

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

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OF THE

FOUNDER, AND PRINCIPAL ALUMNI

OF THE

LOG COLLEGE.

TOGETHER WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE REVIVALS  
OF RELIGION, UNDER THEIR MINISTRY.

COLLECTED AND EDITED

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## CHAPTER III.

### MEMOIR OF REV. GILBERT TENNENT.

Gilbert Tennent—Birth—Education—Conversion—Licensure—  
Character by Dr. Finley—By Mr. Prince—By Mr. Whitefield—  
Visit to Boston—Success of his ministry in New England, and in  
other places.

HAVING, in the preceding chapter, given some account of the founder of this literary institution, let us now attend to the character of some of its principal pupils. The surest criterion, by which to judge of the character of any school, is to observe the attainments and habits of those educated in it. And judging by this rule, a very high place must be assigned to the Log College, notwithstanding its diminutive and mean external appearance. And what was before said should be remembered, that this was the first seminary in which young men were trained for the gospel ministry, within the limits of the Presbyterian church. Before this school was opened, if a young man wished to become a minister in the Presbyterian church, he must either repair to one of the New England colleges, or go to Europe. It is morally certain, therefore, that few, if any of those who were

brought forward to the work, could ever have reached the ministry had it not been for this school. Accordingly, we find, that for a considerable time, nearly all the ministers composing the synod, were either from Great Britain, Ireland, or New England, except those who proceeded from this school. And of what character and abilities these were, we shall soon see. The first on the list of students, in this school, was, no doubt, Mr. Tennent's oldest son, Gilbert. For though he had finished his education before the Log College was built, yet he received no other education than what he gained under the tuition of his father; and may therefore without impropriety be classed among the pupils of the institution.

Gilbert Tennent, the oldest son of the Rev. William Tennent, sen., was born in the county of Armagh, Ireland, April 5, in the year 1703, and was, therefore, thirteen or fourteen years of age, when his father immigrated to this country. In setting up this school, no doubt, the father had a regard to the education of his four sons. Men who have themselves profited by education, and have become learned, cannot but feel a lively interest in the education of their children; and this motive has had its influence in the institution of numerous classical schools, in this country, besides the LOG COLLEGE. Judging by the result, however, all have reason to conclude, that in the mind of this good man, the education of

his sons was viewed as subordinate to the prosperity of the church; for every one of them became ministers of the gospel, and some of them ranked among the most distinguished, who have ever laboured in the Presbyterian church.

Gilbert Tennent, as has been remarked, received his education under the paternal roof, before this school was opened; for at this time he was twenty-one or twenty-two years of age; and was soon able to be an assistant to his father in teaching the other students. And when we consider the eminence to which he rose as a preacher, and as a writer, we need no other proof of the talents and skill of his reverend tutor.

Gilbert Tennent's first religious impressions of any permanency, were experienced when he was about fourteen years of age. His serious concern about his salvation continued for several years before his mind was established in comfort and peace. During this period, he was often in great agony of spirit; until at last, it pleased God to give him "the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ." While he remained in the anxious state of mind, which has been referred to, beside his other studies, he pursued a course of theological reading; but living under the habitual impression that his spiritual condition was not good, he durst not think of entering the holy ministry. He, therefore, commenced the study of medicine, which he prose-

cuted for the space of a year. But about this time, it pleased God to reveal himself to him with so much clearness and comfort, that all his doubts and sorrows, and fears were dispelled; and the Sun of Righteousness arose upon him with healing under his wings. And no sooner was he satisfied of his saving interest in Christ, than he felt himself called to seek the ministry, which he had before been deterred from thinking of. And here it may be proper to remark, that, often, when God intends a man for eminent usefulness in the ministry, he leads him through deep waters, and causes him to drink freely of the cup of spiritual sorrow, that he may be prepared, by a long course of afflictive experiences, to sympathize with tempted and desponding believers, and may learn how to administer to them that consolation by which his own heart was at last comforted. Of this, religious biography furnishes many instructive examples. After due preparation and study, Mr. Gilbert Tennent presented himself as a candidate, to the presbytery of Philadelphia, of which his father was a member. Having passed the usual trials before the presbytery, to their great approbation, he received a license to preach, in May, 1726. This was the very year in which the Log College was opened; and as we learn from the documents to which we have had access, that he was an usher, or assistant to his father in the school, it seems altogether probable that he continued with his

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father in the school for one year, at least; for by the Presbyterian Records it appears, that he was not ordained and settled as a pastor, until the autumn of the year 1727. This then, is the only period in which he could have been a tutor in the LOG COLLEGE; for it was not in existence until 1726, and after he was ordained, he was the regular pastor of an important church in another state; for he was called to take charge of the Presbyterian congregation in the city of New Brunswick, New Jersey. Before Gilbert Tennent settled at New Brunswick, he preached several Sabbaths, in Newcastle, on the Delaware, and received a call from the Presbyterian congregation in that place; which, however, he did not accept.

From his first entrance on the public work of the ministry, the preaching of Gilbert Tennent was very popular and attractive, with all classes of hearers. He possessed uncommon advantages as a preacher. In person, he was taller than the common stature, and well proportioned in every respect. His aspect was grave and venerable, and his address prepossessing. His voice was clear and commanding, and his manner in the pulpit was exceedingly earnest, and impressive. His reasoning powers, also, were strong, and his language often nervous, and, indeed, sublime. No one could hear him without being convinced that he was deeply in earnest. His style was copious, and sometimes elegant. Indeed, in the vigour of his age, few preachers could equal him.

In the sermon preached at the funeral of Mr Tennent by Dr. Finley, he describes his character, as follows: "In his manners, at first view, he seemed distant and reserved; yet, upon nearer acquaintance, he was ever found affable, condescending, and communicative. And what greatly endeared his conversation was, an openness and undisguised honesty; at the greatest remove from artifice and dissimulation, which were the abhorrence of his soul, while he lived. Besides, he was tender, loving, and compassionate; kind and agreeable in every relation; an assured friend to such as he esteemed worthy of his regards; and a common patron to all whom he apprehended were injured or distressed. He was of a truly public spirit, and seemed to feel the various cases of mankind in general: but sensibly partook of all the good or ill that befell his country. He needed no other motive to exert himself, than only to be persuaded that the matter in question was an important public good; and in such cases, he was much regarded, not only because of his known integrity, but his generous and catholic disposition. For although he was a great lover of truth, and very zealous for its propagation; yet he was so far above a narrow, party spirit, that he loved and honoured all who seemed to have 'the root of the matter in them,' and made it their business to promote the essentials of religion, though they were, in various points, opposed to his own sentiments. He was, moreover, an example



of great fortitude, and unshaken resolution. Whatever appeared to him subservient to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, the salvation of souls, or the common good of mankind, he pursued with spirit; and what he did, he did with his might. If the end seemed to be attainable, great obstructions and difficulties in the way, were so far from dispiriting, that they animated him in his efforts: nor would he give up the point, while one glimpse of hope remained. Hence, he accomplished many important matters, which one less determined and enterprising, would presently have relinquished as desperate. He would go through honour and dishonour, through 'evil report and good report'; and though he had sensibility with respect to his character, as well as other men; yet, if preserving it, seemed at any time to require the omission of duty, or sinful compliances, he readily determined to expose himself to all risks; and if adhering to the will of God should be accounted 'vile,' he resolved that he would be 'yet more vile.'

"A great part of his life was a scene of unremitted labour. He studied hard, travelled much, and preached often, while his health and other circumstances permitted. He was 'instant in season and out of season': always about his Master's business. They who have journeyed or been often with him in company, could not but observe his constant endeavours to do good by his conversation; to introduce

some convincing or edifying topics ; and his watching for proper opportunities for speaking for God. And very faithful was he in warning sinners of their danger, and persuading them to seek salvation in earnest. Thus, he showed how much religion was his element, and promoting it the delightful business of his life. How benevolent towards mankind he was, and how precious immortal souls were in his esteem, were evident from this, that every advantage accruing to them he reckoned clear gain to himself ; nor were they ‘ who divide the spoil,’ ever more joyful than I have known him to be, on occasion of the hopeful conversion of sinners, whether by his own, or the ministry of others. And, often, has his ‘ soul wept in secret places, for the pride’ and obstinacy of those who refused to be reclaimed.

“ His great reading, with his various and long experience of the workings of both grace and corruption in the heart, made him a wise and skilful casuist, who could resolve perplexing exercises of mind with clearness, [and enabled] him to comfort with those consolations, wherewith he in like cases had been comforted of God.

“ He was a faithful attendant on the judicatories of the church, as was natural for one so anxiously concerned for the interest of religion, as he was. And having observed the effects of a lax and negligent government in some churches, he became a more strenuous asserter of due and strict discipline.

But above all other things, the purity of the ministry was his care; and, therefore, at the hazard of the displeasure of many, and in the face of reproach, he zealously urged every scriptural method by which carnal and earthly-minded men might be kept from entering it, and men of piety and zeal, as well as learning, introduced.

“As Mr. Tennent’s preaching was very alarming and awakening to careless sinners; so it was much blessed to this end, wherever he preached. And it was not only rendered effectual in producing conviction of sin, and exciting desires to flee from the wrath to come, but also to comfort mourners in Zion, and to encourage the timid and self-diffident. “The atoning blood of the Redeemer, that only sovereign balsam, was applied to their recent or festering wounds. For while, at one time, when he thundered the terrors of the law, the heavens seemed to gather blackness, and a tempest of wrath appeared ready to be hurled on the heads of the guilty; at other times, when he exhibited the riches of the grace and provisions of the gospel, the heavens seemed to smile, the clouds were dispelled, and the sky became serene. The almighty God was shown to be their refuge, and underneath were the everlasting arms. Then his exhilarating words dropped upon them as the dew.”

