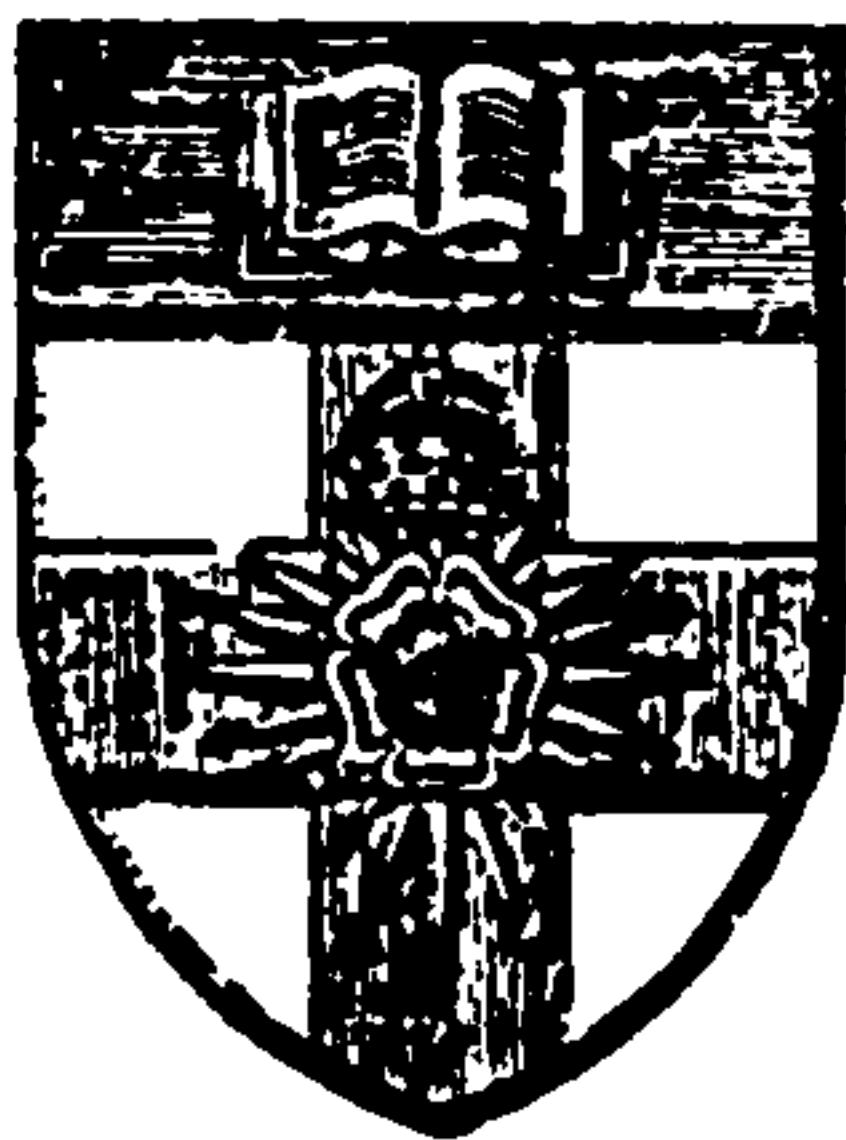


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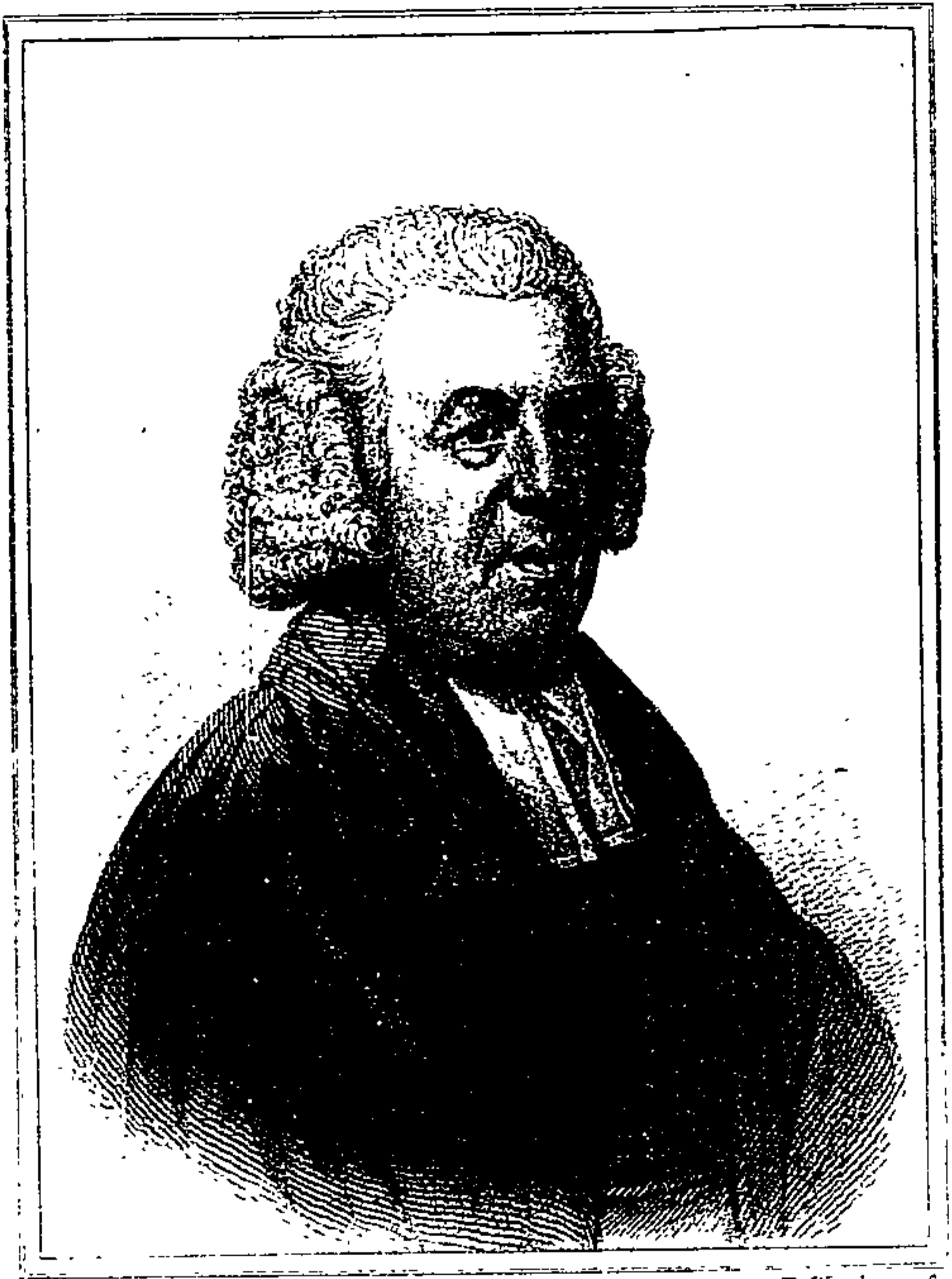


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**MEMOIRS**  
**OF THE**  
**REV. JOHN NEWTON.**

SEELEYS, WESTON GREEN, THAMES DITTON.



*R. Woodman Sc.*

*John Newton*

*London Published by R. B. Seeley & W. Burnside, 112 Fleet Street Oct 1. 1835.*

# MEMOIRS

OF THE

## REV. JOHN NEWTON,

FORMERLY RECTOR OF ST. MARY, WOOLNOTH, &c.

WITH SELECTIONS FROM

### HIS CORRESPONDENCE.

PUBLISHED BY R. B. SEELEY AND W. BURNSIDE :  
AND SOLD BY L. AND J. SEELEY,  
FLEET STREET, LONDON.  
MDCCCXXXV.

## INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

THE compiler of the present volume, on forwarding it to me, accompanied it with the following remarks:—

‘ To the reader who is only partially informed on the subject, the publication of a new Life of Mr. Newton will probably seem not only unnecessary, but even in a measure presumptuous. It is believed, however, that those who are best acquainted with the leading outlines of Mr. N.’s life, and with Mr. Cecil’s Memoir of him, will be the most prompt to acquit the author of the present attempt, both of any misemployment of time, and of any intention of casting a slight on the memory or the work of Mr. Newton’s friend and biographer.

‘ Mr. Cecil produced his Memoir at a period when the present plan of biographical writing was unpractised and unknown. The last twenty years, in

the production of the Memoirs of Martyn, Scott, and of Richmond, have not only greatly enriched our store of religious portraitures, but have also fixed and settled a peculiar manner and method of representing human character, which the public mind has, on good grounds, fully approved, and from which it will not now easily tolerate any departure. The chief feature of that method, is, the sedulous endeavour, as far as possible, to let the person whose life is to be given, tell his own story in his own language; and the persevering attempt to bring together his own private memoranda and his correspondence, with this especial view.

‘In the totally different plan, upon which Mr. Cecil, writing nearly thirty years since, proceeded; something, doubtless, may be traced to the peculiar character of his own mind; a mind which acted like a crucible on the subjects presented to it. But still more probably may we ascribe the brevity and condensation of that narrative to the peculiar circumstances in which Mr. Cecil felt himself placed.

‘These are sufficiently obvious. The chief and most interesting passages in Mr. Newton’s life had been already described by himself, in publications which had been long before the public, and of which a vast number of copies had been dispersed. His “Narrative” was in every Christian’s library, and his “Letters to a Wife,” with the details of Mrs. N’s

last days, had been largely circulated. It was not surprising, therefore, that Mr. Cecil should feel it impossible to incorporate these personal narrations into his work, without laying himself open to the charge of making his readers purchase over again, that which they had already in their libraries. To avoid this amputation, one of the last under which a man of Mr. Cecil's mind would have willingly lain,—of book-making from interested motives;—he appears to have resolved to frame his own narrative from those materials, in his own compact and condensed style; without actually adopting any of them as a component portion of his work: and thus, excluding also Mr. N.'s own letters, he succeeded in bringing the whole of a long life within the short compass of a very succinct narration.

‘Probably this plan was the *best*, or rather the *only* one, which could at that moment be adopted. But at this distance of time the case is changed, and the result is not equally satisfactory. Experience has shewn that the public mind has vibrated between Mr. Newton's own Narrative and Mr. Cecil's Memoir,—the one being preferred as the most full and most interesting, so far as it went; the other as being more complete, in carrying the history to its close; till at last people have come to neglect both, the first because it is incomplete, the second because Mr. N.'s own narrative is not given in it; and thus



the benefit of his most instructive story is in a great degree lost to the world.

‘ To remedy this state of things has been the object kept in view in the present compilation. It has been endeavoured—taking Mr. Cecil’s outline,—to make his work what he himself would undoubtedly have made it, had the “ Narrative ” and the “ Letters to Wife ” remained then unpublished. But besides these admirable materials, ample stores of letters have since been poured forth, and this gives a biographer, in the present day, vast additional advantages for the purposes of his work.

‘ With this view, adopting Mr. Newton’s narrative, and adhering to the outline marked out by Mr. Cecil, the narrative has been enriched, wherever it was possible to do so, by the introduction of Mr. Newton’s own details, letters, and memoranda. It thus becomes in some measure assimilated to those later and more popular biographies already alluded to, in which Henry Martyn, Thomas Scott, and Legh Richmond are found to supply, in their own language, all the chief details of their own history. The preference which the public has so distinctly shewn for this plan of writing personal histories, is obviously founded, not in fancy, but in feeling. “ *As face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man ;* ”—and what language but *its own*, can ever accurately lay open the heart of a human being? ’

These observations render any farther remarks in explanation of the design and plan of the work, clearly unnecessary. It is obvious that in the great accumulation of materials, illustrative of Mr. Newton's life and character, which have been brought to light of late years, the compiler of the present volume has had advantages which were unattainable at the period in which Mr. Cecil wrote. Having had no share in its compilation, I may venture to add, that if the minds of others are impressed in the same degree in which my own has been, in reading the present collection, there will be good reason to hope that this piece of biography will prove as generally edifying as those which have been above alluded to, "whose praise is in all the churches."

EDWARD BICKERSTETH.

*Watton Rectory,*  
*Sept. 22, 1835.*

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## CHAPTER I.

### *His childhood and youthful Years.*

THE narrative on which we are about to enter, is commenced by Mr. Newton, in the following words :

‘ I can sometimes feel a pleasure in repeating the grateful acknowledgment of David, “ O Lord, I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaid ; thou hast loosed my bands.” The tender mercies of God towards me, were manifest in the first moment of my life—I was born as it were in his house, and dedicated to him in my infancy. My mother (as I have heard from many) was a pious and experienced Christian ; she was a dissenter, in communion with the late Dr. Jennings. I was her only child, and as she was of a weak constitution and a retired temper, almost her whole employment was the care of my education. I have some faint remembrance of her

care and instructions. At a time when I could not be more than three years of age, she herself taught me English, and with so much success, (as I had something of a forward turn) that when I was four years old I could read with propriety in any common book that offered. She stored my memory, which was then very retentive, with many valuable pieces, chapters and portions of scripture, catechisms, hymns, and poems. My temper, at that time seemed quite suitable to her wishes: I had little inclination to the noisy sports of children, but was best pleased when in her company, and always as willing to learn as she was to teach me. How far the best education may fall short of reaching the heart, will strongly appear in the sequel of my history: yet, I think, for the encouragement of pious parents to go on in the good way of doing their part faithfully to form their children's minds, I may properly propose myself as an instance. Though in process of time I sinned away all the advantages of these early impressions, yet they were for a great while a restraint upon me; they returned again and again, and it was very long before I could wholly shake them off; and when the Lord at length opened my eyes, I found a great benefit from the recollection of them. Further, my dear mother, besides the pains she took with me, often commended me with many prayers and tears to God; and I doubt not but I reap the fruits of these prayers to this hour.

‘ My mother observed my early progress with peculiar pleasure, and intended from the first to bring me up with a view to the ministry, if the Lord should so incline my heart. In my sixth year I began to learn Latin; but, before I had time to know much

about it, the intended plan of my education was broken short. The Lord's designs were far beyond the views of an earthly parent; he was pleased to reserve me for an unusual proof of his patience, providence, and grace, and therefore over-ruled the purpose of my friends, by depriving me of this excellent parent, when I was something under seven years old. I was born the 24th of July, 1725; and she died the 11th of that month, 1732.

‘ My father was then at sea, (he was a commander in the Mediterranean trade at that time :) he came home the following year, and soon after married again. Thus I passed into different hands. I was well treated in all other respects; but the loss of my mother's instructions was not repaired. I was now permitted to mingle with careless and profane children, and soon began to learn their ways. Soon after my father's marriage, I was sent to a boarding-school in Essex; where the imprudent severity of the master almost broke my spirit and relish for books. With him I forgot the first principles and rules of arithmetic, which my mother had taught me years before. I staid there two years; in the last of the two a new usher coming, who observed and suited my temper, I took to the Latin with great eagerness: so that before I was ten years old, I reached and maintained the first post in the second class, which in that school read Tully and Virgil. I believe I was pushed forward too fast, and therefore not being grounded, I soon lost all I had learnt (for I left school in my tenth year) and when I long afterwards undertook the Latin language from books, I think I had little, if any advantage, from what I had learnt before.

‘ My father’s second marriage was from a family in Essex ; and when I was eleven years old, he took me with him to sea. He was a man of remarkably good sense, and great knowledge of the world ; he took great care of my morals, but could not supply my mother’s part. Having been educated himself in Spain, he always observed an air of distance and severity in his carriage, which over-awed and discouraged my spirit. I was always in fear when before him, and therefore he had the less influence. From that time to the year 1742, I made several voyages, but with considerable intervals between, which were chiefly spent in the country, excepting a few months in my fifteenth year, when I was placed upon a very advantageous prospect at Alicánt in Spain ; but my unsettled behaviour and impatience of restraint rendered that design abortive.

‘ In this period my temper and conduct were exceeding various. At school, or soon after, I had a little concern about religion, and easily received very ill impressions. But I was often disturbed with convictions ; I was fond of reading from a child ; among other books, *Bennet’s Christian Oratory* often came in my way ; and though I understood but little of it, the course of life therein recommended appeared very desirable, and I was inclined to attempt it. I began to pray, to read the scripture, and to keep a sort of diary ; I was presently religious in my own eyes ; but, alas ! this seeming goodness had no solid foundation, but passed away like a morning cloud, or early dew. I was soon weary, gradually gave it up, and became worse than before : instead of prayer, I learned to curse and blaspheme, and was exceedingly wicked, when from under my parents’ view.



All this was before I was twelve years old. About that time I had a dangerous fall from a horse; I was thrown, I believe, within a few inches of a hedge-row newly cut down; I got no hurt; but could not avoid taking notice of a gracious providence in my deliverance; for had I fell upon the stakes, I had inevitably been killed: my conscience suggested to me the dreadful consequences, if in such a state I had been summoned to appear before God. I presently broke off from my profane practices, and appeared quite altered; but it was not long before I declined again. These struggles between sin and conscience were often repeated; but the consequence was, that every relapse sunk me into still greater depths of wickedness. I was once roused by the loss of an intimate companion. We had agreed to go on board a man-of-war (I think it was on a *Sunday*;) but I providentially came too late; the boat was upset, and he and several others were drowned. I was invited to the funeral of my play-fellow, and was exceedingly affected, to think that by a delay of a few minutes (which had much displeased and angered me till I saw the event) my life had been preserved. However this likewise was soon forgot. At another time the perusal of the *Family Instructor* put me upon a partial and transient reformation. In brief, though I cannot distinctly relate particulars, I think I took up and laid aside a religious profession three or four different times before I was sixteen years of age; but all this while my heart was insincere. I often saw the necessity of religion as a means of escaping hell; but I loved sin, and was unwilling to forsake it. Instances of this, I can remember, were frequent in the midst of all my forms; I was so strangely

blind and stupid, that sometimes when I have been determined upon things which I knew were sinful and contrary to my duty, I could not go on quietly, till I had first dispatched my ordinary task of prayer, in which I have grudged every moment of my time; and when this was finished, my conscience was in some measure pacified, and I could rush into folly with little remorse.

‘My last reform was the most remarkable both for degree and continuance. Of this period, at least of some part of it, I may say in the apostle’s words, “After the strictest sect of our religion, I lived a pharisee.” I did every thing that might be expected from a person entirely ignorant of God’s righteousness, and desirous to establish his own. I spent the greatest part of every day in reading the scriptures, meditation, and prayer; I fasted often; I even abstained from all animal food for three months; I would hardly answer a question, for fear of speaking an idle word. I seemed to bemoan my former miscarriages very earnestly, sometimes with tears. In short, I became an ascetic, and endeavoured, so far as my situation would permit, to renounce society, that I might avoid temptation. I continued in this serious mood (I cannot give it a higher title) for more than two years, without any considerable breaking off. But it was a poor religion; it left me in many respects under the power of sin, and so far as it prevailed, only tended to make me gloomy, stupid, unsociable, and useless.

‘Such was the frame of my mind, when I became acquainted with Lord Shaftesbury. I saw the second volume of his *Characteristics*, in a petty shop at Middleburgh in Holland. The title allured me to buy it,

and the style and manner gave me great pleasure in reading, especially the second piece, which his Lordship, with great propriety, has entitled a *Rhapsody*. Nothing could be more suited to the romantic turn of my mind, than the address of this pompous declamation; of the design and tendency I was not aware; I thought the author a most religious person, and that I had only to follow him, and be happy. Thus, with fine words and fair speeches, my simple heart was beguiled. This book was always in my hand; I read it, till I could very nearly repeat the *Rhapsody verbatim* from beginning to end. No immediate effect followed, but it operated like a slow poison, and prepared the way for all that followed.

‘ This letter brings my history down to December, 1742. I was then lately returned from a voyage, and my father not intending for the sea again, was thinking how to settle me in the world; but I had little life or spirit for business: I knew but little of men or things. I was fond of a visionary scheme of a contemplative life; a medley of religion, philosophy, and indolence; and was quite averse to the thoughts of an industrious application to business. At length a merchant in Liverpool, an intimate friend of my father, (to whom, as the instrument of God’s goodness, I have since been chiefly indebted for all my earthly comforts) proposed to send me for some years to Jamaica, and to charge himself with the care of my future fortune. I consented to this, and every thing was prepared for my voyage. I was upon the point of setting out the following week. In the mean time, my father sent me on some business to a place a few miles beyond Maidstone in

Kent; and this little journey, which was to have been only for three or four days, occasioned a sudden and remarkable turn, which roused me from the habitual indolence I had contracted, and gave rise to the series of uncommon dispensations, of which you desire a more particular account. So true it is, “that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” ’

## CHAPTER II.

*His entrance on active life—Career of Vice—Falls into a state of Slavery in Africa—His Deliverance.*

HAVING thus given, in his own words, a sketch of the youthful days of Mr. Newton, we come now to the period of his entry on the business and perils of an active life. And at this juncture an incident occurred on which the whole character and tendency of his after life depended. Few men have been able to reckon up, in their own experience, so many unquestionable interpositions of the providence of God as Mr. Newton; but unquestionably the greatest and chiefest of them all, was that which met him in the very opening of his career, and gave a bias to his steps, which was felt in every stage of his subsequent journey.

It was the purpose of Him who ordereth the goings of the children of men, to form and constitute the object of this narrative, a minister of the everlasting gospel. And, as his after usefulness and efficiency was to be of an uncommon character; so it naturally followed that his training and preparation must be extraordinary. He was to be a *devoted* servant and minister of Christ:—and to form him to this high dignity, it was requisite that his pardon and

recovery should not be from light or customary depths of guilt. "*He to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.*" He was to be remarkable for *tenderness, sympathy, and compassion* for his fellow-sinners:— and to give him all these feelings in a proportion exceeding that of other men, it was needful that he should have experienced deeply the power of the enemy, and have suffered severely from the treachery of his own heart. He was to be also a remarkably *direct and familiar speaker*: and to form him to this, a self-education, freed from the fetters and fashions of the schools, was decreed for him. In fact, at a distance, and in such proportion as was consistent with the vast disproportion between the master and the servant, it might be said of him, as of his great Exemplar, that he was "*made perfect through sufferings,*" and that he passed through great and fearful temptations, "*that he might,*" in his turn, "*know how to succour them that were tempted.*"

The permission given for his fall into temptation, on the one hand, must be contemplated in connection with the means employed for his recovery, on the other. These means constitute the remarkable providence of which we are now about to speak.

‘ A few days before my intended journey into Kent, I received an invitation to visit a family in that county. They were distant relations, but very intimate friends of my dear mother: she died in their house; but a coolness took place upon my father’s second marriage, and I had heard nothing of them for many years. As my road lay within half a mile of their house, I obtained my father’s leave to call on them. I was, however, very indifferent about it,

and sometimes thought of passing on: however I went: I was known at first sight, before I could tell my name, and met with the kindest reception, as the child of a dear deceased friend. My friends had two daughters: the eldest (as I understood some years afterwards) had been often considered, by her mother and mine, as a future wife for me from the time of her birth. I know indeed, that intimate friends frequently amuse themselves with such distant prospects for their children, and that they miscarry much oftener than succeed. I do not say that my mother predicted what was to happen, yet there was something remarkable in the manner of its taking place. All intercourse between the families had been long broken off; I was going into a foreign country, and only called to pay a hasty visit; and this I should not have thought of, but for a message received just at that crisis (for I had not been invited at any time before.) Thus the circumstances were precarious in the highest degree, and the event was as extraordinary. Almost at the first sight of this girl (for she was then under fourteen) I was impressed with an affection for her, which never abated or lost its influence a single moment in my heart from that hour. In degree, it actually equalled all that the writers of romance have imagined; in duration, it was unalterable. I soon lost all sense of religion, and became deaf to the remonstrances of conscience and prudence; but my regard for her was always the same: and I may perhaps venture to say, that none of the scenes of misery and wickedness I afterwards experienced, ever banished her a single hour together from my waking thoughts, for the seven following years.

‘I would pause a moment, to reflect a little upon this unexpected incident, and to consider its influence upon my future life, and how far it was subservient to the views of Divine Providence concerning me, which seem to have been twofold; that by being given up, for a while, to the consequences of my own wilfulness, and afterwards reclaimed by a high hand, my case, so far as it should be known, might be both a warning and an encouragement to others.

‘In the first place, hardly any thing less than this violent and commanding passion would have been sufficient to awaken me from the dull melancholy habit I had contracted. I was almost a misanthrope, notwithstanding I so much admired the pictures of virtue and benevolence as drawn by Lord Shaftesbury: but now my reluctance to active life was overpowered at once, and I was willing to be or to do any thing, which might subserve the accomplishment of my wishes at some future time.

‘Farther, when I afterwards made shipwreck of faith, hope, and conscience, my love to this person was the only remaining principle which in any degree supplied their place; and the bare possibility of seeing her again was the only present and obvious means of restraining me from the most horrid designs against myself and others.’

Of this circumstance he further speaks in another place thus :

‘She was as the hinge on which my life turned; my extravagant passion for her opened the way to that misconduct which buried me in misery and in Africa so long, and my regard for her was the only motive which could have made me willing to come home.’

Looking back on this circumstance, at the present



time, with the whole history of his eventful life before us, we can admire the wisdom and the kindness which were combined in the whole arrangement. And the narrative furnishes, as it passes before our eyes, a kind of illustration of another passage of scripture; "*which hope we have, as an ANCHOR OF THE SOUL, sure and stedfast,*" &c. The comparison, indeed, is of great things with small; but it is surely allowable thus to illustrate scripture when it can be done without irreverence.

Perhaps, however, the question may arise, Are you not limiting the Holy One of Israel, to certain plans and contrivances for the compassing his wise and gracious purposes? We answer, No! We say not a word against the undoubted possibility of the preparation of a Christian minister, by instantaneous and wholly supernatural illumination. But it is not in this way that God commonly pleases to work: nor is the reason of His choosing to make use of means and plans, at all difficult to perceive. His great purpose ever must be, the manifestation of his own perfections. Now, the exhibition of mere power is less glorious and less affecting, than the operation of foresight, contrivance, and consummate wisdom. The one merely excites wonder and awe; the other raises a feeling of admiration and delight.

We are to view Mr. Newton, then, in future, as one who for wise and holy ends, was to be permitted to fall into temptation, into sin, and into suffering; but who, in the midst of all, had his Master's *bridle in his mouth*, which was, in the end, to *turn him back by the way that he came*. He proceeds in his narrative:—

‘ But the ill effects this passion brought upon me

counterbalanced all its advantages. The interval, usually styled the time of courtship, is indeed a pleasing part of life, where there is a mutual affection, the consent of friends, a reasonable prospect as to settlement, and the whole is conducted in a prudential manner, and in subordination to the will and fear of God. When things are thus situated, it is a blessing to be susceptible of the tender passions; but when these concomitants are wanting, what we call *love* is the most tormenting passion in *itself*, and the most destructive in its *consequences*, that can be named. And they were all wanting in my case. I durst not mention it to her friends, or to my own, nor indeed for a considerable time to herself, as I could make no proposals: it remained as a dark fire, locked up in my own breast, which gave me a constant uneasiness. By introducing an idolatrous regard to a creature, it greatly weakened my sense of religion, and made farther way for the entrance of infidel principles: and though it seemed to promise great things, as an incentive to diligence and activity in life; in reality, it performed nothing. I often formed mighty projects in my mind, of what I would willingly do or suffer, for the sake of her I loved; yet, while I could have her company, I was incapable of forcing myself away, to improve opportunities that offered: still less could it do in regulating my manners. It did not prevent me from engaging in a long train of excess and riot, utterly unworthy the honourable pretensions I had formed. And though through the wonderful interposition of Divine goodness, the maze of my follies was at length unravelled, and my wishes crowned in such a manner as overpaid my sufferings; yet, I am sure, I would not go

through the same series of trouble again, to possess all the treasures of both the Indies. I have enlarged more than I intended on this point, as perhaps these papers may be useful to caution others against indulging an ungovernable passion, by my painful experience. How often may such headstrong votaries be said "to sow the wind, and to reap the whirlwind."

' My heart being now fixed and rivetted to a particular object, I considered every thing I was concerned with in a new light. I concluded it would be absolutely impossible to live at such a distance as Jamaica, for a term of four or five years, and therefore determined at all events that I would not go thither. I could not bear either to acquaint my father with the true reason, or to invent a false one; therefore, without taking any notice to him why I did so, I staid three weeks instead of three days in Kent, till I thought (as it proved) the opportunity would be lost, and the ships sailed. I then returned to London. I had highly displeased my father by this disobedience; but he was more easily reconciled than I could have expected. In a little time I sailed with a friend of his to Venice. In this voyage, I was exposed to the company and ill example of the common sailors, among whom I ranked. Importunity, and opportunity, presenting every day, I once more began to relax from the sobriety and order which I had observed, in some degree, for more than two years. I was sometimes pierced with sharp convictions; but though I made a few faint efforts to stop, as I had done from several before; I did not, indeed, as yet turn out profligate; but I was making large strides towards a total apostacy from God. The most re-

markable check and alarm I received (and, for what I know, the last) was by a dream, which made a very strong, though not any abiding impression upon my mind.

‘ It is needless for me either to enter upon a discussion of the nature of dreams in general, or to make an apology for recording my own. Those who acknowledge scripture will allow, that there have been monitory and supernatural dreams, evident communications from heaven, either directing or foretelling future events: and those who are acquainted with the history and experience of the people of God, are well assured, that such intimations have not been totally withheld in any period down to the present times. Reason, far from contradicting this supposition, strongly pleads for it, where the process of reasoning is rightly understood, and carefully pursued. So that a late eminent writer,<sup>1</sup> who, I presume, is not generally charged with enthusiasm, undertakes to prove, that the phenomenon of dreaming is inexplicable at least, if not absolutely impossible, without taking in the agency and intervention of spiritual beings, to us invisible. I would refer the incredulous to him. For my own part, I can say, without scruple, “The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.” I am sure I dreamed to the following effect, and I cannot doubt, from what I have seen since, that it had a direct and easy application to my own circumstances, to the dangers into which I was about to plunge myself, and to the unmerited deliverance and mercy, which God would be pleased to offer me in the time of my distress.

<sup>1</sup> Baxter on the *Vis Inertiae*.

‘ Though I have written out a relation of this dream more than once for others, it has so happened that I never reserved a copy ; but the principal incidents are so deeply engraven in my memory, that I believe I am not liable to any considerable variations in repeating the account. The scene presented to my imagination was the harbour of Venice, where we had lately been. I thought it was night, and my watch upon the deck ; and that, as I was walking to and fro by myself, a person came to me, (I do not remember from whence) and brought me a ring, with an express charge to keep it carefully ; assuring me that while I preserved that ring, I should be happy and successful : but, if I lost, or parted with it, I must expect nothing but trouble and misery. I accepted the present and the terms willingly, not in the least doubting my own care to preserve it, and highly satisfied to have my happiness in my own keeping. I was engaged in these thoughts, when a second person came to me, and observing the ring on my finger, took occasion to ask me some questions concerning it. I readily told him its virtues, and his answer expressed a surprise at my weakness, in expecting such effects from a ring. I think he reasoned with me for some time upon the impossibility of the thing, and at length urged me in direct terms to throw it away. At first, I was shocked at the proposal ; but his insinuations prevailed. I began to reason and doubt of the matter myself, and at last plucked it off my finger, and dropped it over the ship’s side into the water, which it had no sooner touched, than I saw, the same instant, a terrible fire burst out from a range of mountains, (a part of the Alps) which appeared at some distance behind the city of Venice.

I saw the hills as distinct as if awake, and they were all in flames. I perceived too late my folly ; and my tempter, with an air of insult, informed me, that all the mercy God had in reserve for me, was comprised in that ring, which I had wilfully thrown away. I understood that I must now go with him to the burning mountains, and that all the flames I saw were kindled upon my account. I trembled, and was in a great agony ; so that it was surprising I did not then awake : but my dream continued, and when I thought myself upon the point of a constrained departure, and stood self-condemned, without plea or hope ; suddenly, either a third person, or the same who brought the ring at first, came to me, (I am not certain which) and demanded the cause of my grief. I told him the plain case, confessing that I had ruined myself wilfully, and deserved no pity. He blamed my rashness, and asked if I should be wiser, supposing I had my ring again. I could hardly answer to this : for I thought it was gone beyond recal. I believe, indeed, I had not time to answer, before I saw this unexpected friend go down under the water, just in the spot where I had dropped it ; and he soon returned, bringing the ring with him. The moment he came on board, the flames in the mountains were extinguished, and my seducer left me. Then was ‘ the prey taken from the hand of the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered.’ My fears were at an end, and with joy and gratitude I approached my kind deliverer to receive the ring again ; but he refused to return it, and spoke to this effect : ‘ If you should be entrusted with this ring again, you would very soon bring yourself into the same distress ; you are not able to keep it ; but I

will preserve it for you, and whenever it is needful, will produce it in your behalf.' Upon this I awoke, in a state of mind not to be described: I could hardly eat, or sleep, or transact my necessary business for two or three days; but the impression soon wore off, and in a little time I totally forgot it; and I think it hardly occurred to my mind again, till several years afterwards. It will appear, in the course of these papers, that a time came, when I found myself in circumstances very nearly resembling those suggested by this extraordinary dream, when I stood helpless and hopeless upon the brink of an awful eternity: and I doubt not but, had the eyes of my mind been then opened, I should have seen my grand enemy, who had seduced me wilfully to renounce and cast away my religious profession, and to involve myself in the most complicated crimes; I say, I should probably have seen him pleased with my agonies, and waiting for a permission to seize and bear away my soul to this place of torment. I should perhaps have seen likewise that Jesus, whom I had persecuted and defied, rebuking the adversary, challenging me for his own, as a brand plucked out of the fire, and saying, "Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom." However, though I saw not these things, I found the benefit; I obtained mercy. The Lord answered for me in the day of my distress; and, blessed be his name, he who restored the ring, (or what was signified by it) vouchsafes to keep it. O what an unspeakable comfort is this, that I am not in my own keeping! "The Lord is my shepherd:" I have been able to trust mine all in his hands, and I know in whom I have believed. Satan still desires to have me, that he might sift me

as wheat; but my Saviour has prayed for me, that my faith may not fail. Here is my security and reliance; a bulwark, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. But for this, many a time and often (if possible) I should have ruined myself, since my first deliverance; nay, I should fall, and stumble, and perish still, after all that the Lord has done for me, if his faithfulness was not engaged in my behalf, to be my sun and shield even unto death. "Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

'Nothing very remarkable occurred in the following part of that voyage. I returned home in December, 1743, and soon after repeated my visit to Kent, where I protracted my stay in the same imprudent manner I had done before, which again disappointed my father's designs in my favour, and almost provoked him to disown me. Before any thing suitable offered again, I was impressed (owing entirely to my own thoughtless conduct, which was always the same) and put on board a tender: it was a critical juncture, when the French fleets were hovering upon our coast, so that my father was incapable to procure my release. In a few days I was sent on board the Harwich man of war, at the Nore. I entered here upon quite a new scene of life, and endured much hardship for about a month. My father was then willing that I should remain in the navy, as a war was daily expected, and he procured me a recommendation to the captain, who sent me upon the quarter-deck as a midshipman. I had now an easy life, as to externals, and might have gained respect; but my mind was unsettled, and my behaviour very indifferent. I here met with companions who completed the ruin of my principles; and though I affected to



talk of virtue, and was not so utterly abandoned as afterwards, yet my delight and habitual practice was wickedness: my chief intimate was a person of exceeding good natural talents, and much observation; he was the greatest master of what is called the free-thinking scheme I remember to have met with, and knew how to insinuate his sentiments in the most plausible way. And his zeal was equal to his address; he could hardly have laboured more in the cause, if he had expected to gain heaven by it. Allow me to add, while I think of it, that this man, whom I honoured as my master, and whose practice I adopted so eagerly, perished in the same way as I expected to have done. I have been told, that he was overtaken in a voyage from Lisbon with a violent storm: the vessel and people escaped, but a great sea broke on board and swept him into eternity. Thus the Lord spares or punishes, according to his sovereign pleasure! But to return:—I was fond of his company, and having myself a smattering of books, was eager enough to show my reading. He soon perceived my case, that I had not wholly broke through the restraints of conscience, and therefore did not shock me at first with too broad intimations of his design; he rather, as I thought, spoke favourably of religion; but when he had gained my confidence, he began to speak plainer; and perceiving my ignorant attachment to the *Characteristics*, he joined issue with me upon that book, and convinced me that I had never understood it. In a word, he so plied me with objections and arguments, that my depraved heart was soon gained, and I entered into his plan with all my heart. Thus, like an unwary sailor, who quits his port just before a

rising storm, I renounced the hopes and comforts of the gospel at the very time when every other comfort was about to fail me.

‘ In December, 1744, the *Harwich* was in the Downs, bound to the East Indies. The captain gave me liberty to go on shore for a day ; but, without consulting prudence, or regarding consequences, I took horse, and followed the dictates of my restless passion ; I went to take a last leave of her I loved. I had little satisfaction in the interview, as I was sensible that I was taking pains to multiply my own troubles. The short time I could stay passed like a dream, and on new year’s-day, 1745, I took my leave to return to the ship. The captain was prevailed on to excuse my absence ; but this rash step (especially as it was not the first step of the kind I had taken) highly displeased him, and lost me his favour, which I never recovered.

‘ At length we sailed from Spithead with a very large fleet. We put into Torbay with a change of wind ; but it returning fair again, we sailed the next day. Several of our fleet were lost in attempting to leave that place, and the following night the whole fleet was greatly endangered upon the coast of Cornwall, by a storm from the southward. The darkness of the night, and the number of the vessels, occasioned much confusion and damage. Our ship, though several times in imminent danger of being run down by other vessels, escaped unhurt ; but many suffered much, particularly the Admiral. This occasioned our putting back to Plymouth.

‘ While we lay at Plymouth, I heard that my father, who had an interest in some of the ships lately lost, was come down to Torbay. He had a connec-

tion at that time with the African company. I thought if I could get to him, he might easily introduce me into that service, which would be better than pursuing a long uncertain voyage to the East Indies. It was a maxim with me, in those unhappy days, *never to deliberate*; the thought hardly occurred to me before I was resolved to leave the ship at all events: I did so, and in the worst manner possible. I was sent one day in the boat, to take care that none of the people deserted; but I betrayed my trust, and went off myself. I knew not what road to take, and durst not ask, for fear of being suspected; yet having some general idea of the country, I guessed right; and, when I had travelled some miles, I found, upon inquiry, that I was on the road to Dartmouth. All went smoothly that day and part of the next: I walked apace, and expected to have been with my father in about two hours, when I was met by a small party of soldiers; I could not avoid or deceive them. They brought me back to Plymouth; I walked through the streets guarded like a felon. My heart was full of indignation, shame, and fear. I was confined two days in the guard-house, then sent on board my ship, and kept awhile in irons, then publicly stripped and whipped, after which I was degraded from my office, and all my former companions forbidden to show me the least favour, or even to speak to me. As midshipman, I had been entitled to some command, which (being sufficiently haughty and vain) I had not been backward to exert. I was now in my turn brought down to a level with the lowest, and exposed to the insults of all.

‘ And as my present situation was uncomfortable,

my future prospects were still worse; the evils I suffered were likely to grow heavier every day. While my catastrophe was recent, the officers and my quondam brethren were somewhat disposed to screen me from ill usage; but, during the little time I remained with them afterwards, I found them cool very fast in their endeavours to protect me. Indeed they could not attempt it without running a great risk of sharing with me: for the captain, though in general a humane man, who behaved very well to the ship's company, was almost implacable in his resentment, when he had been greatly offended, and took several occasions to show himself so to me; and the voyage was expected to be (as it proved) for five years. Yet I think nothing I either felt or feared distressed me so much, as to see myself thus forcibly torn away from the object of my affections, under a great improbability of seeing her again, and a much greater, of returning in such a manner as would give me hopes of seeing her mine. Thus I was as miserable on all hands as could well be imagined. My breast was filled with the most excruciating passions, eager desire, bitter rage, and black despair. Every hour exposed me to some new insult and hardship, with no hope of relief or mitigation, no friend to take my part, or to listen to my complaint. Whether I looked inward or outward, I could perceive nothing but darkness and misery. I think no case, except that of a conscience wounded by the wrath of God, could be more dreadful than mine; I cannot express with what wishfulness and regret I cast my last looks upon the English shore; I kept my eyes fixed upon it till, the ship's distance increasing, it sensibly disappeared; and when I could see it no

longer, I was tempted to throw myself into the sea, which (according to the wicked system I had adopted) I supposed would put a period to all my sorrows at once. But the secret hand of God restrained me.

‘ During our passage to Madeira, I was a prey to the most gloomy thoughts. Though I had well deserved all I met with, and the captain might have been justified if he had carried his resentment still farther; yet my pride at that time suggested that I had been grossly injured, and this so far wrought upon my wicked heart, that I actually formed designs against his life; and this was one reason that made me willing to prolong my own. I was sometimes divided between the two, not thinking it practicable to effect both. The Lord had now to appearance given me up to judicial hardness; I was capable of any thing. I had not the least fear of God before my eyes, nor (so far as I remember) the least sensibility of conscience. I was possessed of so strong a spirit of delusion that I believed my own lie, and was firmly persuaded that after death I should cease to be. Yet the Lord preserved me! Some intervals of sober reflection would at times take place: when I have chosen death rather than life, a ray of hope would come in (though there was little probability for such a hope) that I should yet see better days, that I might again return to England, and have my wishes crowned, if I did not wilfully throw myself away. In a word, my love to M—— C—— was now the only restraint I had left; though I neither feared God, nor regarded men, I could not bear that *she* should think meanly of me when I was dead. As in the outward concerns of life, the weakest means are often employed

by Divine Providence to produce great effects, beyond their common influence, (as when a disease, for instance, has been removed by a fright) so I found it then : this single thought, which had not restrained me from a thousand smaller evils, proved my only effectual barrier against the greatest and most fatal temptations. How long I could have supported this conflict, or what, humanly speaking, would have been the consequence of my continuing in that situation, I cannot say ; but the Lord, whom I little thought of, knew my danger, and was providing for my deliverance.

‘ Two things I had determined when at Plymouth, that I would *not* go to India, and that I *would* go to Guinea ; and such, indeed, was the Lord’s will concerning me ; but they were to be accomplished in his way, not in my own. We had been now at Madeira some time ; the business of the fleet was completed, and we were to sail the following day. On that memorable morning I was late in bed, and had slept longer, but that one of the midshipmen (an old companion) came down, and, between jest and earnest, bid me rise ; and, as I did not immediately comply, he cut down the hammock or bed in which I lay, which forced me to dress myself. I was very angry, but durst not resent it. I was little aware how much his caprice affected me, and that this person, who had no design in what he did, was the messenger of God’s providence. I said little, but went upon deck, where I that moment saw a man putting his clothes into a boat, who told me he was going to leave us. Upon inquiring, I was informed that two men from a Guinea ship, which lay near us, had entered on board the Harwich, and that the

commodore (the present Sir George Pocock) had ordered the captain to send two others in their room. My heart instantly burned like fire. I begged the boat might be detained a few minutes; I ran to the lieutenants, and intreated them to intercede with the captain, that I might be dismissed upon this occasion. Though I had been formerly on ill terms with these officers, and had disoblged them all in their turns, yet they had pitied my case, and were ready to serve me now. The captain, who, when we were at Plymouth, had refused to exchange me, though at the request of Admiral Medley, was now easily prevailed on. I believe in little more than half an hour from my being asleep in my bed, I saw myself discharged, and safe on board another ship. This was one of the many critical turns of my life, in which the Lord was pleased to display his providence and care, by causing many unexpected circumstances to concur in almost an instant of time. These sudden opportunities were several times repeated: each of them brought me into an entirely new scene of action; and they were usually delayed to almost the last moment in which they could have taken place.

‘ The ship I went on board of was bound to Sierra Leone, and the adjacent parts of what is called the Windward Coast of Africa. The commander I found was acquainted with my father; he received me very kindly, and made fair professions of assistance; and I believe he would have been my friend; but, without gaining the least advantage by former mistakes and troubles, I pursued the same course; nay, if possible, I acted much worse. On board the Harwich, though my principles were totally corrupted, yet, as upon my first going there I was in some degree staid and

serious, the remembrance of this made me ashamed of breaking out in that notorious manner I could otherwise have indulged. But now, entering amongst strangers, I could appear without disguise; and I well remember, that while I was passing from the one ship to the other, this was one reason why I rejoiced in the exchange, and one reflection I made upon the occasion, viz. 'That I now might be as abandoned as I pleased, without any controul:' and, from this time, I was exceedingly vile indeed, little, if any thing, short of that animated description of an almost irrecoverable state, which we have in 2 Peter ii. 14. I not only sinned with a high hand myself, but made it my study to tempt and seduce others upon every occasion: nay, I eagerly sought occasion sometimes to my own hazard and hurt. One natural consequence of this carriage was, a loss of the favour of my new captain; not that he was at all religious or disliked my wickedness, any further than it affected his interest; but I became careless and disobedient; I did not please him, because I did not intend it; and, as he was a man of an odd temper likewise, we the more easily disagreed. Besides, I had a portion of that unlucky wit, which can do little more than multiply troubles and enemies to its possessor; and, upon some imagined affront, I made a song, in which I ridiculed his ship, his designs, and his person, and soon taught it to the whole ship's company. Such was the ungrateful return I made for his offers of friendship and protection. I had mentioned no names, but the allusion was plain, and he was no stranger either to the intention or the author. I shall say no more on this part of my story; let it be buried in eternal silence. But let me not



be silent in the praise of that grace which could pardon, or of that blood which could expiate such sins as mine; yea, "the Ethiopian may change his skin, and the leopard his spots," since I, who was the willing slave of every evil, possessed with a legion of unclean spirits, have been spared, and saved, and changed, to stand as a monument of his almighty power for ever.

' Thus I went on for about six months, by which time the ship was preparing to leave the coast. A few days before she sailed, the Captain died. I was not upon much better terms with his mate, who now succeeded to the command, and had upon some occasion treated me ill: I made no doubt, but, if I went with him to the West Indies, he would put me on board a man-of-war; and this, from what I had known already, was more dreadful to me than death. To avoid it, I determined to remain in Africa, and amused myself with many golden dreams, that here I should find an opportunity of improving my fortune.

' There are still upon that part of the coast, a few white men settled (and there were many more at the time I was first there) whose business it was to purchase slaves, &c. in the rivers and country adjacent, and sell them to the ships at an advanced price. One of these, who at first landed in my indigent circumstances, had acquired considerable wealth: he had lately been in England, and was returning in the vessel I was in, of which he owned a quarter part. His example impressed me with hopes of the same success; and upon condition of entering into his service, I obtained my discharge. I had not the precaution to make any terms, but trusted to his generosity. I received no compensation for my time on board the ship, but a bill upon the owners in

England, which was never paid; for they failed before my return. The day before the vessel sailed I landed upon the island of Benanoes, with little more than the clothes upon my back, as if I had escaped shipwreck.

‘The two following years, of which I am now to give some account, will seem as an absolute blank in a very short life: but the Lord’s hour of grace was not yet come, and I was to have still deeper experience of the dreadful state of the heart of man, when left to itself. I have seen frequent cause since, to admire the mercy of the Lord in banishing me to those distant parts, and almost excluding me from human society, at a time when I was big with mischief, and, like one infected with a pestilence, was capable of spreading a taint wherever I went. Had my affairs taken a different turn; had I succeeded in my designs, and remained in England, my sad story would probably have been worse. Worse in myself, indeed, I could hardly have been; but my wickedness would have had greater scope; I might have been very hurtful to others, and multiplied irreparable evils, but the Lord wisely placed me where I could do little harm. The few I had to converse with were too much like myself, and I was soon brought into such abject circumstances, that I was too low to have any influence. I was rather shunned and despised than imitated; there being few even of the negroes themselves (during the first year of my residence among them) but thought themselves too good to speak to me. I was as yet an “outcast lying in my blood.” (Ezek. xvi.) and, to all appearance, exposed to perish. But the Lord beheld me with mercy—he did not send me to hell, as I justly

deserved; "he passed by me when I was in my blood, and bid me live." But the appointed time for the manifestation of his love, to cover all my iniquities with the robe of his righteousness, and to admit me to the privileges of his children, was not till long afterwards; yet even now he bid me live; and I can only ascribe it to his secret upholding power, that what I suffered in a part of this interval, did not bereave me either of my life or senses; yet as by these sufferings the force of my evil example and inclinations was lessened, I have reason to account them amongst my mercies.

