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SIX LETTERS OF PRESIDENT BURR.

By WILLIAM L. LEDWITH, D. D.

Old Nassau Hall is very dear to the hearts of all the alumni of Princeton, and around its ancient walls cluster the bright and precious memories of nearly one hundred and fifty years. Anything, even if of the slightest importance, has an interest and value in connection with that old building, which at the time of its erection was the largest of its kind in the British Provinces of North America. The names of the men who were active and faithful as loyal Presbyterians and lovers of education in those days should never be forgotten, and among them as a leading spirit was the Rev. Aaron Burr, the second of that noble line of Presidents that have made Princeton famous as a seat of sound learning. These letters relating to college affairs in the time of its beginning have never been published, we believe, as a whole, though some of them have been quoted in Dr. John Hall's history of the First Church in Trenton. As they relate to the time when the College of New Jersey was removed from Newark to Princeton, and the building of Nassau Hall, it will be of interest to publish them, with slight annotations, so that they will be intelligible to all readers.

They were addressed to the Rev. David Cowell, an intimate

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MEMORABILIA OF THE TENNENTS.

By DE BENNEVILLE K. LUDWIG, Ph. D.

To theological students, ministers, and older Presbyterians that have studied the history of their church, the story of the relations and labors of the Tennents is clear enough, but to the younger members of the church, judging from inquiries often heard, there is a very vague idea concerning these famous preachers.

The various Tennent memorials—churches, tablets, etc.,—emphasize the fact that there was more than one Tennent. To clarify the vision and add some excerpts from material found in the Museum of the Presbyterian Historical Society is the object of this paper.

There were seven Tennents more or less noted and influential in promoting Christianity and education in their day. William Tennent and his four sons, Gilbert, William, Jr., John and Charles, and two grandsons, William Tennent, 3d, son of William Tennent, Jr., and William Macky Tennent, the son of Charles.

The chart on the next page shows the genealogy as far as known :

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THE REV. WILLIAM TENNENT, Senior, often called Tennent of Neshaminy, because he founded the Log College at Neshaminy, was born in 1673 in Ireland, and was probably educated at Trinity College, Dublin. He originally belonged to the Episcopal Church of Ireland. After entering the ministry he acted as chaplain to an Irish nobleman, but there is no evidence that he ever became a pastor in his native land. He remained in Ireland till past middle life. He became acquainted with Rev. Gilbert Kennedy, a distinguished Presbyterian Minister, by whom he was greatly influenced, and whose daughter he married May 15, 1702, naming his first-born after his friend. He was ordained a deacon by the Bishop of Down, July, 1704, and a priest September 22, 1706. He came to America in 1716 or 1718 (the dates given by different authors greatly vary), was settled first at East Chester, N. Y., November 22, 1718, and at Bedford, N. Y., May 3, 1720. He was received by the Synod of Philadelphia September 17 (November 22), 1718, and about 1721 was invited to Bensalem, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where he supplied a small Presbyterian congregation until 1726, when he was called to the Neshaminy Church in the same county where he continued the balance of his life. In 1728 James Logan gave him fifty acres of land in Neshaminy, on which he founded the Log College that was the forerunner of Princeton University (see Dr. Craven's article, 308-314 of the present volume), that therein he might educate his sons together with such other young men as might desire preparation for the gospel ministry. Including his sons, there were no less than fourteen young men who came forth from his instruction as preachers of the Word.

When George Whitefield came to Philadelphia the elder Tennent with several of his followers visited him and in turn was visited by Whitefield, who was greatly impressed by what he saw and heard, comparing him and his wife to Zacharias and Elizabeth of Gospel story.

He died May 6, 1746, according to what seems the best authority, and was buried in the Presbyterian Burying Ground at Neshaminy. His tomb has been repaired, the old stone having been covered with new slabs of granite. His widow Cath-

arine came to Philadelphia and lived with their son Gilbert. She died in Philadelphia, May 7, 1753, aged 70.