The preceding full length portrait is, with some slight alterations in the language, from the pen of

one well qualified to judge in such matters, and who by a long and intimate acquaintance, had the best opportunities of knowing the true character of the man which he undertakes to describe. The Rev. Dr. Finley, president of New Jersey College, the author of the foregoing sketch, was himself one of the alumni of the Log College. It is possible, however, that the cordial friendship which he had long cherished for Gilbert Tennent, and the early admiration which he felt for his talents and virtues, might insensibly lead him to give rather too high a colouring to the portraiture which he has delineated. One thing is apparent to all who attentively consider what Dr. Finley has written, that however just the prominent traits may be, the shading which more or less belongs to every human character, is wanting. Undoubtedly, Gilbert Tennent had his imperfections, and they were sometimes sufficiently visible. But, on the whole, it must be confessed, that he was a very eminent minister of Jesus Christ, and was made the instrument of performing a great work, in his day. His memory ought to be precious in the Presbyterian church. Dr. Finley says, "that the seals of his ministry in New Brunswick and parts adjacent, where he first exercised his ministry, were numerous. Many have I known, in those, and other parts where he only preached occasionally, whose piety was unquestioned, who owned him for their

spiritual father : and many I have heard of in different places.”

Though Dr. Finley’s description of the character of Gilbert Tennent is full, it will be satisfactory to have the the testimony of some other distinguished persons respecting him. The Rev. Mr. Prince, a pious and learned minister of Boston, speaks of Mr. Tennent in the following terms. “In private conversation, I found him to be a man of considerable parts and learning ; free, gentle, and condescending, and from his own various experience, his reading the most eminent writers on experimental divinity, as well as the scriptures, and from his conversing with many who had been awakened by his ministry, in New Jersey, he seemed to have as deep an acquaintance with the experimental part of religion, as any I have conversed with. And his preaching was as searching and rousing, as ever I heard.”—“ He seemed to have such a lively view of the divine Majesty—of the spirituality, purity, extensiveness, and strictness of the law, with his glorious holiness, and displeasure at sin ; his justice, truth, and power, in punishing the damned, that the very terrors of God seemed to rise in his mind afresh, when he displayed and brandished them in the eyes of unreconciled sinners.” And the same writer speaks of his remarkable discrimination and skill in detecting hypocrites, “and laying open their many vain and secret refuges, counterfeit resemblances, their delusive

hopes, their utter impotence, and impending danger of destruction.”

It will be gratifying to learn what Mr. Whitefield's opinion was of the subject of this memoir. And this we have given very freely and fully, in his Journal, to which reference has already been made. “Nov. 13, [1739]. Left Trenton about six in the morning, had a sweet and pleasant journey, and reached Brunswick, about thirty miles distant, about one o'clock. Here we were much refreshed with the company of Mr. Gilbert Tennent, an eminent dissenting minister, about forty years of age, son to that good old man who came to see me on Saturday, at Philadelphia. God, I find, has been pleased greatly to bless his labours. He and his associates, are now the burning and shining lights of this part of America. He recounted to me many remarkable effusions of the Blessed Spirit, which have been sent down among them. And one may judge of their being true and faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ, because they are every where spoken evil of, by natural men. The devil and carnal ministers rage horribly against them. Several pious souls came to see me at his house, with whom I took sweet counsel.” “Wednesday, Nov. 14. Set out early from Brunswick, with my dear fellow-travellers, and my worthy brother and fellow-labourer, Mr. Tennent. As we passed along, we spent our time most agreeably in telling what God had done for our souls.”

Upon their arrival at New York, Mr. Whitefield goes on to say, "I went to the meeting house to hear Mr. Gilbert Tennent preach, and never before, heard I such a searching sermon. He went to the bottom, indeed, and did not daub with untempered mortar. He convinced me more and more, that we can preach the gospel of Christ no further than we have experienced the power of it in our own hearts. Being deeply convicted of sin, and being from time to time driven from his false bottom and dependencies, by God's Holy Spirit, at his first conversion, he has learned experimentally to dissect the heart of the natural man. Hypocrites must either soon be converted or enraged, at his preaching. He is 'a son of thunder,' and does not regard the face of man. He is deeply sensible of the deadness and formality of the Christian church, in these parts, and has given noble testimonies against it."

A higher testimony, and from higher authority could not be given, upon earth. It is doubtful whether Mr. Whitefield has ever expressed so high an opinion of any other preacher, of any denomination. Indeed, it is probable, that he never met with a man of a more perfectly congenial spirit with his own. As Mr. Whitefield was doubtless honoured to be the instrument of the conversion of more souls than any other preacher of his age, or perhaps of any age, since that of the apostle Paul; so Mr. Tennent, among orthodox preachers, undoubtedly deserves

to be placed next to him, both in the abundance of his labours, and the wonderful success which attended his ministry.

When in the year 1740, Mr. Whitefield returned from Boston, he persuaded and urged Mr. Gilbert Tennent, to make a preaching tour through New England, as far as Boston, to water the good seed which he had there sown by his preaching, on his late visit. At that time, there was but little intercourse between the middle and eastern colonies; and no ecclesiastical connexion between the Presbyterian and Congregational churches. Mr. Whitefield's preaching, attended by the mighty power of God, not only was the means of the conviction and conversion of many of his hearers; but he also excited a host of enemies, who pursued him with unrelenting hostility; and among his opposers were reckoned, both in this country and in Great Britain, the majority of the clergy and of professors of religion. Thus verifying the words of our Lord, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my sayings, they will keep yours also." Mr. Tennent must have been inflamed with a very ardent zeal, situated as he was, the pastor of a church, and the father of a family, to set off in the depth of winter, to preach to a strange people, among whom he probably had not a single acquaintance, either among the clergy or the laity. But invincible resolution, was a prominent trait in his character. Mr. White-



field made no journeys without several attendants ; men who cheerfully ministered unto him, as did Timothy, and Luke, and Silas, and Mark and others, to Paul. But Mr. Tennent appears, to have gone on this self-denying and evangelical tour, alone. He was influenced by no curiosity to see a country not before visited ; nor could he have had any secular motive to induce him to perform so laborious a service, as that in which he now engaged.

As Mr. Whitefield's preaching had enkindled a considerable flame in Boston, Mr. Tennent directed his course immediately to that city ; where he arrived on the 13th of December, 1740 ; and here he continued for nearly three months, preaching almost every day, with extraordinary power and success. There were, however, there, many who were ready to welcome him ; and several of the excellent ministers of the town cordially received this zealous preacher, and opened their pulpits—and, indeed, some of them, gave them up to him, while he continued in the place. Among those who received him joyfully, was the Rev. Mr. Prince, the author of "The Christian History," from whose pen we are favoured with an account of Mr. Tennent's manner of preaching, during his ministry in Boston. "It was," says he, "both terrible and searching. It was for matter, justly terrible, as he, according to the inspired oracles, exhibited the dreadful holiness, justice, law-threatening, truth, power, and majesty of God, and his

anger with rebellious, impenitent, and Christless sinners: the awful danger they were in every moment of being struck down to hell, and damned forever, with the amazing miseries of that place of torment. By his arousing and scriptural preaching, deep and pungent convictions were wrought in the minds of many hundreds of persons, in that town; and the same effect was produced in several scores, in the neighbouring congregations. And now, was such a time as we never knew. The Rev. Mr. Cooper was wont to say, that more came to him in one week, in deep concern, than in the whole twenty-four years of his preceding ministry. I can say also the same, as to the numbers who repaired to me." "By a letter of Mr. Cooper—one of the evangelical ministers of Boston—to a friend in Scotland, it appears, he had had about six hundred different persons to visit him on the concerns of their souls, in three month's time. And Mr. Webb—another of the pious Boston ministers—informs me, he has had, in the same space, above a thousand."

But it will be satisfactory to hear Mr. Tennent's own account of this visit; which is found in a letter addressed to Mr. Whitefield, by whose urgent entreaty he was persuaded to undertake the journey. This letter has been preserved in that excellent book, "Gillies's Historical Collections," of which there certainly ought to be a new edition, as copies of the work, are becoming very scarce.

“VERY DEAR BROTHER,

In my return home, I have been preaching daily ; ordinarily, three times in a day, and sometimes, oftener : and, through pure grace, I have met with success much exceeding my expectations. In the town of Boston, there were many hundreds, if not thousands, as some have judged, under soul-concern. When I left the place, many children were deeply affected about their souls, and several had received consolation. Some aged persons in church-communion, and some open opposers, were convinced. Divers of the young and middle aged were converted, and several negroes. The concern was rather more general at Charlestown. Multitudes were awakened, and several had received great consolation ; especially among the young people, children, and negroes. In Cambridge, also, in the town and in the college, the shaking among the dry bones was general, and several of the students have received consolation.” He then proceeds to name more than twenty towns to which the revival had extended ; and in most of which he had preached on his return home. “In New Haven,” says he, “the concern was general, both in the college, and in the town. About thirty students came on foot, ten miles, to hear the word of God. And at Milford, the concern was general. I believe, by a moderate calculation, divers thousands have been awakened. Glory to God on high ! I thank you sir, that you did excite

me to this journey. I have had good information, that on Long Island, God has blessed my poor labours, on my pass to New England. The work of God spreads more and more. My brother William has had remarkable success, this winter, at Burlington. Mr. John Cross has had remarkable success at Staten Island; and many, I hear, have been awakened by the labours of Mr. Robinson, in New York government. Mr. Mills has had remarkable success in Connecticut, particularly at New Haven. And I hear that Mr. Blair has had remarkable success, in Pennsylvania."