'It may not, perhaps, be amiss to digress for a few lines, and give you a very brief sketch of the geography of the circuit I was now confined to, especially as I may have frequent occasion to refer to places I shall now mention; for my trade afterwards, when the Lord gave me to see better days, was chiefly to the same places, and with the same persons, where and by whom I had been considered as upon a level with their meanest slaves. From Cape de Verd, the most western point of Africa, to Cape Mount, the whole coast is full of rivers: the principal are Gambia, Rio Grande, Sierra Leone, and Sherbro. Of the former, as it is well known, and I was never there, I need say nothing. The Rio Grande (like the Nile) divides into many branches near the sea. On the most northerly, called Cacheo, the Portuguese have a settlement. The most southern branch, known by the name of Rio Nuna, is, or was, the usual boundary of the white men's trade northward. Sierra Leone is a mountainous peninsula, uninhabited, and I believe inaccessible, upon account of the thick woods, excepting those parts which lie near

the water. The river is large and navigable. From hence about twelve leagues to the south-east, are three contiguous islands, called the Benanoes, about twenty miles in circuit: this was about the centre of the white men's residence. Seven leagues farther the same way lie the Plantanes, three small islands, two miles distant from the continent at the point which forms one side of the Sherbro. This river is more properly a sound, running within a long island, and receiving the confluence of several large rivers; 'rivers unknown to song,' but far more deeply engraven in my remembrance, than the Po or Tiber. The southernmost of these has a very peculiar course, almost parallel to the coast; so that in tracing it a great many leagues upwards, it will seldom lead one above three miles, and sometimes not more than half a mile from the sea-shore. Indeed I know not but that all these rivers may have communications with each other and with the sea in many places which I have not remarked. If you cast your eyes upon a large map of Africa, while you are reading this, you will have a general idea of the country I was in; for though the maps are very incorrect, most of the places I have mentioned are inserted, and in the same order as I have named them.

'My new master had formerly resided near Cape Mount, but he now settled at the Plantanes, upon the largest of the three islands. It is a low sandy island, about two miles in circumference, and almost covered with palm-trees. We immediately began to build a house, and to enter upon trade. I had now some desire to retrieve my lost time, and to exert diligence in what was before me; and he was a man

with whom I might have lived tolerably well, if he had not been soon influenced against me; but he was much under the direction of a black woman, who lived with him as a wife. She was a person of some consequence in her own country; and he owed his first rise to her interest. This woman (I know not for what reason) was strangely prejudiced against me from the first; and what made it still worse for me, was a severe fit of illness, which attacked me very soon, before I had any opportunity to show what I could or would do in his service. I was sick when he sailed in a shalop to Rio Nuna, and he left me in her hands. At first I was taken some care of; but, as I did not recover very soon, she grew weary, and entirely neglected me. I had sometimes not a little difficulty to procure a draught of cold water, when burning with a fever. My bed was a mat, spread upon a board or chest, and a log of wood my pillow. When my fever left me, and my appetite returned, I would gladly have eaten, but there was no one gave unto me. She lived in plenty herself, but hardly allowed me sufficient to sustain life, except now and then, when in the highest good humour, she would send me victuals in her own plate, after she had dined; and this (so greatly was my pride humbled) I received with thanks and eagerness, as the most needy beggar does an alms. Once, I well remember, I was called to receive this bounty from her own hand; but, being exceedingly weak and feeble, I dropped the plate. Those who live in plenty can hardly conceive how this loss touched me; but she had the cruelty to laugh at my disappointment; and though the table was covered with dishes (for she lived much in the European manner) she refused

to give me any more. My distress has been at times so great, as to compel me to go, by night, and pull up roots in the plantation (though at the risk of being punished as a thief) which I have eaten raw upon the spot, for fear of discovery. The roots I speak of are very wholesome food when boiled or roasted, but as unfit to be eaten raw in any quantity, as a potatoe. The consequence of this diet, which, after the first experiment, I always expected, and seldom missed, was the same as if I had taken tartar emetic ; so that I have often returned as empty as I went : yet necessity urged me to repeat the trial several times. I have sometimes been relieved by strangers ; nay, even by the slaves in the chain, who secretly brought me victuals (for they durst not be seen to do it) from their own slender pittance. Next to pressing want, nothing sits harder upon the mind than scorn and contempt ; and of this likewise I had an abundant measure. When I was very slowly recovering, this woman would sometimes pay me a visit, not to pity or relieve, but to insult me. She would call me worthless and indolent, and compel me to walk, which when I could hardly do, she would set her attendants to mimic my motions, to clap their hands, laugh, throw limes at me ; or, if they chose to throw stones (as I think was the case once or twice) they were not rebuked : but, in general, though all who depended on her favour must join in her treatment, yet, when she was out of sight, I was rather pitied than scorned by the meanest of her slaves. At length my master returned from his voyage ; I complained of ill usage, but he would not believe me ; and, as I did it in her hearing, I fared no better for it. But in his second voyage he took me with him. We did

pretty well for a while, till a brother trader he met in the river persuaded him that I was unfaithful, and stole his goods in the night, or when he was on shore. This was almost the only vice I could not be justly charged with: the only remains of a good education I could boast of, was what is commonly called honesty; and, as far as he had entrusted me, I had been always true; and though my great distress might, in some measure, have excused it, I never once thought of defrauding him in the smallest matter. However, the charge was believed, and I was condemned without evidence. From that time he likewise used me very hardly: whenever he left the vessel I was locked upon deck, with a pint of rice for my day's allowance; and if he staid longer, I had no relief till his return. Indeed, I believe I should have been nearly starved, but for an opportunity of catching fish sometimes. When fowls were killed for his own use, I seldom was allowed any part but the entrails, to bait my hooks with: and, at what we call slack water, that is, about the changing of the tides, when the current was still, I used generally to fish (for at other times it was not practicable) and I very often succeeded. If I saw a fish upon my hook, my joy was little less than any other person may have found, in the accomplishment of the scheme he had most at heart. Such a fish, hastily broiled, or rather half burnt, without sauce, salt, or bread, has afforded me a delicious meal. If I caught none, I might, if I could, sleep away my hunger till the next return of slack water, and then try again. Nor did I suffer less from the inclemency of the weather and the want of clothes. The rainy season was now advancing; my whole suit was a shirt, a pair of trowsers, a

cotton handkerchief instead of a cap, and a cotton cloth about two yards long, to supply the want of upper garments: and thus accoutred, I have been exposed for twenty, thirty, perhaps near forty hours together, to incessant rains, accompanied with strong gales of wind, without the least shelter, when my master was on shore. I feel to this day some faint returns of the violent pains I then contracted. The excessive cold and wet I endured in that voyage, and so soon after I had recovered from a long sickness, quite broke my constitution and my spirits; the latter were soon restored, but the effects of the former still remain with me, as a needful memento of the service and the wages of sin.

‘ In about two months we returned, and then the rest of the time I remained with him was chiefly spent at the Plantanes, under the same regimen as I have already mentioned. My haughty heart was now brought down, not to a wholesome repentance, not to the language of the prodigal; this was far from me; but my spirits were sunk; I lost all resolution, and almost all reflection. I had lost the fierceness which fired me when on board the Harwich, and which made me capable of the most desperate attempts; but I was no further changed than a tiger is, who has been tamed by hunger;—remove the occasion, and he will be as wild as ever.

‘ One thing, though strange, is most true. Though destitute of food and clothing, and depressed to a degree beyond common wretchedness, I could sometimes collect my mind to mathematical studies. I had bought Barrow’s Euclid at Plymouth; it was the only volume I brought on shore; it was always with me, and I used to take it to remote corners of the



island by the sea-side, and draw my *diagrams* with a long stick upon the sand. Thus I often beguiled my sorrows, and almost forgot my distress:—and thus, without any other assistance, I made myself, in a good measure, master of the first six books of Euclid.

‘ There is much piety and spirit in the grateful acknowledgment of Jacob, “with my staff I passed this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.” They are words which ought to affect me with a peculiar emotion. I remember that in some of those mournful days to which my last letter refers, I was busied in planting some lime or lemon-trees. The plants I put into the ground were no longer than a young gooseberry-bush ; my master and his mistress passing by the place, stopped a while to look at me ; at last, ‘ Who knows,’ says he, ‘ who knows but, by the time these trees grow up and bear, you may go home to England, obtain the command of a ship, and return to reap the fruits of your labours ; we see strange things sometimes happen.’ This, as he intended it, was a cutting sarcasm. I believe he thought it full as probable, that I should live to be king of Poland ; yet it proved a prediction, and they (one of them at least) lived to see me to return from England, in the capacity he had mentioned, and pluck some of the first limes from those very trees. How can I proceed in my relation, till I raise a monument to the divine goodness, by comparing the circumstances in which the Lord has since placed me, with what I was at that time ! Had you seen me, Sir, then go so pensive and solitary, in the dead of night, to wash my one shirt upon the rocks, and afterwards put it on wet, that it might dry upon my back, while I slept ;

had you seen me so poor a figure, that when a ship's boat came to the island, shame often constrained me to hide myself in the woods, from the sight of strangers; especially had you known that my conduct, principles, and heart, were still darker than my outward condition—how little would you have imagined, that one, who so fully answered to the *συγγητοι και μισηντες*<sup>1</sup> of the apostle, was reserved to be so peculiar an instance of the providential care and exuberant goodness of God. There was, at that time, but one earnest desire in my heart, which was not contrary and shocking both to religion and reason; that *one* desire, though my vile licentious life rendered me peculiarly unworthy of success, and though a thousand difficulties seemed to render it impossible, the Lord was pleased to gratify. But this favour, though great, and greatly prized, was a small thing compared to the blessings of his grace: he spared me, to give me the “knowledge of himself, in the person of Jesus Christ;” in love to my soul, he delivered me from the pit of corruption, and cast all my aggravated sins behind his back. He brought my feet into the paths of peace.—This is indeed the chief article, but it is not the whole. When he made me acceptable to himself ‘in the Beloved,’ he gave me also favour in the sight of others. He raised me new friends, protected and guided me through a long series of dangers, and crowned every day with repeated mercies. To him I owe it that I am still alive, and that I am not still living in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and the want of all things: into that state I brought myself, but it

<sup>1</sup> ‘Hateful, and hating one another.’

was he who delivered me. He has given me an easy situation in life, some experimental knowledge of his gospel, a large acquaintance amongst his people, a friendship and correspondence with several of his most honoured servants. But it is as difficult to enumerate my present advantages, as it is fully to describe the evils and miseries of the preceding contrast.

‘ I know not exactly how long things continued with me thus, but I believe nearly a twelvemonth. In this interval I wrote two or three times to my father; I gave him an account of my condition, and desired his assistance, intimating at the same time, that I had resolved not to return to England, unless he was pleased to send for me; I have likewise letters by me, written to M— C— in that dismal period; so that at the lowest ebb, it seems I still retained a hope of seeing her again. My father applied to his friend in Liverpool, of whom I have spoken before, who gave orders accordingly to a captain of his, who was then fitting out for Gambia and Sierra Leone.

‘ Some time within the year, as I have said, I obtained my master’s consent to live with another trader, who dwelt upon the same island. Without his consent I could not be taken, and he was unwilling to do it sooner, but it was then brought about. This was an alteration much to my advantage; I was soon decently clothed, lived in plenty, was considered as a companion, and trusted with the care of all his domestic effects, which were to the amount of some thousand pounds. This man had several factories and white servants in different places, particularly one in Kittam, the river I spoke of which runs so near along the sea coast. I was soon appointed

to go there, where I had a share in the management of business, jointly with another of his servants: we lived as we pleased, business flourished, and our employer was satisfied. Here I began to be wretch enough to think myself happy. There is a significant phrase frequently used in those parts, that such a white man is grown *black*. It does not intend an alteration of complexion, but of disposition. I have known several, who, settling in Africa after the age of thirty or forty, have, even at that time of life been gradually assimilated to the tempers, customs, and ceremonies of the natives, so far as to prefer that country to England; they have even become dupes to all the pretended charms, necromances, amulets, and divinations of the blinded negroes, and have put more trust in such things than the wiser sort among the natives. A part of this spirit of infatuation was growing upon me (in time perhaps I might have yielded to the whole;) I entered into closer engagements with the inhabitants, and should have lived and died a wretch amongst them, if the Lord had not watched over me for good. Not that I had lost those ideas which chiefly engaged my heart to England, but despair of seeing them accomplished made me willing to remain where I was. I thought I could more easily bear the disappointment in this situation than nearer home. But, so soon as I had formed my connections and plans with these views, the Lord providentially interposed to break them in pieces, and save me from ruin in spite of myself.

‘At this juncture, the ship that had orders to bring me home arrived at Sierra Leone: the captain made inquiry for me there and at the Bananas; but understanding that I was at a great distance in the

country he thought no more about me. Without doubt the hand of God directed my being placed at Kittam just at this time; for, as the ship came no nearer than the Bananas, and staid but a few days, if I had been at the Plantanes I should not, probably, have heard of her till after she had sailed. The same must have certainly been the event, had I been sent to any other factory, of which my new master had several upon different rivers. But though the place I was at was a long way up a river, much more than a hundred miles distant from the Plantanes, yet, by the peculiar situation which I have already noticed, I was still within a mile of the sea coast. To make the interposition more remarkable, I was at that very juncture going in quest of trade to a place at some distance directly from the sea, and should have set out a day or two before, but that we waited for a few articles from the next ship that passed, to complete the assortment of goods I was to take with me. We used sometimes to walk to the beach, in expectation of seeing a vessel pass by, but this was very precarious, as at that time the place was not at all resorted to by ships for trade. Many passed in the night, others kept at a considerable distance from the shore. In a word, I do not know that any one had stopped while I was there, though some had before, upon observing a signal made from the shore. In February, 1747, (I know not the exact day) my fellow-servant walking down to the beach in the forenoon, saw a vessel sailing past, and made a smoke in token of trade. She was already a little beyond the place, and, as the wind was fair, the captain was in some demur whether to stop or not: however, had my companion been half an hour later,

she would have been gone beyond recal; but he soon saw her come to an anchor, and went on board in a canoe: and this proved the very ship I have spoken of. One of the first questions he was asked was concerning me; and when the captain understood I was so near, he came on shore to deliver his message. Had an invitation from home reached me, when I was sick and starving at the Plantanes, I should have received it as life from the dead; but now, for the reasons already given, I heard it at first with indifference. The Captain, unwilling to lose me, told a story altogether of his own framing; he gave me a very plausible account, how he had missed a large packet of letters and papers, which he should have brought with him; but this, he said, he was sure of, having had it from my father's own mouth, as well as from his employer, that a person lately dead had left me £400. *per annum*; adding further, that if I was any way embarrassed in my circumstances, he had express orders to redeem me, though it should cost one half of his cargo. Every particular of this was false; nor could I myself believe what he said about the estate; but, as I had some expectations from an aged relation, I thought a part of it might be true. But I was not long in suspense: for though my father's care and desire to see me had too little weight with me, and would have been insufficient to make me quit my retreat, yet the remembrance of M— C—, the hopes of seeing her, and the possibility that accepting this offer might once more put me in a way of gaining her hand, prevailed over all other considerations. The captain further promised (and in this he kept his word) that I should lodge in his cabin, dine at his table, and

be his constant companion, without expecting any service from me. And thus I was suddenly freed from a captivity of about fifteen months. I had neither a thought nor a desire of this change one hour before it took place. I embarked with him, and in a few hours lost sight of Kittam.

‘How much is their blindness to be pitied, who can see nothing but chance in events of this sort! So blind and stupid was I at that time, that I made no reflection. I sought no direction in what had happened: like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed, I was governed by present appearances, and looked no farther. But He, who is eyes to the blind, was leading me in a way that I knew not.

‘Now I am in some measure enlightened, I can easily perceive that it is in the adjustment and concurrence of these seemingly fortuitous circumstances, that the ruling power and wisdom of God is most evidently displayed in human affairs. How many such casual events may we remark in the history of Joseph, which had each a necessary influence in his ensuing promotion! If he had not dreamed, or if he had not told his dream;—if the Midianites had passed by a day sooner or a day later; if they had sold him to any person but Potiphar; if his mistress had been a better woman; if Pharaoh’s officers had not displeased their Lord; or if any, or all these things had fallen out in any other manner or time than they did, all that followed had been prevented; the promises and purposes of God concerning Israel, their bondage, deliverances, polity, and settlement, must have failed; and, as all these things tended to, and centered in Christ, the promised Saviour, the desire of all nations would not have appeared; man-

kind had been still in their sins, without hope, and the counsels of God's eternal love in favour of sinners defeated. Thus we may see a connection between Joseph's first dream, and the death of our Lord Christ, with all its glorious consequences. So strong, though secret, is the concatenation between the *greatest* and the *smallest* events! What a comfortable thought is this to a believer to know, that amidst all the various interfering designs of men, the Lord has one constant design which he cannot, will not miss, namely, his own glory in the complete salvation of his people; and that he is wise, and strong, and faithful, to make even those things, which seem contrary to this design, subservient to promote it.'



## CHAPTER III.

*From his Deliverance from Africa to his Marriage.*

A. D. 1747—1750.

‘THE ship I was now on board, as a passenger, was on a trading voyage for gold, ivory, dyers’ wood, and bees’ wax. It requires much longer time to collect a cargo of this sort than of slaves. The captain began his trade at Gambia, had been already four or five months in Africa, and continued there a year, or thereabouts, after I was with him; in which time we ranged the whole coast, as far as Cape Lopez, which lies about a degree south of the equinoctial, and more than a thousand miles farther from England than the place where I embarked. I have little to offer worthy your notice, in the course of this tedious voyage. I had no business to employ my thoughts, but sometimes amused myself with mathematics: excepting this, my whole life, when awake, was a course of most horrid impiety and profaneness. I know not that I have ever since met so daring a blasphemer: not content with common oaths and imprecations, I daily invented new ones; so that I was often seriously reproved by the captain, who was himself a very passionate man, and not at all

circumspect in his expressions. From the relation I at times made him of my past adventures, and what he saw of my conduct, and especially towards the close of the voyage, when we met with many disasters, he would often tell me that to his great grief he had a Jonah on board; that a curse attended me wherever I went; and that all the troubles he met with in the voyage, were owing to his having taken me into the vessel. I shall omit any further particulars, and after mentioning an instance or two of the Lord's mercy to me, while I was thus defying his power and patience, I shall proceed to something more worthy your perusal.

‘ Although I lived long in the excess of almost every other extravagance, I never was fond of drinking; and my father has often been heard to say, that while I avoided drunkenness, he should still entertain hopes of my recovery. But sometimes I would promote a drinking-bout for the frolic's-sake, as I termed it; for though I did not love the liquor, I was sold to do iniquity, and delighted in mischief. The last abominable frolic of this sort I engaged in, was in the river Gabon; the proposal and expense were my own. Four or five of us one evening sat down upon deck, to see who could hold out longest in drinking geneva and rum alternately; a large sea-shell supplied the place of a glass. I was very unfit for a challenge of this sort, for my head was always incapable of bearing much strong drink. However, I began and proposed the first toast, which, I well remember, was some imprecation against the person who should *start* first.—This proved to be myself.—My brain was soon fired:—I arose, and danced about the deck like a madman; and while I

was thus diverting my companions, my hat went overboard. By the light of the moon I saw the ship's boat, and eagerly threw myself over the side to get into her, that I might recover my hat. My sight in that circumstance deceived me, for the boat was not within my reach, as I had thought, but perhaps twenty feet from the ship's side. I was, however, half over-board, and should in one moment more have plunged myself into the water, when somebody caught hold of my clothes behind, and pulled me back. This was an amazing escape, for I could not swim if I had been sober; the tide ran very strong, my companions were too much intoxicated to save me, and the rest of the ship's company were asleep. So near was I, to all appearance, of perishing in that dreadful condition, and sinking into eternity under the weight of my own curse!

‘ Another time, at Cape Lopez, some of us had been in the woods, and shot a buffalo or wild cow; we brought a part of it on board, and carefully marked the place (as I thought) where we left the remainder. In the evening we returned to fetch it, but we set out too late. I undertook to be their guide, but night coming on before we could reach the place, we lost our way. Sometimes we were in swamps up to the middle in water, and when we recovered dry land, we could not tell whether we were walking towards the ship, or wandering farther from her. Every step increased our uncertainty. The night grew darker, and we were entangled in extricable woods, where perhaps, the foot of man had never trod before. That part of the country is entirely abandoned to wild beasts, with which it prodigiously abounds. We were indeed in a terrible case, having neither

light, food, nor arms, and expecting a tiger to rush from behind every tree. The stars were clouded, and we had no compass to form a judgment which way we were going. Had things continued thus, we had certainly perished: but it pleased God that no beast came near us: and, after some hours perplexity, the moon arose, and pointed out the eastern quarter. It appeared then, as we had expected, that instead of drawing near to the sea side, we had been penetrating into the country; but, by the guidance of the moon, we at length came to the water-side, a considerable distance from the ship. We got safe on board, without any other inconvenience than what we suffered from fear and fatigue.

‘Those and many other deliverances were all, at that time, entirely lost upon me. The admonitions of conscience, which, from successive repulses, had grown weaker and weaker, at length entirely ceased; and for a space of many months, if not for some years, I cannot recollect, that I had a single check of that sort. At times I have been visited with sickness, and have believed myself near to death, but I had not the least concern about the consequences. In a word, I seemed to have every mark of final impenitence and rejection; neither judgments nor mercies made the least impression on me.

‘At length, our business being finished, we left Cape Lopez, and after a few days stay at the island of Annabona, to lay in provisions, we sailed homeward about the beginning of January, 1748. From Annabona to England, without touching at any intermediate port, is a very long navigation, perhaps more than seven thousand miles, if we include the circuits necessary to be made on account of the trade-winds.

We sailed first westward, till near the coast of Brazil, then northward, to the banks of Newfoundland, with the usual variations of wind and weather, and without meeting any thing extraordinary. On these banks we stopped half a day to fish for cod: this was then chiefly for diversion; we had provisions enough, and little expected those fish (as it afterwards proved) would be all we should have to subsist on. We left the banks March the 1st, with a hard gale of wind westerly, which pushed us fast homewards. I should here observe, that with the length of this voyage in a hot climate, the vessel was greatly out of repair, and very unfit to support stormy weather: the sails and cordage were likewise very much worn out, and many such circumstances concurred to render what followed more dangerous. I think it was on the ninth of March, the day before our catastrophe, that I felt a thought pass through my mind which I had long been a stranger to. Among the few books we had on board, one was Stanhope's *Thomas à Kempis*; I carelessly took it up, as I had often done before, to pass away the time; but I had still read it with the same indifference as if it was entirely a romance. However, while I was reading this time, an involuntary suggestion arose in my mind—what if these things should be true? I could not bear the force of the inference, as it related to myself, and therefore shut the book presently. My conscience witnessed against me once more, and I concluded that, true or false, I must abide the consequences of my own choice. I put an abrupt end to these reflections, by joining in with some vain conversation or other that came in my way.

‘ But the Lord’s time was come, and the conviction



I was so unwilling to receive, was deeply impressed upon me by an awful dispensation. I went to bed that night in my usual security and indifference, but was awakened from a sound sleep by the force of a violent sea which broke on board us ; so much of it came down below as filled the cabin I lay in with water. This alarm was followed by a cry from the deck, that the ship was going down, or sinking. As soon as I could recover myself, I essayed to go upon deck, but was met upon the ladder by the captain, who desired me to bring a knife with me. While I returned for the knife another person went up in my room, who was instantly washed overboard. We had no leisure to lament him, nor did we expect to survive him long ; for we soon found that the ship was filling with water very fast. The sea had torn away the upper timbers on one side, and made a mere wreck in a few minutes. I shall not affect to describe this disaster in the marine dialect, which would be understood by few, and therefore I can give you but a very inadequate idea of it. Taking in all circumstances, it was astonishing, and almost miraculous, that any of us survived to relate the story. We had immediate recourse to the pumps, but the water increased in spite of all our efforts : some of us were set baling in another part of the vessel, that is, lading it out with buckets and pails. We had but eleven or twelve people to sustain this service ; and, notwithstanding all we could do, she was full, or very near it ; and with a common cargo she must have sunk of course : but we had a great quantity of bees-wax and wood on board, which were specifically lighter than the water ; and as it pleased God that we received this shock in the very crisis of

the gale, towards morning we were enabled to employ some means for our safety, which succeeded beyond hope. In about an hour's time the day began to break, and the wind abated. We expended most of our clothes and bedding, to stop the leaks (though the weather was exceedingly cold, especially to us who had so lately left a hot climate) over these we nailed pieces of boards, and at last perceived the water abate. At the beginning of this hurry, I was little affected; I pumped hard, and endeavoured to animate myself and my companions: I told one of them that in a few days this distress would serve us to talk of, over a glass of wine; but he being a less hardened sinner than myself, replied with tears: 'No, it is too late now.' About nine o'clock, being almost spent with cold and labour, I went to speak with the captain, who was busied elsewhere, and just as I was returning from him, I said, almost without any meaning: 'If this will not do, the Lord have mercy upon us.' This (though spoken with little reflection) was the first desire I had breathed for mercy for the space of many years. I was instantly struck with my own words, and as Jehu said once: "What hast thou to do with peace?" so it directly occurred, "What mercy can there be for me?" I was obliged to return to the pump, and there I continued till noon, almost every passing wave breaking over my head; but we made ourselves fast with ropes, that we might not be washed away. Indeed I expected that every time the vessel descended into the sea, she would rise no more; and though I dreaded death now, and my heart foreboded the worst, if the scriptures, which I had long since opposed, were indeed true; yet still I was but half convinced, and remained

for a space of time in a sullen frame, a mixture of despair and impatience. I thought, if the christian religion was true, I could not be forgiven ; and was therefore expecting, and almost, at times, wishing to know the worst of it.

‘ The 10th (that is in the present style the 21st) of March, is a day much to be remembered by me, and I have never suffered it to pass wholly unnoticed since the year 1748. On that day the Lord sent from on high, and delivered me out of the deep waters. I continued at the pump from three in the morning till near noon, and then I could do no more : I went and lay down upon my bed, uncertain and almost indifferent whether I should ever rise again. In an hour’s time I was called, and not being able to pump, I went to the helm and steered the ship till midnight, excepting a small interval for refreshment. I had here leisure and convenient opportunity for reflection : I began to think of my former religious professions ; the extraordinary turns in my life : the calls, warnings, and deliverances I had met with, the licentious course of my conversation, particularly my unparalleled effrontery in making the gospel history (which I could not now be sure was false, though I was not yet assured it was true) the constant subject of profane ridicule. I thought, allowing the scripture premises, there never was nor could be such a sinner as myself, and then comparing the advantages I had broken through, I concluded, at first, that my sins were too great to be forgiven. The scripture likewise seemed to say the same ; for I had formerly been well acquainted with the Bible, and many passages, upon this occasion, returned upon my memory, particularly those awful passages, Prov.



i. 24—31. Heb. vi. 4, 6. and 2 Peter ii. 20. which seemed so exactly to suit my case and character, as to bring with them a presumptive proof of a divine original. Thus, as I have said, I waited with fear and impatience to receive my inevitable doom. Yet, though I had thoughts of this kind, they were exceedingly faint and disproportionate; it was not till long after (perhaps several years) when I had gained some clear views of the infinite righteousness and grace of Christ Jesus my Lord, that I had a deep and strong apprehension of my state by nature and practice, and perhaps, till then I could not have borne the sight. So wonderfully does the Lord proportion the discoveries of sin and grace: for he knows our frame, and that if he was to put forth the greatness of his power, a poor sinner would be instantly overwhelmed, and crushed as a moth. But to return; when I saw, beyond all probability, that there was still hope of respite, and heard about six in the evening that the ship was freed from water, there arose a gleam of hope. I thought I saw the hand of God displayed in our favour; I began to pray; I could not utter the prayer of faith, I could not draw near to a reconciled God and call him father: my prayer was like the cry of the ravens, which yet the Lord does not disdain to hear. I now began to think of that Jesus whom I had so often derided; I recollected the particulars of his life and of his death; a death for sins not his *own*, but, as I remembered, for the sake of those who, in their distress, should put their trust in him. And now I chiefly wanted evidence. The comfortless principles of infidelity were deeply rivetted, and I rather wished than believed these things to be real facts.

I collect the strain of the reasonings and exercises of my mind in one view ; but I do not say that all this passed at one time. The great question now was, how to obtain *faith*? I speak not of an appropriating faith (of which I then knew neither the nature or necessity) but how I should gain an assurance that the scriptures were of a divine inspiration, and a sufficient warrant for the exercise of trust and hope in God. One of the first helps I received (in consequence of a determination to examine the New Testament more carefully) was from Luke xi. 13. I had been sensible, that to profess faith in Jesus Christ, when in reality I did not believe his history, was no better than a mockery of the heart-searching God ; but here I found a spirit spoken of which was to be communicated to those who ask it. Upon this I reasoned thus : if this book is true, the promise in this passage must be true likewise : I have need of that very spirit, by which the whole was written, in order to understand it aright. He has engaged here to give that spirit to those who ask. I must therefore pray for it, and, if it is of God, he will make good his own word. My purposes were strengthened by John vii. 17. I concluded from thence, that though I could not say from my heart, that I believed the gospel, yet I would, for the present, take it for granted ; and that, by studying it in this light, I should be more and more confirmed in it. If what I am writing could be perused by our modern infidels, they would say (for I too well know their manner) that I was very desirous to persuade myself into this opinion. I confess I was, and so would they be, if the Lord should shew them, as he was pleased to show me at that time, the absolute necessity of some

expedient to interpose between a righteous God and a sinful soul ; upon the gospel scheme I saw, at least, a peradventure of hope, but on every other side I was surrounded with black unfathomable despair.

‘The wind was now moderate, but continued fair, and we were still drawing nearer to our port. We began to recover from our consternation, though we were greatly alarmed by our circumstances. We found, that the water having floated all our moveables in the hold, all the casks of provision had been beaten to pieces by the violent motion of the ship : on the other hand, our live stock, such as pigs, sheep and poultry, had been washed over-board in the storm. In effect, all the provisions we saved, except the fish I had mentioned, and some food of the pulse kind, which used to be given to the hogs, (and there was but little of this left) all our other provisions would have subsisted us but a week at scanty allowance. The sails too were mostly blown away, so that we advanced but slowly, even while the wind was fair. We imagined ourselves about a hundred leagues from the land, but were in reality much farther. Thus we proceeded with an alternate prevalence of hope and fear. My leisure time was chiefly employed in reading and meditating on the scripture, and praying to the Lord for mercy and instruction.

‘ Things continued thus for four or five days, or perhaps longer, till we were awakened one morning by the joyful shouts of the watch upon deck proclaiming the sight of land. We were all soon raised at the sound. The dawning was uncommonly beautiful, and the light (just strong enough to discover distant objects) presented us with a gladdening prospect :

it seemed a mountainous coast, about twenty miles from us, terminating in a cape or point, and a little farther two or three small islands, or hommocks, as if just rising out of the water; the appearance and position seemed exactly answerable to our hopes, resembling the north-west extremity of Ireland, which we were steering for. We sincerely congratulated each other, making no doubt, but that if the wind continued, we should be in safety and plenty the next day. The small remainder of our brandy (which was reduced to little more than a pint) was, by the captain's orders, distributed amongst us; he adding at the same time, 'We shall soon have brandy enough.' We likewise eat up the residue of our bread for joy of this welcome sight, and were in the condition of men suddenly reprieved from death. While we were thus alert, the mate with a graver tone than the rest, sunk our spirits by saying, that, 'he wished it might prove land at last.' If one of the common sailors had first said so, I know not but the rest would have beaten him for raising such an unreasonable doubt. It brought on, however, warm debates and disputes whether it was land or no; but the case was soon unanswerably decided, for the day was advancing fast, and in a little time, one of our fancied islands began to grow red, from the approach of the sun which soon arose just under it. In a word, we had been prodigal of our bread and brandy too hastily; our land was literally *in nubibus*, nothing but clouds, and in half an hour more the whole appearance was dissipated. Seamen have often known deceptions of this sort, but in our extremity we were loath to be undeceived. However, we comforted ourselves, that though we could not

see the land, yet we should soon, the wind hitherto continuing fair ; but alas, we were deprived of this hope likewise ! That very day our fair wind subsided into a calm, and the next morning the gales sprung up from the south-east, directly against us, and continued so for more than a fortnight afterwards. The ship was so wrecked, that we were obliged to keep the wind always on the broken side, unless the weather was quite moderate : thus we were driven by the wind fixing in that quarter, still further from our port, to the northward of all Ireland, as far as the western islands of Scotland, but a long way to the westward. In a word, our station was such as deprived us of any hope of being relieved by other vessels : it may indeed be questioned whether our ship was not the very first that had been in that part of the ocean, at the same season of the year.

‘ Provisions now began to grow very short ; the half a salted cod was a day’s subsistence for twelve people ; we had plenty of fresh water, but not a drop of stronger liquor ; no bread, hardly any clothes, and very cold weather. We had incessant labour with the pumps, to keep the ship above water. Much labour and little food wasted us fast, and one man died under the hardship. Yet our sufferings were light in comparison of our just fears ; we could not afford this bare allowance much longer, but had a terrible prospect of being either starved to death, or reduced to feed upon one another. Our expectations grew darker every day, and I had a further trouble peculiar to myself. The captain, whose temper was quite soured by distress, was hourly reproaching me (as I formerly observed) as the sole cause of the cala-

mity, and was confident that if I was thrown overboard (and not otherwise) they should be preserved from death. He did not intend to make the experiment, but continual repetition of this in my ears gave me much uneasiness, especially as my conscience seconded his words. I thought it very probable that all that had befallen us was on my account. I was, at last, found out by the powerful hand of God, and condemned in my own breast. However, proceeding in the method I have described, we began to conceive hopes greater than all our fears, especially when at the time we were ready to give up all for lost, and despair was taking place in every countenance, we saw the wind come about to the very point we wished it, so as best to suit that broken part of the ship which must be kept out of the water, and to blow just so gently as our few remaining sails could bear; and thus it continued without any observable alteration or increase, though at an unsettled time of the year, till we once more were called up to see the land, and were convinced that it was land indeed. We saw the island Tory, and the next day anchored in Lough Swilly, in Ireland; this was the eighth of April, just four weeks after the damage we sustained from the sea. When we came into this port our very last victuals were boiling in the pot, and before we had been there two hours, the wind, which seemed to have been providentially restrained till we were in a place of safety, began to blow with great violence, so that if we had continued at sea that night in our shattered, enfeebled condition, we must, in all human appearance, have gone to the bottom. About this time I began to know that there is a God that hears and answers prayer. How many

times has he appeared for me since this great deliverance:—yet, alas! how distrustful and ungrateful is my heart unto this hour.

‘ I have brought my history down to the time of my arrival in Ireland, 1748; but before I proceed I would look back a little, to give you some farther account of the state of my mind, and how far I was helped against inward difficulties, which beset me, at the time I had many outward hardships to struggle with. The straits of hunger, cold, weariness, and the fears of sinking and starving, I shared in common with others; but besides these, I felt a heart-bitterness, which was properly my own; no one on board but myself being impressed with any sense of the hand of God in our danger and deliverance, at least not awakened to any concern for their souls. No temporal dispensations can reach the heart, unless the Lord himself applies them. My companions in danger were either quite unaffected, or soon forgot it all, but it was not so with me: not that I was any wiser or better than they, but because the Lord was pleased to vouchsafe me peculiar mercy, otherwise I was the most unlikely person in the ship to receive an impression, having been often before quite stupid and hardened in the very face of great dangers, and always to this time had hardened my neck still more and more after every reproof. I can see no reason, why the Lord singled me out for mercy but this, “that so it seemed good to him;” unless it was to show, by one astonishing instance, that with him “nothing is impossible.”

There were no persons on board, to whom I could open myself with freedom concerning the state of my soul; none from whom I could ask advice. As

to books, I had a New Testament, Stanhope already mentioned, and a volume of Bishop Beveridge's sermons, one of which upon our Lord's passion affected me much. In perusing the New Testament, I was struck with several passages, particularly that of the fig-tree, (Luke xiii.) the case of St. Paul, (1 Tim. i.) but particularly the prodigal, (Luke xv.)—a case I thought that had never been so nearly exemplified, as by myself:—and then the goodness of the father in perceiving, nay, in running to meet such a son, and this intended only to illustrate the Lord's goodness to returning sinners—this gained upon me: I continued much in prayer: I saw that the Lord had interposed *so far* to save me, and I hoped he would do more. The outward circumstances helped in this place to make me still more serious and earnest in crying to him, who alone could relieve me; and sometimes I thought I could be content to die even for want of food, so I might die a believer. Thus far I was answered, that before we arrived in Ireland I had a satisfactory evidence in my own mind of the truth of the gospel, as considered in itself, and its exact suitableness to answer all my need. I saw that, by the way there pointed out, God might declare not his mercy only, but his justice also, in the pardon of sin, on the account of the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ. My judgment, at that time, embraced the sublime doctrine of "God manifest in the flesh, reconciling the world to himself." I had no idea of those systems, which allow the Saviour no higher honour than that of an *upper servant*, or, at the most, a *demigod*. I stood in need of an Almighty Saviour, and such a one I found described in the New Testa-



ment. Thus far the Lord had wrought a marvellous thing; I was no longer an infidel; I heartily renounced my former profaneness, and I had taken up some right notions; was seriously disposed, and sincerely touched with a sense of the undeserved mercy I had received, in being brought safe through so many dangers. I was sorry for my past mis-spent life, and purposed an immediate reformation; I was quite freed from the habit of swearing, which seemed to have been deeply rooted in me, as a second nature. Thus to all appearance I was a new man.

‘ But though I cannot doubt that this change, so far as it prevailed, was wrought by the Spirit and power of God, yet still I was greatly deficient in many respects. I was in some degree affected with a sense of my more enormous sins, but I was little aware of the innate evils of my heart. I had no apprehension of the spirituality and extent of the law of God: the hidden life of a Christian, as it consists in communion with God by Jesus Christ, and a continual dependence on him for hourly supplies of wisdom, strength, and comfort, was a mystery of which I had as yet no knowledge. I acknowledged the Lord’s mercy in pardoning what was past, but depended chiefly upon my own resolution to do better for the time to come. I had no Christian friend or faithful minister to advise me, that my strength was no more than my righteousness; and though I soon began to inquire for serious books, yet not having spiritual discernment, I frequently made a wrong choice, and I was not brought in the way of evangelical preaching or conversation (except the few times when I heard, but understood not) for six years after this period. Those things the Lord was pleased

to discover to me gradually. I learnt them, here a little and there a little, by my own painful experience, at a distance from the common means and ordinances, and in the midst of the same course of evil company and bad examples I had been conversant with for some time. From this period I could no more make a mock at sin, or jest with holy things ; I no more questioned the truth of scripture, or lost a sense of the rebukes of conscience. Therefore I consider this as the beginning of my return to God, or rather of his return to me ; but I cannot consider myself to have been a believer (in the full sense of the word) till a considerable time afterwards.

‘ I have already observed that, in the time of our distress, we had fresh water in abundance ; this was a considerable relief to us, especially as our spare diet was mostly salt fish, without bread. We drank plentifully, and were not afraid of wanting water, yet our stock of this likewise was much nearer at an end than we expected ; we supposed that we had six large butts of water on board, and it was well that we were safe arrived in Ireland before we discovered that five of them were empty, having been removed out of their places and burst by the violent agitation, when the ship was full of water. If we had found this out while we were at sea, it would have greatly heightened our distress, as we must have drunk more sparingly.

‘ While the ship was refitting at Lough Swilly, I repaired to Londonderry. I lodged at an exceedingly good house, where I was treated with much kindness, and soon recruited my health and strength. I was now a serious professor, went twice a-day to the

prayers at church, and determined to receive the sacrament the next opportunity. A few days before I signified my intention to the minister, as the rubric directs; but I found this practice was grown obsolete. At length the day came: I arose very early, was very particular and earnest in my private devotion, and, with the greatest solemnity, engaged myself to be the Lord's for ever, and only his. This was not a formal, but a sincere surrender, under a warm sense of mercies recently received; and yet, for want of a better knowledge of myself and the subtilty of Satan's temptations, I was seduced to forget the vows of God that were upon me. Upon the whole, though my views of the gospel salvation were very indistinct, I experienced a peace and satisfaction in the ordinance that day, to which I had been hitherto a perfect stranger.

' The next day I was abroad with the mayor of the city and some other gentlemen shooting. I climbed up a steep bank, and pulling my fowling-piece after me, as I held it in a perpendicular direction, it went off so near my face as to burn away the corner of my hat. Thus, when we think ourselves in the greatest safety, we are no less exposed to danger than when all the elements seem conspiring to destroy us. That divine providence, which is sufficient to deliver us in our utmost extremity, is equally necessary to our preservation in the most peaceful situation.

' During my stay in Ireland I wrote home. The vessel I was in had not been heard of for eighteen months, and was given up for lost long before. My father had not the least expectation of hearing that I was alive, but he received my letter a few days before

he left London. He was just going out Governor of York Fort, in Hudson's Bay, whence he never returned. He sailed before I landed in England, or he had purposed to take me with him; but God designing otherwise, one hindrance or other delayed us in Ireland till it was too late. I received two or three affectionate letters from him, but I never had the pleasure of seeing him more. I had hopes, that in three years more, I should have had an opportunity of asking his forgiveness for the uneasiness my disobedience had given him; but the ship that was to have brought him home, came without him. According to the best accounts we received, he was seized with the cramp, when bathing, and drowned, a little before her arrival in the bay.—Excuse this digression.

‘ My father, willing to contribute all in his power to my satisfaction, paid a visit before his departure to my friends in Kent, and gave his consent to the union which had been so long talked of. Thus, when I returned to —, I found I had only the consent of one person to obtain: with her I as yet stood at as great an uncertainty as on the first day I saw her.

‘ I arrived at Liverpool the latter end of May, 1748, about the same day that my father sailed from the Nore, but found the Lord had provided me another father, in the gentleman whose ship had brought me home. He received me with great tenderness, and the strongest expressions of friendship and assistance; yet not more than he has since made good: for to him, as the instrument of God's goodness, I owe my all. Yet it would not have been in the power even of this friend, to have served me ef-

fectually, if the Lord had not met with me on my way home, as I have related. Till then I was like the man possessed with the *legion*. No arguments, no persuasion, no views of interest, no remembrance of the past, or regard to the future, could have restrained me within the bounds of common prudence. But now I was in some measure restored to my senses. My friend immediately offered me the command of a ship; which, upon mature consideration, I declined for the present. I had been hitherto always unsettled and careless, and therefore thought I had better make another voyage first, and learn to obey, and acquire a farther insight and experience in business, before I ventured to undertake such a charge. The mate of the vessel I came home in, was preferred to the command of a new ship, and I engaged to go in the station of mate with him. I made a short visit to London, &c. which did not fully answer my views. I had but one opportunity of seeing M— C—, of which I availed myself very little, for I was always exceeding awkward in pleading my own cause *viva voce*. But after my return to Liverpool, I put the question in such a manner, by letter, that she could not avoid (unless I had greatly mistaken her) coming to some sort of an explanation. Her answer (though penned with abundance of caution) satisfied me; as I collected from it that she was free from any other engagement, and not unwilling to wait the event of the voyage I had undertaken.

‘Who would not expect to hear that, after such a wonderful, unhoped-for deliverance as I had received, and, after my eyes were in some measure enlightened to see things aright, I should immedi-

ately cleave to the Lord and his ways with full purpose of heart, and consult no more with flesh and blood? But, alas! it was far otherwise with me; I had learned to pray, I set some value upon the word of God, and was no longer a libertine, but my soul still cleaved to the dust. Soon after my departure from Liverpool, I began to intermit, and grow slack in waiting upon the Lord: I grew vain and trifling in my conversation; and though my heart smote me often, yet my armour was gone, and I declined fast: and by the time we arrived at Guinea, I seemed to have forgotten all the Lord's mercies and my own engagements, and was (profaneness excepted) almost as bad as before. The enemy prepared a train of temptations, and I became his easy prey; and for about a month he lulled me asleep in a course of evil, of which, a few months before, I should not have supposed myself any longer capable. How much propriety is there in the apostle's advice, "Take heed lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." O who can be sufficiently upon their guard! Sin first deceives, and then it hardens; I was now fast bound in chains; I had little desire, and no power at all to recover myself. I could not but at times reflect how it was with me: but, if I attempted to struggle with it, it was in vain. I was just like Sampson, when he said, "I will go forth and shake myself as at other times," but the Lord was departed, and he found himself helpless in the hands of his enemies. By the remembrance of this interval, the Lord has often instructed me since, what a poor creature I am in myself, incapable of standing a single hour without continual fresh supplies of strength and grace from the fountain-head.

‘ At length, the Lord, whose mercies are infinite, interposed in my behalf. My business, in this voyage, while upon the coast, was to sail from place to place in the long-boat, to purchase slaves. The ship was at Sierra Leone, and I then at the Plantanes, the scene of my former captivity, where every thing I saw might seem to remind me of my ingratitude. I was in easy circumstances, courted by those who formerly despised me. The lime trees I had planted were growing tall, and promised fruit the following year, against which time I had expectations of returning with a ship of my own. But none of these things affected me, till, as I have said, the Lord again interposed to save me. He visited me with a violent fever, which broke the fatal chain, and once more brought me to myself. But oh, what a prospect! I thought myself now summoned away;—my past dangers and deliverances, my earnest prayers in the time of trouble, my solemn vows before the Lord at his table, and my ungrateful returns for all his goodness, were all present to my mind at once. Then I began to wish that the Lord had suffered me to sink into the ocean, when I first besought his mercy. For a little while, I concluded the door of hope to be quite shut; but this continued not long. Weak, and almost delirious, I arose from my bed, and crept to a retired part of the island; and here I found a renewed liberty to pray. I durst make no more resolves, but cast myself upon the Lord, to do with me as he should please. I do not remember that any particular text or remarkable discovery was presented to my mind; but in general I was enabled to hope and believe in a crucified Saviour. The burden was removed from my con-

science, and not only my peace, but my health was restored : I cannot say instantaneously, but I recovered from that hour, and so fast, that when I returned to the ship, two days afterwards, I was perfectly well before I got on board. And from that time, I trust I have been delivered from the power and dominion of sin ; though, as to the effects and conflicts of sin dwelling in me, I still “ groan, being burdened.” I now began again to wait upon the Lord, and though I have often grieved his spirit, and foolishly wandered from him since (when, alas, shall I be more wise !) yet his powerful grace has hitherto preserved me from such fearful declensions as this I have last recorded ; and I humbly trust in his mercy and promises, that he will be my guide and guard to the end.

‘ My leisure hours in this voyage were chiefly employed in learning the Latin language, which I had now entirely forgot. This desire took place from an imitation I had seen of one of Horace’s Odes in a magazine. I began the attempt under the greatest disadvantages possible : for I pitched upon a poet, perhaps the most difficult of the poets, even Horace himself, for my first book. I had picked up an old English translation of him, which, with Castalio’s Latin Bible, were all my helps. I forgot a Dictionary, but I would not therefore give up my purpose. I had the edition in usum Delphini, and by comparing the Odes with the interpretation, and tracing the words I could understand from one place to another, by the index, with the assistance I could get from the Latin Bible : in this way, by dint of hard industry, often waking when I might have slept, I made some progress before I returned, and



not only understood the sense and meaning of many odes, and some of the epistles, but began to relish the beauties of the composition, and acquire a spice of what Mr. Law calls classical' enthusiasm. And, indeed, by this means I had Horace more *ad unguem* than some who are masters of the Latin tongue: for my helps were so few that I generally had the passage fixed in my memory, before I could fully understand its meaning.

