

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.

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and had little sympathy with any of their extraordinary movements for the promotion of the Gospel.

A gentleman of this place, a remote relative of Mr. Elder's, to whom I have applied for information concerning him, writes thus:—"As to Mr. E's personal appearance and habits, I would not venture any thing from my own knowledge; for though I may have seen him frequently, I was too young (only six years old) when he died, to retain any distinct recollection of him. But as my grandfather and he were full brothers, I have heard many of the relatives and friends speak of his personal appearance and manners, and they uniformly represented him as a large, fine looking man, above six feet high, well formed and proportioned, dignified in manner, a fine specimen of an educated gentleman, beloved and respected by the people of his congregation, and having great influence for good among them."

I am sorry that I cannot give you fuller and more detailed information of Mr. Elder, as he must have acted an important part, both as a citizen and a minister, in the first settlement of this portion of Pennsylvania. Should, however, the above answer your purpose, to any extent, I shall be gratified.

With much respect, yours sincerely,

WILLIAM R. DEWITT.

JAMES DAVENPORT.*

1738—1757.

JAMES DAVENPORT was a great grandson of the Rev. John Davenport, who was the first minister of New Haven, and was afterwards settled in Boston, where he died in 1670. He was a son of the Rev. John Davenport of Stamford, Conn., who was graduated at Harvard College in 1687, was ordained pastor of the church in Stamford in 1694; and died February 5, 1731, aged sixty-one. He (the father) was an eminently faithful and useful minister, and was so familiar with the original languages of the Scriptures, that he was accustomed to read them in the family in place of the English translation.

James Davenport was born in Stamford in the year 1710, and was graduated at Yale College in 1732. From letters addressed to his brother-in-law, the Rev. (afterwards Dr.) Stephen Williams of Longmeadow,—which are still extant, it appears that he was very seriously inclined, and probably a professor of religion, during his college life. He continued to reside at New Haven for two or three years after his graduation, and, during this time, it is supposed that he prosecuted his theological studies under the direction of Rector Williams. He was, at this period, the subject of some very troublesome, if not dangerous, disease: and, after having made trial of the skill of Dr. Hubbard of New Haven, without receiving any material benefit, he went to Killingworth, and spent some time in the family of Dr. Jared Eliot, distinguished alike as a physician and a clergyman,—that he might have the benefit of his medical attentions. Under Dr. Eliot's treatment, he very soon began to amend, and after two or three months, we find

* Miller's Life of President Edwards.—Prime's Hist., L. I.—Webster's MSS.—Various pamphlets connected with the Revival of 1740.—Tracy's Great Awakening.—Autograph letters of Mr. Davenport to Rev. Stephen Williams.

him again pursuing his studies at New Haven, and, for aught that appears, in his usual health. He seems to have taken a very serious view of the dispensation, and to have been deeply solicitous that it might turn to his spiritual benefit.

His letters at this period show that he was the subject of great spiritual conflicts, and was intent upon making high attainments in religion. Some of them show also, that he was far from having any sympathy with that extravagant spirit,—of which he afterwards gave so humiliating an example. In a letter dated Yale College, January 27, 1734, he writes thus—"I find need of continual supplies of grace and strength from above, that I may maintain a close walk with God; Divine wisdom and prudence to behave aright to and before others, so as to give no offence,—so as to do no hurt to religion, or to my own soul. Oh, Sir, a great thing I find it to be wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove. I would repeatedly ask your prayers for me on this account. I am very sorry to hear what you write concerning Mr. R——, fearing it may be no small damage to religion. I should be sorry if, upon examination, you should find that there was real ground to fear, as you mention in your letter, with respect to Sir Pomeroy. Sir Wheelock, I hope, and am very well satisfied, thinks right in these matters, and has no wild notions, and I should be glad to hear that Sir Pomeroy has not."

It is not known where, or by what body, Mr. Davenport was licensed to preach; but, as he pursued his theological studies at Yale, and as his father was a prominent clergyman in Connecticut, there is little doubt that it was by an Association in his native State. In the spring of 1738, he was applied to, to preach at Maidenhead and Hopewell, (Lawrence and Pennington,) N. J., and the Philadelphia Presbytery wrote to him in behalf of those congregations; but he received a call from Southold, L. I., about the same time, to which he gave the preference. Southold was the oldest town on the Island, and had been left vacant, in 1736, by the removal of the Rev. Benjamin Woolsey.* His ordination took place on the 26th of October, 1738. Among the ministers composing the council was his brother-in-law, the Rev. Stephen Williams of Longmeadow.

