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ANNALS
OF THE
AMERICAN PULPIT;
OR
COMMEMORATIVE NOTICES
OF
DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN CLERGYMEN
OF
VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS,
FROM THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTRY TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIVE.
WITH HISTORICAL INTRODUCTIONS.
✓
BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

VOLUME III.

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In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern
District of New York.

Abercrombie's Remarks on a fair Narrative of the proceedings of the Presbytery of Boston against himself, 1758. A Sermon on true Godliness, &c., 1759. Manna gathered in the morning, 1761. Infant Baptism from Heaven: Two Sermons, 1765. A Sermon on the death of the Rev. George Whitefield, 1770. Letters on Baptism addressed to the Rev. Hezekiah Smith, 1770. Freedom from civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, the purchase of Christ: A Sermon, 1774. Sixty Sermons: 2 volumes, octavo, (posthumous,) 1784.

Mr. Parsons is now chiefly known as an author by his two volumes of posthumous Discourses,—most of those published in pamphlet form having been long out of print. They are characterized by very considerable mental vigour, by an imagination prolific of striking imagery, by great copiousness of diction and depth of feeling, and a most uncompromising adherence to that system of faith, to which, during the greater part of his ministry, he was so earnestly devoted.

WILLIAM TENNENT (SECOND).*

1732—1777.

WILLIAM TENNENT (Second) was born in the County of Antrim, Ireland, January 3, 1705. He came to this country at the age of thirteen, with his father, the Rev. William Tennent, who arrived with his family at Philadelphia, in the summer of 1718. He early evinced an uncommon thirst for knowledge, and made rapid progress in the languages, particularly the Latin. Being also, as it was hoped, the subject of an early conversion, he determined to devote himself to the Christian ministry. His elder brother, Gilbert, was already a popular preacher, settled in New Brunswick, N. J.; and William, after having gone through a preparatory course under the instruction of his father, went to New Brunswick to avail himself of the aid of his brother in the prosecution of his theological studies. When he left home, his father, with his parting blessing, gave him a small sum of money, telling him that, if he behaved well, it would be all he would need; and if he did not behave well, it was more than he deserved. When he had nearly completed his theological course, and was preparing for his examination by the Presbytery, he was the subject of the remarkable trance which has perhaps given him his greatest celebrity, and of which a particular and authentic account is given in two of the letters connected with this sketch.

After Mr. Tennent's gradual recovery from the effects of his trance, he still adhered to his purpose to preach the Gospel, and in due time received licensure from the Philadelphia Presbytery. His first efforts in the pulpit gave promise, if his life should be spared, of eminent fidelity and usefulness. His brother John, who had for some time been settled over the Presbyterian Church at Freehold, Monmouth County, N. J., having then recently deceased, application was made to the subject of this sketch, to supply the pulpit which his brother's death had vacated; and, after having served them

* Assemb. Miss. Mag. II.—Boudinot's Narrative.—Hist. Log Coll.—Webster's MSS.

a year in the character of a supply, he was, on the 25th of October, 1733, regularly constituted their pastor by the Philadelphia Presbytery.

Though the salary of Mr. Tennent, with proper management, was abundantly adequate to his support, yet, in consequence of his entrusting all his pecuniary concerns to a servant, he very soon became seriously embarrassed, and found that he had debts to a considerable amount, which it was quite impossible for him to cancel. Happening one day to mention this circumstance to a friend who was on a visit to him from the city of New York, his friend suggested, as the most suitable remedy for his difficulty, that he should get married; and when Mr. Tennent smiled at the suggestion, as if it were an utterly hopeless matter, the gentleman told him that there was a lady within his knowledge,—a Mrs. Noble,—his own sister-in-law, whom he thought eminently qualified for such a station; and intimated his willingness, if he would come to New York, to render him any aid in the matter that might be in his power. He accepted the proposal; accompanied his friend to New York the next day; was introduced to the lady; offered himself to her, and was accepted; and, within one week from the time of the introduction, she was the mistress of his house. His friend's recommendation was fully justified by her character; for, while she proved a most affectionate and devoted wife, she assumed, in a great degree, the management of his temporal concerns, and within a short time, under her skilful superintendence, he was not only free from debt, but was quite easy in his worldly circumstances. Besides several children who died in infancy, they had three who lived to mature age:—*John*, who was a physician, and died in the West Indies, at the age of about thirty-three; *William*, who forms the subject of a distinct notice in this work; and *Gilbert*, who was also a practising physician, and died at Freehold, before his father, at the age of twenty-eight. They were all men of fine appearance, and of excellent education and character.