In the Museum of the Presbyterian Historical Society, there are shown the gifts of the late Rev. Douglas K. Turner, a piece of tile from the old church at Neshaminy, the last piece of wood from the Log College, William Tennent's cane, and a handle probably from his coffin, found in his grave in 1891.

William Tennent's oldest son, GILBERT, was born in the county of Armagh, Ireland, April (February) 5, 1703, and was converted while crossing the Atlantic, when his father emigrated to America. He was 21 or 22 years old when the Log College was opened, and soon was found assisting his father as tutor for his younger brothers and the other lads under course of instruction in that place. He was licensed to preach May, 1725 or 1726—a tall, sober, studious young man, with commanding voice. He was called first to New Brunswick, N. J., and while settled there, he traveled much and preached often. He made a preaching tour with great success in company with Whitefield through New England as far as Boston in 1740.

With the exception of Whitefield he was the strongest preacher in the great revival that spread from Massachusetts to Georgia. His denunciations of sin were most severe and his efforts to win men for Christ most earnest; especially did he preach against the dead formality everywhere found in the church, and consequently was much persecuted as one of the "New Lights" or "New Side" ministers. Two years after the Synod was disrupted through the dissensions respecting revivals, he was called to be pastor of the Second Church in Philadelphia in May, 1743, and through his indefatigable labors he succeeded in securing the money for a new church edifice at the corner of Arch and Third streets in that city. He continued pastor of this congregation until his death, the only interruption being a successful mission with Rev. Samuel Davies, of Virginia, to Great Britain in November, 1743, to solicit funds for the College of New Jersey, now known as Princeton University. He brought back £307 4s. 6d. for the college, and £200 for the evangelization of the Indians, which sum was entrusted to John Brainerd, who

labored with great success among the tribes dwelling in New Jersey. He helped in the extraordinary revival at Princeton in 1757, and had the great joy of seeing multitudes converted through his instrumentality. He received the college degrees of Master of Arts (from Yale) and Doctor of Divinity. He married Cornelia, the widow of Matthew Clarkson, who had a daughter, Ann Clarkson. He died in 1764, aged 62, and was buried in the church yard at Abington, Pa., in the same tomb with President Finley of Princeton College, both having been born in the same town about the same time.

The only survivors of Gilbert Tennent were a daughter and a son. The latter was lost at sea. The daughter, Cornelia, married William Smith, a physician of Philadelphia, from which marriage was born a daughter on whose tombstone is the following inscription:

Here also
Rest the Remains of
Elizabeth Tennent Smith
daughter of
D^r William and Cornelia Smith
and grand-daughter of
The Reverend Gilbert Tennent, D D.
Died at Philadelphia
December 3rd 1866
Aged 82 years.
The last of her lineage.
This woman was full of good
works and alms-deeds which
she did. Acts 9. 36.

The will of Gilbert Tennent is to be seen in the Museum of the Presbyterian Historical Society and reads as follows:

In the Name of God Amen I Gilbert Tennent Minister of the Gospell being at Present in good health but Considering the uncertainty of life and Certainty of Death do make and ordain this my last will and Testament as follows: I Committ my Soul into the Hands of God my Creator and my body to y^e Earth to buried in Decent Manner Hoping through the Satisfaction and Righteousness of Christ my Redeemer to be made partaker of Eternal Happiness. And as for my real and personal Estate I Dispose thereof as followeth Imprimis it is my will that all my Just Debts be paid within Some Convenient time after my Decease and particularly I ordain and will that whatsoever shall be due

from me at the time of my Death to the Children of M^r Matthew Clarkson Deceased shall be well and truly paid out of my Estate

Item in case I shall die without Issue I then give Devise and bequeath the one half of all my Estate real and personal—and personal after the payments of my Debts aforesaid to my well beloved wife Cornelia her heirs Executors adm^r and Assigns for ever

Item my will is that my said wife enjoy the Rents Issues and Profitts of my whole Estate During her natural life

