

F. H. P. Greenough.

A curious little book,  
written with old-fashioned sim-  
plicity.

1835.

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MEMOIR

OF

Mrs. THOMAZIN JOHNSON.

**MEMOIR**  
**OF**  
*Gibson (Blanchard)*  
**Mrs. THOMAZIN JOHNSON,**  
**OF**  
**Braintree, Mass.**

**WITH**  
**AN ACCOUNT OF HER PIOUS LINEAGE, FROM**  
**JOHN ALDEN, THE FIRST PILGRIM**  
**FATHER WHO PLACED FOOT**  
**ON PLYMOUTH ROCK.**

**BY HER SON,**  
**L. D. JOHNSON**

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**MEMOIR**  
**or**  
**MRS. JOHNSON.**

**CHAPTER I.**

**INTRODUCTION.**

To raise a monument to the memory of the just, and rescue from oblivion the fading accounts of departed virtue,—to exhibit examples for the living, by bringing to view the characters of those who have run their race,—and to open a channel through which a happy influence may roll on and bless generations yet unborn, are the objects of this humble attempt.

Some years having already gone by since the principal subject of this memento went down to the grave, and a short account of her

*“life and death,”* having appeared in a public journal, her name would, perhaps, have soon been forgotten by the world, had not recent occurrences favoured the presentation to her numerous friends of a more correct and interesting account of her life, and of the life of her progenitors, whose lineage runs parallel with the history of this country. Nor would this form a sufficient reason for troubling the world with this little memorial, did not other important objects enter in and form a part of the present design.

Conscious, however, of the reluctance generally felt at being detained upon the threshold of a person's narrative, and at having arrayed before us a long train of ancestors, it might be well, under other circumstances, to make some apology for so doing. But when the reader is informed that the train of ancestors here brought forward is designed to increase the strength of that moral influence which it is hoped this work will effect—and that the soul-cleansing stream, which has flowed through a lineage of more than two hundred years,

may now receive such an impetus, as that it shall still pass on, to save each forth-coming generation — it is hoped he will be encouraged to read over the following pages.

In looking over the ancestors of a pious and lamented mother, the writer would take liberty to observe, that should some of them be found among the *rich* and *honourable* of their day, he is not conscious of being prompted by *vanity of mind* to show with particularity their position in society; but rather to give their true characters: for he acknowledges that the present generation is too remote from wealth and high birth to feel any of their influence. Nor would he withhold, that, through the tender mercy of God, he has been permitted to share in the benefits of another influence, more high and holy than what could be exerted by wealth or power. And with a hope that others may be induced to submit to the influence of religion, the following narrative is given to the world.

Mrs. THOMAZIN GIBSON JOHNSON was born in Braintree, (Norfolk Co.) Mass., Sept. 20th, 1765 ; where she spent the days of her childhood, and where the first serious impressions were made on her mind. Her father, Nehemiah Blanchard, was a native of Braintree, where all his ancestors had lived ever since the settlement of the town ; but her mother was a native of Boston.

Mr. and Mrs. Blanchard walked in the steps of their pious progenitors, went to the same house of God, where their devout ancestors had sacrificed to the Most High, until they had offered at the altar the children which God had given them, consisting of three daughters, of which Thomazin was the youngest.

About the year 1778, for reasons with which we are not acquainted, Mr. Blanchard moved with his family to Lunenburg, Worcester Co., where he lived until in a very sudden manner his earthly career was terminated. While on a journey into the province of Maine, in attempting to cross the Kennebeck

river upon the ice, he broke through and was drowned. A very small hand trunk, which he threw upon the ice while struggling in vain to extricate himself from the grasp of death, was all that ever fell into the hands of his grandchildren to commemorate his name. He was afterwards found, and buried in a stranger's grave, to be seen no more till the resurrection.

Dying thus alone, none but God heard the last accents of his voice. But having lived the life of the righteous, he left not his afflicted wife and children to mourn as those who have no hope. The object of this journey is worthy of notice and will be mentioned in its proper place.

Not long after the family moved to Lunenburg, the oldest daughter married and settled in Charlestown, N. H., where she was living and prospering in the world at the time of her father's death. Mrs. B., now left a widow, and with but a small estate, was invited by her son-in-law and daughter to move up and live in their family. This was done not far



from 1782, and in about two years after their removal to Charlestown the subject of these memoirs was married to Mr. Jeremiah Johnson.

The reader's attention is now called to look over the ancestors of Mrs. Johnson, both on the paternal and maternal side; the former extending back to 1620, the account being preserved by the descendants of the puritans with a correctness which it is presumed will not be doubted. It is this that enables us to trace our forefathers through such a series of years, and transmit the following account with unwavering confidence in its correctness, to their posterity.

The personage, recognized as the patriarch, and placed at the head of more than two thousand descendants, is one of the pious, pilgrim fathers who emigrated from England to Holland, and subsequently to this country by the name of *John Alden*. The first time this name appears upon the records of these piously renowned men, we find it signed to an instrument drawn up on board the ship,

**May Flower**, anchored in **Cape Cod Harbour**, — by which these pioneers of our settlement in **New England**, and whose sons formed and established our free, republican government, formed themselves into a civil compact. It was signed “The eleventh day of November, in the year of the reign of our sovereign lord, **James**, king of **England**, **France** and **Ireland**, the eighteenth, and of **Scotland** the fifty-fourth, **Anno Domini 1620.**” Speaking of this instrument, a late author says, that it established a most important principle, a principle which is the foundation of all democratic institutions in **America**.

The **Hon. Francis Baylis**, in his memoirs of **Plymouth Colony**, after describing the movements of the pilgrims in their flight from **Europe** to this country, until they anchored in **Plymouth Harbour**, proceeds as follows: — “On the 22nd the company left the vessel and landed on a rock near the shore, which now bears a consecrated character, to which pilgrimages are made, and to which the posterity of the pilgrims delight to throng, to call

up the sublime associations with which its history is connected. The honour of having first placed foot on this rock, has been claimed for John Alden and Mary Chilton." In 1627 we find Mr. Alden associated with Governor Bradford and others in an enterprise which included the entire commerce of the colony ; involving a responsibility of some thousand pounds — and all to prepare the way for the emigration of that part of the church which they had left behind ; who were now without a pastor. Mr. Robinson, their former pastor, stayed in Leyden with that part of the church which our fathers left, having uniformly sustained a character, "In which the most eminent faculties and the highest attainments were absorbed by the predominating power of a solemn, affectionate piety." He died in Holland 1625.

Mr. Alden came to this country a single man, and was married to an extremely engaging young female pilgrim, by the name of Priscilla Mullins. Their family consisted of eight children, four sons and four daughters.

“From him are descended all who bear the name of Alden in the United States,” one of whom died in Middleborough, Mass. but a few years ago in the hundred and fourth year of his age. Mr. Alden lived sixty-six years after he came to America, and died in the year 1686. The Historical Memoir contains the following obituary notice of his death.

“John Alden died in the course of this year at Duxbury. He was one of the pilgrims of the May Flower, and is believed to have been at the time of his death, the last surviving signer of the original governmental compact; the Charles Carrol of his day; the last of the pilgrims. Tradition assigns him the good fortune to have been the first who leaped on the rock at the time of landing; but his claim to this distinction is disputed, and by some allowed to Mary Chilton, a young female pilgrim. He had for many years been deeply engaged in the public concerns of the colony. He was chosen assistant Governor as early as 1633, and was continued in that office with but few interruptions until the time of his

death ; and at that time he was and had been nearly all the time since the year 1666 the first assistant Governor. He was born in England in 1597, and died at the age of eighty-nine. After the death of Captain Standish he was for some time the Treasurer of the colony. He possessed much native talent, was decided, ardent, resolute and persevering. Indifferent to danger, he was resolute in duty even unto slaying. A bold and hardy man, stern, austere and unyielding, of exemplary piety and incorruptible integrity, an iron-nerved puritan, who could hew down forests and live on crumbs. He hated innovation and changes ; steadily walked in the ways of his youth, and adhered to the principles of those whom he was taught to honour."

## CHAPTER II.

THE first person we find in the descending line, after leaving the Hon. and pious Mr. Alden, is his oldest daughter. She married Mr. Bass, of Braintree, where they both lived and died. The Christian name of Mr. Bass we cannot find. Not being in our *lineal records*, we have searched for it elsewhere in vain. The Historical Memoir in giving a short account of John Alden's descendants, mentions the names of his sons, where they settled, and their professions; it also notices the marriage of the four daughters, but does not give their names. In noticing the marriage of this lady, to whom our manuscript record gives the name of Ruth Alden, the sentence in the Memoir stands thus, "One of his daughters married —— Bass, of Braintree;" then leaves her with saying, Mrs. Bass was a maternal ancestor of two presidents of the United States, John Adams and John



Quincy Adams. (So much from the Historical Memoir.)

Though we cannot give the Christian name of this gentleman, yet we are happy to learn from the record we have, that his father, who must have been an emigrant to Massachusetts Colony, was one of the first members of the Congregational Church in Braintree, and sustained in it the office of Ruling Elder.

Mr. and Mrs. Bass both having parents thus pious and honourable, we might conclude, without much hesitation, that they were brought up "in the way in which they should go;" and we have great evidence to believe that "when they were old they did not depart from it."

Though Mr. Bass filled no public station either in church or state, like those before him, yet, by a long course of honest industry, he was made the steward of a handsome fortune. But it was in sterling piety, modest meekness, and chaste conversation, coupled with filial fear, which sweetens and improves all the scenes of domestic life, that

both he and his companion obtained the greatest honour, affluence and happiness. Possessing these graces, they brought up their children, inspiring them with such principles as would prepare them to go out and continue to exert a good moral influence in the world. After having lived in the enjoyment of those Gospel graces, which make us happy amidst the sorest ills of life, and happy on the most distant verge of time, this devoted pair came to the close of life at a good old age. Like the calm setting sun, which shines with most brilliant splendor, while closing its eye upon the world ; so these heaven-bound travellers closed their earthly career, leaving their posterity these valuable bequests, *a happy life for their example*, and triumph in death, the sure prize of piety.

Were we acquainted with all their children, it would not come within our province at this time to give the character of but one of their daughters. She married a gentleman in Braintree by the name of Ephraim Thayer. This lady having both parents and grand parents



whose characters would suffer very little in a comparison with the ancient patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac, took them for her spiritual guides, and in early life commenced walking carefully in their steps. She had the good fortune to find in the partner of her choice a spirit kindred to her own. His soul felt with hers the accumulated weight of holy influence, descending from pious ancestors ; a wider extension of which the providence of God was preparing them to give, in the bountiful blessing of fourteen children — consisting of the scripture number of each sex, *seven* sons and *seven* daughters. These children were all led to the same temple where their forefathers had worshipped, until they hopefully yielded to the influence of truth ; and *all* made a profession of their faith ; and *all* became members of the same church in Braintree in which their parents were members, and within whose pale their progenitors had lived and died.

