund, for the education of pious young men for the ministry. The clear sum accruing to the church from the sale of the house, was 650 guineas.

1806. Rev. Dr. Keith released the church from the repayment of \$300, which he had loaned to the building committee, to assist in paying the expenses of building the circular church, on their paying off the assessment on two or three pews, which are to remain the property of the church, and to be leased or granted free of rent, to poorer members, especially widows—and that \$100 should be credited to Mrs. Elizabeth Bee, in payment of half the assessment on her pew.
1807. One hundred and forty-seven ladies gave towards building the pulpit in the circular church \$2063.
1808. Rev. Dr. Keith bequeathed by his will of that date, to the church, the reversion of about \$5,000 unfettered with any binding restrictions, but with an implied trust, or rather strong recommendation, that the income alone should be expended at their discretion for pious purposes. The intentions of the testator were expressed in the following words: “Although I do not judge it expedient to lay upon the said church any positively binding restrictions, yet I think it proper to declare, that it is my desire and hope that the said church should consider itself rather as the trustee, than the absolute proprietor of the said property; and that after funding it in the manner that may be judged the most safe and advantageous, the clear profits thereof be applied under the direction of the aforesaid church, chiefly, if not wholly, to the purpose of aiding young men, of approved piety and talents, when such assistance may be necessary, in obtaining a suitable education for the gospel ministry; or, of aiding sister churches, in supporting the minis-

tration of the gospel, and providing for the accommodation of worshippers, in their attendance on the ordinances of the Christian sanctuary, or of aiding charitable institutions or societies, founded on Christian principles, for promoting the interests of religion, by spreading the light and blessing of the gospel among those who might otherwise remain destitute of the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and of the salvation which is in Christ, with eternal glory.”

1810. Rev. Dr. Keith gave the pulpit branches to the circular church, which cost him \$195 26.

Besides the proper estate belonging to the church, the individuals composing it form so great a majority of the society, incorporated in 1789, “For the relief of elderly and disabled ministers, and the widows and orphans of the clergy of the Independent and Congregational Church, in the state of South Carolina,” that its capital stock, amounting to more than \$30,000, may, in a qualified sense, be considered as an appendage to the church. An annual collection, enforced by an appropriate sermon in its favour, is made by a standing order of the Church. Similar resolutions have been adopted to aid the funds of the Congregational and Presbyterian Society, for promoting the interest of religion, and also in aid of the funds of the Bible Society.

On the review of the history of this church, it must be apparent, that it is under great obligations to a kind Providence, which put it into the hearts of the first settlers of Charleston, though emigrants from distant countries, and differing among themselves in respect to church government, and other matters of

secondary importance, to unite harmoniously in founding a place of worship, in which the humbling self-denying doctrines of the gospel have been so long, so faithfully, and so uninterruptedly preached—and also put it into the hearts of pious wealthy persons, from time to time, to make so many handsome donations and bequests to the church, as enabled it “to lengthen its cords and strengthen its stakes;” which has raised up and brought from afar, competent labourers in the gospel vineyard, in the infancy of the province, when the means of education were remote and generally inaccessible to its inhabitants, so that with the exception of the tumultuous period of the revolutionary war, the church has never been long without a preacher—which has so overruled the hearts of all concerned, that its ministers, though strangers, and for the most part taken on the recommendation of strangers, have been perseveringly sound in the faith, exemplary in their lives, honest and faithful in the discharge of their pastoral duties—and that the church has been supported under the frowns of a partial establishment, which continued in force for nearly seventy years—preserved through a perilous revolution,—and in the course of one hundred and twenty-five years, raised from a handful of worshippers, in a small building forty feet square, to its present state of respectability. For these, and many other providential favours, to this branch of Christ’s vineyard, the warmest gratitude of the worshippers therein, is due to the beneficent Author of all good.

APPENDIX.

MR. TENNENT'S SPEECH

ON

THE DISSENTING PETITION,

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, CHARLESTON, SOUTH-CAROLINA, JAN. 11, 1777.