Mr. Tennent, though he did not live till the close of the Revolutionary war, was yet deeply interested in the American cause, and by his prayers at least, strove earnestly for its promotion. He was on a visit to some friends near New York, when a British frigate attempted to pass the batteries, and proceed up the North River, while General Washington lay with the American army in the city. A heavy cannonading took place, which was mistaken, in the surrounding country, for a general attack on our army. Mr. Tennent was deeply affected, and, after pausing for a moment, turned to a friend or two present and said—"Come,—while our fellow citizens are fighting, let us retire for prayer." They accordingly went up into his room, where, for half an hour, he poured out his fervent supplications in behalf of his suffering country.

In the winter of 1776–77, the British overran a great part of the State of New Jersey, and particularly the County of Monmouth, where there were a large number of Tories. Encouraged by the adverse prospects of the American cause, a party of these people arose, and dragged numbers of their fellow citizens to the British Provost, by whom they were treated with the utmost rudeness and cruelty. Mr. Tennent now regarded his own situation as one of great peril; but, as he had no place to flee to, he remained at home, committing himself to the Divine protection. In December, 1776, a number of the inhabitants called upon him, and urged him to hasten to Princeton, and avail himself of General Howe's then recent proclamation,

offering a pardon to those who should seek it within a limited time. He refused, till he became satisfied that he should stay at the peril of his life, and that if he did stay unmolested, it would be to little purpose, as he should have no opportunity of exercising his ministry. Under these circumstances, he at length very reluctantly consented to go to Princeton. On his way, he lodged at the house of a young clergyman, and, when he arose in the morning, manifested great depression of spirit. On being asked what troubled him, he answered with a sigh,—“I am going to do a thing for conscience sake, directly against my conscience.” Soon after his return home, a change favourable to the American interest occurred, and the whigs of Monmouth County, who had been driven away, came back in force. Mr. Tennent continued to reflect severely upon himself for what he regarded as an act of timid and unworthy submission.

But the days of this good man were now almost numbered. About the latter end of February, or beginning of March, 1777, he was seized with a violent fever, which, after a few days, terminated fatally. He died on the 8th of March, 1777, and was buried in his own church at Freehold,—an immense concourse of people attending his funeral.

Mr. Tennent published a Sermon entitled “An exhortation to walk in Christ,” preached at New Brunswick, August 8, 1737, upon the Monday after the Sacramental solemnity. It is included in a volume entitled “Sermons on Sacramental occasions by divers ministers,” printed in 1739. Also, a Sermon upon Matthew v. 23, 24, 1769.

Judge Boudinot relates the following, among other anecdotes of Mr. Tennent, illustrative of his eminent piety:—

“He was attending the duties of the Lord’s day in his own congregation as usual, where the custom was to have morning and evening service, with only a half hour’s intermission to relieve the attention. He had preached in the morning, and in the intermission had passed into the woods for meditation,—the weather being warm. He was reflecting on the infinite wisdom of God, as manifested in all his works, and particularly in the wonderful method of salvation, through the death and sufferings of his beloved Son. This subject suddenly opened on his mind with such a flood of light, that his views of the glory and the infinite majesty of Jehovah were so inexpressibly great as entirely to overwhelm him, and he fell almost lifeless to the ground. When he had revived a little, all he could do was to raise a fervent prayer that God would withdraw Himself from him, or he must perish under a view of his ineffable glory. When able to reflect on his situation, he could not but abhor himself as a weak and despicable worm, and seemed to be overcome with astonishment that a creature so unworthy and insufficient had ever dared to attempt the instruction of his fellow men in the nature and attributes of so glorious a Being. Overstaying his usual time, some of his elders went in search of him, and found him prostrate on the ground, unable to rise, and incapable of informing them of the cause. They raised him up, and after some time brought him to the church, and supported him to the pulpit, which he ascended on his hands and knees, to the no small astonishment of the congregation. He remained silent a considerable time, earnestly supplicating Almighty God (as he told the writer) to hide Himself from him, that he might be able to address his people, who were by this time lost in wonder to know what had produced this uncommon event. His prayers were heard, and he became able to stand up by holding the desk. He now began the most impressive and pathetic address that the congregation had ever received from him. He gave a surprising account of the views he had of the infinite wisdom of God, and greatly deplored his own incapacity to speak to them concerning a Being so infinitely glorious beyond all his powers of description. He attempted to show something of what had been discovered to him of the astonishing wisdom of Jehovah, of which it was impossible for human nature to form adequate conceptions. He then broke out into so fervent and expressive a prayer, as greatly to surprise the congregation, and draw tears from every eye. A sermon followed that continued the solemn scene, and made very lasting impressions on all the hearers.”