The frequent struggles between the English and French, from time to time, called

most of the seven sons into the *field of battle* — through which they all lived to return. And it is recorded as a remarkable instance of divine Providence, that after passing through all the dangers in which these men had been exposed, the whole family, sixteen in number, were seen in the Braintree church, sitting together at the table of the Lord. These fourteen children, like the sons of Jacob, all lived to settle down in the world, and to have large families. The number of all their children was one hundred and thirty-two ; averaging nine and ten to a family ; and what is not a little singular, we again meet in their children an equal number of the sexes—sixty-six sons and sixty-six daughters. One of these sons was Nehemiah Blanchard, father of Mrs. Johnson, the lady whose memoir follows in this work.

The parents of these fourteen children and one hundred and thirty-two grand children, the influence of whose character was about to be felt by so many, deserve still further notice, which, however, must be short.

Imbued with the spirit of their ancestors, they walked before God with integrity of heart, and left a name among their friends more to be valued than great riches. The consort of their grandson, the writer's grandmother, saw the last days of Mrs. Thayer, who outlived her husband. Though Mrs. Blanchard was but a youth at the time of Mrs. Thayer's death, yet she caught the *odour* of this aged matron's fame and has transmitted it down to us. And though these personages are cherished with religious veneration, and are regarded by their descendants as proper way-marks to heaven, yet few, and perhaps none, now live, who ever saw these devoted persons.

There has fallen into our hands a poetic effusion, eulogizing, not only Mrs. Thayer and her husband, but her venerable ancestors. Though we are not so fortunate as to get the date, or the author's name, yet it came to hand with good authority for believing that it was written about one hundred years ago. It is here inserted, not only to show how much

the persons were beloved whose praise it sings, but also for the testimony it bears to the truth of the preceding narrative. Perhaps the reader may imagine our poet has "wooed the muse in vain," but it is too valuable a relic of antiquity to be thrown into the shade.

Good people all, I pray attend  
To what I've got to say  
Concerning one that's dead and gone ;  
Death summon'd her away.

An ancient handmaid of the Lord,  
The wife of Ephraim Thayer ;  
Who lately from us has deceas'd,  
Her praise I will declare.

The person, now of whom I write,  
Is worthy of our praise :  
With God she walk'd, in Christ she died,  
She sprang from godly race.

Her grandsire was a holy man,  
Who did the truth reveal ;  
And to defend Christ's kingdom great,  
He burn'd with holy zeal.

Like holy Abraham of old,  
Left land and kindred all ;  
And wand'ring up and down he went  
Wherever God did call.

From Old England he did come o'er  
Where heathen did possess,  
For to enjoy religion free ;  
This man the Lord did bless ;

And made him a good Ruler here ;  
Let's not forget his fame ;  
He lived above the age of man,  
John Alden was his name.

Also her father\* was a man  
Who lived to good estate ;  
He lived an honest, holy life,  
And died a hopeful saint.

She wedded was in youthful days  
To Mr. Ephraim Thayer ;  
He lived a good religious life,  
This truth *I can declare.*

They lovingly together lived,  
And never did provoke ;  
And like two lambs they did agree,  
And both pull'd in one yoke.

\* Mr. Bass.

The years she lived a married life  
Was fifty-nine and more ;  
The whole time of his pilgrimage  
Lack'd some months of four score.

She also was a fruitful vine,  
The truth I may relate ;  
And fourteen children she did bear,  
Who lived to man's estate.

From these did spring a num'rous race,  
One hundred thirty-two ;  
Sixty and six, each sex alike,  
As I declare to you.

This does not appear to be all of the canto ;  
but what there is informs us that the persons  
whom it commemorates

“ —— lived a good religious life ; ”

that they had that charity by which

“ They lovingly together lived,  
And never did provoke.”

It was said of them that, amidst the care of  
bringing up their numerous family, no unkind-  
ness or unpleasantness was at any time mani-  
fested to each other.

Oh how valuable is religion ! how exactly adapted to the wants of fallen man ! With the aid of its gracious influence, whole families and whole communities, whether in prosperity or adversity, may find it enabling them sweetly to harmonize in their social circles, to sympathize in each other's sorrows, and promote each other's present happiness and eternal welfare. It will make them proper examples "in spirit and conversation," for those around them ; proper examples in the order of their house, "the meat of their table," and their apparel, and in their constancy at the domestic altar ; yea, in every good work.

The only thing that we are prepared to say of the mother of Mr. Blanchard is, that she, with the other thirteen children of Mrs. Thayer, was hopefully pious, and they were all members of the church, as we have before mentioned. Of her husband and children we can give no account, except of Mr. Blanchard, our pious grandfather, whose life and death have been already mentioned. But we will here add, what should have been mentioned



with the notice of his death, that sober piety and uprightness of heart and life were his uniform character. It would be exceedingly gratifying, if we had it in our power, to say the same of all the hundred and thirty-two grandchildren of Mrs. Thayer ; but we have no information on the subject.

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### CHAPTER III.

HITHERTO Mrs. Johnson's ancestry has been viewed only on her father's side. The reader's attention is now called to a short account of her progenitors on her mother's side. Though it may not display the blessings of family religion, like the account already given, yet we presume it will equally engage his attention. Mrs. Duesbury Blanchard, Mrs. Johnson's mother, we have said was a native of Boston. Her maiden name was Gibson. James Gibson, Esq., her father, was a wealthy, wholesale



merchant in Boston, at the time of her birth. He was born in England; and report says "was a connection of Edmund Gibson, the eminent antiquarian, and bishop of London." He came to this country and commenced business in Boston not far from the year 1732. Sustaining an office in the military forces of the city, he took a deep interest in the war with the French. In 1740 he hired a body of volunteers with his own money, went down to Cape Breton, fought, captured a French frigate, and returned home in victory. In this tour he distinguished himself for his courage and eminent skill, which the British king and government attempted to reward, by making him a present of *five hundred pounds*, besides conferring on him some other honours. But he never received the one nor enjoyed the other, being suddenly taken away by death.

Mr. Gibson was in the habit of going himself to the West Indies to purchase goods; where he married his lady. She was a native of Barbadoes by the name of Thomazin Duesbury. They had but one child, a daughter;

to whom they gave the name of Mary Duesbury Gibson. This child was afterwards, by marriage, Mrs. Blanchard, as will be seen in the sequel, and the mother of Mrs. Johnson.

In one of Mr. G.'s voyages to Barbadoes he had some difficulty with a person, of whom he recovered a considerable amount of damage. Just before Mr. Gibson was to sail for home, his defendant came forward, acknowledged the settlement to be just, expressed his regret for the perturbation of feeling which had interrupted their former friendship, and invited Mr. Gibson to dine with him before he left for the United States. The invitation was accepted; after which Mr. Gibson went on board the vessel, and in about two hours he was a dead man. Apprehensions were entertained that poison was put in his food.

His amiable companion, now in Boston, being a person of the most sensitive mould, and far away from all her relations, was illy prepared to hear the melancholy intelligence of her husband's death; intelligence, which was no less than a death-warrant to herself.

If she looked upon her worldly affluence it afforded no soothing cordial to her bleeding heart. If she looked upon her smiling daughter, it only reminded her that its father was torn away by death as she feared in a *cruel manner*; with forebodings that her child must soon be left an orphan in a land of strangers. Unsupported by grace, we fear, and a proper resignation to the allotments of divine Providence, she soon grieved herself into the arms of death.

Her parents being foreigners, Mary Duesbury had not a single relation in the United States to mourn with her for the loss of her father or mother. Thus was she left, when a little more than ten years of age, alone, and, as it would seem, without friends in the world. She, together with her large estate, to which she was the only heir, was committed into the hands of a guardian, who proved to be a corrupt and fraudulent man. She was, however, placed under the care of Rev. Mr. Niles, of Braintree, with whom an agreement was made to superintend her education.

It was fortunate for her that "Mr. Niles was a clergyman of hospitable feelings and unusual piety for those days." He received her into his family, and gave her every advantage for learning and improvement which the times afforded, until he died. Whether he ever received a full remuneration for the expenses of her education, we are not prepared to say. It was in this town she entertained a hope in Christ, formed the circle of her youthful associates, was married first to a gentleman by the name of Hayden, with whom she lived but a little while before the companion of her youth was taken away by death. Having no family she was left again alone in the world. She was afterwards married to Mr. Blanchard, who was her second husband.

Efforts were made, from time to time, by herself and friends, to obtain her property; but their exertions were mostly fruitless. It was once published in this country, by order of parliament, that if there were any heirs to the property of James Gibson in the United States, by proving their claims there was

money ready for them. This induced a renewed effort. A man was sent to England, proved the heirship of Mrs. Blanchard, and received a sum of money ; how much we are not able to state ; but it was a sufficient sum to induce the agent to elope, and nothing more has been seen of him since. As he carried off with him the most important papers, it was thought difficult for Mrs. Blanchard to obtain any more of her property abroad ; so that all foreign efforts were given up.

Her cruel guardian had so managed with her property, that she could never obtain but little of it after she was married, except the small rent of a building, which we believe she received till she died. There remained, therefore, but one more hope of gain, from being heiress to a large estate. Either for services done in the war, or from the legacy of his friends in England, Mr. Gibson had a tract of land fall to him, laying in the (then) Province of Maine. After Mr. Blanchard moved to Lunenburg, from a want perhaps of proper means to bring up his little family, he

was induced to take a journey down to the Province, and see if he could find and learn the worth of that land. This was the *object* of his journey when he was drowned in the Kennebeck river.

Having thus buried her husband in an unsuccessful attempt to gain her property, and learning how true it is, that "riches take to themselves wings and fly away," she dismissed all further anxiety about property from her mind, and more fully than ever before, committed herself to the care of Him who hath said, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me." After moving to Charlestown, N. H. to live with her daughter, she married the third time. This husband also died before the writer of this was born; and though he was well acquainted with his grandmother before her death, yet he knows nothing of the history of her last husband, only that his name was Carter, and that he lived but few years after they were married. He never knew her only by that name, yet it was for the writer's own



grandfather, Mr. Blanchard; that he was most-ly inclined to inquire when a child.

Mrs. Carter's life presents truly a chequered scene. In it she was thoroughly taught the mutability of all earthly things. Her infancy was surrounded with the flush of wealth, and though she was left an orphan, yet her early youth presented prospects which made it appear as though

“Fortune fond had built her nest on high.”

For though she was wronged out of what might have carried her through life, supplying all her temporal wants, yet she was permitted to pass the morning of life in the garden of affluence, with liberty to pluck each flower as she pleased. Never did a new rising morning shine with a clearer sun, or present the appearance of a more cloudless day, than that presented by her “morn of life.” But for wise purposes, no doubt, she was, *like our first parents, driven out of the garden*, and obliged to get *her bread* by the labour of her hands. While she was preparing to lay her

hand on treasures she called her own, they vanished like the "fabric of a baseless vision."