MR. SPEAKER,

I AM much concerned, lest an unfavourable construction should be put upon any word that may fall from me in the course of this debate, as reflecting upon the respectable members of the Church of *England*. I wish, sir, to be understood as bearing the gentlemen of that Church, a very high respect. None that now exist have been the authors of that which we complain of: with the generosity of sentiment, that now prevails; with the same enlightened minds, I am persuaded they never would have been the authors.

I dissent from the Church of *England*, it is true; but, I trust, it is upon the most liberal grounds: when I oppose its establishment, I do not mean to oppose the Church itself. I would equally oppose the establishment of any other, though I admired its constitution ever so much. I firmly believe that this petition arises from an unextinguishable love to the free and equal rights of mankind, and not from a dis-

like to one denomination of Christians, more than another. And, sir, while a love to freedom and equality is the grand sentiment that inspires all ranks of men, in this great contest; while you feel an unconquerable spirit of freedom, animating you to all these measures; how can you find in your heart to blame those who risk their all, and stand with you in the foremost rank of zeal and danger, if they should only desire to secure to themselves and children, the same privileges that you enjoy? You must pardon them, if, sensible of the injuries that have been done them in times past, while we mutually groaned under a foreign yoke, and anxious for the complete freedom and happiness of their posterity, they should improve the important moment of forming a constitution for this most righteous purpose.

And, now sir, I beg leave to offer a few of those reasons which induce me to oppose the religious establishment of any one denomination of Christians in this state, under our new constitution.

1. My first, and most capital reason, against all religious establishments is, that *they are an infringement of religious liberty.*

Religious establishments, as far as they operate, do interfere with the rights of private judgment and conscience: in effect, they amount to nothing less, than the legislature's taking the consciences of men into their own hands, and taxing them at discretion.

We contend, that no legislature under heaven, has a right to interfere with the judgment and conscience of men, in religious matters, if their opinions and practices do not injure the state. The rights of conscience are now too generally understood, to make it needful to take much pains to convince mankind that they appertain to an higher tribunal, and that the

objects of human legislation, are quite of a different nature. The state may give countenance to religion, by defending and protecting all denominations of Christians, who are inoffensive and useful. The state may enact good laws for the punishment of vice, and the encouragement of virtue. The state may do any thing for the support of religion, without partiality to particular societies, or imposition upon the rights of private judgment. But when the legislative authority of the state, sets itself up as a judge in Church controversies, and proceeds by law, to declare *this* system of opinions right, and *that* wrong; when it proceeds to lay hardships upon the professors of the one, while it lavishes its bounties on the other, and that while both are equally useful and inoffensive—I say, in this, it not only mistakes the proper objects of legislation, but is chargeable with manifest injustice. No legislature upon earth, has a right to do such a thing; nay, we contend, that such a right cannot possibly be communicated to them.—I can communicate to my representative, a power to dispose of part of my property, for the security of the remaining part: I may give him a right to resign a part of my personal liberty to the obligation of good laws, as a means of preserving the rest,——but cannot,——I say it is out of my power, to communicate to any man on earth, a right to dispose of my conscience, and to lay down for me what I shall believe and practice in religious matters. Our judgment and practice in religious matters, is not like our purse; we cannot resign them to any man or set of men on earth; and therefore, no man or set of men on earth, either has, or can have, a right to bind us in religious matters. The rights of conscience are unalienable, and, therefore, all the laws to bind it, are, *ipso facto*,

null and void. Every attempt of this kind is tyranny, let it be made by whatever body of men, and in whatever age:—Of all tyranny, religious tyranny is the worst, and men of true sentiment, will scorn civil, where they cannot enjoy religious liberty.

And, now sir, permit me to take a short view of religious establishments, and see, whether they do not, more or less, bear hard upon the rights of private judgment, and partake, in greater or smaller degrees, of this worst of tyranny.