On the subject of this great revival, which extended from Massachusetts to Georgia, the ministers of the synod were greatly divided. For while some approved the work, and were principal instruments in promoting it, a majority considered it an ebullition of enthusiasm, which tended neither to the glory of God, nor to the real benefit of immortal souls. And concerning Mr. Whitefield and his preaching, there was an entire dissension. And this difference, relating to the great and vital interests of religion, produced exasperation. The friends of the revival considered all who opposed it, as setting themselves in opposition to a glorious work of God's grace, and they could not but view all who openly spoke against the revival, or opposed it in any way, to be the enemies of God. Hence, they too hastily took up the opinion, that all those ministers who disapproved the

work, were unconverted men ; that they were mere formalists, and knew nothing of the vital power of religion ; but trusted to a mere profession of orthodoxy, and that if in words they did not deny the truths of God, they did, in fact: and though they might acknowledge the truth in theory, it was with them a “dead orthodoxy,” which they held in unrighteousness. On the other hand, the opposers of the revival, blamed the kind of preaching which the revivalists adopted ; especially, the dwelling so much tr damned. They charged the leaders in the revival with on the terrors of the law, and the torments of the encouraging enthusiastic raptures, and making religion to consist too much in strong emotion, and violent excitement, attended often with bodily affections. They were also greatly offended with the harsh, uncharitable spirit with which they were denounced and misrepresented, by the preachers on the other side ; and their opposition to no one, unless Mr. Whitefield be an exception, was greater than to Mr. Gilbert Tennent. Indeed, all must acknowledge, that among the friends and promoters of the revival, he stood pre-eminent ; and in the harshness of his censures, and the severity of his denunciation, he went far before all his brethren. It cannot be doubted that before the commencement of this extraordinary revival of religion, the Presbyterian church in America, was in a most deplorable state of deadness and formality ; and that the necessity of

a change of heart was very little inculcated from the pulpit, or understood by the people. Here it may be remarked, that the founder of the Log College, and all the pupils of that school were warm friends of the revival, and exerted themselves with all their might to promote the good work.

## CHAPTER IV.

Rev. Gilbert Tennent's Contest with the synod—Severity of his censures—New Brunswick presbytery protest against the synod's act—Violate it—Are excluded irregularly from the synod—Form a separate Body—Judgment of their conduct.

WE come now to a period of Gilbert Tennent's life, in which he was called to act a very conspicuous part in the affairs of the Presbyterian church. A great schism took place in the synod, in bringing about which, it must be admitted, he had his full share. It took place, indeed, by the expulsion of himself, and the other members of the New Brunswick presbytery, from the synod: but he had provoked his opponents by one of the most severely abusive sermons which was ever penned, called, "THE NOTTINGHAM SERMON," because it was preached at that place. And in the protests which he and Mr. Samuel Blair presented to the synod, in 1740, the majority of the members of the synod were exhibited in a very unenviable light. Mr. Gilbert Tennent felt himself called in providence to attempt to arouse the Presbyterian church from its profound sleep of carnal security, and to bring about a reformation in the body; but the majority of the clergy were opposed

to his measures, and disparaged what had already been done. He seems, therefore, to have considered them as the enemies of the spiritual kingdom of Christ; and that it was his duty, in imitation of Christ and the ancient prophets, in the plainest and most solemn manner, to denounce, and expose their hypocrisy, as did our Lord that of the Pharisees. But here he made a grand mistake. He could not read the hearts of his opponents, and, therefore, had no authority to pronounce a sentence of condemnation on them. He should have remembered that precept of our Lord, "Judge not that ye be not judged." A difference of opinion from him respecting the true nature of the revival, and concerning Mr. Whitefield's character, furnished no sufficient ground for him to censure and denounce them, as he did: and, especially, as a part of them, at least, were excellent men, and sound and judicious theologians. They were not the enemies of vital godliness, but were opposed to what they apprehended to be spurious religion. We may now see that they erred in their judgment, and pursued a course which was very injurious to the people under their care. and that they committed a great fault in opposing a glorious work of God on account of some irregularities which accompanied it. One of the greatest causes of complaint against Mr. Gilbert Tennent and his "New-light" brethren was, that in violation of order and propriety, they passed beyond



the bounds of their own presbytery, and intruded into congregations under the care of other ministers. This, these brethren attempted to justify by the sound maxim, employed by the apostles, when forbidden to preach by the Jewish rulers, 'that we should obey God rather than man.' But it may well be doubted, whether, in the circumstances in which they were placed, the maxim was applicable. The ministers into whose congregations they intruded, belonged to the same synod with themselves, and had as good a right to judge what was right and expedient, as the "New Side" ministers.

We think, therefore, that Mr. Tennent was much to be blamed for the course which he pursued, in this controversy with the synod; especially, in the harshness, censoriousness, and bitterness which he manifested towards them; particularly, in the sermon before mentioned; and that his course can by no means be justified. He does, indeed, appear in a very unamiable light, and as exceedingly deficient in the meekness and charity of the gospel, in this whole controversy. He, doubtless, believed that he was doing God service, and that duty required him to pursue the course and manifest the spirit which he did. And after the separation had taken place, and the heat of the controversy had cooled, he seems to have been sensible that he had not done justice to the majority of the synod; for he wrote and published a large pamphlet called "The Pacificator," in

which he strongly pleads for peace, and a re-union of the separated parts of the Presbyterian church. This desirable event was, after a division which lasted seventeen years, and after long negotiation, accomplished; and Mr. Gilbert Tennent entered cordially into the measure. Whatever mistakes he fell into arose from error of judgment, in regard to duty. He was, doubtless, actuated by a sincere and glowing zeal for the honour of the Redeemer, and the salvation of souls. Like the sun, he was a burning and a shining light; but like that luminary, had some dark spots, which, in some measure, marred the beauty and symmetry of his otherwise estimable character. His natural disposition appears to have been severe, and uncompromising; and he gave strong evidence of being very tenacious of all his opinions; and not very tolerant of those who dissented from his views, as appears by the controversy which he had with the Rev. Mr. Cowell, of Trenton; and which he brought before the synod. But with all his faults he was an extraordinary man, raised up by Providence to accomplish a great work. We, of the Presbyterian Church, are more indebted to the men of the Log College for our evangelical views, and for our revivals of religion, than we are aware of. By their exertions, and the blessing of God on their preaching, a new spirit was infused into the Presbyterian body; and their views and sentiments respecting experimental religion, have prevailed more and

more ; until at last, opposition to genuine revivals of religion, is almost unknown in our church. It is not my purpose to enter into the ecclesiastical transactions in which Mr. Tennent acted an important part, any further than is necessary to form a judgment of his Christian and ministerial character. They who desire to see a lucid view of the ecclesiastical transactions of that period, are referred to Dr. Hodge's "CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH;" or they may go to the fountain head, by consulting the "Records of the Transactions of the Synod," recently given to the public, by the "Board of Publication."

We have seen that a great schism was produced in the Presbyterian body, by a difference of opinion among the ministers of the synod, respecting the great revival which pervaded many of the churches. But though this was the proximate cause of the division, by those who attentively consider the history of that time, and especially the "Records" of the synod itself, it will be seen, that this event was actually produced by the LOG COLLEGE. At first view, this will seem very improbable, but when all the documents are read, and all the circumstances of the church weighed and compared, it will appear exceedingly probable, that the erection of this school of the prophets was, innocently, the cause of the breach which took place in 1741. Here it will be necessary to enter somewhat minutely into a consi-

deration of the condition of the church, prior to the commencement of the revival. A liberal education was from the beginning, considered an indispensable qualification for the gospel ministry in the Presbyterian church. The usual evidence of having received such an education was, a diploma from some college or university, in Europe or America. The Presbyterian ministers, before the erection of the Log College, had, nearly all, received such an education. We know of but one exception, and that was Mr. Evans, whose case has already been mentioned. There existed no college in any of the middle states, where young men seeking the ministry, could obtain the requisite learning. Until this school was instituted, no young man could enter the Presbyterian ministry, without going to Scotland or New England for his education; and this amounted pretty nearly to closing the door against all candidates who were brought up in the Presbyterian church; for very few, in those days, could bear the expense of acquiring a liberal education, by going to any college or university, on this or the other side of the Atlantic. The church, therefore, had to depend for a supply of ministers on immigration from Scotland, Ireland, or New England. Most of those who came to settle in the Presbyterian church, came from Ireland; except that those presbyteries which bordered on New England, received a supply of ministers from that region. It must be

evident, at once, that this condition of the church was very unfavourable to her prosperity ; for often, those who came across the ocean, were not men of the best character. They were often mere adventurers, and sometimes had crossed the Atlantic to escape from the censure incurred by their misconduct ; and it was exceedingly difficult, in those days, to ascertain the true character of a foreigner, coming here as a minister of the gospel ; for though such men commonly exhibited ample testimonials from abroad, too often these were forged. Several instances of this very thing have occurred. And as the ministers who came in from New England were all brought up Congregationalists, and had habits and customs, not congenial with those of Scottish Presbyterians, their accession to the body had a tendency to produce confusion and strife. The sons of the pilgrims and the descendants of Scottish Presbyterians, though holding substantially the same creed, have never readily amalgamated into one uniform mass : but the habits and prejudices of each have been preserved, and kept the people distinct for several generations, though living contiguously to each other. There seemed, therefore, to be an urgent necessity for some seminary to be erected within the limits of the Presbyterian church, where young men might be educated for the ministry. It is indeed wonderful, that the synod had not paid earlier attention to this subject, as being essential to

the prosperity of the church. But as far as appears, no classical school had been erected in any part of the synod, until the Rev. William Tennent connected himself with the Presbyterian church, and set up a school at his own door, in Neshaminy. It is probable, that Mr. Gilbert Tennent was the first candidate licensed in the Presbyterian church, who was educated within its limits. And as he was thirteen or fourteen years of age, when his father arrived, it is probable, that his classical education was commenced before he left Ireland; though the principal part of his education must have been acquired here; and no doubt, under the paternal roof. And although we have connected Mr. G. Tennent with the Log College, it must be in the character of a teacher, rather than a student; for in the very year in which his father removed to Neshaminy, he was licensed to preach. This was the year 1726.