Judge Boudinot elsewhere says of him—and he could testify from an intimate acquaintance:—

"He hated and despised sloth. He was almost always in action—never wearied in well-doing, nor in serving his friends. His integrity and independence of spirit were observable on the slightest acquaintance. He was so great a lover of truth that he could not bear the least aberration from it, even in a joke. He was remarkable for his candour and liberality of sentiment with regard to those who differed from him in opinion. His hospitality and domestic enjoyments were even proverbial. His public spirit was always conspicuous, and his attachment to what he thought the best interests of his country was ardent and inflexible. He took an early and decided part with his country in the commencement of the late Revolutionary war. He was convinced that she was oppressed, and that her petitions to the Sovereign of the mother country were constitutional, loyal, moderate and reasonable; that the treatment they received was irrational, tyrannical and intolerable. As he made it a rule, however, never to carry politics into the pulpit, he had no way to manifest his zeal for the public measures, but by his private prayers, and by his decided opinions delivered in private conversations. But in this way his sentiments became universally known, and he was considered as a warm friend to the American cause. * * * He was well read in Divinity, and professed himself a moderate Calvinist. The doctrines of man's depravity; the atonement of the Saviour; the absolute necessity of the all-powerful influence of the Spirit of God to renew the heart and subdue the will,—all in perfect consistence with the free agency of the sinner, were among the leading articles of his faith. * * * His people loved him as a father; revered him as the pastor and bishop of their souls; obeyed him as their instructor; and delighted in his company and private conversation as of a friend and brother."

The three following letters which came into my possession several years ago, contain notices of some of the most interesting events of the life of Tennent, not included in the preceding narrative. I have chosen to subjoin the letters, as being original documents, and of the highest authority. They were addressed to the venerable Judge Boudinot, and constituted part of the material out of which his memoir of Tennent's Life was formed. The first is from General J. N. Cumming, of Newark, N. J., of Revolutionary memory; the second is from the Rev. Dr. John Woodhull, Tennent's successor at Freehold, from whose lips I once heard a statement of the same facts; and the third is from Dr. Thomas Henderson, Tennent's family physician, a distinguished civilian of New Jersey, and a member of the Old Congress. A fourth letter is added, addressed to myself, by S. J. Forman, Esq., of Syracuse, N. Y., who is one of the very small number now living, who have any personal recollections of that remarkable man.

FROM GENERAL CUMMING.

NEWARK, January 3, 1804.

Dear Sir: The Rev. William Tennent once related to me that, after lying ill with the lung fever six weeks, in the midst of winter, about the year 1723, and when he was about nineteen years old, he apparently died. This happened on Sunday, whilst his brother Gilbert, with whom he lived in the city of New Brunswick, was gone to church. His body was laid out in the usual manner, in the back part of a room, in one of the old fashioned Dutch houses. On Monday morning, when they went to put him into the coffin, a man by the name of Duncan, who was assisting, called out to the others to lay him down, for he felt his heart beat, and was sure there was life in him. His brother Gilbert derided the assertion of Duncan, and indeed there was every thing to induce a belief that he was dead. The length of time that he had been sick, his emaciated body, his black lips, his sunken eye,—all appearances were against remaining life. But after this declaration of Duncan, it would not do to bury him, and the funeral was postponed till Tuesday, when the people assembled for the burial. In the mean time, all means had been used to restore life. They were again about to put the body into the coffin, when again Duncan called out,—“Lay him down, for I am sure there is life in him.” No other person believed there was life, and yet so long as *he* retained this opinion, they would not allow the fune-