Her riper years were filled up with trials and disappointments. Do we find her happy with her bosom friend, the companion of her earliest love? we look again and see her following him to the grave. Do we again see her going to the house of God and taking sweet counsel with one who will with her divide her sorrows? we follow her but a few years before she is bowed down with grief, amidst the responsibilities of a double charge; mourning the loss of her husband, the father of her orphan children, who sleeps in a stranger's grave. Should we still pursue her path, we should find her walking through a vale of tears; proving the timely caution of pious Dr. Young,

"Lean not on earth; 'twill pierce thee to the heart;  
A broken reed at best; but oft a spear;  
On its sharp point peace bleeds, and hope expires."

Though cast down, yet she was not forsaken. She seemed to have profited by the instruction received from her reverend teacher



in her early education. She ever maintained the views of gospel doctrine which she first embraced, and her confidence in God, her faith, hope and love, were bright and strong to the end of life. She seemed ever anxious to do good. Many instances might be recorded of her perseverance to do what she esteemed to be her duty, to her honour as a Christian. Though she passed through heart-rending scenes, yet, unlike her bereaved mother, who, it was supposed, died with grief, she viewed all her vicissitudes as paths in which it was best for her to walk; marked out by Him who governs the providences and studies the best good of his creatures. With these views, under dispensations however afflictive, like Mary of old, she calmly took her place at the Saviour's feet, waiting to learn the lesson which it was designed to teach. Her powers of mind being strong and vigorous, she retained her senses to the last. After having endured the hard storms of life with firmness and great regularity, she died at Ban-

gor, N. Y., universally esteemed, in the eighty-eighth year of her age.

Religion ! thou art the chief and only permanent source of happiness to man. Though we flourish in wealth and soar in fame, without thy precious gifts we languish and die. Thou hast, indeed, trials appointed for thy followers ; but thou comest in the strength of God, and ledest them out through them all. As the darkness of the world thickens around them, thou sheddest a brighter light in the cloudless clime whither they are travelling. As they have days of severe fatigue, and nights more wearisome and watchful, thou layest the repose of their souls nearer the bosom of their God. Wo unto him that seeketh his happiness apart from thee ! He shall be miserably disappointed.

## CHAPTER IV.

HAVING followed Mrs. Johnson's narrative in the preceding pages, from the place of her birth until she was settled in life, we shall now bring forward that part of her history with which we, ourselves, are more particularly acquainted. From early life she states that her mind was much impressed with subjects of a serious nature. The instruction and example of pious parents, together with the means of grace she regularly attended through the early part of her days, had a salutary effect upon her mind. About the time of her father's sudden death, her attention again was called to the subject of religion. Concerning this time we have often heard her observe, "I gave my heart wholly to the Lord, and believe I found the forgiveness of my sins. If ever I felt love to my Saviour it was in those days." Moving, soon after with her

mother up to New Hampshire, she was taken away from the sound of the "church going bell," and from those privileges which had been rendered so useful to her soul. She consequently made no public profession of her faith at the altar of God, nor of her love to the Saviour at the communion of the saints; and her light, if not entirely extinguished, shone but dimly for years. A correspondent, who was well acquainted with her in those days, in alluding to them, says, "Though her general design appeared to be to live in the fear of God, yet, I believe, if she had love to her Saviour, she felt so many embarrassments which settled close around her, that it was but very little in exercise."

Her husband's oldest brother at the commencement of the revolutionary war enlisted as a soldier during its continuance. After staying four years he became wearied with his hardships, ran away from the army, and came home. He was pursued and taken; and must be carried back, suffer the penalties of the martial law, and serve the remainder of

the war, unless he could send a substitute. This, Jeremiah, with the consent of his parents, volunteered to do ; and at the age of seventeen left to join the ranks. He says, "To save my brother from a whipping was not my only object in leaving home. Discontented by means of my religious views, I thought, though my mother was an able woman in the scriptures, she must be mistaken about Christian doctrine ; and I wanted to go out into the world, mingle with other men, and learn their opinions." Finding the army a poor place to improve in religious knowledge, after peace was proclaimed, he returned home, as much dissatisfied with his doctrine, and a greater sinner than before. At the age of twenty-five he was married to the subject of these memoirs, settled down upon a little farm on the fertile banks of the Connecticut river, enjoying, amidst the pleasures of rural scenery, a moderate share of the comforts of life. He moved some years afterward into Weathersfield, Vermont.

Remaining unsettled and unhappy with re-

gard to religion, he was ready to receive any new thoughts that might be offered to his mind. In this state of mind he went to hear the celebrated Elhanan Winchester, who, on returning from a tour to the south, commenced preaching a sentiment called the *restoration doctrine*, signifying that there would come up a period in eternity when God would have a great jubilee, like that of the Jews at the end of forty-nine years, when all the infernal spirits of the nether world would be restored to heaven. Mr. Johnson became a partial convert to the new doctrine; at best he made it a stepping-stone to unqualified universalism. His doctrine being formed from his views of the attributes of God, rather than from his word, he laboured and laboured in vain to interpret the scriptures in accordance with universalism. But insurmountable difficulties fell in his way. Meeting with the sentence of condemnation against the impenitent on almost every page, whether *living* or *dying*, he thought the scriptures could not be in accordance with the merciful and benevolent attri-



butes of God. And what was the consequence? Therefore they cannot be true. He had associates and the writings of Thomas Paine to confirm his opinions; and was led on from step to step until he looked upon the Bible and revealed religion as an imposition upon mankind. Falling thus into infidelity, he walked in the winter coldness and Egyptian darkness of deism and atheism for years. Surely

“They set at odds Heaven’s jarring attributes,  
And with one excellence another wound;  
Maim Heaven’s perfection, break its equal beams,  
Bid mercy triumph over God himself,  
Undeified by their opprobrious praise:  
A God all mercy is a God unjust.”

It was through these scenes that his beloved companion “had but little of the love of God in exercise.” Never, perhaps, was a husband more attentive to the interests of his family, or more ready to sympathize with them in every thing except in matters of religion. He was considered scrupulously honest and moral in his conduct, by his townsmen, except

as a scoffer of sacred things ; and in consequence of this, Mrs. Johnson found "great embarrassments." It was here, also, that she realized the blessing of a pious mother, as fully as in any part of her life. And if her mother ever realized the good advantages of her early education, it was here. Living mostly with her daughter Thomazin, after being left a widow the last time, she was now called upon to take her stand, amidst the laughs, scoffs and sophistry of infidels, firmly on the Lord's side. She stood, by the grace of God, like a brazen pillar against the current ; and by her pious influence held her daughter from going down the dark stream of infidelity, until kind Heaven turned the current. Passing over the coincidence which operated effectually upon his mind, suffice it to say, that near the middle age of life, Mr. Johnson was brought to feel his accountability to God, and to see that he had sinned against Heaven with a high hand. The way of salvation was opened to his view, and he saw all but one thing clearly. He could see no mercy for



himself. Though he beheld in the atonement how God could be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, yet he could not *believe*. He had laboured so industriously to poison the sentiments of others, and to prejudice them against what he now saw to be the only way of salvation, he supposed that God would do injustice to the interests of his kingdom to save him.

After the merciless waves of despair had lashed his wretched, desponding soul for a time, one evening, while walking in his orchard, writhing in the anguish of his spirit, and deploring his case, a ray of hope struck his mind and excited him to pray. He says, "I started back at the thought. It was more than I could at once do, to resolve on what I had feared was a heaven-daring attempt. But with fears lest the earth should swallow me up, I fell upon my knees." He never left the spot until a voice spake to his aching, anxious heart, "I will ; be thou clean ; and he was made whole from that very hour."

Being now translated from darkness to light,

with a clear witness that he was accepted in the Beloved, he thought it to be no more than his reasonable service to give his soul and body, and all he had, to God. A family altar was set up, from which the incense of his morning and evening sacrifice has never ceased to ascend. His house might emphatically have been called, *the house of God*. Nor did his companion linger long behind. Roused to a sense of her obligation, her astonished soul resolved, "I will arise and go to my Father." Hindrances being thus removed, she mourned over her past unfaithfulness, and like the prodigal son she rose and went confessing her sins, when her *Father met her*. The best robe was brought forth, the ring put on her finger as a pledge of forgiving love.

Now being of one heart and one soul, they became true yoke-fellows and helpers together of each other's joys in the way to heaven. On one of the coldest days of winter, they went forward in baptism by immersion, in a place prepared by removing the ice, and united with the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Their children, ten in all, as they came to years of understanding, sought the Lord.

Mr. Johnson sustained various offices in the church; and for a number of years was licensed as a *local* preacher, which gave him liberty to fill vacancies made by the travelling preachers, and to labour where he pleased in the vineyard of the Lord. He spent much time in visiting the churches, but never gave himself wholly to the ministry. After having been an active member for more than sixteen years, he became dissatisfied with the anti-republican nature of her institutions, and with a respectable number of his brethren seceded from the church. They afterward formed themselves into a compact, admitting lay representation into the law-making department, calling themselves Reformed Methodists.

But to return: The way being now prepared, Mrs. Johnson seemed not insensible to the obligations which were increased upon her by the precious privileges with which she was surrounded. She availed herself of every means in her power to increase her heavenly

mindfulness, to strengthen the devotion of her soul, and to live in growing conformity to the divine *mind*. In the attainment of these objects she eminently succeeded, until she rose from moral obscurity to shine in her humble sphere like a star of the first magnitude, until her light returned with her to mingle in the splendors of eternal day.

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## CHAPTER V.

WE shall contemplate the life and character of Mrs. Johnson under several distinct heads ; and shall begin with noticing,

1. *The influence she exerted in her family.*

It is saying very little of any mother, that she has tender affection for her children. But add to this that love which influenced the blessed Saviour, alike, when he *reproved* for sin, as when he *suffered* for our sakes, then shall we see that tender affection, which is too

often manifested in a criminal, injurious indulgence toward children, brought under proper control. It was truly so with Mrs. Johnson. Though her heart was tenderness and sympathy itself, yet, the integrity of her heart before God, and her love for their souls, would not suffer her to see her children do wrong and commit sin, unreprieved. Though her corrections, like the smiting of the righteous, "did not break their bones," it was "like excellent oil upon their heads."