Mr. Davenport's settlement was just at the time when the indications of what has been called the "Great Awakening," were beginning to appear in different parts of the Church. It was the custom of those who deplored the prevailing religious indifference, to draw the line with great distinctness between the converted and unconverted, and to express to individuals personally the judgment they had formed of their spiritual condition. Davenport, who seems to have been of an excitable temperament, and to have hailed the earliest signs of the new state of things with intense inter-

* BENJAMIN WOOLSEY was a grandson of George Woolsey, who emigrated from Yarmouth, England, to America, between 1630 and 1640; and was a son of Captain George Woolsey, who was born in New York, October 10, 1652, and died at Dosoris, L. I., January 19, 1740-41, in his ninetieth year. He was born at Jamaica, L. I., November 19, 1687; was graduated at Yale College in 1709; and was ordained as the third pastor of Southold, L. I., by an ecclesiastical council, in July, 1720. In 1736, he resigned his charge, and removed to Dosoris, in Queens County, where he had a large tract of land, which came to him through his wife. Here he spent the remainder of his life, preaching, as opportunity offered, in the surrounding country. He died on the 15th of August, 1759, in the seventy-second year of his age. He had two sons,—*Melancthon Taylor*, who was a Colonel in Abercrombie's expedition, and died during the expedition, in 1758; and *Benjamin*, who was graduated at Yale College in 1744, led a quiet country life, and died in 1771. The latter was the grandfather of the Rev. Dr. Woolsey, President of Yale College.

est, practised the severest scrutiny in regard to the religious character of the members of his church. He went so far as to pronounce upon them, almost with the confidence of Omniscience,—calling those, of whom he formed a favourable judgment, *brethren*, and the rest, *neighbours*,—at the same time, by a strange inconsistency, having as little intercourse with the latter class as possible. He subsequently went so far as to forbid the “neighbours” to come to the Lord’s table,—a measure which of course was followed by excitement, distress, and exasperation.

There was no one who sympathised more fully in the state of mind into which Mr. Davenport was now brought, than the Rev. Jonathan Barber,* who was at that time officiating in the neighbouring parish of Oyster Ponds, (now Orient.) Mr. Barber visited Southold in March, 1740, on which occasion a meeting was held there for twenty-four hours, accompanied by demonstrations of—to say the least—a very doubtful character, and foreshadowing the yet more extravagant movements that were to follow. Davenport and Barber went together to East Hampton, and the effect of their labours there was a prodigious excitement—of which Dr. Davis, late President of Hamilton College, and a native of that town, says—“Many untoward and ever to be lamented circumstances occurred; yet lasting good was done amid a great shaking and commotion.” Shortly after this, Davenport went to Philadelphia, where he was present at a meeting of Synod, and about the same time became acquainted with Whitefield, who speaks of him as “one of the ministers whom God has lately sent out,—a sweet, pious soul.” Here he seems to have been not a little strengthened and encouraged in the course on which he had entered, by the bold and earnest preaching of Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Blair. The summer following he spent with his own people at Southold, during which time he supposed about twenty of them were converted; and in the autumn he preached for a while, amidst a powerful excitement, at Basking Ridge, N. J., and made another brief visit, in company with Whitefield, to Philadelphia. After spending the next winter, as is supposed, in his own parish, he went in July, 1741, into Connecticut, preaching in various places, as he had opportunity, and everywhere exciting great attention, and often the most violent opposition; while some excellent and eminent men seemed, on the whole, to countenance him,—being willing to tolerate the evil for what they considered the greater good. At Stonington, one hundred are said to have been awakened under his first sermon. From Stonington he seems to have gone to the neighbouring town of Westerly, R. I., and was accompanied by the people, in solemn procession, singing as they went. At Branford, he was invited to preach by the Rev. Philemon Robbins, and on their way to meet-

* JONATHAN BARBER, a son of Thomas Barber, was born at West Springfield, Mass., January 21, 1712, and was graduated at Yale College in 1730. He was licensed to preach by the Association of his native county in 1732, and commenced his ministerial labours in the neighbouring parish of Agawam. After leaving there, he seems to have exercised his ministry for some years on Long Island, though he was not regularly settled. In 1740, he accompanied his intimate friend, Mr. Whitefield, to the South, where he remained for seven years, Superintendent of the Orphan House in Georgia. About 1748, he returned to Long Island, and became pastor of the church to which he had previously ministered. Here he continued nearly ten years. In the autumn of 1758, he was installed pastor of the Congregational Church in Groton, Conn. Having discharged the duties of a pastor with fidelity and acceptance for eight years, he fell into a deep and settled melancholy, which prematurely closed his labours. After suffering under this distressing calamity for nearly eighteen years, he died suddenly, on the 8th of October, 1783, in the seventy-second year of his age. He had an extensive correspondence, both in this country and in Europe, and was held in high estimation as an exemplary Christian, and a faithful minister.

ing on Sabbath, he proposed that they should sing; and he did sing, despite of Mr. Robbins' objections and expostulations. At New Haven, he came in conflict with the pastor, the Rev. Mr. Noyes, who refused to submit to his examination; but he preached notwithstanding, and produced a powerful effect upon the mind of David Brainerd and many others; though an effect which was at best of a mixed character. At Saybrook, the Rev. William Hart, who had been his classmate in College, declined admitting him into his pulpit, chiefly on account of his severe and almost indiscriminate censures of the standing ministry.