'My business in the long boat, during the eight months we were upon the coast, exposed me to innumerable dangers and perils, from burning suns, and chilling dews, winds, rains, and thunder-storms, in the open boat; and on shore, from long journeys through the woods, and the temper of the natives, who are, in many places, cruel, treacherous, and watching opportunities for mischief. Several boats in the same time were cut off! several white men poisoned, and, in my own boat, I buried six or seven people with fevers. When going on shore, or returning from it, in their little canoes, I have been more than once or twice overset, by the violence of the surf, or break of the sea, and brought to land half dead, (for I could not swim.) An account of such escapes as I still remember would swell to several sheets, and many more I have perhaps forgot; I shall only select one instance, as a specimen of that wonderful providence, which watched over me for good, and which, I doubt not, you will think worthy of notice.

'When our trade was finished, and we were near sailing to the West Indies, the only remaining service I had to perform in the boat, was to assist in bringing the wood and water from the shore. We were then

at Rio Cestors. I used to go into the river in the afternoon, with the sea breeze, procure my loading in the evening, and return on board in the morning with the land-wind. Several of these little voyages I had made, but the boat was grown old, and almost unfit for use. This service, likewise, was almost completed. One day, having dined on board, I was preparing to return to the river, as formerly; I had taken leave of the captain, received his orders, was ready in the boat, and just going to put off, as we term it, that is, to let go our ropes, and sail from the ship. In that instant, the captain came up from the cabin, and called me on board again—I went, expecting further orders; but he said he had taken it in his head (as he phrased it) that I should remain that day in the ship, and accordingly ordered another man to go in my room. I was surprised at this, as the boat had never been sent away without me before; and asked him the reason, he could give me no reason, but as above, that so he would have it. Accordingly, the boat went without me, but returned no more. She sunk that night in the river, and the person who had supplied my place was drowned. I was much struck when we received news of the event, the next morning. The captain himself, though quite a stranger to religion, so far as to deny a particular providence, could not help being affected; but he declared, that he had no other reason for countermanding me at that time, but that it came suddenly into his mind to detain me.

‘ A few days after I was thus wonderfully saved from an unforeseen danger, we sailed for Antigua, and from thence proceeded to Charlestown, in South Carolina. In this place there are many serious

people, but I knew not how to find them out: indeed I was not aware of a difference, but supposed that all who attended public worship were good christians. I was as much in the dark about preaching, not doubting but whatever came from the pulpit must be very good. I had two or three opportunities of hearing a dissenting minister, named Smith, who, by what I have known since, I believe to have been an excellent and powerful preacher of the gospel; and there was something in his manner that struck me, but I did not rightly understand him. The best words that men can speak are ineffectual, till explained and applied by the Spirit of God, who alone can open the heart. It pleased the Lord for some time, that I should learn no more than what he enabled me to collect from my own experience and reflection. My conduct was now very inconsistent—almost every day, when business would permit, I used to retire into the woods and fields (for these when at hand have always been my favourite oratories) and, I trust, I began to taste the sweets of communion with God in the exercises of prayer and praise; and yet I frequently spent the evening in vain and worthless company; indeed, my relish for worldly diversions was much weakened, and I was rather a spectator than a sharer in their pleasures, but I did not as yet see the necessity of an absolute forbearance. Yet, as my compliance with custom and company was chiefly owing to want of light rather than to an obstinate attachment, and the Lord was pleased to preserve me from what I knew to be sinful, I had, for the most part, peace of conscience, and my strongest desires were towards the things of God. As yet I knew not the force of that

precept, "Abstain from all appearance of evil," but very often ventured upon the brink of temptation; but the Lord was gracious to my weakness, and would not suffer the enemy to prevail against me. I did not break with the world at once (as might in my case have been expected) but I was gradually led to see the inconvenience and folly of one thing after another, and, when I saw it, the Lord strengthened me to give it up. But it was some years before I was set quite at liberty from occasional compliances in many things in which, at this time, I dare by no means allow myself.

' We finished our voyage, and arrived in Liverpool. When the ship's affairs were settled, I went to London, and from thence (as you may suppose) I soon repaired to Kent. More than seven years were now elapsed since my first visit. No views of the kind could seem more chimerical, or could subsist under greater discouragements than mine had done, yet, through the over-ruling goodness of God, while I seemed abandoned to myself, and blindly following my own passions, I was guided by a hand that I knew not, to the accomplishment of my wishes. Every obstacle was now removed: I had renounced my former follies, my interest was established, and friends on all sides consenting; the point was now entirely between ourselves, and after what had passed, was easily concluded. Accordingly our hands were joined on the 1st of February, 1750.

## CHAPTER IV.

*From his Marriage to his Ordination.*

A.D. 1750—1764.

‘THE satisfaction I have found in this union, you will suppose has been greatly heightened, by reflections on the former disagreeable contrasts I had passed through, and the views I have had of the singular mercy and providence of the Lord in bringing it to pass. On the whole retrospect, it will surely be allowed, that few persons have known more either of the misery or happiness, of which human life (as considered in itself) is capable. How easily, at a time of life when I was so little capable of judging, (but a few months more than seventeen) might my affections have been fixed where they could have met with no return, or where success would have been the heaviest disappointment. The long delay I met with was likewise a mercy; for had I succeeded a year or two sooner, before the Lord was pleased to change my heart, we must have been mutually unhappy, even as to the present life. “Surely mercy and goodness have followed me all my days.”

‘But, alas! I soon began to feel that my heart was still hard and ungrateful to the God of my life. This crowning mercy, which raised me to all I could

ask or wish in a temporal view, and which ought to have been an animating motive to obedience and praise, had a contrary effect.—I rested in the gift and forgot the giver. My poor narrow heart was satisfied—a cold and careless frame as to spiritual things, took place and gained ground daily. Happily for me the season was advancing, and in June I received orders to repair to Liverpool. This roused me from my dream; I need not tell you that I found the pains of absence and separation fully proportioned to my preceding pleasure. It was hard, very hard, to part, especially as conscience interfered, and suggested to me how little I deserved that we should be spared to meet again; but the Lord supported me: I was a poor faint idolatrous creature, but I had now some acquaintance with the way of access to a throne of grace, by the blood of Jesus, and peace was soon restored to my conscience. Yet, through all the following voyage, my irregular and excessive affections were as thorns in my eyes, and often made my other blessings tasteless and insipid. But he who doth all things well, over-ruled this likewise for good. It became an occasion of quickening me in prayer, both for her and myself; it increased my indifference for company and amusement; it habituated me to a kind of voluntary self-denial, which I was afterwards taught to improve to a better purpose.

‘ While I remained in England, we corresponded every post; and all the while I used the sea afterwards, I constantly kept up the practice of writing two or three times a week, (if weather and business permitted,) though no conveyance homeward offered for six or eight months together. My packets were usually heavy, and as not one of them at any time

miscarried, I have to the amount of near two hundred sheets of paper, now lying in my bureau, of that correspondence. I mention this little relief I had contrived to soften the intervals of absence, because it had a good effect beyond my first intention. It habituated me to think and write upon a great variety of subjects; and I acquired insensibly a greater readiness of expressing myself, than I should otherwise have attained. As I gained more ground in religious knowledge, my letters became more serious, and, at times, I still find an advantage in looking them over, especially as they remind me of many providential incidents, and the state of my mind at different periods in these voyages, which would otherwise have escaped my memory.'

It may be interesting to the reader to peruse some passages from the first of these letters, as furnishing some clue to the state of Mr. Newton's mind at this period:—

'I think I fully obeyed you in not saying much when I took my leave. My heart was really too full; and had I been more able, the fear of increasing your uneasiness would have prevented me. Were I capable of describing all the tender sentiments that have occurred since we parted, an indifferent person would allow me to be master of the *pathetic*. But I cannot express what I feel. Do me the justice to believe my affection goes beyond any words I can use.

'I purpose to set off early to-morrow, and to attend service at church somewhere on the road; which I do not care to miss without necessity. But now I am particularly desirous of improving the first opportunity to implore, in a solemn manner, the

protection of Divine Providence, that we may be favoured with a happy meeting.

“ Gracious God ! favour me and my dearest M—— with health, and a moderate share of the good things of this life. Grant that I may be always happy in her love, and always prove deserving of it ! For the rest, the empty gewgaws and gilded trifles which engage the thoughts of multitudes, I hope I shall be always able to look upon them with indifference.”

In an interleaved copy of his “ Letters to a Wife,” the following observations were found, evidently penned many years after :—

‘ This prayer includes all that I at that time knew how to ask for ; and had not the Lord given me more than I then knew how to ask or think, I should now be completely miserable. The prospect of this separation was terrible to me as death : to avoid it, I repeatedly purchased a ticket in the lottery ; thinking, ‘ Who knows but I may obtain a considerable prize, and be thereby saved from the necessity of going to sea ? ’ Happily for me the lot which I then considered as casual was at thy disposal. The money, which I could not with prudence have spared at the time, was lost : all my tickets proved blanks, though I attempted to bribe thee, by promising if I succeeded, to give a considerable part to the poor. But these blanks were truly prizes. Thy mercy sent me to sea against my own will. To thy blessing, and to my solitary sea hours, I was indebted for all my temporal comforts and future hopes.

‘ Thou wert pleased likewise to disappoint me by thy providence, of some money which I expected to receive on my marriage ; so that, excepting our apparel, when I sailed from Liverpool on my first



voyage, the sum total of my worldly inventory was—seventy pounds in debt.’

We return to the ‘Narrative,’ which proceeds,—  
‘I sailed from Liverpool in August, 1750, commander of a good ship. I have no very extraordinary events to recount from this period, and shall therefore contract my memoirs, lest I become tedious; yet I am willing to give you a brief sketch of my history down to 1755, the year of my settlement in my present situation. I had now the command and care of thirty persons; I endeavoured to treat them with humanity, and to set them a good example; I likewise established public worship, according to the liturgy, twice every Lord’s day, officiating myself. Farther than this I did not proceed, while I continued in that employment.

‘Having now much leisure, I prosecuted the study of Latin with good success. I remembered a dictionary this voyage, and procured two or three other books; but still it was my hap to choose the hardest. I added Juvenal to Horace, and for prose authors, I pitched upon Livy, Cæsar, and Sallust. You will easily conceive, Sir, that I had hard work to begin (where I should have left off) with Horace and Livy. I was not aware of the difference of style; I had heard Livy highly commended, and was resolved to understand him. I began with the first page, and laid down a rule which I seldom departed from, not to proceed to a second period till I understood the first, and so on. I was often at a stand, but seldom discouraged; here and there I found a few lines quite obstinate, and was forced to break in upon my rule, and give them up, especially as my edition had only the text, without any notes to assist

me. But there were not many such ; for, before the close of that voyage, I could (with a few exceptions) read Livy from end to end, almost as readily as an English author. And I found that in surmounting this difficulty, I had surmounted all in one. Other prose authors, when they came in my way, cost me little trouble. In short, in the space of two or three voyages I became tolerably acquainted with the best classics (I put all I have to say upon this subject together :) I read Terence, Virgil, and several pieces of Cicero and the modern classics, Buchanan, Erasmus, and Casimir ; at length I conceived a design of becoming Ciceronian myself, and thought it would be a fine thing indeed to write pure and elegant Latin. I made some essays towards it, but by this time the Lord was pleased to draw me nearer to himself, and to give me a fuller view of the “ pearl of great price,” the inestimable treasure hid in the field of the holy scripture ; and, for the sake of this, I was made willing to part with all my newly acquired riches. I began to think that life was too short (especially my life) to admit of leisure for such elaborate trifling. Neither poet nor historian could tell me a word of Jesus, and I therefore applied myself to those who could. The classics were at first restrained to one morning in the week, and at length quite laid aside. I have not looked into Livy these five years, and I suppose I could not now well understand him. Some passages in Horace and Virgil I still admire, but they seldom come in my way. I prefer Buchanan’s psalms to a whole shelf of Elzevirs. But thus much have I gained, and more than this I am not solicitous about, so much of the Latin as enables me to read any useful or curious book

that is published in that language. About the same time, and for the same reason that I quarrelled with Livy, I laid aside the mathematics. I found they not only cost me much time, but engrossed my thoughts too far: my head was literally full of *schemes*. I was weary of cold contemplative truths, which can neither warm nor amend the heart, but rather tend to aggrandize *self*. I found no traces of this wisdom in the life of Jesus, or the writings of Paul. I do not regret that I have had some opportunities of knowing the first principles of these things, but I see much cause to praise the Lord that he inclined me to stop in time, and, whilst I was "spending my labours for that which is not bread," was pleased to set before me "wine and milk without money, and without price."

' My first voyage was fourteen months, through various scenes of danger and difficulty, but nothing very remarkable; and as I intend to be more particular with regard to the second, I shall only say that I was preserved from every harm; and having seen many fall on my right hand and on my left, I was brought home in peace, and restored to where my thoughts had been often directed.

' In the interval between my first and second voyage after my marriage, I began to keep a sort of diary, a practice which I have found of great use. I had in this interval repeated proofs of the ingratitude and evil of my heart. A life of ease, in the midst of my friends, and the full satisfaction of my wishes, was not favourable to the progress of grace, and afforded cause of daily humiliation. Yet, upon the whole, I gained ground. I became acquainted with books which gave me a farther view of Christian doctrine

and experience, particularly Scougal's *Life of God in the Soul of Man*, Hervey's *Meditations*, and the *Life of Colonel Gardiner*. As to preaching, I heard none but of the common sort, and had hardly an idea of any better; neither had I the advantage of Christian acquaintance; I was likewise greatly hindered by a cowardly reserved spirit; I was afraid of being thought precise, and, though I could not live without prayer, I durst not propose it, even to my wife, till she herself first put me upon it; so far was I from those expressions of zeal and love, which seem so suitable to the case of one who has had much forgiven. In a few months the returning season called me abroad again, and I sailed from Liverpool in a new ship, July, 1752.

' A sea-faring life is necessarily excluded from the benefit of public ordinances and Christian communion; but, as I have observed, my loss upon these heads was at this time but small. In other respects, I know not any calling that seems more favourable, or affords greater advantages to an awakened mind, for promoting the life of God in the soul, especially to a person who has the command of a ship, and thereby has it in his power to restrain gross irregularities in others, and to dispose of his own time; and still more so in African voyages, as these ships carry a double proportion of men and officers to most others, which made my department very easy; and, excepting the hurry of trade, &c. upon the coast, which is rather occasional than constant, afforded me abundance of leisure. To be at sea in these circumstances, withdrawn out of the reach of innumerable temptations, with opportunity and a turn of mind disposed to observe the wonders of God in

the great deep, with the two noblest objects of sight, the expanded heavens and the expanded ocean, continually in view, and where evident interpositions of Divine Providence, in answer to prayer, occur almost every day; these are helps to quicken and confirm the life of faith, which, in a good measure, supply to a religious sailor the want of those advantages which can only be enjoyed upon the shore. And, indeed, though my knowledge of spiritual things (as knowledge is usually estimated) was, at this time, very small, yet I have sometimes looked back with regret upon those scenes. I never knew sweeter or more frequent hours of divine communion than in my two last voyages to Guinea, when I was either almost secluded from society on ship-board, or when on shore with none but natives. I have wandered through the woods, reflecting on the singular goodness of the Lord to me, in a place where, perhaps, there was not a person who knew him for some thousand miles round me. Many a time, upon these occasions, I have restored the beautiful lines of Propertius to the right owner; lines full of blasphemy and madness, when addressed to a creature, but full of comfort and propriety in the mouth of a believer.

*Sic ego desertis possim bene vivere sylvis  
Quo nulla humano sit via trita pede ;  
Tu mihi curarum requies, in nocte velatra  
Lumen, et in solis tu mihi turba locis.*

PARAPHRASED.

In desert woods with thee, my God,  
Where human footsteps never trod,  
How happy could I be !  
Thou my repose from care; my light  
Amidst the darkness of the night ;  
In solitude my company.

‘ In the course of this voyage I was wonderfully preserved in the midst of many obvious and many unforeseen dangers. At one time there was a conspiracy amongst my own people to turn pirates, and take the ship from me. When the plot was nearly ripe, and they only waited a convenient opportunity, two of those concerned in it were taken ill in one day; one of them died, and he was the only person I buried while on board. This suspended the affair, and opened a way to its discovery, or the consequence might have been fatal. The slaves on board were likewise frequently plotting insurrections, and were sometimes upon the very brink of mischief; but it was always disclosed in due time. When I have thought myself most secure, I have been suddenly alarmed with danger, and when I have almost despaired of life, as sudden a deliverance has been vouchsafed to me. My stay upon the coast was long, the trade very precarious, and, in the pursuit of my business, both on board and on shore, I was in *deaths often*. Let the following instance serve as a specimen :

‘ I was at a place called Mana, near Cape Mount, where I had transacted very large concerns, and had, at the time I am speaking of, some debts and accounts to settle, which required my attendance on shore; and I intended to go ashore the next morning. When I arose, I left the ship, according to my purpose; but when I came near the shore, the surf or breach of the sea ran so high, that I was almost afraid to attempt landing. I had often, indeed, ventured at a worse time, but I now felt an inward hindrance and backwardness, which I could not account for. The surf furnished a pretext for indulging it, and after

waiting and hesitating for about half an hour, I returned to the ship, without doing any business, which, I think, I never did any other morning in all the time I used that trade. But I soon perceived the reason of all this. It seems, the day before I intended to land, a scandalous and groundless charge had been laid against me (by whose instigation I never could learn) which greatly threatened my honour and interest, both in Africa and England, and would, perhaps, humanly speaking, have affected my life, if I had landed according to my intention. I shall say no more of this adventure here, any further than to state, that an attempt, aimed either to destroy my life or character, and which might very probably, in its consequences, have ruined my voyage, passed off without the least inconvenience. The person most concerned owed me about a hundred pounds, which he sent me in a huff, and otherwise, perhaps, would not have paid me at all. I was very uneasy for a few hours, but was soon afterwards comforted. I heard no more of my accusation, till the next voyage, and then it was publicly acknowledged to have been a malicious calumny, without the least shadow of a ground.

‘Such were the vicissitudes and difficulties through which the Lord preserved me. Now and then both faith and patience were sharply exercised, but suitable strength was given; and as those things did not occur every day, the study of the Latin, of which I gave a general account a few pages back, was renewed and carried on from time to time, when business would permit. I was mostly very regular in the management of my time; I allotted about eight hours for sleep and meals, eight hours for exercise and devo-

tion, and eight hours to my books; and thus, by diversifying my engagements, the whole day was agreeably filled up, and I seldom found a day too long, or an hour to spare. My studies kept me employed, and so far it was well; otherwise they were hardly worth the time they cost, as they led me to an admiration of false models and false maxims; an almost unavoidable consequence, I suppose, of an admiration of classic authors. Abating what I have attained of the language, I think I might have read *Cassandra* or *Cleopatra* to as good purpose as I read *Livy*, whom I now account an equal romancer, though in a different way.

‘ From the coast I went to *St. Christopher’s*; and here my idolatrous heart was its own punishment. The letters I expected from *Mrs. N.* were by mistake forwarded to *Antigua*, which had been at first proposed as our port. As I was certain of her punctuality in writing, if alive, I concluded by not hearing from her, that she was surely dead. This fear affected me more and more; I lost my appetite and rest; I felt an incessant pain in my stomach, and in about three weeks’ time I was near sinking under the weight of an imaginary stroke. I felt some severe symptoms of that mixture of pride and madness, which is commonly called *a broken heart*; and indeed I wonder that this case is not more common than it appears to be. How often do the potsherds of the earth presume to contend with their Maker! And what a wonder of mercy is it that they are not all broken! However, my complaint was not all grief, conscience had a share. I thought my unfaithfulness to God had deprived me of her, especially my backwardness in speaking of spiritual things,



which I could hardly attempt even to her. It was this thought, that I had lost invaluable and irrecoverable opportunities, which both duty and affection should have engaged me to improve, that chiefly stung me; and I thought I would have given the world to know she was living, that I might at least discharge my engagements by writing, though I were never to see her again. This was a sharp lesson, but I hope it did me good; and when I had thus suffered some weeks, I thought of sending a small vessel to Antigua. I did so, and it brought me several packets, which restored my health and peace, and gave me a strong contrast of the Lord's goodness to me, and my unbelief and ingratitude towards him.

' In August, 1753, I returned to Liverpool. My stay was very short; in fact only six weeks was allowed me: and in that space nothing very memorable occurred.

' My third voyage was shorter and less perplexed than either of the former. Before I sailed, I met with a young man, who had formerly been a midshipman, and my intimate companion on board the *Harwich*. He was, at the time I first knew him, a sober youth, but I found too much success in my unhappy attempts to infect him with libertine principles. When we met at Liverpool, our acquaintance was renewed upon the ground of our former intimacy. He had good sense, and had read many books. Our conversation frequently turned upon religion, and I was desirous to repair the mischief I had done him. I gave him a plain account of the manner and reason of my change, and used every argument to persuade him to relinquish his infidel schemes: and when I sometimes pressed him so close that he had no other

reply to make, he would remind me that I was the very first person who had given him an idea of his liberty. This occasioned me many mournful reflections. He was then going master to Guinea himself, but before his ship was ready, his merchant became a bankrupt, which disconcerted his voyage. As he had no further expectations for that year, I offered to take him with me as a companion, that he might gain a knowledge of the coast; and the gentleman who employed me promised to provide for him upon his return. My view in this was not so much to serve him in his business, as to have an opportunity of debating the point with him at leisure; and I hoped that, in the course of my voyage, my arguments, example, and prayers, might have some good effect on him. My intention in this step was better than my judgment, and I had frequent reason to repent it. He was exceedingly profane, and grew worse and worse: I saw in him a most lively picture of what I had once been, but it was very inconvenient to have it always before my eyes. Besides, he was not only deaf to my remonstrances himself, but laboured all he could to counteract my influence upon others. His spirit and passions were likewise exceedingly high, so that it required all my prudence and authority to hold him in any degree of restraint. He was as a sharp thorn in my side for some time; but at length I had an opportunity upon the coast of buying a small vessel, which I supplied with a cargo from my own, and gave him the command, and sent him away to trade on the ship's account. When we parted, I repeated and enforced my best advice. I believe his friendship and regard for me was as great as could be expected, where principles were so dia-

metrically opposite; he seemed greatly affected when I left him, but my words had no weight with him: when he found himself at liberty from under my eye, he gave a hasty loose to every appetite; and his violent irregularities, joined to the heat of the climate, soon threw him into a malignant fever, which carried him off in a few days. He died convinced, but not changed. The account I had from those who were with him was dreadful; his rage and despair struck them all with horror, and he pronounced his own fatal doom before he expired, without any appearance that he either *hoped* or *asked* for mercy. I thought this awful contrast might not be improper to adduce, as a stronger view of the distinguishing goodness of God to me, the chief of sinners.

‘I left the coast in about four months, and sailed for St. Christopher’s. Hitherto I had enjoyed a perfect state of health, equally in every climate, for several years: but, upon this passage, I was visited with a fever, which gave me a very near prospect of eternity. I had not that full assurance which is so desirable at a time when flesh and heart fail; but my hopes were greater than my fears, and I felt a silent composure of spirit, which enabled me to wait the event without much anxiety. My trust, though weak in degree, was alone fixed upon the blood and righteousness of Jesus; and those words, “he is able to save to the uttermost,” gave me great relief. I was for a while troubled with a very singular thought—whether it was a temptation, or that fever disordered my faculties, I cannot say, but I seemed not so much afraid of wrath and punishment, as of being lost and overlooked amidst the myriads that are continually entering the unseen world.

What is my soul, thought I, among such an innumerable multitude of beings ! And this troubled me greatly : ‘Perhaps the Lord will take no notice of me.’ I was perplexed thus for some time, but at last a text of scripture, very apposite to the case, occurred to my mind, and put an end to the doubt : “The Lord knoweth them that are his.” In about ten days, beyond the hopes of those about me, I began to amend, and by the time of our arrival in the West Indies, I was perfectly recovered. I hope this visitation was made useful to me.’

An extract or two, from the letters written to Mrs. N. on this occasion, will throw a clearer light on his progressive advance in faith and hope.

‘ April 18, 1754.

‘ A few days ago I informed you that I had left Africa in good health and spirits. It has now pleased God to give me, in my own person, an experience of that uncertainty of all human affairs which I have so often remarked in the concerns of others.

‘ I have been ill three days of a fever, which, though it is at present attended with no symptoms particularly dangerous, it behoves me to remember, may terminate in death. I have endeavoured to compose myself to the summons if it should so prove ; and I hope I may say I am, in some measure, ready to live or to die, as may be appointed ; and that I desire not to choose for myself, in this case, more than in any other. One specious excuse with which I have often covered my desire of life was, that I might have opportunity of doing something for the glory of God, and the good of my fellow-creatures ;

that I might not go quite useless out of the world. But, alas! I have so little improved the talents and occasions which have been already afforded me, that I am ashamed to offer this plea any more. My only remaining concern is upon your account, and, even in that, I am in a measure relieved, by the following considerations;—

‘ My first and principal consolation is in the hope that we are both under the influence of religious principles, and that you, as well as myself, are persuaded that no trouble or change can befall us by chance. Whenever a separation shall take place, as, if not now, it sooner or later must; it will be, by the express act and will of the same wise and good Providence which brought us together at first; has given us so much happiness in each other already; and has continually shielded us, as yet, from the various harms which have been fatal to many of our acquaintance. Farther, I consider, *that the time is short*. If I go now, in a few years, perhaps much sooner, you will follow me. I hope, in the same path, depending wholly on the divine mercy, through faith in the blood and mediation of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, according to the plain literal terms of the gospel. It is in this faith I am now happy. This bears me, in a measure, above my fears and sins; above my sickness, and above the many agreeable hopes I had formed in my mind, of a happy return to you. May this be your support, your guide, and shield, and I can ask no more for you. Then you will, at last, attain complete and unfading happiness; and we shall meet again, and perhaps, to join in recollecting the scenes we have been engaged in together while upon earth; then, probably, we shall

clearly see what I now believe, and from which I derive another reason for acquiescence; that, as the goodness of God first joined us, so it was his mercy that parted us again:—mercy to each, to both of us.

‘ We have, perhaps, been sometimes too happy in each other; to have been always or longer so, might have betrayed us into a dangerous security. We might have forgotten our present duty and our future destination. It has been too much the case already: I have greatly failed myself, and I have been but a poor example for you. Should it, therefore, please God to make my death the happy occasion of fixing your dependance, hope, and desire upon him alone; surely I can say, Thy will be done! My heart bleeds when I represent to myself the grief with which such an event would overwhelm you; but I know that he can moderate and sanctify it, and give you cause, hereafter, to say, it was good for you to have been so afflicted; and, ere long, the time will come when all tears shall be wiped both from your eyes and mine.

‘ *April 30.*

‘ It has pleased God to give me another reprieve. The fever has left me, and I feel my strength returning. You will congratulate me on my recovery. I thank you. But let us not be too secure. A relapse may soon happen, or twenty unforeseen events may, without sickness, prove equally decisive. I hope I am, in some measure, thankful for the present, and not anxious about the future; for the Lord will appoint what is best for us. My head was much confused when I wrote last; but I shall let it stand as a specimen of my thoughts in the hour of trial. I endeavoured, from the first, to compose my mind

for departure hence, if such should be the will of God. And my belief of the gospel, (which I once despised) made me tolerably easy and resigned. When this grand point was, according to my poor attainment, settled, you were the chief, the sole object of my remaining solicitude; and I was desirous of leaving a few lines, while the fever did not render me quite incapable of writing, to certify you in what manner I was enabled to meet my summons; and to leave you my farewell advice, my blessing, and my thanks; but before I could finish what I intended, the occasion was mercifully removed.

‘I hope the remembrance of this visitation will be a long and constant benefit to me, and will give me a better sense of the value of health, which I had been favoured with so long, that it seemed almost a thing of course. I bless God for restoring it to me again. If it be his will, I shall be glad to live a little longer, upon many accounts; and, among the chief, for your sake. And oh! may it please him to spare you for me, likewise, and to grant that we may again meet in peace! My eyes will not yet allow me to write much.

‘I now mean to give you some account how I pass a sea-Sunday, when I am favoured with a tolerable frame of mind, and am enabled, by the grace of God, to obtain some degree of mastery over the incumbrances of the flesh, and the world, which, in my best hours, are too prevalent with me.’

‘My evening devotions, when opportunity permits, commence about six o’clock the week and month round—and I am sometimes engaged a full hour, or more, in prayer and praise, without any remarkable weariness or repetition. You furnish me with much

subject for both. On a Saturday evening, in particular, I beg a blessing upon your Sunday, upon your public worship, and retirement. And as I know, that where you are, you are unavoidably exposed to trifling company, to whom all days are alike, I pray that you may be shielded from their evil influence. I have likewise to pray for others, for our friends, for many of them by name, and according to the knowledge I have of their circumstances—and I extend my petitions to the general state of the world, that they who are strangers to that gospel in which I have found so much peace, may be brought to the knowledge of it; and that they who neglect and despise it, as I once did, may, like me, obtain mercy. When these and other points are gone over, and my praises offered for our temporal and spiritual blessings, and likewise my repeated confessions of the sins of my childhood, youth, and advanced years, as they occur to my remembrance, you will not wonder that an hour is elapsed. The remainder of the evening I pass in ruminating on the mercies of the preceding week, the subjects of my reading, or whatever I can gain useful self-conference from.

‘I usually rise at four on a Sunday morning. My first employ is to beg a blessing upon the day for us both; for all who, like you, are preparing to wait upon God in public, and for all who, like myself, are for a time excluded from that privilege. To this succeeds a serious walk upon deck. Then I read two or three select chapters. At breakfast I eat and drink more than I talk, for I have no one here to join in such conversation as I should then choose. At the hour of your going to church, I attend you in my



mind, with another prayer; and at eleven o'clock the ship's bell rings my own little congregation about me. To them I read the morning service, according to the Liturgy. Then I walk the deck, and attend my observation, as we call it, that is, to know by the sun (if it shines) at noon, the latitude the ship is in. Then comes dinner. In the afternoon I frequently take a nap for half an hour; if not, I read or write in a book I keep for that purpose. I wait upon you again to church, in the afternoon, and convene my ship's company, as in the morning. At four o'clock I drink tea, which recruits my spirits for the evening. Then another scripture lesson, and a walk, brings six o'clock, which, I have told you, is my hour for stated prayer. I remember you then again, in the most particular manner, and, in trust that you are still preserved in safety for me, I endeavour to praise the Lord for his goodness so long vouchsafed to us.

• But alas, when I look back upon a day spent in this manner, I cannot express how much I have to mourn over and be ashamed of at night! Oh! the wanderings and faintness of my prayers, the distraction of my thoughts, the coldness of my heart, and the secret workings of pride which debase and corrupt my best services. In short, every thing is wrong. But I remember that I am not under the law, but under grace. I rely on the promised mediation of my Saviour; renounce my own poor performances, and implore mercy, in his name and for his sake only, and that sets all to rights. I need no one to pronounce an absolution to me; I can tell myself that my sins are forgiven me, because I know in whom I have believed. This leads me to praise and adore him, that I was born in an age and country

favoured with the light of the gospel, when there are millions of my species who have neither the means of grace, nor the hope of glory; and farther, that I have been called out from the unhappy apostacy, and licentiousness, and misery, into which I had plunged myself—when many thousands, who never offended to the degree I have, are either suffered to go on, from bad to worse, till there is no hope, or are cut off by a stroke, and sink into endless misery in a thoughtless moment! Lord, not unto me, but unto thee be the praise. It was wholly the effect of thy grace; for thou wouldst be found of me, when I had not the least inclination to seek thee!’

We now return to the Narrative:—

‘Thus far, that is, for about the space of six years, the Lord was pleased to lead me in a secret way. I had learnt something of the evil of my heart: I had read the Bible over and over, with several good books, and had a general view of the gospel truth. But my conceptions were, in many respects, confused; not having, in all this time, met with one acquaintance who could assist my inquiries. But upon my arrival at St. Christopher’s, this voyage, I found a captain of a ship from London, whose conversation was greatly helpful to me. He was a man of experience in the things of God, and of a lively communicative turn. We discovered each other by some casual expressions in mixed company, and soon became (so far as business would permit) inseparable. For near a month we spent every evening together on board each other’s ship alternately, and often prolonged our visits till towards day-break. I was all ears; and what was better, he not only in-

formed my understanding, but his discourse inflamed my heart. He encouraged me to open my mouth in social prayer, he taught me the advantage of christian converse; he put me upon an attempt to make my profession more public, and to venture to speak for God. From him, or rather from the Lord, by his means, I received an increase of knowledge: my conceptions became clearer and more evangelical, and I was delivered from a fear which had long troubled me, the fear of relapsing into my former apostacy. For now I began to understand the security of the covenant of grace, and to expect to be preserved, not by my own power and holiness, but by the mighty power and promise of God, through faith in an unchangeable Saviour. He likewise gave me a general view of the state of religion, with the errors and controversies of the times (things to which I had been entirely a stranger) and finally, directed me where to inquire in London for further instruction.<sup>1</sup> With these newly acquired advantages, I left him, and my passage homewards gave me leisure to digest what I had received; I had much comfort and freedom during those seven weeks, and my sun was seldom clouded. I arrived safe in Liverpool, August, 1754.

‘ My stay at home was intended to be but short, and by the beginning of November, I was ready again for the sea; but the Lord saw fit to over-rule my design. During the time I was engaged in the

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to this valued friend, Captain Clunie, written many years after, Mr. N. says, “ I often think of you with peculiar pleasure and thankfulness, as by you the Lord was pleased to bring me to know his people. Your conversation was much blessed to me at St. Kitt's; and the little knowledge I have of men and things took its rise from thence.”

slave trade, I never had the least scruple as to its lawfulness; I was, upon the whole, satisfied with it, as the appointment Providence had marked out for me; yet it was, in many respects, far from eligible. It is, indeed, accounted a genteel employment, and is usually very profitable, though to me it did not prove so, the Lord seeing that a large increase of wealth could not be good for me. However, I considered myself as a sort of *gaoler* or *turnkey*; and I was sometimes shocked with an employment that was perpetually conversant with chains, bolts, and shackles. In this view I had often petitioned, in my prayers, that the Lord (in his own time) would be pleased to fix me in a more humane calling, (and if it might be) place me where I might have more frequent converse with his people and ordinances, and be freed from those long separations from home, which very often were hard to bear. My prayers were now answered, though in a way I little expected. I now experienced another unforeseen change of life: I was within two days of sailing, and, to all appearance in good health as usual, but in the afternoon as I was sitting with Mrs. N., by ourselves, drinking tea, and talking over past events, I was in a moment seized with a fit, which deprived me of sense and motion, and left me no other sign of life than that of breathing;—I suppose it was of the apoplectic kind. It lasted about an hour, and when I recovered, it left a pain and dizziness in my head, which continued with such symptoms, as induced the physicians to judge that it would not be safe or prudent for me to proceed on the voyage. Accordingly, by the advice of my friend, to whom the ship belonged, I resigned the command the day before she

sailed; and thus I was unexpectedly called from that service, and freed from a share of the future consequences of that voyage, which proved extremely calamitous. The person who went in my room, most of the officers, and many of the crew, died; and the vessel was brought home with great difficulty.

Thus terminated Mr. Newton's connection with the Guinea trade, and in fact, with a seafaring life altogether. The wise and merciful reasons for which he had been suffered to remain, for several years, in an employment so immoral, and, to all human appearance, so unfavourable to a growth in spiritual life, are well suggested and acknowledged in the preface to his "Letters to a wife," published more than forty years after. He there observes, that

'The coast of Guinea is a country from whose bourn few travellers who have once ventured to settle there ever return. But God, against whom I had sinned with a high hand, was pleased to appoint me to be a singular instance of his mercy. He not only spared me, but watched over me, by his merciful Providence, when I seemed to be bent upon my own destruction; and provided for my deliverance from my wretched thraldom! To him, who has all hearts in his hands I ascribe it, that a friend of my father's, the late Mr. Joseph Manesty, a merchant of Liverpool, to whom I was then an utter stranger, directed the captain of one of his ships to inquire for me, and, if he could, to bring me home. This proposal for my deliverance, no less unexpected than undeserved by me, reached me at a time when some circumstances of my captivity being, according to

my wretched views and taste, a little amended, I at first hesitated to accept it; and I believe, had it not been for one consideration, which will be often mentioned in the course of these letters, I should have lived and died in my bondage. When I returned to Liverpool, I found in Mr. Manesty a second father; he treated me with great kindness, and took upon himself the care of providing for me.

‘Towards the close of the year 1749, Mr. Manesty promised me the command of a ship to Africa, in the ensuing season. On this promise (for I had no other dependance) I ventured to marry, on the 1st of February following, where my heart had been long engaged. After I had gained my point, I often trembled for my precipitation: for, though I am sure I should have preferred the person I married to any other woman in the world, though possessed of the mines of Potosi, she had no fortune; and if any thing had happened to involve her in difficulties upon my account, I think my strong affection for her would have made me truly miserable.

‘I have often thought since, that we were then like two unexperienced people on the edge of a wide wilderness—without a guide—ignorant of the way they should take, and entirely unapprized of the difficulties they might have to encounter. But the Lord God, whom, at that time, we knew not, had mercifully purposed to be our guide and our guard.

‘The imminent danger and extreme distress to which we were reduced by a storm, in my passage from Africa to Liverpool, had, by the mercy of God, made such an impression upon my mind, that I was no longer an infidel, or a libertine. I had some serious thoughts—was considerably reformed—but

too well satisfied with my reformation. If I had any spiritual light, it was but as the first faint streaks of the early dawn; and I believe it was not yet day-break with my dear wife. She was young, cheerful, and much esteemed by her connexions, who were genteel and numerous. She was not wanting in that decent religion which is compatible with the supposed innocent gaieties of a worldly life; but farther than this she knew not, nor was I qualified to teach her. It is rather probable, that if I could have remained at home, my great attachment to her would have drawn me into the same path; and that we should have looked no higher for happiness than to our mutual satisfaction in each other.

‘But God had designed better things for us. The season for sailing approached, and I was constrained to leave her, to take the command and charge of my ship. This necessity of being absent from her, which then seemed to me bitter as death, I have now reason to acknowledge as one of the chief mercies of my life. *Nisi periissem, periissem*. If I could have obtained my fond, short-sighted wish, and have continued with her, I see that, humanly speaking, it might have proved the ruin of us both.

‘The summons I received, to repair to Liverpool, awakened me as out of a dream. When I was forced from her I found both leisure and occasion for much reflection. My serious thoughts, which had been almost smothered, began to revive: and my anxiety with respect to what might possibly happen while I was abroad, induced me to offer up many prayers for her, before I well knew how to pray for myself. He who takes notice of the cries of the young ravens in their nests, was pleased to hear mine. In a word, I

soon felt the need of that support which only religion can give. The separation likewise tended, on both sides, to give a certain tenderness and delicacy, and thereby a permanency to our affection, which might not have flourished to equal advantage through life, if we had always lived together.'

· But we must now resume his own narration:—

'As I was now disengaged from business, I left Liverpool, and spent most of the following year at London and in Kent. But I soon entered upon a new trial. You will easily conceive that Mrs. N. was not an unconcerned spectator, when I lay extended, and, as she thought, expiring upon the ground. In effect, the blow that struck me reached her in the same instant; she did not, indeed, immediately feel it, till her apprehensions on my account began to subside; but as I grew better, she became worse: her surprise threw her into a disorder, which physicians could not define, nor medicines remove. Without any of the ordinary symptoms of a consumption, she decayed almost visibly, till she became so weak that she could hardly bear any one to walk across the room she was in. I was placed for about eleven months in what Dr. Young calls the

“—dreadful post of observation,  
“Darker every hour.”

'It was not till after my settlement in my present station that the Lord was pleased to restore her by his own hand, when all hopes from ordinary means were at an end.

'By the directions I had received from my friend at St. Kitt's, I soon found out a religious acquaint-



ance in London. I first applied to Mr. B.,<sup>1</sup> and chiefly attended upon his ministry, when in town. From him I received many helps both in public and private; for he was pleased to favour me with his friendship from the first. His kindness and the intimacy between us has continued and increased to this day; and of all my many friends, I am most deeply indebted to him. The late Mr. Hayward was my second acquaintance; a man of a choice spirit, and an abundant zeal for the Lord's service. I enjoyed his correspondence till near the time of his death. Soon after, upon Mr. Whitfield's return from America, my two good friends introduced me to him; and though I had little personal acquaintance with him till afterwards, his ministry was exceedingly useful to me. I had likewise access to some religious societies, and became known to many excellent Christians in private life. Thus, when at London, I lived at the fountain-head, as it were, for spiritual advantages. When I was in Kent, it was very different, yet I found some serious persons there; but the fine variegated woodland country afforded me advantages of another kind. Most of my time, at least some hours every day, I passed in retirement, when the weather was fair; sometimes in the thickest woods, sometimes on the highest hills, where almost every step varied the prospect. It has been my custom, for many years, to perform my devotional exercises *sub die*, when I have opportunity, and I always find these rural scenes have some tendency to refresh and compose my spirits. A beautiful diversified prospect gladdens my heart.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Brewer of Stepney, of whose congregation his friend Capt. Clunie was a member.

When I am withdrawn from the noise and petty works of men, I consider myself as in the great temple, which the Lord has built for his own honour.

‘The country between Rochester and Maidstone, bordering upon the Medway, was well suited to the turn of my mind; and was I to go over it now, I could point to many a place where I remember to have either earnestly sought, or happily found, the Lord’s comfortable presence with my soul. And thus I lived, sometimes at London, and sometimes in the country, till the autumn of the following year. All this while I had two trials, more or less, upon my mind; the first and principal was Mrs. N.’s illness; she still grew worse, and I had daily more reason to fear that the hour of separation was at hand. When faith was in exercise, I was in some measure resigned to the Lord’s will; but too often my heart rebelled, and I found it hard, either to trust or to submit. I had likewise some care about my future settlement; the African trade was overdone that year, and my friends did not care to fit out another ship till mine returned. I was some time in suspense; but, indeed, a provision of food and raiment has seldom been a cause of great solicitude to me. I found it easier to trust the Lord in this point than in the former, and accordingly this was first answered. In August I received an account, that I was nominated to the office of tide-surveyor. These places are usually obtained, or at least sought, by dint of much interest and application; but this came to me unsought and unexpected. I knew, indeed, my good friend in Liverpool had endeavoured to procure another post for me, but found it pre-engaged. I found afterwards, that the place I

had missed would have been very unsuitable for me, and that this, which I had no thought of, was the very thing I could have wished for, affording me much leisure, and the liberty of living in my own way. Several circumstances, unnoticed by others, concurred to shew me that the good hand of the Lord was as remarkably concerned in this event as in any other leading turn of my life.'

[These circumstances are more fully detailed in one of his letters to Mrs. N.

'When I think of my settlement here, and the manner of it, I see the appointment of Providence to be so good and gracious, and such a plain answer to my poor prayers, that I cannot but wonder and adore. I think I have not yet told you, that my immediate predecessor in office, Mr. C——, had not the least intention of resigning his place on the occasion of his father's death—though such a report was spread about the town without his knowledge, or rather in defiance of all he could say to contradict it. Yet to this false report I owe my situation. For it put Mr. Manesty upon an application to Mr. S——, the member for the town, and the very day he received the promise in my favour, Mr. C—— was found dead in his bed, though he had been in company and in perfect health the night before. If I mistake not, the same messenger who brought me the promise, carried back the news of the vacancy to Mr. S—— at Chester. About an hour after, the mayor applied for a nephew of his, but though it was but an hour or two, he was too late. Mr. S—— had already written, and sent off the letter, and I was appointed accordingly. These circumstances appear to me extraordinary, though of

a piece with many other parts of my singular history. And the more so, as by another mistake, I missed the land-waiter's place, which was my first object, and which I now see, would not have suited us nearly so well. I thank God I can now look through instruments and second causes, and see his wisdom and goodness immediately concerned in fixing my lot. He knows our wants and our infirmities. He knows what indulgences may, by his blessing, promote our real good, and excite us to praise his name; and what those are which might be snares and temptations to us, and prove hurtful. And he knows how to bestow the one, and to withhold the other. He does all things well!']

Mr. Newton now brings his narrative, which he had addressed, in the form of a series of letters, to his friend Dr. Hawes, to a close, in the following terms:—

‘ But when I had gained this point, my distress in the other was doubled; I was obliged to leave Mrs. N, in the greatest extremity of pain and illness, when the physicians could do no more, and I had no ground of hope that I should see her again alive, but this—that nothing is impossible with the Lord. I had a severe conflict, but faith prevailed: I found the promise remarkably fulfilled, of strength proportioned to my need. The day before I set out, and not till then, the burden was entirely taken from my mind; I was strengthened to resign both her and myself to the Lord's disposal, and departed from her in a cheerful frame. Soon after I was gone, she began to amend, and recovered so fast, that in about two months, I had the pleasure to meet her at Stone, on her journey to Liverpool.

‘And now I think I have answered, if not exceeded your desire. Since October, 1755, we have been comfortably settled here, and all my circumstances have been as remarkably smooth and uniform as they were various in former years. My trials have been light and few—not but that I still find, in the experience of every day, the necessity of a life of faith. My principal trial is—the body of sin and death, which makes me often to sigh out the apostle’s complaint, “O wretched man!” But with him likewise I can say, “I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord.” I live in a barren land, where the knowledge and power of the gospel is very low: yet here are a few of the Lord’s people: and this wilderness has been a useful school to me, where I have studied more leisurely the truths I gathered up in London. I brought down with me a considerable stock of notional truth; but I have since found, that there is no effectual teacher but God; that we can receive no farther than he is pleased to communicate; and that no knowledge is truly useful to me, but what is made my own by experience. Many things I thought I had learned, would not stand in an hour of temptation, till I had in this way learned them over again. Since the year 1757, I have had an increasing acquaintance in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where the gospel flourishes greatly. This has been a good school to me: I have conversed at large among all parties without joining any; and in my attempts to hit the *golden mean*, I have sometimes been drawn too near the different extremes; yet the Lord has enabled me to profit by my mistakes. In brief, I am still a learner, and the Lord still condescends to teach me. I begin at

length to see that I have attained but very little ; but I trust in him to carry on his own work in my soul, and by all the dispensations of his grace and providence to increase my knowledge of him and of myself.

‘ When I was fixed in a house, and found my business would afford me much leisure time, I considered in what manner I should improve it. And now having reason to close with the apostle’s determination, “to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified,” I devoted my life to the prosecution of spiritual knowledge, and resolved to pursue nothing but in subservience to this main design. This resolution divorced me (as I have already hinted) from the classics and mathematics. My first attempt was to learn so much Greek, as would enable me to understand the New Testament and Septuagint: and when I had made some progress this way, I entered upon the Hebrew the following year ; and two years afterwards having surmised some advantages from the Syriac version, I began with that language. You must not think that I have attained, or ever aimed at a critical skill in any of these ; I had no business with them, but as in reference to something else. I never read one classic author in the Greek ; I thought it too late in life to take such a round in this language, as I had done in the Latin. I only wanted the signification of scriptural words and phrases, and for this I thought I might avail myself of Scapula, the Synopsis, and others who had sustained the drudgery before me. In the Hebrew I can read the historical books and psalms with tolerable ease : but in the prophetical and difficult parts, I am frequently obliged to have recourse to

Lexicons, &c. However I know so much as to be able, with such helps as are at hand, to judge for myself the meaning of any passage I have occasion to consult. Beyond this I do not think of proceeding, if I can find better employment; - for I would rather be in some way useful to others, than die with the reputation of an eminent linguist.

‘ Together with these studies, I have kept up a course of reading of the best writers in divinity that have come to my hand, in the Latin and English tongue, and some French (for I picked up the French at times while I lived at sea.) But within these two or three years I have accustomed myself - chiefly to writing, and have not found time to read many books besides the scripture.

‘ I am the more particular in this account, as my case has been somewhat singular; for in all my literary attempts I have been obliged to strike out my own path, by the light I could acquire from books, as I have not had a teacher or assistant since I was ten years of age.

‘ One word concerning my views to the ministry, and I have done. I have told you, that this was my dear mother’s hope concerning me; but her death, and the scenes of life in which I afterwards engaged, seemed to cut off the probability. The first desires of this sort in my own mind, arose many years ago, from a reflection on Galatians i. 23, 24. I could not but wish for such a public opportunity to testify the riches of divine grace. I thought I was, above most living, a fit person to proclaim that faithful saying, “That Jesus Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners;” and as my life had been full of remarkable turns, and I seemed selected

to show what the Lord could do, I was in hopes that, perhaps, sooner or later, he might call me into his service.