Though Gilbert Tennent had received no diploma from any college; yet he passed his trials before the mother presbytery of Philadelphia, with great credit to himself, and much to the satisfaction of the presbytery. It was now seen, that young men could be well prepared for the ministry at home, without going to distant colleges. And as Mr. William Tennent, the father, had been, as far as is known, the sole instructor of his son, who as soon as licensed, attracted public attention, and was seen to be an able preacher, the conclusion was easily drawn, that

he would be an excellent person to train up young men for the ministry. But though the thing appeared thus to many plain and pious people; others were apprehensive, that by educating young men in this way, the literary qualifications of candidates would necessarily be greatly diminished. The school, however, went on prosperously, and a number of young men, who had the ministry in view, resorted to the Log College, to pursue their education; and here they were not only taught the classics; but studied divinity also; so that this institution was a theological seminary, as well as a college. How many years they were occupied with these studies does not appear; but a number of persons educated in this school were licensed by the presbyteries, after undergoing such trials as were usually prescribed to candidates, in Scotland and Ireland. And some of them, as we shall see, became eminent in the church, and were much distinguished as powerful and evangelical preachers. Still the impression existed, and grew stronger, that this course of instruction was not sufficient. To men educated in the universities of Europe, furnished with so many professors, and other advantages, it seemed preposterous to suppose, that a man could acquire adequate learning for the ministry, in this little, paltry log-cabin; and instructed, principally, by one teacher. They began, therefore, in the synod, to talk of establishing a synodical school, and to express dissatisfaction

with the course of study in the *Log College*, as it was contemptuously called. None doubted of old Mr. Tennent's classical scholarship; but it was believed that his proficiency in the arts and sciences was by no means equal to his classical learning. And as young men were still entering the church from this school, the synod adopted a rule, that no presbytery should license any young man until he had passed an examination on his literary course, before a committee of synod. Two large committees, one for the northern part of the synod, and the other for the south, were appointed, before whom young men were to appear and submit to an examination. This rule gave great dissatisfaction to the Tennents and their friends; for they perceived, at once, that this rule was intended to bear on the students of the Log College, and they believed it to be a high-handed measure, entirely inconsistent with the rights of presbyteries, who, as they had the power of ordaining ministers, ought to possess the power of judging of their qualifications. And what rendered the measure more odious to them, they had just succeeded in getting a presbytery set off, in New Jersey, which included most of the friends of the Log College. Their object in getting this presbytery erected, as they confessed to Mr. Whitefield, was, that they might license such young men as they deemed properly qualified for the office; and, in their opinion, fervent piety was the first and prin-



cipal qualification; though they believed a classical education necessary; yet it seems that they lightly esteemed some parts of learning, which the other members of the synod thought requisite. And while they were blamed for being too lax in their demands of a knowledge of literature and science, they seriously charged the majority of the synod with neglecting to make a thorough examination into the piety of their candidates. And on several occasions, Mr. Gilbert Tennent brought this matter before the synod, and obtained from them some formal resolutions, in favour of inquiring carefully into the personal piety of the candidates. And when the order was passed, rendering it necessary for candidates to appear before a committee of the synod, Mr. Gilbert Tennent and his friends entered their protest against the regulation. But to be more exact in regard to this first measure, which divided the synod into two parties, it will be proper to observe, that the regulation adopted in the year 1738, was occasioned by an overture from the presbytery of Lewes, in which they say, "That this part of the world, where God has ordered our lot, labours under grievous disadvantage for want of the opportunities of universities, and professors skilled in the several branches of useful learning; and that many students from Europe, are especially cramped in prosecuting their studies; their parents removing to these colonies before they have an opportunity of attending the college, after

having spent some years at the grammar school; and that many persons, born in this country, groan under the same pressure, whose circumstances are not able to support them to spend a course of years in the European or New England colleges, which discourages much, and must be a detriment to our church, for we know that natural parts, however great and promising, for want of being well improved, must be marred in their usefulness, and cannot be so extensively serviceable to the public; and that want paves the way for ignorance, and this for a formidable train of sad consequences. To prevent this evil, it is humbly proposed, as a remedy, that every student, with approbation not pursuing the usual courses, in some of the New England or European colleges approved by public authority, shall, before he be encouraged by any presbytery for the sacred work of the ministry, apply himself to this synod, and that they appoint a committee of their members, yearly, whom they know to be well skilled in the several branches of philosophy, divinity, and the languages, to examine such students, in this place, and finding them well accomplished in these several parts of learning, shall allow them a public testimony from the synod, which, till better provision be made, will, in some measure, answer the design of taking a degree in college. And, for the encouragement of students, let this be done without putting them to further expenses than attend-

ing. And let it be an objection against none where they have studied, or what books; but let all encouragement be only according to merit, &c." The synod, by a great majority, approved the overture, and proceeded to appoint two committees, the one for the region north of Philadelphia, and the other for the country south of that city.

It does not appear that any dissent or protest was entered on the minutes at the time, but the next year, the presbytery of New Brunswick sent up a remonstrance. The paper containing the objections to the act of the synod of the preceeding year, is not on the records; but the synod upon hearing it, agreed to re-consider the subject, and after due deliberation, resolved to substitute the following, instead of the act complained of. "It being the first article in our excellent Directory for the examination of the candidates for the sacred ministry, that they be inquired of, what degrees they have taken in the university, &c. And it being oftentimes impracticable for us, in these remote parts of the earth, to obtain an answer to these questions, of those who propose themselves to examination, many of our candidates not having enjoyed the advantage of a university education, and it being our desire to come to the nearest conformity to the incomparable prescriptions of the Directory, that our circumstances will admit of, and after long deliberation of the most proper expedients to comply with the intentions of

the Directory, where we cannot exactly fulfil the letter of it: the synod agree and determine, that every person who proposes himself to trial, as a candidate for the ministry, and who has not a diploma, or the usual certificates from an European or New England university, shall be examined by the whole synod, or its commission, as to these preparatory studies, which we generally pass through at the college; and if they find him qualified, they shall give him a certificate, which shall be received by our respective presbyteries, as equivalent to a diploma, or certificate from the college, &c.” But, this form of the act was no more acceptable to the New Brunswick presbytery than the former; the next day, therefore, they entered a protest against the said act. This protest was signed by the four Tennents, Samuel Blair, and Eleazer Wales, ministers, and by four elders. The synod, it appears, were determined to bring the pupils of the Log College, under their own examination, before they would suffer any more of them to be received as members of the synod, or to preach as candidates in the churches. And the friends of this institution were exceedingly averse to having their young men examined by the synod; either, because they were conscious that they would be found defective in some of the branches usually pursued in the college course, or, because they were of opinion that the major part of the synod were prejudiced against this humble in-

stitution, and against all who were connected with it. Probably, both these considerations had their weight, in leading them to oppose so strenuously a measure, which to us seems reasonable and necessary, to guard the ministry against the intrusion of unqualified candidates. For, it appears, that this examination, by the synod, was not intended to interfere with the right of presbyteries to examine their candidates; but to be a substitute for a diploma, which the Directory seemed to require. For when a young man presented his certificate to a presbytery, if, upon examination, they were not satisfied, they could reject him notwithstanding his certificate.

But the fact was, that the New Brunswick presbytery had already committed themselves. At their very first meeting, in August 1738, they took on trial a certain Mr. Rowland, one of the scholars of the Log College, in direct violation of the act of the synod. And after the synod had re-considered the matter, and re-enacted the same thing, in different words, this presbytery proceeded with the trials of Mr. Rowland, and licensed him to preach the gospel. And, not long afterwards, ordained him. The synod refused to recognise Mr. Rowland as a member of their body; for, though they did not deny that by the act of the presbytery he was a real minister; yet, they alleged, that they had a right to determine who should and who should not become

members of their own body. Henceforth, the parties became much exasperated against each other. The friends of the Log College saw, that the act of the synod was directed against that institution, for there was no other school at that time, in the bounds of the synod, where young men were trained for the ministry. And this was not all. The act implied a reflection on all those who had before entered the ministry from this school. And the majority of synod were grievously offended, that one of their presbyteries, and one too just created, should so disregard the authority of the supreme judicatory of the church, as to act in open defiance of an act formed after much discussion and deliberation, in the synod,

One thing necessary to be known, in order to form an impartial judgment respecting the dispute which arose in the synod, but which cannot at this distance of time be accurately ascertained, is, what sort of education was actually received at this famous institution. Was it as solid and thorough as could be obtained within the limits of the Presbyterian church? If so, even if compared with that which was given in the universities of Europe, it was in some parts defective, this was no good reason why the institution should be frowned upon, by the synod. Instead of this, they ought to have recognised and cherished it, and should have endeavoured to raise it higher, and to enlarge its advantages. As

far as we have observed, this school, although already it had produced a number of distinguished preachers, is never once mentioned in the minutes of the synod; except in their letter to President Clapp, of which further notice will be taken. It is true, that most of the members of synod had enjoyed the advantages of an university education, in Europe or New England; and it cannot be supposed that equal advantages could be had in the little Log Cabin at Neshaminy. But it is a well known fact, that men's eminence in learning, does not always correspond with the privileges enjoyed. If we compare Gilbert Tennent, Samuel Blair, Samuel Finley, William Tennent, jr., and John Blair, with an equal number of their opposers, they certainly will not suffer in public opinion, by the comparison. And one advantage they possessed who were educated in the Log College, that the spirit of piety seems to have been nourished in that institution. All, as far as we can learn, who proceeded from this school, were men of sound orthodoxy, evangelical spirit, glowing zeal, and in labours very abundant. They had, we have reason to believe, the teaching of the Holy Spirit; and without the advantages which others enjoyed, they became "burning and shining lights." They were the friends and promoters of revivals of religion, which their censurers bitterly opposed. Still, we do not justify their irregular and insubordinate acts. Gil-

bert Tennent and Samuel Blair were men of invincible firmness—a firmness, bordering on obstinacy. They were the leaders in this warfare. They saw a great harvest before them, and the Lord seemed to attend their labours every where with a blessing, and they were led to think, that mere forms of order, and regulations of ecclesiastical bodies were of trivial importance, compared with the advancement of the Redemer's kingdom, and the salvation of souls. They felt, as did the apostles, and first reformers, that they were called to go every where preaching the gospel, without regard to prescribed limits of presbyteries or congregations; especially, as they observed, that many pastors neglected to inculcate on their hearers, the necessity of a change of heart, and that the people were as really perishing for lack of knowledge, as they were under Jewish or Popish instructors. They felt themselves bound, therefore, to preach far and wide, wherever the people would hear them; and although there was irregularity in this, judging by human and ecclesiastical rules; yet I doubt not, that in the main, their zealous and exhausting labours have met with a large reward. Weak enthusiasts, or fierce fanatics may abuse the principle on which they acted; but the same thing occurred at the time of the blessed reformation from popery. We must not neglect to do all the good we can because some may pervert our example, to sanction their own lawless proceedings.