In May, 1742, the Legislature of Connecticut passed a most extraordinary law, designed to regulate the conduct of ministers. If any minister preached without express invitation, in a parish not under his care, he was denied his salary for a year; and the ministers who licensed a candidate, or counselled a congregation, not under their particular Association, were also deprived of their support. No minister could draw his salary, till he had a certificate of the clerk of the parish, that he had not been complained of for either of these offences. Any minister of the Colony, preaching in any place beside his own parish, without the consent of the pastor and the majority of the people, was bound over in the penal sum of one hundred pounds not to offend again: those not inhabitants of the Colony, were to be carried out of it as vagrants. The law allowing "sober dissenters from the standing order" to form congregations, was repealed.

It can easily be imagined that such a man as Davenport was, at this period, could not be very safe within the range of the operation of this law. Accordingly, we find that in June, 1742, when Davenport and his friend, the Rev. Benjamin Pomeroy of Hebron, had met at Ripton, by request of the Rev. Mr. Mills, minister of the place, to consult in regard to carrying forward the revival, complaint was made to the General Assembly, of the disorders to be apprehended in consequence of their inflammatory proceedings, and they were immediately taken up and carried to Hartford, to answer for having committed various irregular acts in violation of the law. During their examination the greatest excitement prevailed, insomuch that the Sheriff found it difficult to conduct his prisoners from the meeting house, where the Assembly seems to have held its session, to the house where they were to be lodged; and it was found necessary to order out a militia force, of forty armed men, to protect the Assembly from the hostile demonstrations that were going forward. On the third day from the commencement of the examination, the Assembly decided "that the behaviour, conduct, and doctrines, advanced by the said James Davenport, do, and have a natural tendency to disturb and destroy the peace and order of this government. Yet it further appears to this Assembly that the said Davenport is under the influence of enthusiastical impressions and impulses, and thereby disturbed in the rational faculties of his mind, and therefore to be pitied and compassionated, and not to be treated as otherwise he might be." They, therefore, ordered him to be sent home to Southold. On hearing their decision, he said, "Though I must go, I hope Christ will not, but will tarry and carry on his work in this government, in spite of all the powers and malice of earth and hell." About four o'clock, P. M., the Sheriff, with two files of men armed with muskets, conducted him to the bank of the Connecticut, and put him on board a vessel, the owner of which agreed to carry him to

his home. Pomcroy, who seemed "almost orderly and regular," in comparison, was discharged.

Shortly after this, Davenport went to Boston, but was very generally discountenanced by the ministers in that region. He attended public worship at Charlestown, on Sabbath morning after his arrival, and partook of the Lord's Supper, but in the afternoon remained at his lodgings, from an apprehension that the minister was unconverted. He appeared before the Boston Association, and gave them an account of his experience, which, on the whole, led them to believe that he was "truly pious," while yet they felt constrained to issue a public testimony disapproving his course. But he availed himself of the first opportunity publicly to denounce them, representing some of them as unconverted, and the rest as Jehosaphats in Ahab's army, and exhorted the people to separate from them without delay. In consequence of his erratic proceedings, he was seized by the Sheriff, and, on refusing to give bail, was committed for trial. The Sheriff offered him his liberty till the day of trial came, on condition that he would promise good behaviour; but he refused, and was accordingly kept in close quarters. When the trial came on, the ministers made intercession in his behalf with the Court, and the verdict was, that while he actually uttered nearly all the defamatory expressions that were charged upon him, he was at the time *non compos mentis*, and therefore *not guilty*.

During all this time, it is not to be supposed that his people had nothing to say in view of his long absences from them, or that they were satisfied with what he was doing abroad. So far from it, that, on the 7th of October following, a Council was convened at Southold, by request of his congregation, to take into consideration the peculiar state of things in respect to them and their pastor, and advise as to the proper course to be pursued. Though I have not met with any particular account of the doings of that Council in print, I have in my possession the following document in manuscript—the Result of the Council—in the handwriting of Jonathan Dickinson. From the fact that the manuscript is largely interlined and altered, it is presumed that this is the original draft, and that Dickinson of course was a member, and probably the Scribe, of the Council.