‘I believe it was a distant hope of this, that determined me to study the original scriptures; but it remained an imperfect desire in my own breast, till it was recommended to me by some christian friends. I started at the thought, when first seriously proposed to me; but afterwards set apart some weeks to consider the case, to consult my friends, and to intreat the Lord’s direction. The judgment of my friends, and many things that occurred, tended to engage me. My first thought was to join the dissenters, from a presumption that I could not honestly make the required subscriptions; but Mr. C——, in a conversation upon these points, moderated my scruples; and preferring the established church in some other respects, I accepted a title from him, some months afterwards, and solicited ordination from the late Archbishop of York: I need not tell you I met a refusal, nor what steps I took afterwards, to succeed elsewhere. At present I desist from any applications. My desire to serve the Lord is not weakened; but I am not so hasty to push myself forward as I was formerly. It is sufficient that he knows how to dispose of me, and that he both can and will do what is best. To him I commend myself: I trust that his will and my true interest are inseparable. To his name be glory for ever.’



We here terminate Mr. Newton's personal narrative, and must carry on the remainder of the present memoir with the aid of his biographer, Mr. Cecil, and with the further light of very many letters, published since Mr. Cecil completed his work. The above narrative leaves him at Liverpool, still waiting and watching for an opening to be presented to him, for an entrance upon the ministry of the gospel, within the pale of the Established Church.

His situation at Liverpool, procured by the kindness of his indefatigable friend, Mr. Manesty, was by no means an uncomfortable one. He thus describes it to his wife, in a letter written before she joined him at that place.

‘ I entered upon business yesterday. I find my duty is to attend the tides one week, and visit the ships that arrive, and such as are in the river; and the other week to inspect the vessels in the docks; and thus alternately the year round. The latter is little more than a sinecure, but the former requires pretty constant attendance, both by day and night. I have a good office, with fire and candle, fifty or sixty people under my direction, with a handsome six-oared boat and a coxswain, to row me about in form. Mr. W. went with me on my first cruise down to the Rock. We saw a vessel, and wandered upon the hills till she came in. I then went on board, and performed my office with all due gravity; and had it not been my business, the whole might have passed for a party of pleasure.

‘ To-day the wind blows hard; but you need not be uneasy about me at such times; for though my department will lead me to be much upon the river,

it is at my option to embark or not, as I find the weather. I like my station, and shall soon be master of it. Remember that I am in the path of duty, and under the protection of Him whom the winds and seas obey.'

Amongst other points of that peculiar and divine education which Mr. N. was continually receiving, the frequent interpositions of the providence of God in his behalf were conspicuous. Several instances of this have been already particularized, and many others might be added; some of which occurred about this period. On one occasion he had received an unexpected call to London; and, on his return, when within a few miles of Liverpool, he mistook a marle-pit for a pond, and, in attempting to water his horse, both the horse and the rider plunged into it overhead. He was afterwards told, that, near that time, three persons had lost their lives by a mistake of the same kind.

Exactness with respect to time, it seems, was his habit, while occupying his post at Liverpool. One day, however, some business had so detained him, that he came to his boat much later than usual, to the surprise of those who had observed his former punctuality. He went out in the boat, as heretofore, to inspect a ship; but the ship blew up just before he reached her. It appears, that, if he had left the shore a few minutes sooner, he must have perished with the rest on board.

Other providential deliverances of a similar kind have been already described, to which the recollection of our readers will easily convey them.

We pass on, however, to Mr. Newton's attempts to enter the ministry. The first of these, which was not successful, was made in 1758. In his 'Letters to a Wife,' it is thus referred to.

‘ *Hunslett, 15th December, 1758.*

‘ I have received my title from Mr. C. and shall proceed to-morrow. I can hardly be more happy while separated from you than at present. Pray for me, my dearest, my hour of trial is at hand—a solemn hour, which will call for all my faith, strength, and zeal. But the needful supply is near. In our Lord there is a fulness of grace, a sufficiency for me, for you, and for all that seek. May he give you that peace which passeth all understanding, may he bless us while apart, and join us again to our mutual comfort, here for a time, and hereafter for ever!’

‘ *21st December, 1758.*

‘ Well—all is over for the present, and I have only cheated you out of a journey to London. Last night I waited on the Bishop of Chester. He received me with great civility; but he said, as the title was out of his diocese, he could do me no effectual service, and that the notice was much too short. However, he countersigned my testimonials, and directed me to Dr. N——, the Archbishop's chaplain. On him I waited this morning. He referred me to the secretary, and from him I received the softest refusal imaginable. He had represented my affair to the Archbishop, but his Grace was inflexible in supporting the rules and canons of the church, &c.

‘ Had my eye been raised no higher than to his

Grace of York, I should have been displeased and disconcerted; but I am in the hands of the great Lord of all. He has been pleased to prove me, whether my surrender to his will was sincere or not, and he has enabled me to stand the trial. As sure as our names are John and Mary, you will find that the time and expense of this journey will not be thrown away. I am quite satisfied and easy. The Lord will make all these things subservient to our good. He can open another door in a minute. I think to go down to Chatham on Monday, and to set out for Leeds about Thursday.'

This repulse, however, had the very natural effect on Mr. Newton's mind which similar undeserved rejections have had upon others;—it induced a doubt whether, as he felt and had avowed, a desire, not, he trusted, of human implantation, to become a messenger of the everlasting gospel,—it might not be his duty to disregard minor distinctions and subdivisions, and to preach where liberty would be readily accorded. It is not difficult to trace the operations of these doubts in his mind. In the above letter, it will be observed, that he speaks of an intended visit to Leeds; having, as he observes in his narrative, 'an increasing acquaintance in the West Riding.' And, in a series of letters to another friend, written many years after, we find the following circumstance alluded to, which probably took place during this visit:—

'My first essay as a preacher was in a dissenting meeting-house, at Leeds, in Yorkshire, in the year 1758. I do not know that I had a very overweening opinion of my own abilities; I feared and trembled

abundantly, but I was determined to set off extempore. I did so. I opened my discourse with a passable exordium, divided my subject into four heads, had subdivisions under each in my mind, and was beginning to think I should do pretty well. But before I had spoken ten minutes I was stopped, like Hannibal upon the Alps. My ideas forsook me; darkness and confusion filled up their place. I stood on a precipice, and could not advance a step forward. I stared at the people, and they at me. But I remained as silent as Friar Bacon's head, and was forced to come down *re infecta*. My two worst enemies, self and Satan, seized me at the bottom of the stairs. I hope the Lord has forgiven the abominations of my heart, which showed themselves on that occasion. My pride and self-sufficiency were sorely mortified, and for two years afterward I could not look at the place without feeling the heart-ache, and as it were saying to myself, *Hic troja stetit*.

This disaster made me conclude it would be absolutely impossible for me ever to preach without book. Accordingly, I began to compose sermons at full length. The next time I was asked to preach, I did not feel much trepidation. I had my discourse in my pocket, and did not much doubt that I was able to read it. But the moment I began, my eyes were rivetted to the book, from a fear which got hold of me, that if I looked off I should not readily find the line again. Thus, with my head hanging down, (for I am near-sighted) and fixed like a statue, I conned over my lesson, like a boy learning to read; but I did not stop till I came to the end. I think I was rather more out of conceit with myself this time than the former. What was to be done next? I had

tried the two extremes to little purpose, and there seemed to me to be no medium between them. I looked sorrowfully at my sermon-book, and said,

*Nec tecum, nec sine te*——.

‘I began to think my views to the ministry were presumptuous. I thought at least, that if the Lord was pleased to accept my desire to serve him, he would not accept my service, because I had been so vile a creature; as he accepted David’s desire to build his house, but did not employ him, because he had shed blood. And yet, notwithstanding all disappointments and discouragements, he was pleased at length to admit me into his vineyard. He put it into my heart to have a meeting for a few select friends in my own house, on the Lord’s day evening, which I continued for about the last three years I lived at Liverpool. And in these exercises he was pleased in some measure to open my mouth.’

It is said that such was Mr. Newton’s mortification and shame at the first of these failures, that for some time afterwards he could not see two or three persons conversing in the street, without imagining that he was the subject of their discourse.

Shortly after this visit to Leeds we find him at Warwick;—Mr. Brewer of Stepney having strongly recommended him to a small dissenting congregation in that place. He remained there several weeks, but did not finally settle in that place. It was not the smallness of the congregation, or the narrow salary proposed, that prevented his entering into this engagement, but rather the unsettled state of his mind,

which was evidently at that time hesitating between the Church and the Independents.

His earliest religious connections, Captain Clunie, Mr. Brewer, and Mr. Hayward, it must be borne in mind, were among the choicest characters in the dissenting churches. The influence of this circumstance, in inclining his mind towards the Independents, could not be slight. An unhappy dissension, however, wherein he was rather a witness than a party, and which arose out of a sermon preached by Mr. Beddome, at Warwick, during his residence at that place, appears to have raised many doubts in his mind touching the Independent scheme, and, more than all, the judgment of Mrs. Newton strongly opposed itself to any hasty decision. A letter addressed to her, in the interval over which we are now passing, furnishes a most interesting view of the workings of his mind at this period.

‘ *Liverpool, June 14, 1762.*

‘ I am still striving to decline the thoughts of an undertaking, which though otherwise I should think agreeable, has this momentous difficulty attending it, that it has not your full concurrence and approbation. If I thought myself in the path of duty, and had you on my side, methinks all trials would be comparatively light; but when duty seems to call one way, and my regard for your peace seems to plead powerfully for another, how can I but be greatly perplexed?

‘ Not but that I am well assured, that if I told you I was at such a pinch, that I could see no medium between grieving you and acting against the light of my own mind, you would comply with any proposal I

could make, and would rather suffer in silence than see me at a continual variance with myself. But such a consent would not satisfy me. The more you constrained yourself for me, so much the more should I be pained for you, and thus, by our sensibility, we should give each other greater trouble in proportion as we endeavoured to avoid it.

‘ I hope, therefore, that I write this in a happy hour, and that the Lord, who has power over all hearts, (to whom we owe our all, and especially our mutual love,) will accompany it with his blessing, that I may not merely extort your consent, but obtain your full concurrence and approbation to my design. I much desire to enlarge my little attempts in the way of preaching, or expounding, (call it what you please) in Liverpool. The wish of many here, the advice of many absent, and my own judgment, (I had almost said my conscience) are united on one side; which I think would preponderate against Mr. B——’s single sentiment, if your fears did not add weight to his scale.

‘ The late death of Mr. Jones of St. Saviour’s has pressed this concern more closely upon my mind. I fear it must be wrong, after having so solemnly devoted myself to the Lord for his service, to wear away my time, and bury my talents in silence, (because I have been refused orders in the church) after all the great things that he has done for me. And should he throw me upon a sick bed, or visit *you* for my sake, I believe the sense of my cowardice and indolence in this business would greatly aggravate my distress.

‘ I think there are but two possible objections against my purpose. The first is, that I should proba-



bly draw upon myself some of that scorn or opposition which, in a greater or less degree, is the usual portion of those who determine to be faithful. But even if this was a weighty something, though indeed it is quite light when compared with the blessings promised to those who suffer for the truth,—it is some encouragement to find, that after it has been publicly known, for more than a twelvemonth, that several of my friends frequent my house on a Sunday evening, I have not had the least disturbance near home, nor been treated with the least disrespect or ridicule abroad upon that account. And if I procured a larger place to speak in, I might, I believe, still go on as quietly. At least, I am willing to venture.

‘The other objection, being started by prudence, ought to be attended to. But I think that if I chose such times only as would not interfere with my business, I should run no hazard of losing my place; and this is the opinion of my immediate superiors in office, whom I have consulted upon the point. Nay I know not but the diminution I have found in my emoluments may be owing to my hesitation. If I serve the Lord heartily, He will be answerable for consequences; but if I continue to serve Him by halves, and to rebel against the conviction of my mind, will it be any wonder that when I look for much it should come to little?’

‘You know that I am not wholly incompetent, either as to knowledge or expression. Shall I flatter your regard for me, by hinting, that perhaps a step of this kind may, in a little time, gain me more respect and estimation than I have yet known? But I hope we both wish to be governed by a nobler motive. It will be of little moment what the people

of the world once thought of me, when they and we shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

‘ You justly complain of dull Sabbaths. Let us then embrace the first favourable opportunity of aiming at what may more enliven us. You love to hear me speak upon all occasions; and I think you have sometimes heard me with pleasure as a preacher. And you know not what blessings may be yet reserved for you. Perhaps the Lord may send you the greatest favours by the hand of him from whom you are kind enough to accept the smallest trifle with complacence.

‘ After all, as I have already said, I cannot be content with forcing your bare acquiescence. I beg, therefore, you will think it over frequently, and intreat the Lord to direct us both. Perhaps, before long, it may seem to deserve your approbation. To hear you say so, would make me quite another person : for while I remain in this suspense, I feel, at times, a burden which I can hardly bear, and cannot possibly shake off.

‘ May the Lord bless, guide, and guard you, and abundantly reward you for all your affection and kindness to  
Yours, &c.’

In reviewing the subject, after the lapse of thirty years, Mr. Newton added the following observations :

‘ The influence of my judicious and affectionate counsellor moderated the zeal which dictated the preceding letter, and kept me quiet till the Lord’s time came, when I should have the desire of my heart. Had it not been for her, I should perhaps have precluded myself from those important scenes of service to which He was pleased to appoint me.

But the exercises of my mind upon this head, I believe, have not been peculiar to myself. I have known several persons, sensible, pious, of competent abilities, cordially attached to the established church, who, being wearied out by repeated refusals of ordination, and, perhaps, not having the advantage of such an adviser as I had, have at length struck into the itinerant path, or settled among the dissenters. Some of these, yet living, are men of respectable characters, and useful in their ministry; but their influence, which would once have been serviceable to the true interests of the church of England, now rather operates against it. I was long in a trying situation, thinking myself bound in conscience, upon grounds which I believe would have stood the test of candid examination, could I have obtained a hearing; and yet refused admission by two archbishops and one bishop, into that line of service which had my decided preference. This was one of the reasons I have to praise God for the partner He mercifully allotted me. She was useful to me through life, but perhaps in no one instance more essentially so, than in the prudent use she made of my affection to her, and of hers to me, at this period. I believe no arguments but hers could have restrained me for almost two years from taking a rash step, of which I should perhaps have soon repented, and which would have led me far wide of the honour and comfort I have since been favoured with. The Lord's time is like the time of tide, which no human power can either accelerate or retard. Though it tarry, wait for it.'

In his *Apologia*, a defence of his preference for the Church, he thus adverts to the subject;—

‘My first overtures were to the Dissenters, and had not the providence of God remarkably interposed to prevent it, I should probably have joined their body; but my designs were overruled. A variety of doors by which I sought entrance were successively shut against me. These repeated delays afforded me more time to think and judge for myself; and the more I considered the point, the more my scruples against conformity gave way. Reasons increased upon me, which not only satisfied me that I might conform without sin, but that the preference, (as to my own concern) was plainly on that side. Accordingly, in the Lord’s due time, after several years waiting to know his will, I sought and obtained episcopal ordination. Far from having regretted this part of my conduct for a single hour, I have been more satisfied with it from year to year.’

The year 1764 decided the point, and terminated Mr. N.’s anxiety. Through the recommendation of Lord Dartmouth, the curacy of Olney, a living in his lordship’s gift, and of which the Rev. Moses Brown was the Vicar, was offered to him. The same influence aided in removing all difficulties on the point of ordination, and on the 29th of April he became a minister of the Church of England, and Curate of Olney. The following letters were written to Mrs. N. at this period.

‘*London, 12th April.*

‘I was with the bishop of Lincoln this morning, and he has fixed on Monday next for my examination. If I get safe through that scene, I suppose my ordination will soon follow. He received me with great civility and candour. The beginning of my

interview with the bishop of Chester was not so pleasing. I suspect that some person, or persons, at Liverpool, had written to him, and not in my favour. Great men, not being able to see every where with their own eyes, must depend upon information, and are liable to be imposed upon by misrepresentation. He said that before he could authenticate my testimonials, he must ask me some questions. But when I showed him Lord D——'s letter, a full stop was put to all inquiries, but what were agreeable. He became very sociable; kept me in chit-chat near an hour; and, when I took my leave, he wished me much success. I shall be glad to have this business fairly finished. My mind has been greatly unsettled. Much company and frequent changes do not well suit me. Friends smile, and favour me on all sides; but creature-regards affect me too strongly, and I feel a degree of dearth in the midst of plenty.'

*' London, 16th April.*

' I waited on the bishop of Lincoln this morning, and have reason to revere him for his candour and tenderness. The examination lasted about an hour, chiefly upon the principal heads of divinity. As I was resolved not to be charged hereafter with dissimulation, I was constrained to dissent from his lordship in some points. But he was not offended; he declared himself satisfied, and has promised to ordain me, either next Sunday, in town, or the Sunday following, at Buckden. Let us praise the Lord!

‘ *Buckden, 28th April.*

‘ I have waited upon the bishop this afternoon ; have gone through all the previous forms, and am to be ordained (if the Lord please) at eleven to-morrow.

‘ I hope the repeated intimations I have given you concerning this long-expected to-morrow, have been in time to engage you in earnest prayer for me. I now almost stagger at the prospect before me. My heart is, in some measure, though I dare not say suitably, affected. I am to stand in a very public point of view ; to take the charge of a large parish ; to answer the incessant demands of stated and occasional services ; to preach what I ought, and to be what I preach. Oh ! what zeal, faith, patience, watchfulness, and courage, will be needful for my support and guidance ! My only hope is in the name and power of Jesus. May that precious name be as ointment poured forth, to your soul and mine ! May that power be triumphantly manifested in our weakness !’

Two days after, he writes to his attached friend, Capt. Clunie, in the following beautiful strain :—

‘ *Buckden, April 30, 1764.*

‘ DEAR BROTHER,

‘ I reached this place safe and sound at ten on Saturday morning, was ordained yesterday, dined with the bishop, and was dismissed with leave to come to him for priest’s orders at the next ordination, which will be about seven weeks hence.

‘ He has treated me with the greatest kindness throughout ; and though some things that have happened, particularly the refusal I met from the archbishop of York, might have given him some cause of

suspicion, he has not given me the least hint by way of caution or limitation. I think myself much obliged to him, and have much reason to be thankful to the Lord, who has all hearts in his hands, who gave me favour in his sight.

‘ Dear brother, pray for me that I may be faithful, watchful, and humble—that I may trust in the name of Jesus for grace and wisdom answerable to the important scene before me. I shall not cease to pray for you, that the Lord may refresh and revive your soul, and keep you very near to himself. Remember me to dear Mr. B., and tell him I desire his frequent remembrance at a throne of grace. My respects to Mrs. C. and thanks to you both for all your kindness. I hope to see you soon at Olney.

‘ May the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon your soul, and give you to say, by sweet experience, that it is good for you to draw near to him.—May you taste the beauty of the precepts and the sweetness of the promises;—may the name of Jesus be to us a seal set upon our hearts, to keep us unspotted from the world, and to animate us to a conversation becoming the Gospel of Christ. Oh my brother, if these things are so, if He lived and wept, and bled and died for us, what manner of persons ought we to be? May we grow in grace, and in the knowledge and love of Him who is all in all, till at length we shall be brought to see him as he is, and to be perfectly like him, and with him for ever. Amen.

Your's for his sake,

J. N.

## CHAPTER V.

*His Ministry at Olney.*

A. D. 1764 to 1779.

WE now enter upon a new era in Mr. Newton's life: perhaps we might almost say, that we now *commence his life*; for the first two and twenty years of his history is of that description on which a man can only look back with a desire that it were blotted out of remembrance; and the next period was one during which, by a gradual but wisely-ordered process, he was prepared for the forty years of earnest and successful labour on which we now see him entering.

Mr. Newton was in his 39th year when he undertook the curacy of Olney. He was admitted to deacon's orders at Buckden, on the 29th of April, 1764. Returning to Liverpool for Mrs. Newton, he there preached, he observes, 'six times in the town and neighbourhood, to many thousands, I hope with some measure of faithfulness, I trust with some success, and in general with much greater acceptance than I could have expected.'



He arrived at the scene of his future labours on the 26th of May, and entered upon those duties, which, for fifteen subsequent years, he unremittingly discharged, on the following Sunday. His first sermon in that church was from the text, Psalm lxxx. 1. "*Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.*" On the 17th of June he was ordained priest; and on the 28th commenced a Thursday evening lecture, which from the first was well attended. Two or three passages in letters to a friend, about this time, will show the zeal, and energy, and success, with which he engaged in his work.

‘ Last Thursday I entered upon a new service. A room in the great house being prepared for the purpose, I began to meet the children of the parish: but though the room was large, it proved rather too small for the purpose. I had eighty-nine the first time; and though perhaps some will be weary and drop off, yet, as there are many more intended, who did not then come, I expect my usual number, when settled, will exceed a hundred. I propose to meet them every Thursday after dinner—not so much to teach them the Catechism (though I shall attend to that likewise) as to talk, preach, and reason with them, and explain the Scriptures to them in their own little way.

‘ It would have pleased you to see them: there are several among them who discover a seriousness and attention beyond their age. I have proposed premiums—a great bible and five shillings each to the best boy and the best girl, at Whitsuntide, besides proportionable rewards to all who behave well; and I believe I shall make those two, four—that is,

two for those under ten years, and two for those above. Three-fourths of them attended at the lecture, and sat together in the middle aisle. It was an affecting sight, and moved me to pray for them with some earnestness from the pulpit. If the Lord affords his blessing, I hope this step will be attended with advantage, not only to the children, but perhaps to some of the parents, who will be sure to hear from their little ones what we have been talking of at the great house. And where it goes no farther at present, the children will be more orderly and under restraint, and more constant in their attendance at church.'

In a subsequent letter he writes:—

'Almost every thing seems to flourish at Olney but myself. The prayer-meeting I lately set up on Tuesday evenings is likely to thrive and be comfortable—our number is about forty. We might easily enlarge it; but I choose to have none but such as I hope are in downright earnest; however, it increases every time. The children on Thursday now amount to one hundred and seventy-five, and additions are offering every week: they make a pretty show in the chancel. I have furnished them all with Mason's Sermon and Catechism, and Dr. Watts's little Hymn-Book. They are very fond of coming, and there are some lookers-on. I expect there will be more when the weather is warmer. In speaking to the children, I sometimes speak to the by-standers, without seeming to intend it; and who knows but a random-shot may now and then hit the mark? As to the public preaching, I believe the Lord is pleased to own it. Last sacrament-day I had the pleasure of seeing two of my own children at the ordinance, who, I trust, can give a solid reason of the hope that is in them;

and I know of six others that have been awakened within these few weeks, who seem to be in a good way.

‘ I think the congregations have been as large within this month past as they were any time last summer, though the weather is cold, and the roads indifferent: there is a probability that, when the spring advances, more will come than we shall be able to seat. This put me upon planning a large gallery, to be erected the whole length of the north side of the church, from the door to the chancel. I communicated my wish to Lord Dartmouth, who was pleased to approve it, and to promise his assistance. A plan has been made, and the estimate is eighty-five pounds—to have four depths of handsome pews, and an open seat behind. As I intend to have the best front seat for the accommodation of my friends, and as I think it well to set a good example to the parish, that they may be stirred up to give freely,—I have myself promised to subscribe five guineas; you will perhaps think this is more than the poor curate of Olney can well afford: if you do, (and you are not far from the mark) I hereby authorize and empower you to levy the said sum upon yourself, and your and my friends in the city and eastern quarters, for my re-imbusement; and, if you should have something more than that sum forced upon you, if you please to send it here, it shall go the use and behoof above-mentioned.’

Having already given his own description of his earliest attempts as a preacher, it will be but just to add a sketch or two, also from his own pen, of the degree of facility and success which he enjoyed at Olney.

‘ Many exercises have I had about preaching; nor

am I wholly without them still. I must add, I do not wish to be quite free. To be an extempore preacher, with some degree of acceptance and popularity, is an ensnaring situation. It affords much grounds for the workings of pride and self-complaisance, and therefore it is a mercy if the Lord is pleased to give us frequent proofs of our own inability, notwithstanding what we can do when he puts forth his power in us. Experience likewise proves, that we do not always preach best when we are most pleased with our own doings; at least if we account it the best preaching when we are most useful. Such I think should be the standard. When is a fisherman's best fishing-time? I think, not when he has the neatest rods, hooks, or lines, nor even when he has the pleasantest weather, but when he catches the greatest quantity of good fishes. When we have made a poor sermon, and are almost afraid or ashamed to look our hearers in the face, the Lord may put forth his power in our weakness, and work great things by our little sermon. When we think we have done bravely, and pleased the people's ears, and sent them home to praise the fine discourse, their hearts may be quite unaffected. If we were perfectly mortified to self, we should submit to be pitied or laughed at by the bulk of a congregation, if we might but be useful to a few. And we should be dissatisfied with the applause of all, except we could be serviceable to some. I wish any thing I have hastily written may encourage you. I long to hear that you are freed from the drudgery of committing your sermons to memory. I long to hear that you are an extempore preacher. It will save a deal of time, which might be employed to better purposes. But I would not

be impatient. I hope the Lord will lead and guide you to what is best. I only say, "if you can believe, you shall be established."

' However, I should tell you, that long after he had given me some liberty of speech, at Olney, in the midst of my own people, and before a full congregation, my mouth was stopped again. That is, my mind was so confused that I only talked nonsense; and I thought it my duty to tell the people I could not preach, because the Lord suspended his assistance. I therefore stopped and told them so. When I had made this acknowledgment, I had liberty again, only I could not resume the subject I had been upon. But I spoke freely on what had happened, and perhaps it was one of our best opportunities. It was so to me. My pride was kept down, my mind perfectly composed, and I went home as easy as if the whole parish had admired my sermon.'

Yet scarcely was he settled and thus actively engaged in his work, before temptations were placed in his way, tending to draw him from that scene of labour in which he was so usefully occupied. The emoluments of his curacy were only *sixty pounds* per annum. For this, though destitute of any private fortune, he had given up a much larger income, arising from his situation at Liverpool. It was hardly to be wondered at, therefore, that friends who took a warm interest in his welfare and comfort, should eagerly point out to him other openings, in which his means of usefulness would be the same, and his emoluments greater. To such a suggestion he replies in the following letter—

' You desire my thoughts of Hampstead, and I sit

down to give you them. I have not heard from Mr. Madan upon the subject as you hint; and if I ever do, I can hardly think that he will advise me to leave Olney without a real necessity. If Mr. Brown should ever return himself, or dismiss me from his curacy, neither of which perhaps is probable, I should be at liberty: but otherwise I think I ought to wait till I see the Lord pointing out my way as clearly as with a sun-beam, before I so much as listen to a removal. To be sure there is something tempting in the thought of being situated in a fine air, close to London, near all my friends, ministers and others: how pleasing the prospect, if the Lord had not sent me another way! I may apply what I told you a lady said to a friend of mine about his small church, "The Lord knew how large it was:" so the Lord knew that there would be vacancies elsewhere, before he led me to Olney. Now let us turn the tables. To this place I owe the opportunity of my ordination—the Lord has brought me to a place where I am persuaded he has many dear children—where the light of the blessed gospel is highly prized, so that they would almost do and suffer any thing, rather than be deprived of it—to a place where I have a congregation not much smaller (in an afternoon) than at the Lock—where the people flock in from four, six, or more miles, about the country, to hear the word—where I have been hitherto favoured with much liberty in my own soul, am heard with acceptance, and have reason to hope that my poor endeavours have been already in some measure blessed, and meet with little or no opposition.

‘Now, my dear friend, consider seriously before you advise me farther, lest you should ensnare me. Can

it be my duty to forego all these advantages, merely because I have not got the living? and so soon, too? Methinks it would look (to consider it in no other light) as if I came into the church solely for profit. I have the promise of Olney, and perhaps a little time may vacate it: if not, I cannot think of quitting immediately for the poor difference of twenty pounds per annum. But you will say, a family must be provided for. True—and all that I can get from Olney, as curate, will be too strait a maintenance; and I confess that, when in an unbelieving mood, I am of your mind. But I find my heart, by grace, brought to a point, to take the promises and the providence of God for my inheritance. I long had a desire for the ministry: He has granted it: I was likewise desirous of seeing a considerable number of people about me; (though unworthy and insufficient of myself to speak to two or three.) He has granted that too. I feel myself enabled to devote myself to the service of his kingdom and righteousness: He has a people in this country, that were in danger of being scattered as sheep without a shepherd: they did not seek me, nor I them; but the Lord brought us together: He has given us to love one another, and we are unwilling to part. The question is, whether I have a sufficient warrant from the word (for confidence without a promise is presumption) to trust the Lord to take care of my temporal concerns in this circumstance? I think I have—and especially when I remember when and where he found me—destitute of food and raiment, and how he has led, and fed me, and encompassed me with mercy on every side, surely I ought not either to seek great things, or be discouraged with small trials. But, then, Mrs. N. you

will say,—Aye, there's the rub, indeed. For myself, if my heart does not deceive me more than ever, were I single, it would not be in the power of man to propose a consideration that should make me quit my post. But, to see her, who never knew hardship or inconvenience, whose tenderness of constitution requires indulgence, whose affections and dependance on me induced her to venture her all with me, and who (to speak the language of the world) has had sufficient ground and reason to expect a competent provision—to see her straitened, and struggling with trials beyond her strength, would not this be hard to bear? Hard, indeed! almost as great a trial as to lose her; perhaps a greater: for what I feel for her, always affects me more than what I feel for myself. However, by the grace of God, I am willing to put her case and my own together into his hands. He knows both our affection and our weakness. He has promised to mitigate, to support, and to deliver. I see all I want in his promise; and though I know not the way of communication, he can find it.

‘You think that Hampstead promises as fair a field of usefulness as Olney—I am not doubtful of being in some measure useful wherever the Lord sends me—but you know all depends on him; if I should dislike this place, and choose another, He might permit me to go; but how can I be sure he would go with me? And if not, what a wretched exchange should I make! The night I received your's I heard a sermon from Mr. Grant of Wellingborough. It was a word in season to me. His text was, Exod. xxxiii. 15; and after explaining what is intended by God's presence with his people, he made this observation, ‘That the Lord's people



had rather abide in the howling wilderness, to have his gracious presence with them, than to exchange it for the best worldly situation without him.' To this my soul, through rich mercy, subscribes. The people here are mostly poor; the country low and dirty. We shall perhaps have but a solitary life in the winter time: however, with his presence, in the closet, the family, and the assembly, all will do very well.

' I sometimes can imagine myself changing my place, possessing a good provision in a genteel neighbourhood, many friends to smile upon me, perhaps some persons of distinction to take notice of me. And I think again, that this is the very situation the Devil would wish me in: for then he would have many new batteries to play upon me. If the Lord call me into the midst of danger, he can preserve me in it; but I must be well satisfied that it is his will, and his doing, before I think seriously about it. I thank you, however, for your care and good wishes. If you do not agree with what I have wrote, or whether you do or not, let me hear from you soon.'

But his great Master was not unmindful, even of these smaller matters: "*Your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of these things.*" We have omitted to state, that Mr. Newton had published a volume of Sermons at Liverpool, in 1760, four years before his ordination; and his 'Letters of Omicron,' in 1762. Shortly after his settlement at Olney, his interesting 'Narrative' was published, from which the former part of this memoir has been compiled. Mr. N. transmitted a copy of it to Mr. Thornton,

whose Christian character was universally known and admired.

Mr. Cecil (from whose memoir we shall now make several copious quotations,) observes, that 'Mr. Thornton replied in his usual manner, that is, by accompanying his letter with a valuable bank-note; and, some months after, he paid Mr. N. a visit at Olney. A closer connection being now formed between friends who employed their distinct talents in promoting the same benevolent cause, Mr. Thornton left a sum of money with Mr. N. to be appropriated to the defraying of his necessary expences, and the relief of the poor. 'Be hospitable,' said Mr. Thornton, 'and keep an open house for such as are worthy of entertainment. Help the poor and needy. I will stately allow you 200*l.* a year, and readily send whatever you have occasion to draw for more.' Mr. N. stated, that he thought he had received of Mr. Thornton upwards of 3000*l.* in this way, during the time he resided at Olney.

The case of most ministers is peculiar in this respect. Some among them may be looked up to, on account of their publicity and talents: they may have made great sacrifices of their personal interest, in order to enter on the ministry, and may be possessed of the warmest benevolence; but, from the narrowness of their pecuniary circumstances, and from the largeness of their families, they often perceive, that an ordinary tradesman in their parishes can subscribe to a charitable or popular institution much more liberally than themselves. This would have been Mr. N.'s case, but for the above-mentioned singular patronage.

A minister, however, should not be so forgetful

of his dispensation, as to repine at his want of power in this respect. He might as justly estimate his deficiency by the strength of the lion, or the flight of the eagle. The power communicated to *him* is of another kind; and power of every kind belongs to God, who gives gifts "to every man severally as he will." The two mites of the widow were all the power of *that* kind, which was communicated to her; and her bestowment of her two mites was better accepted, than the larger offerings of the rich man. The powers, therefore, of Mr. Thornton and of Mr. N. though of a different order, were both consecrated to God: and each might have said, *Of thine own have we given thee.*

Providence seems to have appointed Mr. N.'s residence at Olney, among other reasons, for the relief of the depressed mind of the Poet COWPER. There has gone forth an unfounded report, that the deplorable melancholy of Cowper, was, in part, derived from his residence and connections in that place. The fact, however, is the reverse of this: and, as it may be of importance to the interests of true religion to prevent such a misrepresentation from taking root, I will present (says Mr. Cecil,) the real state of the case, as I have found it attested by the most respectable living witnesses; and, more especially, as confirmed by a MS. written by the poet himself, at the calmest period of his life, with the perusal of which I was favoured by Mr. N.

It most evidently appears, that symptoms of Mr. Cowper's morbid state began to discover themselves in his earliest youth. He seems to have been at all times disordered, in a greater or less degree. He

was sent to Westminster school at the age of nine years, and long endured the tyranny of an elder boy, of which he gives an affecting account in the paper above mentioned; and which '*produced*,' as one of his biographers observes, who had long intimacy with him, '*an indelible effect upon his mind through life.*' A person so naturally bashful and depressed as Cowper, must needs find the profession of a barrister a further occasion of anxiety. The post obtained for him by his friends in the House of Lords overwhelmed him; and the remonstrances which those friends made against his relinquishing so honourable and lucrative an appointment (but which soon after took place) greatly increased the anguish of a mind already incapacitated for business. To all this were added events, which, of themselves, have been found sufficient to upset the strongest minds: namely, the decease of his particular friend and intimate, Sir William Russel; and his meeting with a disappointment in obtaining a lady upon whom his affections were placed.

But the state of a person, whose mind was torn and depressed (not by his *religious connections* but) by adverse circumstances, and these meeting a naturally morbid sensibility, *long before he knew Olney, or had formed any connection with its inhabitants*, will best appear from some verses which he sent at this time to one of his female relations, and for the communication of which we are indebted to Mr. Hayley:

'Doomed, as I am, in solitude to waste  
The present moments, and regret the past;  
Deprived of every joy I valued most,  
My friend torn from me, and my mistress lost:  
Call not this gloom I wear, this anxious mien,  
The dull effect of humour or of spleen!

Still, still I mourn, with each returning day,  
Him—snatched by fate, in early youth, away;  
And her—through tedious years of doubt and pain,  
Fixed in her choice, and faithful—but in vain.  
See me—ere yet my destined course half done,  
Cast forth a wanderer on a wild unknown!  
See me, neglected on the world's rude coast,  
Each dear companion of my voyage lost!  
Nor ask why clouds of sorrow shade my brow,  
And ready tears wait only leave to flow;  
Why all that soothes a heart, from anguish free,  
All that delights the happy—palls with me.'

Under such pressures, the melancholy and susceptible mind of Cowper received, from evangelical truth, the first consolation which it ever tasted. It was under the care of Dr. Cotton, of St. Albans, (a physician as capable of administering to the spiritual as to the natural maladies of his patients) that he first obtained a clear view of those sublime and animating doctrines, which so distinguished and exalted his future strains as a poet. Here, also, he received that settled tranquillity and peace, which he enjoyed for several years afterwards. So far, therefore, was his constitutional malady from being produced or increased by his evangelical connections, either at St. Albans or at Olney, that he seems never to have had any settled peace but from the truths he learned in these societies. It appears, that among them alone, he found the only sunshine he ever enjoyed, through the cloudy day of his afflicted life.

It appears also, that, while at Dr. Cotton's, Mr. Cowper's distress was for a long time entirely removed, by marking that passage in Rom. iii. 25. *Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past.* In this scripture he

saw the remedy which God provides for the relief of a guilty conscience, with such clearness, that for *several years* after, his heart was filled with love, and his life occupied with prayer, praise, and doing good to his needy fellow-creatures.

Mr. Grimshawe, in his *Life of Cowper*, thus describes the circumstances which led to the friendship which subsisted for so many years between these two most congenial minds.

‘ Time and providential circumstances now introduced to the notice of Cowper the zealous and venerable friend, who became his intimate associate for many years, after having advised and assisted him in the important concern of fixing his future residence. The Rev. John. Newton, then curate of Olney, in Buckinghamshire, had been requested by the late Dr. Conyers (who in taking his degree in divinity at Cambridge, had formed a friendship with young Mr. Unwin, and learned from him the religious character of his mother), to seize an opportunity, as he was passing through Huntingdon, of making a visit to that exemplary lady. This visit (so important in its consequences to the future history of Cowper) happened to take place within a few days after the calamitous death of Mr. Unwin. As a change of scene appeared desirable, both to Mrs. Unwin and to the interesting recluse whom she had generously requested to continue under her care, Mr. Newton offered to assist them in removing to the pleasant and picturesque county in which he resided. They were willing to enter into the flock of a pious and devoted pastor, whose ideas were so much in harmony with their own. He engaged for

them a house at Olney, where they arrived on the 14th of October, 1767.

‘The warm, benevolent, and cheerful piety of Mr. Newton, induced his friend Cowper to participate so abundantly in his parochial plans and engagements, that the poet’s time and thoughts were more and more engrossed by devotional objects. He became a valuable auxiliary to a faithful parish priest, superintended the religious exercises of the poor, and engaged in an important undertaking, to which we shall shortly have occasion to advert.’

‘The kind and affectionate intercourse which subsisted between Cowper and his beloved pastor, was the commerce of two kindred minds, united by a participation in the same blessed hope, and seeking to improve their union, by seizing every opportunity of usefulness. Friendship to be durable, must be pure, virtuous, and holy. All other associations are liable to the caprice of passion, and to the changing tide of human events. It is not enough that there be a natural coincidence of character and temperament, a similarity of earthly pursuit and object; there must be materials of a higher fabric; streams flowing from a purer source. There must be the impress of divine grace stamping the same common image and superscription on both hearts. A friendship founded on such a basis, strengthened by time and opportunity, and nourished by the frequent interchange of good offices, is perhaps the nearest approximation to happiness attainable in this chequered life.

‘Such a friendship is beautifully portrayed by Cowper, in the following passage in his poem on Conversation; and it is highly probable that he

alludes to his own feelings on this occasion, and to the connexion subsisting between himself and Newton :—

True bliss, if man may reach it, is compos'd  
Of hearts in union mutually disclos'd ;  
And farewell else all hope of pure delight !  
Those hearts should be reclaim'd, renew'd, upright :  
Bad men, profaning friendship's hallow'd name,  
Form, in its stead, a covenant of shame.

\* \* \* \* \*

But souls, that carry on a blest exchange  
Of joys they meet with in their heavenly range,  
And with a fearless confidence make known  
The sorrows sympathy esteems its own ;  
Daily derive increasing light and force  
From such communion in their pleasant course ;  
Feel less the journey's roughness and its length ;  
Meet their opposers with united strength :  
And, one in heart, in interest, and design,  
Gird up each other to the race divine.

‘ It is to the friendship and intercourse formed between these two excellent men, that we are indebted for the origin of the Olney Hymns. These Hymns are too celebrated in the annals of sacred poetry not to demand special notice in a life of Cowper, who contributed to that collection some of the most beautiful and devotional effusions that ever enriched this species of composition. They were the joint production of the divine and the poet, and “intended (as the former expressly says in his preface) as a monument to perpetuate the remembrance of an intimate and endeared friendship.” ’

Another remarkable incident, during Mr. Newton's residence at Olney, was the friendship which grew up between him and a neighbouring clergyman, at that time in a state of mind somewhat resembling



that of St. Paul before his journey to Damascus ; but who, being brought to the knowledge of the truth, in a great measure by Mr. Newton's instrumentality,—was afterwards strengthened by God to the performance of such labours, especially in Biblical interpretation, as have had, in modern times, perhaps few equals in extent and abundance, and assuredly none in their circulation and their influence. Our readers will see that we allude to the universally honoured name of THOMAS SCOTT, whose connection with Mr. Newton we shall give in his own words ;—

‘I was,’ says he, ‘full of proud self-sufficiency, very positive, and very obstinate ; and, being situated in the neighbourhood of some of those whom the world calls Methodists, I joined in the prevailing sentiment ; held them in sovereign contempt ; spoke of them with derision ; declaimed against them from the pulpit, as persons full of bigotry, enthusiasm, and spiritual pride ; laid heavy things to their charge ; and endeavoured to prove the doctrines, which I supposed them to hold, (for I had never read their books) to be dishonourable to God, and destructive of morality. And though, in some companies, I chose to conceal part of my sentiments ; and, in all, affected to speak as a friend to universal toleration : yet, scarcely any person could be more proudly and violently prejudiced against both their persons and principles than I then was.

‘In January, 1774, two of my parishioners, a man and his wife, lay at the point of death. I had heard of the circumstance ; but, according to my general custom, not being sent for, I took no notice of it : till, one evening, the woman being now dead, and the

man dying, I heard that my neighbour Mr. Newton had been several times to visit them. Immediately my conscience reproached me with being shamefully negligent, in sitting at home within a few doors of dying persons, my general bearers, and never going to visit them. Directly it occurred to me, that, whatever contempt I might have for Mr. N.'s *doctrines*, I must acknowledge his *practice* to be more consistent with the ministerial character than my own. He must have more zeal and love for souls than I had, or he would not have walked so far to visit, and supply my lack of care to those who, as far as I was concerned, might have been left to perish in their sins.

‘ This reflection affected me so much, that, without delay, and very earnestly, yea, with tears, I besought the Lord to forgive my past neglect; and I resolved thenceforth to be more attentive to this duty: which resolution, though at first formed in ignorant dependence on my own strength, I have, by divine grace, been enabled hitherto to keep. I went immediately to visit the survivor; and the affecting sight of one person already dead, and another expiring in the same chamber, served more deeply to impress my serious convictions.

‘ But it was not till some time after, that my correspondence with Mr. N. commenced. At a visitation, May, 1775, we exchanged a few words on a controverted subject in the room among the clergy, which I believe drew many eyes upon us. At that time he prudently declined the discourse; but, a day or two after, he sent me a short note, with a little book for my perusal. This was the very thing I wanted; and I gladly embraced the opportunity, which, according

to my wishes, seemed now to offer; God knoweth, with no inconsiderable expectations that my arguments would prove irresistibly convincing, and that I should have the honour of rescuing a well-meaning person from his enthusiastical delusions.

‘I had, indeed, by this time conceived a very favourable opinion of him, and a sort of respect for him; being acquainted with the character he sustained, even among some persons who expressed a disapprobation of his doctrines. They were forward to commend him as a benevolent, disinterested, inoffensive person, and a laborious minister. But, on the other hand, I looked upon his religious sentiments as rank fanaticism; and entertained a very contemptuous opinion of his abilities, natural and acquired. Once I had had the curiosity to hear him preach; and, not understanding his sermon, I made a very great jest of it, where I could do it without giving offence. I had also read one of his publications; but, for the same reason, I thought the greater part of it whimsical, paradoxical, and unintelligible.

‘Concealing, therefore, the true motives of my conduct, under the offer of friendship and a professed desire to know the truth, (which, amidst all my self-sufficiency and prejudice, I trust the Lord had even then given me) with the greatest affectation of candour, and of a mind open to conviction, I wrote him a long letter; purposing to draw from him such an avowal and explanation of his sentiments, as might introduce a controversial discussion of our religious differences.

‘The event by no means answered my expectation. He returned a very friendly and long answer to my

letter; in which he carefully avoided the mention of those doctrines which he knew would offend me. He declared that he believed me to be one who feared God, and was under the teaching of his Holy Spirit; that he gladly accepted my offer of friendship, and was no ways inclined to dictate to me: but that, leaving me to the guidance of the Lord, he would be glad, as occasion served, from time to time, to bear testimony to the truths of the Gospel; and to communicate his sentiments to me on any subject, with all the confidence of friendship.

‘ In this manner our correspondence began; and it was continued, in the interchange of nine or ten letters, till December in the same year. Throughout I held my purpose, and he his. I made use of every endeavour to draw him into controversy, and filled my letters with definitions, inquiries, arguments, objections, and consequences, requiring explicit answers. He, on the other hand, shunned every thing controversial as much as possible, and filled his letters with the most useful and least offensive instructions: except that, now and then, he dropped his hints concerning the necessity, the true nature, and the efficacy of faith, and the manner in which it was to be sought and obtained: and concerning some other matters, suited, as he judged, to help me forward in my inquiry after truth. But they much offended my prejudices, afforded me matter of disputation, and at that time were of little use to me.

‘ When I had made some further progress in seeking the truth, my acquaintance with Mr. N. was resumed. From the conclusion of our correspondence, in December, 1775, till April, 1777, it had been almost wholly dropped. To speak plainly, I did not care

for his company: I did not mean to make any use of him as an instructor; and I was unwilling the world should think us in any way connected. But, under discouraging circumstances, I had occasion to call upon him; and his discourse so comforted and edified me, that my heart, being by his means relieved from its burden, became susceptible of affection for him. From that time I was inwardly pleased to have him for my friend; though not, as now, rejoiced to call him so. I had, however, even at that time, no thoughts of learning doctrinal truth from him, and was ashamed to be detected in his company; but I sometimes stole away to spend an hour with him. About the same period, I once heard him preach, but still it was foolishness to me: his sermon being principally upon the believer's experience, in some particulars with which I was unacquainted. So that, though I loved and valued him, I considered him as a person misled by enthusiastical notions; and strenuously insisted that we should never think alike till we met in heaven.'

Mr. Scott, after going on to describe his progress in the discovery of truth, and his better appreciation of Mr. N. as its minister, afterwards adds—

'The pride of reasoning, and the conceit of superior discernment, had all along accompanied me: and, though somewhat broken, had yet considerable influence. Hitherto, therefore, I had not thought of hearing any person preach; because I did not think any one in the circle of my acquaintance capable of giving me such information as I wanted. But, being at length convinced that Mr. N. had been right, and that I had been mistaken, in the several particulars in which we had differed, it occurred to

me, that, having preached these doctrines so long, he must understand many things concerning them to which I was a stranger. Now, therefore, though not without much remaining prejudice, and not less in the character of a judge than of a scholar, I condescended to be his hearer, and occasionally to attend his preaching, and that of some other ministers. I soon perceived the benefit ; for, from time to time, the secrets of my heart were discovered to me, far beyond what I had hitherto noticed ; and I seldom returned from hearing a sermon, without having conceived a meaner opinion of myself ; without having attained to a further acquaintance with my deficiencies, weaknesses, corruptions, and wants ; or without being supplied with fresh matter for prayer, and directed to greater watchfulness. I likewise learned the use of experience in preaching ; and was convinced, that the readiest way to reach the hearts and consciences of others, was to speak from my own. In short, I gradually saw more and more my need of instruction, and was at length brought to consider myself as a very novice in religious matters. Thus I began experimentally to perceive our Lord's meaning, when he says, *Except ye receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, ye shall in no wise enter therein.*

It can hardly be necessary to add, that a friendship thus formed and thus cemented, continued through life. We shall presently have occasion to observe, that, on Mr. Newton's removal from Olney, his strongest efforts were directed to secure Mr. Scott's appointment as his successor.

