

ART. XVI.—*A Cumbrian in Virginia*. By C. ROY  
HUDLESTON, F.S.A.

*Read at Grange-over-Sands, August 31st, 1961.*

IN CW2 i the late George Watson made some totally undeserved strictures on the Rev. Joseph Tickell, sometime curate of Penrith. The facts of Mr Tickell's career are as follows. As a literate person he was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Carlisle on 9 June 1754, his title being the curacy of Bolton within the parish of Morland. On 26 June 1757 he was ordained priest at Carlisle, and he served at Penrith as curate from 1757 until 1760, when he answered a call from Virginia, where Episcopalian ministers were badly needed. The registers of Penrith contain the following note:

“There are no entries of baptisms or burials from June 17th to October 5th 1760, occasioned by Mr Joseph Tickell leaving the curacy and going into Virginia.”

(Nothing is said, be it noted, of the responsibility of the vicar of Penrith in this matter of registers, and the note is hardly accurate, since entries for 18 August and 7, 9, 10 September and 4 October 1760 follow). On the authority of this note, Mr Watson declared that Tickell “disappeared, taking with him the day-book of baptisms and burials, thereby creating the only gap to be found in the Penrith Registers.”

He then goes on to speak of Mr John Page declining to take orders and be consecrated a bishop in Virginia, adding “perhaps the runaway curate from Penrith might fill the gap; who knows?” The answer to this idle speculation is that Tickell certainly never became a bishop, but it is true that he served the Church in Virginia faithfully and honourably, respected by all, until the day

of his death. To speak of his "disappearance" is nonsense, and to call him "a runaway curate" is to slander a man whom all the records show to have been straightforward and upright.

Worse still, Mr Watson's quite unjustified condemnation has been repeated by the late Colonel Haswell in his preface to vol. iv of the printed parish registers of Penrith, where he writes:

"in the year is 1756 is the baptism of one of the Littlejohn family, who migrated to the United States; and the Curate, J. Tickels [*sic*] left us in the lurch in a similar manner in 1760."

Presumably both Mr Watson and Colonel Haswell expected Tickell to serve as curate at Penrith until the end of his days, but of course it was customary for a curate to move on after a few years. It may be noted that there is no criticism of Tickell for leaving Bolton after three years. Tickell was a close friend of the Rev. Jonathan Boucher, his countryman, who speaks of him as his "dear friend" and "a man of worth". From Boucher we learn that Tickell was a native of Wigton but so far I have not been able to identify him with certainty in the registers, where the following baptisms and burials occur:

- 1713-14 February 14. Joseph son of John Tickel of Wigton bap.
- 1729 June 13. Joseph son of John Tickel of Wigton bap.
- 1730 October 2. Joseph son of John Tickel of Wigton buried.
- 1731 July 12. Joseph son of John Tickel of Wigton bap.
- 1731 August 6. Joseph son of John Tickel buried.<sup>1</sup>

On the whole I am disposed to think that the Joseph Tickel baptised in 1714 is the one who was buried on 6 August 1731, and the child christened on 12 July 1731 grew up, and was the Joseph Tickell who was ordained in 1754.

Concerning his life in Virginia, Mr John Melville

<sup>1</sup> All these entries are taken from the Rev. F. B. Swift's printed version of the registers of Wigton.

Jennings, Director of the Virginia Historical Society, is kind enough to write to me as follows:

"According to the available records here, Mr Tickell does not appear on the local scene until 1763, when he became rector of Trinity Parish, Louisa County, Virginia. We can assume he was occupying some other clerical post in the colony prior to that date, perhaps in one of the Tidewater counties. As was the case with so many of the clergy in colonial Virginia, Mr Tickell not only ministered to the spiritual needs of the communicants of his parish, but also conducted a school.

"His name is occasionally mentioned in the *Virginia Gazette*, a newspaper published in Williamsburg, Virginia, during the 18th century, in connection with sermons he delivered on behalf of and as a trustee of 'the Fund for the relief of the widows and orphans of poor clergymen'. He served on the board of that Fund under the chairmanship of the Rev. John Camm, President of the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg.

"He died in November 1768, still rector of Trinity Parish. His obituary notice appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* on 1 December. Among his friends in the colony was the Rev. Jonathan Boucher, who referred to him at p. 62 of his *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist* as follows: 'I had the great misfortune to lose by death another dear friend, the Reverend Mr Joseph Tickell, who was my countryman and a man of worth'."

Mr Jennings adds that he has been unable to discover where Mr Tickell was buried, or what his age at death was.

Mr Jennings has kindly sent me a photostat of two folios, nos. 57 and 58, from the Louisa County Will Book 2, covering the years 1767-1783. These folios record that a bond of £1,000 was entered into on 12 December 1768 by Jonathan Boucher, Robert Armistead and George Pottie, to Charles Barret, Thomas Johnson, James Overton and Waddy Thomson, gentlemen, justices of the County of Louisa, the condition of the obligation being that if Boucher, the administrator of "all the goods, chattles and credits of Joseph Tickell deceased make or cause to be made a true and perfect inventory of all the goods and chattles of the deceased, and the same so made, do exhibit in the County Court of Louisa and the same goods and

chattles do well and truly administer, and do make a just and true account of all his actions, and all the rest and residue of the said goods which shall be found remaining upon the said administrator's account, shall deliver and pay to such persons as the justices shall direct, and if it shall hereafter appear that any last will was made by the deceased and the executor or executors exhibit the same in the said court, making request to have it allowed and approved, "accordingly if the said Jonathan Boucher being thereunto required, do render and deliver up his Letters of Administration, approbation of such testament being first had and made in the said Court, then this obligation to be void . . ." The bond is signed by Boucher and his bondsmen, "teste John Nelson, C.L.C."

In CW2 xxvii 127 the late Canon Bouch, in his account of Jonathan Boucher, wrote "While still at Annapolis he was able to assist a fellow Cumbrian, the Rev. Mr Tickell . . . on his death bed and by subsequently sending his savings, £300, to his poor relatives there" — i.e. at Wigton.

The kindness was rewarded: the Rev. John Tickell and Miss Mary Tickell of Wigton gave Mr Boucher a silver two-handled cup and cover, engraved with the Boucher arms and with an inscription recording their gratitude as follows:

"From the Revd. Mr. John & Miss Mary Tickell of Wigton in Cumberland to the Revd. Mr. Jonathan Boucher as an acknowledgment for his trouble & great kindness in settling the affairs of their Deceased Brother the Revd. Mr. Joseph Tickell of Louisa County in the Colony of Virginia and remitting his effects to them in England anno 1771."

The cup was inherited by Mr Boucher's descendant Mr Godfrey Locker-Lampson, and on his instructions was sold by Messrs Christie, Manson & Woods Ltd., in their sale of 1 July 1936, as lot 64. It was bought for £41. 13s. 9d. by Miss Locker-Lampson.