"At a Council of ministers convened at Southold, October, 1742, upon the desire and invitation of the congregation there, there being a variety of complaints exhibited by the committee of the First Parish in Southold against the Rev Mr. James Davenport, the pastor of the church there,—the Council, after distinctly hearing both the allegations of the said committee, and Mr. Davenport's answers to their several complaints, and after repeated and solemn addresses to God for his directing and assisting influences, came to the following conclusions:

"In the first place, we think it our duty to declare our firm and undoubted persuasion that the Glorious God has, as well in these as in several other parts of the country, made an uncommon display of the power of his infinite free grace in the conviction of sinners, and in the saving conversion of many to himself; and that he has improved our said Rev. brother, Mr. Davenport, as a successful instrument in carrying on this blessed and glorious work; and it is grievous to us to observe that some irregularities in Mr. Davenport's conduct have, as we apprehend, in a great measure hindered his usefulness, and been the unhappy occasion of prejudicing many against the work of God that has been carried on in the land.

“Upon the several articles of complaint that are laid before us, we propose our following opinions and advice. We can’t but suppose that his barring sundry members of his church, of good reputation for religion, from Communion at the Lord’s table, and his suspending one of his deacons, without any other reason against them than his own private apprehension of their internal state, was a proceeding too arbitrary and uncharitable; and that his refusing baptism to the children of some who have been communicants at the Lord’s table, and to others of a blameless and regular conversation, only from a suspicion that they were unconverted, is a just cause of objection against him.

“We also think that his congregation have just cause to complain of his leaving them at several times, for so long a space as he has done, without their consent—whereby he has not only left them destitute of Gospel ordinances, but has been too unmindful of the obligations he lies under by his pastoral relation to them.

“If, by his declaring, both in praying and preaching, that he knows not beforehand what subject he shall preach upon until he comes into the pulpit, be intended that he makes no previous preparation for his public preaching, this is what we cannot justify. And we must likewise testify against the confusions and disorders sometimes brought into public worship, when there is praying, and singing, and exhorting, carried on at the same time in the same congregation, as being directly contrary to the Apostle’s directions in I. Cor. xiv., and must therefore be displeasing to that God, who is a God of order, and not of confusion, in all the churches of the Saints.

“We likewise think that his method of censuring and condemning those ministers of the Gospel, whose conduct and conversation are unexceptionable, is that censorious judging, so frequently and in such plain and strong terms condemned in the word of God. And his encouraging separate meetings, in consequence of such censoriousness, is such a rending of the mystical body of Christ, and such a promoting of schism and uncharitableness, contention and confusion, as is utterly unwarrantable.

“We cannot approve of his singing along the streets, on the Sabbath, and other days,—there being too much appearance of ostentation herein, and we having no precept or example in the word of God to warrant such a practice.

“We, in like manner, highly disapprove of Mr. Davenport’s making immediate impulses upon his mind the rule of his conduct in many cases, and declaring publicly that he is herein acted by the immediate influence of the Spirit of God; this being a pretence to such degrees and kind of inspiration as he brings no credentials to justify; and this having also a tendency to lead him and others off from a due attendance to the word of God, as the only safe and sure rule of our faith and practice.

“We also think that his refusing to let orderly ministers preach in the meeting house, in his absence, when desired by the congregation, is contrary to that charity and brotherly love, which he ought to live in the exercise of; and his improving and encouraging unqualified teachers to publicly preach and exhort, without any orderly introduction to the exercise of the sacred character, is a practice of a most mischievous and dangerous tendency, and directly contrary to the directions of the word of God.

“Upon the whole, as we cannot but be pleased to find such good affection in the whole congregation to Mr. Davenport, and such a desire

that he should continue their minister, if he would leave off those irregularities, so we advise them to exercise some forbearance, praying and hoping that he may yet be convinced of these mistakes. But if, after their waiting upon him, he yet perseveres in those irregularities, we think they cannot continue under further special obligations to him as their minister; but we advise them to take the most peaceable methods they can in procuring another minister. In the mean time, we earnestly entreat them to conduct towards their minister, and any others that differ in their sentiments from them, with all possible kindness and respect, and to be very much in prayer to the Great Head of the Church, that he will heal their breaches, bring order out of their confusion, and carry on a work of grace with power among them."