Item in Case I shall die without issue Then as to y^e other moiety or half part of my whole Estate real & personal after the payment of my Debts as aforesaid I give Devise and bequeath the same to my Brothers William Tennent and Charles Tennent and their heirs forever—to be equally Divided Between them Share and Share alike & to be possessed and Enjoyed by them after the Decease of my beloved wife Cornelia they paying when my said Estate shall come to their hands Respectively Each of them the Sum of Fifty pounds New York Currency to Ann Clarkson the Daughter of my wife by her former husband which I give to the Said Ann Clarkson in Testimony of my Affection & regard to her But in case I shall Leave Issue at my Decease then my will is That (after payment of my Debts as a^{fo}) my said wife enjoy the Rents Issues and profitts of my whole Estate During her Natural life towards the Support of herself and the maintenance and Education of Such Child or Children I shall Leave by her

Item In Case I shall leave issue as aforesaid Then I give to my said Loving wife full power to Dispose of four Hundred pounds money aforesaid out of my said Estate in such manner as she shall think by her last will and Testament

Item all the Rest residue and remainder of my Estate real and personal—I give Devise and bequeath to Such Child or Children as I shall have by my said wife to be Equally Divided Between them Share and Share alike

Item I will and ordain that the Exec^t of this my Last will and Testam^t & the Survivours & Survivour of them for and towards the performance of my said Testament Shall if they and the Survivour of them shall See fit Sell and alien in fee Simple all or any part of my real Estate that I shall leave at my Decease for the Doing Executing and perfect finishing whereof I Do by these presents Give Grant will and Transfer to my said Executors and the Survivours and Survivour of them full power and authority to Grant Bargain alien Convey and Assure the premises to any person or persons and their heirs forever In fee Simple by all and Every Such Lawfull ways and means in the Law as to my said Executors & y^e Survivours and Survivour of them or to his and their Council Learned in the Law shall seem fit and necessary and I do hereby Constitute and Appoint my well beloved wife Cornelia Tennent my Brother William Tennent and my Friend David Chambers Executors of this my last will and Testament And it is my will that my said Executrix & Executors do Consult and Advise with Mr. William Smith of New York att at Law in all Cases Relating to the Execution of this my will wherein Council and advise shall be wanting And Lastly I do hereby Revoke annull and make void all former wills by me at any time In Witness whereof I the said Gilbert Tennent

have to this my last will and Testament Set my hand and Seal this—Thirteenth Day of July in the Year of our Lord one thousand Seven hundred and Forty two—

GILBERT TENNENT [Seal]

Signed sealed and published in y^e presence of us who subscribed our names as Witnesses in the presence and at the request of the Testator.

WILLIAM TENNENT, JR., the second son of William of Neshaminy, was born June 3, 1705, in the county of Antrim, Ireland. He studied with his brother Gilbert at New Brunswick, and applied himself so intensely to his work that his health was greatly affected. It was during this period that he fainted and apparently died, so that preparations were made for the funeral when his friend and physician found evidences of vitality. During his unconsciousness he had the trance of which so much has been said and of which a full and interesting account is given in Dr. Alexander's History of the Log College. Upon the death of his brother John he succeeded him and was ordained pastor of the church at Freehold, N. J., October 25, 1733, with a salary of £100, and continued there the rest of his life.

Feeling the need of a wife, he went to New York with a friend, was introduced to Mrs. Noble, a sister-in-law of his friend, and within a week was married to her. They had several children that died in infancy and three sons that grew to manhood,—John, who became a physician and died in the West Indies about 33 years of age; William (3rd), who was an eloquent preacher and zealous patriot, born in Freehold in 1740, educated at Princeton, settled first at Norwalk, Conn., and in 1772 became pastor of the Independent Church in Charleston, S. C., where he died in 1777; and Gilbert, who was a physician at Freehold and died there at the age of 28.