I cannot express how much the Presbyterian church, in these United States, is indebted to the labours of this very corps, who studied successfully the sacred oracles in the LOG COLLEGE; or more probably, under the beautiful groves which shaded the banks of the Neshaminy. There they studied, and there they prayed.

But I do not mean to justify all that was done by these zealous men. As was admitted before, they did not act towards their brethren in the ministry, with brotherly affection, and Christian meekness. Gilbert Tennent indulged himself in very unwarrantable language in speaking of men clothed with the same office as himself, and members of the same synod. Nothing could have justified his treatment of them, unless he had been inspired to know that they were a set of hypocrites, or, unless their lives had been wicked, or their faith heretical; none of which things were alleged against them.

But while it is admitted, that Mr. Gilbert Tennent was a principal instrument in provoking a majority of the synod to excise the New Brunswick presbytery, it does not appear, that either he, or his friends wished to bring about a separation in the church. Their object was to produce a reformation, if possible, among the ministers, and in the churches under the care of the synod; though it must be acknowledged, that their zeal led them to make use of unjustifiable means to accomplish the desired end.

It need not, therefore, be a matter of surprize, that Gilbert Tennent was among the first to seek a reconciliation and re-union of the parties. To promote this object, he wrote and published a pamphlet, entitled, "THE PACIFICATOR," in which he reasons strongly in favour of peace and union. Between the contending parties, there existed, really, no difference on doctrinal points; except that the New Side were blamed for dwelling too much on the terrors of the law, and insisting too strongly on the necessity of legal conviction for sin. And on church government there was scarcely a shade of difference. The members of the New Brunswick presbytery were disposed to consider presbyteries, as the origin of ecclesiastical power; while the majority of the synod probably thought, that all the power of the church was concentrated in the synod, then the supreme judicatory. And the same difference of opinion still exists in the Presbyterian Church, for while some are of opinion, that synods and General Assemblies possess limited powers, defined by the constitution of the church, and that all ecclesiastical power emanates from the presbyteries, which they consider the *essential* body in our church government; there are others, who consider the synod in no other light than a larger presbytery; and the General Assembly, as it were, a universal presbytery, possessing all the powers of the inferior judicatories. Whichever of these be the more correct theory of ou

Presbyterian church government, the presbytery of New Brunswick has always been firm in maintaining the rights of presbyteries against the encroachments of the higher judicatories. And, certainly, our higher judicatories were constituted by the junction of presbyteries. In Scotland, the General Assembly existed before there were either presbyteries or synods, and all church power descended from that body; but not so with us, where presbyteries first existed, of which the higher judicatories were formed.

## CHAPTER V.

Mr. Gilbert Tennent removes to Philadelphia to be the pastor of the Second Presbyterian church.—Mission to Great Britain for the College of New Jersey—Exertions to get a commodious church erected—His Sickness and Death—Eulogy on his character—His Publications.

THE preaching of Mr. Whitefield, in Philadelphia, was the means of the conversion of many souls. A number of these, with others who agreed with them in sentiment, and were admirers of Mr. Whitefield's preaching, and friends of the revival, had formed a new Presbyterian congregation, in that city. And being desirous to obtain a pastor of like views and sentiments with themselves, and one possessed of talents and eloquence suited to such a station, turned their eyes upon the Rev. Gilbert Tennent. Their call to him was presented in May, 1743, just two years after the rupture of the synod, which took place, in the same city. Mr. Tennent did not hesitate to accept this call, as he saw that the sphere of his influence would be greatly enlarged. He was, therefore, regularly released from his pastoral charge in New Brunswick, where he had preached for sixteen years. In the important station, on which he now entered, he continued to exercise his

ministry with great fidelity and diligence, for twenty years. During this whole period, comprehending more than one half of his ministerial life, he seems to have lived in peace with all men. The fiery edge of his zeal had worn off, and he had found by experience, that neither people nor ministers were ever rendered better by vituperative attacks from the pulpit, or the press. During the whole of the latter part of his life, Mr. Gilbert Tennent, as far as has come to our knowledge, never had any controversy with any of his brethren, but seems to have conducted himself in a friendly, and peaceable manner, toward all men. From this it would seem, that he was not of a quarrelsome or litigious spirit. And it may hence be fairly inferred, that the warm controversies in which he engaged with his brethren of the synod of Philadelphia, were entered into conscientiously, and on principle. And we have no doubt, that in this whole concern, he was, at the time, fully persuaded, that he was doing God service, and performing a painful duty toward his opposing brethren, which he could not with a good conscience omit. But as was before said, we are of opinion that he was mistaken and proceeded on an erroneous principle; and there is good reason to think, that he was of the same opinion himself, in this latter part of his life.

The only interruption of his pastoral labours, in Philadelphia, was occasioned by a mission to Great

Britain, in conjunction with the Rev. Samuel Davies, of Virginia, for the College of New Jersey. At the request of the Trustees of New Jersey College, the Synod of New York appointed these two gentlemen, to cross the Atlantic, to solicit funds for the College. The mission was, in a good degree, successful; but of this our only account is found in the diary of the Rev. Mr. Davies. It does not appear, that Mr. Tennent ever kept any journal, or diary, at home or abroad. From Mr. Davies's journal we learn, that he and Mr. Tennent went on board a vessel bound for London, Nov. 17, 1753, and on the next day, set sail. They arrived in London, on the 25th of December, and were well received. We are unable to give any account of Mr. Tennent's preaching and its effects on the people whom he addressed, for he and Mr. Davies seem to have been separated from each other, for the most part. But in regard to the direct object of their mission, he says, under date of April 7, 1754, "We have had 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 on our arrival here, we could not raise our hopes above £300, but we have already got about £1200. Our friends in America cannot hear the news with the same surprise, as they do not know the difficulties we have had to encounter with; but to me it ap-

pears the most signal interposition of Providence, I ever saw.”

While Mr. Gilbert Tennent was in Great Britain, a friend to the conversion of the Indians, put into his hands, two hundred pounds sterling, to be made use of by the synod of New York, in sending missionaries to these heathen tribes. This seems to have excited, for a time, a considerable missionary spirit among the ministers in connexion with this synod. Several pastors, who had charges, went on temporary missions; and Mr. John Brainerd devoted himself wholly to the work, among the tribes who reside in New Jersey.

John Brainerd was the brother of David, whose devoted missionary life is so well known, and has had so powerful an effect in exciting the missionary spirit. His brother succeeded him, supported by the same society in Scotland, which had supported himself. But after some time he relinquished the missionary work and accepted a pastoral charge in the town of Newark, New Jersey. The contribution from Scotland was now withdrawn, as there was no missionary among the Indians. But when Mr. Tennent returned with the aforementioned sum, appropriated to this object, the synod of New York, renewed their missionary enterprise: and as the very name of Brainerd was precious to the Indians of New Jersey, Mr. John Brainerd by the advice of the synod, resigned his charge and returned to the Indians.

“The Rev. Messrs. Tennent and Davies, when in Great Britain, received from various persons, in London, the sum of £298 17s. ‘for the education of such youth for the ministry of the gospel, in the College of New Jersey, as are unable to defray the expenses of their education; who appear upon proper examination to be of promising genius, Calvinistic principles, and in the judgment of charity, experimentally acquainted with the work of saving grace, and to have distinguished zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of men.’ The annual interest of the aforesaid sum only was to be appropriated. To this sum was added by another donor, £10 7s. 6d., making the whole of this charitable fund to be £307 4s. 6d.

“The money aforesaid was, by Messrs. Tennent and Davies put into the hands of the Trustees of New Jersey College, to be applied to the education of such youth, of the character above mentioned, as shall be examined and approved by the synod of New York, (or by what name soever, that body of men may be hereafter called) and by them recommended to the trustees of said college, and to be divided among such youths, in proportion as said synod shall think fit.” To the above sums, fifty pounds sterling were added, by an individual, making the whole sum £357 4s. 6d.\*

\* This fund was nearly all lost during the revolutionary war.



A report has attained some currency, that Mr. Tennent and Mr. Davies did not perfectly harmonize, when on this mission; but though it is possible that some coolness may have arisen between these eminent ministers, there is not any written document where we have seen the least hint of any difference. And from the suavity of Mr. Davies's disposition, and the perfect politeness of his manners, we cannot think that there is any foundation for the report. The men, it is true, in natural disposition, were not altogether congenial; for while the manners of one were polished and calculated to please, it is probable, those of the other were rough, blunt, and not at all courtly. We shall therefore, dismiss this report as one of the thousands which have no probable foundation. No doubt, Mr. Davies carried off the palm, as to popularity, in London, and other places; and if Mr. Tennent was at all susceptible of the feelings of envy, which are very natural to the human heart, and the remains of which are often found lurking in the hearts of ministers, as well as others, he might have felt badly in finding himself eclipsed by a much younger man. But as was said, we have no right to charge him with any such feeling, and we are confident, that Mr. Davies's treatment of him, must have been uniformly respectful and affectionate; for it was so to everybody.

After Mr. Tennent's settlement in Philadelphia, he exerted himself with great energy, and perse-

verance, to get a good house of worship erected for the congregation which he served. Indeed, at that time, the building of such an edifice as that which by his indefatigable exertions was erected at the northeast corner, at the intersection of Mulberry and Third streets, for the second Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, was a great work. Very few of the Presbyterian denomination then, possessed much wealth. Mr. Tennent not only obtained nearly all the subscriptions for the building, but actually superintended the work, in person, and assiduously watched over it, from its commencement to its completion. After some time, the congregation added a handsome steeple to the building.