In a letter from her oldest child to the writer, he observes, "I venerate the memory of our pious and worthy mother. As far back as I can recollect, there always appeared something so amiable and lovely in her temper and habits, that obedience seemed but a poor reward. The kindness of her manners so subdued my stubbornness, that almost always it was a privilege to submit to her wishes." There was so much good intention manifested in her countenance, and such a subduing sweetness in the tone of her voice, that she was never obliged to rise into a boisterous

harshness to have her word regarded. Nor were her children held from disobedience, by fear of the rod, so much as by a fear of grieving her heart. They knew her displeasure at their evil-doing was the effect of tenderness and love for them. One of her sons, by a rash, imprudent step of which he was once guilty, saw that he had very much hurt her feelings. He has since been heard to say, "There is nothing in my life which has produced more deeply painful sensations than the recollection of that scene. Long since she died, whenever it occurred to my mind, I have thought I would go miles and make confession over her grave, if it would atone for my sin, and blunt the keen edge of those reflections which have so often pained my mind."

In matters of religion, her own family was her field of labour. Holding sweet communion with God herself, she ever endeavoured to make her children feel, that "thou God seest us." Taught thus to believe that "God is, wherever they might be, in *this* place," they were made to fear, early in life, to sin



against him ; early in life they felt remorse for sin, and were burdened with a guilty conscience. Their parents were united in pointing them to a Saviour. Family worship was a place where they both took an active part. Though Mr. Johnson generally took the lead in the family devotions, yet, at the evening exercise especially, she would often follow her husband in prayer, in which she would most fervently present her supplications in behalf of each child ; very often calling them by name, in presenting them before the Lord, as she thought each case required. The writer of these sheets has often listened to these fervent supplications until his own case came up, when his heart has been so filled with penitential grief, that he would resolve in tears to seek the salvation of his soul.

All the children, except one, who died, made a public profession of religion before they were seventeen years old. Like as their mother had watched over them, and had tenderly brought them from infancy to manhood, so did she, every way in her power, labour to



do in a spiritual sense. Were any of them cast down in their minds, she was ready to bring something from the rich fund of her own experience in the things of God, to console them and to encourage them on their way. Were any of them, from the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed, exposed to temptation, greater than she feared they were able to bear, she would surmount many obstacles and go to their relief. Were they triumphing in the grace of God, her tears of joy would tell that she could "weep with them that weep and rejoice with such as do rejoice." Ready, as she ever was, to do as much as was in her power to meet the temporal wants of her children, she was no less ready, and abundantly more able, through the assisting grace of God, to do them some spiritual good.

*2. Her growth in grace and spiritual attainments.*

Though deeply convinced of her sinfulness and unworthiness, so that her mourning led her to the borders of despair before she found a satisfying evidence of her acceptance with

God, yet when she received the spirit of adoption, all was given up for that. She ever after seemed to prize the inward testimony of a good conscience above every other thing. Her constant labour was to have her eye single to the glory of God, which caused her way to become light in the Lord.

Though the best of Christians have had their trials, and “great heaviness through manifold temptations,” yet it was ever maintained by Mrs. Johnson, that if we walk in Christ, we shall *not* walk in *darkness*; that unbelief, and disobedience are the only sources of it, and not the discharge of duty. Indeed, ever after experiencing the favour of God in the forgiveness of her sins, she placed her trust in the great and precious promises of the Gospel, and maintained the hopeful and believing rather than the doubtful, despairing side of the question; and like the apostle, “though sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.”

There is what some divines have termed a “negative and a positive salvation.” Negative, to be redeemed “from all iniquity;” and

positive, to be "filled with all the fulness of Christ." Negative, to put off the old man with his deeds; and positive, to put on the new man, Christ Jesus, with the armour of light. Like a vessel, emptied and cleansed of its filthiness, and then filled with pure water. This seems to compare with Mrs. Johnson's experience. Her constant labour was, for some years before she finished her course, that the old *leaven* might be wholly cast out, and that she might become a new lump in the Lord. She has often been heard to observe, that for eight years together her mind was seldom beclouded; and when it was, "the anguish of her mind was such that she could not rest day or night, until the Lord smiled upon her."

If *love* to the people of God be an evidence that we are his children, surely Mrs. Johnson must have been one of them; for, ever since the writer has been acquainted with her Christian exercises, if she excelled in either of the graces it must have been this. She loved her brethren with whom she was associated in the

church ; but her love was not confined to these alone. Wherever she found a child of God, of whatever name, she regarded them with Christian esteem and affection. Regardless of circumstances or sect, wherever she found a character that had been enstamped with the image of her Master, that character fell within the embrace of her Christian charity. It appeared to be the delight of her soul to greet *all such* as *fellow* travellers to a better world. We have frequently heard her observe, “ When I go to pray, after praying for myself and family, my mind is drawn out to pray for the dear children of God of every name, and then for the *whole* world.”

Nor was she less wanting in *faith*. When we have tried the veracity of a friend, and have found that friend faithful to his word, our doubts naturally disperse, and our confidence becomes unwavering. So it is in the things of God. In the course of her life Mrs. Johnson had had, like Abraham of old, many things to exercise her faith and confidence in God, whereby it became vigorous and strong ;

so that it might be said of her, that she became "strong in faith, giving glory to God." In the few last years of her life, she abundantly confirmed this statement, by her many remarkable answers to prayer.

We are aware that it is what the incredulous world would be unwilling to believe, should instances be named in confirmation of her strength of faith; especially the many cases of recovery from sickness which the persons themselves believe were in answer to her prayers. And passing over many instances which might be related, we will mention one circumstance which is fresh in our recollection. A poor but pious woman lived near by, whom Mrs. Johnson used frequently to visit. Calling one day, she noticed that her neighbor appeared more than usually cast down, and interrogated her to know the cause. The answer was, "School has begun, and my little girl ought to go, but she has no *gown* fit to wear. I have *nothing* to get her one, and therefore she has to stay at home." At this account Mrs. Johnson's feelings were some-



what moved ; and after conversing a few minutes, said, she wished to spend a few moments in prayer before she left. They kneeled together and called fervently upon the name of the Lord. Then said Mrs. Johnson, as she was about to go, " You need not be cast down any longer about your little girl, for I have evidence that her wants will be supplied." That same day, before night, a sister called upon this woman and told her that she felt her mind impressed to come and make her a present of some cloth, which, said she, " I think is a sufficient pattern for your little daughter a gown." This, among many other instances of the kind, which to us illustrate the declaration respecting the strength of her faith.

Though the providence of God never put it within her power to bestow very bountifully upon the destitute, yet her heart was ever open to bestow, as much as her ability would allow. Her sympathy was unbounded. When it was not in her power to supply their wants from her own resources, she has not unfrequently gone to those who had the means to

do so, pleaded the cause of the destitute, begged for them, (a task not of the most pleasing kind,) and got their wants supplied. Her argument with her children against all superfluity or excess, in which she would never suffer them to indulge, was the *wants of the destitute*.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### 3. *Her influence in the church.*

There are some people who give good evidence of having passed from darkness to light, or from death unto life, and yet, owing in part, perhaps, to their highly sensitive temperament, they never move harmoniously in society; their movements are ever attended with a kind of concussion which keeps society in a turmoil. Nothing but *great* grace will give to their minds a true balance, or enable them to move steadily along. On the other hand, there are



those who may be equally alive to every thing that is passing around them, but having the charity which hopeth all things, they are enabled so to dispose of whatever they meet as to merit the name of peace-makers. The latter was Mrs. Johnson's course.

Whoever has the mind of Christ, has patience, forbearance and forgiving love, extended many more ways to bring a difficult case to a happy issue, than one who does not cherish and possess the spirit of the Gospel. In the course of Mrs. Johnson's pilgrimage, she got the praise of being skilful in up-rooting those little germs of bitterness which were disturbing the peace of friends, and in bringing those who were enduring the cold sorrows of severed friendship, to embrace each other again in the arms of brotherly love. It was by carrying so much of the spirit of Jesus, and urging him as their only example, which enabled her to exert so healing an influence, and enabled her to lighten, rather than increase, the burden of the church. By this spirit she was frequently made the instrument of diffus-

ing and encouraging an active feeling among the people of God ; and in consequence of her fervent prayers and soul-reviving exhortations her company was sought and often solicited to go here and there among the people of God.

4. *Her influence in the world.*

“ We have reason to believe,” says a late writer, “ that many Christian professors increase the prejudice of worldly men, by a coldness and gloomy reserve in their manners.” Though religion is the only source of solid comfort and lasting joy, we must confess that not a few individuals avowedly, and perhaps sincerely, attached to it, give little proof of its happy influence upon themselves. Their fears predominate ; their comforts are outweighed by their troubles. They are oftener walking in the chilling shade, than in the cheering sunshine ; and their sighs are more commonly heard than their songs. Persons of this character may be serious and conscientious, may even at times feel an earnestness and deep interest in closet devotion, but their

social intercourse may be uninteresting and disagreeable. Whether they are ill-informed with respect to the grand doctrines and gracious promises of the Gospel, and as yet detained in partial thralldom ; or whether their constitutional temperament gives a tinge of melancholy to the mind, or whatever other cause may be assigned, religion, in their deportment, has a meagre and uninviting aspect. Their language is harsh, repulsive and full of complaints : their life is a dull routine of tame and tiresome formalities. Is it surprising that persons of this description should raise in the minds of worldly men an unfavourable idea of religion ? The system is charged with the faults of those who espouse it. Hence the hasty conclusion is drawn, that Christian principles darken the lustre and damp the spirits and vivacity of youth ; that they infuse a spirit which sours both the mind and manners of those who yield to their influence. . Such reasoning, however, is unfair and incorrect ; for examples of cheerful and attractive piety are always to be found ; and Mrs. Johnson was

certainly one of them. Though she was firm and unwavering, she was uniformly kind and courteous, spreading the charm of a winning affability over all the social circles in which it was her lot to move.

The people of her age esteemed her as a valuable friend and companion; while the young enjoyed her society and listened to her voice with veneration and delight. Nor was it because she accommodated the standard of truth and the path of duty to the inclinations of those with whom she associated, that she was so readily received and heard; for we have often been astonished to see the plainness and faithfulness with which she has exhorted persons of various standing in the world, and at the same time to see the falling tear bear witness that it was cordially and with effect received.

It was not, however, because she was naturally gifted above others, nor because she was privileged with a superior education, that she recommended the Gospel with so much ease, cheerfulness and success—for her mother

had it not in her power to give her children those advantages with which she was favoured in youth ;—but because she did her work not with disgusting austerity and moroseness, but in the sweet and heavenly temper of the Gospel.

5. *Her delight in the works of nature.*

“What do not they lose,” says a late pious writer, “who are strangers to serious meditation on the wonders and beauties of created nature.” The man whose affections are directed to the Supreme Intelligence is not an indifferent spectator of the manifestations of Deity. He beholds the glorious canopy of heaven over his head in silent grandeur ; his eye penetrates beyond the apparent aspect of the twinkling luminaries which adorn it, and surveys the hand of the Almighty wheeling stupendous globes through the immeasurable regions of space. He contemplates the vast range of mountains which spread around the earth ; the mass of waters in the mighty ocean, and its numerous tribes of animated beings ; the dry land, with all its furniture and



inhabitants ; and while he admires, he is filled with strong emotions of reverence for the glorious perfections of that Being whose mighty hand conducts those stupendous movements ; and he feels the full force of the impressive exhortation of the psalmist, " Let all the earth fear the Lord."

