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MEMOIR OF PRESIDENT DAVIES.

[Brief biographical notices of President Davies may be found in the preface to his sermons; in the funeral sermons of Drs. Gibbons and Finley, generally prefixed to the sermons of Davies; in the second volume of the Panoplist; Middleton's Evangelical Biography; Assembly's Missionary Magazine; State of Religion in Virginia; Rev. David Bostwick's account prefixed to Davies' sermon on the death of George II.; Appendix to Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green's Baccalaureate Addresses; and in President Allen's American Biographical Dictionary. The most copious and interesting biography is found in the second volume, 1819, of the Evangelical and Literary Magazine, published in Richmond, Va., and edited by the Rev. Dr. John H. Rice, afterwards professor of theology, in the Union Theological Seminary. This memoir was from the pen of the editor, and is the result of much careful inquiry by a man of a spirit remarkably kindred to the subject of his sketches. The Sabbath school book, published by the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, is, for the most part, a selection from the biography by Dr. Rice. To Dr. Rice's Memoir we are indebted for most of the following statements. Dr. Green has furnished us with some important facts. We have, however, compared all the accessible notices on the subject. We have endeavored by correspondence to secure some original materials, but have been for the most part, disappointed in our efforts.—EDITOR.]

SAMUEL DAVIES was born November 3d, 1724, in the county of Newcastle, in what is now the State of Delaware.* His father was a farmer of small property, of intellectual endowments rather below the ordinary level, of unpolished manners, but of a blameless and religious life. His mother was a woman of superior powers of mind, of affectionate disposition, and of ardent piety. Her first child was a daughter. Her anxiety to be instrumental in promoting the Redeemer's kingdom, induced her, like Hannah of old, earnestly to pray that God would bestow upon her the blessing of a son. She believed that the son whom she afterwards bore, was given to her in answer to her prayers, and she determined to devote him to the Lord, for the service of the sanctuary, all the days of his life. President Davies subsequently, in a letter to Dr. Gibbons of London, writes: "I was blessed with a mother whom I might account, without filial vanity or partiality, one of the most eminent saints I ever knew upon earth. I am a son of prayer, like my name-sake Samuel the prophet; and my mother

* Both his parents, it is supposed, were of Welsh descent. In Dr. Rice's memoir, it is stated that "the Christian names of his parents, we know not." Yet Dr. Finley's funeral sermon is dedicated to Mrs. Martha Davies, the mother, and to Mrs. Jean Davies, the widow, etc.

called me Samuel, because, she said, I have asked him of the Lord. This early dedication to God has always been a strong inducement to me to devote myself to him by my own personal act; and the most important blessings of my life I have looked upon as immediate answers to the prayers of a pious mother. But, alas! what a degenerate plant am I! How unworthy of such a parent, and such a birth!"

It may well be supposed that the mother of young Davies would regard him with more than common maternal tenderness and solicitude, and would earnestly endeavor to prepare him for that sacred service to which she had devoted him. At a very early age, he was taught to read, by herself, and his proficiency in learning, under a mother's instructions, is said to have surprised all who had the opportunity to observe it. He continued at home with his parents till he was about ten years old; and as there was no school in the neighborhood, he had, till that age, no teacher but his mother. Up to this time, he had experienced no remarkable religious impressions. His character was merely that of a sprightly and docile child, under the influence of pious example and instruction. At ten years of age, he was sent to an English school, at some distance from his father's residence, where he continued two years, and where he is said to have made rapid progress in his studies. He excelled in penmanship, in after life; and he probably acquired the elements of it in this school. But for want of the pious instruction with which he was favored at home, he became, according to his own statement, sadly inattentive to religious things. Yet he still made a practice of secret prayer, especially in the evening; assigning as the reason for his punctuality in his evening devotions, "that he feared lest he should die before morning." But what is most particularly observable in his prayers at this time is, "that he was more ardent in his supplications for being introduced into the gospel ministry than for any other thing."

At about the age of twelve, he was awakened to solemn concern respecting his eternal state. So deep was his sense of his danger, as to make him habitually restless, till he obtained scriptural evidence of his interest in the forgiving love of his Saviour. Yet, he was afterwards troubled with many perplexing doubts, for a long time; but, at length, after years of impartial, repeated self-examination, he attained to a settled confidence of his interest in redeeming grace. This he retained to the end of his life. A diary which he kept in the first years of his religious history, clearly shows how intensely his mind was fixed on religious subjects, how observant he was of the state of his heart, and how watchful over all his thoughts, words, and actions. If any were disposed to censure his juvenile indiscretions, they would have done it compassionately, had they known how severely he censured them himself.

The precise period at which Davies made a public profession of religion, is not known. It is believed to have been in the fifteenth year of his age, perhaps a little earlier. It is, likewise, unknown at what age he first entered on a course of liberal studies, or who was his first grammar-master. It is probable, that either with or without a teacher, he early acquired some knowledge, at least of the Latin language. The principal part of his education was, however, acquired under the direction of the Rev. Samuel Blair, of Fog's Manor, Chester county, Pa.* Mr. B. inspired his pupil

* This gentleman was a native of Ireland, but came to this country early in life, and was one of the Rev. Wm. Tennent's pupils, at Neshaminy, about twenty miles north of Philadelphia. Mr. Blair opened his academy at Fog's Manor, in 1745, with particular reference to the study of theology, as a science. He was one of the most learned, pious, and useful men of his day. He died, it is believed, in 1751, and was succeeded in the care of the seminary by his brother John. An account of this seminary, and a biography of the Blairs, is a desideratum.

with strong affection for his person and reverence for his character. In proof of this, we give two short extracts from a fragment of a journal, kept by Mr. Davies, when on the mission to England, in behalf of the college of New Jersey.

"Thursday P. M. Sept. 1755, rode to Mrs. Blair's in company with Mr. Smith, and enjoyed much satisfaction in the mutual communication of our Christian and ministerial exercises. How happy am I in having so many valuable friends in various parts! The sight of Mrs. Blair, and my old walks about her house in the happy days of my education, raised a variety of tender and solemn thoughts in my mind. When I had passed by the meeting-house, where I so often heard the *great* Mr. Blair, I could not help crying out, 'Oh, how dreadful is this place! This is no other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'

"Tuesday, Oct. 1753, rode to the presbytery at Fog's Manor, solitary and pensive. Was refreshed in the company of my dear brethren. Lodged at Mrs. Blair's, where every thing suggested to me the image of the *incomparable* Mr. Blair, once my minister and tutor, but now in superior regions."

The powers of Mr. Davies, and his assiduous attention to study, would of course render his progress unusually great, for the time which he passed at Mr. Blair's academy. His poverty, however, probably prevented his spending as much time as was common, and as was earnestly desired by himself, in the acquisition of knowledge before he began to preach. He resided at Fog's Manor about five years. He received pecuniary aid from Virginia, the circumstances of which we will here mention.