ral service to proceed. The funeral was again postponed until Wednesday, and the means of restoring life meanwhile applied with the utmost diligence and vigour. At the time appointed, the people again assembled, and the Doctor was sitting on the bed-side with a looking glass in one hand, and a feather in the other, trying them alternately at his mouth and his nose. At the very last moment, to the unspeakable surprise of all, he opened his eyes, gazed on them, and swooned away for about two hours. Again he gazed, and again fainted. Shortly after, his whole body broke out in boils to such an extent that it seemed throughout a complete ulcer; insomuch that his nurses were obliged, for nearly a whole year, to sew up sheets, and stuff them with wool, in order to absorb the humours. It was more than a year before he could stand upon his feet, and his intellectual faculties seemed to be gone. He informed me that his eldest sister, named Catharine, was one day teaching him his letters, and he observed her to turn her head from him, and weep with great apparent agitation; and when he asked her what was the matter, she replied,—“I am distressed to think that your sickness has been so severe that, notwithstanding you have had a good education, you have forgotten all you ever knew.” Upon this information, he said, there was a sudden return of the use of his faculties, but he was well convinced that his memory was never so good after as before his sickness. I did not ask him whether he saw any thing in his trance. My mother told me that he always said he should live to old age.

Thus, my dear Sir, you have all on this subject that I recollect to have heard. My memory was always strong; and the conversation I had with this good old man, in regard to his trance, was so impressive and extraordinary, that it is one of the last things that can ever fade from my recollection.

Yours affectionately,

J. N. CUMMING.

FROM THE REV. JOHN WOODHULL, D. D.

MONMOUTH, N. J., December 10, 1805.

Dear Sir: Agreeably to your request, I now send in writing the remarkable account which I some time since gave you verbally, respecting your good friend, my worthy predecessor, the late Rev. William Tennent of this place.

In a very free and feeling conversation on religion, and on the future rest and blessedness of the people of God, (while travelling together from Monmouth to Princeton,) I mentioned to Mr. Tennent that I should be highly gratified in hearing from his own mouth an account of the *trance*, which he was said to have been in, unless the relation would be disagreeable to himself. After a short pause, he proceeded, saying that he had been sick with a fever,—that the fever increased, and by degrees he sunk under it; and, after some time, as his friends informed him, he died, or appeared to die, in the same manner as persons usually do;—that, in laying him out, one happened to draw his hand under the left arm, and perceived a slight tremor in the flesh—that he was laid out—was cold and stiff—the time for his funeral was appointed and the people collected; that a young Doctor,—his particular friend, plead with great earnestness that he might not then be buried, as the tremor under the arm continued;—that his brother Gilbert became impatient with the young gentleman, and said to him—“What! a man not dead, who is cold and stiff as a stake!” The importunate friend, however, prevailed—another day was appointed for the burial, and the people separated. During this interval, many means were made use of to discover, if possible, some symptoms of life; but none appeared, excepting the tremor. The Doctor never left him for three nights and three days, when the people again met to bury him, but could not even then obtain the consent of his friend, who plead for one hour more; and when that was

gone, he plead for half an hour; and then he plead for a quarter of an hour; when, just at the close of this, on which hung his last hope, Mr. Tennent opened his eyes. They then pried open his mouth which was stiff, so as to get a quill into it, through which some liquid was conveyed into the stomach, and he by degrees recovered.

This account, as intimated before, Mr. Tennent said he had received from his friends.

I said to him, "Sir, you seem to be one indeed raised from the dead, and may tell us what it is to die, and what you were sensible of while in that state." He replied as follows: "As to dying, I found my fever increase, and I became weaker and weaker, until all at once, I found myself in Heaven, as I thought. I saw no shape as to the Deity, but Glory all unutterable!" Here he paused, as though unable to find words to express his views, let his bridle fall, and, lifting up his hands, proceeded,—"I can say as Saint Paul did, I heard and I saw things all unutterable! I saw a great multitude before this glory, apparently in the height of bliss, singing most melodiously; and I was transported with my own situation, viewing all my dangers and all my troubles ended, and my rest and glory begun; and was about to join the great and happy multitude, when one came to me, looked me full in the face, laid his hand on my shoulder, and said,—'*You must go back.*' These words went through me,—nothing could have shocked me more—I cried out, 'Lord, must I go back?' With this shock, I opened my eyes in this world. When I saw I was in the world, I fainted; then revived and fainted several times; as one probably would naturally have done in so weak a situation."

