

of that truth were called in derision new-born, and looked upon as holders forth of some new and false doctrine.

And indeed their practice was as bad as their principles, viz. loose and profane. In the year 1729, their minister removed from them, and they were so grievously divided among themselves, that it appeared improbable, they would ever agree in the settlement of another. In this miserable condition they lay; and few among them had either eyes to see, or hearts to bewail their woful wretched circumstances. Thus they seemed to be cast out as the prophet Ezekiel represents it, in the 16th chapter of his book, and the 5th verse. But the Lord, who is rich in mercy, of his unexpected and unmerited love, passed by them lying in their blood, and said unto many of them since that day, *live*; and live they shall to all eternity.

About this time my dear brother John (who is now with Christ) was licensed as a candidate for the sacred ministry: a youth whom the Author of every good gift had uncommonly furnished for that important trust. To him application was made by some of the congregation, intreating that he would supply them for a time: to which (with the leave of the presbytery) he consented. But ere he went, he often told me, that he was heartily sorry he had engaged to go among them; for it seemed to him, that they were a people whom God had given up for their abuse of the gospel. But the Lord's thoughts are not our thoughts; for when he had preached four or five Sabbaths in the place, the Lord so blessed his labours, engaging people to attend to the things which were spoken, and stirring them up to search the Scriptures, whether these things were so,



The Old Tennent Church today

(From the Facebook page of the church—sadly now apostate)

and withal enabling him to preach to them with such uncommon freedom and earnestness; that he told me he was fully persuaded Christ Jesus had a large Harvest to bring home there; so that, though they were a poor broken people, yet if they called him, he would settle among them, albeit he should be put to beg his bread by so doing. April the 15th, 1730, the congregation unanimously called him; which he accepting of, was ordained the 19th of November following, and continued with them until April 23^d, 1732, and was then translated to glory.

During his short time, his labours were greatly blessed; so that the place of public worship was usually crowded with people of all ranks; and they seemed to hear generally as for their lives; yea, such as were wont to go to those places for their diversion, viz. to hear news or speak to their tradesmen, &c. even on the Lord's-day, as they themselves have since confessed, were taken in the gospel net: a solemn awe of God's majesty possessed many, so that they behaved themselves as at his bar while in his house. Many tears were usually shed, when he preached, and sometimes the body of the congregation was moved or affected. I can say, and let the Lord alone have the glory of it, that I have seen both minister and people wet with their tears as with a bedewing rain. It was no uncommon thing to see persons in the time of hearing, sobbing as if their hearts would break, but without any public outcry; and some have been carried out of the assembly (being overcome) as if they had been dead. Religion was then the general subject of discourse, though they did not all approve of the power of it: the Holy Bible was searched by people on both sides of the question, and knowledge surprizingly increased: the terror of God fell generally upon the inhabitants of this place; so that wickedness, as ashamed in a great measure, hid itself. Some of the jolly companions of both sexes were constrained, by their consciences, to meet together, the men by themselves, and the women by themselves, to confess privately their abominations before God, and beg the pardon of them.

Before my brother's death, by reason of his bodily weakness, I preached here about six months. In which time, many came enquiring, what they should do to be saved? and some to tell what the Lord had done for their souls. But the blessing on his labours, to the conviction and conversion of souls, was more discernible some months after his death, than any time in his life; almost in every neighbourhood, I cannot say in every house, there were sin-sick souls, longing for and seeking after the dear Physician,

Jesus Christ; several of whom I no wise doubt have since that time sincerely closed with him, and are healed: glory, glory to his holy name be given for ever and ever, Amen!

Sometime after my brother's decease, the congregation called me to labour among them stately; which I accepted, and was ordained October the 25th, 1733. Thus my Lord sent me to reap that on which I had bestowed but little labour: may this consideration be blessed to make me thankful and humble while I live.

Such as have been converted were every of them prepared for it by a sharp law-work of conviction, in discovering to them in a heart-affecting manner, their sinfulness both by nature and practice, as well as their liableness to damnation for their original and actual transgressions. Neither could they see any way in themselves by which they could escape the divine vengeance; for that their whole life past was not only a continued act of rebellion against God, but their present endeavours to better it, such as prayers, &c. were so imperfect, that they could not endure them, and much less they concluded, would a holy God. They all confessed the justice of God in their eternal perdition; and thus have been shut up to the blessed necessity of seeking relief by faith in Christ alone.

It would be endless to mention the evils they complained of, viz. ignorance, unbelief, hardness of heart, hatred against God, his laws, and people, worldliness, wandrings of heart in duty, pride, sensuality, sloth, &c. With what grief, shame, and self-loathing have I heard them bewail their loss of time and neglect of the great gospel salvation! Those that were communicants before their awakening, have with trembling declared that their unworthy partaking grieved them more than anything ever they did. It is almost incredible to relate the indignation that such awakened sinners expressed against themselves, on the account of their sinfulness. They looked upon themselves to be mere monsters of nature, and that none were worse, if any so bad. Others signified that they could not find their pictures out of hell, and that they were just companions for the damned, and none else. Let it be here noted, that some who have expressed themselves in the manner I have mentioned, were before taken for believers both by themselves and others, being sober and regular in their walk.