About 1740, some individuals in the county of Hanover, Va., were awakened to attend with great earnestness to their religious condition. A few leaves of Boston's Fourfold State fell into the hands of a rich planter, and made so deep an impression on his mind, that he never rested till he procured a copy of the book. The reading of it brought peace to his heart. A Mr. Samuel Morris derived similar advantage from Luther on the Galatians. These books were read to others, and produced very great and happy effects. So deep was the interest, that multitudes assembled to hear Morris read. His house was soon too small to contain them, and a meeting house was built for the purpose, long known by the name of *Morris's Reading Room*. About this time, the Rev. Wm. Robinson, of the presbytery of New Brunswick, was sent on a mission to the frontier settlements. He entered Virginia, and preached with great acceptance to the Scotch-Irish in Prince Edward, Charlotte, and Campbell counties. At Cub Creek, in Charlotte county, he was heard by some of the young people from Hanover, who had gone to visit their friends, and who sent back word what manner of man was among them. Two messengers were immediately sent from Hanover for Mr. Robinson. Though he had left the place, they followed his track, and induced him to visit Hanover. For four days he continued among them, preaching to the crowds that had assembled at the Reading Room. This is described as a very remarkable season. On Mr. Robinson's taking leave, some of the gentlemen presented him with a considerable sum of money as a compensation for his services. This Mr. R. resolutely refused to take, urging as a reason, that it would bring into suspicion the purity of his motives. Having withstood all their entreaties he took his leave. But at the first house at which he stopped for refreshment, he discovered the money which he had refused, in his saddle-bags. He immediately returned to Mr. Morris's. His friends were mortified that he had come, solely to bring the money back, urging that they knew not what to

do with it, as it had been collected from a great variety of sources. In this dilemma, Mr. R., with much animation, as though a new thought had just entered his mind, said: "I will tell you what must be done with the money. There is a very promising young man, now studying divinity at the North, whose parents are very hard pressed, and find great difficulties in supporting him at his studies. I will take this money, and it shall be given to help him through. And when he is licensed, he shall come and be your preacher." The proposition was at once accepted, and the money faithfully appropriated to the benefit of young Davies. "And that is the reason," said a pious lady who communicated the fact to Dr. Rice, "that Mr. Davies came to Hanover; for he often used to say, that he was inclined to settle in another place, but that he felt under obligations to the people of Hanover." "This was the first money," says Dr. R. "which, so far as we can learn, was ever contributed in Virginia, for the education of poor and pious youth for the gospel ministry."

Aided in the manner just recited, young Davies prosecuted his studies with alacrity, and was licensed to preach the gospel early in the year 1747.* Mr. Bostwick says: "Scarcely was he known as a public preacher, but he was sent to some of the distant settlements of Virginia." At this time, his age was twenty-two years and six months. He remained in Virginia but a few weeks on his first visit, and then returned to Newcastle. The remainder of this year, and the beginning of the next, were spent in preaching in Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Maryland; and scarcely was there a vacant congregation in which his voice was heard, that did not desire and endeavor to secure his permanent services. In the mean time, he was attacked by a disease, which was supposed to be an irrecoverable consumption of the lungs. But, though he believed himself to be on the borders of the grave, he determined to spend the little remains of an almost exhausted life, as he apprehended it, in endeavoring to advance his Master's glory, in the salvation of souls. With this view, he went to a place at a considerable distance, which was destitute of the preaching of the gospel, where he labored in season, and out of season, preached in the day, and had his hectic fever at night, and that to such a degree as to be sometimes delirious, and to stand in need of persons to sit up with him. Nor did he thus labor in vain, but received, at this very time, some of the first fruits of his ministry, in several instances of the hopeful conversion of sinners, two of which he considered as very remarkable.

In the Spring of 1748, Mr. Davies returned to Virginia, in obedience to a call which he had received from several congregations. At this time he had begun slowly to recover, from what he calls his "melancholy and consumptive languishments;" though he adds, "I then looked upon it only as the intermission of a disorder that would finally prove mortal. But upon the arrival of a messenger from Hanover, I put my life in my hand, and determined to accept of their call, hoping I might live to prepare the way for some more useful successor; and willing to expire under the fatigues of duty, rather than in voluntary negligence."

The condition of Dissenters, at that time, in Virginia, was any thing but comfortable. Episcopacy was established by law. A number of very severe acts had been passed, much in the spirit of the famous act of uniformity, and enforcing attendance at the parish church by various penalties. When the people flocked to Morris's reading room, they were fined for absence from church. Morris himself was fined at least twenty times.

* Dr. Rice says 1745. But on his tomb-stone it is recorded "Sacris ibidem initiatus 19 Feb. 1747."

The act of toleration had indeed passed long before this period; but as there had never been occasion for its application, it seemed to have been very little understood in Virginia. Davies appears, however, to have studied it carefully, and had the forecast to procure the licensure of several places of worship, before he commenced his preaching; of these, one was in the county of Henrico, two in Hanover, and one in New Kent. It was an interesting sight to behold a youth of his age engaged alone in the cause of vital piety and religious liberty, while the power and authority of the State were against him. At first he was regarded as a youthful adventurer, who would speedily ruin his own cause. But his ardent zeal and splendid talents soon brought him into notice. Opposition being excited, the general court of the colony reversed the order of the county court for a meeting-house. This took place about the year 1748. On this, and on other occasions, Davies appeared before the general court for the support of his own cause. On one occasion, rather from an inclination in the king's officers to amuse themselves at the expense of the poor Dissenters, than from any other motive, Davies was allowed to plead his own cause. The attorney-general, Peyton Randolph, delivered a speech of great legal learning, attempting to show that the act of toleration did not extend to the colony of Virginia. When Davies rose to reply, there was a general *titter* through the court. His very first remark, however, discovered so intimate an acquaintance with the law on that subject, that marks of surprise were manifest on every countenance. In a short time, the lawyers present began to whisper, "The attorney-general has met with his match to-day, at any rate." Davies' position was, that if the act of toleration did not extend to Virginia, neither did the act of uniformity. This was illustrated with great force, ingenuity, and knowledge of the law. The general sentiment among the members of the bar was: "There is a most capital lawyer spoiled." This display of talents called forth universal admiration, and Davies was treated in Williamsburgh with great attention. The lieutenant-governor, Sir William Gooch, and James Blair, a member of the general court, were marked in their civilities. Still, however, the Dissenters were occasionally harassed until Mr. Davies returned from England. While there, he brought the case of his brethren before the court; and had the satisfaction to find that the king's attorney-general, Sir Dudley Rider, agreed with him against the king's attorney-general in Virginia. A copy of his opinion on the subject, brought over by Mr. Davies, put the affair at rest; and Dissenters' meeting-houses were allowed to be licensed in Virginia as in England.* Mr. Davies remained in Virginia about eleven years. The following extracts from a letter of his to Dr. Bellamy of Bethlem, Conn., furnish an account of his labors from the time of his settlement till the year 1751.

"Upon my arrival, I petitioned the general court to grant me a license to officiate in and about Hanover, at four meeting-houses, which after some delay, was granted, upon my *qualifying* according to the act of toleration. I preached frequently in Hanover, and some of the adjacent counties: and

* "The church of England was the established religion of Virginia. The whole colony was divided into parishes, commonly about two in a county—in each of which was a glebe and parsonage house for the minister, who also received 16,000 lbs of tobacco a year from the public treasury. Great jealousy seems to have been entertained by the early settlers against other sects, particularly the Quakers. In 1660, all of this sect who came into the colony were to be imprisoned till they gave security to leave it; and masters of vessels were subjected to a penalty of £100 for every Quaker brought into the country. Dissenters from the church of England, however, gradually increased, particularly Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists, and at the breaking out of the revolution, they constituted, according to Mr. Jefferson, one half of those who professed themselves members of any church. Mr. Madison, however, thought that the proportion of Dissenters was considerably less.—*Tucker's Life of Jefferson*, i. 19. Philad. 1837.

though the fervor of the late work was considerably abated, and my labors were not blessed with success equal to those of my brethren, yet I have reason to hope they were of service in several instances. The importunities they used with me to settle with them, were invincible; and upon my departure they sent a call for me to the presbytery. After I returned from Virginia, I spent near a year under melancholy and consumptive languishments, expecting death. In the spring of 1749, I began slowly to recover, though I then looked upon it only as the intermission of a disorder that would finally prove mortal. But upon the arrival of a messenger from Hanover, I put my life in my hand, and determined to accept of their call, hoping I might live to prepare the way for some more useful successor, and willing to expire under the fatigues of duty, rather than in voluntary negligence. Sir William Gooch, our late governor, always discovered a ready disposition to allow us all claimable privileges, and the greatest aversion to persecuting measures; but, considering the shocking reports spread abroad concerning us by officious malignants, it was no great wonder the council discovered a considerable reluctance to tolerate us. Had it not been for this, I persuade myself they would have shown themselves the guardians of our legal privileges, as well as generous patriots to their country, which is the character generally given them.