On all hands it will be acknowledged, that those establishments are of this nature, which lay heavy penalties upon those who refuse to conform to them. Can you form an idea of more horrid cruelty exercised upon the rights of conscience, than that which imposes fines, imprisonment and death, upon those who presume to differ from the established religion? You, sir, look back with horror upon the history of such savage cruelty,——the more cruel, as it has ever been exercised under the colour of law.

Of the same nature, though differing somewhat in the degree of their cruelty, are those establishments, which incapacitate good subjects, who differ from the speculative opinions of the state. Judgment and conscience, in these matters, is, or *ought to be*, as independent of our will, as our height or colour. They are formed by the circumstances of the time in which we live, by the manner of our education, by the capacity of our mind, and the degree of evidence. Would not that prince be esteemed a cruel tyrant, who should ordain, that every man of six feet high, and of a sandy complexion, should be excluded from the rights of citizens? An assembly of two hundred senators, who could ordain, that good citizens should

be deprived, on account of their inoffensive opinions, would be two hundred times as cruel.

2. The next kind of establishment that we meet with, is, that which now obtains in this state. I shall speak cautiously of it, but I shall take the liberty to speak freely, and shall only mention facts.

Its chief characteristics are, that it makes a legal distinction between people of different denominations, equally inoffensive; it taxes all denominations, for the support of the religion of one; it only tolerates those that dissent from it, while it deprives them of sundry privileges which the people of the establishment enjoy.

I say it makes a legal and odious distinction between subjects equally good. The law knows and acknowledges the society of the one, as a Christian Church; the law knows not the other Churches. The law knows the Clergy of the one, as ministers of the gospel; the law knows not the Clergy of the other Churches, nor will it give them a license to marry their own people. Under this reputedly free government, licenses for marriage are even now refused by the ordinary, to any but the established clergy. The law makes provision for the support of one Church,—it makes no provision for the others. The law builds superb Churches for the one,—it leaves the others to build their own Churches: the law, by incorporating the one Church, enables it to hold estates, and to sue for rights; the law does not enable the others to hold any religious property, not even the pittances which are bestowed by the hand of charity for their support. No dissenting Church can hold or sue for their own property at common law. They are obliged therefore to deposit it in the hands of trustees, to be held by them as their own private property, and to lie at their mercy. The consequence of this is, that too often their funds for the

support of religious worship, get into bad hands, and become either alienated from their proper use, or must be recovered at the expense of a suit in chancery.

These are important distinctions indeed, but these are not all. The law vests the officers of the Church of England with power to tax not only her own people, but all other denominations within the bounds of each respective parish, for the support of the poor: an enormous power! which ought to be vested in no one denomination more than another. Greater distinctions still! where there are parishes the law throws the whole management of elections, that most inestimable of all the rights of freemen! into the hands of Church officers exclusively.

And why all this inequality? Why does the law thus favour one, and bear hard upon every other denomination of Christians? The reason is only to be found in the spirit of the times when this unequal establishment was framed, and in the Machiavelian policy of the British government; which ought not any longer to take place in this country.

But that which shows much of the injustice and oppression of the present establishment, is the tax which it makes all other denominations pay to the support of the religion of one. It puts its hand into the pocket of nine denominations, all equally pretending to the merit of good subjects and citizens, to bestow upon one and support its dignity.

Sir! is this consistent with our first notions of justice and equality? And here, it matters not whether the religious tax is equally levied upon the people at large, or whether it is paid by a general duty. The treasury is the equal property of all denominations in the state, and if it comes out of the treasury, it comes in effect out of their pocket.

The sums advanced by the treasury, for the support of the Church of England, within the space of the last ten years preceding the 31st of December 1775, amount to 164,027*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.* The expense of the year 1772 only, was 18,031*l.* 11*s.* 1*d.* The religious estate, now in the actual possession of the Church of England, drawn more or less from the purses of all denominations by law, would probably sell for three hundred and thirty thousand pounds.