The conviction of some has been instantaneous, by the Holy Spirit's applying the law to the conscience, and discovering to the eye of the understanding, as it were, all their heart-deceits very speedily; by which they have been

stabbed as with a sword. But the conviction of others, has been in a more progressive way. They have had discovered to them one abomination after another in life; and from thence were led to behold the fountain of all corruption in the heart; and thus they were constrained to despair of life by the law, and consequently to flee to Jesus as the only door of hope, and so rest entirely on his merit for salvation.

After the aforesaid sorrowful exercises, such as were reconciled to God, have been blessed with the Spirit of adoption, enabling them to cry, Abba Father. The Lord has drawn some out of the horrible pit of distress and darkness, and brought them into the light of his countenance. He has filled their hearts with joy, and their mouths with praises; yea, given them the full assurance of faith. Others have been brought to peace in believing; but have not had so great a plerophory of joy: yet they go on in a religious course trusting in the Lord. The way they have been comforted is either by the application of some particular promise of Scripture, or by a soul-affecting view of the way of salvation by Christ, as free without money and without price: they were enabled to behold the valuable mercies of the covenant of grace, freely tendered to the vilest transgressors, that were poor in their own eyes, sin-sick, weary, and wounded, together with the ability and willingness of the Lord Jesus to relieve them from all the evils they either feared or felt. With this way of salvation their souls were well pleased, and thereupon have ventured their case into his hands, expecting help from him only; who has given them both peace and rest, yea filled some of them with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Doubtless, Sir, you will desire to know what effects this work produces on the minds and manners of its subjects? I answer, They are not only made to know, but heartily to approve of the great doctrines of the gospel, which they were before either ignorant of or averse to, (at least some of them;) so that they do harmonize sweetly in exalting free, special, and sovereign grace through the redeemer Jesus Christ; being willing to glory only in the Lord, who has loved them and given himself for them, an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour. They have spoken with such affection and clearness, as I have thought was sufficient to convince an Atheist, that the Lord was their teacher. The alteration in some from almost gross ignorance, to such clear gospel light, and in others from such corrupt principles, as the Papists and Quakers hold, to the believing acknowledgement of the truth, none but he that made the

understanding could effect. They approve of the law of God after the inward man, as holy, just, and good, and prize it above gold. They judge it their duty as well as privilege to wait on God in all the ordinances of his institution, altho' they expect to merit nothing thereby. A reverence for God's commanding authority, and gratitude for his love, conspire to incite and constrain them to a willing, unfeigned, universal, and unfainting obedience to his laws: yet they declare that in every thing they come sadly short of what they ought to do, and bitterly bewail their defects. But, blessed be God, are not discouraged in their endeavours to reach forward, if by any means they may apprehend that for which they are apprehended of God: and in all things they acknowledge that they ought to look to Jesus as the author and finisher of faith, whose alone it is to work all good in them, and for them, to whom be glory for ever.

They love all such, as they have reason to think from their principles, experience, and practice, are truly godly, though they differ from them in sentiment in lesser things, and look on them to be the excellent of the earth. They rejoice in Zion's prosperity, glorifying God on that account, and feel a sympathy in her sorrows. They do prefer one another before themselves in love, except under temptation, which they are ready to confess and bewail when they are themselves, generally accounting that they are the meanest of the family of God, and unworthy of the blessing; yea, the most so of any living, all things considered.

In a word, the sapless formalist is become spiritual in his conversation; the proud and haughty are made humble and affable; the wanton and vile, sober and temperate; the swearer honours that venerable Name he was wont to profane, and blesses instead of cursing; the Sabbath-breaker is brought to be a strict observer of holy time; the worldling now seeks treasures in the heavens; the extortioner now deals justly; and the formerly malicious forgive injuries; the prayerless are earnest and incessant in acts of devotion; and the sneaking self-seeker endeavours the advancement of God's glory, and the salvation of immortal souls.

Freehold, October 9th, 1744. WILLIAM TENNENT.



—Condensed from *Historical Collections Relating to Remarkable Periods of the Success of the Gospel and Eminent Instruments Employed in Promoting It, Volume II*, Compiled by John Gillies, 1754. Original spelling and punctuation have been generally retained.

Pilgrims Covenant Church  pccmonroe.org

*A rich display of our
Glorious Emmanuel's Grace
in subduing multitudes of sinners to Himself*



There was a considerable revival in the end of 1730, and the three following years at Freehold in the province of New-Jersey, under the ministry of Mr. John Tennent, and his brother Mr. William, who succeeded him. Of which take the following account from a letter to the Rev. Mr. Prince at Boston.

I desire to notice thankfully the late rich display of our glorious Emmanuel's grace, in subduing, by his word and spirit, multitudes of sinners to himself.

The settling of this place with a gospel-ministry was owing, under God, to the agency of some Scots people, that came to it: among whom there was none so painful in this blessed undertaking as one Walter Ker, who, in the year 1685, for his faithful and conscientious adherence to God and his truth, as professed by the church of Scotland, was there apprehended, and sent into this country, under a sentence of perpetual banishment.

[But] the major part of the congregation could not be said to have so much as a name to live. Family prayer was unpracticed by all, a very few excepted; ignorance so overshadowed their minds, that the doctrine of the new-birth, when clearly explained, and powerfully pressed upon them, as absolutely necessary to salvation was made a common game of; so that not only the preachers but professors