

ENCYCLOPÆDIA
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

INCLUDING THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN ASSEMBLIES.

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AND OTHER EMINENT MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH.

Including a Description of the Historic Decorations of the Pan Presbyterian Council of 1880,

By REV. HENRY C. McCOOK, D. D., LL. D.

Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following—PSALM XLVIII, 12, 13.

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themselves into a church as early as 1692, and probably had built a house of worship before that time. They called their church Freehold. Among their number was John Boyd, who was possibly licensed to preach in Scotland. At least he appears as ministering to that people in 1706. In December of that year he was ordained, in his own public meeting house, by the newly-formed Presbytery of Philadelphia, the first minister ordained by this first Presbytery. After two years, steps were taken to have him regularly installed, when he died.

Then, for twenty years, Rev. Joseph Morgan ministered to that people, though it is not certain when

remarkable brothers. Immediately a parsonage farm was purchased, where William Tennent, Jr., resided during his nearly half-century pastorate, and which was in part the scene of the battle of Monmouth.

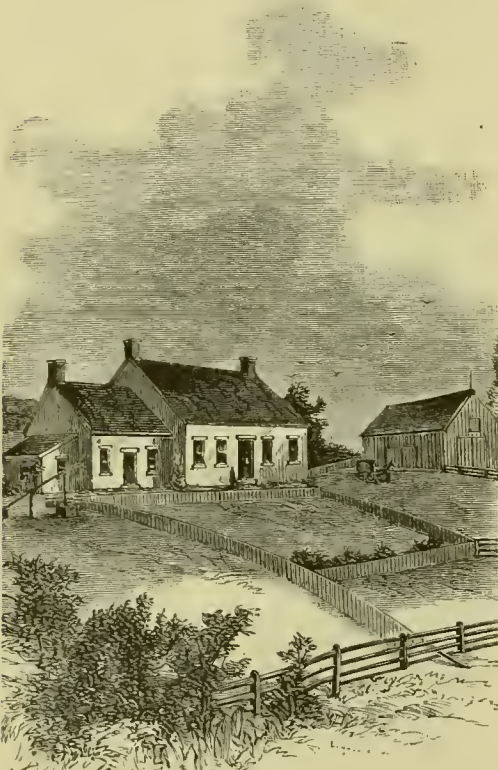
Such was the prosperity attending the labors of the two Tennents, that in 1750 it was deemed necessary to build a larger house of worship. And the present edifice was erected, almost precisely as it is to this day. It is to be hoped that before this building is too far decayed it may be hermetically sealed up in a glass case, to be seen by future generations, a landmark, and a monument of the early days of Presbyterianism. It stands not only as a monument of the Church, but is also to be venerated for having seen the clash of arms in one of the most important battles in the war of Independence.

This church, blessed with an unusual succession of able and godly men for pastors, still brings forth fruit in old age—a *green old age*.

Succeeding the nearly half century of Tennent, came another half century pastorate under Dr. John Woodhull, not only a teacher of the people, but also a distinguished teacher of teachers. Then came briefer pastorates, under Job F. Halsey, D. D., June 14th, 1826, to March 5th, 1828; Rev. Robert Roy, February 18th, 1829, to March 15th, 1832; Daniel V. McLean, D. D., October, 1832, to November 8th, 1836; James Clark, D. D., November 8th, 1837, to October 2d, 1839; Rev. Luther H. VanDoren, June 17th, 1840, to July 5th, 1856; Rev. Donald McLaren, July 1st, 1857, to November 5th, 1862; Rev. Archibald P. Cobb, August 8th, 1863, until his death, February 26th, 1881. Very shortly after Mr. Cobb's settlement he had purchased the parsonage property and refitted and enlarged it, when, before the furniture was arranged in it, a fire consumed the whole, and with it all the records of the church. The present pastor is the Rev. George G. Smith.

For more than one hundred and fifty years called "Freehold," the name of this church was changed not many years since, and now it bears most appropriately the name of "Tennent Church." It embraces within its broad bosom more than four hundred and fifty souls.

Tennent, Rev. Gilbert, the oldest son of Rev. William Tennent, of Neshaminy, was born in the county Armagh, February 5th, 1703; was educated by his father, and was licensed by Philadelphia Presbytery in May, 1725. He received in the Fall the degree of A. M., from Yale. In the Autumn of 1726, he was installed pastor of the Church at New Brunswick, N. J. For some time he was the delight of the pious, and was honored by those who were destitute of religion. But when God began to bless his faithful labors to the awakening of secure sinners, and to their conversion from darkness unto light, he presently lost the good opinion of false professors, his name was loaded with reproaches, and the grossest immoralities were attributed to him. But he bore all with