Such men as Mr. Gilbert Tennent always appear greatest in times of excitement, and stirring activity. It may well be doubted, whether his preaching was as awakening and impressive, after his removal to Philadelphia, as it was before. Some change in his views and feelings, as to the best method of promoting religion had taken place, it would be very natural to suppose. The warmth of his religious feelings had in some measure cooled, and the violence of his zeal had, by time and experience, been mitigated. From this time he seems to have gone along as quietly as other ministers around him. We thus judge, because we have never heard of any remarkable effects of his preaching, after his settlement in Philadelphia. There is another thing which

ought not to be overlooked. In a great city, the hearers are more fastidious than in the country, and will not tolerate so much liberty of digression, and so frequent departures from good taste and correct composition. Before Mr. Gilbert Tennent went to Philadelphia, though, doubtless, he studied his sermons carefully, and digested his matter under a sufficient variety of heads, yet he preached without having written his discourses, and like all ardent preachers, gave himself great indulgence, in pursuing any new train of ideas which was presented during the time of preaching. But when settled in a great city, he thought it necessary, for the sake of correctness, to write his sermons, and read them from the pulpit. This circumstance alone, probably, produced a great alteration in his mode of preaching. Many men who preach admirably when free to follow the thoughts which they have arranged, or to pursue such as spring up at the time, when confined to a discourse written in the study, appear to be very much cramped, and lose much of their vivacity and natural eloquence. The writer once conversed with a plain and pious man, who in early life being apprenticed to a trade in Philadelphia, attended Mr. Tennent's ministry. We asked him respecting his manner of preaching. He answered simply, "that Mr. Tennent was never worth any thing after he came to Philadelphia;" "for," said he, "he took to, reading his sermons, and lost all his animation."

This testimony came from a class not sufficiently considered, when the best mode of preaching is under consideration. Our reference is too much to the taste of men of cultivated minds, who form but a small part of any congregation; and even these, when pious, are better pleased with blundering simplicity joined with animation, than with cold accuracy, when the most solemn truths are delivered without emotion.

Mr. Tennent, however, though he probably lost a considerable portion of his early vehemence and impressiveness; yet composed discourses, sound and instructive. This will appear more clearly when we come to speak of his writings.

The interest of Mr. Gilbert Tennent in revivals, and his joy at the conversion of sinners, continued unabated. ..For in March 1757, an extraordinary revival of religion occurred in the New Jersey college, concerning which he thus speaks in the preface to one of his volumes of sermons: "In March last, I received a letter from the College of New Jersey, informing me of an extraordinary appearance of the Divine power and presence there, and requesting I would come and see. With this kind motion I gladly complied; and having been there some time, had all the evidence of the aforesaid report, which could be in reason desired." He then inserts a letter from his brother William, giving a particular account of the nature and progress of the work; which was ad-

dressed to the Rev. Dr. Finley, and the autograph of which the writer has seen. This letter shall be given entire, when we come to give an account of the life of the Rev. William Tennent, jr.

For about three years before his death, Mr. Tennent became very infirm; so that he was unable to go through the duties which devolved upon him as the pastor of a large city congregation. In December 1762, the congregation got leave to present a call to the Rev. George Duffield, D. D., then of Carlisle, to be a co-pastor with Mr. Tennent. This call Dr. Duffield declined to accept; and the congregation remained without another pastor, until Mr. Tennent's death; which event occurred in the year 1764, in the sixty-second year of his age.

Of the circumstances of his death, Dr. Finley, in his funeral sermon, says but little. In the general, he informs us, that, "as he lived to the Lord, so death was his unspeakable gain. And his being conscious of it made him ardently wish for the pleasing hour, when he should enter into the joy of his Lord." . . . "He had an habitual unshaken assurance of his interest in redeeming love, for the space of more than forty years; but eight days before his death, he got a more clear and affecting sense of it still. And though he lamented that he had done so little for God, and that his life had been comparatively unprofitable; yet he triumphed in the grace of Jesus Christ, who had pardoned all his sins; and

said his assurance of salvation was built on the scriptures, and was more sure than the sun and moon.”

His congregation placed a monumental stone over his remains, in the middle aisle of the church in which he had so long preached. The inscription on this stone was written by his friend Dr. Finley, in classic Latin. When this church was remodelled, his remains and those of Dr. Finley also, were removed to the public cemetery of the Second Presbyterian Church, between Mulberry and Cherry streets.

After Mr. Tennent's death, there was an eulogy on his character, published in Philadelphia, by a young gentleman of that city, from which some extracts will be made, as serving to show in what estimation he was held in the place where he spent more than twenty years of his life. We expect, in discourses of this kind, some exaggeration; but as this eulogy was addressed to the public, who were well acquainted with the person eulogized, it must have a general foundation of truth; and the reader, by making an allowance for the strong expressions of the partial writer, may form a pretty correct opinion of the true character of the person celebrated.

After an introduction, this writer goes on to say: “He whose memory these pages are intended to celebrate, was distinguished in a very remarkable manner, by his eminent endowments of mind; a love of learning that nothing could abate; an intense appli-

cation, that no recreations could divert. And his great proficiency in the several branches of literature, while the powers of his soul were but just opening, raised the expectations of all that knew him. And what recommended these amiable accomplishments was, that they were early adorned with the charms of Divine grace. It was his study to remember his Creator in the days of his youth. And as he often inculcated the necessity and manifold advantages of early piety, so he might with propriety have added his own experience of them, as an inducement to the votaries of gayety and pleasure to embrace the pleasures that flow from true religion. He had no sooner experienced what it was to pass from death unto life, and from a state of nature to a state of grace, than he formed a resolution of spending his time, his talents, and his all, in the service of God, in his sanctuary; previously to the accomplishment of which design, he devoted himself wholly to the study of the sacred scriptures, and his own heart, and not merely to a dry system of speculative notions. He was too sensible of the importance of that arduous office, to rush into it without suitable preparation. He knew too well the worth of precious immortal souls to recommend any other foundation for the hopes of their future happiness, than what he was well assured would stand the test of beating rains and descending showers. . . . The manner in which he usually preached, and the indif-

ference with which he treated all secular advantages, abundantly evinced, that neither a love of popular applause, nor a desire of promoting his own affluence and ease, could have been any inducement to him to assume the holy function. But, on the contrary, an ardent love to God, and a desire to advance his glory in the world, by proclaiming pardon and reconciliation through the atoning blood of his crucified Son, were his only motives for the choice of that noble, disinterested profession. As he entered into the ministry in the prime of life, when his bodily constitution was in its full vigour, he devoted his juvenile strength and ardour of mind to the service of the church, at a time when their exertion was of the greatest importance. Few that knew Mr. Tennent in that season of life, can speak of him without some pleasing emotions. The good old puritan spirit that had for a series of years been asleep, seemed to revive and blaze forth in him with a genuine lustre. He was, indeed, like the harbinger of his Master, 'a burning and a shining light,' in the church. His undissembled piety, his fervent zeal, his pungency of address, and his indefatigable assiduity in the performance of every ministerial duty, were remarkably eminent. He might truly be styled a 'Boanerges.' As he knew the composition and make of the human heart; so he knew how to speak to it; and all his discourses were aimed at the fountain of impurity and sin. He knew that a



reformation that did not take its rise in the heart, could not be of long continuance, or pleasing in the sight of God; and, therefore, he always strove to convince his hearers, that a thorough renovation of it was necessary to salvation.”

“As his presence was venerable, and his voice commanding, so his very appearance in the pulpit, filled the minds of his hearers with a kind of religious awe. . . . The thunderings and mighty vociferations of Mount Sinai seemed to roar from the sacred desk, when he denounced the wrath of God against him that transgressed but once God’s law, which he knew to be spiritual, and that nothing but a perfect obedience—which man in his fallen state is unable to perform—would satisfy its demands. Hence, he made it his constant practice to sound the alarm of God’s curse abiding on the whole human race; and that to doom man to everlasting misery would be highly consistent with the mercy and justice of JEHOVAH. But while he enforced the truth of inspiration, ‘that in Adam all die,’ he was no less warm in proclaiming, ‘that in Christ all shall be made alive.’ And as he knew how to wound, so he knew how to pour the oil of consolation on the bleeding conscience. The blood of Jesus, that sacred healing balm, was his grand *catholicon* for sin-sick souls. This only was what he recommended as sufficient to procure ease to the trembling sinner; with the love of God to man, in pouring so much Deity on guilty dust—in

sending his darling Son into the world, to redeem a race of rebel sinners, by bearing on the accursed tree, the heavy punishment due to man's enormous crimes, in order to translate him to the regions of eternal joy.

“The beginning of his ministry was employed in long and tedious itinerations. And wherever he had a prospect of doing good, however remote the place might be from his friends, and however repugnant to his own ease, he needed no other inducement, but cheerfully undertook the pleasing task.

“Fatigues and toils from which even worldly men, in the prosecution of an earthly good shrink back, he joyfully engaged in; and with a degree of perseverance peculiar to himself, bravely overcame those difficulties, which to some minds appeared insurmountable. . . . It pleased God, in a very gracious manner, to crown his labours with success. The energy of the divine Spirit accompanied his ministrations. Wherever he went the kingdom of Satan trembled; the desolate and solitary places bloomed like a rose before him; and he became the happy instrument of turning many from the error of their ways to the living God.

“His knowledge in divinity, in which he made great proficiency, was entirely derived from the Bible; and whatever truth it enforced as duty, he inculcated; his arguments for the one, and motives

for the other, were all taken from those inspired pages, which he prized above all human writings, and valued as the charter by which he possessed the hope, and ere long expected the full enjoyment of a blessed eternity.

“Sensible how much man is dependent upon God for every blessing he enjoys, and that the best way to keep the flame of devotion alive in his own soul, was to maintain a constant intercourse with heaven, he made PRAYER his chief and most delightful employment. This was the very breath of his soul. . . . His manner of praying was such as evidenced it to be not the mere language of the passions, but a rational, solemn, and animated address to the Great Father of spirits.