During the life of William Tennent, Jr., at Freehold, he had some curious experiences which in connection with his trance seem to mark his career in a peculiar manner. Once while meditating upon God's wonderful plan of salvation he was so overcome with a sense of the glory and majesty of God that he fell almost lifeless to the ground, and when he recovered and was able to return to his church, his prayer and sermon made a

most extraordinary impression upon the congregation; at another time, when through very deceptive circumstantial evidence, to the joy of his enemies he seemed guilty of perjury, and hence exposed to ignominious punishment, his innocence was proven by friends that were impelled by a dream to visit him; and later on in 1776 he was greatly oppressed through fear of death from the British, who were in the neighboring town of Trenton, when again he was delivered by what seemed divine interposition. These and other incidents are related at length by Dr. Alexander in his History of the Log College, already referred to.

He died of a violent fever the next year, March 8, 1777, and was buried in his own church at Freehold.

JOHN TENNENT, third son of William of Neshaminy, was born in the county of Antrim, Ireland, November 12, 1707. He was educated under the paternal roof and at the Log College, and was licensed to preach at Freehold before his brother William. He was exceedingly zealous in his work as a preacher, and labored so incessantly that his health gave way, and yielding to a pulmonary disease he passed from earth in a most triumphant and rapturous manner on April 23, 1732, at the early age of twenty-five. The epitaph on his tombstone in the Freehold churchyard shows how greatly he was esteemed:

"Who quick grew old in learning, virtue, grace,
Quick finished, well-yielded to Death's embrace:
Whose mouldered dust, this cabinet contains,
Whose soul triumphant, with bright seraphs reigns;
Waiting the time 'till Heaven's concave flame,
And the last trump repairs his ruined frame."

The fourth child of William Tennent was a daughter named Eleanor, of whom nothing more is known than that she was born in the county of Down, Ireland, December 28, 1708.

CHARLES TENNENT, the youngest son of William of Neshaminy, was also born in the county of Down in 1711, seven years before his father emigrated. Educated also at the Log College he became pastor at White Clay Creek, Delaware, where in a great revival that soon followed he was assisted by Whitefield.

On fly leaves of an old Bible, now in the Museum of the Presbyterian Historical Society, printed at Edinburgh in 1797, and supposed to have been the property of Miss Elizabeth Tennent Smith, Gilbert Tennent's granddaughter, there is written the following record of Charles Tennent's family and of his son, William Macky Tennent, the fourth William Tennent that was a power for good in his day and generation.

"Rev^d Charles Tennent & Miss Martha Macky were married by the Rev^d Samuel Blair, July 20, A. D. 1740.

Names births & deaths of their childⁿ.

Eleanor was born May 20th 1741. & died Dec^r 15th 1781.

Catharine was born June 20th 1742. & died Nov^r 17th—1776.

William Macky was born Jan^y 1st 1744. & died Dec^r 2^d 1810.

James was born Nov^r 8th 1745. & died May 27th—1765.

Ann was born 20th Feby—1749. & died May 22. 1777.

Martha was born 26th Aug^t 1751.

Gilbert was born 1st March 1754. & died Jany—12th 1771.

Sarah was born Oc^r 4th 1757. & died March—1759.

The Parents of the above named children died viz; Rev^d Charles Tennent Feby—25th 1771—The disease of which he died was a *PNumonia*—He was in his 68th (?) year—died sweetly composed & in the full possession of his faculties bidding an affectionate farewell to his weeping friends—He was a man of gentle manners & easy address, an affect^{ed} parent—a pleasing companion—& an approved & successful Minister of Christ for many years.

"He rests from his labours, & his works do follow him."

His wife M^{rs}. Martha Tennent exchanged a temporal for an eternal Sabbath on Jany—12th 1766. She was eminent for piety, good sense & prudence—excelled in family discipline & oeconomy—was beloved in life & lamented in death. She opened her mouth with wisdom, & in her tongue was the law of kindness—She looked well to the ways of her household, & eat not the bread of idleness—Her children rose up and called her blessed—Her husband also, & he praised her. She died in the 46th year of her age. They were both buried with their two Sons, James & Gilbert in Buckingham, Sussex County, Maryland.

Eleanor was twice married; first to Jno. Porter & afterwards to Jno. Stewart & had several childⁿ by each of them—She lies buried at S^t Georges—New Castle County.