How this Result was received by Mr. Davenport does not appear; though it is quite certain that it did not have the effect which either the council or his people desired. It is supposed that he spent the winter of 1742-43 at Southold; but he was not yet by any means cured of his delusions. In the beginning of March, 1743, he went to New London, by request of a company of his partisans, to organize them as a church. Immediately on his arrival, in obedience to messages which he said had been communicated to him from God, in various ways, he began to purify the company from evils which prevailed among them. To cure them of their idolatrous love of worldly things, he ordered wigs, cloaks and breeches, hoods, gowns, rings, jewels and necklaces, to be brought together into his room, and laid in a heap, that they might, by his solemn decree, be committed to the flames. To this heap he added the pair of plush breeches which he wore into the place, and which he seems to have put off, on being confined to his bed by the increased violence of a complicated disease. He next gave out a catalogue of religious books, which must be brought together and burned, as unsafe in the hands of the people. On the afternoon of the 6th of March,—the requisite preparations having all been made, his followers carried a quantity of books to the wharf and burned them, singing around the pile, "Hallelujah" and "Glory to God," and declaring that, as the smoke of those books ascended up in their presence, so the smoke of the torment of such of their authors as died in the same belief, was now ascending in Hell. Among the authors were Beveridge, Flavel, Doctors Increase Mather, Colman and Sewall, and even Jonathan Parsons of Lyme. The next day, more books were burned, but one of the party persuaded the others to save the clothes.

For some time after this, he was laid aside from his labours by a distressing illness; and this, in connection with two expostulatory letters which he received from Mr. Williams of Lebanon and Mr. Wheelock, seems to have been the means of bringing him to reflection and penitence. In 1744, he published in the Boston Gazette an ample retraction of his errors, which served, in a great measure, to restore to him the confidence of his brethren and of the Church at large. I take it from a manuscript copy which he sent to his brother-in-law, the Rev. Dr. Williams of Longmeadow, probably previous to its being published. It is as follows:—

"Messrs. Kneeland & Green: Please to give the following paper of my Retraction a place in the Gazette, and you will oblige

"Your humble servant,

"JAMES DAVENPORT."

“Although I don’t question at all but there is great reason to bless God for a glorious and wonderful work of his power and grace in the edification of his children, and the conviction and conversion of numbers in New England, in the neighbouring government, and several other parts, within a few years past, and believe that the Lord hath favoured me, though most unworthy, with several others of his servants, in granting special assistance and success, the glory of all which be given to Jehovah, to whom alone it belongs; yet, after frequent meditation and desire that I might be enabled to apprehend things justly, and I hope I may say mature consideration, I am now fully convinced and persuaded that several appendages to this glorious work are no essential parts thereof, but of a different and contrary nature and tendency; which appendages I have been, in the time of the work, very industrious in, and instrumental of promoting, by a misguided zeal; being further much influenced in the affair by the false spirit which, unobserved by me, did (as I have been brought to see since) prompt me to unjust apprehensions and misconduct in several articles, which have been great blemishes to the work of God, very grievous to some of God’s children, no less ensnaring and corrupting to others of them, a sad means of many persons questioning the work of God, concluding and appearing against it; and of the hardening of multitudes in their sins, and an awful occasion of the enemies blaspheming the right ways of the Lord, and withal very offensive to that God, before whom I would lie in the dust, prostrate in deep humility and repentance on this account, imploring pardon for the Mediator’s sake, and thankfully accepting the tokens thereof.

“The articles which I especially refer to, and would, in the most public manner, retract, and warn others against, are these which follow, viz:—

“The method I used, for a considerable time, with respect to some, yea many, ministers in several parts, in openly exposing such as I feared or thought unconverted, in public prayer or otherwise, herein making my private judgment (in which also I much suspect I was mistaken in several instances)—I say, making my private judgment the ground of public action or conduct, offending, as I apprehend, (although in the time of it ignorantly,) against the ninth commandment, and such other passages of Scripture as are similar, yea, I may say, offending against the laws both of justice and charity, which laws were further broken.

“2d. By my advising and urging to such separations from those ministers, whom I treated as above, as I believe may justly be called rash, unwarrantable, and of sad and awful tendency and consequence. And here I would ask the forgiveness of those ministers, whom I have injured in both these articles.

“3d. I confess I have been much led astray by following impulses or impressions, as a rule of conduct, whether they came with or without a text of Scripture, and my neglecting also duly to observe the analogy of Scripture. I am persuaded this was a great means of corrupting my experiences, and carrying me off from the word of God, and a great handle which the false spirit has made use of with respect to a number, and me especially.

“4th. I believe, further, that I have done much hurt to religion, by encouraging private persons to a ministerial and authoritative kind or method of exhorting, which is particularly observable in many such, being much puffed up, and falling into the snare of the devil, while many others are thus directly prejudiced against the work.

“5th. I have reason to be deeply humbled that I have not been duly careful to endeavour to remove or prevent prejudice, (where I now believe I might then have done it consistently with duty,) which appeared remarkable in the method I practised of singing with others in the streets, in societies frequently.