Now, if you suppose that dissenters have always made more than one half of this government, the sum that has been actually taken out of their pockets for the support of a Church with which they did not worship, must amount to more than 82,013*l.* 10*s.* within the ten years aforesaid; and a very large sum of their property, in glebes, parsonages, and Churches, lies in the possession and improvement of the Church of England.

But if the dissenters do make a great majority of the inhabitants, the argument is still stronger, and the impropriety of obliging the purse of the *major* to suit itself to the consciences of the *minor*, can't fail to weigh with every candid mind. The inequality of the religious burden, is the more evident, when you consider, that the number of the established Churches in this state is only twenty, and many of them very small, whereas the number of formed dissenting congregations, the generality of which are much larger than those of the establishment, is at least seventy-nine, as appears from a schedule now in my hand. Still more unequal it appears, when you take into computation the large sums which dissenters do actually pay over and above their share of expense to the Church of England, for the support of their own worship. From the best intelligence that I can obtain, they have made provision for the support of

their own worship, and would actually pay the sum of 40,000*l.* annually, could they be furnished with Clergy. But the deficiency of gospel ministers reduces the sum very considerably.

Sir, you may say, that the doors of the established Church are open equally to all denominations, and that all may equally enjoy the benefit of it. I have heard of such an argument.

But besides that it is notorious, that what the public has paid for, in some instances has been converted into private property, and become the real estate of individuals, it would here be extremely natural to ask, how a rational dissenter can enjoy the benefit of the establishment? The only answer that I can give to such a question is a very short one: *he must do it at the expense of his own private judgment and conscience.*

“But dissenters are tolerated; there is a free toleration: Does any man impose upon them? who prevents their worshipping as they please?”

I answer. In this respect they stand upon the same footing with the Jews. Nobody molests them. But would it, sir, content our brethren of the Church of England, to be *barely tolerated*? that is, *not punished* for presuming to think for themselves. Is a bare toleration sufficient for the majority of a free state? of a free state that expects to gain its liberties by the sword? Would not a *bare toleration* be viewed by our brethren with infinite disdain; is this equality? Sure the justice of this house, now unfettered by British violence, will not permit the continuance of such a monument of inequality.

3. There are some who entertain an idea of keeping up the establishment, merely as a matter of religious superiority, without taxing other denominations. But they seem to forget, that every reason for which they desire the superiority by establish-

ment, operates as an abridgment of religious liberty. For when a man presumes to follow his own judgment in religious matters, and refuses to *conform*, he must at least submit to this inferiority, or rather bear the reproach of the law, as not being on a level with those that are Christians in its esteem. Still there remains injustice, and a foundation for dissatisfaction. For, sir, let it be remembered, that there are many dissenters in this state, who care but little for the money that it costs them to support the Church of England. They value much more their religious, their *unalienable* rights, than the expense. Sir, you very well know, that it was not the *three pence on the pound of tea*, that roused all the virtue of America. It is our birth-right that we prize. It is a full and undiminished freedom in the exercise of our own judgment, in all religious matters, that we value and esteem.

And for a *mere empty name*, without profit,—for a mere title of pre-eminency without emolument,—is it worth while to have a bone of endless contention in the state, and to maintain these odious distinctions?

4. There is a proposal, Mr. Speaker, to establish all denominations by law, and to pay them all equally.

This, sir, may operate as a scheme of division, but in practice it must appear equally absurd and impossible. Absurd, as the establishment of all religions would in effect be no establishment at all. It would destroy the very end of an establishment, by reducing things just to the same state they would be in without it, with this disadvantage, that large bodies of men who could not obtain Church officers, might be oppressed, by being obliged to pay for that which they received no benefit from. But it would be found impracticable, as people of different sentiments live

intermingled, and there could be no possible distinction of parishes, so as to accommodate different denominations. But if the establishment must from time to time conform itself to the prevailing party in each parish or district, there would not only be the same ground for complaint that there now is, but it would prove the means of everlasting strife. And indeed I am afraid that the expense would be found upon trial insupportable. Sir, it is impracticable in this state to establish all denominations, and it is only thrown out to amuse us. But to admit the establishment of a few dissenting Churches, in preference to all others, as a means to make them acquiesce! It is too big with injustice to procure the consent of an honest man. Let us all have equal privileges or nothing. **EQUALITY OR NOTHING!** ought to be our motto.