But to return to the more immediate subject of these memoirs : In the year 1776, Mr. N. was afflicted

with a tumor, or wen, which had formed on his thigh; and finding it become large and troublesome, he resolved to try the experiment of extirpation. This obliged him to go to London for the operation, which was successfully performed, October 10th, by the late Mr. Warner, of Guy's Hospital. I remember, says Mr. Cecil, hearing him speak several years afterwards of this trying occasion; but the trial did not seem to have affected him as a painful operation, so much as a critical opportunity in which he might fail in demonstrating the patience of a Christian under pain. 'I felt,' said he, 'that being enabled to bear a very sharp operation with tolerable calmness and confidence, was a greater favour granted to me than the deliverance from my malady.'

While Mr. N. thus continued, faithfully discharging the duties of his station, and watching for the temporal and eternal welfare of his flock, a dreadful fire broke out at Olney, October 1777. Mr. N. took an active part in comforting and relieving the sufferers: he collected upwards of 200*l.* for them; a considerable sum of money, when the poverty and late calamity of the place are considered. Such instances of benevolence towards the people, with the constant assistance he afforded the poor, by the help of Mr. Thornton, naturally led him to expect that he should have so much influence as to restrain gross licentiousness on particular occasions. But, to use his own expression, he had "lived to bury the old crop, on which any dependence could be placed." He preached a weekly lecture, which occurred that year on the 5th of November; and, as he feared that the usual way of celebrating it at Olney might endanger his hearers in their attendance

at the church, he exerted himself to preserve some degree of quiet on that evening. Instead, however, of hearkening to his entreaties, the looser sort exceeded their former extravagance, drunkenness, and rioting; and even obliged him to send out money, to preserve his house from violence. This happened but a year before he finally left Olney. When he related this occurrence to me, (says Mr. Cecil,) he added, that he believed he should never have left the place while he lived, had not so incorrigible a spirit prevailed, in a parish which he had long laboured to reform.

But I must remark here, that this is no solitary fact, nor at all unaccountable. The gospel, we are informed, is not merely *a savour of life unto life*, but also *of death unto death*. Those, whom it does not soften, it is often found to harden. Thus we find that *St. Paul went into the synagogue and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But, when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them.*

*The strong man armed* seeks to keep his house and goods in peace: and, if a minister is disposed to let this *sleep of death* remain, that minister's own house and goods may be permitted to remain in peace also. Such a minister may be esteemed by his parish as a good kind of man—quiet, inoffensive, candid, &c.; and, if he discovers any zeal, it is directed to keep the parish in the state he found it; that is, in ignorance and unbelief, worldly-minded and hard-hearted—the very state of peace in which *the strong man armed* seeks to keep his palace or citadel, the human heart.



But, if a minister, like the subject of these memoirs, enters into the design of his commission—if he be alive to the interest of his own soul, and that of the souls committed to his charge: or, as the Apostle expresses it, *to save himself and those that hear him*—he may depend upon meeting in his own experience the truth of that declaration, *Yea, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*, in one form of it or another. One of the most melancholy sights we can behold is, when any part of the church, through prejudice, joins the world in this warfare. There is, however, such a determined enmity to godliness itself, in the breasts of a certain class of men existing in most parishes, that, whatever learning and good sense are found in their teacher—whatever consistency of character or blameless deportment he exhibits—whatever benevolence or bounty (like that which Mr. N. exercised at Olney) may constantly appear in his character, such men remain irreconcilable. They will resist every attempt made to appease their enmity. God alone who changed the hearts of Paul and of Newton, can heal these bitter waters.

Mr. Newton himself observed,—‘When God is about to perform any great work, he generally permits some great opposition to it. Suppose Pharaoh had acquiesced in the departure of the children of Israel—or that they had met with no difficulties in the way, they would, indeed, have passed from Egypt to Canaan with ease; but they, as well as the church in all future ages, would have been great losers. The wonder-working God would not have been seen in those extremities which make his arm so visible. A *smooth passage* here, would have made but a *poor story*.’

But under such disorders, Mr. N.—in no one instance that I ever heard of, was tempted to depart from the line marked out by the precept and example of his Master. He continued to *bless them that persecuted him* : knowing that *the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient*. To the last day he spent among them, he went straight forward, in *meekness instructing those that opposed, if God peradventure might give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth*.

Such are Mr. Cecil's reflections on the removal of Mr. Newton from Olney. It would be an act of supererogation to add any thing further. Suffice it to say that matters being in this state at Olney ; and the rectory of St. Mary Woolnoth, in London, being at this juncture pressed upon his acceptance by his constant friend, Mr. Thornton, he at last came to the resolution of leaving Olney, after a residence there of fifteen years. Within that period he had added to his printed works, a Volume of Sermons, printed in 1767, a Review of Ecclesiastical History in 1769, and the Olney Hymns, written in conjunction with Mr. Cowper, in 1779.

## CHAPTER VI.

FROM HIS SETTLEMENT IN LONDON TO THE DEATH  
OF MRS. NEWTON.

A.D. 1779 to 1790.

THE unpleasant circumstances which have been alluded to at the close of the preceding chapter, having necessarily tended to weaken Mr. Newton's attachment to the scene of his earlier ministerial labours; it could excite no surprise, that on the death of the incumbent of the rectory of the united parishes of St. Mary Woolnoth and St. Mary Woolchurch, in the city of London, Mr. Thornton, in whom the right of presentation was vested, should offer it to Mr. N. A question was raised by another claimant of this right, but the decision of the house of lords being at length obtained in Mr. Thornton's favour, Mr. Newton was inducted to the living, and preached his first sermon in the church of the united parishes on the 19th of December, 1779. His text, remarkably descriptive of the leading feature in his own ministry, was taken from Ephesians iv. 15, *Speaking the truth in love.*" The sermon contained an affectionate address to his people, and was immediately published for their use. An extract or two will not be unacceptable to the reader.

‘ I propose my text as a kind of motto; to introduce a brief account of the feelings, desires, and purposes of my heart, on this my first appearance among you. The inhabitants of these parishes, to whom I more immediately address myself, have a right to be informed, now that the providence of God has placed me in this city and in this church, of the views with which I have undertaken the important trust lately committed to me, and of the manner and spirit in which it is my desire to discharge it. If these enquiries be upon any of your minds, accept my answer in the words I have read: I came, and by the grace of God, I hope to abide among you, “ *speaking the truth in love.*”

‘ I should be utterly unworthy your attention, I should deserve your contempt and detestation, if, under the solemn character of a minister of Jesus Christ, and with a professed regard for his service and the good of souls, I should presume to speak any thing among you, but what I verily believe in my conscience to be *truth*. The apostles were ambassadors for Christ, and we, however inferior in other respects, are so far concerned in this part of their character, as to be equally bound to conform to the instructions of our Lord and Master. The Bible is the grand repository of the truths which it will be the business and pleasure of my life to set before you. It is the complete system of divine truth, to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken, with impunity. Every attempt to disguise or soften any branch of this truth, in order to accommodate it to the prevailing taste around us, either to avoid the displeasure, or to court the favour of our fellow-mortals, must be an affront to

the majesty of God, and an act of treachery to men. My conscience bears me witness, that I mean to 'speak the truth' among you. May the grace of God enable me always to do it. The principal branches of the "truth as it is in Jesus," according to St. Paul's expression, are summarily contained in the articles which I have just now read, and given my solemn assent to, in your hearing. These I acknowledge and adopt as a standard of sound doctrine, not merely because they are the articles of our church, but because, upon a mature and repeated examination, I am persuaded that they are agreeable to the scripture. I am to enlarge on the declarations of the scripture, and of the articles concerning the depravity of fallen man, the evil of sin, the method of salvation by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. I am to bear testimony to the dignity and excellency of the Redeemer's person and characters, the suitableness of his office, the efficacy of his blood, and obedience to death on the behalf of sinners; and his glory as head of the church, and Lord of heaven and earth. I am to set before you the characters, obligations, and privileges of those who believe in his name, and to prove that the doctrines of the grace of God, are doctrines 'according to godliness;' which though they may be abused by men of corrupt minds, have in themselves, when rightly understood, a direct and powerful tendency to enforce universal obedience to the commands of God, and to promote the peace and welfare of civil society. I am likewise to warn all who hear me of the sin and danger of rejecting the great salvation revealed by the gospel: these will be the subjects of my ministry, and if what I shall offer on

these heads be agreeable, not only to the articles, which I have subscribed, but to the scriptures which we all profess to believe, it must, of course, be admitted that I shall '*speaking the truth.*'

'But the cause of truth itself may be discredited by improper management; and therefore the scripture, which furnishes us with subject matter for our ministry, and teaches us what we are to say, is equally explicit as to the temper and spirit in which we are to speak. Though I had the knowledge of all mysteries, and the tongue of an angel to declare them, I could hope for little acceptance or usefulness, unless I was to speak "*in love.*" The gospel is a declaration of the astonishing love of God to mankind; it exhibits the perfect exemplar of love, in the character of Him who, when on earth, in the form of a servant, "went about doing good," and exerted the most unbounded benevolence to all around him. The servant of the Lord, of that meek and merciful Saviour, who wept over his avowed enemies, and prayed for his actual murderers, when nailing him to the cross, learns, at his Saviour's feet, to bear a cordial love to all mankind. Man, considered as the creature of God, is the noblest and most important of his works in the visible creation, formed by him who originally made him for himself, with such a vastness of desire, such a capacity for happiness, as nothing less than an infinite good can satisfy; formed to exist in an eternal, unchangeable state. And even fallen man, though defiled and perverted, guilty, and, in his present state, obnoxious to eternal misery, is yet capable of being restored to the favour of God, and, when renewed in his image, of serving him here, and

being happy with him for ever. Whoever, therefore, has tasted of the love of Christ, and has known, by his own experience, the need and the worth of redemption, is enabled, yea, he is constrained to love his fellow-creatures. He loves them at first sight; and, if the providence of God commits a dispensation of the Gospel, and a care of souls to him, he will feel the warmest emotions of friendship and tenderness, while he beseeches them by the tender mercies of God, and even while he warns them by his terrors. Surely I durst not address you from this place, if I could not with equal sincerity, at least, if not with equal warmth, adopt the Apostle's words, and say, *Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to impart unto you not the gospel of God only, but our own souls also, (were it possible) because ye were dear unto us.*

And now (observes Mr. Cecil)—a new and very distinct scene of action and usefulness was set before him. Placed in the centre of London, in an opulent neighbourhood, with connections daily increasing, he had now a course of service to pursue, in several respects different from his former at Olney. Being, however, well acquainted with the word of God and the heart of man, he proposed to himself no new weapons of warfare, for pulling down the strong holds of sin and Satan around him. He perceived, indeed, most of his parishioners too intent upon their wealth and merchandise, to pay much regard to their new minister: but, since they would not come to him, he was determined to go, so far as he could, to them: and therefore, soon after his institution, he sent a printed address to his parishioners; many of whom objected

to the length of his sermons, or the doctrine conveyed in them, or the manner of the preacher. In this Address he tells them—

‘ I acknowledge with thankfulness to God and to you, that in the occasional intercourse I have had among you, I have never received the least personal incivility or unkindness from any one. Though I cannot but know and lament, that the subject-matter of my preaching is to many of you not pleasing; though several steps I have thought it my duty to take, must appear to some of you unnecessary and troublesome innovations, I have met with no direct or studied marks of opposition or ill-will. Your conduct has, in this respect, been worthy of the politeness and humanity which distinguish you on other occasions.

‘ The only cause of complaint, or rather of grief, which you have given me, is, that so many of those to whom I earnestly desire to be useful, refuse me the pleasure of seeing them at church on the Lord’s day. My concern does not arise from the want of hearers. If either a numerous auditory, or the respectable characters of many of the individuals who compose it, could satisfy me, I might be satisfied. But I must grieve, while I see so few of my own parishioners among them. Let me entreat your favourable attention, while I respectfully and earnestly expostulate with you on this head.’

Mr. N. then proceeds to discuss all the probable causes of this dissatisfaction, and concludes an animated and argumentative appeal, in the following terms:—

‘ I can have no interest to forward by this address, except that interest which I feel in your welfare. I



have no favour to solicit from you, but that you would attend to the things which pertain to your eternal happiness. I can truly say, "I seek not yours, but you." Though I am not indifferent to your good opinion, so far as respects my integrity and moral character, yet it is a small thing with me to be judged of man's judgment; nor would your united approbation content me, except I could hope it was founded on your cordial acceptance of the gospel which I preach. I have taken this method, as it seemed the only one in my power, of acquainting some of you with my sentiments, which yet it highly concerns you to know; not because they are *mine*, but (I speak it with confidence) because they are *true*, and of the utmost consequence. However amiable and benevolent in your private characters, except you are "born again—born from above," delivered from the love and spirit of the world, and made partakers of the love and spirit of the Lord Jesus, you cannot be accepted of him, in the great approaching day of his appearance. My heart longs for your salvation; but whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, I must take your conscience to witness, that I have been faithful to you.'

Mr. Newton often spoke with great feeling on the circumstances of his present important station. 'That one,' said he, 'of the most ignorant, the most miserable, and the most abandoned of slaves, should be plucked from his forlorn state of exile on the coast of Africa, and at length be appointed minister of the parish of the first magistrate of the first city in the world;—that he should there, not only testify of such grace, but stand up as a singular instance and monument of it;—that he should be enabled to record

it in his *history, preaching, and writings*, to the world at large—is a fact I can contemplate with admiration, but never sufficiently estimate.’ This reflection, indeed, was so present to his mind, on all occasions and in all places, that he seldom passed a single day any where, but he was found referring to the strange event in one way or other.

Soon after his settlement in the metropolis, he thus writes to a friend in Scotland:—

‘ Yes, my friend, I am now in London—the last place I should have chosen for myself; but the Lord, who led me hither, has reconciled me so far, that I seem now to prefer it to the country. My apparent opportunities for usefulness are doubtless much enlarged, and here, as in a centre, I am likely to see most of my friends, who are fixed in different and distant places, but are, upon one occasion or other, usually led to London in the course of the year.

‘ While I was writing I was called away, and now, after an interval of nine days, I hope to fill and forward the sheet. It is a time of trial at Olney, but I believe there is a ‘need be’ for it. I had provided a minister to succeed me, but the people were infatuated to refuse him, though they knew him, and could not but respect him. Now they wish for him, but it is too late. His name is Scott, a neighbouring curate, whom the Lord was pleased to call and teach himself. I showed Mr. C. the narrative of his conversion, which he lately published under the title of *The Force of Truth*. It is, in my judgment, one of the clearest, most striking, and satisfactory accounts of a supernatural change, that has appeared

in print at any time, and I wish it may have found its way into Scotland. This man, however, the Olney people wished might not be their minister. The Lord gave them their wish. They have another, who is in the list of gospel preachers, but a very different man from Mr. Scott. They are not happy with him, nor can they be so. But they must bear their burden till the death of Mr. Browne, the vicar, who appointed him. Then I hope the Lord will give them a proper shepherd again, and by that time I trust they will be prepared to receive and value such a one. They behaved, in the main, affectionately to me; and I loved them so, that it was in my heart, and in my prayers, to live and die with them. But our privileges were great, and the enjoyment of them for a long course of years without interruption, made them seem to too many as a matter of course. Weeds sprang up—offences appeared. I hope it was in mercy to them, as well as in mercy to me, that the Lord removed me. They now feel the difference. Such, alas! is the deplorable evil of the human heart, that we are prone to suifeit upon our privileges, and can seldom long enjoy our own wishes without hazard. This makes changes necessary, and under the management of our wise and great Shepherd, crosses prove comforts, losses gains, apparent hindrances real helps, and the dark, dark cloud of disappointment brings us showers of blessings.

‘I am wonderfully at peace in my new settlement, and I hope not unuseful. My lecture on the Lord’s day evening is much crowded. My dispensation likewise seems to be peace. My congregation is made up from various and discordant parties, who in the midst of differences can agree in one point, to

hear patiently a man who is of no party. I say little to my hearers of the things wherein they differ, but aim to lead them all to a growing and more experimental knowledge of the Son of God, and a life of faith in him.

‘ My thoughts often make excursions north of Tweed, where the Lord has given me hearts and friends whom I probably shall never see in the flesh. But there is a day coming, ‘when all the chosen race shall meet before the throne.’ *O præclarum diem!* indeed. May the prospect of it animate our pursuits, and spiritualize our aims. Yet, why do I speak of seeing each other? We shall then see Jesus! See him as he is: Be like him, and be with him for ever. *O præclarum diem!* we may say again. Who can state the disproportion between the light and momentary sufferings of the present life, and the exceeding weight and eternal duration of the glory which shall then be revealed!’

Shortly after, he again addresses the same correspondent, and his description of the state of religion, at that period, especially in the metropolis, cannot be otherwise than interesting to the reader.

‘ The people at Olney have had time and cause to repent their hasty refusal of Mr. Scott. But I hope all will work together for good. The person they have had since my removal is going, and Mr. Scott is to succeed him. This is a revolution in their favour which I could not hope for; but the Lord works wonderfully. Lord Dartmouth is the patron of Olney, so that there is a fair probability of a gospel minister having the living after Mr. Brown’s decease.

‘ I thank you for your prayers and good wishes

respecting my new charge. They are in some measure answered. The Lord is very gracious. I am favoured with liberty and acceptance;—I trust with a degree of success. I meet with no violent opposition, and though my immediate parishioners do not attend in such numbers as I could wish, the deficiency is made up from other quarters, and I have no cause to complain of a want of hearers. The bulk of them are professors. My congregation on Wednesdays, and on the Lord's-day evenings, is made up of almost all denominations. I now come to take notice of your queries:—

‘1. Though we cannot fence the Lord's table by ecclesiastical authority, we can, and with some good effect, from the pulpit. Neither is it possible to know all our communicants personally, but I believe that few come whom I would wish to keep away.

‘2. As to the state of religion in this city. There are in the establishment (to begin with that) but two gospel ministers who have churches of their own—Mr. Romaine and myself. I believe you need not my information concerning his abilities and success. He is an eminent preacher, and has crowded auditories. But we have about ten clergymen, who, either as morning preachers or lecturers, preach either on the Lord's day, or at different times of the week, in perhaps fifteen or sixteen churches. The tabernacle and Tottenham Court chapel are very large; they are in the hands of Mr. Whitfield's trustees, and the gospel is dispensed in them to many thousands of people, by a diversity of ministers. clergy, dissenters, or lay-preachers, who are, in general, lively, faithful, and acceptable men. There is likewise the Lock, and another chapel, in West-

minster; the former served chiefly by Mr. De Coetlogon, the latter by Mr. Peckwell—both well attended: as is likewise Lady Huntingdon's chapel, which will hold about two thousand, and is supplied by able ministers. There is also another, not so large, in the same connexion. Mr. Wesley has one large chapel, and several smaller; and though they are Arminians, as we say, there are many excellent Christians, and some good preachers, among them. There are likewise several preachers whom I may call Independent Methodists, of the Methodist stock, and something in the dissenting form, but who stand singly, not being connected with any of the dissenting boards. I should suppose that the churches, chapels, &c. which are open on the Lord's day, for those whom the world calls Methodists, as distinct from Dissenters, will contain thirty thousand people, and in general they are all crowded.

‘ Now for the dissenters: The Presbyterians, excepting a few, which are called the Scotch churches, such as Dr. Trotter's, have deviated widely from the way of their forefathers. Among their ministers are men of learning and abilities, but hardly any who preach the doctrines of the cross. Their auditories are rather polite and elegant than numerous; and their profession of religion not very strict. Experience and observation prove, that no doctrine but Jesus Christ and him crucified, will turn the stream of the heart or withstand the stream of the world. The Baptists are divided into General and Particular; the latter and sounder is, I believe, the larger part. They are a respectable people; have many good ministers; and are tenacious of the truth. They are, I think, over-zealous about the point of baptism, and

their numbers are kept up and increased, more by the proselytes they gain from among other denominations than by conversions under their own preachers. The Independents, for the most part, retain a form of sound words, though some appear verging to a declension in doctrine. The life and glory, I apprehend, is abated among them as a body. There are ministers among them, very sound, judicious, and able preachers, who are but poorly attended; and conformity to the evil world seems growing among those who are non-conformists in some respects. We have further, in London and in some other places, settlements of the *Unitas Fratrum*, the Brethren, or, as they are more vulgarly called, the Moravians. These are a people little known in England; popular prejudice is strongly against them, and mine was very strong once. There are some singularities in their constitution which I do not admire; but some of my most endeared connexions are with persons of this name, and I do not know more excellent, spiritual, evangelical people in the land. Thus I have given you my thoughts of the Lord's floor in this city. In the great abounding of profession which prevails, there are doubtless too many who bear no nearer relation to his true church than the chaff does to the wheat; but I trust the number of solid exemplary believers is very considerable, and I hope the Lord's work is growing and spreading both in city and country. Every year adds to the number of evangelical clergymen, and the Lord still maintains a succession of promising young men in both the universities, some of whom are ordained every season; yet the number of serious students is still kept up by others, whose hearts he inclines to devote

themselves to the service of the sanctuary. This is almost the only encouraging sign we have in this dark and awful day; and it does encourage me to hope, that sinful as we are, the Lord will not give us up to the will of our enemies, because he has a remnant and a work amongst us.'

When Mr. Newton came to St. Mary's, he resided for some time in Charles' Square, Hoxton. Afterwards he removed to Coleman-street Buildings, where he continued till his death. Being of the most friendly and communicative disposition, his house was open to Christians of all ranks and denominations. Here, like a father among his children, he used to entertain, encourage, and instruct his friends; especially younger ministers, or candidates for the ministry. Here also the poor, the afflicted, and the tempted found an asylum and a sympathy, which they could scarcely find, in an equal degree, any where besides.

His timely hints were often given with much point and profitable address, to the numerous acquaintances which surrounded him in this public station. Some time after Mr. N. had published his 'Omicron,' and described the three stages of growth in religion, from the *blade*, the *ear*, and the *full corn* in the ear, distinguishing them by the letters A. B. and C, a conceited young minister wrote to Mr. N. telling him that he read his own character accurately drawn in that of C. Mr. N. wrote in reply, that, in drawing the character of C., or full maturity, he had forgotten to add, till now, one prominent feature of C.'s character, namely, that *C. never knew his own face.*

'It grieves me,' said Mr. N. 'to see so few of my wealthy parishioners come to church. I always con-



sider the rich as under greater obligations to the preaching of the gospel than the poor. For, at church, the rich *must* bear the whole truth as well as others. *There* they have no mode of escape. But let them once get home, you will be troubled to get at them; and, when you are admitted, you are so fettered with *punctilio*—so interrupted and damped with the frivolous conversation of their friends, that, as Archbishop Leighton says, ‘It is well if your visit does not prove a blank or a blot.’

Mr. N. used to make use of every occurrence which he could with propriety bring into the pulpit. One night he found a bill put up at St. Mary Woolnoth’s, upon which he largely commented when he came to preach. The bill was to this effect:—‘A young man, having come to the possession of a very considerable fortune, desires the prayers of the congregation, that he may be preserved from the snares to which it exposes him.—‘Now if the man,’ said Mr. N., ‘had lost a fortune, the world would not have wondered to have seen him put up a bill; but *this* man has been better taught.’

Coming out of his church, on a Wednesday, a lady stopped him on the steps, and said, ‘The ticket, of which I held a quarter, is drawn a prize of ten thousand pounds. I know you will congratulate me upon the occasion.’—‘Madam,’ said he, ‘as for a friend under temptation, I will endeavour to *pray* for you.’

Mr. Newton had a very happy talent of administering admonition and reproof. Hearing that a person in whose welfare he was greatly interested, had met with great success in business, and was deeply immersed in worldly engagements, the first

time he called on him, which was usually once a month, he took him by the hand, and drawing him on one side into the counting-house, told him his apprehensions for his spiritual welfare. His friend, without making any reply, called down his partner in life, who came with her eyes suffused in tears and unable to speak. Enquiring the cause, he was told, she had just been sent for to one of her children, who was out at nurse, and was supposed to be in dying circumstances. Claspings her hands immediately in his, he cried, 'God be thanked! he has not forsaken you—I do not wish your babe to suffer, but I am glad to find he gives you this token of his favor.'

Soon after he came to St. Mary's, he remarked, in the course of conversation;—'Some have observed, that I preach shorter sermons on a Sunday morning, and with more caution: but this I do upon principle. I suppose I may have two or three of my bankers present, and some others of my parish, who have hitherto been strangers to my views of truth. I endeavour to imitate the Apostle. *I became*, says he, *all things to all men*: but observe the END; it was in order to *gain some*. The fowler must go cautiously to meet shy birds, but he will not leave his powder and shot behind him. *I have fed you with milk*, says the Apostle: but there are some that are not only for forcing strong meat, but *bones* too, down the throat of the child. We must have patience with a single step in the case of an infant; and there are *one-step* books and sermons, which are good in their place. Christ taught his disciples, *as they were able to bear it*; and it was upon the same principle that the Apostle accommodated himself to prejudice. Now,' continued he, 'what I wish to remark on these

considerations is, that this apostolical principle, steadily pursued, will render a minister *apparently* inconsistent: superficial hearers will think him a trimmer. On the other hand, a minister, destitute of the apostolical principle and intention, and directing his whole force to preserve the appearance of consistency, may thus *seem* to preserve it: but let me tell you, here is only the *form* of faithfulness, without the *spirit*.'

The awful circumstances of the times were not disregarded by him, but he deeply regretted the error of some of his brethren; who appeared to pay too much attention to politics, 'For my part,' said he, 'I have no temptation to turn politician, and much less to inflame a party, in these times. When a ship is leaky, and a mutinous spirit divides the company on board, a wise man would say, 'My good friends, while we are debating, the water is gaining on us. We had better leave the debate and go to the pumps.'—'I endeavour,' continued he, 'to turn my people's eyes from instruments to God. I am continually attempting to show them, how far they are from knowing either the matter of *fact* or the matter of *right*. I inculcate our great privileges in this country, and advise a discontented man to take a lodging for a little while in Russia or Prussia.'

Though no great variety of anecdote is to be expected in a course so stationary as this part of Mr. N.'s life and ministry,—for sometimes the course of a single day might give the account of a whole year,—yet that *day* was so benevolently spent, that he was found in it not only *rejoicing with those that rejoiced*, but literally *weeping with those that wept*. He ob-

served, one day, when adverting to the perpetual interruptions to which a London clergyman is liable, 'I seem to see in this world two heaps, of human happiness and human misery : now if I can take but the smallest bit from one heap, and add it to the other, I carry a point. If, as I go home, a child has dropped a halfpenny, and if, by giving it another, I can wipe away its tears, I feel I have done something. I should be glad, indeed, to do greater things ; but I will not neglect this. When I hear a knock at my study-door, I hear a message from God. It may be a lesson of instruction ; perhaps a lesson of patience : but, since it is *his* message, it must be interesting.' The portrait which Goldsmith drew from imagination, Mr. N. realized in fact, insomuch, that had Mr. N. sat for his picture to the poet, it could not have been more accurately delineated than by the following lines in his *Deserted Village* :—

' Unskilful he to fawn, or seek for power,  
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour :  
Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,  
More bent to raise the wretched than to rise.  
Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,  
And e'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side ;  
But, in his duty, prompt at every call,  
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all :  
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries,  
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,  
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,  
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way.'

Mr. N. used to spend a month or two, annually, at the house of some friend in the country. He always took an affectionate leave of his congregation before he departed ; and spake of his leaving town as quite uncertain of returning to it, considering the variety of incidents which might prevent that return. Nothing was more remarkable than his constant

habit of regarding the hand of God in every event, however trivial it might appear to others. On every occasion, in the concerns of every hour, in matters public or private, like Enoch, he *walked with God*. Take a single instance of his state of mind in this respect. In walking to his church he would say, '*The way of man is not in himself*', nor can he conceive what belongs to a single step. When I go to St. Mary Woolnoth, it seems a trivial thing whether I turn down Lothbury or go through the Old Jewry; yet the going through one street and not another may produce a result of lasting consequences. A man cut down my hammock in sport: but had he cut it down half an hour later, I had not been here now; as the exchange of crew was then making. A man made a smoke on the sea-shore at the time a ship passed, which was thereby brought to, and afterwards restored me to England.'

In the years 1784 and 1785, Mr. N. preached a course of sermons, on an occasion, of which he gives the following account in his first discourse:—'Conversation, in almost every company, for some time past, has much turned upon the Commemoration of Handel; and particularly on his oratorio of the "Messiah." I mean to lead your meditations to the language of the oratorio; and to consider in their order, (if the Lord, on whom our breath depends, shall be pleased to afford life, ability, and opportunity,) the several sublime and interesting passages of Scripture, which are the basis of that admired composition.' In the year 1786, he published these discourses, in two volumes octavo.

There is a passage so original, at the beginning of his fourth sermon, from Mal. iii. 1—3. *The Lord,*

*whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, &c.,* that we shall transcribe it for the use of such as have not seen these discourses ; at the same time, it will, in a few words, convey Mr. N.'s idea of the usual performance of this oratorio, and of the propriety of attending its performance under present circumstances.

*' Whereunto shall we liken the people of this generation, and to what are they like? I represent to myself a number of persons, of various characters, involved in one common charge of high treason. They are already in a state of confinement, but not yet brought to their trial. The facts, however, are so plain, and the evidence against them so strong and pointed, that there is not the least doubt of their guilt being fully proved, and that nothing but a pardon can preserve them from punishment. In this situation, it should seem their wisdom to avail themselves of every expedient in their power for obtaining mercy. But they are entirely regardless of their danger, and wholly taken up with contriving methods of amusing themselves, that they may pass away the term of their imprisonment with as much cheerfulness as possible. Among other resources, they call in the assistance of music. And, amidst a great variety of subjects in this way, they are particularly pleased with one: they choose to make the solemnities of their impending trial, the character of their Judge, the methods of his procedure, and the awful sentence to which they are exposed, the ground-work of a musical entertainment: and, as if they were quite unconcerned in the event, their attention is chiefly fixed upon the skill of the composer, in adapting the style of his music to the very*

solemn language and subject with which they are trifling. The king, however, out of his great clemency and compassion towards those who have no pity for themselves, prevents them with his goodness: undesired by them, he sends them a gracious message: he assures them that he is unwilling they should suffer: he requires, yea, he entreats them to submit: he points out a way in which their confession and submission shall be certainly accepted; and, in this way, which he condescends to prescribe, he offers them a free and a full pardon. But, instead of taking a single step towards a compliance with his goodness, they set his message likewise to music: and this, together with a description of their present state, and of the fearful doom awaiting them if they continue obstinate, is sung for their diversion; accompanied with the sound of cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of instruments. Surely, if such a case as I have supposed could be found in real life, though I might admire the musical taste of these people, I should commiserate their insensibility !'

Mr. N. experienced a severe stroke while he resided in Charles' Square, in the death of his niece, Miss Eliza Cunningham. He loved her with the affection of a parent, and she was, indeed, truly lovely. He had long had the care of her; and had observed that, with the most amiable natural qualities, she possessed a real piety. After every possible attention from Mr and Mrs. Newton and their friends, they saw her gradually sink into the arms of death: but fully prepared to meet him, as a messenger sent from a yet kinder Father; to whom she departed, October 6th,

1785, in the fifteenth year of her age. On this occasion Mr. N. published some brief memoirs of her character and death; from which we have taken the following narrative. Mr. Newton first explains the circumstances which brought this interesting young person under his care, and then proceeds:—

‘ I soon perceived that the Lord had sent me a treasure indeed. Eliza’s person was agreeable. There was an ease and elegance in her whole address, and a gracefulness in her movements, till long illness and great weakness bowed her down. Her disposition was lively, her genius quick and inventive; and if she had enjoyed health, she probably would have excelled in every thing that required ingenuity. Her understanding, particularly her judgment, and her sense of propriety, were far above her years. There was something in her appearance that usually procured her favour at the first sight. She was honoured by the notice of several persons of distinction, which, though I thankfully attribute in part to their kindness to me, I believe was a good deal owing to something rather uncommon in her. But her principal endearing qualities, which could be only fully known to us who lived with her, were the sweetness of her temper, and a heart formed for the exercise of affection, gratitude, and friendship. Whether, when at school, she might have heard sorrowful tales from children who, having lost their parents, had met with a great difference in point of tenderness when they came under the direction of uncles and aunts, and might think that all uncles and aunts were alike, I know not; but I have since understood from herself, that she did not come to us with any highly-raised expectations of the treatment she was



to meet with. But as she found, (the Lord in mercy having opened our hearts to receive her,) that it was hardly possible for her own parents to have treated her more tenderly,—and that it was from that time the business and the pleasure of our lives to study how to oblige her, and how to alleviate the afflictions which we were unable to remove,—so we likewise found that the seeds of our kindness could hardly be sown in a more promising and fruitful soil. I know not that either her aunt or I ever saw a cloud upon her countenance during the whole time she was with us. It is true, we did not, we could not, unnecessarily cross her; but if we thought it expedient to overrule any proposal she made, she acquiesced with a sweet smile; and we were certain we should never hear of that proposal again. Her delicacy, however, was quicker than our observation; and she would sometimes say, when we could not perceive the least reason for it, ‘I am afraid I answer you peevishly—Indeed I did not intend it: if I did, I ask your pardon—I should be very ungrateful, if I thought any pleasure equal to that of endeavouring to please you.’ It is no wonder that we dearly loved such a child.

‘Wonderful is the frame of the human heart!—the Lord claims and deserves it all; yet there is still room for all the charities of relative life, and scope for their full play—and they are capable of yielding the sincerest pleasures this world can afford, if held in subordination to what is supremely due to him.

‘The marriage relation, when cemented by the Divine blessing, is truly a union of hearts; and the love resulting from it will admit of no competition in the same kind. Children have the next claim.—

And, whether there be one, two, or many, each one seems to be the object of the parent's love. Perhaps my friends who have children may think that I, who never had any, can only talk by guess on this subject. I presume not to dispute the point with them. But when it pleased the Lord to put my dear Betsy under my care, I seemed to acquire a new set of feelings; if not exactly those of a parent, yet, as I conceive, not altogether unlike them; and I long thought it was not possible for me to love any child as I did her. But when Eliza came, she, without being her rival, quickly participated with her in the same affection. I found I had room enough for them both, without prejudice to either. I loved the one very dearly, and the other no less than before;—if it were possible, still more, when I saw she entered into my views, received and behaved to her cousin with great affection, ascribing many little indulgences and attentions that were shewn her to their proper ground,—the consideration of her state of health, and not to any preference that could operate to HER disadvantage; for the Lord was pleased to answer my prayers in this respect so graciously, that I could not perceive that any jealousy or suspicion took place between them, on either side, from first to last.

‘The hectic fever, cough, and sweats which Eliza brought with her from Scotland, were subdued in the course of the summer, and there appeared no reason to apprehend that she would be taken off very suddenly. But still there was a worm preying upon the root of this pretty gourd. She had seldom any severe pain till within the last fortnight of her life, and usually slept well; but when awake, she was always ill. I believe she knew not a single

hour of perfect ease; and they who intimately knew her state could not but wonder to see her so placid, cheerful, and attentive, when in company, as she generally was. Many a time, when the tears have silently stolen down her cheeks, if she saw that her aunt or I observed her, she would wipe them away, come to us with a smile and a kiss, and say, 'Do not be uneasy—I am not very ill—I can bear it—I shall be better presently,' or to that effect.

'Her case was thought beyond the reach of medicine; and, for a time, no-medicine was used. She had air and exercise, as the weather and circumstances would permit. For the rest, she amused herself as well as she could with her guitar and harpsichord, with her needle, and with reading. She had a part likewise, when able, in such visits as we paid or received—and our visits were generally regulated by a regard to what she could bear. Her aunt, especially, seldom went abroad, but at such times and places as we thought agreeable and convenient to her;—for we could perceive that she loved home best, and best of all when we were at home with her.

'In April 1784, we put her under the care of my dear friend, Dr. Benamor. But what can the most efficacious medicines or the best physicians avail to prolong life, when the hour approaches, in which the prayer of the great Intercessor must be accomplished, 'Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, to behold my glory!' This was the proper cause of my dear Eliza's death. The Lord sent this child to me to be brought up for him;—he owned my poor endeavours; and when her education was completed, and she was ripened for

heaven, he took her home to himself. He has richly paid me my wages, in the employment itself, and in the happy issue.

· Dr. Benamor advising a trial of the salt water, we passed the month of August 1784 with her, partly at Mr. Walter Taylor's, at Southampton, and partly at Charles Ety's, Esq. of Priestlands, near Lymington. While she was with these kind and generous friends, she had every accommodation and assistance that could be thought of or wished for. And the bathing was evidently useful, so far as to give some additional strength to her very weak and relaxed frame, which assisted her in going more comfortably through the last winter. We were therefore encouraged and advised to repeat our visit to Southampton this autumn; but the success was not the same. Her feet and legs had already begun to swell; and the evening before she set out, she took cold, which brought on a return of the fever and cough. And though Dr. Allan was successful in removing these symptoms in about a fortnight, and she bathed a few times, she could not persevere. However, the advantage of situation, air, and exercise being much greater than she could have in London, and as we were with friends whom she, as well as we, dearly loved, she continued at Southampton six weeks; but she was unable to proceed to Mr. Ety's, who was very desirous of repeating his former kindness. The Lord strengthened her to perform her journey home without inconvenience. She returned on the 16th of September; and then she entered our door for the last time; for she went out no more, till she was carried out to be put into the hearse.

· Soon after her return from Southampton she be-

came acquainted with acute pain, to which she had till then been much a stranger. Her gentle spirit, which had borne up under a long and languishing illness, was not so capable of supporting agony. It did not occasion any improper temper or language, but it wore her away apace. On the 30th of September she was down stairs for the last time, and then she was brought down and carried up in my arms.

‘It now became very desirable to hear from herself a more explicit account of the hope that was in her; especially as upon some symptoms of an approaching mortification, she appeared to be a little alarmed, and of course not thoroughly reconciled to the thoughts of death. Her aunt waited for the first convenient opportunity of intimating to her the probability that the time of her departure was at hand. The next morning presented one. She found herself remarkably better;—her pains were almost gone, her spirits revived,—the favourable change was visible in her countenance.

‘Her aunt began to break the subject to her, by saying, ‘My dear, were you not extremely ill last night?’ She answered, ‘Indeed I was.’—‘Had you not been relieved, I think you could not have continued long.’—‘I believe I could not.’—‘My dear, I have been very anxiously concerned for your life.’—‘But I hope, my dear aunt, you are not so now.’ She then opened her mind, and spoke freely. I cannot repeat the whole, but the substance was to this effect:—

‘My views of things have been, for some time, very different from what they were when I came to you. I have seen and felt the vanity of childhood and youth. I have long and earnestly sought the Lord

with reference to the change that is now approaching. I have not that full assurance which is so desirable ; but I have a hope, I trust a good hope ; and I believe the Lord will give me whatever he sees necessary for me, before he is pleased to take me hence.' She then said, ' I have prayed to him to fit me for himself,—and then, whether it be sooner or later, it signifies but little.' Here was a comfortable point gained. We were satisfied that she had given up all expectation of living, and could speak of her departure without being distressed.

' It will not be expected that a child at her age should speak systematically. Nor had she learned her religion from a system or form of words, however sound. The Lord himself was her teacher. But from what little she had at different times said to me, I was well satisfied that she had received a true conviction of the nature of sin, and of her own state by nature as a sinner. When she spoke of the Lord, she meant the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd, who gathers such lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom. She believed him to be God and man in one person ; and that hope of which she was not ashamed, was founded on his atonement, grace, and power. As I do not intend to put words into her mouth which she never spoke, I mention this, lest any person should be disappointed at not finding a certain phraseology to which they have been accustomed.

' Her apparent revival was of short duration. In the evening of the same day, she complained of a sore throat, which soon became worse, and by Sunday noon threatened suffocation. When Dr. Benamor, who the day before had almost entertained hopes of her recovery, found her so suddenly and greatly

altered, he could not, at the moment, prevent some signs of concern from appearing in his countenance. She quickly perceived it, and desired he would plainly tell her his sentiments.

‘When he had recovered himself, he said, ‘My dear, you are not so well as when I saw you on Saturday.’ She answered, that she trusted all would be well soon. He replied, that whether she lived or died, it would be well, and to the glory of God. He has since told me that he had much pleasing conversation with her that morning,—some particulars of which he had committed to writing, but that he had lost the paper. From that time she may be said to have been dying, as we expected her departure from one hour to another.

‘On Monday the 3d, she was almost free from any complaint in the throat; but there was a renewed appearance of a mortification in her legs, which was again repelled by the means which Dr. Benamor prescribed.

‘I recollect but little of the incidents of this day: in general she was in great pain, sometimes in agonies, unable to remain many minutes in the same position; but her mind was peaceful. She possessed a spirit of recollection and prayer; and her chief attention to earthly things was confined to the concern she saw in those around her. That she might not increase their painful feelings, she strove to conceal the extent of her sufferings. It pleased the Lord wonderfully to support my dear Mrs. Newton, and she had a tolerable night’s rest, though I did not expect the child would live till morning. On Tuesday the 4th, about nine in the morning, we all thought her dying, and waited near two hours by her

bedside, for her last breath. She was much convulsed, and in great agonies. I said, 'My dear, you are going to heaven; and I hope, by the grace of God, we shall in due time follow you.' She could not speak,—but let us know by a gentle nod of her head and a sweet smile, that she attended to what I said. I repeated to her many passages of scripture and verses of hymns, to each of which she made the same kind of answer. Though silent, her looks were more expressive than words. Towards eleven o'clock, a great quantity of coagulated phlegm, which she had not strength to bring up, made her rattle violently in the throat, which we considered as a sign that death was at hand; and as she seemed unwilling to take anything that was offered to her, we were loth to disturb her in her last moments (as we supposed,) by pressing her. I think she must have died in a quarter of an hour, had not Dr. Benamor just then come into the room.

'He felt her pulse, and observed that she did not appear to be near death, and desired that something might be given her. She was perfectly sensible, though still unable to speak, but expressed her unwillingness to take any thing by her strongest efforts. However she yielded to entreaty; and a tea-spoonful or two of some liquid soon cleared the passage, and she revived. Her pain, however, was extreme, and her disappointment great. I never saw her so near impatience as on this occasion. As soon as she could speak, she cried, 'Oh cruel, cruel, cruel, to recal me, when I was so happy and so near gone! I wish you had not come—I long to go home.' But in a few minutes she grew composed, assented to what the doctor said, of her duty to wait the Lord's



time; and from that hour, though her desires to depart, and to be with her Saviour, were stronger and stronger, she cheerfully took whatever was offered to her, and frequently asked for something of her own accord.

‘How often, were we to have our choice, should we counteract our own prayers! I had entreated the Lord to prolong her life, till she could leave an indisputable testimony behind her for our comfort: yet when I saw her agony, and heard her say, O how cruel to stop me! I was for a moment almost of her mind, and could hardly help wishing that the doctor had delayed his visit a little longer. But if she had died then, we should have been deprived of what we saw and heard the two following days; the remembrance of which is now much more precious to me than silver or gold.

When the doctor came on Wednesday, she entreated him to tell her how long he thought she might live. He said, ‘Are you in earnest, my dear?’ She answered, ‘Indeed I am.’ At that time there were very great appearances that a mortification was actually begun. He therefore told her that he thought it possible she might hold out till eight in the evening, but did not expect she could survive midnight at farthest. On hearing him say so, low as she was, her eyes seemed to sparkle with their former vivacity; and fixing them on him with an air of ineffable satisfaction, she said, ‘Oh, that is good news indeed.’ And she repeated it as such to a person who came soon after into the room, and said with lively emotions of joy, ‘The doctor tells me I shall stay here but a few hours longer.’ In the afternoon she noticed and counted the clock, I believe every time it struck;

and when it struck seven, she said, 'Another hour and then.' But it pleased the Lord to spare her to us another day.

'She suffered much in the course of Wednesday night, but was quite resigned and patient. Our kind servants, who from their love to her and to us, watched her night and day with a solicitude and tenderness which wealth is too poor to purchase, were the only witnesses of the affectionate and grateful manner in which she repeatedly thanked them for their services and attention to her. Though such an acknowledgment was no more than due, yet coming from herself, and at such a time, they highly valued it. She added her earnest prayers that the Lord would reward them.

'I was surprised on Thursday morning to find her not only alive, but in some respects better. The tokens of mortification had again disappeared. This was her last day, and it was a memorable day with us. When Dr. Benamor asked her how she did, she answered, 'Truly happy; and if this be dying, it is a pleasant thing to die.' She said to me about ten o'clock, 'My dear uncle, I would not change conditions with any person upon earth; O how gracious is the Lord to me! O what a change is before me.' She was several times asked if she could wish to live, provided the Lord would restore her to perfect health; her answer was, 'Not for all the world,' and sometimes, 'Not for a thousand worlds.' 'Do not weep for me, my dear aunt,' she said, 'but rather rejoice and praise on my account. I shall now have the advantage of dear Miss B (for whom she had a very tender affection, and who had been long in a languishing state) for I shall go before her.' We asked her if she would choose a text for her own funeral sermon. She readily men-

tioned, “ Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth ”— That,’ said she, ‘ has been my experience ; my afflictions have been many, but not one too many ; nor has the greatest of them been too great ; I praise him for them all.’ But after a pause she said, ‘ Stay, I think there is another text which may do better—Let it be, “ Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord ; ” *that is my experience now.*’ She likewise chose a hymn to be sung after the sermon.

‘ She had something to say, either in a way of admonition or consolation, as she thought most suitable, to every one she saw. To her most constant attendant she said, ‘ Be sure you continue to call on the Lord ; and if you think he does not hear you now, he will at last, as he has heard me.’ She spoke a great deal to an intimate friend, who was with her every day, which I hope she will long remember, as the testimony of her dying Eliza. Among other things, she said, ‘ See how comfortable the Lord can make a dying bed ! Do you think that you shall have such an assurance when you come to die ?’ Being answered, ‘ I hope so, my dear,’ she replied, ‘ But do you earnestly, and with all your heart, pray to the Lord for it ? If you seek him, you shall surely find him.’ She then prayed affectionately and fervently for her friend, afterwards for her cousin, and then for another of our family who was present. Her prayer was not long, but every word was weighty, and her manner was very affecting. The purport was, that they might all be taught and comforted by the Lord. About five in the afternoon, she desired me to pray with her once more. Surely I then prayed from my heart. When I had finished, she said, ‘ Amen !’ I said, ‘ My dear child, have I expressed your mean-

ing?' She answered, ' O yes!' and then added, ' I am ready to say, " Why are his chariot wheels so long in coming?" But I hope he will enable me to wait his hour with patience.' These were the last words I heard her speak.

' Mrs. Newton's heart was much, perhaps too much, attached to this dear child; which is not greatly to be wondered at, considering what sort of a child she was, and how long and how much she had suffered. But the Lord was pleased graciously to support her in this trying season. Indeed, there was much more cause for joy than for grief; yet the pain of separation will be felt. Eliza well knew her feelings, and a concern for her was, I believe, the last anxiety that remained with her. She said to those about her, ' Try to persuade my aunt to leave the room; I think I shall soon go to sleep; I shall not remain with you till the morning.' Her aunt, however, was the last person who heard her speak, and was sitting by her bed, when she departed. A little past six, hearing that a relation who dearly loved her, and was beloved by her, and who had come daily from Westminster to see her, was below stairs, she said, ' Raise me up, that I may speak to him once more.' Her aunt said, ' My dear, you are nearly exhausted, I think you had better not attempt it.' She smiled, and said, ' It is very well, I will not.' She was then within half an hour of her translation to glory, but the love of her dear Lord had so filled her with benevolence, that she was ready to exert herself to her last breath, in hope of saying something that might be useful to others, after she was gone.