“I would also penitently confess and bewail my great stiffness in retaining these aforesaid errors a great while, and unwillingness to examine into them with any jealousy of their being errors, notwithstanding the friendly counsels and cautions of real friends, especially in the ministry.

“Here may properly be added a paragraph or two taken out of a letter from me to Mr. Barber at Georgia, a true copy of which I gave consent should be published lately at Philadelphia. I would add to what Brother T. hath written on the awful affair of books and clothes at New London, which afford ground of deep and lasting humiliation, I was, to my shame be it spoken—the ringleader in that horrid action. I was, my dear Brother, under the powerful influence of the false spirit, almost one whole day together, and part of several days; the Lord showed me afterwards that the spirit I was then acted by, was in its operations void of true inward peace, laying the greatest stress on externals, neglecting the heart, full of impatience, pride, and arrogance; although I thought, in the time of it, that ’twas the Spirit of God in an high degree. Awful indeed! My body, especially my leg, much disordered at the same time,* which Satan and my evil heart might make some handle of. And now may the Holy, Wise and Good God be pleased to guard and secure me against such errors for the future, and stop the progress of those, whether ministers or people, who have been corrupted by my word or example, in any of the above mentioned particulars; and if it be his holy will, bless this public recantation to this purpose. And oh! may He grant withal that such as, by reason of the aforesaid errors and misconduct, have entertained unhappy prejudices against Christianity in general, or the late glorious work of God in particular, may, by this account, learn to distinguish the appendage from the substance or essence,—that which is vile and odious from that which is precious, glorious and Divine, and thus be entirely and happily freed from all those prejudices referred to; and this in infinite mercy through Jesus Christ. And to these requests, may all God’s children, whether ministers or others, say Amen.

“July 18, 1744.

J. DAVENPORT.”

It was not only through the press, but in a more private manner, that Davenport strove to repair the injuries he had done to his brethren and the churches. The church at Stonington had been rent by his disorderly proceedings; and, after his recantation, he took occasion to revisit it, with a view to undo, as far as he could, the mischief which he had done by his former visit. “He came,” says the Rev. Mr. Fish, the minister of that parish, “with such a mild, meek, pleasant and humble spirit, broken and contrite, as I scarce ever saw excelled or equalled. He owned his fault in private, and in a most Christian manner asked forgiveness of some ministers he had treated amiss, and in a large assembly publicly retracted his errors and mistakes.”

It would seem that he resigned his pastoral charge at Southold, shortly after he published his “Retractation;” for between that time (June, 1744) and April, 1745, he had (as appears from his letters to Dr. Williams)

* I had the long fever on me, and the cankry humour raging at once.

preached for some time at Plainfield, Conn.,—probably with reference to a settlement, and was, at the latter date, supplying his former charge at Southold, with the expectation of soon removing with his wife to the “Jersies.” On the 22d of September, 1746, he became a member of the New Brunswick Presbytery, having, probably, for some time, been preaching within their bounds. In 1748, he transferred his relation to the New York Presbytery, with a view to settle at Connecticut Farms, near Elizabethtown; but I find no evidence that this purpose was ever fulfilled.

In 1750, he was residing at Hopewell, N. J. He made a preaching tour to Virginia in the course of that year, of which I find the following account in a letter which he addressed to Dr. Williams, on the 16th of October:—

“At the meeting of the Synod of New York, the appointment that I should go and preach sometime in Virginia was renewed, whereupon, on the week following, and on the 21st day of May, I set out. I delayed no longer, because I might, going then, enjoy the Rev. Mr. Davies’ company into Virginia. On the 30th of May, we came to his house in Hanover, three hundred and seven miles distant from hence. I went above a hundred and twenty miles farther, even to Roanoke River, and came within thirty miles of North Carolina. It was four months complete before I returned home. After I began to preach in Virginia, I did not omit one Sabbath in the whole journey, and generally preached once every week, and sometimes twice or thrice: by this you may see that my bodily state was considerably rectified through Divine goodness. I rode, in the whole journey, fifteen hundred and ninety miles. The first two months of the journey, I was bravely in health; but the latter part of the time, more poorly, and often feverish, by reason of my being caught several times in the rain, as I was travelling. As to religion, I observed encouraging appearances in most places where I preached, and found reason to hope there were some abiding effects of the ministrations of the word. In and about Hanover County, where dear Mr. Davies preaches, the Lord’s people seemed generally engaged in searching—quickened and stirred up, and some particularly comforted. I understood, further, that there were some souls there under conviction, but more in Cumberland and Amelia Counties in my way to Roanoke. The Lord be pleased to carry on his own work more and more, and take all the glory to Himself, to whom only it belongs.”