“In October, 1748, besides the four meeting-houses already mentioned, the people petitioned for the licensing of three more, which with great difficulty was obtained. Among the seven, I have hitherto divided my time. Three of them lay in Hanover county, the other four in the counties of Henrico, Carolina, Louisa, and Goochland. The nearest are twelve or fifteen miles distant from each other, and the extremes about forty. My congregation is very much dispersed; and notwithstanding the number of meeting-houses, some live twenty, some thirty, and a few forty miles from the nearest. Were they all compactly situated in one county, they would be sufficient to form three distinct congregations. Many of the church-people also attend, when there is a sermon at any of these houses. This I looked upon at first as mere curiosity; but as it continues, and in some places seems to increase, I cannot but look upon it as a happy token of their being at length thoroughly engaged. And I have the greater reason to hope so now, as experience has confirmed my former hopes; fifty or sixty families having thus been happily entangled in the net of the gospel by their own curiosity, or some such motive. There are about three hundred communicants in my congregation, of whom the greatest number are, in the judgment of rational charity, real Christians; besides some who through excessive scrupulousness do not seek admission to the Lord's table. There is also a number of negroes. Sometimes I see an hundred or more among my hearers. I have baptized about forty of them within these three years, upon such a profession of faith as I then judged credible. Some of them, I fear, have apostatized; but others, I trust, will persevere to the end. I have had as satisfying evidences of the sincere piety of several of them, as ever I had from any person in my life; and their artless simplicity, their passionate aspirations after Christ, their incessant endeavors to know and do the will of God, have charmed me, but alas! while my charge is so extensive, I cannot take sufficient pains with them for their instruction, which often oppresses my heart.

“There have been instances of unhappy apostasy among us; but, blessed be God, not many in proportion to the number brought under concern. At present there are a few under promising impressions, but, in general, a lamentable security prevails. Oh for a little reviving in our bondage! I

might have given you a particular account of the conversion of some persons here, as indeed there are some uncommon instances of it; but I shall only observe in general, that abstracting from particular circumstances, the work of conversion has been carried on in such steps as are described by experimental divines, as Alleine, Shepard, Stoddard, Flavel, etc. And nothing confirms me more in the truth of their opinions concerning experimental piety, than this agreement and uniformity as to substance, in the exercises of those that can make the fairest claim to saving grace.

"I forgot to inform you, in its proper place, that the Rev. Mr. Davenport was sent by the synod to Hanover last summer, and continued here about two months: and blessed be God, he did not labor in vain. Some were brought under concern, and many of the Lord's people much revived, who can never forget the instrument of it. Thus, dear Sir, I have given you a brief account of what I am persuaded you will readily own to be the work of the Lord. We claim no infallibility, but we must not fall into skepticism. Why should we pretend to promote the conversion of men, if we cannot have any satisfying knowledge of it, when it appears? Indeed, the evidence of its divinity here is so irresistible, that it has extorted an acknowledgment from some, from whom it would hardly have been expected. Were you, Sir, a narrow bigot, you would, no doubt, rejoice to hear that there are now some hundreds of Dissenters in a place, where a few years ago there were ten: but I assure myself of your congratulations on a nobler account, because a considerable number of perishing sinners are gained to the blessed Redeemer, with whom, though you never see them here, you may spend a blissful eternity. After all, poor Virginia demands your compassion; for religion at present, is but like the cloud which Elijah's servant saw. O that it may spread and cover the land!"

Notwithstanding the humility and despondence manifested in the above extract, yet we have satisfactory evidence of the powerful effects every where produced by the labors of Davies. His home was in the county of Hanover, about twelve miles from Richmond; but his efforts were extended through no small portion of the State. He acquired an influence which perhaps no other preacher of the gospel in Virginia ever possessed; it was the influence of fervent piety and zeal directed by a mind of uncommon compass and force. Aged people, who sat under his ministry, assert, that his powers of persuasion seemed sufficient for the accomplishment of any purpose which a minister of the gospel could undertake. Many persons, who were parents, and had children around them, were induced to learn the elements of religious knowledge. A mother might be often seen rocking her infant in a cradle, sewing some garment for her husband, and learning her catechism at the same time. A girl employed in spinning, would place her book of questions at the head of the wheel, and catching a glance at it as she ran up her yarn on the spindle, would thus prepare for public catechising; and plough-boys, were often to be seen at mid-day, while their horses were feeding, reclining under an old oak in the yard, learning their weekly task. Young and old were willing to be taught by their preacher; and when assembled for catechetical instruction, the heads of families, and the elders of the church, were always first to be examined. Households were generally furnished with a few standard works, and were expected to study them carefully. In the families of Mr. Davies' congregation, are now to be found copies or remnants of Watson's Body of Divinity, Boston's Fourfold State, Luther on the Galatians, Flavel's Works, Baxter's Call, the Saint's Rest, Alleine's Alarm, etc.

Mr. Davies took no little pains to afford negroes religious instruction.

Within three years after his settlement in Virginia, he had baptized about forty; and before his removal to Princeton, the number had greatly increased. There is now a considerable congregation of their descendants at Polegreen, a church in Hanover county. Some of the survivors at the present day can read well, and know perfectly the Assembly's Shorter Catechism. At Cub-Creek, is a church of one hundred negro communicants. Of these a very large proportion could read, and are instructed in religious doctrines and duties, beyond many professors among the whites. In this connection we will quote again from a letter of Mr. Davies, written to a friend in London, in 1755:

"The poor neglected negroes, who are so far from having money to purchase books, that they themselves are the property of others; who were originally African savages, and never heard of the name of Jesus or his gospel till they arrived at the land of their slavery in America; whom their masters generally neglect, and whose souls none care for, as though immortality were not a privilege common to them as with their masters; these poor unhappy Africans are objects of my compassion, and I think the most proper objects of the society's charity. The inhabitants of Virginia are computed to be about 300,000 men, the one half of which number are supposed to be negroes. The number of those who attend my ministry at particular times is uncertain, but generally about 300, who give a stated attendance; and never have I been so struck with the appearance of an assembly, as when I have glanced my eye to that part of the meeting-house where they usually sit, adorned (for so it has appeared to me) with so many black countenances, eagerly attentive to every word they hear, and frequently bathed in tears. A considerable number of them (about an hundred) have been baptized after a proper time for instruction, having given credible evidence not only of their acquaintance with the important doctrines of the Christian religion, but also a deep sense of them on their minds, attested by a life of strict piety and holiness. As they are not sufficiently polished to dissemble with a good grace, they express the sentiments of their souls so much in the language of simple nature, and with such genuine indications of sincerity, that it is impossible to suspect their professions, especially when attended with a truly Christian life and exemplary conduct. There are multitudes of them in different places who are willing and eagerly desirous to be instructed, and embrace every opportunity of acquainting themselves with the doctrines of the gospel; and though they have generally very little help to learn to read, yet, to my agreeable surprise, many of them, by dint of application in their leisure hours, have made such a progress that they can intelligibly read a plain author, and especially their Bibles; and pity it is that any of them should be without them. Some of them have the misfortune to have irreligious masters, and hardly any of them are so happy as to be furnished with these assistances for their improvement. Before I had the pleasure of being admitted a member of your society, they were wont frequently to come to me with such moving accounts of their necessities in this respect, that I could not help supplying them with books to the utmost of my small abilities; and when I distributed those among them which my friends with you sent over, I had reason to think that I never did an action in all my life, that met with so much gratitude from the receivers. I have already distributed all the books that I brought over which were proper for them. Yet still, on Saturday evenings, the only time they can spare, my house is crowded with numbers of them, whose very countenances carry the air of importunate petitioners for the same favors with those who come before

them. But alas! my stock is exhausted, and I must send them away grieved and disappointed. Permit me, Sir, to be an advocate with you, and by your means with your generous friends, in their behalf. The books I principally want for them are Bibles, and Watts's Psalms and Hymns. The two last they cannot be supplied with any other way than by a collection, as they are not among the books which your society give away. I am the rather importunate for a good number of these, as I cannot but observe that the negroes, above all the human species that I ever knew, have an ear for music and a kind of ecstatic delight in psalmody; and there are no books they learn so soon, or take so much pleasure in, as those used in that heavenly part of divine worship."

After having received another supply of books, Mr. Davies writes:—

"When the books arrived I gave notice of it after sermon at the next opportunity, and desired such negroes as would make a good use of them, and were so poor that they could not buy such books, to come to me at my house, and I should distribute them among them. For some time after this, the poor slaves, whenever they could get an hour's leisure from their masters, would hurry away to my house, and receive the charity with all the genuine indications of passionate gratitude, which affectation and grimace would mimic in vain. The books were all very acceptable, but none more so than the Psalms and Hymns, which enable them to gratify their peculiar taste for psalmody. Sundry of them have lodged all night in my kitchen, and sometimes when I have awaked, about two or three o'clock in the morning, a torrent of sacred harmony has poured into my chamber, and carried my mind away to heaven. In this seraphic exercise some of them spend almost the whole night. I wish, Sir, you and other benefactors could hear any of these sacred concerts. I am persuaded it would surprise and please you more than an oratorio or a St. Cecilia's day."

In 1757, Mr. Davies writes to Dr. Bellamy: "As to the state of religion in Virginia, I can only say, that my brethren have of late been much more successful than myself; particularly honest Mr. Henry and our common friend, Mr. Wright; and that what little success I have lately had, has been chiefly among the extremes of gentlemen and negroes. Indeed, God has been remarkably working among the latter. I have baptized about 150 adults; and at the last sacramental solemnity, I had the pleasure of seeing the table of the Lord *graced* with about 60 black faces. They generally behave well as far as I can hear, though there are some instances of apostasy amongst them."

In the course of four or five years after Davies's settlement in Hanover, he found it impossible to afford even a monthly supply of preaching to the congregations organized by him. Accordingly, he sought an assistant in Mr. John Todd, a young preacher from Pennsylvania, who was installed in the upper part of Hanover, Nov. 12, 1752.

The general state of religion in Virginia, as well as the catholic opinions of Mr. Davies, may be seen from the following extract from a communication of his to Mr. Dawson, a member of the council of the colony: "I am not fond, Sir, of disseminating sedition and schism; I have no ambition to *Presbyterianize* the colony. But I hope I may declare, without suspicion of ostentation, or wilful falsification, that I have a sincere zeal, however languid and impotent, to propagate the catholic religion of Jesus in its life and power, though I feel but little anxiety about the denomination its genuine subjects assume. The profession of Christianity is universal in this colony; but alas! Sir, if the religion of the Bible be the test of men's characters, and the standard of their final doom, multitudes, multitudes are

in a perishing condition. Their ignorance, their negligence, their wrong notions of vital Christianity, their habitual neglect of its known duties, their vicious practice, proclaim it aloud, and he that can persuade himself of the contrary, in spite of evidence, is possessed of a charity under no rational or scriptural regulations. For my part, Sir, should I believe that religion is in a flourishing state in this colony, I must renounce the Bible, disbelieve my eyes, and my ears, and rush into universal skepticism. Could I indulge the pleasing dream, my life below the skies would be an anticipation of heaven. I do not conclude religion is in so lamentable a state, because I see the generality pray by form, receive the sacrament kneeling, etc.; or, in a word, because they conform to the debated peculiarities of the established church. No, Sir, I freely grant that these things are not tests of men's characters. These may be so far from hindering, that for what I know, they may promote religion in such as have no scruples about them, though the case would be otherwise with others; but the unwelcome evidences that force this conclusion upon me, are the general neglect, and stupid unconcernedness about religion, the habitual omission of its duties, and the vicious practices that glare upon me around; and which are utterly inconsistent with true religion in any denomination."

Early in 1753, Mr. Davies was appointed by the trustees of the college of New Jersey to visit Great Britain in company with Gilbert Tennent, to solicit donations for the college. He accepted this appointment, and was absent from the country about a year and a half. He kept a diary, a fragment of which has been preserved, and from which we shall make some brief extracts. "When I was informed of the appointment," he remarks, "by letter from the worthy president, Burr, it struck me into a consternation and perplexity unknown before. All the tender passions of the husband, the minister, the father and the son, formed an insurrection in my breast against the proposal; and with these I have struggled ever since. My conjugal anxieties were increased by the languishing state of my tenderer and better part, which my absence for so long a time might perhaps increase. I was also afraid lest my dear congregation, whose hearts are so excessively set on me, should suffer by my absence. The danger of the seas likewise appeared terrible. And above all, my just consciousness of my want of qualifications for so important an embassy, sunk my spirit; and yet my remonstrances on this head would not be regarded by others."

Sept. 3, 1753, he writes: "This morning I felt the painful rupture of the tender relative ties which bind my heart to Hanover. I took leave of some thousands yesterday in public; and to-day, I parted with some of my select friends, and my dear, dear spouse, my honored parents, and three helpless children, and left them in a flood of tears. To thee, O Lord, I then solemnly committed them; and now I renew the dedication." "Sunday. Preached at Mr. Finley's, [Nottingham, Pa.] on Deut. x. 13, a sermon which I preached at Hanover with great satisfaction and prospect of success; but alas! I have lost that spirit with which it was first delivered; and indeed I can but rarely retain the spirit of preaching in the hurries of a journey. The materials of the sermon were very solemn, and nothing appears to me a more unnatural incongruity, than to speak the most solemn things with a trifling spirit. Indeed the incongruity appeared so great, that I was obliged to omit sundry things, though written before me in my notes, for want of a heart to express them with suitable tenderness and fervor." "Monday, Sept. 17, went with Mr. Tennent to wait on the governor and secretary, [of New Jersey,] but they were not at home. Waited