“After having laboured for many years, with much success, in New Brunswick, where he was settled; by the advice of his brethren, he accepted an urgent call from the Second Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, while the society was in its infant state; and continued to exercise his pastoral function there for upwards of twenty years, with a degree of watchfulness and fidelity, scarcely to be paralleled. He considered himself as the shepherd of his flock, and made it his practice to lead them to the green pastures and living fountains of salvation, with the care of one that knew he must render an account at the last day. Nay, he considered himself the father of his people, and as his beloved children he coun-

elled, warned and reproved them, with all the tenderness and solicitude of a father's heart. He was, indeed, a faithful watchman, that never failed to give warning of impending danger. The rich and the poor, the black and white had equally free access to his person, and ever found him ready to hear their complaints and solve their doubts."

"What he preached in the pulpit, his life preached out of it. His disposition—naturally calm—was still more sweetened with that holy temper which the gospel of Christ inspires. A genuine serenity and cheerfulness dwelt upon his countenance, which he never failed to diffuse on all around him. He was charitable to the poor; kind to all men; a lover of all that loved the Lord Jesus, whatever mode of worship they professed; and much beloved in all the tender endearments of domestic life, as a husband, a father, a master, and a friend.

"There is nothing in this world, methinks, more grand or illustrious, than the old age of a man who has devoted his whole time, and spent his whole life in promoting the spiritual interests of his fellow creatures. . . . The review of his life fills his soul with a pleasure, which none but such as experience it can conceive. Whilst he sees no ill-spent time to sting his conscience with remorse, nor feels any attachment to the transitory things of this world, he beholds a calm haven prepared for his repose, where the storms and billows of affliction can reach him no more. . . .

In this light should we contemplate Mr. Tennent. His soul, like the setting sun, broke through the clouds of infirmity. There was a dignity and grandeur in his old age. Wisdom bloomed upon his silver locks; and while the cold hand of time snowed upon his locks, his heart glowed with redoubled love for the church. . . . Nor more dreadful to the man of ease in his possessions is the approach of the king of terrors, than he was welcome to this eminent servant of God. Every symptom of his approaching dissolution, instead of filling his soul with alarms, rather filled him with comfort, and made him impatiently long for the kind stroke that should dismiss his soul.' After having borne a long and tedious illness with the most invincible fortitude and resignation, the friendly messenger at last, came with the joyful summons. . . . And with full confidence in the merits and atonement of his dear Redeemer, he gently fell asleep.

The following is the most accurate list of Mr. Gilbert Tennent's works, which the author has been able to collect.

1. In the year 1735, Mr. Tennent published his "SOLEMN WARNING TO THE SECURE WORLD, From the God of Terrible Majesty; or, the Presumptuous Sinner Detected, his Pleas Considered, and his Doom Displayed." This volume was printed in Boston.

2. SERMONS ON SACRAMENTAL OCCASIONS, *by Divers Authors*. A small duodecimo volume.—

The sermons are all by Mr. Gilbert Tennent, except two ; one, by his brother William, and the other, by the Rev. Samuel Blair. It would seem, that at the time when this volume was published, no books were printed either in New York or Philadelphia ; for the manuscript was sent to Boston, and printed there, in the year 1739.

3. Two sermons of the Rev. John Tennent, with a Preface, containing a memoir of him, to which is added, "An Expostulatory Address to Saints and Sinners," by Gilbert Tennent. Printed in Boston, in the year 1735.

4. His next Publication was, probably, his famous "NOTTINGHAM SERMON," in which he lashed his brethren of the synod so severely, that it had much influence in leading to the separation which soon followed.

5. "THE EXAMINER EXAMINED" was written in the year 1740, and is an answer to a pamphlet written against him, by an anonymous author, after his visit to New England.

6. "THE PACIFICATOR," a large pamphlet, the object of which was to bring about a re-union of the dissentient parties, in the Presbyterian church.

7. In the year 1744, Mr. G. Tennent published, in Philadelphia, a small quarto volume of sermons, twenty-three in number. These Discourses appear to have been the commencement of a body of Divinity. The subjects treated are, "The Chief End of

Man—The Divine Authority of the Sacred Scriptures—The Being and Attributes of God, and the Trinity.” Preached in Philadelphia, in 1743.

8. In the year 1749, Mr. G. Tennent, published two sermons, preached at Burlington, N. J., On a day of Public Fasting. They are dedicated to Governor Belcher. The Texts are Matt. vi. 16, 17, 18, and Jonah iii. 8.

9. In 1758, Mr. Gilbert Tennent published a volume of sermons, entitled, “SERMONS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS, ADAPTED TO THE PERILOUS STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION,” Lately Preached in Philadelphia, by Gilbert Tennent, A. M.

We do not know where Mr. Tennent obtained his degree of Master of Arts. It would be natural to suppose that it was conferred by the Trustees of the College of New Jersey; but his name is not on the catalogue; while we find there the names of some of his contemporaries, who received honorary degrees. As he was a Trustee of New Jersey college, it is probable that this honour was conferred on him by Yale or Harvard, or possibly, from one of the Scotch universities.

10. In 1756, Mr. Tennent published a Funeral sermon, occasioned by the death of Captain William Grant. Preached in Philadelphia.

11. The last Publication of Mr. G. Tennent, was “A SERMON ON THE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS ZEAL. ITS EXCELLENCY AND IMPORTANCE OPENED AND

URGED." Preached in Philadelphia, Jan. 27, 1760.

The style of these several publications is very diverse; as they were composed at different periods of Mr. Tennent's life, on different subjects, and in different circumstances. In all his writings perspicuity and force are manifest characteristics of his style; but there is a great want of simplicity and ease. Throughout the whole, the doctrines inculcated are rigidly orthodox, according to the Westminster Confession. In his didactic discourses, he shows himself not only to be a profound thinker, but a well-read theologian; and often quotes the standard Latin writers of systematic theology, as one who had been accustomed to read them. While he manifests an ardent zeal in defence of the 'doctrines of grace,' he never loses sight of the importance of experimental religion and practical godliness. In conformity with the custom of the age, he too much abounds in divisions and subdivisions; and is too fond of technical words and phrases. His practical discourses, however, are often both pungent and searching.

It is somewhat remarkable, that while so many old authors have been republished, in our day, none of the writings of Gilbert Tennent have ever passed to a second edition. The author is disposed to make a selection from his works, if he had encouragement, that we might not only have a sketch of the lives of the divines of the Log College, but a specimen of their theology.



## CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Gilbert Tennent's letter to the Rev. Mr. Prince, containing many interesting particulars of the state of religion in New Brunswick, and vicinity; and also in Philadelphia, and various other places.

THE preceding memoir of Gilbert Tennent was drawn up before the writer met with the following letter from his own pen, addressed to the Rev. Mr. Prince of Boston, and published in his "Christian History," dated August 24, 1744, soon after Mr. Tennent had removed to Philadelphia. This letter sheds a satisfactory light on several parts of Mr. Tennent's life, which all other accounts leave in obscurity, as for example, the success of his ministry in New Brunswick, while the pastor of that church; and also in Staten Island, where he had a congregation, to which his labours appear to have been blessed. It is a sad evidence of the retrograde march of Presbyterianism in some parts of our country, that after the lapse of a complete century, there is not a vestige of a Presbyterian congregation in that Island; nor has there been, within the memory of any person living.

Such parts of Mr. Tennent's letter as have no bearing on his own life, have been omitted, but we have retained much the larger part, and in his own language.

EXTRACTS from the Letter of the Rev. Gilbert Tennent, to the Rev. Mr. Prince, of Boston, published in the Christian History, of the latter.

“ I am glad it pleased the sovereign God to make my poor labours of any service among you. I desire ever to bless his name for that undeserved mercy. I am thankful for the CHRISTIAN HISTORY, and well pleased with the design and management of the work. I hope it will be a means in God’s hand of conveying with honour to posterity, a *memorial* of the late blessed revival of religion, which has been so virulently opposed by many.” Here he introduces a long extract from a public attestation to the reality of the work of grace, in the late revival, which was prefixed to Mr. Dickinson’s “DISPLAY OF SPECIAL GRACE.” This public testimony was subscribed by Gilbert Tennent, William Tennent, Samuel Blair, Richard Treat, Samuel Finley, and John Blair. Some parts of this paper, will not be out of place here, as, no doubt, it was drawn up by Gilbert Tennent.

“ If any should inquire, what we mean by the work of God, we think the judicious author of the following dialogue (Mr. Dickinson) has given a plain and pertinent answer, to which we give our approbation. ‘ A work of conviction and conversion spread not long since in many places of these provinces, with such power and progress, as even silenced for a time the most malignant opposers. They were either

afraid or ashamed openly to contradict such astonishing displays of the divine Almightyness, in alarming multitudes of secure sinners out of their fatal stupor, and exciting in them the utmost solicitude about the everlasting concerns of their souls; many of whom gave us a rational and scriptural account of their distress, and afterwards of their deliverance from it, agreeable to the method of the gospel of Christ. Their comforts as well as their sorrows appeared, by all the evidence we can have of such things, to be agreeable to scripture and reason. . . .

“It is shocking to think that any should dare to oppose a work attended with such commanding evidence as has been among us. We would beseech all such solemnly to answer the following paragraph of the Rev. Mr. Robe, minister of the gospel in Kilsyth, Scotland, in his preface to his “NARRATIVE,” which is as follows: ‘I seriously beg of any who are prejudiced against this dispensation of God’s extraordinary grace, and look upon it as a delusion, that they will show themselves so charitable, as to direct me and other ministers, what we shall answer distressed persons of all ages, who come to us crying bitterly that they are undone, because of unbelief and other sins—‘What shall we do to be saved?’ And as a young girl about twelve, who had been in distress for some time called upon me in the house where I was, and asked me with great sedateness, ‘What shall I do to get CHRIST?’ shall we tell them

that they are not Christless, and are not unconverted, when we evidently see many of them to be such? Shall we tell them that their fears of the wrath of God is all but delusion, and that it is no such a dreadful thing that they need to be much afraid of it? Shall we tell persons lamenting their cursing and swearing, Sabbath-breaking, and other immoralities, that it is the devil that now makes them see these evils to be offensive to God, and destructive to their souls? Shall we tell them, who, under the greatest uneasiness, inquire of us what they shall do to get an interest and faith in Jesus Christ, that Satan is deluding them, when they have, or show any concern this way? In fine, shall we pray, and recommend it to them to pray to God, to deliver them from such delusions? It would be worse than devilish to treat the Lord's sighing and groaning prisoners at this rate; and yet such treatment is a natural consequence of reckoning this the work of the devil, and a delusion.'

