

Rev. Dr. William M. Tennent, relates a very remarkable incident :

“ABINGDON, Jan. 11, 1806.

“Sir,—The anecdote of my venerable relative, the late William Tennent, of Freehold, which you wished me to send you, is as follows :

“During the great revival of religion, which took place under Mr. Whitefield and others, distinguished for their piety and zeal at that period, Mr. Tennent was laboriously active, and much engaged to help forward the work, in the performance of which he met with strong and powerful temptations. The following is related, as received in substance from his own lips, and may be considered as extraordinary and singularly striking.

“On the evening preceding public worship, which was to be attended the next day, he selected a subject for the discourse, which was to be delivered, and made some progress in his preparations. In the morning he resumed the same subject with an intention to extend his thoughts farther on it, but was presently assaulted with a temptation that the Bible, which he then held in his hand, was not of divine authority, but the invention of man. He instantly endeavored to repel the temptation by prayer, but his endeavors proved unavailing. The temptation continued, and fastened upon him with greater strength as the time advanced for public service. He lost all the thoughts which he had on his subject the preceeding evening. He tried other subjects, but could get nothing for the people. The whole book of God, under that distressing state of mind, was a sealed book to him ; and, to add to his affliction, he was, to use his own words, ‘shut up in prayer.’ A cloud, dark as that of Egypt, oppressed his mind. Thus agonized in spirit, he proceeded to the Church, where he found a large congregation assembled, and waiting to hear the word ; and then it was, he observed, that he was more deeply distressed than ever, and especially for the dishonor which he feared would fall upon religion through him that day. He resolved, however, to attempt the service. He introduced it by singing a psalm, during which time his agitation increased to the highest degree.