The saints, in all ages of the church, have increased the warmth of their devotional feelings by contemplations of this kind, until they were constrained to say with the psalmist, " Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty ;" and in the attitude of humble worshipers, have offered up their prayers under the influence of those feelings which inspired the immortal Thomson to say,

" Hail, Source of being ! Universal Soul  
Of heaven and earth. Essential Presence, hail !  
To Thee I bow the knee. To Thee my thoughts  
Continually climb, who with thy master hand  
Hath the great whole into perfection touch'd."

In contemplations and feelings of this kind, Mrs. Johnson found a source of comfort and of much enjoyment. Having supreme love to

God, she felt in her heart, that "All thy works praise Thee." If a bird sung, she would gather inspiration from its melodies, that awakened in her heart praise to God, which she would sometimes, from a full soul, express audibly. If a gentle shower were falling, her spiritual eye would recognise in it the *wisdom* and *goodness* as well as the *power* of God. In the loud thunder and red lightning that lingered in the tempest around her dwelling, she heard the voice of God and saw his handy work. As listening to God's ambassadors, she has often followed the tempest's voice, until her union with Him "who maketh the clouds his chariot," was abundantly increased. Thus were the thunders disarmed of their terror, while she often proved that there is no fear in love.

The flowers of spring, the perfumes of summer, the golden harvest, all contributed alike to her spiritual as to her natural refreshment. When the writer was but a young lad, he used to listen with so much pleasure to those lines which his mother was excessively



fond of singing, especially in the summer season, that he wishes to give them an insertion here, not only as an evidence of the pleasure Mrs. Johnson experienced in ruminating on the works of God, but to preserve them from oblivion.

“ Through all this world below,  
God can see all around.  
Search hills and vallies through,  
There is he ever found.  
In growing fields of corn,  
The lily and the thorn,  
The pleasant and forlorn,  
All declare God is there.  
In meadows drest in green,  
There is he always seen.”

“ See springing nature rise, fountains flow, rivers run,  
The mist beclouds the skies, hides the sun ;  
Then down the rain doth pour, the ocean now doth roar,  
And break upon the shore ; call to praise in their lays,  
A God who ne’er declines in his designs.”

“ The sun, with all his rays, speaks of God as he flies ;  
The comet, in its blaze, a God decries.  
The shining of the stars, the moon, when she appears,  
His dreadful name declares ; see them fly thro’ the sky,  
And join the silent sound from the ground.”

The vicinity in which Mrs. Johnson spent the last of her life, presents as sublime and picturesque scenery, as perhaps any part of New England ; combining, in the variegated prospect, the beauties and deformities of nature on no very limited scale.

Those who are acquainted with the mountain scenery of Vermont, need no description of those grand and lofty piles which lift their verdant heads above the clouds and overlook each other. The traveller who has laboured on the slow rising and quick ascending hills, feels delighted to have his way fall upon one of those streams which find a level course, by winding round among the hills. It was upon the bank of one of those streams, with the road passing through the door-yard of her house, that Mrs. Johnson lived, in the county of Windsor. The principal summits in this county are the Ascutney mountains, the largest rearing its lofty head three hundred and thirty-two feet above the level of the sea. Owing to the huge pile of naked rocks which lay on the surface of nearly half of those

mountains, there is perhaps less evergreen upon them than any others of the Green mountains. The rocks being of a whitish appearance, the largest mountain is known from the neighbouring hills as soon as it rises in the distant prospect. There are but two which bear the name of Ascutney, the smallest laying directly west of the largest, and is distinguished from the other by the name Little Ascutney. This is far more interesting to the traveller than the larger one, on account of its peculiar form. Approaching it from the southwest, upon the county road, we meet no part extending out; but if no cloud obscure the brow, its base, gigantic side and naked top, stand out in bold relief before the astonished eye. About half way from the south to the north end of it, there is a gradual sinking in of the side of the mountain, which forms a path for the rocks that cleave off at the top and sides of this hollow. In the spring, when the frost is coming out, enormous pieces of rock roll down this vacuity, making a noise like distant thunder, and sometimes jarring the

ground for more than half a mile from the mountain's base. A branch of the Black river runs near its foot on the western side, with a beautiful meadow extending north and south nearly the whole length of it.

Mrs. Johnson lived nearly opposite the north end of this mountain, and not far from the head of this meadow. Standing but a few steps from the door and looking north, you see the hills now retiring back, enough to admit a little meadow into the farm, and then come so near together as to interfere with the road, and border on the rivulet's brink. Turn to the west, and you will see one cultivated hillock rising above another to a considerable height. Look southward, and the extensive plain opens before the eye, with the beautiful prospect of luxuriant fields of produce upon its prolific bosom. A little to the east, the beholder's eye falls directly upon the "awful form" of Little Ascutney, rising almost perpendicular from the meadow which lays at its base. Here a person might stand and contemplate the mountain pile, the yawning prec-

ipice and waving forest, the angling brook, the winding valley and fruitful field, with other works of nature and art, until the mind would feel all the sensations of sublimity, pleasure and astonishment at one time.

Though Mrs. Johnson could not look on the works of nature with the eye of the learned, they were not seen by her with a "brute, unconscious gaze," but she viewed them all—and in such a frame of mind were they contemplated as often constrained her, in the devout exclamations of one anciently, to say, "How manifold are thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches."

Our Saviour hath said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." They shall not only see him in heaven, but see him in a very peculiar sense in this life. Wherever they behold the operations of His hand, they are led to recognize and admire some attribute of his awful yet glorious character, whether it be in his works of *nature*, provi-

*dence, or grace.* In this way Mrs. Johnson often had refreshing views of God while in this vale of tears.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### 6. *Her days of darkness and calamity.*

Though “justice and judgment are the habitation of God’s throne,” not unfrequently are the purposes and designs of his providence hid behind “clouds and darkness.” The friends of holy Job could not see why it was that he should be so afflicted, unless it was because he was a hypocrite. But he was perfect and upright at the very time his calamities came upon him.

After Mrs. Johnson had raised up her children to years of understanding, and after having been a burning and shining light in the church for upwards of fifteen years, she was, like a useless branch, removed from the vine-



yard for a season. At a time when she did not complain of any special bodily indisposition, and at a time when her confidence was not suspected to be wavering, her usual cheerfulness began to depart, and a kind of *dark, melancholy gloom* began to brood over her mind and to sadden her countenance. It was thought by some to be occasioned by a disorder in her head. But medical aid was resorted to in vain. No physical cause was fixed upon as the source of her delirium. An appalling darkness seemed to becloud her future prospects, whether in this life or in the life to come. Her imagination became bewildered, so that she could see nothing so plainly as "Woe too wide to see beyond."

Thus the once lovely Mrs. Johnson, whose company and conversation had often cheered the fainting mind of others, could now feel no soothing influence from the kindest and most affectionate friends. In this way she went down, until her relatives and Christian friends, around whose hearts twined the recollection of what she once was, with deep sorrow now

beheld her fast approximating to the wild reveries of a maniac.

It is needless to say that this was felt as a great calamity, both by her afflicted husband and children and the church of God. The prayers offered up by her Christian friends and by her children, that she might be again restored to her right mind, were almost without number; and by Mr. Johnson they were poured out almost without ceasing, that, if this were her last sickness, she might leave the world with the prospect of the dying Christian. Nor did they pray in vain. After she had walked in this *dark valley* about four years, it might be said of her that she began to "see men as trees walking;" and, to the utter astonishment of many, in matters of religion, she presently "*saw all things clearly.*"

In the course of this time, Mrs. Johnson being unfit to manage her domestic affairs, and the children mostly grown up, Mr. Johnson broke up house-keeping and united what little interest he had with a son-in-law, so that his eldest daughter, Mrs. White, with her husband,

had the entire care of the temporal affairs of the family. This arrangement precluded the necessity of having Mrs. Johnson enter into any domestic care as formerly, if she had been as capable. But she never again appeared to have the judgment, taste and regular understanding in temporal things that she once possessed. In this she discovered more imbecility of mind than what could be the natural consequence of her age until her death ; but her spiritual perception was as far removed from common ground on the rational side. Her health was once more firm and good, her mind resumed a youthful vigour, and, as she used often to say, her age was renewed "like the eagle." Mr. Johnson was much congratulated upon the "dawn of reason," which once more made glad the heart and lighted up the countenance of his beloved companion. He received solicitations on every side to bring her with him and visit their old friends ; much of which they did to the end of life ; visits which oftentimes resulted in the conversion and salvation of precious souls.

7. *The clearness of her spiritual vision.*

It is a deplorable truth that sin hath separated us from God, and removed us to a great moral distance from him. On the other hand, it should give us joy unspeakable, that a way is open through Jesus Christ whereby we may draw nigh unto him, "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." But *how near* we may approach to a conformity to the Divine Mind, is a subject concerning which, Christians entertain different views. One thing however is certain, that *to see him* (God) *as he is*, Christians *must be like him*. With the natural eye they cannot see him, for "no man can see God and live." But by holiness, (which is derived *through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost,*) they may be made like unto God, as holiness is an attribute of his. If God be holy, and if we cannot see him without holiness, does it not follow, that the more holy we are, the more just will be our views of his character and the easier our access to his throne of mer-

cy. On this principle we can account for many of Mrs. Johnson's spiritual exercises, without deviating from our views of the ordinary economy of God's grace.

Unincumbered with the cares of the world, after being restored to *her butlership again*, she returned to the work of drawing near to *God*. It would be in vain to attempt a proper description of all her spiritual views, of those overwhelming perceptions of the high and lofty One—of heaven—angels—and the spirits of just men made perfect. But a few facts will demonstrate the correctness of those spiritual perceptions. The first thing we shall notice is the sympathy she had for the condition of absent friends.

While offering up her fervent prayers, which were almost without ceasing, she would often dwell on the cases of particular individuals, for whom her mind was especially drawn out. While pouring out her supplications for her husband, children, or Christian friends, and *when far away* she would somehow gain a sense of their *real condition*; and guided only



by the impressions of her mind, she often afforded them aid. Not unfrequently she has pressed through serious difficulties, and gone miles to see persons for whom she felt great sympathy and solicitude. In this way she has been the humble means of raising up the bowed down, establishing the wavering, and encouraging tempted souls vigorously to press forward in the way of life. She has been hailed as an angel of mercy, sent on an errand of love. A volume of testimonies might now be obtained, bearing witness to the happy effect of these visits.