“I may add, that both our presbyteries of New Brunswick and Newcastle, have, in their DECLARATION of May 26, 1743, printed at Philadelphia, manifested their cordial concurrence with the PROTESTATION of the presbytery of New York, in which are these words, viz. : ‘ We protest against all those passages which have been published in these parts which seem to reflect on the work of divine power and grace, which has been carrying on in so wonder

ful a manner in many of our congregations; and declare to all the world, that we look upon it to be the indispensable duty of all our ministers, to encourage that glorious work, with their most faithful and diligent endeavours.’”

This public PROTESTATION was signed by Jonathan Dickinson, Ebenezer Pemberton, Daniel Elmore, Silas Leonard, John Pierson, Simon Horton, and Azariah Horton, ministers; and by Nathaniel Hazard, Timothy Whitehead, and David Whitehead, elders. Now, the concurrence of the presbyteries of New Brunswick, and Newcastle, with the aforesaid Protest, is expressed in the following words, in the 5th page of their Declaration: “With this Protestation of our reverend and other brethren, we heartily agree.” And in the 13th page, they declare, “that they could not come into a state of settled constant communion with such as had protested against them, until they received competent satisfaction; especially concerning their opposition to, and reflections upon the work of God’s grace, and success of the gospel in the land.

“I trust I may say to the glory of God’s grace, that it pleased the most high God to let me see considerable success, in the places where I laboured staidly, many years before I came hither.

“The labours of the Rev. Mr. Frelinghuysen, a Dutch Calvinist minister, were much blessed to the people of New Brunswick and places adjacent; es-

pecially, about the time of his coming among them, which was about twenty-four years ago.

“ When I came there, which was about seven years after, I had the pleasure of seeing much of the fruits of his ministry : divers of his hearers with whom I had the opportunity of conversing, appeared to be converted persons, by their soundness in principle, Christian experience, and pious practice ; and these persons declared, that the ministrations of the aforesaid gentleman were the means thereof. This, together with a kind letter which he sent me, respecting the dividing the word aright, and giving to every man his portion in due season, through the divine blessing, excited me to greater earnestness in ministerial labours. I began to be very much distressed about my want of success ; for I know not for half a year or more after I came to New Brunswick, that any one was converted by my labours ; although several persons were at times affected transiently. “ It pleased God, about that time, to afflict me with sickness, by which I had affecting views of eternity. I was then exceedingly grieved I had done so little for God, and was very desirous to live one half year more, if it was his will, that I might stand upon the stage of the world, as it were, and plead more faithfully for his cause, and take more earnest pains for the salvation of souls. The secure state of the world appeared to me in a very affecting light ; and one thing among others, pressed me

sore, that I had spent so much time in conversing about trifles, which might have been spent in examining people's states, and persuading them to turn unto God. I therefore prayed to God that he would be pleased to give me one half year more, and I was determined to promote his kingdom with all my might, and at all adventures. This petition God was pleased to grant manifold, and to enable me to keep my resolution in some measure.

“After I was raised up to health, I examined many about the grounds of their hope of salvation, which I found in most to be nothing but as the sand. With such I was enabled to deal faithfully and earnestly, in warning them of their danger, and urging them to seek converting grace. By this method many were awakened out of their security, and of these, divers were to all appearance effectually converted; but some that I spoke plainly to were prejudiced. And here I would have it observed, that as soon as an effectual door was opened, I found many adversaries, and my character was covered with unjust reproaches, which through divine goodness did not discourage me in my work. I did then preach much on original sin, repentance, the nature and necessity of conversion, in a close, examinatory, and distinguishing way: labouring, in the mean time, to sound the trumpet of God's judgments, and alarm the secure by the terrors of the Lord, as well as to affect them with other topics of persuasion: which

method was sealed by the Holy Spirit, in the conviction and conversion of a considerable number of persons, at various times, and in different places, in that part of the country, as appeared by their acquaintance with experimental religion, and good conversation.

“I may further observe, that frequently at sacramental seasons, in New Brunswick, there have been signal displays of the divine power and presence. Divers have been convinced of sin, by the sermons there preached, some converted, and many much affected with the love of God in JESUS CHRIST. O the sweet meltings that I have seen on such occasions, among many ! New Brunswick did then look like a field the Lord had blessed. It was like a little Jerusalem, to which the scattered tribes with eager haste repaired at sacramental solemnities ; and there they fed on the fatness of God’s house, and drank of the rivers of his pleasures. But alas ! the scene is now altered !

“ While I lived in the place aforesaid, I do not remember, that there was any great ingathering of souls at any one time ; but, through mercy, there were frequently gleanings of a few here and there, which in the whole were a considerable number. But having never taken a written account of them I cannot offer any precise conjecture at their number, and shall therefore, leave it to be determined at the judgment-day. But at Staten Island, one of the



places where I statedly laboured, there was, about fifteen or sixteen years ago, a more general concern about the affairs of salvation, which hopefully issued in the conversion of a pretty many. Once in the time of a sermon from Amos vi. 7, before which the people were generally secure, the Spirit of God was suddenly poured out on the assembly; the people were generally affected about the state of their souls; and some to that degree, that they fell upon their knees in the time of the sermon, in order to pray to God for pardoning mercy. Many went weeping home from the sermon; and then the general inquiry was, 'what must I do to be saved?' I may further observe, that some few of those that I hope were converted in the places aforesaid, were compelled to cry out in the public assembly, both under the impressions of terror and love. During the late revival of religion, New Brunswick felt some drops of the spreading rain, but no general shower.

"As to Philadelphia, where by the Providence of God, I now labour statedly, many have been hopefully converted here during the display of God's grace in this land. The Rev. Mr. Whitefield was the instrument God was pleased to *improve*, principally in the awakening and conversion of sinners here; yet the labours of others have been attended with some success. This town, by all that I can learn was in deep security, generally, before Mr. Whitefield came among them, but his preaching was

so blessed, that a great number were brought under a religious concern about the salvation of their souls; multitudes were "inquiring the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, weeping as they went." Some years since, there were so many under soul-sickness in this place, that my feet were pained in walking from place to place to see them. And there was then such an eagerness to hear religious discourse, that when they saw me going to a house they would flock to it; and under what was spoken, they were sometimes generally, and to all appearance, deeply affected. And thus it was in more public assemblies; there were sometimes, general meetings. And though several persons have lost their religious impressions, and "returned with the dog to his vomit;" and some others have fallen into erroneous sentiments, yet God has preserved many from those evils, who give a rational and scriptural account of their conversion, and crown the same by their practice. Neither is it strange that some should be carried away here, by the fair speeches and cunning craftiness of those that lie in wait to deceive; seeing that the greater part in this place, have never had the advantage of a strict religious education, and, therefore, were never well fixed in the thorough knowledge of a consistent system of principles. None that I know of in this town, that were well acquainted with the doctrines of religion in their connexion, and established in them, have been

turned aside by the tempests and tricks of errorists.

“The last Sabbath in May last, I gave the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, the first time that it was dispensed to the society to which I belong—considered as a society. The number of communicants was above one hundred and forty. Those persons I examined about their gracious state, as well as doctrinal knowledge; and upon trial, almost all of them gave scriptural and satisfactory account of the ground of their hope. Now the chief of these, according to their own account, have been brought to CHRIST during the late revival of religion. And there are divers other persons, who in a judgment of charity, have got saving benefit during the late marvellous manifestation of God’s grace, who do not join in communion with us.

“Though there is in many, a considerable decay as to their liveliness and affectionateness in religion, yet through divine goodness, they grow more humble and merciful; and it is evident by their conversation, that the general bent of their heart is for God. Since I have come here, my labours seem to be chiefly serviceable to instruct, and establish the great truths of religion, and to comfort pious people. There have been but a few instances of conviction and conversion in this town that I know of.

“In some places of this province, some years ago, particularly in Nottingham, Fag’s Manor, Whiteclay Creek, Neshaminy, and elsewhere, there have

been such general lamentations in the time of preaching, that the speaker's voice has been almost drowned with the cries of the distressed, even after they have been entreated again and again to restrain themselves; yea, and sometimes when the speaker discoursed in a gospel strain, divers persons in this province have fallen down to the ground in the time of sermon, as though they were stabbed with a sword. And what though some have lost their impressions, and relapsed into their sordid impieties, this is no more than what the scriptures inform us did happen in the apostolic times; yet it is well known that many of them—so far as we are capable of judging by men's speech and practice—have been brought to a sound conversion.

“I think it needless here to offer a reply to the cavils of opposers, which are as numerous as insidious and impertinent. But though I must say, that mine eyes and ears have seen and heard so much of the appearance and fruits of the late revival of religion, that I must reject religion altogether, and turn infidel, if I should dispute and oppose the same. May it please the gracious God to pardon those unhappy men who have set themselves in opposition to the work of the most high God, and painted it in black and odious colours, and let them see their sin and danger before it be too late.

“Dear Sir, I did not think when I began to write, to offer any more than our **PREFATORY ATTESTA-**

TION; but being urged to mention something of what I have seen and heard, and finding a pleasure in the subject, I have added, with the strictest regard to truth and soberness, these few hasty hints, concerning some matters of fact, which I know to be true; and shall leave to your discretion to do with them, as you shall see meet.

“I am Sir, Yours, &c.,

“GILBERT TENNENT.

“August 24, 1744.’