Mr. Tennent further informed me that he had so entirely lost the recollection of his past life, and the benefit of his former studies, that he could neither understand what was spoken to him, nor write nor read his own name; that he had to begin all anew, and did not recollect that he had ever read before, until he had again learned his letters, and was able to pronounce the monosyllables, such as *thee* and *thou*; but that, as his strength returned, which was very slowly, his memory also returned. Yet, notwithstanding the extreme feebleness of his situation, his recollection of what he saw and heard while in Heaven, as he supposed, and the sense of Divine things which he there obtained, continued all the time in their full strength; so that he was continually in something like an ecstasy of mind. And said he, "for three years, this sense of Divine things continued so great, and every thing else appeared so completely vain, when compared to Heaven, that could I have had the world by stooping down to pick it up, I believe I should not have thought of doing it."

Having thus complied with your request, it may not be improper for me to add that, since Mr. Tennent's death, I conversed with his son, the Rev. William Tennent of South Carolina, on this subject, and he agreed in every particular, with one exception—namely, he understood that his father recovered his memory instantaneously.

I am, Dear Sir, affectionately yours,

In the dear Immanuel,

JOHN WOODHULL.

FROM DR. HENDERSON.

FREEHOLD, Monmouth, March 30, 1805.

Dear Sir: As I understand you have already been informed by Dr. Woodhull of the remarkable vision or trance of which Mr. Tennent was once the subject, I shall omit all allusion to that memorable event in the few notices of his character that I am about to furnish.

With regard to the manner in which he discharged the duties of the pastoral office, I can say something from actual knowledge, having lived chiefly under his

ministry from my infancy to his death,—a period of between twenty and thirty years. I think I may say with confidence that he was regarded by all classes as a fervent, impressive, and successful preacher of the Gospel; and I doubt not that the Records of his church will prove that a greater number were received to communion, during his ministry, than in any other church in the then Province. His labours in spiritual concerns were far from being confined to the pulpit: he was indefatigable in his endeavours to do good in private. A considerable part of his time he appropriated to visiting his congregation, and would apply the truths of the Gospel personally to individuals of every age, rank, and character; and he was particularly attentive to the little children of his charge, taking care that they were early taught the Catechism, and explaining the various doctrines of the Gospel to their comprehension, as they were able to receive them. He was remarkable for his great attention to the particular situation of persons afflicted either in body or mind, and would visit them often, and with as much care as a physician would do, and proved frequently a very comforting spiritual physician to their souls. As a peace-maker, I am of opinion that none in our day have excelled,—few have equalled, him. If he heard of any difference arising in his congregation, he would scarcely give sleep to his eyes, before he would attempt to bring about a reconciliation between the parties; and he hardly ever remitted his efforts till his object was accomplished. Thus much concerning the general character of our mutual and dear friend I am able to state from my own knowledge.

With regard to any striking facts or anecdotes in the history of Mr. Tennent, I will mention two or three, though there is perhaps only one of them that you will deem worthy of much notice. Though I did not have it immediately from Mr. Tennent himself, yet I have heard the particulars so frequently stated by my parents, who were members of his church, and my father an elder, that I am confident I cannot be mistaken in respect to them. The circumstances were as follows: Mr. Tennent, while young in the ministry, had a contemporary of the name of John Rowland,* who had preached once or more in a church in the County of Hunterdon, N. J., but not often enough, or recently enough, to be readily known by the congregation. Mr. Tennent and Mr. Rowland had both gone on a preaching tour into Maryland or Virginia; and, in their absence, a certain young man by the name of Tom Bell, who knew Mr. Rowland, and who strikingly resembled him in his outward appearance, but who was a most artful and accomplished scoundrel, dressed himself as much like Mr. Rowland as he could, changed his name to that of John Rowland, and professing to be a minister of the Gospel, went into the congregation above alluded to, and passed himself off as the minister who had preached to them some time before. He accepted an invitation to pass the rest of the week with one of the members of the church, and to preach on the succeeding Sabbath. The impostor was treated with every