In short, every plan of establishment, must operate as a plan of injustice and oppression; and therefore, sir, I am utterly against all establishments in this state. Leave each Church to be supported by its own members, and let its real merit be all its pre-eminence. Thus while you give proper scope for a laudable emulation, you take away all complaint of injustice, and build your state upon the solid foundations of equity and righteousness.

If these arguments have failed to weigh at other times, they ought now to have amazing weight. While you are contending for the rights of mankind with one of the greatest powers upon earth, will you leave your own constitution marked with injustice and oppression, and that in the most important of all respects that ever mortals contended for? What are all the liberties for which we dare to grapple with Great Britain, when compared with our religious

liberties? Can you imagine, that the numerous dissenters who venture their all in support of American freedom, would be fond of shedding their blood in this cause, if they did not with confidence expect that they should have justice done them, and that they should stand upon the same footing with their brethren? Can you imagine that a refusal of justice would not damp their ardour, if not utterly disarm them? Do they ask any more than what they have an absolute and indefeasible right to enjoy? Sir, these are rights which they cannot possibly relinquish. Their claim is founded in eternal justice, and this stands confessed by their most violent opposers. They must pay an equal share of that tax which independency will cost you—they must spill a greater share of blood, and therefore they cannot, I say they cannot consent to the smallest inferiority in privileges either civil or religious.

But, sir, in the present case, the claims of good policy join those of common and confessed justice. Religious establishments discourage the opulence and cramp the growth of a free state. Every fetter, whether religious or civil, deters people from settling in a new country. Take off every unnecessary yoke, and people of all denominations and professions will flock in upon you with all their arts and industry. If a spirit of toleration raised the United Provinces to such a pitch of glory and grandeur, by inviting people from every quarter of Europe; if an entire equality has made Pennsylvania the emporium of America, to the immortal honour of its wise legislator; what good effects may not be expected from the same spirit of laws in this state. That state in America which adopts the freest and most liberal plan will be the most opulent and powerful, and will well deserve it. Sir, as a narrowness in these matters is the

disgrace of the human mind, so is it the disgrace of any system of laws whatever.

I could wish to draw the attention of the house to another important motive,—that is, the future peace and happiness of this state. Grant this petition, and the foundation of religious discord is eternally removed. It is inequality that excites jealousy and dissatisfaction. Make your laws partial towards people of any one set of opinions, suppose it only in philosophy, and you entail immortal strife and debate upon your children. If all your people are equally free and happy, it will be no matter who is *in* or who is *out*, i. e. in respect to denomination.

Where the people have a full voice in legislation, the case is vastly different from what it has been in times past, while royal violence stood ready to support the claims of injustice. Gentlemen of the Church of England, should, methinks, be as much concerned to obtain the prayer of this petition as any others. The course of things is very uncertain. None know where numbers and interest may carry matters in future time. Some have unjustly accused dissenters with an intention to establish themselves. It was partly that accusation that gave birth to the petition before you. But if the gentlemen of the Church of England do really apprehend danger of such a mortifying issue in process of time, sure they of all men ought to be most anxious so to fix the basis of the constitution, as forever to prevent it: I mean by making it a foundation article, that there never shall be any such establishment. This is the only security of the Church of England, as well as of other Churches. That Church has long had the advantage; he has reaped uncontrolled, the enoluments of the state; she has subsisted on the abridgment of the