' Towards seven o'clock I was walking in the gar-

den, and earnestly engaged in prayer for her, when a servant came to me, and said, 'She is gone!' O Lord, how great is thy power! how great is thy goodness! A few days before, had it been practicable and lawful, what would I not have given to procure her recovery? Yet seldom in my life have I known a more heart-felt joy than when these words, *She is gone*, sounded in my ears. I ran up stairs, and our whole little family was soon around her bed. Though her aunt and another person were sitting with their eyes fixed upon her, she was gone perhaps a few minutes before she was missed. She lay upon her left side, with her cheek gently reclining upon her hand, as if in a sweet sleep; and I thought there was a smile upon her countenance. Never, surely, did death appear in a more beautiful, inviting form! We fell upon our knees, and I returned, I think I may say, my most unfeigned thanks to our God and Saviour, for his abundant goodness to her, crowned in this last instance, by giving her so gentle a dismissal. Yes, I am satisfied—I am comforted. And if one of the many involuntary tears I have shed could have recalled her to life, to health, to an assemblage of all that this world could contribute to her happiness, I would have laboured hard to suppress it. Now my largest desires for her are accomplished. The days of her mourning are ended. She is landed on that peaceful shore, where the storms of trouble never blow. She is for ever out of the reach of sorrow, sin, temptation, and snares. Now she is before the throne; she sees Him whom not having seen, she loved; she drinks of the rivers of pleasure which are at his right hand, and shall thirst no more.

‘ She breathed her spirit into her Redeemer’s hands a little before seven in the evening, on Oct. 6, 1785, aged fourteen years and eight months.’

Writing to a friend, very shortly after his niece’s death, Mr. Newton says—

‘ Our dear Eliza never went out of doors after she came home from you. She had a succession and a variety of pains and maladies, but on the 6th instant, (just three weeks from her leaving your hospitable roof,) the Lord delivered her from them all. This is the dark side of the dispensation; I have not time nor words, to describe the bright side, but I may hereafter attempt to draw up some brief account of her, which, if I do, will surely find its way to S——. Four days we expected her dismissal every hour, and though she suffered much, we could not but be thankful she continued so long. Her peace and confidence in God were abiding; her mouth was filled with words of grace, comforting or exhorting all around her. Often she declared she would not change conditions with any person upon earth, nor be willing to live longer here, even if restored to perfect health, for all that the world, or a thousand such worlds could afford. She smiled upon pain, she smiled upon death; for when she went, which seemed to be in a sort of slumber, she had reclined her cheek gently upon her hand, and there was almost a smile left upon her countenance. I can answer for her, as for myself and Mrs. Newton, that she brought home with her a thankful sense of the great kindness she received at S——, and spoke of you all with much affection and gratitude. Mr. and Mrs. T. know, I trust, how our hearts beat towards them. I am glad of this opportunity of expressing

my particular thanks to you for your very obliging attention to Mrs. N. and the dear child, for which I shall always hold myself your debtor. Could I pray as I ought and wish, I would make you large returns in that way. May the Lord God of your father be your God; may you, together with his name and fortune, inherit his character and spirit, and be no less respected, no less beloved, no less useful than he.

‘My dear sir, when sweet Eliza was dying, I almost wished it were practicable to have set my door open, and invited all who passed by to come in and see what it is to die in the Lord, and to hear what a child under fifteen could say of his goodness, and of the vanity of every thing short of his favour.’

We must now return to the main stream of our narrative.

Among various friendships formed about this period, and the opportunities of forming which constituted, in Mr. Newton's view, one of the chief advantages of a residence in the metropolis, that with Mrs. Hannah More was not the least important. This distinguished lady, who had been for several years a leading star in the first literary circles, was at that time beginning to break the spell of this powerful enchantment, and to forsake a life of celebrity for a life of usefulness. Her own memoirs have shown with sufficient clearness, that in making this choice, the counsels, both public and private, of Mr. Newton and a few other friends, were of the greatest service. The earliest letters that took place between Mrs. More and Mr. Newton have happily been preserved, and the reader cannot fail to be interested by them.

*May 11, 1787.*

‘ MY DEAR MADAM,

‘ A familiar style of address, you may say, upon so short an acquaintance; but may I not use it by anticipation? Thus, at this season of the year, we speak of a field of wheat, because though there may be some Londoners, who, from its green appearance, would pronounce it to be mere grass, we expect that it will produce ears of wheat, before the harvest arrives. So, from yesterday’s specimen, Mrs. Newton and I judge that if you and we were so situated, as that our present slight acquaintance could be cultivated by private interviews, you would soon be very dear to us. And even now, from what I have seen, superadded to what I have read and heard, my heart will not allow me to make a serious apology for taking the liberty to say—My dear Madam.

‘ This waits upon you to thank you for your obliging call—to request your acceptance of the Fast Sermon—and to express my best wishes for your welfare, and to assure you that I am, with great sincerity.

‘ Your affectionate and obliged servant,

‘ JOHN NEWTON.’

*May 18, 1787.*

‘ MY DEAR SIR,

‘ You see I adopt your friendly mode of address; and, I trust, with an equal degree of cordiality. Whenever I know any thing of a person’s character and disposition beforehand, if it be of a meritorious kind, and especially if I have read and liked his



writings, it saves me a great deal of trouble; for it cuts off all the long preliminaries of mere acquaintance, and I at once feel that degree of friendship for them which in other cases one does not arrive at, but after much time and by slow gradations.

‘I should immediately have thanked you for your very acceptable present of books and pamphlets: but that I have been in hope, from day to day, of being able to wait on you with my personal thanks. As every morning has brought its hope, so every day has brought its disappointment; and as I am now on the point of leaving town, I see very little chance of being able to indulge myself in a way I should like so well. I will not therefore any longer incur the censure of my ingratitude, by delaying to thank you for your kind attention to me. Your little book to your dissenting friend, I opened the moment I came home, intending (for I was very busy) only to read a page or two; but I was so pleased with the candour, good sense, and Christian spirit of it, that I never laid it out of my hands while there was a page unread. I regret that your ideal academy cannot be realized. The large volume I leave unbroached for my country retirement, and expect to receive much profit and pleasure from it.

‘How could I write so much without saying a word of Mrs. Newton? Only, I suppose, because one generally saves the best for the last. Pray tell her, with my kind compliments, that I regret exceedingly the inconvenient distance between us, which puts it out of my power to cultivate an intimacy from which I am persuaded I should derive so much pleasure and advantage.

‘ I heartily wish you all the comforts and blessings of this world, and in the next the high reward promised to those who turn many to righteousness.

I am, dear Sir,

With much regard, your obliged and faithful  
humble servant,

H. MORE.’

*May 31, 1787.*

‘ MY DEAR SIR,

‘ Many thanks for your very kind letter, and the affectionate interest you are so good as to take in my welfare. It is worth while to be a little sick, were it only to try the kindness of one’s friends. I have had a good deal of fever, which is now, I thank God, much abated, though my cough remains; but as I am going out of town almost immediately, I trust that the pure air and quiet of the country will be of service. I am sometimes inwardly rejoiced when a slight indisposition furnishes me with a lawful pretence for not keeping a visiting engagement; but this was far from being the case on Friday last, when I had figured to myself that I should derive not only pleasure but profit from the society I should have found there. But you have said so many consolatory things upon the subject, and have put me in the way of drawing so much good out of these little accidental evils, that I hope I shall be the better, not only from this disappointment, but also from many future ones, for some of the hints you have suggested.

‘ I am thoroughly persuaded of the necessity of seeing and acknowledging the hand of providence in the smaller as well as in the greater events of life:

but I want more of the *practical* persuasion of this great truth. Pray for me, my good sir, that I may be enabled to obtain more firmness of mind, a more submissive spirit, and more preparedness, not only for death itself, but for the common evils of life.

‘I shall look forward with pleasure to the hope of seeing you in my little thatched hermitage during the summer, and am, very truly, my dear Sir,

‘Your much obliged and sincere friend,

‘HANNAH MORE.’

A few months after, the correspondence was renewed, and we find these three letters :—

‘MY DEAR MADAM,

‘I longed to hear from you, or to see you; and because my longing proved of such long continuance, I feared you continued ill. Your late kind note gratified my wishes, and relieved my apprehensions: and from the hour I received it, I have been watching for an interval of leisure to thank you for it.

‘Your poem was soon followed by a little book, addressed to the great. In the blank leaf there was written, ‘from the author.’ As to the rest, I was for a time in suspense, but I believe the prevalence of public reports will now authorize me to thank you for it. I wish I had it before me, but when I had read it rather hastily over, one borrowed it, and then another, and it is still travelling about amongst my friends. I congratulate you on the performance, and especially on your choice of a subject. You could easily write what would procure you more general applause. But it is a singular privilege to have a *consecrated* pen, and to be able and willing to

devote our talents to the cause of God and religion. There are no persons whom I more compassionate, or of whom I am more afraid, than some of those whom you so well describe under the character of 'good sort of people.' If I am lawfully called into the company of the profligate, I am too much shocked to be in great danger of being hurt by them. I feel myself in the situation of the traveller, when assaulted by the north wind. The vehemence of the wind makes me wrap my cloak the faster about me. But when I am with 'your good sort of people,' I am like the same traveller when under the powerful beams of the sun; the insinuating warmth puts me insensibly off my guard, and I am in danger of voluntarily dropping the cloak, which could not be forced from me by downright violence. The circle of politeness, elegance, and taste, unless a higher spirit and principle predominate, is to me an enchanted spot, which I seldom enter without fear, and seldom retire from without loss.

'My account of the slave trade has the merit of being true. I am not afraid of being solidly contradicted by any or by all, who are retained by interest to plead on the other side. Some of my friends wish I had said more, but I think I have said enough. They who (admitting that my testimony is worthy of credit,) are not convinced by what I have offered, would hardly be persuaded by a folio filled with particular details of misery and oppression. What may be done just now, I know not, but I think this infamous traffic cannot last long, at least this is my hope. But after the period of investigation, should it still be persevered in, I think it will constitute a national sin, and of a very deep dye. I should tremble for

the consequences; for whatever politicians may think, I assuredly know there is a righteous Judge who governs the earth. He calls upon us to redress the injured, and should we perversely refuse, I cannot doubt but he will plead his cause himself.

‘ You speak of the great distance between the Adelphi and Coleman Street Buildings;—to me they seem almost contiguous. If I knew the convenient season, I would soon convince you that I thought it but a step. However, the penny-post affords a sort of bridge over the gulf between us, and by this medium we may converse whenever we please.

‘ I remain, My dear Madam,

‘ Your obliged and obedient Servant,

‘ JOHN NEWTON.’

‘ *Cowslip Green, 1787.*

· MY DEAR SIR,

‘ I am, really extremely obliged to you for your very agreeable and instructive letter. Whenever I receive a letter or a visit, I always feel pleased and grateful in proportion to the value I set on the time of the visitor or the writer; and when a friend who knows how to work up to advantage all the ends and fragments of his time, is so good as to bestow a little portion of it on me, my heart owns the obligation; and I wish it were understood as a preliminary in all acquaintance, that where no good can be done and no pleasure given, it will be so unprofitable a commerce as to be hardly worth engaging in. I am sure your letter *gave* me pleasure, and I hope it *did* me good; so you see it is doubly included in the treaty.

· Excepting one month that I have passed at Bath on account of health, and occasional visits to my

sisters at Bristol—in this pretty quiet cottage, which I built myself two years ago, I have spent the summer. It is about ten miles from Bristol, on the Exeter road, has a great deal of very picturesque scenery about it, and is the most perfect little hermitage that can be conceived. The care of my garden gives me employment, health, and spirits. I want to know, dear Sir, if it is peculiar to myself to form ideal plans of perfect virtue, and to dream of all manner of imaginary goodness in untried circumstances, while one neglects the immediate duties of one's actual situation? Do I make myself understood? I have always fancied that if I could secure to myself such a quiet retreat as I have now really accomplished, that I should be wonderfully good; that I should have leisure to store my mind with such and such maxims of wisdom; that I should be safe from such and such temptations; that in short my whole summers would be smooth periods of peace and goodness. Now the misfortune is, I have actually found a great deal of the comfort I expected, but without any of the concomitant virtues. I am certainly happier here than in the agitation of the world, but I do not find that I am one bit better; with full *leisure* to rectify my heart and affections, the disposition un- luckily does not come. I have the mortification to find that petty and (as they are called) innocent employments, can detain my heart from heaven as much as tumultuous pleasures. If to the pure all things are pure, the reverse must be also true when I can contrive to make so harmless an employment as the cultivation of flowers stand in the room of a vice, by the great portion of time I give up to it, and by the entire dominion it has over my mind. You will tell

me that if the affections be estranged from their proper object, it signifies not much whether a bunch of roses or a pack of cards effects it. I pass my life in intending to get the better of this, but life is passing away, and the reform never begins. It is a very significant saying, though a very old one, of one of the Puritans, that 'Hell is paved with good intentions.' I sometimes tremble to think how large a square my procrastination alone may furnish to this tessellated pavement.

'I shall come London-ward next month, but shall be only geographically nearer you, as I pass much of the winter at Hampton. I shall gladly seize every opportunity of cultivating your friendship, and must still regret that your house and the Adelphi are so wide of each other.' I heartily commend myself to your prayers, and am, with the most cordial esteem,  
your much obliged and faithful,

H. MORE.

' 1787.

'MY DEAR MADAM,

'It is high time to thank you for your favour of the first of November. Indeed I have been thinking so, for two or three weeks past, and perhaps it is well for you that my engagements will not permit me to write when I please.

'Your hermitage—my imagination went to work at that, and presently built one. I will not say positively as pretty as yours, but very pretty. It stood (indeed, without a foundation) upon a southern declivity, fronting a woodland prospect, with an infant river, that is a brook, running between. Little thought was spent upon the house, but if I

could describe the garden, the sequestered walks, and the beautiful colours with which the soil, the shrubs, and the thickets were painted, I think you would like the spot. But I awoke, and behold it was a dream ! My dear friend William Cowper has hardly a stronger enthusiasm for rural scenery than myself, and my favourite turn was amply indulged during the sixteen years I lived at Olney. The noises which surround me in my present situation, of carriages and carts, and London cries, is a strong contrast to the sound of falling waters, and the notes of thrushes and nightingales. But London, noisy and dirty as it is, is my post ; and if not directly my choice, has a much more powerful recommendation ; it was chosen for me by the wisdom and goodness of Him, whose I trust I am, and whom it is my desire to serve. And therefore I am well satisfied with it ; and if this busy imagination (always upon the wing,) would go to sleep, I would not awaken her to build me hermitages ; I want none.

The prospect of a numerous and attentive congregation, with which I am favoured from the pulpit, exceeds all that the mountains and lakes of Westmoreland can afford ; and *their* singing, when their eyes tell me their voices come from the heart, is more melodious in my ear, than the sweetest music of the woods. But were I not a servant who has neither right nor reason to wish for himself, yet has the noblest wish he is capable of forming, gratified,—I say, were it not for my public services, and I were compelled to choose for myself, I would wish to live near your hermitage, that I might sometimes have the pleasure of conversing with you, and admiring your flowers and garden ; provided I could like-



wise at proper seasons, hear from others that joyful sound, which is now the business, the happiness, and the honour of my life to proclaim, myself. What you are pleased to say, my dear Madam, of the state of your mind, I understand perfectly well; I praise God on your behalf, and I hope I shall earnestly pray for you. I have stood upon that ground myself. I see what you yet want, to set you quite at ease, and though I cannot give it you, I trust that He who has already taught you what to desire, will in his own best time do every thing for you and in you, which is necessary to make you as happy as is compatible with the present state of infirmity and warfare; but he must be waited *on*, and waited *for*, to do this; and for our encouragement it is written, as in golden letters, over the gate of his mercy, "Ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." We are apt to wonder that when what we accounted hindrances are removed, and the things which we conceived would be great advantages, are put within our power, still there is a secret something in the way which proves itself to be independent of all external changes, because it is not affected by them. The disorder we complain of is *internal*, and in allusion to our Lord's words upon another occasion, I may say, it is not that which surrounds us; it is not any thing in our outward situation, (provided it be not actually unlawful,) that can prevent or even retard our advances in religion; we are defiled and impeded by that which is within. So far as our hearts are right, all places and circumstances, which his wise and good providence allots us, are nearly equal; such hindrances will prove helps; such losses, gains,

—and crosses will ripen into comforts ; but till we are so far apprized of the nature of our disease, as to put ourselves into the hands of the great and only physician, we shall find, like the woman in Luke viii. 43, that every other effort for relief will leave us as it found us.

‘ Our first thought when we begin to be displeased with ourselves, and sensible that we have been wrong, is to attempt to reform ; to be sorry for what is amiss, and to endeavour to amend. It seems reasonable to ask, what can we do more ? but while we think we can do so much as this, we do not fully understand the design of the gospel. This gracious message from the God who knows our frame, speaks home to our case. It treats us as sinners—as those who have already broken the original law of our nature, in departing from God our creator, supreme lawgiver, and benefactor, and in having lived to ourselves instead of devoting all our time, talents, and influence to his glory. As sinners, the first things we need are pardon, reconciliation, and a principle of life and conduct entirely new. Till then we can have no more success or comfort from our endeavours, than a man who should attempt to walk while his ankle was dislocated ; the bone must be reduced before he can take a single step with safety, or attempt it without increasing his pain. For these purposes we are directed to Jesus Christ, as the wounded Israelites were, to look at the brazen serpent, John iii. 14, 15. When we understand what the scripture teaches of the person, love, and offices of Christ, the necessity and final causes of his humiliation unto death, and feel our own need of such a Saviour ; we then know him to be the light,

the sun of the world and of the soul ; the source of all spiritual light, life, comfort, and influence ;—having access by God to him, and receiving out of his fulness grace for grace.

‘ Our perceptions of these things are for a time faint and indistinct, like the peep of dawn ; but the dawning light, though faint, is the sure harbinger of approaching day, Prov. iv. 18. The full-grown oak, that overtops the wood, spreads its branches wide, and has struck its roots to a proportionable depth and extent into the soil, springs from a little acorn : its daily growth, had it been daily watched from its appearance above ground, would have been imperceptible, yet it was always upon the increase ; it has known a variety of seasons, it has sustained many a storm, but in time it attained to maturity, and now is likely to stand for ages. The beginnings of spiritual life are small likewise in the true Christian ; *he* likewise passes through a succession of various dispensations ; but he advances, though silently and slowly, yet surely, and will stand for ever.

‘ At the same time it must be admitted, that the Christian life is a warfare. Much within us and much without us must be resisted. In such a world as this, and with such a nature as *our*’s, there will be a call for habitual self-denial. We must learn to cease from depending upon our own supposed wisdom, power, and goodness, and from self-complacence and self-seeking—that we may rely upon Him whose wisdom and power are infinite.

Commending you to His care and blessing,

‘ I remain, my dear Madam, with great sincerity,

‘ Your affectionate and obliged servant,

‘ JOHN NEWTON.’

Returning to the narrative, we shall find it expedient to adopt Mr. Cecil's account of the next important incident in Mr. Newton's life. Mr. C. says:—

‘ But *clouds return after the rain*: a greater loss than that of his niece was to follow. Enough has been already said to show the more than ordinary affection Mr. N. felt for her who had been so long his idol, as he used to call her; but I may add one more instance, out of many that might easily be collected.

Being with him at the house of a lady at Blackheath, we stood at a window which had a prospect of Shooter's Hill. ‘ Ah,’ said Mr. N. ‘ I remember the many journeys I took from London, to ascend the top of that hill, in order to look towards the part in which Mrs. N. then lived: not that I could see the spot itself, after travelling several miles, for she lived far beyond what I could see, when on the hill; but it gratified me even to look *towards* the spot: and this I did always once, and sometimes twice a-week. ‘ Why,’ said I, this is more like one of the vagaries of romance than of real life.’ ‘ True,’ replied he: ‘ but real life has extravagancies that would not be admitted to appear in a well-written romance;—they would be said to be *out of nature*.’

In such a continued habit of excessive attachment, it is evident how keenly Mr. N. must have felt, while he observed the progress of a threatening induration in her breast. This tumour seemed to have arisen from a blow she received before she left Liverpool. The pain it occasioned at the time soon wore off, but a small lump remained in the part affected. In October, 1788, on the tumour's increasing, she applied to an eminent surgeon, who told her it was a cancer, and now too large for extraction, and that he could

only recommend quiet. As the spring of 1789 advanced, her malady increased: and, though she was able to bear a journey to Southampton, from which she returned, in other respects, tolerably well, she grew gradually worse with the cancer, till she expired December 15, 1790.'

We cannot, however, deprive the reader of the deeply-interesting record of this passage in his life which Mr. Newton has himself left us. No other pen than his own could possibly do justice to his feelings, or to the admirable example of submission which he was then enabled to give. We therefore make no apology for inserting his own narrative with but small abridgment.

'My dear wife had naturally a good constitution, and was favoured with good spirits to the last. But the violent shock she sustained in the year 1754, when I was suddenly attacked by a fit (I know not of what kind) which left me no sign of life for about an hour, but breathing,—made as sudden a change in her habit, and subjected her, from that time, to a variety of chronic complaints. She was several times confined for five or six months to her chamber, and often brought so low, that her recovery was deemed hopeless. I believe she spent ten years out of the forty that she was spared to me, (if all the days of her sufferings were added together) in illness and pain. But she had likewise long intervals of health. The fit I have mentioned (the only one I ever had) was the means the Lord was pleased to appoint, in answer to my prayers, to free me from the irksome sea-faring life in which I was, till then, engaged, and to appoint me a settlement on shore.

‘ Before our removal from Liverpool, she received a blow upon her left breast, which occasioned her some pain and anxiety for a little time, but which soon wore off. A small lump remained in the part affected, but I heard no more of it for many years. I believe that, latterly, she felt more than I was aware of ; but her tenderness for me made her conceal it as long as possible. I have often since wondered at her success, and how I could be kept so long ignorant of it.

‘ In the month of October, 1788, she applied, unknown to me, to a friend of mine, an eminent surgeon. Her design was, if he approved it, to submit to an operation, and so to adjust time and circumstances with him, that it might be performed in my absence, and before I could know of it. But the surgeon told her that the malady was too far advanced, and the tumor (the size of which he compared to the half of a melon) was too large, to warrant the hope of being extracted, without the most imminent danger of her life ; and that he durst not attempt it. He could give her but little advice, except to keep herself as quiet, and her mind as easy as possible ; and little more encouragement, than by saying, that the pains to which she was exposed were generally rendered tolerable by the use of laudanum, to which, however, she had a dislike little short of an antipathy.

‘ I cannot easily describe the composure and resignation with which she gave me this recital, the next day after her interview with the surgeon ; nor of the sensations of my mind while I heard it. My conscience told me that I had well deserved to be wounded where I was most sensible ; and that it was my duty to submit in silence to the will of the

Lord. But I strongly felt, that unless he was pleased to give me this submission, I was more likely to toss like a wild bull in a net, in defiance of my better judgment.

‘Soon after, the Lord was pleased to visit our dear adopted daughter with a dreadful fever, which, at first, greatly affected her nerves, and afterwards became putrid. She was brought very near to the grave indeed—for we, once or twice, thought her actually dead. But he, who in the midst of judgment remembers mercy, restored her, and still preserves her to be the chief temporal comfort of my old age, and to afford me the greatest alleviation of the loss I was soon to experience, that the case could admit.

‘The attention and anxiety, occasioned by this heavy dispensation, which lasted during the whole of a very severe winter, were by no means suited to promote that tranquillity of mind, which my good friend wished my dear wife would endeavour to preserve. She was often much fatigued, and often much alarmed. Next to each other, this dear child had the nearest place, both in her heart and mine. The effects were soon apparent: as the spring advanced, her malady rapidly increased; her pains were almost incessant, and often intense, and she could seldom lie one hour in her bed, in the same position. Oh! my heart, what didst thou then suffer?

‘But in April, the God who heareth prayer, mercifully afforded relief; and gave such a blessing to the means employed; that her pains ceased. And though I believe, she never had an hour of perfect ease, she felt little of the distressing pains, incident to her malady, from that time, to the end of her life, (which

was about twenty months) excepting at three or four short intervals, which, taken together, hardly amounted to two hours: and these returns of anguish, I thought, were permitted, to show me how much I was indebted to the goodness of God, for exempting her feelings, and my sympathy, from what would have been terrible indeed!

‘ In the close of the summer, she was able to go to Southampton, and returned tolerably well.

‘ She was twice at church, in the first week after she came home. She then went no more abroad, except in a coach, for a little air and exercise; but she was cheerful, tolerably easy, slept as well as most people who are in perfect health, and could receive and converse with her kind friends who visited her.

‘ It was not long after, that she began to have a distaste for food, which continued, and increased; so that, perhaps, her death was, at last, rather owing to weakness, from want of nourishment, than to her primary disorder. Her dislike was first to butcher’s meat, of which she could bear neither the sight nor the smell. Poultry and fish, in their turns, became equally distasteful. She retained some relish for small birds, a while after she had given up the rest; but it was at a season when they were difficult to be obtained. I hope I shall always feel my obligations to the kind friends, who spared no pains to procure some for her, when they were not to be had in the markets. At that time I set more value upon a dozen of larks than upon the finest ox in Smithfield. But her appetite failed for these also, when they became more plentiful.

‘ Under this trying discipline, I learnt, more sensi-



bly than ever, to pity those, whose sufferings, of a similar kind, are aggravated by poverty. Our distress was not small; yet we had every thing within reach, that could, in any degree, conduce to her refreshment, or relief; and we had faithful and affectionate servants, who were always willingly engaged to the utmost of their power, yea, as the apostle speaks, beyond their power, in attending, and assisting her, by night and by day. What must be the feelings of those, who, when afflicted with grievous diseases, pine away, unpitied, unnoticed, without help, and, in a great measure, destitute of common necessaries? This reflection, among others, contributed to quiet my mind, and to convince me, that I had still much more cause for thankfulness, than for complaint.

For about a twelvemonth of her confinement, her spirits were good, her patience was exemplary, and there was a cheerfulness in her looks and her language that was wonderful. Often the liveliness of her remarks has forced a smile from us, when the tears were in our eyes. Whatever little contrivances we formed for her amusement, in the course of the day, she would attend to nothing, till she had finished her stated reading of the scripture; in which she employed much time, and great attention. I have her bible by me, (which I would not part with for half the manuscripts in the Vatican) in which almost every principal text, from the beginning to the end of the book, is marked in the margin, with a pencil, by her own dear hand. The good word of God was her medicine, and her food, while she was able to read it. She read Dr. Watts's psalms and hymns, and the Olney hymns, in the same manner. There are few of them, in which one, two, or more verses,

are not thus marked ; and in many, which I suppose she read more frequently, every verse is marked.

‘ But in October, the enemy was permitted for a while to take advantage of her bodily weakness, and to disturb the peace and serenity of her mind. Her thoughts became clouded and confused ; and she gradually lost, not only the comfortable evidence of her own interest in the precious truths of the bible, but she lost all hold of the truth itself. She doubted the truth of the bible, or whether truth existed. And, together with this, she expressed an extreme reluctance to death ; and could not easily bear the most distant hint of her approaching end, though we were expecting it daily and hourly. This was the *acme*, the high water-mark of my trial ; this was hard to bear indeed !

‘ My readers, perhaps, will scarcely believe, that I derived some consolation, during this gloomy period, from perceiving, that her attachment to me was very sensibly abated. She spoke to me with an indifference, of which, a little before, she was incapable. If, when the Lord’s presence was withdrawn, and she could derive no comfort from his word, she had found some relief from my being with her, or from hearing me speak ; I should have been more grieved. Her affection to me, confirmed by so many proofs, in the course of forty years, was not to be impeached by this temporary suspension of its exercise. I judged the same of the frame of her mind as to her spiritual concerns : I ascribed them both to the same causes, her bodily weakness and the power of temptation. She was relieved, in both respects, after about a fortnight spent in conflict and dismay. The Lord restored peace to her

soul, and then her former tenderness to me immediately revived. Then, likewise, she could calmly speak of her approaching dissolution. She mentioned some particulars concerning her funeral, and our domestic concerns, with great composure. But her mind was not so fully restored to its former tone, as to give her freedom to enlarge upon her hopes and views, as I had wished, till near her dissolution; and then she was too low to speak at all.

‘ One addition to our trial yet remained. It had been her custom, when she went from the sofa to her bed, to exert herself, for my encouragement, to shew me how well she could walk. But it pleased the Lord, that, by some alteration, which affected her spine, she was disabled from moving herself; and other circumstances rendered it extremely difficult to move her. It has taken five of us near two hours, to remove her from one side of the bed to the other, and at times, even this was impracticable: so that she has lain more than a week, exactly in the same spot, without the possibility of changing her position. All this was necessary on my account. The rod had a voice; and it was the voice of the Lord. I understood the meaning no less plainly, than if he had spoken audibly from heaven, and said, “ Now contemplate your idol. Now see what *she* is, whom you once presumed to prefer to *Me!*” Even this bitter cup was sweetened, by the patience, and resignation, which he gave her. When I have said, You suffer greatly; her answer usually was, “ I suffer, indeed, but not greatly.” And she often expressed her thankfulness, that though her body was immoveable, she was still permitted the use of her hands.

‘ One of the last sensible concerns she felt, respecting *this* world, was, when my honoured friend, patron, and benefactor, the late John Thornton, Esq. of Clapham, was removed to a *better*. She revered and regarded him, I believe, more than she did any person upon earth : and she had reason. Few had nearer access, to know, and admire his character ; and perhaps none were under greater, if equal, obligations to him, than we. She knew of his illness, but was always afraid to enquire after the event ; nor should I have ventured to inform her, but that the occasion requiring me to leave her for four or five hours, when I hardly expected to find her alive at my return, I was constrained to give her the reason of my absence. She eagerly replied, “ Go by all means ; I would not have you stay with me upon any consideration.” I put the funeral ring I was favoured with, into her hand ; she put it first to her lips, and then to her eyes, bedewing it with her tears. I trust they soon met again. But she survived him more than a month.

‘ Her head now became so affected, that I could do little more than sit and look at her. Our intercourse by words was nearly broken off. She could not easily bear the sound of the gentlest foot upon the carpet, nor of the softest voice. On Sunday, the 12th December, when I was preparing for church in the morning, she sent for me, and we took a final farewell, as to this world. She faintly uttered an endearing appellation, which was familiar to her, and gave me her hand, which I held, while I prayed by her bed-side. We exchanged a few tears ; but I was almost as unable to speak, as she was. But I returned soon after, and said, “ If your mind, as I

trust, is in a state of peace, it will be a comfort to me, if you can signify it by holding up your hand." She held it up, and waved it to and fro several times.

'That evening, her speech, her sight, and, I believe, her hearing, wholly failed. She continued perfectly composed, without taking notice of anything, or discovering any sign of pain, or uneasiness, till Wednesday evening, towards seven o'clock. She then began to breathe very hard: her breathing might be called groaning, for it was heard in every part of the house; but I believe it was entirely owing to the difficulty of expiration, for she lay quite still, with a placid countenance, as if in a gentle slumber. There was no start, or struggle, nor a feature ruffled. I took my post by her bed-side, and watched her for nearly three hours, with a candle in my hand, till I saw her breathe her last, on the 15th of December, 1790, a little before ten in the evening.

'When I was sure she was gone, I took off her ring, according to her repeated injunction, and put it upon my own finger. I then kneeled down, with the servants who were in the room, and returned the Lord my unfeigned thanks for her deliverance, and her peaceful dismissal.

'How wonderful must be the moment after death! What a transition did she then experience! She was instantly freed from sin, and all its attendant sorrows, and I trust, instantly admitted to join the heavenly choir. That moment was remarkable to me likewise. It removed from me the chief object, which made another day or hour of life, as to my own personal concern, in the least desirable. At the same time, it set me free from a weight of painful feelings and

anxieties, under which nothing short of a divine power could have so long supported me.

‘ I believe it was about two or three months before her death, when I was walking up and down the room, offering disjointed prayers, from a heart torn with distress, that a thought suddenly struck me, with unusual force, to this effect: The promises of God must be true; surely the Lord will help me, *if I am willing to be helped!* It occurred to me, that we are often led, from a vain complacency in what we call our sensibility, to indulge that unprofitable grief, which both our duty, and our peace, require us to resist to the utmost of our power. I instantly said aloud, Lord, I am helpless indeed, in myself, but I hope I am willing, without reserve, that thou shouldest help me!

‘ It had been much upon my mind, from the beginning of this trial, that I was a minister, and that the eyes of many were upon me; that my turn of preaching had very much led me to endeavour to comfort the afflicted, by representing the gospel as a catholic, affording an effectual remedy for every evil, a full compensation for every want or loss, to those who truly receive it. So that though a believer may be afflicted, he cannot be properly unhappy; unless he gives way to self-will, and unbelief. I had often told my hearers that a state of trial, if rightly improved, was, to the Christian, a post of honour, affording the fairest opportunity of exemplifying the power of divine grace, to the praise and glory of the giver. It had been, therefore, my frequent, daily prayer, that I might not by impatience, or despondency, be deprived of the advantage my situation afforded me, of confirming, by my own practice, the

doctrine which I had preached to others; and that I might not give them occasion to apply to me the words of Eliphaz to Job, chap. iv. 4, 5, "Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees; but now it is come unto thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled!" And I had not prayed in vain. But from the time that I so remarkably felt myself *willing to be helped*, I might truly say to the praise of the Lord, My heart trusted in Him, and I was helped indeed. Through the whole of my painful trial, I attended all my stated and occasional services as usual; and a stranger would scarcely have discovered, either by my words or looks, that I was in trouble. Many of our intimate friends were apprehensive that this long affliction, and especially the closing event, would have overwhelmed me; but it was far otherwise. It did not prevent me from preaching a single sermon, and I preached on the day of her death.

'After she was gone, my willingness to be helped, and my desire that the Lord's goodness to me might be observed by others, for their encouragement, made me indifferent to some laws of established custom; the breach of which is often more noticed, than the violation of God's commands. I was afraid of sitting at home, and indulging myself by poring over my loss; and therefore I was seen in the street, and visited some of my serious friends, the very next day. I likewise preached three times, while she lay dead in the house. Some of my brethren kindly offered their assistance; but as the Lord was pleased to give me strength, both of body and mind, I thought it my duty to stand up in my place as formerly.

And after she was deposited in the vault, I preached her funeral sermon, with little more sensible emotion, than if it had been for another person. I have reason to hope that many of my hearers were comforted and animated under their afflictions, by what they saw of the Lord's goodness to me, in my time of need. And I acknowledge, that it was well worth standing a while in the fire, for such an opportunity of experiencing, and exhibiting, the power and faithfulness of his promises.

‘I was not supported by lively, sensible consolations, but by being enabled to realize in my mind, some great and leading truths of the word of God. I saw, what indeed I knew before, but never till then so strongly and clearly perceived, that as a sinner, I had no *right*, and as a believer, I could have no *reason*, to complain. I considered her as a loan, which he who lent her to me, had a right to resume whenever He pleased; and that as I had deserved to forfeit her every day, from the first; it became me rather to be thankful that she was spared to me so long, than to resign her with reluctance, when called for. Farther, that his sovereignty was connected with infinite wisdom and goodness; and that consequently, if it were possible for me to alter any part of his plan, I should only spoil it—that such a short-sighted creature as I, so blind to the possible consequences of my own wishes, was not only unworthy, but unable, to choose well for myself; and that it was therefore my great mercy and privilege, that the Lord condescended to choose for me. May such considerations powerfully affect the hearts of my readers under their troubles, and then I shall not regret having submitted to the view of the public,



a detail, which may seem more proper for the subject of a private letter to a friend. They who can feel for me, will, I hope, excuse me. And it is chiefly for their sakes that I have written it.

‘ When my wife died, the world seemed to die with her, (I hope, to revive no more). I see little now, but my ministry and my Christian profession, to make a continuance in life, for a single day, desirable; though I am willing to wait my appointed time. If the world cannot restore *her* to me (not that I have the remotest wish that her return was possible) it can do nothing for me. The Bank of England is too poor to compensate for such a loss as mine. But the Lord, the all-sufficient God, speaks, and it is done. ’ Let those who know him, and trust him, be of good courage. He can give them strength according to their day; he can increase their strength, as their trials are increased, to any assignable degree. And what he *can* do, he has promised he *will* do. The power and faithfulness, on which the successive changes of day and night, and of the seasons of the year, depend, and which uphold the stars in their orbits, is equally engaged to support his people, and to lead them, safely and unhurt, (if their path be so appointed) through floods and flames. ] Though I believe she has never yet been (and probably never will be) out of my waking thoughts for five minutes at a time; though I sleep in the bed, in which she suffered and languished so long; I have not had one uncomfortable day, nor one restless night, since she left me. I have lost a right hand, which I cannot but miss continually, but the Lord enables me to go on cheerfully without it.’

The following verses, written by Mr. N., were sung by his congregation after the funeral sermon :—

THE earth with rich abundance stored,  
To answer all our wants,  
Invites our hearts to praise the Lord  
For what his bounty grants.

Flocks, herds, and corn, and grateful fruit,  
His gracious hand supplies ;  
And while our various tastes they suit,  
Their prospect cheers our eyes.

To these He adds each tender tie  
Of sweet domestic life ;  
Endearing joys the names imply,  
Of parent—husband—wife !

But sin has poisoned all below ;  
Our blessings burdens prove ;  
On every hand we suffer woe,  
But most where most we love.

Nor vintage, harvest, flocks, nor herds.  
Can fill the heart's desire :  
And oft a worm destroys our gourds,  
And all our hopes expire.

Domestic joys, alas, how rare !  
Possessed and known by few !  
And they who know them, find they are  
As frail and transient too.

But you who love the Saviour's voice,  
And rest upon His name,  
Amidst these changes may rejoice,  
For He is still the same.

The Lord Himself will soon appear,  
Whom you unseen adore ;  
Then He will wipe off ev'ry tear,  
And you shall weep no more.

## CHAPTER VII.

*From the death of Mrs. Newton to the close of his own life.*

A. D. 1790 to 1807.

WE have now to attend Mr. Newton through the concluding stage of his life; when, deprived of that companion who had been, for more than forty years, his first earthly treasure—long the object of his idolatry, always of his deepest and most ardent affection—he was left to descend the few remaining steps of the hill-side alone, before he entered upon that dark valley, in which nothing but the *rod* and the *staff* of the Shepherd of Israel can give any support or any comfort.

The last steps, though each succeeding year might be expected to be the closing one,—were yet prolonged through more than sixteen years. Many “sheep,” many “lambs,” were given to Mr. Newton to feed, and he “fed them with a faithful and true heart,” and guided them “prudently with all his power.”

We have already seen the calm and peaceful state of his mind, under a deprivation, in comparison of which any other visitation would have seemed light as air. One or two extracts from letters written shortly afterwards, but just at that trying moment

when, the first pangs and throes of separation being over, the heart begins to turn from the pains of *losing* to the amount of the *loss*,—a few expressions of his feelings at this period, cannot fail to be read with interest.

To Hannah More he writes as follows:—

‘ I have begun to levy prayers and praises on my dear friends, and I was on the point of applying to you for your quota of the contribution, when your letter came.

‘ You will observe that I ask not only for prayers but also for praises on my behalf. I could begin every letter with the words of David, “ Oh magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!” Great has been his goodness! I am a wonder to many and to myself. You, perhaps, knew, Madam, from what you have read of mine, and possibly from what you have seen in me, that my attachment to my dearest, was great, yea excessive, yea idolatrous! It was so when it began. I think no writer of romances ever imagined more than I realized. It was so when I married. She was to me precisely (how can I write it?) in the place of God. In all places and companies, my thoughts were full of her. I did every thing for her sake, and if she was absent, (for I made three long voyages to Africa afterwards,) I could take pleasure in nothing. So narrow were my notions of happiness at this time, that I had no idea I was capable of any thing greater or better than of being always with her. By degrees, he who has the only right to my heart, and who alone can fill it, was pleased to make me sensible of his just claim; and my idol was

brought some steps lower down. Yet still, I fear, there was somewhat of the golden calf in my love, from the moment that joined our hands to the moment of separation. She was certainly my chief temporal blessing, and the providential hinge upon which all the temporal events of my life have turned. Before I was four years old, she was sent into the world to be my companion, and to soften the rugged path of life. The difficulties in the way of our union were so many, so great, so apparently insuperable, that my hope of obtaining her seemed little less chimerical, than if I had expected the crown of Poland. Yet at the proper time it took place. Fond as I was of her, I know that inconstancy and mutability are primary attributes of the *human heart depraved*, if left to itself; but as the providence of God joined our hands, a secret blessing from him cemented our hearts, and we certainly understood Thompson when he says

Enamoured more as more remembrance swells  
With many a proof of recollected love.

Further, though I had deserved to forfeit her every day of my life, yet he spared her to me more than forty years: and lastly, (which is the crowning mercy,) when he recalled the loan,—for strictly speaking, she was not mine but his,—he made me willing to resign her. Through the long course of her very trying illness, he supported me. Though my feelings were often painful, I believe a stranger, who had seen me in company, or heard me from the pulpit, would hardly have suspected what was passing at home. On the evening of the 15th instant, I watched her with a candle in my hand for some hours, and when

I was sure she had breathed her last,—which could not at once be determined, she went away so easily,—I kneeled down by her bed-side, with those who were in the room, and thanked the Lord, I trust with all my heart, for her dismissal. I slept that night as well as usual, and in defiance of the laws of tyrant custom, I continued to preach while she lay dead in the house. We deposited her in my own vault the 23rd; and last Sunday evening, I was enabled to preach her funeral sermon, from Habakkuk iii. 17, 18.

‘In these respects, it pleased God to answer my repeated though imperfect prayers. As different ministers have their different turns, mine (if I know my own) has led me much to attempt to comfort the afflicted. I have endeavoured to commend the Gospel to them as the pearl of great price, a catholicon, a sovereign balm for every wound, a cordial for every case; and to convince them that those who have a well-grounded hope of forgiveness and acceptance in the Beloved, however afflicted, can have no just reason to deem themselves unhappy. When my own time of trial came, I felt myself in what the soldiers call the post of honour. I was very solicitous that I might not, by any symptoms of impatience or despondency, disgrace my own principles, or give occasion to the words of Job’s friends, (chap. iv. 3, 5.) to be applied to myself. I thought, if my behaviour at such a season should prove the means of confirming others in the truths which I had often proposed to them, in the days when I was in peace and prosperity, it would be a mercy sufficient to counterbalance my own personal sufferings. For I am to live, if I can, not for myself, but for him who redeemed me from the house of bondage in

Africa, and called me out of darkness into marvelous light.'

He then gives a variety of particulars of the affecting scenes through which he had passed, and proceeds:—

' Now, my dear madam, I have done. I shall trouble you with no more in this strain. She is gone—and may I not add, I am going? For though my health was never better than at present, I am advancing in my 66th year. What is the world to me now? All the treasures of the bank of England could not repair my loss, or even abate my sense of it. My chief earthly tie to this life is broken; yet, I thank God, I am willing to live, while he has any service for me to do; or rather, while he pleases, whether I can serve him or not, provided I am favoured with submission to his will. I have lost my right hand. He has made me willing to part with it, but I must expect to miss it often. However, I thank him, I am by no means uncomfortable. I am satisfied that he does all things well; and though some months ago, had it been lawful, I would have redeemed her life and health by the sacrifice of a limb, and thought the purchase cheap; yet now his will is made known by the event, I trust I can from my heart say, with Fenelon, ' I would not take up a straw to have things otherwise than they are!' Time is short. A new and inconceivable scene will soon open upon us, and if they who now "sow in tears shall reap in joy," they may smile while they weep.

' If I could relieve your cough by an act of mine, you would soon be well. The Lord could do this in a moment, but he does not—therefore, as you happily

believe, the continuance of it must be best. When it shall be no longer necessary or salutary, he will remove it; for he delighteth in our prosperity; and they who love and trust him, are never in heaviness of any kind an hour sooner or longer than there is need for it.

‘ The blessed God is an infinite object, and our obligations to him as creatures, and especially as redeemed sinners, are immense. And, therefore, they who know him and who truly love him, will always be sensible, that their love, when in the most lively exercise, is very disproportionate to what it ought to be, and that their warmest returns of gratitude and service fall far short of what they owe him for his goodness. They who think they love him enough, certainly do not love him aright; and a jealousy lest our love should not be cordial, effectual, and entire, is rather a favourable sign than otherwise; and is not peculiar to you, but is experienced at times by all who have spiritual life. We seem to want some other word by which to denote our supreme regard to God, than that which expresses our affection to creatures. When we speak of loving him, it must be in a different sense; creature-love is a passion; divine love is a principle. It arises from an apprehension of his adorable perfections, especially as they are displayed in the great work of redemption, without which, it is impossible for a sinner to love him. Much of his wisdom, power, and goodness are discernible in the works of creation, and in his providential government; but the only proper, adequate, and full-orbed exhibition of his glorious character, suited to promote our comfort and sanctification, is in the person of “ Christ Jesus



and him crucified." We must go to the foot of the cross to understand what the scripture declares of his holiness, justice, and truth, and the wonderful method by which they are brought to harmonize with the designs of his mercy and grace in the salvation of sinners. There is a sensibility of feeling in creature-love, which is no proper standard of our love to God. This, depending much upon constitution and the state of the animal spirits, is different in different persons, and in the same persons at different times. It is variable as the weather, and indeed is often affected by the weather and a thousand local circumstances, no more in our power than the clouds which fly over our heads. It is no uncommon thing to judge more favourably of ourselves on this point on a bright summer's day, and while contemplating a beautiful prospect, than in the gloom of winter or the hurry of Cheapside. The high affection of some people may be compared to a summer's brook after a hasty rain, which is full and noisy for a little time, but soon becomes dry. But true divine love is like a river which always runs, though not always with equal depth and flow, and never ceases till it finds the ocean. The best evidences are—admiration of his way of saving sinners,—humble dependence on his care,—desire of communion with him in his instituted means of grace,—submission to the will of his providence,—and obedience to the dictation of his precepts. To keep his commandments, and to keep them as *His* commandments, from a sense of his authority and goodness, is the best, the most unsuspecting test of our love to him. If we wish to love him more, or to be more satisfied that our love is genuine, we must

not love the world, nor be greatly solicitous of saving appearances in it. We must not be ashamed of the cross, nor think it strange or hard that the spirit which crucified our Saviour should show itself unfavourable to us, if we have courage to avow our attachment to him. These are hard sayings to us for a time; and for want of a more early compliance with them, we perhaps long walk like a man with a thorn in his foot. Every step we take is slow, difficult, and painful. How often have I in the morning surrendered myself to God, and before the day has closed, have been ashamed or afraid that people should suspect that I thought of him! It is no wonder that such treasonable hesitation should often hinder my comfort. But he is gracious: he gradually convinces us of our folly, humbles us for it, and strengthens us against it. Whenever he has made us thoroughly willing, we may depend upon him to make us able and successful; yet in such a way, that our whole life will always be a warfare, and we shall always have cause for humiliation and shame.'

But Mr. Newton was furnished, and that just at the fitting moment, with evidence that there was work remaining for him to do, and that his reunion with the object of his affections was not to be immediate. Few indirect remedies for natural sorrow are equal to that of useful employment; and in addition to his customary round of duties, a most interesting case presented itself, just at this moment, the results of which afterwards extended themselves beyond all human computation.

It was very early in the year which opened imme-

diately after Mrs. Newton's decease, that a letter was brought to Mr. N. from a young man who had been one of his hearers on the preceding Sunday evening, and who felt impelled to open his whole heart to him, to detail his entire history, and to solicit his friendly counsel and guidance. In this communication a narrative was given, of which Mr. Cecil justly remarks, that 'romance could not exceed it.' The writer, after receiving one of the best educations that Scotland could afford, had abandoned his country, in a sudden paroxysm of disappointment, had determined to 'seek his fortunes' and to 'see the world,' and, like many other similar speculators, had suffered many privations and hardships, without extending his researches beyond the English metropolis. Three years' residence there, however, had dissipated many a baseless fancy, and awakened many a feeling of painful remorse. "In his trouble he began to call upon the Lord," and He who sent Peter to the devout centurion, and Philip into the wilderness to meet the inquiring eunuch, soon directed his paths to one "*who should tell him words whereby he might be saved.*"

'I had written to my mother,' says Mr. Buchanan, (for it is Claudius Buchanan of whom we are now speaking,) 'some particulars of my state, requesting her prayers, for she is a pious woman. In her answer, written by my sister, is the following passage: 'My mother has heard much of Mr. Newton, Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, London, and wishes that you would cultivate an acquaintance with him, if it is in your power.''