* JOHN ROWLAND was a native of Wales; came to this country in early life, and received his education for the ministry at the Log College. He was taken under the care of the New Brunswick Presbytery at its first meeting, August 8, 1738. In disregard of a standing rule of the Synod, which required that every candidate, before being taken on trials by any Presbytery, should undergo an examination on his classical and scientific attainments by a Committee of Synod. The Presbytery, believing this rule to be an undue infringement of the rights of Presbyteries, and considering it as designed to operate particularly against the Log College, determined to resist it; and hence arose the violent dissension between this Presbytery and the Synod, which issued in a division of the latter body into two parts,—the Old and the New Side. Mr. Rowland, having gone through the prescribed trials, was licensed to preach on the 7th of September; but the Synod refused to consider him a member of their body. On the very day of his licensure, an application was made for his services by the united Congregations of Maidenhead (Lawrence) and Hopewell (Pennington). He accepted the invitation, and a great revival of religion attended his labours. After some time, he removed from New Jersey into Pennsylvania, where he had charge of a congregation in what is called “the Great Valley,” and also of New Providence, near Norristown, though much of his time seems to have been spent in itinerating. He died before the autumn of 1747. Dr. Henderson of Freehold says—“He possessed a commanding eloquence and many estimable qualities.” Whitefield said—“There was much of the simplicity of Christ discernible in his behaviour.”

mark of respect by the family who had thus proffered him their hospitality; and, in order the more effectually to blind them to his character and his purpose, he occupied a room by himself as a study, in which he was professedly making his preparation for the Sabbath. When the Sabbath morning came, and the family had got ready to go to church, it was proposed that the pretended minister should take a seat in the wagon in which the family were to be conveyed, while the gentleman of the house would ride on horseback. Thus they went to church; but when they arrived there, the clerical rogue suddenly made the discovery that he had left his notes behind, and begged his host to allow him to mount his horse, (a remarkably fine one,) and return to his house and get his notes, promising to be there to commence the service within a short time. The proposal being readily consented to, the imposter rode back to the gentleman's house, and, having rifled the desk of whatever he could find in it that was valuable, went off with all speed in a different direction, and thus made his escape. Several persons saw him on the horse, and addressed him as Mr. Rowland. When Mr. Rowland, after some time, returned to the Province, he was immediately prosecuted for horse-stealing; and when the case came to trial, Mr. Tennent appeared as a witness, proving that he and Mr. Rowland were, on that very Sabbath, at a particular place in Maryland or Virginia, and that one or both of them preached there. In consequence of this testimony, Mr. Rowland was honourably acquitted.

At that time, there were many leading families in that part of the Province, who evinced a deadly hostility to the Gospel, and who were upon the lookout for opportunities to bring its ministers into contempt. Perceiving the great and increasing influence of Mr. Tennent, and the remarkable success that attended his labours, they entered into a conspiracy against him, and succeeded in getting him indicted, by a grand jury of the County of Huntingdon, for perjury. Mr. Tennent was charged upon his indictment, and plead "not guilty." The trial was put off as usual to another term. His enemies, who were also the enemies of religion, had engaged distinguished counsel, whose anti-christian sympathies were entirely with their own. Mr. Tennent or his friends secured the best counsel they could get. At the time when the trial was to come on, Mr. Tennent attended at Trenton, and, in the morning, before the court was opened, was asked by his counsel, where his witnesses were; and his reply was, "I have no witnesses, Gentlemen, that I know of, but God and my own conscience." "You *have* no witnesses, Sir," replied the attorneys, with the utmost astonishment,— "then you had better have the trial put off:—you know what testimony will be brought against you, and what efforts will be made to ruin you; and you will inevitably be convicted, unless you are able to meet them with an opposing testimony." Mr. Tennent answered,— "I know it well; but I will never put it into the power of my enemies to charge me with a wish to delay the trial, or with being afraid to meet the law or justice. I know my innocence; and my God, whose I am, and whom I serve, and in whom I place all my confidence, knows it, and he will never suffer me to fall by the snares of the devil, or the wicked machinations of his agents—go to trial, Gentlemen." His attorneys informed him that his confidence in God as a Christian or a minister of the Gospel was no doubt well founded, and before a Heavenly Tribunal would be all-important to him; but that it would avail him nothing before a Court of Law, and again urged his consent to have the trial put off. He, however, persisted in his determination to let the trial take its course, assuring them that he had such entire confidence that God would bring about his deliverance in some way or other, that he did not wish for a moment's delay. They were so out of patience with him, that they did not hesitate to tell him that his conduct was more worthy of a wild enthusiast, or a downright madman, than of a prudent Christian. But he still charged them to go to court, and let the case come to trial without loss of