on three Lutheran ministers and a Calvinist, and was not a little pleased with their candor and simplicity. How pleasing is it to see the religion of Jesus appear undisguised in foreigners! I am so charmed with it, that I forget all national and religious differences, and my very heart is intimately united to them. On Thursday, came to Newark, and was received with much affection by the worthy president [Burr.] On Friday, waited on his excellency the governor, in company with the president and his lady. Was kindly received. On Sunday, heard the president preach a valedictory sermon to the candidates for a degree, who are to leave the college this week. I was amazed to see how readily good sense and accurate language flowed from him extempore. On Wednesday, I delivered a thesis, (*personales distinctiones in trinitate sunt aeternae.*) and vindicated it in a public dispute against three opponents; and afterwards was honored with the degree of A. M. Monday, Oct. 1, lodged at Mr. Brainerd's, the good missionary among the Indians, and was pleased with his accounts of the progress of religion among them. Tuesday, took a view of the Indian town, and was pleased at the affection of the poor savages to their minister, and his condescension to them. Monday, Oct. 8. Preached a sermon in the morning from Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. And through the great mercy of God, my heart was passionately affected with the subject; and what tended not a little to increase my affection, was my observing the venerable Mr. G. Tennent weeping beside me in the pulpit. Spiritual poverty and humility appeared very amiable and charming to me."

On Saturday, Nov. 17, 1753, Davies and his friend Tennent went on board a vessel bound for London, and on the next day set sail. On the 25th of December they arrived in London, and were very kindly received.

"Wednesday, Dec. 26, were visited by Mr. Hall, a venerable old gentleman, author of some of the Lime-street sermons, who seems to be of a true, puritanic spirit, and full of religion. Were visited by Mr. Gibbons, my dear correspondent, who informed us of the general apostasy of the Dissenters from the principles of the reformation. He told me that Dr. Young had erected two schools, over the door of one of which he had written, '*Doctrinæ filia virtus;*' and over the other, '*Filia matre pulchrior.*' Monday, Jan. 7. In the evening, visited Mr. Winter, a Congregational minister, but his dry orthodoxy, and severe reflections upon those who deviated from rigid Calvinism, were disagreeable to me. Heard good Mr. Whitefield in the evening. Sunday, Jan. 13. In the afternoon, preached for Mr. Gibbons on these words, '*I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.*' I had a good deal of readiness and vivacity, though, alas! but little tender solemnity. Tuesday, Jan. 15. Heard Dr. Guise, in Pinner's-hall, preach a judicious, experimental discourse. It was well adapted to comfort the people of God, but the languor of his delivery, and his promiscuous, undistinguishing manner of address, seem to take away its energy and pungency. Wednesday, Jan. 16. Visited Mr. Pike, an Independent minister. He appears sound in principle, and a great friend to experimental religion, and promised to promote the college. He has a penetrating, philosophical genius, and is properly a man of books. I next visited Dr. Lardner, the celebrated author of the '*Credibility of the Gospel History;*' and I was really surprised at the sight of him, as he differed so much from the ideas I had formed of so great a man. He is a little pert old gentleman, full of sprightly conversation; but so deaf that he seems to hear nothing at all. I was obliged to tell him my mind and answer his questions in writing; and he keeps pen and paper always on the table for

that purpose. He treated me very kindly, and constrained me to dine with him."

"Saturday, March 16. Last Sunday I preached, A. M., for Mr. Gibbons on these words, 'So then neither is he that planteth any thing,' etc.; and as I was deeply sensible of the withdrawing of the divine influences, and the inefficaciousness of the means of grace without them, my tender passions were frequently moved throughout the sermon, and in the conclusion I burst out into a flood of tears. Sundry of the hearers were tenderly affected, particularly Mr. Cromwell, great-grandson of the famous Oliver; who gave Mr. Gibbons three guineas for the college after sermon, and thanked me for my discourse with tears in his eyes. He afterwards conducted me to Dr. Stennett's, and talked freely and warmly of experimental religion. Heard Mr. Reed last Tuesday, at Salter's-hall, on these words, 'Enter not into judgment,' etc. But there was such a *legal* spirit diffused through the sermon, that I thought it rather calculated to promote the security than the conversion of sinners. I could not help thinking of a pun I have heard of a minister's, who preached a sermon on these words; 'Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its savor,' etc.; and when he was desired to publish it, he said, he believed he would, and dedicate it to the preachers at *Salter's* hall, for they wanted *seasoning*.' Tuesday, March 19. Went to the Amsterdam coffee-house among the Baptist and Independent ministers, where I enjoyed much satisfaction. Received the thanks of the governors of the charity school in Bartholomew-close, for my sermon there, which were presented to me in a very respectful manner by Dr. Guise as their deputy. Though it be hard to repress the workings of vanity even in a creature so unworthy as I, under so much applause, yet I think my heart rises in sincere gratitude to God for advancing me from a mean family and utter obscurity, into some importance in the world, and giving me so many advantages of public usefulness. Indeed, I hardly think there is a greater instance of this in the present age. Alas! that I do not better improve my opportunities. Went to Hamlin's coffee-house among the Presbyterians, where they are generally shy and unsocial towards me. They have universally, as far as I can learn, rejected all tests of orthodoxy, and require their candidates, at their ordination, only to declare their belief in the Scriptures. Mr. Prior, with the appearance of great uneasiness, told me that he heard we would admit none into the ministry without subscribing the Westminster Confession, and that this report would hinder all our success among the friends of liberty. I replied that we allowed the candidate to mention his objections against any article in the Confession, and the judicature judged whether the articles objected against, were essential to Christianity; and if they judged they were not, they would admit the candidate, notwithstanding his objections. He seemed to think that we were such rigid Calvinists, that we would not admit an Arminian to communion."

"April 7, 1754. We have had a most surprising success in our mission, which, notwithstanding the languor of my nature, I cannot review without passionate emotions. From the best information of our friends, and our own observation upon our arrival here, we could not raise our hopes above £300; but we have already got about £1,200. Our friends in America cannot hear the news with the same surprise, as they do not know the difficulties we have had to encounter; but to me it appears the most signal interposition of Providence I ever saw."

From England, Mr. Davies went to Scotland, where he was well received, and where he met with considerable success. The exact date of his return

to this country is not known. Early in 1755, we find him laboring among his people in Hanover, with his accustomed diligence. The country was then agitated in a high degree by a French and Indian war. Designs were on foot to abandon to the enemy a part of the colony. July 10th, 1755, general Braddock sustained his memorable defeat, and the remnant of his army were saved by the courage and skill of colonel Washington, then only twenty-three years of age. On the 20th of this month, Mr. Davies preached a sermon, "On the defeat of general Braddock going to fort Du Quesne." In this sermon he calls on all his hearers, in the most impassioned strains, "to show themselves men, Britons, and Christians, and to make a noble stand for the blessings they enjoyed." His influence among the negroes was perhaps greater than that of any other man; and he used it all to persuade them from any thoughts of joining the enemy. In August, he delivered a sermon to a company of volunteers, under the title of "Religion and Patriotism the constituents of a good soldier." In a note to this sermon he says: "As a remarkable instance of this, [the diffusion of some sparks of a martial influence through the colony,] I may point out to the public that heroic youth, colonel Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved, in so signal a manner, *for some important service to his country.*"

The celebrated Patrick Henry is known to have spoken in terms of enthusiasm of Mr. Davies. And as that distinguished orator lived from his eleventh to his twenty-second year in the neighborhood where the patriotic sermons of Mr. Davies were delivered, and which produced the most powerful effects, it has been supposed with much probability, that it was Mr. Davies who first kindled the fire and afforded the model of Henry's elocution. Mr. Davies, however, never permitted patriotism or politics to interfere with his duties, or tarnish his character as a Christian minister. With him every thing was subordinate to religion, or rather he did all that he did as a part of his religious duty.