equal privileges of others; she has flourished by aid of their property. *Let the time past suffice.* With the new constitution, let the day of justice dawn upon every rank and order of men in this state. Let us bury what is past forever. We even consent, that the estate which she has for a century past been drawing more or less from the purses of all denominations; an estate of no less value than three hundred and eighty thousand pounds, remain in her quiet possession, and be fixed there. Let her only for the future cease to demand pre-eminence. Let her freely consent that others enjoy the same privileges, in every respect, with herself. This is all we ask; we seek no restitution. After the vast sums partially expended by the state upon one denomination, all the others ask not a farthing to be returned them. Let her be contented with her superb churches, her spacious burying-grounds, her costly parsonages, her numerous glebes, and other church estates, obtained in a great degree from the public purse, while not a farthing has been granted to other churches; and let her not now insist upon such glaring partiality any longer.

But it is impossible to do justice to this great cause by confining myself to a narrow compass. I am obliged to answer one capital objection before I sit down,—and reserve to myself the right of answering the arguments which are used in favour of a continuance of the establishment, in case I find it needful.

The objection I mean is that with respect to the *time*. You hear it from all quarters, by those who speak in favour of the establishment, “it is perfectly just, that an equality of privileges should take place. None can contradict the justice of the petition. If you

had only delayed it to a proper time, we should have become advocates for it ourselves. But we have too much now upon our hands. Wait until matters are better settled, and you are sure of it."

I believe the gentlemen that I have heard speak in this manner, are sincere as to their own intentions; but I must be excused from believing, that the zealous friends of an establishment so partial, will be of the same mind with them. I think if the time is left to them, it will prove as it did in the case of the man, the time of whose execution was left to himself: it so happened, that all the persuasions of the executioner could never make him believe that the time present was proper. I remember from the history of the revolution, when the papists were like to prove too strong for the favourers of the accession,—the dissenters thought it a proper time to insist on some alterations in the penal laws, which, though levelled against papists, were so artfully managed, as to take in all dissenters with them. The only way found to content them, was, by solemnly promising to give them relief, as soon as ever the affairs of the nation would permit it. They were prayed and entreated to be silent at that time; "it would be dangerous to make any alterations—the papists would take advantage of it, and endanger the accession." *They* simply yielded to the prayers of the establishment: but, a full proof, that to *postpone* where the rights of justice demand, is to *betray* them; a full proof of the danger of deferring to another time, what ought to be done now.—I will only ask any man, who knows the history of the nation since that time, whether those promises have ever been fulfilled! Are they placed upon the equal footing that was promised? Not that

there were not found some who faithfully endeavoured to fulfil their promises,—but the majority thought it proper to ride on in the same manner, after they found themselves well fixed in the saddle.

But, sir, suppose the petitioners had no such instance to warn them; suppose the event was not so perfectly natural and to be expected. Yet let me ask any gentleman, who thinks that *this is not a proper time*, a few questions.

Is it not a fact, that we are now reviewing the constitution; that *what* was designed only as a *pro tempore* affair may become so perfected as to be fit to stand? Is it not an agreed point, that it is dangerous to have the constitution placed upon the same footing with any common law, subject to be canvassed every sessions? If then, there is ever a time in which it is proper to apply for redress of any grievance which may be supposed to lie in the present frame of the state, when should that be but when the constitution is to be reviewed and fixed? Is there, can there be another time so natural? Or should a thing in which the liberties of the people are so essentially concerned, not enter into the constitution, but be left to the precarious fate of any common law? Shall it be left to be promoted or crushed at hazard? Should not the constitution take care of the religious as well as civil liberties of the people? Or do you think the former of less importance than the latter?

