

L I F E

OF THE

REV. WILLIAM TENNENT,

**FORMERLY PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
AT FREEHOLD, IN NEW JERSEY.—IN WHICH
IS CONTAINED, AMONG OTHER INTE-
RESTING PARTICULARS,**

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS BEING

THREE DAYS IN A TRANCE,

AND APPARENTLY LIFELESS.

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consist in the satisfaction of your own mind, that you have helped two old people through the last steps of their pilgrimage." Thus did this pious man turn every event of life, however afflictive, to the praise and glory of God; and he seldom omitted an opportunity of inculcating the same disposition on all his acquaintance.

When the late Rev. George Whitefield was last in this country, Mr. Tennent paid him a visit as he was passing through New Jersey. Mr. Whitefield and a number of other clergymen, among whom was Mr. Tennent, were invited to dinner by a gentleman in the neighborhood, where the late Mr. William Livingston, since Governor of New Jersey, resided, and who, with several

other lay gentlemen, were among the guests. After dinner, in the course of an easy and pleasant conversation, Mr. Whitefield adverted to the difficulties attending the gospel ministry, arising from the small success with which their labors were crowned. He greatly lamented that all their zeal, activity, and fervor, availed but little; said that he was weary with the burdens and fatigue of the day; declared his great consolation was, that in a short time his work would be done, when he should depart and be with Christ; that the prospect of a speedy deliverance had supported his spirits, or that he should, before now, have sunk under his labor. He then appealed to the ministers around him, if it were not their great comfort

that they should soon go to rest. They generally assented, excepting Mr. Tennent, who sat next to Mr. Whitefield in silence; and by his countenance discovered but little pleasure in the conversation. On which, Mr. Whitefield, turning to him, and tapping him on the knee, said, "Well, brother Tennent, you are the oldest man amongst us; do you not rejoice to think that your time is so near at hand, when you will be called home and freed from all the difficulties attending this chequered scene?" Mr. Tennent bluntly answered, "I have no wish about it." Mr. Whitefield pressed him again; and Mr. Tennent again answered, "No, sir, it is no pleasure to me at all; and if you knew your duty, it would be none to you. I

have nothing to do with death; my business is to live as long as I can—as well as I can—and serve my Lord and Master as faithfully as I can, until he shall think proper to call me home.” Mr. Whitefield still urged for an explicit answer to his question, in case the time of death were left to his own choice. Mr. Tennent replied, “I have no choice about it: I am God’s servant, and have engaged to do his business as long as he pleases to continue me therein. But now, brother, let me ask you a question. What do you think I would say if I was to send my man Tom into the field to plough; and if at noon I should go to the field, and find him lounging under a tree complaining, ‘Master, the sun is very hot,

and the ploughing hard and difficult ; I am tired and weary of the work you have appointed me, and am overdone with the heat and burden of the day ; do, master, let me return home, and be discharged from this hard service ? What would I say ? Why, that he was an idle, lazy fellow ; that it was his business to do the work that I had appointed him, until I, the proper judge, should think fit to call him home. Or, suppose you had hired a man to serve you faithfully for a given time, in a particular service, and he should, without any reason on your part, and before he had performed half his service, become weary of it, and upon every occasion, be expressing a wish to be discharged, or placed in other circumstances ?

Would you not call him a wicked and slothful servant, and unworthy the privileges of your employ?" The mild, pleasant and Christian-like manner, in which this reproof was administered, rather increased the social harmony, and edifying conversation of the company; who became satisfied that it was very possible to err even in desiring, with undue earnestness, "to depart and be with Christ," which, in itself, is "far better," than to remain in this imperfect state; and that it is the duty of the Christian, in this respect, to say, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come."

Among Mr. Tennent's qualifications, none were more conspicuous than his activity both of body and mind. He

hated and despised sloth. He was almost always in action—never wearied in well doing, nor in serving his friends. His integrity and independence of spirit were observable on the slightest acquaintance. He was so great a lover of truth, that he could not bear the least aberration from it, even in a joke. He was remarkable for his candor and liberality of sentiment, with regard to those who differed from him in opinion. His hospitality and domestic enjoyments were even proverbial.—His public spirit was always conspicuous, and his attachment to what he thought the best interests of his country, was ardent and inflexible. He took an early and decided part with his country in the commencement of the late revolutionary