In the autumn of 1752, he was preaching at a place in New Jersey, called Philippi. In a letter dated September 19th, he says,—“My continuance in these parts is at present doubtful, or rather likely to be but short, by reason of this place, (where I now am) Philippi’s, not continuing to bear one third part of my support above one year; and this, so far as I can learn, not out of any disrespect to me, (for their respect seems rather to increase,) but an earnest desire to have a minister wholly to themselves. If I go from hence, I expect to go Southward; but where I shall fix is at present very uncertain. Oh that this and all Divine dispensations may be sanctified in order to lasting and spiritual benefit!”

On the 22d of October, 1754, he was installed pastor of the New Side Church of Hopewell and Maidenhead,—the Rev. William Tennent preaching the Sermon, from Acts xxv. 18. Referring to this occasion, he says,—“Through pure mercy, I found it a day of solemnity, sense of great unworthiness and insufficiency, sweet serenity and rest of soul in God through Christ, and dedication of myself to God, particularly in the affair

of the day." At this time, it appears that one of his cousins, who had "thoughts of the ministry," was residing with him, and that he was expecting several more pupils in a short time. His health had now become quite confirmed—more vigorous, in his own judgment, than it had been for about twenty years.

He was Moderator of the Synod of New York in 1754, and preached the opening Sermon the next autumn, from II Cor. iv. 1. It was printed at Philadelphia, at "the newest printing office on the South side of the Jersey market," with the title, "The faithful minister encouraged."

In a letter to Dr. Williams, dated November 14, 1754, he writes thus:—"It is indeed matter of deep lamentation that it is at present a season of such awful security and neglect of God, of Christ, and of men's souls, in our land and nation in general, notwithstanding the loud calls and warnings the Lord gives us. Yet, blessed be God that there is some degree of a revival of religion in some places in your parts of late; that there are some also in our parts, both in respect of quickenings among God's people, and awakenings among others. Something of this nature I have had the comfort of observing lately in my place, and of hearing of in several other places. Dear Mr. Whitefield has had some encouragement our way; sundry by his means awakened, and some I heard of as hopefully converted,—especially one that was graduated this fall. We had the pleasure of Mr. Whitefield's company at the New Jersey Commencement, this fall, at Newark, and at the meeting of the New York Synod, the day following, in the same place. The Trustees of New Jersey College expressed something, though but a small part, of their love and esteem of Mr. Whitefield, by inviting and admitting him to the degree of Master of Arts. He preached to us, as he was much desired, on the Commencement day, and the following day; and the Lord was with him of a truth. I'm persuaded many of God's people, and especially of his ministers, found their hearts not a little warmed and enlivened by the preaching as well as conversation of his servant. I don't think there was one of the ministers of our Synod convened, but what rejoiced much in the opportunity of seeing and hearing Mr. Whitefield. (When the ministers of our Synod are all together, they are above sixty.) Oh that the pleasure of the Lord may prosper abundantly in his servant's hand, and that the name of our God may be praised for his prospering in such a measure already; as also for the success of the Messrs. Tennents and Davies, who have obtained, as we hear, £1500 sterling in England, beside books and mathematical instruments, and an order for a collection in the congregations throughout Scotland for the benefit of New Jersey College. Something valuable was obtained in Dublin, besides a collection throughout the bounds of the Synod of Ulster in Ireland. The Lord grant that this and other Colleges may be fountains of piety as well as learning; that there may yearly issue from them such streams as may make glad the city of our God."

I make an extract from one more of Mr. Davenport's letters, illustrative of his patriotism. It was addressed to his brother-in-law, Dr. Williams, who was, at that time, serving in the army as Chaplain, at Crown Point. It is dated July 11, 1755.

"I cannot help rejoicing that you are called out to bear fruit in old age, in the service of your God, your King, and your country. The Lord be, according to your desire, with your dear family and flock, which you have

committed to his care. And oh may He give you, Dear and Reverend Sir, much of his presence and blessing! May He strengthen you in body and soul to go through all the services, fatigues and trials, you may be called to in this important enterprise; and make all easy and sweet to you comparatively, by firing your soul, from time to time, with love to God and Christ, to King and country.

“May the Lord God of Israel go before you, and the army you are with, and be your rereward. May He save you from all sin, cover your heads in the day of battle, cause your enemies to fall before you, give desired and happy success, and get all the glory to Himself! And oh may He lead us to repentance, gratitude, and fruitfulness by his goodness; cause our Popish and perfidious enemies, that are or shall be taken captive by us, to turn to Himself, and cause Anti-Christ’s reign soon to come to its final period!