The limits of the presbytery of Hanover originally comprehended the whole of Virginia, and a considerable part, if not the whole, of North Carolina. Through this great territory, there were scattered numerous settlements of Protestant Dissenters, besides many who had originally belonged to the established church, but had chosen to join the Dissenters. It was a vast charge to be committed to Davies and his five brethren of the presbytery. Yet there was no part of it which seems to have been neglected by them. Davies made his influence to be felt every where; he transfused his own spirit into the bosoms of his associates, and roused them by the force of his example. The presbytery met about four times a year; and from one meeting to another, a committee was appointed to attend to any business that might occur. Every movement gave tokens of a zeal that nothing could damp, of a perseverance that nothing could exhaust. The popularity of Davies in Virginia was almost unbounded. He was urged to preach in almost all the settled parts of the State. The presbytery, willing to gratify the people as far as possible, at every session directed Mr. D. to supply a number of vacancies. Indeed, this was carried so far, that Davies's congregation in Hanover earnestly remonstrated against it, contending that he should not be appointed to supply vacancies, unless his congregation were provided for in his absence.

On the 22d of March, 1758, the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, president of the college of New Jersey, died. "Some of the trustees," says Mr. Davies, "to my great surprise, had some thoughts of me, upon the first vacancy that happened. But knowing the difficulty of my removal, and being very

unwilling to bereave my congregation, they made an attempt, upon president Edwards's death, to furnish the college with another; and therefore chose the Rev. Mr. Lockwood, [of Wethersfield, Conn.] a gentleman of worthy character. But being disappointed as to him, they elected me on the 16th of last August, [1758,] and were at the trouble and expense of sending two messengers to solicit the affair with me and the presbytery. I can honestly say, never any thing cast me into such anxious perplexities. Never did I feel myself so much in need of divine direction, nor so destitute of it. My difficulty was not to find out my own inclination, which was pre-engaged to Hanover, but the path of duty; and the fear of mistaking it in so important a term of life, kept me uneasy night and day. I submitted the matter to the presbytery, and gave them an honest representation of it, as far as it was known to me. As I was at an entire loss in my own mind to discover my duty, I could not, upon the authority of my own judgment, approve or reject their decision; but cheerfully acquiesced in it, and sent it, with my own negative answer, to the board of trustees, and expected never to hear any more about it. But the trustees, to my still greater surprize, made a second application, requesting I would act as vice-president during the winter, till the synod should sit, when the judgment of the presbytery might be referred to the higher judicature. After making all the inquiries in my power to discover what was my duty in so perplexing a case, I thought I had certainly found out the will of God, and returned an absolute refusal in the strongest terms, transferring all my interest at the board to another gentleman, [Mr. Finley,] whom I looked upon as incomparably better qualified for the place, and of whose election I then had considerable hopes. But how was I surprised and struck to receive a third application in more importunate terms than ever."

The matter was referred to the synod of New York and Philadelphia, who dissolved the relation between Mr. Davies and his people, and directed his removal by an almost unanimous vote.

Mr. Davies entered on his office as president of the college, on the 26th of September, 1759. He remained in this office a few days more than eighteen months. During this short period, his reputation, talents and services were of incalculable benefit to the institution. His popularity in the church to which he belonged was great and unrivalled. He was highly respected by other religious denominations, and was personally and favorably known to the friends of the college in Britain, as well as in this country. He was in the full vigor of life, with a mind capacious and ardent, and with habits of activity and energy fully established by time and use. He devoted all his faculties unremittingly to the service of the college, and was instrumental in introducing into it some of the best permanent usages; and indeed every change he made was a manifest improvement. A poet and orator himself, he turned the attention of his pupils to the cultivation of English composition and eloquence, with great effect.

The number of students under his administration cannot be exactly ascertained. It probably did not, at any one time, exceed one hundred; and at his death it must have come very little short of that number.

His death has been attributed to his being unskillfully bled. It was more probably precipitated by his unremitting application to study, and to the duties of his office. His previous situation had afforded little leisure, and comparatively few means, for the cultivation of general science. It was natural, therefore, that even his friends should have had some doubts of his complete preparation to fill and adorn the new sphere in which he was

called to move. To qualify himself for this, his application to study was intense and unremitted. He rose by break of day, and seldom retired till midnight. The habit of his body being plethoric, his health had, for some years, greatly depended on the exercise of riding, to which he was, from necessity, much habituated in Virginia. This salutary exercise had, from the time he took charge of the college, been almost entirely relinquished. Towards the close of January, 1761, he was seized with a bad cold, for which he was bled. The same day he transcribed for the press his sermon on the death of George II. The day following he preached twice in the college chapel. The arm in which he had been bled became much inflamed, and his febrile tendencies were greatly increased. On the morning of the succeeding Monday, he was seized, while at breakfast, with violent chills, succeeded by an inflammatory fever, which terminated his earthly existence on the 4th of February, 1762. The violence of the disease deprived him of the exercise of his reason, through the greater part of his sickness. Had it been otherwise, his friends and the public would, in all probability, have been gratified with an additional evidence of the power of the gospel, in supporting the soul in the near prospect of death and eternity. In his delirium, he manifested what were the objects which chiefly occupied his mind. His faltering tongue was continually uttering some expedient, to promote the good of the church and the world.

His death was greatly and extensively lamented. An affectionate tribute was paid to his memory by his successor, Dr. Finley, in a sermon preached on the occasion from Rom. xiv. 7, 8, and printed at the request of the trustees of the college. The Rev. David Bostwick,* of New York, the dear and intimate friend of Mr. Davies, had been intrusted by him with the printing of the sermon on the death of George II. Mr. B. accompanied the publication of the sermon with a preface, in which the talents, piety and usefulness of Mr. Davies were exhibited with great warmth. Dr. Gibbons of London, to whom his MS. sermons were committed for publication, and who had been for several years his correspondent, preached a funeral sermon, which he published with that of Dr. Finley, in the beginning of the first volume of the sermons of Davies.

The first characteristic of president Davies, which we notice, was his glowing and eminent piety. It pervaded his preaching, his studies, his pastoral intercourse, his conversation, and all his actions. Next to his ardent emotions, humility was the most prominent trait in his religious character. Writing to Dr. Gibbons he says, "I desire seriously to devote to God and my dear country, all the labors of my head, my heart, my hand and pen; and if he pleases to bless any of them, I hope I shall be thankful, and wonder at his condescending grace. Oh! my dear brother, could we spend and be spent, all our lives, in painful, disinterested, indefatigable service for God and the world, how serene and bright would it render the swift approaching eve of life! I am laboring to do a little to save my country, and, which is of much more consequence, to save souls from death—from that tremendous kind of death which a *soul* can die. I have had but little success of late, but blessed be God, it surpassed my expectation, and much more my desert. Some of my brethren labor to better purpose. The pleasure of the Lord prospers in their hands." Again, "As for myself, I am just striving not to live in vain. I entered the

* Mr. Bostwick was born in New Milford, Conn. in 1721, graduated at Yale college in 1740, settled in the ministry in Jamaica, L. I., installed pastor of the Presbyterian church in New York, where he died, Nov. 1773, aged 52.

ministry with such a sense of my unfitness for it, that I had no sanguine expectations of success. And a condescending God, O how condescending! has made me much more serviceable than I could hope. But alas! my brother, I have but little, very little, true religion. My advancements in holiness are small, extremely small. I feel what I confess, and am sure it is true, and not the rant of excessive or affected humility. It is an easy thing to make a noise in the world, to flourish and harangue, to dazzle the crowd, and set them all agape; but secretly to imbibe the spirit of Christianity, to maintain a secret walk with God, to be holy as he is holy, this is the labor, this is the work. I beg the assistance of your prayers in so grand and important an enterprize. The difficulty of the ministerial work seems to grow on my hands. Perhaps once in three or four months I preach in some measure as I could wish; that is, I preach as in the sight of God, and as if I were to step from the pulpit to the supreme tribunal. I *feel* my subject. I melt into tears, or I shudder with horror, when I denounce the terrors of the Lord. I glow, I soar in sacred ecstasies, when the love of Jesus is my theme, and, as Mr. Baxter was wont to express it, in lines more striking to me than all the fine poetry in the world,

‘I preach as if I ne’er should preach again;
And as a dying man to dying men.’