While the writer was once in company with his mother in a visit to her friends in an adjacent town, a lady, lying very sick in the neighbourhood, on hearing that Mrs. Johnson was in the place, sent for us to call and see her. We determined on going the next day. But the weather being such the next morning that it was impossible to go, we therefore returned home without calling. But the sick woman's case rested continually with so much weight, on her mind that she would have been glad to have



gone back the next day to see her. The second morning after we got home, she said to me, "My son, I have no more to feel for Mrs. P., for her spirit has found its rest in heaven;" and continued to observe, that her mind was so exercised over her case the last night that she could not sleep. "And while I was praying for her," said she, "I had a view of her happy soul as it ascended up to God." But a few days after we heard that this lady died that *same* night in the triumphs of faith.

Another instance of the kind took place in the case of her own mother's death. While Mrs. Johnson was in her delirious state, Mrs. Carter, her mother, who had been living with her, went to live with another daughter in Bangor, N. Y.; a distance of about one hundred miles. About six months before her mother's death, Mrs. Johnson felt a great anxiety to go and visit her; and would frequently observe to her husband, "If we do not go soon, I shall never see my mother alive again in this world, for I feel as though she has got almost through." But Mr. Johnson found

the distance of the way, the infirmities of age, and many other obstacles, a sufficient reason for suspending the journey from time to time, till she informed it was too late. As in the case aforementioned, her mind was so exercised about her mother that she could eat but very little, and said she felt that the time was close at hand when her mother's soul would be released from its tenement of clay. She retired to her lodging room, where she continued some time in agonizing prayer. Toward noon she came down stairs, with tears falling down her cheeks, and observed to her daughter, "Your grandmother has got safe home." And she continued, "My tears are not tears of grief, but of joy; for while I was praying, I saw a convoy of angels surround her spirit as it left the body, and rise in a blaze of glory up to heaven." And as she uttered this sentence, extatic joy so filled her soul, that she praised God with an audible voice. This time was not forgotten; and a letter in a little time informed us that it was the same day her mother died.

These are selected from among the many instances of the kind, which were frequently occurring in the two or three last years of her life, as evidences of her close and intimate communion with God. But we should feel more hesitation in recording these facts than we now do, if there were not many witnesses of them now living. For we are aware that they involve too much mystery to meet the credence of many in the world. But facts of this kind, were they ever so well authenticated, would, no doubt, be accounted for in some other way, by those who reject the doctrine of regeneration, than on the principles or as the fruits of true religion. But says the apostle, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." Therefore have we no controversy with them. But our present inquiry is, to know if it be not the privilege of all Christians to have clearer views of the Divine Character, and of the operations of his providence. Surely, before the full glory

of Christ's kingdom is revealed among men, the church must rise into far greater Gospel privileges and shine clear as the sun.

The externals of religion have too much attention from professed Christians; and the internal exercises and operations, the work of God on the heart, are too much neglected. But God has never left himself without a witness to these things. President Edwards, in recording his own experience, writes, "I continued in a constant, clear and lively sense of the heavenly sweetness of Christ's transcendent love. It seemed to be all that my feeble frame could sustain, of that joy which is felt by those who behold Christ's face in heaven." There was so much that was unusual in the experience of his companion also, that he requested her to draw up an exact account of it. In this account, after mentioning manifestations of the power of God, she writes as follows:—  
"After prayer Mr. Buell read two other hymns on the glories of heaven, which moved me so exceedingly, and drew me so strongly heaven-ward, that it *seemed as it were* to draw

my body upwards; and I felt as if I must necessarily ascend thither. At length my strength failed me, and I sunk down, when they took me up and laid me on the bed, where I lay for a considerable time, faint with joy, while contemplating the glories of the heavenly world. After I had lain a while I felt more perfectly subdued, and weaned from the world, and more perfectly resigned to the will of God, than I had ever been conscious of before. I was entirely swallowed up in God, as my only portion; and his honour and glory was the object of my supreme desire and delight."

After having been a witness of her "great meekness, gentleness and benevolence of spirit," Mr. Edwards makes the following statements in reference to these exercises. "Now if such things are enthusiasm, and the offspring of a distempered brain, let my brain evermore be possessed of that distemper. If this be distraction, I pray God that the world of mankind may all be seized with this benign, meek, beneficent, beatific, glorious distraction." "I have no heart," said Dr. Payson, "to speak

or write about any thing but Jesus. Oh, for language suitable to speak his praise, and describe his glory and beauty. Methinks if I could borrow for a moment the archangel's trump, and make heaven, earth and hell resound with 'worthy is the Lamb that was slain,' I could contentedly drop into nothing. What a transporting thought, to spend eternity in extolling God and the Lamb, and in beholding their glory ! This is heaven indeed."

These are the testimonies of *spirits* now made perfect in heaven, to the infinite spiritual beauty and glory of the Gospel. And is there any barrier by which the church generally are prevented from beholding it ? Has Christ opened the overwhelming fountain to the few, while the many are restrained to the scanty drops ? Are not rather the high and blessed privileges of the Gospel common ground for all the followers of Christ ? How came the saints whose language is here recorded so highly favoured of the Lord ? Because they followed him in the way. They agonized to enter into the rest prepared for



the people of God. Let us all go and do likewise.

We are not insensible, however, that many, in attempting to follow the footsteps of the distinguished saints, have been guided by their own limited views and false impressions, rather than the word of God, and so have greatly erred. In consequence of this, many sincere persons have chosen to live in dry morality, rather than to advance one step beyond it into the warming influences of light and love, for fear they might become enthusiastic. But let it be remembered that enthusiasts always consult their own impressions, and prefer their guidance to that of the word of God: they become *wise* above what *is written*. Though there are those who have exceeded the rules of the Gospel, by far the greatest part fall short of them. There is a religion which will diffuse a warming influence through the heart, sometimes rising in flames of zeal and love, in ecstasies of joy. It invigorates the mind, and excites the Christian to great self-denial

and persevering dilligence, in order to promote the glory of God, the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom and the good of souls.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

8. *The presentiment of her death, and the manner in which she came to her end.*

“And he shall show you things to come,” was one of the blessings which the Spirit was to confer on all those who received it. We do not understand by this, that holy men were to prophesy again, as in “old time,” but that it will convey to the mind an impressive presentiment of future events, the experience of hundreds testify. It is supposed by some that this work is carried on by the ministry of angels. It is the opinion of some great men in modern times, as well as many of the ancients, that every person *is attended by an angel*, carrying on the work of preservation, amidst

the dangers to which we are exposed. David says, "the angels of the Lord encompass round about them that trust in him;" and the apostle asks the Hebrews, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Perhaps, says one, they may be sent to answer the poet's whole prayer.

"Oh may thy angels while I sleep,  
Around my bed their vigils keep,  
Their love angelical instil,  
Stop every avenue of ill;  
May thy celestial joys rehearse,  
And thought to thought with me converse."

And that they may gently move our wills to embrace what is good and fly from what is evil.

But without arriving at the precise knowledge of the mode in which the work is carried on, the fact is certain. And this Mrs. Johnson experienced very evidently in relation to her death. For upwards of a year she informed her family that she should stay with them but a *little longer*. At first it created

no surprise, as she had lived to see nearly sixty years. Not long after, she informed them again that her work was almost done ; that she should *never see another day's* sickness ; and *that in a little while* she should leave the *world without a moment's warning*. She often made the same statement in the worship of God, and elsewhere.

The constant impression that she should go without a moment's warning, induced her for some months before her death, to say all that she would if she knew it were the last time she should see them. This made many of her exhortations truly impressive. Her health was constantly good, and she improved her time in going among her extensive circle of friends, to say something to them all concerning their future welfare. Mr. Johnson and her children would often persuade her not to go so much, when they thought it would produce fatigue and expose her health. Her constant reply was, "I shall see no more sickness, and the sooner I get through my work below, the sooner I shall see my heavenly

Father's face." She was often asked, what she knew concerning the time and manner of her death : but her uniform answer was, "As to the exact *time* or *manner*, I know not, only that my days are few, and when I go, it will be without sickness or a moment's warning." Among those who were disposed to make light of it, the saying became proverbial, that "Mother Johnson was to be translated." Assured that the time of her departure was at hand, one evening, after a refreshing season of family prayer, while we were all together, she embraced us affectionately, talked to us collectively concerning her death, and gave to each one of us what she called her-dying charge. It was a pleasant summer evening, between day-light and dark. The words of a pious, affectionate and much loved mother, saying what she would have us believe to be her dying testimony, added to the solemn shades of evening twilight, made it seem like the shadow of death. There was such an influence attending her words, that we were almost persuaded to believe what she said would

be real. Our sighs and tears made it seem like the house of mourning. If an angel had spoken, I know not how much more we should have felt. Never ! never shall I forget that evening.

The last meeting she ever attended was a lecture on Monday evening. After sermon she spoke of her enjoyment, and of the ravishing views she had of heaven, and of the saints in light, and concluded her remarks by saying, “My work on earth is almost done, and I am about to leave you. This is the last meeting I ever expect to attend. I doubt not but what the boards are all ready of which my coffin will be made. The voice you now hear, will soon be silent in death, and this body become food for worms. So farewell, my dear brethren and sisters, with whom I have so often worshiped—farewell, my kind neighbours and friends.” Exhorting them all to meet her in heaven, she sat down. On Thursday she went with Mr. Johnson to pass the night with a family of their old acquaintance who were in affliction. On their way she discoursed



with her companion as though it was the last interview she should have with him, in which she gave him direction how to dispose of her things, even to her articles of clothing which she had on. The astonished husband listened in awful silence to her words, hoping in vain it might be some mistaken impression of her mind.

In the family where they visited, lay their daughter, in the last stages of consumption. This young lady was amiable and lovely, and but a little while before the hectic began to flit upon her cheek, she was married, with the fair prospect of seeing many days of enjoyment in this world. But now she languished under the influence of her disease—so frail a thing is man. And what was still more afflicting, though now exceedingly anxious about her future destiny, she felt herself without God in the world. Mrs. Johnson had been acquainted with her from infancy and loved her much. Some business making it necessary for Mr. Johnson to be at home on Friday, unwilling to leave the dying young woman out of Christ, and in accordance with the earnest wishes of the

family, Mrs. Johnson concluded to spend another night. The horse being perfectly gentle, one which Mrs. Johnson had driven many times alone, and the distance only about three miles, Mr. Johnson indulged no fear in walking home and leaving her to come next day in the carriage alone. She continued pointing Mrs. B. to the promises of a Saviour, until her faith laid hold on Christ, and she was enabled to rejoice in *hope of the glory of God*, with the bright assurance of his forgiving love—which in about a week she went to enjoy forever. She died rejoicing in God. Having thus seen the salvation of God, on Saturday morning she told the family that, like Simeon of old, she could depart in peace, and bid them what proved a final farewell.