time, and left them in a state of utter perplexity as to what course they should pursue; for the bell was then ringing for the Court to assemble. He had not walked far in the street, before he met a gentleman and lady, the former of whom inquired whether his name was William Tennent. He replied in the affirmative, and asked the gentleman if he had any business with him. The answer was, "You will best know, when I tell you whence I came, and what has brought me hither; but I should like to know whether you were in Maryland [or Virginia] at such a time, in company with Mr. John Rowland, minister of the Gospel." Upon being answered in the affirmative, he asked him if he recollected their lodging, a certain Saturday night, at the house of a person by the name of —— and going to church on the ensuing Sabbath with the family, and one or both preaching, &c. Mr. Tennent said he did. The gentleman replied,—“I am that man in whose house you lodged that night, and this is my wife.” Mr. Tennent took them by the hand, and expressed his great satisfaction at seeing them; for the Sabbath referred to proved to be the very one on which Mr. Tennent had sworn that Mr. Rowland was with him in Maryland or Virginia;—on which oath was based the accusation of perjury. The gentleman then explained the reason of his being there: he said that, several nights before, he and his wife awoke in the night at the same time,—each having had the same singular dream; which was, that he (Mr. Tennent) was at Trenton in the greatest possible distress, and that it was in their power alone to relieve him. They, however, suffered it to pass as an ordinary dream, and both went to sleep again; but they had the same dream a second, and even a third, time; and they were then so much impressed with the extraordinary circumstance, that they immediately arose from bed, prepared for their journey, and had travelled with all speed till they had reached Trenton. “And now,” said the gentleman, “you can tell whether we have any business with you or not.” Mr. Tennent begged them instantly to accompany him to the court house, the Court then being in the act of meeting. The case was forthwith called; the witnesses on both sides examined; the cause submitted to the jury; Mr. Tennent triumphantly acquitted; and his adversaries overwhelmed with confusion.

Another anecdote occurs to me, illustrative of Mr. Tennent's knowledge of human nature, and of his disposition always to be about his Master's business. On a certain occasion, he was travelling with a brother minister on a missionary tour at the South, when they stopped at an inn, and engaged lodgings for the night. At supper they met several gentlemen who were strangers to them; and when the cloth was removed, Mr. Tennent and the other minister withdrew from the table. A pack of cards was immediately brought forward; and one of the gentlemen, not knowing that there were any ministers present, asked Mr. Tennent and his clerical brother if they would take a cut with them; meaning thereby to determine by lot who should play. Mr. Tennent replied,—“With all my heart, Sir, if you can convince us that we are thereby serving our Master's cause, or doing anything in aid of the object of our mission.” This drew some observations from the stranger, which were replied to by Mr. Tennent in substance as follows:—“This gentleman” (meaning his companion) “and myself are ministers of the Gospel: we both profess ourselves Christ's servants: we are sent out on his business, which is to persuade men to become reconciled to God.” These remarks, made with great sincerity and kindness of manner, produced such an effect upon the company, that the cards were immediately removed, and a willingness manifested to listen to Mr. Tennent and his friend on the most momentous of all concerns. They gladly availed themselves of the opportunity of doing their Master's work, and spent the evening in explaining to the company, into which they had been thus providentially thrown, the great truths and duties of religion.

I recollect another anecdote which I had from Governor Livingston, which shows how entirely Mr. Tennent's will was swallowed up in the will of his Heavenly Father. The Governor stated that, when, at a certain time, Mr. Whitefield was travelling in Jersey, Mr. Tennent accompanied him to Bound Brook, (if I remember right,) and after Divine service on a week day, a Mr. Van Horne invited Messrs. Whitefield, Tennent, Livingston, and some other gentlemen to dine with him. In the course of the conversation that occurred at the dinner, Mr. Whitefield introduced the subject of death,—expressing himself as weary of the trials and labours of life, and desiring to depart and be with Christ. Turning to Mr. Tennent, he said, “And what do you say, Brother Tennent—don't you want to get your dismissal too?” Mr. T. replied,—“I have no wish about it: I have nothing to do with death: my business is to live as long as I can, as well as I can, and to serve my Lord and Master as faithfully as I can, until it shall be his pleasure to call me to my rest.” “But,” says Mr. Whitefield, if it were left to your own choice, would you not wish to depart and be with Christ, rather than to encounter the fatigues and trials of this mortal state?” Mr. Tennent replied, “I wish to have no choice about it; I am God's servant, and am engaged to do his business as long as he pleases to continue me therein. But, Brother Whitefield, permit me to ask you one question:—What would you think of a person who had engaged to serve you with all fidelity to the end of his life, if he should, without any breach of covenant on your part, and before he had one-half performed the service allotted him, become weary of your service, and be constantly expressing a wish for some easier condition—would you not say that he was a lazy, unfaithful creature, and as such dismiss him entirely from your service?” Mr. Livingston told me that Mr. Whitefield appeared to feel the force of the reproof, and to receive it as a Christian; and that the company seemed much pleased at the ingenious and Christian-like manner in which it was administered.