'On the receipt of my mother's letter, I immediately reflected that I had heard there was a crowded

audience at a church in Lombard Street. Thither I accordingly went the next Sunday evening ; and when you spoke, I thought I heard the words of eternal life ; I listened with avidity, and wished that you had preached till midnight.' Mr. Buchanan laments, however, that this pleasing impression was too soon effaced ; and that, although he constantly attended Mr. Newton's sermons with raised expectations and sanguine hopes that he should one day be relieved from the burden which then oppressed his mind, he had hitherto been disappointed. 'But,' he adds, with genuine humility, 'I have now learned how unreasonable was such an early expectation : I have been taught to *wait patiently* upon God, who waited so long for *me*.'

'You say,' he continues, 'many things that touch my heart deeply, and I trust your ministry has been in some degree blessed to me : but your subjects are generally addressed to those who are already established in the faith, or to those who have not sought God at all. Will you then drop one word to me ? If there is any comfort in the word of life for such as I am, O shed a little of it on my heart ! And yet I am sensible that I am not prepared to receive that comfort. My sins do not affect me as I wish. All that I can speak of is a strong desire to be converted to my God. O sir, what shall I do to inherit eternal life ? I see clearly that I cannot be happy in any degree, even in this life, until I make my peace with God : but how shall I make that peace ? If the world were my inheritance, I would sell it, to purchase that pearl of great price.'

'How I weep when I read of the prodigal son, as described by our Lord ! I would walk many miles

to hear a sermon from the 12th and 13th verses of the thirty-third chapter of the second book of Chronicles.'<sup>1</sup>

After apologizing for thus intruding upon one to whose attention he had no personal claim, Mr. Buchanan concludes as follows.

'My heart is overburdened with grief, and greatly does it distress me, that I must impart my sorrows to him who has himself so much to bear.<sup>2</sup> My frequent prayer to God is, that he would grant you strong consolation. To-morrow is the day you have appointed for a sermon to young people. Will you remember *me*, and speak some suitable word, which by the aid of the blessed Spirit may reach my heart? Whatever becomes of me or my labours, I pray God that *you* may prove successful in your ministry, and that *your* labours may be abundantly blessed.'

The preceding letter was addressed to Mr. Newton anonymously; but so simply, yet so forcibly, does it describe the state of a penitent, awakened to a just apprehension of his sin and folly, and earnestly desiring relief, that it could not fail to excite in the mind of a man of so much Christian benevolence, a degree of lively sympathy with the feelings, and of interest in the welfare of the writer. His letter, however, being not only without any signature, but without any reference to the place of his residence, the only method which occurred to Mr. Newton of conveying any reply to him was; by giving notice in his church, that if the person who had written to him

<sup>1</sup> "And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication."

<sup>2</sup> In allusion to Mr. Newton's recent bereavement.

anonymously, on such a day, were present, and would call upon him, he should be happy to converse with him on the subject of his communication. This intimation Mr. Newton accordingly gave, and an early interview in consequence took place between them.

‘I called on him,’ says Mr. Buchanan, in a letter to his mother, ‘on the Tuesday following, and experienced such a happy hour as I ought not to forget. If he had been my father, he could not have expressed more solicitude for my welfare.’

‘Mr. Newton encouraged me much. He put into my hands the narrative of his life, and some of his letters; begged my careful perusal of them before I saw him again, and gave me a general invitation to breakfast with him when and as often as I could.’

Of the meeting immediately subsequent to this first interview no account has been preserved. That it was mutually pleasing and satisfactory, is evident from the intercourse which afterwards took place between them, and which was ultimately productive of such important consequences.

‘I cultivated,’ says Mr. Buchanan, ‘a close acquaintance with Mr. Newton, and he soon professed a great regard for me.’

The beneficial effects of this regard shortly became apparent. Mr. Newton’s munificent friend, Mr. Thornton, became interested in the young convert, and proposed bearing the cost of a Cambridge education. Mr. Buchanan was entered at Queen’s College, and soon became equally interesting to Mr. Simeon. His term of residence being ended, he took orders, and returned to Mr. Newton’s side in the capacity of his curate. But his great Master had other purposes to

accomplish. A chaplainship in the East India Company's service was pressed upon his acceptance, and under the advice of all his friends, he consented to devote his life to the furtherance of the gospel in the east. The extent and importance of his labours in India are well known. We have only to add, in this place, that after maintaining a regular and mutually interesting correspondence with Mr. Newton during the whole of his residence in India, he arrived in England, on his return, a few months only after his aged friend's removal to his reward.

The autumn following Mrs. Newton's death, saw Mr. N. again in Hampshire, on his accustomed visit to his highly valued friends at Portswood and Southampton. On his return to town, he writes as follows:—

‘ 1st October, 1791.

‘ MY DEAR FRIENDS,

‘ Accept a short letter just to repeat thanks for all your kindness, and to inform you we had a safe and pleasant journey, arrived at home in the evening, and found all well. My heart travelled with you to P——, where I hope to hear the Lord gave you to return with equal safety, and perhaps about the same time. I could gladly have returned with you. Indeed, if my post and duty were not here, I could willingly live and die with you.

‘ The first day at home, after a long absence, calls of course for attention to many things; but I must find time to say, Oh! magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. Very wonderful have his dealings been with me, since the day when

he took me by the hand to bring me out of Egypt. You, no doubt, have seen him working wonderfully in your own concerns. We are verily debtors! May he give us of his own, that we may have something to offer him, for we have nothing that we can properly call *our's*, but sin and misery. I wish to be more thankful for what the Lord has been *to me*—but I long to rise a step higher still, to be enabled to contemplate his character, as displayed by the cross of Christ, so that I may continually admire and adore him for what he *is in himself*. He would have been great and glorious, wise, powerful, holy, and gracious, though I had never been brought into existence, or had been left to perish as I deserved. There would have been a redeemed company though I had never known him.

‘ Here I would so fix my eyes and thought, as in a manner to forget myself—and then, when my heart was overwhelmed, as it were, with His majesty combined with mercy, his glory shining in grace—to bring the matter home, and say with gratitude and triumph—This God, this great and wonderful God, is our God! May we be more employed thus upon earth; so far as we are, we shall share in the joys of the inheritance of the saints in light.

‘ The sun shines bright upon you this morning, (for it is a fine day), but I cannot see it: the houses hide it from me, but I have light from it. It is thus with my soul. I seldom have much sun-shine, but light I trust I have from the Sun of Righteousness, by which I see my way, and have an imperfect glance of the end to which it leads. Well—such a glance is worth all this poor world can bestow. The redeemed before the throne—look how they shine!—



hark how they sing! They were not always as they are now; they were once like us, sorrowing, suffering, sinning; but He has washed them from their sins in his own blood, and wiped away their tears with his own hands. Amongst them are some who were once dear to us, with whom we have shared in pleasure, and sympathized in pain. There I trust is my dearest. I cannot describe my feelings last night, when I looked upon the bed in which she languished so long; but it was a comfort to think—she is not here now—I hear no moans, I see no great distress—she is gone—she is risen, and I hope ere long to follow her.

‘My love to your whole family—mention me to your servants, who were all very obliging to us. May the Lord give them the privileges of his servants. The Lord bless you—pray for us.

‘Your very affectionate and much obliged,

‘JOHN NEWTON.’

About this time, Mr. N. had the honorary degree of D.D. conferred upon him by the University of New Jersey in America, and the Diploma sent to him. He also received a work in two volumes, dedicated to him with the above title annexed to his name. Mr. N. wrote the author a grateful acknowledgment for the work, but begged to decline an honour which he never intended to accept. ‘*I am,*’ says he, ‘*as one born out of due time. I have neither the pretension nor wish for honours of this kind. However, therefore, the University may over-rate my attainments, and thus shew their respect, I must not forget myself: it would be both vain and improper were I to concur in it.*’

In a letter written at this period, he says,—

‘I have been hurt by two or three letters directed to *Dr.* Newton. I beg you to inform my friends in Scotland, as they come in your way, that after a little time, if any letters come to me, addressed in this way, I shall be obliged to send them back unopened. I know no such person, I never shall, I never will, by the grace of God.

‘Do not think I am displeased with you, or any of my kind friends, who mean me kindness and honour by such an address. I only beg, for my peace-sake, that it may not be repeated.

‘I have been informed that a college in America, I think in New Jersey, has given me the honorary degree of Doctor. So far as this mark of their favour indicates a regard to the gospel truths which I profess, I am much pleased with it. But as to the title itself, I renounce it heartily; nor would I willingly be known by it, if all the universities in Europe conferred it upon me. My youthful years were spent in Africa, and I ought to take my degrees (if I take any) from thence. Shall such a compound of misery and mischief as I then was, be called DOCTOR? Surely not!

‘I thank you for the pamphlets. I have not had time to read them all; but I doubt not I shall like them all,—but that which I *have* read, ‘The Dialogue between the Devil and a Socinian,’ I cannot say I approve either the manner or the spirit of. I am hurt when gospel truths are put into the devil’s mouth—nor do I think we are warranted to consign over Socinian ministers so coolly to his power. I suppose a ready penman at Damascus might have

written a smart dialogue between the devil and Saul of Tarsus. But Saul became Paul ; grace has long and strong arms ; and I think it more becoming a Christian to be unwilling to give any one up, while living. In brief, I cannot think that dialogue likely to do much good ; and if it was only designed to hold up an opponent to ridicule and contempt, it might as well have been spared. It is my mercy *I* am not a Socinian ; for had I been left to myself, I might have been among the foremost. It becomes me to be thankful ; and to pity and pray for those who know not what they do. May the Lord open their eyes—then they will soon be of our mind.

‘ May the Lord bless and guide you,

‘ and your affectionate servant,

‘ J. N.’

In a letter written by him in 1796, we find an account of one of “ *the poor of this world, rich in faith,*” which ought not to be allowed to fall into oblivion. He says to his correspondent ;—

‘ I believe your inquiries refer to an old woman who lived upon Wavertree Green, near Liverpool, and was known by the name of ‘ Dame Cross.’

‘ Though very poor when I knew her, and I believe through her whole life, she was above the level of the common poor. She was a person of natural good sense and reflection, and had an agreeable address. Her’s was a dignified and respectable poverty.

‘ Under the first impression of serious thoughts, she set out upon the laudable plan of aiming *to please God*. But she soon found that she could not even please *herself*. This startled her. She con-

sidered, 'I am certainly sufficiently partial in my own favour, and if I cannot please myself, how can I expect to please the holy and heart-searching God, who sees me as I really am, and doubtless notices much more evil in me than I am able to perceive.' This reflection threw her into great distress. But Mr. Hervey's 'Theron and Aspasio' came in her way, which afforded her a key to the Bible. She well knew the great and leading truths of the gospel, but I believe she never once *heard* the gospel in her life, except what she might hear from me in our family-worship, during a week I had the honour of entertaining her in my house, before I was in the ministry. I was then obliged to use caution, lest she should be starved; for if at meal-time I occasionally spoke of the Lord Jesus, his love to sinners, his glory, or the like, she usually burst into tears, and could eat no more.

'She was a staunch church-woman: had a high veneration for gowns and cassocks, and for those who wore them. She thought all sermons were good. They were so to *her*, for she would at least feed upon the text. I remember when this was my own case. But notwithstanding her prejudices, remaining ignorance, and want of discrimination in hearing; if humility, benevolence, submission to the will of God, strong faith, and a spiritual mind, are eminent parts of the Christian character, she appeared to me one of the greatest and most exemplary Christians I ever met with.

'A relation offered to settle ten pounds per annum upon her during *his* life. She said, if he could have settled it for *her own life*, she would accept it; but such an addition for a time, would probably add to

the number of her wants, and then if he died first, she should be worse off than before. Upon this principle she refused his offer.

‘She kept a little school. The parents of the children were mostly as poor as herself; and not being able or willing to pay longer, took the children away. She went round the neighbourhood to them and said, ‘I shall be glad if you can pay me, because I am poor; but whether you pay me or not, do let your children come to me: perhaps something I say may be useful to them when I am dead.’

‘One morning I found her at breakfast upon dry bread and a little tea. I said to her, ‘Dame, do not you like butter?’ She answered, ‘Yes, I like butter, but it is very dear, and I cannot afford it; but *my Lord*,’ so she usually spoke of him, ‘takes care that I should have bread: it is very good, it is enough, and I thank him for it.’

‘Once when I called, she had a good many fowls and chickens about her. I said, Dame, are these all yours?—‘Not one of them, Sir; they belong to my neighbours. But they are accustomed to come to my door: I save all my crumbs and scraps for them. I love to feed them, for the sake of Him who made them.’

‘When I asked her—‘Are you not uneasy at being alone, now you are so old?’ (She was more than four-score.) ‘Suppose you should be taken ill in the night, you have nobody to help you.’ She replied—‘Do you think my Lord does not know that I am an old woman, and live by myself? I am not uneasy: I believe he will take care of me.’ She once said to me—‘I believe my Lord will not permit me to die for want of food: but if such should be

his pleasure, I hope I am willing. Perhaps I should not find that so painful a death as many rich people feel, who live in great plenty. But I am in his hands, and he will do what is right.'—Or to that purpose.

'There were several genteel families upon the Green; and as her general conduct was striking, and she had not been in the way of being marked with the stigma of Methodism, she was much respected. They often sent her a plate of victuals from their tables. At last, two ladies called on her, and said, that they and some of their acquaintance had agreed to make her as easy as possible, for her few remaining days; and asked how much a year she would have? She said—'I am old, and live quite by myself; but I believe I could get a room in a house not far off,' to which she pointed, 'if you will please to pay the rent of my room, and allow me five pounds a year, it will suffice. They offered to double it; but she declined, and said—'Five pounds will be quite enough.' I knew both the ladies, and have no doubt, but that if she had asked thirty pounds per year, she might have had it.

'She did not live long after her removal into her new lodging. She went to bed one night in her usual health, and was found dead in the morning. She seemed to have died in her sleep, for there was no appearance of any struggle, nor any feature in her countenance ruffled. Thus she died *alone* at last. For though there were several people in the house, willing and ready to assist her, she needed no help from them! Such care did the great God, who humbles himself to notice the worship of angels, take of a poor old woman, who was enabled to put her trust in him, and to acquiesce in his dispensations.

‘ I believe it is now forty years since she exchanged earth for heaven. I cannot pretend, at this distance of time, to perfect accuracy in recording all her expressions ; though several of them affected me so much at the time, that they were deeply impressed upon my memory ; and I believe you have them from me *verbatim*, as I had them from her own mouth. However, you may depend upon it, that the substance of what I have written is strictly true. Much more I could have added, if my memory did not fail me.

‘ With my respects, &c. and my prayers that the Lord may bless you and yours in all things, I remain, dear Sir, your affectionate and obliged friend and brother,

‘ JOHN NEWTON.’

Another letter, written in the same year, to a friend then on a visit to Rome, has been judged by Mr. Cecil to be worthy of preservation. Mr. N. writes :—

‘ The true Christian, in strict propriety of speech, has no home here : he is, and must be, a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth : his citizenship, treasure, and real home are in a better world ; and every step he takes, whether to the east or to the west, is a step nearer to his Father’s house. On the other hand, when in the path of duty, he is always at home ; for the whole earth is the Lord’s : and, as we see the same sun in England or Italy, in Europe or Asia : so, wherever he is, he equally sets the Lord always before him : and finds himself equally near the throne of grace, at all times and in all places. God is every where ; and, by faith in the Great Mediator,

he dwells in God, and God in him. To him that line of Horace may be applied, in the best sense,

*' Cælum, non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt.'*

' I trust, my dear sir, that you will carry out, and bring home with you, a determination similar to that of the patriarch Jacob, who vowed a vow, saying, " If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God!" May the Lord himself write it on your heart!

' You are now at Rome, the centre of the Fine Arts; a place abounding with every thing to gratify a person of your taste. Athens had the pre-eminence in the Apostle Paul's time: and I think it highly probable, from many passages in his writings, that he likewise had a taste capable of admiring and relishing the beauties of painting, sculpture and architecture, which he could not but observe during his abode in that city: but then he had a higher, a spiritual, a divine taste, which was greatly shocked and grieved by the ignorance, idolatry, and wickedness which surrounded him, insomuch that he could attend to nothing else. This taste, which cannot be acquired by any effort or study of ours, but is freely bestowed on all who sincerely ask it of the Lord, divests the vanities which the world admire of their glare; and enable us to judge of the most splendid and specious works of men who know not God, according to the declaration of the prophet, " They hatch cockatrice eggs, and weave the spider's web." Much ingenuity is displayed in the weaving of a



cobweb ; but, when finished, it is worthless and useless. Incubation requires close diligence and attention : if the hen is too long from her nest, the egg is spoiled ; but why should she sit at all upon the egg, and watch it, and warm it night and day, if it only produces a cockatrice at last ? Thus vanity or mischief are the chief rulers of unsanctified genius : the artists spin webs ; and the philosophers, by their learned speculations, hatch cockatrices, to poison themselves and their fellow-creatures : few of either sort have one serious thought of that awful eternity, upon the brink of which they stand for a while, and into the depth of which they successively fall.

‘ A part of the sentence denounced against the city which once stood upon seven hills, is so pointed and graphical, that I must transcribe it : *And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee ; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee : and the light of a candle shall no more be seen in thee.* Now, I am informed, that, upon certain occasions, the whole cupola of St. Peter’s is covered with lamps, and affords a very magnificent spectacle : if I saw it, it would remind me of that time when there will not be the shining of a single candle in the city ; for the sentence must be executed, and the hour may be approaching.—

*Sic transit gloria mundi.*

‘ You kindly enquire after my health ; myself and family are, through the divine favour, perfectly well ; yet, healthy as I am, I labour under a growing disorder, for which there is no cure ; I mean old age.

I am not sorry it is a mortal disease, from which no one recovers: for who would live always in such a world as this, who has a scriptural hope of an inheritance in the world of light? I am now in my seventy-second year, and seem to have lived long enough for myself. I have known something of the evil of life, and have had a large share of the good. I know what the world *can* do, and what it *cannot* do; it can neither give nor take away that *peace of God, which passeth all understanding*; it cannot soothe a wounded conscience, nor enable us to meet death with comfort. That you, my dear sir, may have an abiding and abounding experience that the gospel is a catholicon adapted to all our wants and all our feelings, and a suitable help when every other help fails, is the sincere and ardent prayer of

‘Your affectionate friend,

‘JOHN NEWTON.’

But, in proportion as Mr. N. felt the vanity of the pursuits which he endeavoured to expose in the foregoing letter, he was as feelingly alive to whatever regarded eternal concerns. Take an instance of this, in a visit which he paid to another friend. This friend was a minister, who affected great accuracy in his discourses; and who, on that Sunday had nearly occupied an hour in insisting on several laboured and nice distinctions made in his subject. As he had a high estimation of Mr. N.’s judgment, he enquired of him, as they walked home, whether he thought the distinctions just now insisted on, were full and judicious. Mr. N. said he thought them not *full*, as a very important one had been omitted. ‘What can that be?’ said the minister,

‘for I had taken more than ordinary care to enumerate them fully.’ ‘I think not,’ replied Mr. N. ‘for, when many of your congregation had travelled several miles for a meal, I think you should not have forgotten the important distinction which must ever exist between *meat* and *bones*.’

Some of his own circumstances at this period are alluded to in the following letter to a young minister :

‘October 7, 1796.

‘MY DEAR SIR,

‘Six weeks absence has thrown my home affairs sadly behind hand ; but I hope the time was not wholly lost. We, that is dear Miss C. and myself, left London, the 19th August, and returned the 1st instant. We spent the first week at Reading, where the Lord has many people, warm-hearted, upright, and loving. The rest of our time we were at Mr. T.’s, at Portswood Green, from whence I have written to you formerly. He lives within two miles of S., where there are five churches, but no pulpit open for me. But Mr. T. opened his house, and made room for about three hundred hearers. I preached three evenings in the week, while I staid—we were often full—my hearers were chiefly from the neighbouring villages, and seem willing to hear the gospel, if they had any body to preach it to them. But, alas ! in those parts, and in many parts of the kingdom, comparatively a land of light,

“The hungry sheep look up, but are not fed.”

‘We need not go far from home to find people no less ignorant of spiritual things, no less unconcerned about their souls, than the heathens in Africa or

Otaheite. We are encouraged, yea, we are commanded, to pray, that the Lord of the harvest would send forth more faithful labourers, for as yet they are but few, compared with the extensive wilds at home and abroad.

‘ I have received a letter from Buchanan, dated, I think, the 27th August. They were then all well, off the Canary Islands, entering upon the trade winds, and by this time may be at the Cape of Good Hope. I saw his call clear, and gave him up without reluctance, though he was to me as a right hand. I then engaged J. Benamor to be my curate. He was my intimate friend. I had been chiefly instrumental in bringing him forward. He was ordained about two years ago. He was able and ready as a preacher, humble, spiritual, and devoted as a christian, beyond the common standard at his years. I was ready to call him Seth, and thought the Lord had given him to me in the room of Buchanan. But a few days before I left London, he was suddenly taken with a bleeding of his lungs, which terminated his life below, in about a fortnight. He was bereaved of an excellent wife last summer. Of four children, one only was left, a sweet little boy of about four years old. This child was taken with the small pox while his father was ill, he could not see the child, but lived to hear of his death. He and I had promised ourselves much pleasure in our connection ; but we are shortsighted creatures. Thus all his earthly expectations were crossed ; but his last words were, “ The Lord has done all things well,” and from them I preached his funeral sermon last Sabbath evening. I thank the Lord I can say and believe he does all things well ; but I have had my feelings ; for I hoped I

had found a person on whom I might fully depend, and whom my people would hear with pleasure in case I should be laid aside. Perhaps I am to live and preach a little longer. If it be so, well: if otherwise, well: He does all things well; and when he sees I really need assistance, he can provide it. My part is to do the work of to-day, and to leave to-morrow with him.

‘ I perhaps may write a paper for the work you mention, but I know not when, I am so overwhelmed with correspondence. Though I wrote more than forty letters while abroad, I have nearly as many by me that should be answered, if I could find time; and almost every post adds to their number. Many are from strangers, which must be noticed, of course, when I cannot write to my friends. Then I have so many visitants, that I can seldom call an hour my own when I am at home; and if I could attend to the sick and the sorrowful as I wish, I should be always abroad. I wish likewise to return to the *Life of Mr. Grimshaw*, which has lain untouched for six months past. So that I am indeed full-handed.

‘ I am glad to hear well of Mrs. H., and hoped I should have heard from her. I had no fear of her not being supported. How can they fall who lean upon the Lord, and have an almighty arm underneath them? Give our warm love to her, to Mr. and Mrs. B., &c. If you printed the second anniversary, “*When grace her balm to sooth my pain,*” and have any left that you can spare, I shall be obliged to you for a few copies. We have none here in print but what are bound up with ‘*Letters to a Wife.*’

‘ I am now getting into my old track, which seems to suit me better than rambling about. I have cause

to be thankful, that *abroad*, while I was abroad, was very pleasant, but still *home is home*. I love my friends at a distance, but it is not practicable to travel to them all; and therefore I am glad when they call upon me in London, as many of them do in the course of the year; and I seldom stir out for two or three days but I miss some, whom I should have seen, if I had remained upon the spot. There was a time when I did not know that I had a friend in the world, excepting my dear Mary's family; but the Lord has given me so many since, that I cannot express a proper regard to them all. Jacob's acknowledgment, with a little variation, becomes me—  
“With my staff I came over Jordan, and now I am become two bands!” What a wretch was I in Africa! A servant of slaves, scorned, and yet sometimes pitied, by the lowest of the human race! And how is it with me now? O Lord, I am a wonder to many, and to myself!

‘ My eventful life is drawing to a close. While I walked in the way of transgressors, I found it hard indeed! Since the Lord took me up, *outcast* as I was, and brought me into his fold, my path has been as remarkably smooth. So far as happiness can be found in externals, I have known it: yet I cannot wish to live my most pleasant days over again. Sin and vanity are entwined with them all. I am still as happy as temporals in my widowed state can make me. But I am not sorry that I am in my 72d year. I have lived long enough to know what the world can do, and what it cannot do. I have no business in it, but to fill up the uncertain remnant, as becomes a believer and a minister of the gospel. If the Lord by his grace enables me to do this, I care

not whether my stay here be longer or shorter; only may I be found ready when the summons shall come. Pray for me, and I will try to pray for you. May the gracious Saviour dwell with you, and with me, and with all who love him, as the Lord, the guardian, and beloved of our hearts. Amen. Believe me to be

‘Your sincerely affectionate friend,

J. N.’

To another friend, who had consulted him on some commercial or pecuniary question, he thus replies:—

‘DEAR SIR,

‘Had you well known me, you would not have honoured me with your commission. I am no more fit to manage Stocks and Brokers, or to buy, sell, and receive, &c., than a goose. And in this ignorance and awkwardness, I determine to persevere. A very long disuse to what is called business, has grown into such an aversion, as you can hardly conceive. I view it a distance, as a cat looks at a pond, without the least intention of swimming in it. Even the little domestic business, which the removal of my dear wife necessarily imposes upon me, is a great burden to me. She was my manager, and while she lived, for forty years, I know not that I ever bought so much as a pair of stockings.

‘You must positively apply somewhere else, and expect no more advice or assistance from me, in such matters, than if I was at Botany Bay. My hands are so full of other business, which through mercy is more to my taste, that I know not which way to turn myself.

‘ Blessed be God, I go on not uncomfortably, though my wound is as fresh as at the first day. The Lord is good. I have still much to be thankful for. I can still relish my comforts and friends, but I seem to have little tie to the world now but my ministry. I am the Lord’s, and am willing to live his appointed time. I am like a labourer in harvest, who does not wish to leave the field till he has finished his day’s work, yet who looks now and then at the sun, and is glad to see the approach of evening, that he may go to rest.

‘ I wonder not at your concern for W——; but be not cast down: the good Shepherd whom you speak of, knows how to take care of his flock, in every change of circumstance. Nothing happens without his knowledge and direction; nothing but what he can and will overrule for the best. I still hope Mr. J—— will get through his difficulties, and I am sure he will, if it is best that he should. If things fall out contrary to our wishes, it is because we are short-sighted as to consequences, and therefore do not wish aright. But Infinite Wisdom is at the helm, and will do all things well.

‘ You or I would have preserved the life of Mr. W——, had we been able. The Lord could have easily restored him, but did not. He had, doubtless, wise reasons for removing him. Our part is to be attentive, diligent, and dependent, in the use of means; and then to leave events with him.

‘ I pray that His blessing may be with you and Mrs. W——, and that you may count the fruits of your ministry, not by sixes only, but by scores. May we have grace to burn and shine in our stations; and if the Lord has given a willing mind, he will



graciously accept us, not according to our actual success, but according to our desires to serve him.

‘ I must write briefly, because I must write soon : I wish you to lose as little time as possible by your application to me, who cannot possibly serve you.

‘ I am sincerely,

‘ Your affectionate friend and brother,

‘ JOHN NEWTON.’

In one of his autumnal excursions, he had paid a visit to Mrs. Hannah More, at her cottage at Cowslip Green ; and on her recovery from a severe attack of illness in 1799, we find him addressing to her the following letter :—

‘ *Portswood Green, Sept. 1799.*

‘ MY DEAR MADAM,

‘ I wrote a few lines when you were at Clapham, to tell you that I sympathized with you in your illness, and prayed for your recovery. Many prayers were doubtless offered for you, and the Lord heard and answered them. But before I knew whether you were so far recovered as to bear a visit from me, I heard that you had removed to Fulham. Thus I missed the pleasure of seeing you, and shall probably see you no more in this world. For though, I thank the Lord, my health and spirits are still good, I entered my seventy-fifth year almost a month ago ; and I feel that the shadows of the evening are coming over me. However, I would be thankful that I ever saw you ; and especially that I had the privilege of seeing you at Cowslip Green : I number that among the happiest days of my life. The recollection of it will be pleasant, while I retain my

memory ; and ere long I hope we shall meet before the throne, and join in unceasing songs of praise to Him who loved us. There our joys will be unclouded, without interruption, abatement, or end !  
*O præclarum diem !*

‘If old age gives me a prospect of death,—sickness, like a telescope, often presents a clearer view ; whilst it is, as I hope, with you, as yet at a distance. Perhaps when you were ill, you could perceive the objects within the veil, beyond this visible diurnal sphere, more distinctly than at other times. I have known but little of sickness of late years. I attempt to look through the telescope of faith, which gives reality and substance to things not seen, but the glasses are cloudy, and my hands shake, so that I can obtain but very imperfect and transient glances ; but a glance into the heavenly state is worth all that can be seen here below in the course of a long life. If the Lord be with us (and he has promised that he will) in the approaching transition, we may go forward without fear. Guilt and ignorance have personified death ; they represent him with frowns on his brow, and darts in his hand. But what is death to a believer in Jesus ! It is simply a ceasing to breathe. If we personify it, we may welcome it as a messenger sent to tell us that the days of our mourning are ended, and to open to us the gate into everlasting life. The harbingers of death, sickness, pain, and conflict, are frequently formidable to the flesh, but death itself is nothing else than a deliverance from them all.

‘The apostle calls the body a tabernacle or tent. When a tent is taking down, the removal of the boards or curtains will let in light, quite new and

different from what was seen before. Mr. Waller has borrowed this thought:—

‘ The soul’s dark cottage, battered and decayed,  
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made.

‘ We are surrounded with a great cloud of witnesses, and though we cannot see them, I believe they see us. Before the moment of death, great discoveries are often made, and both the pious and the profane have strong intimations whither they are going, and with what company they will soon mingle. I have seen many instances of this; my dear Eliza was a remarkable one. Her animated language and joyful expectations could not be the result of long experience, for she was a child, and I believe her knowledge of the Lord and his salvation was not a year old: but while the tent was taking down, she appeared to see invisibles, and to hear unutterables. She certainly had ideas which she could find no words to express. How wonderful will the moment after death be! how we shall see without eyes, hear without ears, and praise without a tongue, we cannot at present conceive. We now use the word *intuition*—then we shall know the meaning of it. But we are assured that they who love and trust the Saviour shall see him as he is, and be like him and with him. And he has promised us dying strength for the dying hour. Let this suffice—faithful is he that has promised, who also will do it.

‘ We left London on the 9th of July—were one week at Reading, and have been here since the 19th. We hope to be at home in about ten days. Our retreat has been very pleasant, with friends

whom we dearly love, and I am an enthusiast for the country. I have not, indeed, dear Mr. Cowper's discriminating eye to contemplate the miniature beauties, but I am much affected with the *tout ensemble*. Here we have hills and dales, woods, lawns, and rivers; the music of the winds whistling in the trees, and the birds singing in the bushes. All is delightful. My post at St. Mary's, in the midst of noise and smoke, is very different; but still, it is my post, and I would not change it for any spot in the habitable globe.

'My dear Miss Catlett joins me in respects, love, and thanks to you, to Miss Patty and all your sisters. She likewise has a thankful remembrance of Cowslip Green.

'I pray the Lord to afford you a comfortable measure of health, to crown all your labours of love in his service with increasing success, and to bless you in your soul with abounding grace and peace.

'I am, my dear Madam,

'Your very affectionate and much obliged,

'JOHN NEWTON.'

From this period, Mr. Newton's life seems to have flowed on in an even placid course of pastoral usefulness, with but one interruption of its peaceful character, to which we shall presently advert. A letter to another lady, dated in the tenth year after Mrs. Newton's death, presents a most interesting picture of the vividness of his feelings and recollections, even after that lapse of time; but not less so of the glowing thankfulness and quiet rest, which "the hope of the gospel" had shed over his mind.

*Portswood Green, 1800.*

‘MY DEAR MADAM,

‘Though through mercy my wounds are well healed, and I am satisfied the Lord has done all things well with me and mine, yet this place revives some old sensations more than any other spot on the globe could do. Here my Eliza Cunningham and my dear Mary languished long, and this was the last house they were both in, till they returned to Coleman-street, to go out no more till removed in the hearse. There is a wood at a little distance, to which I often resorted, and still resort. If you were there, and the trees could speak, they might tell you much of the exercises of my mind, to which they were witnesses. I call it my Bethel. There in my distress I sought the Lord, and he heard me. There I have since performed, or at least acknowledged the vows I made in the time of my trouble. As my dear Mary was not a young woman, and we had lived together more than forty years, some people have thought I made too much ado when called to resign her. I pity those who cannot feel as I do! They do not know that a union of hearts in the married state, when the Lord affords his blessing, is strengthened daily by a series of reciprocal endearments and obligations in the course of forty years; and that, as passion in time abates, friendship is proportionably strengthened and heightened, so that perhaps the flesh feels more to part at the end of forty years, than at the end of four. He must have a steady hand who can draw the exact line between overvaluing and undervaluing our creature comforts. The latter was not my fault. Alas! I was an idolater, and I suffered

for it. Now all is over, I can be thankful for the years 1789 and 1790. But I would not live them over again for the wealth of the Indies. Yet nothing in the singular history of my life is more wonderful to myself than the manner in which the Lord supported me through the trying scene, and at the close of it. Scarcely in any other way could I have known so much of the power and faithfulness of his promise to give strength according to the day, and of his all-sufficiency; for I had no more of what are called sensible comforts than usual; but still was supported: I know not how, but I well know, that if his arm had not been underneath me, I must have sunk like a stone in the water. I learned also in that school, not be so over-anxious for my friends, when under great trials, as I had formerly been; for I saw, yea, I felt, that the Lord is able to make us equal to any thing which he calls us either to do or suffer. Hab. iii. 17, 18. Though the recollection of what I had once, and what I now have not, is seldom out of my thoughts when awake, yet, through mercy, I am quite easy,—the wound is healed,—the scar only remains, and I allow myself to look often upon it, because it reminds me of the skill and tenderness of that faithful Friend, who so managed the wound he made, for my good, that nothing now but the scar appears. It also excites humiliation, and reminds me how well I deserved to have been chastised more severely. When I see you and Mr. R. together, I am often reminded how it was once with me. I rejoice for you indeed; I do not envy you; sometimes I am inclined to pity you, and to fear you are too happy in each other. Oh, may the Lord preserve you from the excess of affection, which filled my otherwise happy

life with anxious cares, and thorns, and clouds, from the beginning to the end of our union. From these the separating stroke freed me; and if I have not had so much pleasure since, neither have I had so many pains; and, perhaps, upon the whole, and when all deductions are made, my widowhood has been the happiest part of my life; especially as the Lord, by the affection and attention of my dear E., has repaired my loss as far as the nature of the case will admit. At R—— I was in a pleasing bustle; here, I have a pleasing retirement. In London, I lived in a crowd; at P—— there is a crowd in me. Many vain intruders often tease me most at such seasons as I most desire to be freed from them; they follow me into the pulpit, and meet me at the Lord's table. I hope I do not love them, or wish to lodge them! Often in prayer some idle fancy buzzes about me, and makes me forget where I am, and what I am doing. I then compare myself to a man upon his knees before the king, pleading for his life, or returning thanks for some great favour; in the midst of his speech he sees a butterfly; he immediately breaks off, leaves his speech unfinished, and runs away to catch the butterfly. Such a man would be thought mad; and my vile thoughts prove that I am not free from spiritual insanity. Is it so with you? I believe it is at some times, and in some degree, though I hope you are not so bad as I. As we all spring from one stock, though our features differ, depravity is the common family likeness, which runs through the whole species; but Jesus came into the world to save sinners;—He died for us, and

“His hands infected nature cure  
With sanctifying grace.”

We hope in a little time to see him as he is. Then, and not before, we shall be completely like him, and while we are here, his precious blood cleanses us from all sins, and makes our defective services acceptable to God.

‘I have neither time nor room for a list of all to whom I mean to send my love, but, if you will make out *the list*, and send it to me, I will sign it. But tell all who love the Saviour, (by whatever names they are known) whether ministers or people, that I love them, and pray to the Lord to reward all who showed me kindness for his sake.

‘I am, dear Madam,  
 ‘Your affectionate and obliged,  
 ‘JOHN NEWTON.’

About the same period we find him adverting, in a letter to Hannah More, to the death of his beloved friend William Cowper.

‘*May* 24, 1800.

‘MY DEAR MADAM,

‘Glad should I be to have another peep at you, but all is uncertain; and if the precept ‘Boast not thyself of to-morrow,’ is a proper admonition to all persons at all times, it certainly does not become me, at the age of seventy-five, to look so far forward as to the end of a whole month. Well! my times are in the Lord’s hands, and should we not meet upon earth, I trust we shall meet before the throne, where neither sin nor sorrow shall be able to distress us. Here we are sometimes called to sow in tears, but the harvest will be one of everlasting and uninterrupted joys. Oh, this blessed hope softens the trials of life, and will gild the gloomy valley.



‘ My most dear and intimate friend William Cowper, has obtained a release from all his distresses. I preached a funeral sermon for him on the 11th instant, from Eccles. ii. 2, 3. Why was he, who both by talents and disposition seemed qualified, if it were possible, to reform the age in which he lived, harassed by distresses and despair, so that the bush which Moses saw all in flames, was a fit emblem of his case !

‘ The Lord’s thoughts and ways are so much above our’s, that it becomes us rather to lie in the dust in adoration and silence, than to inquire presumptuously into the grounds of his proceedings ; yet I think we may draw some lessons from his sufferings. I wish to learn from them thankfulness, for the health and peace with which I have been favoured ; and caution, not to depend upon whatever gifts, abilities, or usefulness, past comforts or experiences have been afforded me. In all these respects my friend was, during a part of his life, greatly my superior. He lived, (though not without short conflicts) in point of comfort and conduct, far above the common standard, for about ten years ; and for twenty-seven years afterwards he knew not one peaceful day. May it remind me likewise of the precarious tenure by which we hold all our desirables. A slight alteration in the nervous system, may make us a burden and a terror to ourselves and our friends. It may likewise reconcile us to lighter troubles, when we see what the Lord’s most favoured and honoured servants are appointed to endure. But we are sure that he is rich enough, and that eternity is long enough, to make them abundant amends for whatever his infinite wisdom may see meet to call them to, for pro-

moting his glory in the end: for this bush, though so long in the flames, was not consumed, because the Lord was there. The last twelve hours of his life he lay still, and took no notice; but so long as he could speak, there was no proof that his derangement was either removed or abated. He was, however, free from his great terrors. There was no sign either of joy or sorrow when near his departure. What a glorious surprise must it be to find himself released from all his chains in a moment, and in the presence of the Lord whom he loved, and whom he served; for the Apostle says, "When absent from the body, present with the Lord." There is no intermediate state. How little does he think now of all that he suffered while here!

' This is a disinterested letter. It neither requires nor expects an answer from you. When I wrote last I was desirous of possessing one more token of your kindness. You have gratified me, and I ask no further. Probably this will likewise be my last to you. My health is remarkably good; but eyes, ears, and recollection fail. I aim to adopt the words of Dr. Watts, and sometimes I think I can:—'The breaches cheerfully foretell, the house will shortly fall;' yet as I am still able to preach, and am still heard with acceptance, I have no reason to wish to be gone. Pray for me, my dear ladies, that I may work while it is called to-day, and that when the night cometh, I may retire like a thankful guest from an abundant table. My case is almost as singular as Jonah's. He was the only one delivered after having been entombed in the belly of a fish; and I, perhaps, the only one ever brought from bondage and misery in Africa to preach "Jesus Christ and him cruci-

fied." In early life I knew much of the evil of the world, but I brought it all upon myself. During the last half century, I have been favoured with as much of the good which such a world as this can afford, as perhaps any person in it. I have had internal conflicts, abasements, bereavements, and sharp trials; but I think upon the whole, I have been as happy in temporals, as the present state of mortality will admit. Even now I can think of nothing with a serious wish, beyond what I have, if a wish could procure it. But all the past is like the remembrance of a dream, gone beyond recal; the present is precarious, and will soon be past likewise. But oh! the future! Blessed be He who hath brought immortality to light by the gospel. I need not say to myself, or my dear friends who are in the Lord, *Quo nunc abibis in loco?* we know where they are and how employed. There I humbly trust my dear Mary is waiting for me, and in the Lord's own time I hope to join with her, and all the redeemed, in praising the Lamb, once upon the cross, now upon the throne of glory.

How apt is self to occupy too much of my paper, when I am writing to those whom I love; excuse a fault that flows from a sincere regard which cannot be confined by forms. I love you, I love Miss Patty, I love you all. If I were a poet, I should think more frequently of the five sisters and Cowslip Green, than of the nine muses and Parnassus. The Lord bless you all separately and jointly, with all the blessings pertaining to life and godliness.

‘ I am, my dear Madam,

‘ Your very affectionate and much obliged,

‘ JOHN NEWTON.’

Some passages from another letter, dated in the following year, 1801, and addressed to a young minister of a different communion, will give an accurate idea of the mingled simplicity and maturity of the counsel which he was often called upon to give, especially to those in similar circumstances. He writes,—

‘ *Feb. 6, 1801.*

‘ Either you, or some friends of yours, told me that you had retired to study. Undoubtedly, now you have given up business you have more leisure time, which you will do well to improve. I know not what is the immediate object of your literary pursuits, but I hope the Lord will prevent your studying yourself out of that simplicity with which you preached while in business. I hope you will study Jesus Christ and him crucified. Study the *text* of the good word of God. Beware of great books. The first Christians had none to read, yet they lived honourably and died triumphantly. Beware of leaning too much upon human authority, even the best; you may get useful hints from sound divines, but call no man *master*. There are mixtures of human infirmity, and the prejudices of education or party, in the best writers. What is good in them, they obtained from the fountain of truth, the scriptures; and you have as good a right to go to the fountain-head yourself. If you had been designed earlier for the ministry and the kirk, you must have worn the college-trammels, and in order to have obtained a licence, you must have learnt many things, which you might afterwards wished in vain to forget. But the Lord seems to have called you as he did the pro-

phet. See Amos iv. 14, 15. I object not to your adding to your stock of general knowledge, so far as it is made subordinate and subservient to the main point; but watch and pray, that your studies may not rob you of life and unction, and betray you into a nice, critical, curious, and dry manner of preaching. If you need not this caution, I know you will at least excuse and accept it as a token of my goodwill. The effect of your own meditation and prayer over a text of scripture, will afford you more light, warmth, strength, and comfort, than the perusal of a large book upon the subject; and what you thus receive from the Lord, you will deliver also to the people, and you will deliver it as you have received it. When it comes warm from your heart, it will warm the hearts of your hearers.

Permit me likewise to advise you, to avoid all controversial points as much as possible. To preach the simple truth is the best preservative from error, as the best way of keeping tares out of the bushel is to fill it with wheat before hand. The religion that cometh from above, though founded upon doctrines, is not so much a string of sentiments, in what we call a system, as a new nature, a new life. If a man be not born again it signifies little whether he be called Calvinist or Arminian, whether he belong to church or kirk, relief, circus, or tabernacle. He may have a name to live amongst his party, but he is dead, and incapable, as to spirituals, as the stones in the street. On the other hand, if he be born from on high, he is a new creature, and though he may be, for a season, under many incidental mistakes, the grace which has called him will prevail over all, and will teach him, in due time, all that the Lord sees

needful for him to know. His children will all see eye to eye in heaven, but they have not all equal light upon earth. "Who teacheth like Him?" He taught his disciples gradually, as they were able to bear it: but we are apt to be too hasty tutors. Pope Self, if he is not checked, will expect his pupils to receive, at one hearing, all that he says, and upon the authority of his saying it, and is angry if they do not. Calvinists should be the meekest and most patient of all men, if they held fast their own principle,—“that a man can receive nothing, unless (and until) it is given him from above.” Let us preach the deity and atonement of the Saviour—the influences of the Holy Spirit—the dreadful evil of sin, as exhibited in the sufferings of Christ, when treated as a sinner for our sakes—the new birth—and the nature and necessity of that holiness which is an essential part of salvation, and without which no man shall see the Lord. These points will accord with the feelings of all who are truly taught of God; and if, in some things, they be otherwise minded, he will, in due time, reveal it unto them, if he sees it necessary. Thus he taught us step by step, shewing much patience and long-suffering towards us, though we were dull scholars, and thus may we learn of him, to speak the truth in love.

‘I am glad to keep my friends, so long as the Lord is pleased to spare them; but when they are called home, I do not much grieve, if I can follow them in my thoughts to the kingdom of glory. If ministers, I know they did not die till their appointed labours and trials were completed; and I know that he will never want instruments to carry on his work. He can bring them even from Africa. There is not a

person in Britain more unlikely or unfit for his service than I once was: but grace has long and strong arms, and his mercy is boundless!

‘ I am glad you are upon your guard against the snares of kind friends. We are usually more hurt by the smiles than by the frowns of men. But happy is the man who feels his own weakness, and looks for safety to him, who alone is able to keep him from falling.

‘ I have tried hard to send you one long letter more. Whether it will be the last, the Lord only knows. If *He* is with us, we are not necessary to each other. He will care for us. Let us meet at the throne of grace daily;—and hereafter!—Oh what a prospect! Words, yea thoughts fail; we cannot conceive what it will be, to be for ever with the Lord.

‘ I commend you to his blessing. Pray for us,

‘ I remain

‘ Your affectionate friend,

J. N.

Another letter, addressed also to a minister of a different communion, will show with what plainness, mixed with gentleness, he could counsel and admonish. It also furnishes us with his deliberate judgment on an important question, connected with the preaching of the gospel.

The friend addressed, had requested his opinion of a manuscript charge, delivered at the ordination of another minister. Mr. Newton replies:—

‘ I feel myself much obliged by your kind confidence in sending me the manuscript Charge. It came just in time. If the Lord please, we go in a

few days to Southampton, and many things press upon me previous to my leaving town.

‘ I have read your Charge with some attention, and with pleasure; and, as you bid me, with a pen in my hand; but I found no use for it, except to supply a word in two or three places. I found nothing in it that I wished either altered or omitted. Your sentiments and observations are, in my judgment, very just, very important, and very seasonable.

‘ But I felt a want of something. I was sorry that your plan confined you so strictly to the single point of department. I compared your charge to a historical painting in which the light, colouring, and shade were properly observed: the inferior groupes of objects and circumstances were well delineated and disposed; but the principal figure, to which all the principal parts of the picture should refer, was left out. A connoisseur would think this a defect which could not be compensated by the most masterly execution of the other parts. Suppose the subject were the Death of Cæsar; though the conspirators and the scene were finely drawn, if Cæsar himself were left out, the piece would be very defective. I think a charge concerning the ministry of the gospel cannot be complete, unless a general idea, at least, of the gospel be given, and the character and offices of the Saviour be recognized.

A minister may be diligent in his work, regular in his family, resident with his people, and attentive to them. and in many respects exemplary in his outward conduct, and yet not preach “ Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” I had no personal acquaintance with Dr. Priestley, but I have been told that he was diligent in his way; took much pains, both



publicly and from house to house; and that his personal conduct, as a man, was, in the common sense of the word, very moral, and free from blame.

‘ I hope and believe that, though perhaps you and I do not think exactly alike on all points, yet our leading views, motives, and aims, are the same. And therefore though I highly approve the Charge, so far as it goes, I cannot wish to see it in print, without some express testimony to the atonement, person, and offices of Christ, and the influences of the Holy Spirit. I both love and respect you: I am interested in you as a friend: and therefore I should be sorry to see a publication from you capable of an ambiguous construction, and which might give occasion to some severe critic to ask—‘ Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?’

You desired, yea you enjoined me, to be free and faithful in my remarks. I have obeyed you, and therefore I make no apology: I give you my sentiments in the spirit of friendship and love. May the Lord bless you in your ministry, and in all your connections. I request your prayers for us. I am, with true regard, dear Sir, your affectionate and obliged friend and brother,

‘ JOHN NEWTON.’

The deliberate judgment of such a man as Mr. N. surely deserves to be carefully weighed. A preacher of the gospel cannot too constantly bear in mind, that each time he enters the pulpit, he may be addressing some one who never heard the gospel before, and who may never have another opportunity of hearing it. With this thought full on his mind, he will surely hardly venture to close his address without a clear,

sufficient, and explicit statement of the only way of salvation, and a practical application of the subject to the hearts of his hearers.

In a subsequent letter, addressed to Mrs. More, we observe the spirit in which Mr. N. was accustomed to meet and contemplate tribulations, whether in himself or others,—whether personal or national.

1801.

‘ MY DEAR MADAM,

‘ “ Blessed are ye when men revile and persecute you, and speak all manner of evil against you, *falsely*,” and for “ *my name’s sake*.”