But alas! my spirits soon flag, my devotions languish, and my zeal cools. It is really an afflictive thought, that I serve so good a Master with so much inconstancy; but so it is, and my soul mourns upon that account.”

In another letter, he says: “I am laboring to do a little good in the world. But alas! I find I am but of little use and importance. I have many defects, but none gives me so much pain and mortification as my slow progress in personal holiness. This is the grand qualification of the office we sustain, as well as for that heaven we hope for, and I am shocked at myself when I see how little I have of it.”

In a letter, dated Hanover, Sept. 12, 1757, he says: “I am just beginning to creep back from the valley of the shadow of death, to which I made a very near approach a few days ago. I was seized with a most violent fever, which came to a crisis in a week, and now it is much abated, though I am still confined to my chamber. Blessed be my Master’s name, this disorder found me employed in his service. It seized me in the pulpit, like a soldier wounded in the field. This has been a busy summer with me. In about two months, I rode about 500 miles, and preached about forty sermons. This affords me some pleasure in the review. But, alas! the mixture of sin, and of many nameless imperfections that run through and corrupt all my services, give me shame, sorrow, and mortification. My fever made unusual ravages on my understanding, and rendered me frequently delirious, and always stupid. But when I had any little sense of things, I generally felt pretty calm and serene, and death, that mighty terror, was disarmed. Indeed, the thought of leaving my dear family destitute, and my flock shepherdless, made me often start back and cling to life; but in other respects, death appeared a kind of indifferency to me. Formerly I have wished to live longer, that I might be better prepared for heaven, but this consideration had but very little weight with me. After a long trial, I found this world is a place so unfriendly to the growth of every thing divine and heavenly, that I was afraid, if I should live longer, I should be no better fitted for heaven than I am. Indeed, I have hardly any hopes of ever making any great attainments in holiness, while in this world, though I should be doomed to stay in it as long as Methuselah. O

my good Master, if I may dare to call thee so, I am afraid I shall never serve thee on this side the region of perfection. The thought grieves me, it breaks my heart, but I can hardly hope better. But if I have the least spark of true piety in my breast, I shall not always labor under this complaint. No, my Lord, I shall yet serve thee—serve thee through an immortal duration, with the activity, the fervor, the perfection of the rapt seraph that adores and burns. I very much suspect that this desponding view of the matter is wrong. I only relate it as an unusual reason for my willingness to die. In my sickness I found the unspeakable importance of a Mediator in a religion for sinners. O! I could have given you the word of a dying man for it, that that Jesus whom you preach, is indeed a necessary, and an all-sufficient Saviour. Indeed, he is the only support for a departing soul. None but CHRIST. None but CHRIST. Had I as many good works as Abraham or Paul, I would not have dared to build my hopes on such a quicksand, but only on this firm, eternal rock. I am rising up, my brother, with a desire to recommend him better to my fellow-sinners than I have done. But alas! I hardly hope to accomplish it. He has done a great deal more by me already than I ever expected, and infinitely more than I deserved. But he never intended me for great things. He has beings both of my own and of superior order that can perform him more worthy service. O! if I might but untie the latchet of his shoes, or draw water for the service of his sanctuary, it is enough for me. I am no angel, nor would I murmur because I am not. My strength fails me, and I must give over. Pray for me—write to me—love me living and dying—on earth and in heaven."

Mr. Davies was among the brightest patterns of the domestic virtues. The example of his excellent mother made an indelible impression upon him. He looked on the most important blessings of his life as an immediate answer to her prayers.* As a husband, he was kind, tender, and cordial; mingling a genuine and manly fondness with a delicate respect. Rev. Dr. John Rodgers, one of his most intimate friends, says: "I never saw him angry during several years of unbounded intimacy, though I have repeatedly known him to be ungenerously treated." In a letter to a friend, he says: "We have now three sons and two daughters, whose young minds as they are opening, I am endeavoring to cultivate with my own hand, unwilling to trust them to a stranger; and I find the business of education much more difficult than I expected. My dear little creatures sob, and drop a tear now and then, under my instructions, but I am not so happy as to see them under deep and lasting impressions of religion; and this is the greatest grief they afford me. Grace cannot be communicated by natural descent; and if it could, they would receive but little from me."†

President Davies was remarkably generous and catholic in his sentiments. "He considered the visible kingdom of Christ," remarks Dr. Finley, "as extended beyond the boundaries of this or that particular denomination,

* At the time of his death, this venerable woman made a part of his family. When the corpse of her son was laid in the coffin, she stood over it in the presence of a number of friends, for some minutes, viewing it attentively, and then said: "There is the son of my prayers and my hopes, my only son, my only earthly support. But there is the will of God, and I am satisfied." This eminent saint was taken into the family of the Rev. Dr. Rodgers, of New York, and by him was treated with the utmost kindness and veneration, till her death.

† Mr. Davies's widow returned to her friends in Virginia, and remained there till her death. His eldest son, Col. Wm. Davies, graduated at the college of New Jersey, in 1765. He settled as a lawyer, in Norfolk, Va. In the revolution he was an officer of distinguished merit, and possessed, in an eminent degree, the confidence of Washington. He was a man of a powerful and highly cultivated mind. He died a few years since, leaving one daughter. John Rodgers Davies, graduated at the same college, in 1769, and settled as a lawyer in Sussex county, Va. Samuel, the third son, was settled in Petersburg, Va., and died there several years since. An unmarried daughter was living a few years ago. Several of his grandchildren are living. Dr. Rice mentions one at Petersburg, as lending him a MS. of her grandfather.

and never supposed that his declarative glory was wholly dependent on the religious community which he most approved. Hence he gloried more in being a Christian than in being a *Presbyterian*, though he was the latter from principle. His truly catholic address to the established clergy of Virginia, is a demonstration of the sincere pleasure it would have given him, to have heard that CHRIST was preached, and substantial religion, common Christianity promoted by those 'who walked not with him,' and whom he judged in other points to be mistaken. His benevolent heart could not be so soured, nor his enlarged soul so contracted, as to value men from circumstantial distinctions, but according to their personal worth."