I will close my communication (already too long) by detailing one more circumstance which fell within my immediate knowledge, illustrative alike of Mr. Tennent's love of country, and submission to the Divine will. He took the deepest interest in our Revolutionary struggle, believing, as he did, that the great cause of the world's civil freedom was bound up in it. When he was attacked with his last illness, I was sent for as his family physician; but it happened to be just at the moment that I was setting off for Haddenfield, to wait upon the Legislature of the State on important public business. I called on Mr. Tennent, after setting out on my journey, and, having learned the particulars of his case, I told him that I had but a few moments to stay, as it was then night, and I had more than twenty miles to ride before I slept; but that his case was an alarming one,—that it required the strictest attention, and that I advised him to avail himself at once of the best medical aid that could be procured. He replied that he was fully aware of the violence of the attack, and thought it more than probable that it would have a fatal result; “but, blessed be God,” says he, “I have no wish to live, if it should be the good pleasure of my Heavenly Father to call me hence.” After a moment's pause, he seemed to recollect himself, and varied the expression somewhat in this way—“I have no wish to live longer, unless it should be to see a happy issue of the conflict in which my country is now engaged; but the will of the Lord be done.” On my return from Haddenfield, I hastened to see him, and was with him during the last twenty-four hours of his life. His death was worthy of his life,—full of Christian serenity and joyful hope. I believe it may be said of our departed friend, as truly as of any man who has lived during the present age, that he lived habitually under the influence of the powers of the world to come.

I am, dear Sir, with respect,

Your obedient, humble servant,

THOMAS HENDERSON

FROM S. J. FORMAN, Esq.

SYRACUSE, 25th October, 1847.

Rev. and dear Sir: I regret to say that my reminiscences of the celebrated William Tennent are too scanty and unimportant to be of any use to you. Nevertheless, since you ask for them, such as I have, give I unto you.

My parents were members of Mr. Tennent's church, and my very early years were spent under his ministry. I distinctly recollect to have seen him once at my father's house, in company with some of my relatives, with whom he was there visiting. In person he was tall—of a large frame, but spare, and of a long thin visage. He wore a large white wig. I remember that his manners were very pleasing to me. When he came into the house, I heard him say to some person behind him—"in spite of your teeth;" and at the same time, he shut his own teeth, and shook the curls of his long wig, twisting his hands together, and seemed to be in very high spirits. As my mother met him at the door of her room, he clasped both her hands with both of his, in the most cordial and affectionate manner. There was a facetiousness about his whole appearance that I never could forget. The party had come for a sleigh ride, about fourteen miles, in the month of April, and returned after candle light, for fear that the snow would leave them. I have always thought that Mr. Tennent resembled the likeness of Lord Chatham.

One of Mr. Tennent's sons was a physician. At one time, he inoculated a large number for the small pox, in a spacious farm house; and, while his patients (of whom I was one) were yet under treatment, he was himself taken sick and died suddenly. The patients had to scatter to their respective homes. One of his sons was a clergyman in Charleston, S. C., where he died. While I was yet a minor in a counting-house in New York, I was sent to Charleston as a supercargo, and, during my stay in the city, Mrs. Tennent heard of me, and sent for me to come to her house. Though I was an entire stranger to her, her intimacy with some of my connections in New Jersey led her to show me that civility.

With much esteem and respect,

I am, Rev. and dear Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

S. J. FORMAN.

SAMUEL BLAIR.*

1733—1751.

SAMUEL BLAIR was born in Ireland, June 14, 1712. In early youth he became hopefully a subject of renewing grace. He came to America while quite young, and received his education at the Log College, at Neshaminy, under the Rev. William Tennent. He must have been among the earliest pupils of that institution, as he was afterwards among the most distinguished men whom it sent forth. Having completed his preparatory course of both classical and theological study, he was licensed to preach, on the 9th of November, 1733, by the Presbytery of Philadelphia, and in May of the next year, was called to Middletown and Shrewsbury, and also, to Millstone

* Miller's Ret. II.—Mass. Miss. Mag. III.—Hist. Log Coll.—Webster's MSS.