“Ungrateful indeed shall we be who tarry at home, if we don’t pray hard for them who are gone to fight for us;—gone to fight, we trust courageously, for us and our families; for our lives, our properties, our liberties and privileges, our King and our Religion—in a word, our *every thing* that ought to be held dear and valuable by us—gone to play the man in fighting for us, and for the cities of our God.

“My soul is even now drawn out in longings in this momentous affair.

“Oh may the Lord God of gods, the Lord God of his Protestant and English Israel,—the God who has very lately and remarkably succeeded our forces to the Eastward, on the land and water;—the God who, just ten years before, delivered up Cape Breton into our hands;—the God who suppressed a rising formidable rebellion;—the God who defended and destroyed the French fleet, when big with hopes of our destruction;—the God who delivered and preserved our forefathers, when surrounded with a multitude of enemies;—the God who hears prayers, and will not suffer the Gates of Hell to prevail against his Church;—oh may this God be with you and succeed you, and all the British forces, by sea and land, abundantly, notwithstanding our many and aggravated offences, for his name and mercies’ sake; defeat the designs of the French, and all that join with them against the Lord and against his Anointed; destroy the man of sin; cause Mahometan imposture to cease; bring in the Jews with the fulness of the Gentiles; and bring on the latter day glory, through Jesus Christ, to the eternal praise of the Infinitely glorious and blessed Three—One; Amen and Amen.

“So prays, Rev. and dear Brother,

“Yours in the dear Lord Jesus,

“JAMES DAVENPORT.”

His ministry at Hopewell, especially after he became a settled pastor, seems not to have been a very happy one. There was evidently, from some cause or other, disquietude among his people; for we find that a portion of them asked leave of the Presbytery to join adjacent congregations, and, a few months before his death, a petition was presented for his removal. He died on the 10th of November, 1757, aged forty-seven years.

The following is the inscription upon his tomb stone:—

“In memory of the Rev. James Davenport, who departed this life, November 10, 1757, aged forty-seven years.

“Oh Davenport, a seraph once in clay,

“A brighter seraph now in Heavenly day.

“How glowed thy heart with sacred love and zeal,

“How like to that thy kindred angels feel.
 “Cloth’d in humility thy virtues shone,
 “In every eye illustrious but thine own.
 “How like thy Master on whose friendly breast,
 “Thou oft hast leaned and shalt forever rest.”

His wife, Mrs. Parnell Davenport, died on the 21st of August, 1789, aged sixty years. They both lie buried in a small burying ground, about a mile West from Pennington, N. J.

They had two children. The eldest,—a daughter, by the name of *Elizabeth*, was married to a Mr. Kelley, who resided at Princeton, N. J. The son, *John*, was born at Philippi, N. J., August 11, 1752; was graduated at the College of New Jersey in 1769; studied Theology, partly under Dr. Bellamy, and partly under Dr. Buell of East Hampton, L. I.; was ordained June 4, 1775, and served the congregation of Southold as a stated supply for two years; preached for some time at Bedford, N. Y.; was installed at Deerfield, August 12, 1795, and was dismissed on account of ill health in 1805. In 1809, he returned to the State of New York, and died at Lysander, July 13, 1821. He was, in early life, an intimate friend of Aaron Burr. While Davenport was studying Theology under Dr. Buell, and Burr was residing with Dr. Bellamy, the former wrote to the latter a letter which is in my possession,—of which the following is an extract:—“I hope you are by this time fully resolved to engage in the sacred work of the ministry, and that you see your way clear to do it. You are placed under a very judicious as well as pious divine, whose instruction and conversation have, I hope, proved to your spiritual benefit. I rejoice to find you are pleased with your situation, and wish it may continue.”

WILLIAM ROBINSON.*

1740—1746.

WILLIAM ROBINSON was the son of a Quaker,—a man of wealth, and an eminent physician, and was born near Carlisle, England, a little after the beginning of the eighteenth century. He expected to inherit considerable property, not only from his father, but from an aunt in London; but, on going to London to visit that aunt, he greatly overstaid the time which had been allowed him, and plunged into the dissipations of the city, thereby contracting debts which his aunt refused to pay, and which he knew would excite the indignation of his father. Being unable to remain in London, and fearing to return home, he resolved to seek his fortune in America. To this proposal his aunt gave a reluctant consent, and furnished him with a small sum of money to assist in carrying out his purpose. On his arrival in this country, he found it necessary to engage in some active business for his support; and he betook himself to teaching a school in Hopewell, N. J., within the bounds of the Presbytery of New Brunswick. It seems probable that he taught a classical school in the State of Delaware also; for Samuel Davies, whose parents resided in Delaware, was, at one time, one of his pupils. We hear nothing of his erratic tendencies after he left England;

* Hist. Log Coll.—Foote's Sketches of Va., I.—Webster's MSS.