The eminence of Mr. Davies's character as the head of a college was generally acknowledged. In his administration, the firmness of authority was tempered with benignity, mildness, and condescension. He watched over his pupils with the tender solicitude of a father. He repressed their youthful irregularities by the gentlest methods possible; nor did he ever inflict punishment, without evident reluctance and pain. The consequence was, that he was equally revered and loved by every member of his literary family. They esteemed it a privilege to be under his care. In his method of instruction, there was something unusually captivating. Conveying his ideas with the utmost facility, and, by the aid of a lively imagination, imparting the charms of novelty even to common subjects, he could not fail to rivet the attention of his pupils. He communicated to them of his intellectual treasures without reserve. At the same time, he considered religion as unspeakably the brightest of all accomplishments; the only sure foundation either of usefulness or honor. He therefore bent his principal attention, as every instructor should, to impress the youthful mind with the importance of this object. He seized with avidity every occasion to inculcate on his pupils, in private, the worth of their souls, and the pressing necessity of their immediately securing the blessings of salvation. Towards the close of a new year's sermon, he says: "I beg leave of my promiscuous auditory, to employ a few minutes in addressing myself to my important family, whom my paternal affection would always single out from the rest, even when I am speaking in general terms to a mixed crowd. Therefore, my dear charge, my pupils, my children, and every tender and endearing name—ye young immortals, ye embryo angels, or infant fiends, ye blooming, lovely, fading flowers of human nature, the hope of your parents and friends, of church and state; the hope, joy, and glory of your teachers! hear one that loves you; one that has nothing to do in the world, but to promote your best interest; one that would account this the greatest blessing he could enjoy in his pilgrimage; and whose nights and days are sometimes made almost equally restless, by his affectionate anxieties for you. Hear him upon a subject in which you are most deeply interested; a subject the most important that even an apostle or an angel could address you upon, and that is, the right improvement of time, the present time, and preparation for eternity."

The public and official appearance of President Davies was marked with dignity, decorum, and elegance. His performances at anniversary commencements reflected equal honor on himself and the institution, and highly gratified the crowded auditories, which those occasions brought together.

President Davies was not more than fourteen years in public life; for he probably began to preach in his twenty-third year, and died a little after he had completed his thirty-sixth. And when it is considered how imperfect was his early education, how numerous were the difficulties with which he

always had to contend, and yet to what eminence he rose, and what extensive and lasting good he effected, where shall we find an individual whose talents, or whose holy zeal and fidelity, we shall have greater reason to admire? That he had the advantage of genius, no one can doubt. But let it not be forgotten, that he was as much distinguished by laborious and incessant application to study, as by the facility with which he made his attainments. He disliked to preach if he could avoid it, without careful preparation. Sometimes, when pressed to speak extemporaneously, he replied: "It is a dreadful thing to talk nonsense in the name of the Lord." Nor was he one of those who boasted how easily and rapidly his sermons were composed. He is known to have declared, that "every discourse of his which he thought worthy of the name of a sermon, cost him four days' hard study in the preparation." "It was by this combination of talent and diligence," remarks Dr. Green, "that he became, probably, the most eloquent and accomplished pulpit orator that our country has ever produced; and what was infinitely more important and desirable, was more successful in winning souls to Christ, than almost any other individual of the day in which he lived; for his sermons have been benefiting thousands and tens of thousands, since his death; and are likely to do so, while the language in which they are written, shall be in use."

The collection of sermons, in three volumes octavo, published by Dr. Gibbons, has passed through very numerous editions, both in this country and in Britain. The ninth edition was published forty-five years ago. Perhaps there are no sermons in the English language which have been more read, and for which there has been so steady a demand, for more than sixty years. Yet these sermons were almost wholly posthumous in their publication. They are not distinguished by minute accuracy of language, by finished periods, nor are they wholly free from pomp and declamation. His style, though rich and entertaining, is probably rather a dangerous model for imitation. Yet there is every where so much just thinking, such powerful reasoning, such pungent addresses to the conscience and the heart, with such an unction of holy love, that the reader soon ceases to attend to any thing but the subject discussed, and is carried delightfully along by the powerful charm of genius and piety. A chief excellence is that they abound in clear, forcible, and affecting delineations of the great doctrines of the gospel, in union with the very spirit of love and meekness. It is said, that he seldom preached without producing some visible emotions in great numbers present; and seldom, without some saving impressions being left on one or more of his auditory.

We close with an extract of a letter addressed to the writer of this sketch, by the Rev. Dr. Benjamin H. Rice, of Princeton, New Jersey.

"I suppose you have ample evidence of the power and popularity of President Davies as a preacher. In this indeed, consisted his great superiority. I have seen persons who heard his sermon on the Final Judgment. They said it was delivered under the oaks that shaded his church, to about five thousand people; and that when they were dismissed, they dispersed in their carriages, on horseback, and on foot, without uttering a single word—all seemed so absorbed with the awful theme.

"I have no means of ascertaining the amount of his success, but there is abundant proof that his preaching was blessed to the conversion of many souls, both among the white people and the colored. Indeed, he paid special attention to the slaves; contrived to have many of them taught to read, and obtained for them from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, religious books, particularly a number of Watts's Psalms and Hymns.

I have seen some of the old slaves that were brought into the church under his ministry. They were venerable not only for age but for Christian experience and intelligence, and remembered their pastor with strong affection.

“The influence of Davies is one of the most interesting aspects in which he can be remembered. He still lives by a propagated influence in many hearts, not only in Virginia, but also in Tennessee and Kentucky. This may be seen not only in the pleasure with which he is spoken of, but in his name given to the sons from one generation to another, and in the delight with which his sermons are read and handed down from father to son.”

NOTE.—A collected and uniform edition of the works of President Davies is a great desideratum. Drs. J. H. Rice and Green mention important papers which have been overlooked. Some of his poems are well worthy of being included. The individual who shall undertake this work will deserve well of the church and of his country. He should make a personal investigation of the places where Davies resided,—Newcastle in Delaware, Princeton in New Jersey, and the scenes of the labors of Davies in Virginia—examining the records of the college of New Jersey, and of the ecclesiastical bodies with which the president was connected. Something might possibly be found in Nottingham, Pa., and among the papers of Dr. Gibbons of London. The works should include some account of the descendants of President Davies. It is not honorable to the country, that while the memorials of her greatest general are carefully prepared and elegantly published, many of the memorials of one of her most distinguished pulpit orators, should be left to decay and utter loss.

A COLORED SELF-TAUGHT MAN.

REV. DR. COOLEY of Granville, Mass. has prepared and published some very interesting sketches of the life and character of a colored clergyman, who was, for many years, minister of large and respectable congregations of people almost exclusively white. The biographer was long and intimately acquainted with the subject of his sketches, and has exhibited good judgment in the selection and arrangement of his materials, and in his own interspersed remarks. Rev. Dr. Sprague of Albany has prefixed some appropriate introductory observations. LEMUEL HAYNES was born at West Hartford, Conn. July 18, 1753. His father was of unmingled African extraction, his mother a white woman of respectable ancestry. Haynes bore the name of neither father nor mother, but probably of the man under whose roof he received his birth. When five months old, he was bound as a servant to Dea. David Rose of Granville, Mass. till he was twenty-one years of age. He was treated with singular affection by his master and mistress, and carefully instructed in the principles of the Christian religion. As a servant-boy, Haynes was strictly faithful. At length, he discovered such prudence in the management of his master's business, that the superintendence of it was almost wholly committed to him. The remark has been a thousand times repeated, that ‘Lemuel Haynes got his education in the chimney corner.’ This is literally true. While his comrades were sporting in the streets and even round the door, you might see him sitting on his block with his book in his hand. Evening after evening, he plied his studies by fire-light, having laid in a store of pine-knots for the purpose.