On her way home she passed by where her youngest son was at work, learning his trade. He had made a profession of religion, but was at this time very low in his mind. She called on him, requesting that she might see him by himself; “when she reminded me,” he said, “as she had often done before, that she had

ever held me as a whole sacrifice to God, and that it would be my duty to spend my life in the vineyard of the Lord.\* She then exhorted me to repent of my coldness and live near to God. And making no other errand, she then bade me farewell, with an unusual impression of solemnity, and went her way."

She made but one more call ; which was at the house of a dear sister in Christ, who had passed through much bodily suffering from infirmity, and many trials of mind. Mrs. Johnson had many times visited her in her afflictions, when it had soothed her sorrows and been like cold water to a thirsty soul. On entering the room, said she to Mrs. B., "I have called to see you for the last time. Do not be discouraged, for it will be but a little while before you and I shall meet in heaven† to part no more. She then prayed, and was so baptized with the Holy Ghost while calling upon God, that her full soul broke

\* He has since devoted himself to the work of the ministry in the methodist protestant church.

† Mrs. B. has since died in the full assurance of faith and hope.

forth in accents of praise, and then went on her way rejoicing.

When she had arrived within about a mile of home, while going quickly down hill, the wheel struck a rock which projected into the road, broke off the axletree, and threw her with velocity to the ground. Her head struck directly upon the edge of a sharp stone which penetrated to the brain, and she was *no more*. About fifteen minutes after she passed the last house, she was found dead. It was supposed she died instantly. Thus was the coincidence which the Disposer of events had prepared to fulfil her prediction and bring her to her end, "without another day's sickness and without a moment's warning," on Dec. 10, 1825.

The scene of her death and burial were awfully solemn. Mr. Johnson not only mourned for the loss of his bosom friend, with whom he had spent about forty years of peace and domestic tranquility; but he was afflicted with feelings of the most aggravating kind concerning the manner of her death. "Oh if I had not left her," his feelings prompted thus, "If

I had not left her to come home alone, she might now have been living.” Her children felt their loss. Besides her Christian friends, some of whom came miles to look for the last time upon her mortal remains, the whole community seemed astonished to see the event so exactly corresponded with her prediction.

9. *Her burial.*

At the time of her death, some of Mrs. Johnson’s children were living at a considerable distance from home; it was therefore thought proper to suspend the time of her permanent interment, until they could all mingle in the funeral procession. Accordingly, after a funeral sermon, from a text which she had selected for the occasion, her remains were deposited in a garden contiguous to the house in a temporary grave.

The common burying ground being at some distance, it was suggested by Mr. Johnson that it would be proper to select and consecrate a neighbourhood burying ground. The proposal was unanimously acceded to by the community, a proper organization was formed, and the

place prepared. It was a sloping hillock, lying on the margin of the fertile meadow which stretches along the base of Little Ascutney—the mountain raising its majestic summit high in the horizon, which hides the sacred spot from the morning sun.

The appointed time arrived when the corpse was disinterred, to be made the first tenant of the newly consecrated place.

— Scon I heard

The voice of mourning and approaching steps.

Then came the partner, bent with age and grief;

The brothers and the sisters weeping came,

To give the last look to the once so loved.

They looked—they wept—all but the white haired  
sire,

He merely heaved one sigh, and felt one tear

Start from its source as though it were his last.

Although the corpse had lain three months in the earth, it was not disfigured, with the exception of a blue mould which had gathered on her face. The writer not having seen his mother for some months before her death, he began to feel sorry that he looked at her corpse



at all, fearing it would confuse the recollection he had of her countenance. Just at that moment some person, as though troubled with the same thought, wiped away the mould. I looked again and saw my mother. Oh what mingled sensations from the recollection of past scenes rushed upon my mind.

After all had looked upon the lifeless form for the last time,

We turned away ; and as we turned, the sire  
Gave the last glance and filled his swelling heart.  
“ Oh God,” said he ; but ere another word  
Fell from his tongue, he check’d the murmuring tho’t.  
The face was veiled again — the coffin lid  
Was closed and screwed, and the bearers came  
And bore the body to the plumed hearse.

After a prayer to Him who hath said, “ dust thou art,” that the scene might be sanctified to the good of all, and that those who should repose in the silent lodgings of that place might sleep in Jesus, the scene was closed.

#### 10. *Conclusion.*

The reader who has gone through the preceding narrative, may be led to inquire why it

was not published before—nine years having now gone by since Mrs. Johnson died. The simple answer is, though the design has been subject of thought by one other person at least, yet no one has ever resolved to *do it* but the writer. Though he might not have given so long nor so correct an account of Mrs. Johnson's ancestors, as he has now been enabled to do, yet if he had thought himself capable of the attempt, he would have done it years ago. He would much rather it had been done by some other hand than her son's—for if a parent, as is generally supposed, be not a proper person to give the memoirs of a child, neither is a child, we have thought, the proper person to give the history of a parent. But many have done it to the edification of mankind. And so far as the narrative is concerned, the writer has now done it again. Not that he vainly supposes by long delay he has become competent—he lays no claims to praise for any admirable style. All the credit he seeks is, to be considered the narrator of real facts.

But when the writer reviews his humble effort to present the character of Mrs. Johnson, he is conscious that the picture falls far short of the reality. She often expressed a wish, towards the close of her life, while favoured with peculiar manifestations of spiritual things, that some one would write down the exercises of her mind, as she related them from time to time, that others might review them when she was gone. What the writer neglected then to do, he has suffered the want of now. Many other scraps might have been gathered into these sheets, which would have made the memoir more interesting, if the writer had been in the vicinity where they were. But being at this time about two hundred miles from the place where Mrs. Johnson lived and died, and finding time to do it, he concluded to proceed with the means he had.

While filling up these sheets, we have had the opportunity of proving the following reflections of the pious and celebrated Legh Richmond to be emphatically true. "A sweet solemnity often possesses the mind while retrac-

ing past intercourse with departed friends. How much is this increased, when they lived and died in the Lord. The remembrance of former scenes and conversations with those whom we believe are now enjoying the uninterrupted happiness of a better world, fills the heart with pleasing sadness, and animates the soul with the hopeful anticipation of a day when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed in the assembling of all his people together, never more to be separated. Whether they were rich or poor while on earth, is a matter of trifling consequence; the valuable part of their character is, that they are kings and priests unto God; and this is their true nobility." When we look through the circle of relations with whom we may stand connected by a thousand ties, and recall the pastimes we have enjoyed with friends however dear, there are no recollections that might awaken such sensations as those of a *mother*. When we ask ourselves, who watched over our helpless infancy, and with wearisome nights and days tenderly brought us up to youth and manhood?

It was was our mother. When sickness bowed us down and lay our aching heads upon the restless pillow, who was it that spared no pains to soothe our sorrows? and who that we heard sighing over us, as though they felt a part of our infirmities? Our mother. And who rejoices more than the pious mother, when reason's ray begins to shine? or does more to expand our opening mind, or direct our way to God?

And shall I in my riper years,  
When manhood with its cares appears,  
Forget thy tenderness and tears,  
My mother?

No! let me ever own thy sway,  
Still thy parental voice obey,  
And thy increasing love repay,  
My mother.

## CHAPTER X.

ONE of the principal objects in publishing the foregoing accounts is, that the rising generation, especially those who may be found in the lineage of Mrs. Johnson, may see their high and accumulated obligation to become pious—to love and fear God. There are now more than a score of her grandchildren, who are rising upon the stage of action, forming their characters, and settling down to exert an important influence in the world: for whose religious interests and future welfare, their affectionate friend, the writer, feels anxious concern; and for their serious consideration the following *reflections* are laid down.

It will be seen by these grandchildren, in a review, that there is an unbroken *line* of pious ancestors, extending through more than two hundred years, from the Hon. John Alden down to them. A passing notice having been



given of each generation down to the children of Mrs. Johnson—and with respect to them we would observe, and without arrogance or boasting,

“———— For what I am to God I owe,  
Entirely owe, and of myself am nought,

that they all, ten in number, became hopefully pious soon after coming to years of sufficient understanding; three of whom we trust are in a better world, three more are in the Christian ministry, and the remaining four we hope are striving to walk in the steps of their pious parents and ancestors. It therefore remains for the children now living to hold fast their confidence, to be firm to the end, and for those grandchildren to all submit to God, in order that the pious character of this *lineage* may be preserved. And after descending through such a series of years, shall its character in any one instance now be changed, and the line broken off? May God and man forbid.

Again, it will be seen in review, that like “Enoch, the seventh from Adam,” the father

of mankind, so are these grandchildren the seventh from Alden, the pilgrim and father of this lineage. Beginning with his daughter, Ruth Alden, by marriage Mrs. Bass, will be the first generation ; her daughter, by marriage Mrs. Thayer, the second ; her daughter, one of the fourteen children, Mrs. Blanchard, by marriage, the third ; her son, Nehemiah Blanchard, the fourth ; his daughter, Thomazin, Mrs. Johnson by marriage, the fifth ; her children, the sixth ; and these grandchildren, the seventh.

Now let these grandchildren learn the history of the church and of the world in each of the preceding generations, and will they not be compelled to acknowledge that their day is blessed and favoured above others, with the means for useful improvement and religious knowledge. And is it not easy for them to see, that while their ancestors have had *one* or *two* talents, they have FIVE, the improvement of which will be required at their hand ? And is it not possible, like holy Enoch, they are the generation who will in the strength of

God outrun, and in the light of God outshine all lineal predecessors? And why not? Why not walk with God, as did the seventh from Adam? Has the Lord withdrawn any of his aid from the church, by which Enoch was assisted and strengthened? No. He has increased rather our obligations to go and do *likewise* a hundred fold.

We ought to look, in an humble dependence and reliance on God, for greater and more glorious things, these we have never yet seen. For these are "the latter days," the people of God begin to *live* for the conversion of the world. The pure benevolence of their souls, begins to break out in instituting and vigorously supporting those broad and beneficent plans which make the ends of the earth feel the influence of the church. No doubt the time is fast approaching, when the stone which "was cut out without hands," which we believe was the church of Christ, will root out and smite every image, of whatever materials it may be built, with a holy influence; and, increasing velocity, it will continue its course, until it

“becomes a great mountain,” and fills the whole earth. But it is not money or means *alone* that will hasten its progress, but the *spirit* and *measure of holiness* in which each Christian enterprize is carried on ; as saith the word, “Not by might or by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.” Simple means will sometimes accomplish great things, when sanctioned and attended by the Spirit of the living God. What is then so much needed as an increase of holiness in the church. Oh may the number of those who shall walk with God be daily added to the church ; when the watchmen shall lift up their voices together, and those who believe be of one heart.