Catharine—lies buried in Lewis-town & Ann at the head of Indian River Sussex County—and Sarah at White Clay Creek—State of Delaware.

The Rev^d W^m M. Tennent lies buried at Abington Pennsylvania.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

In the blank space and leaf following the Apocrypha, the record given below is found:

“W^m M. TENNENT was born Jan^y-1st 1744 & baptized by the rev^d D^r Sam^l Finley, under whose pious care he began, & completed his school-education in the year 1763—He was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Presb^y of Lewis in May 1770. On the 17th of June 1772 he was ordained to the work of the Ministry; at which time, he took the pastoral charge of the congregation of Greenfield, in Fairfield County, Connecticut. He was married to Miss Susanna Rodgers, daughter of the rev^d D^r Rodgers of New York on the 21st of Sep^r 1773, by his Kinsman the rev^d W^m Tennent of Charles Town S^c Carolina.

“In Dec^r 1781, he was dismissed from the congregation of Greenfield, & at the same time accepted a Call from the united congregations of Abington, Norriton, & New Providence, in Pennsylvania, and was received by them as their Minister the 1st of Jan^y 1782 & installed in Nov^r of the same year, by a Committee of the Pres^by of Philad^a.

“On Tuesday 22nd of Jan^y 1793, between y^e hours of 6 & 7 o'clock in the evening, was born, to the aforementioned W^m M. & Susanna Tennent, a daughter, who was baptized on the 7th of Ap^l following, by the name of *Elizabeth Bayard*, by the rev^d D^r Ashbel Green of Philad^a.

May the child receive the unction of the holy ghost! and if it shall please the Donor to spare this gift, may it be to render to her Maker that praise which is his due—to add to the happiness of society in general, & the circle of her relations & friends in particular; & thus by a course of virtuous, benevolent & holy actions, may she be matured for the full enjoym^t of God! or, if it shall please the Giver to recall his gift, & to nip the tender bud, before it shall have felt the rude blasts of a world rendered unfriendly by sin, may the child, by its hasty departure, possess the purchased glory of his kingdom!

On the Lord's day of the 12th of May 1793, at half past 10 o'clock, in the forenoon, died the aforementioned *Elizabeth Bayard* of the smallpox by inoculation—she departed on the 25th day from the time of the infusion of the deadly poison, & on the 17th from its irruption, after her parents & other interested friends had indulged the pleasing hope that the danger was over—She was three months & twenty days old when she died. Her dust lies intombed in Abington Graveyard—

Blessed babe! ‘Of such is the kingdom of heaven’—It is thy Parents prayer, that they may at the appointed time follow thee to thy heavenly abode, & with thee & all who shall be made perfect, behold the face of Jesus, & that they may dwell forever in that city where there is no night.”

In another part of the Bible there is this further record of William Macky Tennent, with the quotation of which these memorabilia of this wonderful family will have a fitting close:

"In memory of the
 Rev^d W^m M. Tennent. D D
 who was born Jan 1st A D 1744
 Licensed to preach the Gospel in May 1770
 Ordained to the work of the Gospel ministry
 at Greenfield in Connecticut
 in June 1772
 Removed to this church in connection
 with the Presbyterian Churches of
 Norrington & Providence in Decm^r 1781
 and having with zeal and fidelity
 Discharged every pastoral duty
 and shewn an instructive example
 of Christian temper and private worth
 He closed his Life
 with a most edifying exhibition
 of Christian humility, fortitude, & faith
 Through the whole of a tedious illness
 of which he died Dec^r 2nd 1810
 In the 67th year of his age."

Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, yea saith the Spirit—for they
 rest from their labours & their works do follow them—The Lord Jesus Christ
 was the Rock upon which he built. And in his righteousness alone did he hope
 and expect salvation. May this also be our choice who yet remain—So that we
 may join the happy number in celebrating the praises of our dear Redeemer
 throughout the endless ages of eternity. For rich unmerited grace displayed
 in our redemption—Oh the unsearchable riches of *Christ*."