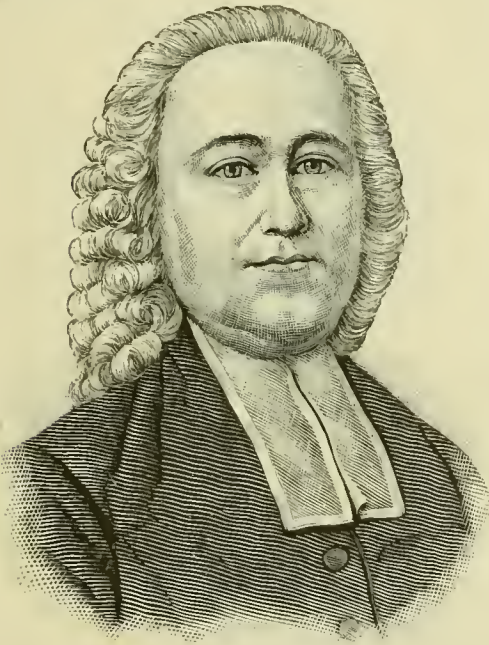
OLD TENNENT PARSONAGE.

he was installed. On his leaving them, the people were sadly divided, and "there seemed no hope of their ever settling a minister." But a marked providence sent them John Tennent, certainly the most saintly of the five of that name who made such a deep impression upon the early history of Presbyterianism in this country. He was settled at Freehold in 1730, and was probably the first pastor. A decided change immediately followed. In that same year steps were taken for the building of a new house of worship. It was near the site of the present building.

John Tennent died in two years, and was succeeded by his brother William, the most famous of the four

patience. Though he had sensibility to character as well as other men, yet he was willing to encounter disgrace rather than neglect preaching the Truth, however offensive to the sinful, whom he wished to reclaim.

Towards the close of the year 1740, and in the beginning of the year 1741, he made a tour in New England, at the request of Mr. Whitefield. An astonishing efficacy accompanied his labors. Visiting various towns, he was everywhere remarkably useful. In this tour, the dress in which he commonly entered the pulpit was a great coat, girt about him with a leathern girdle, while his natural hair was left undressed. His large stature and grave aspect added a dignity to the simplicity, or rather rusticity, of his appearance.



REV. GILBERT TENNET.

In 1744 he removed to Philadelphia and took charge of the Second Congregation. "Here," says Webster, "his feet were blistered in traversing the streets and visiting such numbers of distressed souls. He called on Franklin to point out suitable persons from whom to solicit aid in erecting a house of worship. The philosopher told the 'enthusiast' to call on everybody; he did so, and built the church." In 1753, Mr. Tennent, at the request of the Trustees of New Jersey College, went to England to solicit funds for that Institution. After a life of great usefulness, he died, in much peace, about the year 1765.

For more than forty years, Mr. Tennent had enjoyed a habitual, unshaken assurance of his interest in redeeming love. In his manner, he was affable, condescending and communicative. He was endeared

by his frankness and undisguised honesty, eminent for public spirit and great fortitude; his mind was enriched by much reading, and his heart was laden with a rich experience of divine grace. As a preacher, he was equaled by few; his reasoning was strong, his language forcible, and often sublime, his manner warm and earnest. With admirable dexterity he exposed the false hope of the hypocrite, and searched the corrupt heart to the bottom. He said of some of his earliest sermons that he begged them, with tears, of the Lord Jesus. Among Mr. Tennent's numerous publications were two volumes of sermons.

Tennent, Rev. John, the third son of Rev. William Tennent, Sr., was born in the county of Armagh, in Ireland, November 12th, 1707. The whole of his education he obtained under the paternal roof, and in the Log College which his father had founded at Neshaminy. After passing the usual trials before the Presbytery of Philadelphia, he was licensed to preach the gospel. November 19th, 1730, he was ordained pastor of the Church at Freehold, N. J., where his labors were attended with prudence, diligence and success.

Mr. Tennent died April 23d, 1732, in the twenty-fifth year of his age. A few minutes before he expired, holding his brother William by the hand, he broke out into the following rapturous expressions: "Farewell, my brethren, farewell father and mother, farewell world, with all thy vain delights. Welcome, God and Father—welcome, sweet Lord Jesus! Welcome death, welcome eternity. Amen." Then, with a low voice, he said, "Lord Jesus, come, Lord Jesus!" And so he fell asleep in Christ, and obtained an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of his God and Saviour. He was buried in the graveyard near to the church where he preached, and where his tombstone may yet be seen.

As far as can be judged from the accounts which have come down to us, there is reason to believe that, both in piety and talents, Mr. Tennent was not inferior to any of his brothers, and that if he had lived to the usual period of human life, he would have been a "burning and a shining light" in the Church. The people of his charge were greatly attached to him, and exceedingly lamented his death. There is still extant the fragment of an old manuscript book, kept by the Session of his church, in which is contained the following entry:—

"A mournful providence and cause of great humiliation to this poor congregation, to be bereaved, in the flower of youth, of the most laborious, successful, well qualified and pious pastor this age afforded, though but a youth of twenty-four years, five months and eleven days."

Tennent, Rev. William, Sr., was born in Ireland, in 1673. He received a liberal education, but at what college or university is not known. It is probable, however, that he obtained his learning at Trinity College, Dublin, as he belonged originally to