The writer could also wish that this little narrative might induce not only these grandchildren, but *all* the descendants of the “old puritans,” to become more thoroughly acquainted with the history of these men. We give no new information in saying, that it is to a great extent fashionable to relate opprobrious anecdotes of our forefathers ; and to laugh

over their "bigotry and superstition," is the most that many among the present rising generation know of their characters. Hence, instead of admiring the sincerity, moral courage and purity of their lives, and instead of venerating as we should the memory of these men, whose influence has given to New England its high moral character, and from whose hands we received the foundation of all our free institutions, their names are too often spoken of in ridicule and religious contempt.

Our ancestors had their failings, no doubt, for they were but men. But more of their errors can be traced to the circumstances of their age, than to any want of fixed principles or integrity of heart. With all the errors which can be found in the conduct of those men, however, we can heartily subscribe to the following sentiments of Dr. Dwight. "No sober New Englander can read the history of his country without rejoicing that God has caused him to spring from the loins of such ancestors, and given him his birth in a country whose public concerns were entrusted to their

management. There is no account in the annals of colonization in which the principal actors have left fewer memorials behind them, calculated to awaken the regret of mankind, or call forth a blush on the faces of their descendants, or more fitted to command the admiration and applause of both." When we follow our pilgrim fathers in their emigration from England to Holland, and learn the cause ; and follow them through their residence in that country, until we find them assembled with their brethren on the broad strand at Delph Haven, their beloved pastor, like Paul, knelt down on the sea-shore, and with strong cries and tears commended them to the God who ruleth the winds and the waves ; then embracing and weeping in each other's arms, until the wind and tide compelled them to part, and go on board the ship which was waiting to bear them away to the new world ; and follow them still in their fragile bark across the troubled ocean, until we see them land at Plymouth, in America, establish colonies, and, as fast as practicable, planting churches, until



within a little more than seventy years they had planted in this uncultivated country a hundred and twenty churches, besides thirty composed of Indians—who, we ask, in viewing this, does not see the sanctioning hand of Almighty God? “We can indeed,” says Mr. Hawes, “form no conception of the hardships and suffering endured by our fathers in securing for us these pleasant homes, and this goodly inheritance. They were hardships and sufferings the bare thought of which, it would seem, must have disheartened and overwhelmed them. And yet they endured them not only with fortitude but with a cheerful, unrepining resolution. Like the primitive Christians they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and were willing to suffer all things for the sake of Christ and his cause. Hence when the whole scene of their sacrifices and dangers were full in their view, instead of shrinking from them, they could meekly say, When we are in our graves it will be all one, whether we have lived in penury, died on a bed of down or straw. Only this is the ad-

vantage of the mean condition, we have more freedom to die. And the less comfort any have in the things of this world, the more liberty they have to lay up treasures in heaven. When told by their friends in England they might perish by the way, or be cut off by the famine or sword, their only reply was, We may trust in God's providence for these things. Either he will keep these evils from us, or will dispose them for our good, and enable us to bear them. The sentiment expressed by one of their number may indeed be taken for the sentiments of all. I take notice of it," says he, "as a great favour of God, not only to preserve my life, but give me contentedness in all my straits. Insomuch that I do not remember I ever wished in my heart that I had never come into this country, or wished myself back again to my father's house. The Lord Jesus Christ was so plainly held out in the preaching of the Gospel, and God's Holy Spirit was pleased to accompany the word with such efficacy to many, that our hearts were taken off from Old England and set upon

heaven. The discourse not only of the aged but of the youth also, was not how shall we go to England but how shall we go to heaven.

“Sentiments like these bespeak a moral courage in the men who uttered them ; a spirit of self-denial and self-devotion to the cause of God and the good of mankind, which were hardly surpassed in the purest and best days of Christianity. They are indeed the sentiments of a high, immovable confidence in God, and will entitle our fathers to be regarded as of kindred spirit with apostles and martyrs.”

We think an apology is unnecessary for digressing from our reflections by inserting the following noble sentiments with which Mr. Robinson, pastor of the church in Holland, concluded his last discourse to the pilgrims before their departure for America, which are worthy of being held in everlasting remembrance. “Brethren,” said he, “we are now quickly to part from one another, and whether I may ever live to see your faces on earth any more, the God of heaven only knows. Wheth-

er the Lord has appointed that or no, I charge you before God, and his blessed angels, that you follow me no further than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. If God reveal any thing unto you by any other instrument of his, be as ready to receive it, as ever you were to receive any truth by my ministry ; for I am verily persuaded, I am very confident, the Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word. For my part I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go, at present, no farther than the instruments of their reformation. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw ; whatever part of his good will, our God has revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it. And the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who saw not all things.

“ This is a misery much to be lamented ; for though they were burning and shining lights in their times, they penetrated not into

the whole counsel of God. But were they now living, they would be as willing to embrace further light, as that which they first received. I beseech you, remember it, 'tis an article of your church covenant, that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God. Remember *that* and every other article of your sacred covenant. But I must herewith exhort you to take heed what you receive as truth. Examine it, consider it, and compare it with other scriptures of truth, before you receive it, for it is not possible the Christian world should come so lately out of antichristian darkness, and that perfection of knowledge should break forth at once. And I would wish you by all means to close with the godly people of England; study union with them in all things wherein you can have it without sin, rather than in the least measure to effect a division or separation from them." Influenced by sentiments of this kind, our forefathers settled in this country, established churches, and exerted an influence which will extend, no

doubt, down to Adam's youngest son : from them has been traced many a pious lineage, one of which is here narrated.

While thus calling to recollection our venerated ancestors, our duty would not be done, if we should neglect to take a passing notice of some of their rules of life, rules which operated so extensively in the well being of those who followed in their steps. The first thing we shall notice is the manner in which they observed the sabbath and the means of grace. Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy, is a command which our forefathers viewed as resting on *us* with as equal and perpetual obligation as any other command of the moral law. And in accordance with their sincere belief they designed "*to do all their work in six days,*" so that on the seventh they need not do any work, they, nor their sons, nor their daughters, their man-servants nor their maid-servants, nor their cattle, nor the stranger that was within their gates. Believing that the sabbath was the Lord's, they sought in his temple the blessings with which



he had hallowed it; and in consequence of the strictness with which they regarded this with the other commands, they rendered themselves a "peculiar people."

But since those views of the moral law, the sense of which has lessened and lightened the weight of its perpetual obligation, since the days of liberty, as some would call it, which hath delivered us from the superstitions of *olden time*, has come, people by hundreds and thousands find liberty from any very pressing moral restraints, either to go to meeting or stay at home; and the boys of many families find liberty to attend sabbath school *if they will*, or go a fishing, a hunting, a skating, or some other amusement in which they can rest from the toils of the week. Days of astonishing freedom from past superstition! Where many parents were found catechising their children, and turning their minds away from the gratification of worldly pleasures to things heavenly and divine, as they sat in their family circles sabbath days, you can now find too many amusing the young people of their

household, when formerly they feared to read a political newspaper, or *even* cut off a stick of wood on the sabbath day. Wonderful change in the times ! There might have been instances, since our fathers were not infallible, where they might have carried the observance of the sabbath to an unscriptural extent ; but it forms no excuse for the licentiousness of the present times. It were much better for the world to err on the former hand than the latter. There is no doubt in the writer's mind but what there has been a great revival of spiritual religion in these our days. But it is lamentable and strange that there has come in with it such a departure from the scriptural and extensively beneficial manner in which our ancestors observed the sabbath day, and other ordinances of God's house. If some one of the present generation could be carried back to a sabbath day, and see how it was observed only one hundred years ago, how every thing was put in preparation so that nothing would annoy or molest the solemnities of the scene, and see parents and children, in persevering

stillness, surmounting the difficulties of tedious distance, cold or heat, to get their seat in the house of God; could he observe their deportment, and enter into the tone of feeling which prevailed among these regular church going people; could he contrast it with what he might witness in many towns in New England, would he not be constrained, in reference to former time, with the ancient patriarch to exclaim, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not?" And what was the effect of all this? We answer, when the sabbath was punctually regarded in New England, temperance, sobriety, integrity, and good order prevailed in society; and since it began to be disregarded, intemperance, debauchery, and crimes have come in like a flood. These are facts which cannot be denied. But should it be objected, that "these outward observances were, like those of the Jews, their only religion; that they sought not the sanctification of the heart;" we say, without controversy, "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

A second example which our pious ancestors left us to follow, is the attention they gave to family worship. "Family worship," says an anonymous writer, "properly conducted, teaches children religion by almost insensible degrees. While they surround the altar of God, instruction drops as the rain and distils as the dew." Such worship, too, unites the parents in bonds of inseparable attachment. They humble themselves together before God, and their common interests are spread before him. The children observe the movings of a father's love and concern for their immortal welfare. They are made to feel that he is a Christian; that he is a friend to God; that he has an interest at the throne of grace; and they will reverence, love and obey him. They are made familiar with the truths of the Bible; and these truths, if followed, will be their safeguard through life, and their guide to heaven: and when they have children committed to their care, they will train them up also "in the way they should go;" and thus the influ-

ence of the pious father will descend from generation to generation.

These were precisely the views our forefathers entertained of this important duty, and here in their faithful discharge of it is found the great secret which preserved in their children the unfeigned reverence they manifested for their parents and for the worship of God. They felt the force of that solemn declaration, "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, *and upon the families that call not on thy name ;*" and they regarded what the Lord said concerning Abraham, as having a favourable intimation to all praying families, "And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? For I know him, that he will command his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord."

We have reason to rejoice that there are so many praying families among the sons of the pilgrims, and throughout Christendom. But have we not reason to lament that there should be found any parents, professing piety, and having immortal souls committed to their



charge, and yet never call them to the morning and evening sacrifice at the family altar. O let those parents be exhorted, if they wish to have their children, as well as their own souls, saved, to neglect no longer the establishment of these important means of grace under their own roof.

The last thing we shall notice is the attention which our ancestors gave to their children. The old saying, "that we suffer in manhood for all that was neglected in youth," is what the experience of thousands has proved to be true. We presume that no Christian believes that a parent, however pious, judicious and strict in his government, can change the heart of a child; but unfortunate is that child whose parents believe that they can do nothing towards aiding a child by their government and influence in seeking the salvation of his soul. It is an experimental truth, that the child which has always had its own way, whose will was never subdued, will find it much harder to submit to God than one who has been made to deny himself and take up his



cross in obedience to his parents. Our pilgrim fathers were peculiarly attentive to this subject. It is said that one principle which moved them to leave Leyden and come to this country, was because they feared the consequences of that influence which bad men also would exert upon their children; and it was this ardent desire to preserve the good morals of their children, no doubt, which led them into the censorious spirit, which they sometimes manifested in this country, towards those denominations whose sentiments they feared would lessen the sense of obligation, and corrupt the morals of their children, which they had laboured so hard to preserve.

Finally. We wish never to see a union of church and state; nor any of its degenerating tendency on the piety of the church. We wish not to see one of the errors, or any delusion of former times to return; but we sincerely believe that if many of the observances and customs were universally practised, it would be far better for our country.