When these questions are properly answered, I then beg leave to ask; if this matter is not now attended to, will not the Church of England be established by law under the new constitution, and become the constitutional Church? If so, then will not all these oppressions which have been groaned under heretofore, be constitutional in this free state? And

is this a matter of small moment to the major part of the people? And must they sit still out of mere compliment? Must they compliment away their freedom in this manner, and not only suffer, but even lend their aid, by putting their own hands to it, with the sanction of the people at large? It is strange that gentlemen can expect it. How can we answer our neglect to our constituents, who expect that we shall make them free? How can we answer it to our posterity, who even now ought to rise in our imagination, and demand of us to leave them free? This is the natural time, and this is the only time. Things ought to be done in their proper season. And gentlemen may pretend what they please,—if they are averse to grant justice in the present season of it,—if they are unwilling to do it *now*, they will be more so *by and by*. One thing I am sure of, they will have less motives to engage them to do it *by and by*. He that is disposed to do justice, is willing to it without delay. The old law maxim is good—to *delay justice is to deny it*.

Sir, at this time, all ranks of people more sensibly feel the claims of justice, than they will hereafter. They now feel the rod of oppression: and there is nothing like suffering to bring us to our senses. They are now struggling against arbitrary power. They can now realize the hardship. Let these times pass, and ease will naturally lull them into an inattention to the rights of mankind.

That this is a proper time the example of other states confirms. Pennsylvania, New-Jersey, Delaware have led the way; Virginia and North-Carolina are now meditating the same important step. Maryland has done it already.

That this is the proper time is plain, as the people are now waiting to see what they have to expect, for what it is they are to waste their treasure and their blood? They are ready to do it cheerfully, if they may with certainty expect to be made and kept as happy as their brethren. They ask no favours; they ask only the common rights of mankind.

By some it is said to be dangerous to grant this request at the present time. They own it is just.—It ought to be. No member, say they, in the house will deny it; but the time is dangerous.

But, sir, we are indeed reduced to that situation, that it is dangerous to do common justice? Every man allows it to be just: well then who is to be feared? Are you afraid of those who confess the justice of the present application? Acknowledging it to be just and right, will they be apt to revolt against their own sentiments? Will the danger arise from the dissenting denominations? No; it answers the prayer of their petition. Will the danger arise from the Church of England? I cannot think it. It is too harsh an imputation upon the gentlemen of that Church. They will not endanger the state on account of that which they know and universally allow to be just. I cannot, I will not admit the supposition. Sir, I have the pleasure of knowing too many of them to think so. Many of them have signed the petition. Many more have declared their sentiments in the most liberal terms. There is too much Catholicism and love to liberty among them. They don't desire any longer to oppress their brethren. They profess a generous disdain of the thing. They have property sufficient to maintain their own Clergy liberally; and if the state did not take it off their hands, I believe they would do it more liberally than it is now done.

If the dissenters did not apply now,—it might by and by be retorted upon them, and that with great justice.—“You have had an hand in framing the constitution, as well as we. The Church of England is the constitutional church, by your own act and deed. Why did you not make your opposition in proper time? Why so much out of season? Why endeavour to subvert what your own hands have reared?” Sir, we should be dumb; or what is as bad, we should justly lie under the charge of some species of sedition. Sir, we mean to act a rational and constitutional part.

And now, sir, it only remains to be seen whether this legislative body, now by God’s goodness, free from the chains of foreign compulsion, will rectify the errors of less happy times: whether they will rise in the annals of this important age, by showing a temper superior to all illiberality and oppression.

Will you, sir, comply with the demands of common justice? Or are you willing to listen longer to the cry of oppression? Will you make all your people equally free and happy? Do you desire to put an effectual end to all religious broils and contentions forever? Will you strengthen your own hands in defence of your bleeding country? Do you wish to enrich it by an influx of healthy inhabitants from every quarter of the world? Would you secure yourself from the fetters of any one denomination, with which the uncertainty of time may inundate this country? Will you give to every denomination the best security of future religious freedom and happiness that the nature of the case admits?

Grant them the prayer of the petition: grant it in substance, if not in the very expressions. Let it be

a foundation article in your constitution, "that there shall be no establishment of one religious denomination of Christians in preference to another. That none shall be obliged to pay to the support of a worship in which they do not freely join." Yield to the mighty current of American freedom and glory, and let our state be inferior to none on this wide continent, in the liberality of its laws, and in the happiness of its people.

THE END.