‘ When I consider whose words these are, I am more disposed to congratulate than to condole with you, on the unjust and hard treatment you have met with. Yet I do feel for you. These things are not joyous but grievous at the time; it is afterwards that they yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Cheer up, my dear friend—tarry thou the Lord’s leisure. Be strong and he shall comfort thy heart. Depend upon it all shall turn out to the furtherance of that gospel, for which you are engaged. See Psalm xxxvii. 4, 5, 6, and Rev. iii. 7—13;—that whole message belongs to you, and I trust you will live to see it fulfilled. When Sennacherib insulted Hezekiah, and blasphemed the God of Israel, the king said, ‘ Answer him not! I will put the cause into the Lord’s hands, and he will plead for us, better than we could for ourselves.’ So the event proved in the issue. I have little doubt but the stir that has been made, will conduce to your vindication and honour. But if not, the Lord will honour and own you, before the assembled world, in the great

day of his appearance. In the mean time let us pray for and pity those who know not what they do. A word from him can open the eyes of the blind, and soften the heart of stone.

‘The new year we have begun is likely to prove very eventful. The eye of sense starts at the prospect, but faith sees a hand guiding in the darkest cloud, and reports, that ‘the Lord reigns, be the earth never so unquiet.’ He is carrying on his great designs, in a way worthy of himself, and with an especial regard to his church. To manifest his glory in the salvation of all who believe in the Son of his love; and that his character in the combination of his infinite wisdom, power, holiness, justice, sovereignty, mercy, grace, and truth, might be fully exhibited to the universe, was I believe, the great purpose for which the earth was formed. Prov. viii. 23—31. *ἡ σοφία, ἡ ἐπιστήμη, ἡ ἀνομιμία, ἡ ἀνομιμία, ἡ ἀνομιμία* — *Rom. xvi. 20—26.*

‘He does and will overrule all the designs of men to the furtherance and accomplishment of his holy plan. Not only his friends, but his enemies contribute to it. The wrath of man, so far as it is permitted to act, shall praise him, and the remainder of their wrath,—whatever they mean more than is subservient to his purpose,—he will restrain. Moses and Joshua were his willing servants, but Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar were equally his servants, though they regarded him not; they acted under his secret commission, and could do no more than he appointed them. It is the same now with Bonaparte. When I heard of his unexpected escape from Syria, and arrival in France, I instantly concluded that the Lord had some important business for him to do. And when he has done his work, he will be laid

aside, as many who have been employed in services, (not so fit for the godly,) have been before him. We perhaps have been tempted almost to wish that some persons had not been born, or had been taken away before they had opportunity of doing so much mischief: but what the Lord said to Pharaoh, will apply to all who are like-minded.—“For this very cause have I raised thee up.” Pharaoh’s oppression of Israel prepared the way for their deliverance, and issued in his final overthrow. He permits his people to be brought low, that his interposition in their behalf may become the more signal, and the more glorious.

‘When I consider all second causes and instruments, as mere saws and hammers in the workman’s hands, and that they can neither give us pleasure nor pain, but as our Lord and Saviour is pleased to employ them, I feel a degree of peace and composure. I have been long aiming to learn this lesson, but I am a slow scholar; and when I hope I have made an attainment one day, perhaps the very next I have to learn it over again. Appearances make me anxious, and I forget the report of faith. But though we believe not, He abideth faithful. I am, at least in my deliberate judgment, firmly assured, that he has done, still does, and still will do, all things well. How little can we judge of this great drama by a single scene! But when we see the catastrophe, how shall we love, and praise and wonder! ]

‘Dear Miss Catlett was lately visited by a fever, with some alarming symptoms; but our great physician heard prayer. He soon rebuked the fever and it left her. She was abroad again within the week. Help us with your prayers and praises. We both

love you and all your sisters. We still remember the kindness and pleasures of Cowslip Green. May the Lord bless you all with that wisdom which cometh from above, and with that peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

‘The old man of seventy-six is still favoured with perfect health, and can still preach as loud, as long, and as often, as formerly. He is still heard with acceptance, and has cause to hope the Lord owns his ministry. ‘O to grace how great a debtor,’ is the poor African blasphemer and profligate !

‘I am, my dear Madam,

‘Your very affectionate and much obliged,

‘JOHN NEWTON.’

But Mr. N. had yet another storm to weather. While we were contemplating, says Mr. Cecil, the long and rough voyage he had passed, and thought he had only now to rest in a quiet haven, and with a fine sunset at the close of the evening of his life ; clouds began to gather again, and seemed to threaten a wreck at the very entry of the port.

He used to make excursions in the summer to different friends in the country ; endeavouring to make these visits profitable to them and their neighbours, by his continual prayers, and the exposition he gave of the scriptures read at their morning and evening worship. I have heard of some who were first brought to the knowledge of themselves and of God, by attending his exhortations on these occasions ; for, indeed, besides what he undertook in a more stated way at the church, he seldom entered a room, but something both profitable and entertaining fell from his lips.

After the death of Miss Cunningham and Mrs. N.—his companion in these summer excursions was his other niece, Miss Elizabeth Catlett. This young lady had also been brought up by Mr. and Mrs. N. with Miss Cunningham; and on the death of the two latter, she became the object of Mr. N.'s naturally affectionate disposition. She also became quite necessary to him by her administrations in his latter years: she watched him, walked with him, and visited wherever he went: when his sight failed, she read to him, divided his food, and was unto him all that a dutiful daughter could be.

But, in the year 1801, a nervous disorder seized her, by which Mr. N. was obliged to submit to her being separated from him. During the twelvemonth it lasted, the weight of the affliction, added to his weight of years, seemed to overwhelm him. A few of his reflections on the occasion, written on some blank leaves in an edition of his 'Letters to a Wife,' will possess some interest:—

'August 1st, 1801. I now enter my 77th year. I have been exercised this year with a trying and unexpected change; but it is by thy appointment, my gracious Lord, and thou art unchangeably wise, good, and merciful. Thou gavest me my dear adopted child. Thou didst own my endeavours to bring her up for thee. I have no doubt that thou hast called her by thy grace. I thank thee for the many years' comfort I have had in her; and for the attention and affection she has always shown me, exceeding that of most daughters to their own parents. Thou hast now tried me, as thou didst Abraham, in my old age; when my eyes are failing, and my strength declines. Thou hast called for my

Isaac, who had so long been my chief stay and staff; but it was thy blessing that made her so. A nervous disorder has seized her, and I desire to leave her under thy care; and chiefly pray for myself, that I may be enabled to wait thy time and will, without betraying any signs of impatience or despondency unbecoming my profession and character. Hitherto thou hast helped me; and to thee I look for help in future. Let all issue in thy glory, that my friends and hearers may be encouraged by seeing how I am supported: let thy strength be manifested in my weakness, and thy grace be sufficient for me, and let all finally work together for our good. Amen! I am to say from my heart, "Not my will, but thine be done." But, though thou hast in a measure made my spirit willing, thou knowest, and I feel, that the flesh is weak. "Lord, I believe: help thou my unbelief." Lord, I submit: subdue every rebellious thought that dares arise against thy will. Spare my eyes, if it please thee; but, above all, strengthen my faith and love.'

It may give the reader pleasure to be informed that Miss Catlett returned home, gradually recovered: and afterwards married a worthy and respectable member of Mr. Newton's congregation.

The following letter, one of the last we shall produce, was written about this period, and under this affliction; Mr. N. being then in his seventy-eighth year:—

‘ *London, Sept. 19, 1802.*

‘ MY DEAR SIR,

‘ It is high time to thank you for your kind conso-

latory letter of the 30th June: but my eyes fail me, so that I cannot write much. I am under a painful dispensation; but I am mercifully supported—not by lively frames, or sensible comforts, I have seldom been favoured with these—but I am enabled, by his grace, to cleave to his written word. I believe that this affliction does not spring out of the ground; that the thing is of the Lord; and that he is wise and good, and therefore surely does, and will do, all things well. I believe he can, and I trust he will, bring light out of this dark dispensation; but it is my part to wait his time, way, and will, with submission.

‘ My health is good, and my spirits: I eat and sleep as usual, and preach as much, and seemingly, with as much acceptance, as formerly. Perhaps I may be heard more attentively now; for they who know me, take it for granted that I could not preach at all, as things are, if the Lord himself was not to uphold me. I hope some are encouraged by observing his goodness to me; and possibly I may speak with more emphasis to the afflicted from what I feel in myself.

‘ The Lord is a sovereign—I am a sinner. He has the same right to me and mine, as the potter over the clay; and if he has pardoned our sins, and united us to himself, all will be well at last. We ought to be willing to be placed in the most painful situation, if it may promote his glory, which should be our highest end; for he suffered much more for us than he will ever lay upon us. And since he has said, “ My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength shall be perfected in thy weakness,” and promised that all shall work together for good in the final



issue, I am to leave all in his hands, and am, in some measure, enabled to do so. But, I find, if the spirit be willing, the flesh is weak. Self and unbelief often assail me.

‘Time is short—we are travelling on, and shall soon be at home. Then, farewell sin and sorrow for ever. Heaven and eternity will make rich amends, for all the sufferings which his wise plan may appoint us to endure while here.

‘A report has just reached me, that you have accepted a call to \* \* \* \*, and are settled there: but as I am not sure you are yet removed from Glasgow, I shall direct to you there, and I dare say the letter will find you out. Write as soon as convenient. Give my love to Mrs. B—— and Mr. R——, and to all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and who inquire after me. I beg all your prayers. I need them, and I prize them. My love to Mr. E—— and his mother-in-law; I thank them for thinking of us. May the Lord remember them, and do them much good.

‘May the Lord bless you wherever you are, and make you a blessing to many. Amen.

‘I am your affectionate and obliged,

‘J. N.’

It was with a mixture of delight and surprise, that the friends and hearers of this eminent servant of God beheld him bringing forth such a measure of fruit in extreme age. Though then almost eighty years old, his sight nearly gone, and incapable, through deafness, of joining in conversation; yet his public ministry was regularly continued, and maintained with a considerable degree of his former

animation. His memory, indeed, was observed to fail, but his judgment in divine things still remained: and, though some depression of spirits was observed, which he used to account for from his advanced age; yet his perception, taste, and zeal for the truths which he had long received and taught were evident. Like Simeon, having seen the salvation of the Lord, he now only waited and prayed to depart in peace.

A friend writes, in his memoranda of this period:

‘Having returned to London on the 26th of October, 1803, I called at Mr. Newton’s next morning. I found him attempting to read a little. When I told him who I was, he said, ‘Stop a little till I recollect myself.’ After being silent for about a minute, he held out his hand, saying, ‘I am glad to see you. I am very feeble. I never experienced before what it was to be seventy-nine.’

‘While at dinner, conversing of the awful effects of sin in the world, he said—‘That little of the effects of sin were to be seen here, in comparison of what shall be seen in the eternal world.

‘‘Satan,’ said he, ‘frequently does great damage to the minds of God’s people, in dulling their powers to perceive the truth, and to feel their interest in the Lord. It resembles this:—Suppose my spectacles a part of my body, and while I was asleep some person painted the glasses green; in the morning, when I awoke, I should see every thing green.’

‘When the servant was employed putting on his shoes, he looked up, saying, ‘I had not this trouble in Africa! for I had no shoes. Sir,’ [looking to me] ‘when I rose in the morning, and shook myself like

a dog, I was dressed. For forty years past, I have thought, every waking hour, on my former misery.'

Under the date of Jan. 26, 1804, the same friend observes,—

'He told me that after he was settled at Olney, and had preached six sermons, he thought he had told them his whole stock, and was considerably depressed. 'But,' said he, 'I was walking one afternoon by the side of the river Ouse; I asked myself, How long has this river run? Many hundred years before I was born, and will certainly run many years after I am gone. Who supplies the fountain from whence this river comes? God. Is not the fund for my sermons equally inexhaustible?—the word of God. Yes, surely. I have never been afraid of running out, since that time.' I asked if he had consumed all the variety in the bible now he was an old man and an old minister. He smiled, and said, 'O no, Sir; O no, Sir!''

In May, 1805, the same writer observes,—

'I asked Mr. N. how he did. 'Never in better health, but my animal spirits very low.' 'Do you purpose trying a few weeks in the country this summer? The country air might recruit your spirits.' 'No, Sir, I do not intend now to move beyond the stones of London. I am eighty. I have but little time left. I would not leave my people now for a thousand pounds.' 'How does past life appear when looked back to from the top of eighty?' 'Like a dream!'

'A friend told me that he was present at Mr. N.'s when some ministers were disputing whether faith

or repentance were first. Mr. N. was silent till the debate was ended; then he said—‘ I have a question to ask. Are not the heart and lungs of a man both equally necessary to the life of the man?’ ‘ Yes, surely.’ ‘ Well, tell me which of these began to play first? This resembles the point you have been discussing?’

After Mr. N. was turned of eighty, some of his friends feared he might continue his public ministrations too long. They marked not only his infirmities in the pulpit, but felt much on account of the decrease of his strength and his occasional depressions. Conversing with him, (says Mr. Cecil,) in January 1806, on the latter, he observed, that he had experienced nothing which in the least affected the principles he had felt and taught; that his depressions were the natural result of *fourscore years*; and that, at any age, we can only enjoy that comfort from our principles which God is pleased to send. ‘ But,’ replied I, ‘ in the article of public preaching, might it not be best to consider your work as done, and stop before you evidently discover you can speak no longer?’ ‘ I cannot stop!’ said he, raising his voice, ‘ *What! shall the old African blasphemer stop while he can speak?*’

In every future visit, I perceived old age making rapid strides. At length his friends found some difficulty in making themselves known to him: his sight, his hearing, and his recollection exceedingly failed; but, being mercifully kept from pain, he generally appeared easy and cheerful. Whatever he uttered was perfectly consistent with the principles which he had so long and so honourably maintained.

Calling to see him, a few days before he died, with one of his most intimate friends, we could not make him recollect either of us; but, seeing him afterwards, when sitting up in his chair, I found so much intellect remaining, as produced a short and affectionate reply, though he was utterly incapable of conversation.

Mr. N. declined in this very gradual way, till at length it was painful to ask him a question, or to attempt to rouse faculties almost gone: still his friends were anxious to get a word from him, and those friends who survive him will be as anxious to learn the state of his mind in his latest hours. It is quite natural thus to inquire, though it is not important *how* such a decided character left this world. I have heard Mr. N. say when he has heard particular inquiry made about the last expressions of an eminent Christian, 'Tell me not how the man died, but how he lived.'

Still I say it is natural to inquire: and I will meet the desire; not by trying to expand uninteresting particulars, but, so far as I can collect encouraging *facts*: and I learn from a paper, kindly sent me by his family, all that is interesting and authentic.

About a month before Mr. N.'s death, Mr. Smith's niece was sitting by him, to whom he said, 'It is a great thing to die; and, when flesh and heart fail, to have God for the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever. "I know whom I have believed, and he is able to keep that which I have committed against that great day. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."' '

One who had called in to see him, thought to comfort and strengthen him, by speaking of the great good that had been done by his writings; but he only remarked, in reply, 'I need none of these sweetmeats.'

'When Mrs. Smith came into the room, he said, 'I have been meditating on a subject, "Come, and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul."'

At another time he said, 'More light, more love, more liberty. Hereafter, I hope, when I shut my eyes on the things of time, I shall open them in a better world. What a thing it is to live under the shadow of the wings of the Almighty? I am going the way of all flesh.' And when one replied, 'The Lord is gracious,' he answered, 'If it were not so, how could I dare to stand before him?'

The Wednesday before he died, Mrs. G—— asked him, if his mind was comfortable: he replied, 'I am satisfied with the Lord's will.'

Mr. N. seemed sensible to his last hour, but expressed nothing remarkable after these words. He departed on the 21st, and was buried in the vault of his church on the 31st of December, 1807, having left the following injunction in a letter for the direction of his executors:—

'I propose writing an epitaph for myself, if it may be put up, on a plain marble tablet, near the vestry door, to the following purport:—

## JOHN NEWTON, CLERK,

Once an Infidel and Libertine,  
 A servant of slaves in Africa,  
 Was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour  
 JESUS CHRIST,  
 Preserved, restored, pardoned,  
 And appointed to preach the Faith  
 He had long laboured to destroy,  
 Near sixteen years at Olney in Bucks ;  
 And . . . years in this church.

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On Feb. 1, 1750, he married  
 MARY,  
 Daughter of the late George Catlett,  
 Of Chatham, Kent.

He resigned her to the Lord who gave her,  
 On 15th December, 1790.

And I earnestly desire that no other monument, and no inscription but to this purport, may be attempted for me.'

The following is a copy of the exordium of Mr. Newton's will, dated June 13, 1803.

'In the name of God, Amen. I, JOHN NEWTON, of Coleman Street Buildings, in the parish of St. Stephen, Coleman Street, in the city of London, Clerk, being through mercy in good health, and of sound and disposing mind, memory, and understanding, although in the seventy-eighth year of my age, do; for the settling of my temporal concerns, and for the disposal of all the worldly estate which it hath pleased the Lord in his good providence to give me, make this my last Will and Testament as follows.

I commit my soul to my gracious God and Saviour, who mercifully spared and preserved me, when I was an Apostate, a Blasphemer, and an Infidel, and delivered me from that state of misery on the coast of Africa into which my obstinate wickedness had plunged me; and who has been pleased to admit me (though most unworthy) to preach his Glorious Gospel. I rely with humble confidence upon the atonement and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, God and Man, which I have often proposed to others as the only foundation whereon a sinner can build his hope; trusting that he will guard and guide me through the uncertain remainder of my life, and that he will then admit me into his presence in his heavenly kingdom. I would have my body deposited in the vault under the parish church of St. Mary Woolnoth, close to the coffins of my late dear wife, and my dear niece Elizabeth Cunningham; and it is my desire that my funeral may be performed with as little expense as possible, consistent with decency.'



## CHAPTER VIII.

*Mr. Newton's character ;—Specimens of his table-talk—  
General remarks.*

THERE seems to be little need, (says Mr. Cecil,) of giving a general character of Mr. N. after the particulars which appear in the foregoing Memoirs. He unquestionably was the child of a peculiar providence, in every step of his progress ; and his deep sense of the extraordinary dispensation through which he had passed, was the prominent topic in his conversation. Those, however, who could not view the subject of these Memoirs so closely as his particular friends did, may wish to learn something further of his character, with respect to his LITERARY ATTAINMENTS—his MINISTRY—his FAMILY HABITS—his WRITINGS—and his FAMILIAR CONVERSATION.

Of his LITERATURE, we learn from his 'Narrative' what he attained in the learned languages ; and that by almost incredible efforts. Few men have undertaken such difficulties under such disadvantages. It therefore seems more extraordinary, that he should have attained so much, than that he should not have acquired more. Nor did he quit his pursuits of this kind, but in order to gain that know-

ledge which he deemed much more important. Whatever he conceived had a tendency to qualify him, as “a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God, bringing out of his treasury things new and old,”—I say, in pursuit of *this* point, he might have adopted the Apostle’s expression, “*One thing I do.*” By a principle so simply and firmly directed, he furnished his mind with much information : he had consulted the best old divines ; had read the moderns of reputation with avidity ; and was continually watching for whatever might serve for analogies or illustrations in the service of religion. ‘A Minister,’ he used to say, ‘wherever he is, should be always at his studies. He should look at every man, and at every thing, as capable of affording him some instruction.’ His mind, therefore, was ever intent on his calling ; ever extracting something, even from the basest materials, which he could turn into gold. And in consequence of this incessant attention to this object, while many, whose early advantages greatly exceeded his, might excel Mr. N. in the knowledge and investigation of some curious, abstract, but very unimportant points ; he vastly excelled them in points of infinitely higher importance.

With respect to his MINISTRY, he appeared, perhaps, to least advantage in the pulpit ; as he did not generally aim at accuracy in the *composition* of his sermons, nor at any *address* in the delivery of them. His utterance was far from clear, and his attitudes ungraceful. He possessed, however, so much affection for his people, and so much zeal for their best interests, that the defect of his manner was of little consideration with his constant hearers : at the same time, his capacity and habit of entering into their

trials and experience, gave the highest interest to his ministry among them. Besides which, he frequently interspersed the most brilliant allusions; and brought forward such happy illustrations of his subject, and those with so much unction on his own heart, as melted and enlarged theirs. The parent-like tenderness and affection, which accompanied his instruction, made them prefer him to preachers, who, on other accounts, were much more generally popular.

It ought also to be noted, that, amidst the extravagant notions and unscriptural positions which have too frequently distracted the religious world, Mr. N. never departed, in any instance, from soundly and seriously promulgating the "faith once delivered to the saints;" of which his writings will remain the best evidence. His doctrine was strictly that of the Church of England, urged on the consciences of men in the most practical and experimental manner. 'I hope,' said he one day to me, smiling, 'I hope I am upon the whole a SCRIPTURAL preacher; for I find I am considered as an Arminian among the high Calvinists, and as a Calvinist among the strenuous Arminians.'

I never observed any thing like bigotry in his ministerial character; though he seemed at all times to appreciate the beauty of order, and its good effects in the ministry. He had formerly been intimately connected with some highly respectable ministers among the dissenters, and retained a cordial regard for such to the last. He considered the strong prejudices which often alienate Churchmen and Dissenters, as arising more from education than from principle. But, being himself both a Clergyman and an Incumbent in the Church of England, he wished

to be consistent. In public, therefore, he felt he could not act with some ministers, whom he thought truly good men, and to whom he cordially wished success in their endeavours; and he patiently met the consequence. They called him a *bigot*; and he, in return, prayed for them, that they might not be *really* such.

He had formerly taken much pains in composing his sermons, as I could perceive in one MS. which I looked through; and, even latterly, I have known him, whenever he felt it necessary, produce admirable plans for the pulpit. I own I thought his judgment deficient, in not deeming such preparation expedient at *all* times. I have sat in pain, when he has spoken unguardedly in this way before young ministers; men, who with but comparatively slight degrees of his information and experience, would draw encouragement to ascend the pulpit with but little previous study of their subject. A minister is not to be blamed, who cannot rise to qualifications which some of his brethren have attained; but he is certainly bound to improve his own talent to the utmost of his power: he is not to cover his sloth, or his love of company, under a *pretence* of depending entirely on *divine influence*. Timothy had as good ground, at least, for expecting such influence, as any of his successors in the ministry; and yet the Apostle admonishes him to *give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine—to neglect not the gift that was in him—to meditate upon these things—to give himself WHOLLY to them, that his profiting might appear to all.*

Mr. N. regularly preached on the Sunday morning and evening at St. Mary Woolnoth, and also on the

Wednesday morning. After he was past seventy he often undertook to assist other clergymen; sometimes even to the preaching of six sermons in the space of a week. What was more extraordinary, he continued his usual course of preaching at his own church after he was fourscore years old, and that, when he could no longer see to read his text! His memory and voice sometimes failed him; but it was remarked, that, at this great age, he was no where more recollected or lively than in the pulpit.

His ministerial visits were exemplary. I do not recollect one, though favoured with many, in which his general information and lively genius did not communicate instruction, and his affectionate and condescending sympathy impart comfort.

Truth demands it should be said, that he did not always administer consolation, nor give an estimate of character, with sufficient discrimination. His talent did not lie in *discerning of spirits*. I never saw him so much moved, as when any friend endeavoured to correct his errors in this respect. His credulity seemed to arise from the consciousness he had of his own integrity; and from that sort of parental fondness which he bore to all his friends, real or pretended. I knew one, since dead, whom he thus described, while living—‘He is certainly an odd man, and has his failings; but he has great integrity, and I hope he is going to heaven:’ whereas, almost all who knew the man thought he should go first into the pillory!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is, probably, here that we should turn, for any further explanation that might be thought desirable, as to the cause of his leaving Olney. Every thing in his life goes to negative the idea that in ex-

In his FAMILY Mr. N. might be admired more safely than imitated. His excessive attachment to Mrs. N. has been already so fully displayed in the course of the present narrative, that the reader will need no information on this subject. He used, indeed, to speak of such attachments, in the abstract, as *idolatry*; though his own was providentially ordered to be the main hinge on which his preservation and deliverance turned while in his worst state. Good men, however, cannot be too cautious how they give sanction, by their expressions or example, to a passion which, when not under sober regulation, has overwhelmed not only families, but states, with disgrace and ruin.

With his unusual degree of benevolence and affection, it was not extraordinary that the spiritual interests of his servants were brought forward, and examined severally, every Sunday afternoon; nor that, being treated like children, they should grow old in his service. In short, Mr. N. could *live* no longer than he could *love*: it is no wonder, therefore, if his nieces had more of his heart than is generally afforded to their own children by the fondest parents. It has already been mentioned, that his house was

changing that post for one in London, either mercenary motives, or a lust of popularity, were, in the least degree, his actuating motives. It is recorded, that near the end of his life, the conversation happened to turn one day upon a minister's apparent desertion of an important post; when Mr. Newton, with that overflowing of the "charity which hopeth all things," by which he was ever distinguished,—remarked, that the person alluded to might have good reasons which he could not publicly assign. 'When I left Olney,' added he, 'I had grounds for my determination which I could not have proclaimed at the Royal Exchange.' These grounds, there is every reason to believe, consisted chiefly in the difficulties flowing from the constitutional deficiency which Mr. Cecil has here pointed out.

an asylum for the perplexed or afflicted. Young ministers were peculiarly the objects of his attention: he instructed them: he encouraged them: he warned them: and might truly be said to be a father in Christ, *spending and being spent*, for the interest of his church. In order thus to execute the various avocations of the day, he used to rise early: he seldom was found abroad in the evening, and was always exact in his appointments.

Of his WRITINGS, I think little needs to be said here; most of them are in wide circulation, and best speak for themselves. At present, therefore, what I shall observe upon them will be but general and cursory.

The 'Sermons' which Mr. N. published at Liverpool, after being refused on his first application for orders, were intended to show what he would have preached, had he been admitted: they are highly creditable to his understanding and to his heart. The facility with which he attained so much of the learned languages seems partly accounted for, from his being able to acquire so early, a neat and natural style in his own language, and that under such evident disadvantages. His 'Review of Ecclesiastical History,' so far as it proceeded, has been much esteemed; and, if it had done no more than excite the Rev. Joseph Milner (as that most valuable and instructive author informs us it did) to pursue Mr. N.'s idea more largely, it cannot be held to have been written in vain. Before this, the world seems to have lost sight of a history of real Christianity; and to have been content with what, for the most part, was but an account of the ambition and politics of

secular men to whom it was convenient to assume the Christian name.<sup>1</sup>

It must be evident to any one who observes the spirit of all his Sermons, Hymns, Tracts, &c. that nothing is aimed at which should be met by critical investigation. In the preface to his Hymns, he remarks: ' Though I would not offend readers of taste, by a wilful coarseness and negligence, I do not write professedly for them. I have simply declared my own views and feelings, as I might have done if I had composed hymns in some of the newly-discovered islands in the South Sea, where no person had any knowledge of the name of Jesus but myself.'

To dwell, therefore, with a critical eye on this part of his public character would be absurd and impertinent: it would be to erect a tribunal to which he seems not amenable. He appears to have paid no regard to a nice ear, or an accurate reviewer; but, preferring a style at once neat and perspicuous, to have laid out himself entirely for the service of the Church of God, and more especially for the tried and experienced part of its members.

His chief excellence, as a writer, seemed to lie in the easy and natural style of his epistolary correspondence. His Letters will be read while real religion exists; and they furnish the best portrait and expression of his own mind. He esteemed that collection published under the title of 'Cardiphonia' as

<sup>1</sup> Cowper, in one of his letters to Mr. N. thus alludes to this work: ' I have always regretted that your Ecclesiastical History went no further. I never saw a work that I thought more likely to serve the cause of truth; nor history applied to so good a purpose. The style, in my judgment, is incomparably better than that of Robertson or Gibbon.'



the most useful of his writings, and mentioned various instances of the benefits which he heard they had conveyed to many.

His 'Apologia,' or defence of conformity, was written on occasion of some reflections (perhaps only jocular) cast on him at that time. His 'Letters to a Wife,' written during his three voyages to Africa, and published in 1793, have been received with less satisfaction than most of his other writings. While, however, his advanced age and inordinate fondness may be pleaded for this publication, care should be taken lest men fall into a contrary extreme; and suppose *that* temper to be their *wisdom*, which leads them to avoid another, which they consider as his *weakness*. But his 'Messiah,' before mentioned, his 'Letters of the Rev. Mr. Vanlier, chaplain at the Cape,' his Memoirs of the Rev. John Cowper (brother to the poet,) and those of the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw, of Yorkshire, together with his single sermons and tracts, have been well received, and will remain a public benefit.

To speak of his writings in the mass, they certainly possess what many have aimed at, but very few attained, namely, *originality*. They speak the language of the heart: they show a deep experience of its religious feelings; a continual anxiety to sympathize with man in his wants, and to direct him to his only never-failing resource.

His CONVERSATION, and familiar habits with his friends, were more peculiar, amusing, and instructive, than any I ever witnessed. It is difficult to convey a clear idea of them by description. I venture, therefore, to add a few pages of what I may call his *Table Talk*, which I took down at different

times, both in company and in private, from his lips. Such a collection of printed remarks will not have so much point, as when spoken in connection with the occasions that produced them : they must appear to considerable disadvantage thus detached ; and candid allowance should be made by the reader on this account. They, however, who had the privilege of Mr. N.'s conversation when living, cannot but recognize the speaker in most of them, and will derive both profit and pleasure from these remains of their late valuable friend ; and such as had not, will (if I do not mistake) think them the most valuable part of this book.

‘ While the mariner uses the loadstone, the philosopher may attempt to investigate the *rationale* of its operation ; but, after all, in steering through the ocean, he can make no other use of it than the mariner.

‘ If an angel were sent to find the most perfect man, he would probably not find him composing a body of divinity, but laying a cripple in a poor-house, whom the parish wish dead ; a man humbled before God with far lower thoughts of himself than others have of him.

‘ When a Christian goes into the world, because he sees it is his *call*, yet, while he feels it also his *cross*, it will not hurt him.

‘ Satan will seldom come to a Christian with a gross temptation : a green log and a candle may be safely left together ; but bring a few shavings, then some small sticks, and then larger, and you may soon reduce the green log to ashes.

‘ If two angels came down from heaven to execute a divine command, and one was appointed to con-

duct an empire, and the other to sweep a street in it, they would feel no inclination to exchange employments.

‘ What some call providential openings are often powerful temptations. The heart, in wandering, cries, ‘ Here is a way opened before me ;’ but, perhaps, not to be *trodden*, but *rejected*.

‘ A Christian should never plead spirituality for being a sloven: if he be but a shoe-cleaner, he should be the best in the parish.

‘ My course of study, like that of a surgeon, has principally consisted in walking the hospital.

‘ In divinity, as well as in the other professions, there are the *little* artists. A man may be able to execute the buttons of a statue very neatly, but I could not call him an able artist. There is an air, there is a taste, to which his narrow capacity cannot reach.

‘ My principal method of defeating heresy, is, by establishing truth. One proposes to fill a bushel with *tares*: now if I can fill it first with *wheat*, I shall defy his attempts.

‘ When some people talk of religion, they mean they have heard so many sermons and performed so many devotions; and thus mistake the *means* for the *end*. But true religion is an habitual recollection of God, and determination to serve him; and this turns every thing into gold. We are apt to suppose that we need something splendid to evince our devotion; but true devotion equalizes things—washing plates and cleaning shoes is a high office, if performed in a right spirit.

‘ When a ship goes to sea, among a vast variety of its articles and circumstances, there is but one object

regarded, namely, doing the business of the voyage : — every bucket is employed with respect to *that*.

‘ Many have puzzled themselves about the origin of evil : I observe that there is evil, and that there is a way to escape it ; and, with this, I begin and end.

‘ Consecrated things, under the law, were first sprinkled with blood, and then anointed with oil, and were thenceforward no more common. Every Christian has been a common vessel for profane purposes ; but, when sprinkled and anointed under the gospel, he becomes separated and consecrated to God.

‘ I would not give a straw for that assurance which sin will not damp. If David had come from his adultery, and had talked of his assurance at that time, I should have despised his speech.

‘ A spirit of adoption is the spirit of a child : he may disoblige his father, yet he is not afraid of being turned out of doors. The *union* is not dissolved, though the *communion* is. But he does not stand well with his father, and therefore must be unhappy, as their interests are inseparable.

‘ We often seek to apply cordials when the patient is not prepared for them ; and it is to the patient’s advantage, that he cannot take a medicine when prematurely offered. When a man comes to me and says, ‘ I am quite happy,’ I am not sorry to find him come again with some fears. I never saw a work of grace stand well without a check. ‘ I only want,’ says one, ‘ to be sure of being safe, and then I will go on’—No ; perhaps, then you will go *off* !

‘ A Christian in the world, is like a man who has had a long intimacy with one whom at length he finds to have been the murderer of a kind father : the intimacy, the cordiality after this, will surely be broken.

‘ *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* A man may live in a deep mine in Hungary, never having seen the light of the sun : he may have received accounts of beautiful prospects, and, by the help of a candle, may have examined a few engravings of them ; but, let him be brought out of the mine and set on the mountain—what a difference appears !

‘ Candour will always allow much for inexperience. I have been thirty years forming my own views ; and, in the course of this time, some of my hills have sunk, and some of my vallies have risen : but, how unreasonable would it be to expect that all this should take place in another in the course of a year or two !

‘ Candour forbids us to estimate a character from its accidental blots. Yet it is thus that David, and others have been treated.

‘ Apollos met with two candid people in the church : they neither ran away because he was *legal*, nor were carried away because he was *eloquent*.

‘ There is the analogy of faith : it is a master-key, which not only opens particular doors, but carries you through the whole house. But an attachment to a rigid system is dangerous. Luther once turned out the epistle of St. James, because it disturbed his system. I shall preach, perhaps, very usefully upon two opposite texts, while kept apart ; but, if I attempt nicely to reconcile them, it is ten to one if I do not begin to bungle.

‘ We are surprised at the fall of a famous professor ; but, in the sight of God, the man was gone before : we only have now first discovered it. *He that despiseth small things, shall fall by little and little.*

‘ There are critical times of danger. After great services, honours, and consolations, we should stand upon our guard. Noah—Lot—David—Solomon, fell in these circumstances. Satan is a robber: a robber will not attack a man who is going to the bank, but one who is returning with his pocket full of money.

‘ A Christian is like a young nobleman, who on going to receive his estate, is at first enchanted with its prospects: this in a course of time, may wear off; but a sense of the value of the estate grows daily.

‘ When we first enter into the divine life, we propose to *grow rich*: God’s plan is to make us *feel poor*.

‘ Good men have need to take heed of building upon groundless impressions. Mr. Whitfield had a son, whom he imagined born to be a very extraordinary man: but the son soon died, and the father was cured of his mistake.

‘ Christ has taken our nature into heaven, to represent us; and has left us on earth, with his nature, to represent him.

‘ Worldly men will be true to their principles; and if we were as true to ours, the visits between the two parties would be short and seldom.

‘ A Christian in the world, is like a man transacting his affairs in the rain. He will not suddenly leave his client, because it rains; but, the moment the business is done, he is gone: as it is said in the Acts,—“*Being let go, they went to their own company.*”

‘ The Scriptures are so full, that every case may be found in them. A rake went into a church, and tried to decoy a girl, by saying, ‘ Why do you attend to such stuff as these Scriptures?’ ‘ Because,’ said she, ‘ they tell me, that, *in the last days there shall come scoffers such as you.*’

‘ God deals with us as we do with our children : he first *speaks* ; then gives a gentle *stroke* ; at last a *blow*.

‘ The religion of a sinner stands on two pillars ; namely, what Christ did for us in his flesh, and what he performs in us by his Spirit. Most errors arise from an attempt to separate these two.

‘ Man is not taught any thing to good purpose till God becomes his teacher : and then the glare of the world is put out, and the value of the soul rises in full view. A man’s present sentiments may not be accurate, but we make too much of sentiments. We pass a field with a few blades ; we call it a field of wheat ; yet here is no wheat in perfection ; but wheat is sown, and full ears may be expected.

‘ The word *temperance*, in the New Testament, signifies also *self-possession* : it is a disposition suitable to one who has a race to run, and therefore will not load his pockets with lead.

‘ Contrivers of systems on the earth, are like contrivers of systems in the heavens ; where the sun and moon keep their settled course, in spite of the philosophers.

‘ I endeavour to walk through the world as a physician goes through Bedlam ; the patients make a noise, pester him with impertinence, and hinder him in his business ; but he does the best he can, and so gets through.

‘ A man always in society, is one always on the spend : on the other hand, a mere solitary is, at his best, but a candle in an empty room.

‘ If we were upon the watch for improvement, the common news of the day would furnish it : the falling of the tower in Siloam, and the slaughter of the

Galileans, were the news of the day; which our Lord improved.

‘The generality make out their righteousness, by comparing themselves with some others whom they think worse. A woman of the town, who was dying of disease in the Lock Hospital, was offended at a minister speaking to her as a sinner, because she had never picked a pocket.

‘Take away a toy from a child and give him another, and he is satisfied; but if he be hungry, no toy will do. As new-born babes, true believers desire the sincere milk of the word; and the desire of grace, in this way, is grace.

‘A wise man looks upon men as he does upon horses, and considers their circumstances of title, wealth, and place, but as harness and caparison.

‘The force of what we deliver from the pulpit is often lost by a starched, and what is frequently called, a correct style; and at other times by adding meretricious ornaments. I called upon a lady who had been robbed, and she gave me a striking account of the fact; but had she put it into heroics, I should neither so well have understood her, nor been so well convinced that she had been robbed.

‘When a man says he received a blessing under a sermon, I begin to enquire the character of the man who speaks of the help he has received. The Roman people proved the effect they received under a sermon of Antony, when they flew to avenge the death of Cæsar.

‘The Lord often has reasons far beyond our ken, for opening a wide door, while he stops the mouth of a useful preacher. John Bunyan would not have done half the good he did, if he had remained preach-



ing in Bedford, instead of being shut up in Bedford prison.

‘ If I could go to France, and give every man in it a right and peaceable mind by my labour, I should have a statue erected to my honour ; but, to produce such an effect in one soul, by a true conversion to God, would be a far greater achievement.

‘ Ministers would overrate their labours, if they did not think it worth while to spend ten thousand years in labour and contempt, in order to recover one soul.

‘ Don’t tell me of your feelings. A traveller would be glad of fine weather ; but, if he be a man of business, he will go on. Bunyan says, also, that you must not judge of a man’s haste by his horse ; for when the horse can hardly move, you may see, by the rider’s urging him, what a hurry he is in.

‘ A man and a beast may stand upon the same mountain, and even touch one another ; yet they are in two different worlds ; the beast perceives nothing but the grass ; but the man contemplates the prospect, and thinks of a thousand remote things. Thus a Christian may be solitary at a full exchange ; he can converse with the people there upon trade, politics, and the funds ; but they cannot talk with him upon *the peace of God which passeth all understanding*.

‘ It is a mere fallacy to talk of the sins of a short life. The sinner is always a sinner. Put a pump into a river, you may throw out some water, but the river remains.

‘ Professors, who own the doctrines of free grace, often act inconsistently with their own principles, when they are angry at the defects of others. A company of travellers fall into a pit : one of them

gets a passenger to draw him out. Now he should not be angry with the rest for falling in : nor because they are not yet out, as he is. He did not pull himself out ; instead, therefore, of reproaching them, he should show them pity. He should avoid, at any rate, going down upon their ground again ; and show how much better and happier he is upon his own. We should take care that we do not make our profession of religion a receipt in full for all other obligations. A man, truly illuminated, will no more despise others, than Bartimeus, after his own eyes were opened, would take a stick, and beat every blind man he met.

‘ We much mistake, in supposing that the removal of a particular objection would satisfy the objector. Suppose I am in bed, and want to know whether it be light, it is not enough that I draw back the curtain ; for even if there be light, I must have eyes to see it.

‘ Too deep a consideration of eternal realities might unfit a man for his present circumstances. Walking through St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, or Bedlam, must deeply affect a feeling mind ; but, in reality, this world is a far worse scene. It has but two wards ; in the one, men are miserable ; in the other, mad.

‘ Some preachers near Olney dwelt on the doctrine of predestination ; an old woman said, Ah ! I have long settled that point : for, if God had not chosen me before I was born, I am sure he would have seen nothing in me to have chosen me for afterwards. ’

‘ I see the unprofitableness of controversy in the case of Job and his friends : for, if God had not interposed, had they lived to this day, they would have continued the dispute.

‘ It is often pure mercy that negatives a particular

request. A miser would pray very earnestly for gold, if he believed prayer would gain it; whereas, if Christ had any favour to him, he would take what he has away. A child walks in the garden in spring, and sees cherries: he knows they are good fruit, and therefore asks for them. 'No, my dear,' says the father, 'they are not yet ripe: stay till the season.'

'If I cannot take pleasure in infirmities, I can sometimes feel the profit of them. I can conceive a king to pardon a rebel, and take him into his family, and then say, 'I appoint you, for a season, to wear a fetter. After a certain period, I will send a messenger to knock it off. In the mean time, this fetter will serve to remind you of your state: it may humble you, and restrain you from rambling.'

'Some Christians, at a glance, seem of a superior order; and are not: they want a certain quality. At a florists' feast the other day, a certain flower was admitted to bear the bell; but it was found to be an artificial flower: there is a quality called *growth* which it had not.

'Doctor Taylor of Norwich said to me, 'Sir, I have collated every word in the Hebrew Scriptures seventeen times; and it is very strange if the doctrine of atonement, which you hold, should not have been found there by me.' I am not surprised at this: I once went to light my candle with the extinguisher on it: now, prejudices from education, learning, &c. often form an extinguisher. It is not enough that you bring the light to the candle: you must remove the extinguisher also.

'I measure ministers by square measure. I have no idea of the size of a table, if you only tell me how

*long* it is ; but, if you also say how *wide*, I can tell its dimensions. So, when you tell me what a man is in the pulpit, you must also tell me what he is out of it, or I shall not know his size.

‘ A man should be born to high things, not to lose himself in them. Slaters will walk on the ridge of a house with ease, which would turn our heads.

‘ Much depends on the way we come into trouble. Paul and Jonah were both in a storm, but in very different circumstances.

‘ The men of this world are children. Offer a child an apple and a bank note, he will doubtless choose the apple.

‘ The heir of a great estate, while a child, thinks more of a few shillings in his pocket than of his inheritance. So a Christian is often more elated by some frame of heart than by his title to glory.

‘ A dutiful child is ever looking forward to the holidays, when he shall return to his father ; but he does not think of running from school before.

‘ The Gospel is a proclamation of free mercy to guilty creatures ; an act of grace to rebels. Now, though a rebel should throw away his pistols, and determine to go into the woods, and make himself better before he goes to court and pleads the act ; he may, indeed, not be found in *arms*, yet, being taken in his reforming scheme, and not having submitted himself, he will be hanged.

‘ Man is made capable of three births : by nature, he enters into the present world ; by grace, into spiritual light and life ; by death, into glory.

‘ In my imagination, I sometimes fancy I could make a perfect minister. I take the eloquence of —, the knowledge of —, the zeal of —, and

the pastoral meekness, tenderness, and piety of—: then, putting them all together into one man, I say to myself, ‘This would be a perfect minister.’ Now there is one, who, if he chose it, could actually do this; but he never did. He has seen fit to do otherwise, and to divide these gifts *to every man severally as he will*.

‘I feel like a man who has no money in his pocket, but is allowed to draw for all he wants upon one infinitely rich: I am, therefore, at once both a beggar and a rich man.

‘I went one day to Mrs. G——’s, just after she had lost all her fortune. I could not be surprised to find her in tears: but she said, ‘I suppose you think I am crying for my loss, but that is not the case: I am only weeping to think I should feel so much uneasiness on that account.’ After that, I never heard her speak again upon the subject as long as she lived. Now this is just as it should be. Suppose a man was going to York to take possession of a large estate, and his chaise should break down a mile before he got to the city, which obliged him to walk the rest of the way; what a fool we should think him if we saw him wringing his hands, and blubbering out all the remaining mile, ‘My chaise is broken! My chaise is broken!’

‘I have many books that I cannot sit down to read: they are, indeed, good and sound; but, like halfpence, there goes a great quantity to a little amount. There *silver* books; and a very few *golden* books: but I have one book worth more than all, called the Bible; and that is a book of *bank-notes*.’

‘I conclude these remarks,’ says Mr. C., ‘not because my memorandum-book is exhausted, but lest

the reader should think I forget the old maxim, *ne quid nimis*. It is now time to close the subject by one or two general observations :

I would call the attention of three classes of men<sup>1</sup> to a single point of prime importance ; namely, the EFFICACY AND EXCELLENCY OF REAL CHRISTIANITY as exhibited in the principles and practice of the subject of these Memoirs.

1. Suppose the reader to be so unhappy (though his misfortune may be least perceived by himself) as to have been led astray by bad society, in conjunction with *an evil heart of unbelief*. I will suppose him to be now in the state in which Mr. N. describes himself formerly to have been, and in which also the writer of these memoirs once was. I will suppose him to be given up to believe his own lie ; and that he may be in the habit of thinking that God, when he made man, left him to find his way without any express revelation of the mind and will of his Maker and Governor ; or, at most, that he is left to the only rule in morals, which nature may be supposed to present. What that way is, which such a thinker will take, is sufficiently evident from the general course and habits of unbelievers.

But there is a conscience in man. Conscience, in sober moments, often alarms the most stout-hearted. When such an unbeliever meets an overwhelming Providence, or lies on a death-bed, he will probably awake to a strong sense of his real condition. He will feel, if not very hardened indeed, in what a forlorn, unprovided, and dangerous state he is left.

<sup>1</sup> These concluding remarks are taken wholly from Mr. Cecil's Memoir.

Life is the moment in which only this sceptical presumption can continue; and when it is terminating, where is he to set the sole of his foot? He wildly contemplates the book of nature, in which he may have been persuaded that man may read all he needs to know; but the forlorn outcast sees nothing there to meet his case as a sinner. Infinite power, wisdom, contrivance, general provision, alone appear; but nothing of that further and distinct information which a dying offender needs. He wants footing, and finds none. He needs the hand of a friend to grasp, but none is seen. Possibilities shock his apprehension. He may, perhaps, discern that the present system has a moral government, which frowns upon guilt; and, for aught he knows to the contrary, the next scene may present a Judge upon his throne of justice, this world, his present idol, vanished like smoke, and quick and dead called to give their account. Where then is he? an atom of guilt and wretchedness. All this, I say, may be, for aught he knows to the contrary. But the express and well-authenticated revelation, which that Judge has sent to man, tells us plainly that all this shall be, and that every eye shall behold it!

‘Be it so,’ such a reader may reply: ‘still I am what I am. My habits of thinking are fixed; and I perceive that my habits of life can only be decently borne out by my profession of unbelief. Both are now inveterate. Nor do I see, all things considered, what can be done in my case. How can I adopt the Christian Revelation? and what could it do for me, if I could?’

I answer, by calling your attention to the fact before us. What was the case of John Newton?

Could any one be more deeply sunk in depravity, in profligacy, in infidelity, than he? Can you even conceive a rational creature more degraded, or more hardened in his evil habits? Would you attempt to recover such a mind, by arguments drawn from the advantage which virtue has over vice? or by rousing his attention to the duties of natural religion, or to the possible consequences of a future retribution? He would have gone on thinking he had made the most of his circumstances, in his practice of catching fish, and eating them almost raw. He would sullenly have proceeded to sleep through the drying of his one shirt, which he had just washed on the rock, and put on wet. He would, with a savage ferocity, have watched an opportunity for murdering his master. He would have drowned all reflection in a drunken revel; and would have overwhelmed all remonstrance, by belching out new-invented blasphemies; and then sought to rush headlong, in a drunken paroxysm, into the ocean.

Here is, certainly, presented the utmost pitch of a depraved and degraded nature: nor does it seem possible for Satan to carry his point further with a man, EXCEPT in one single instance, namely, by *the final disbelief of a remedy*.

Now, by God's help, this divine remedy was applied, and its efficacy demonstrated; of which there are thousands of living witnesses. A plain matter of fact is before us. It pleased God, that, by a train of dispensations, this prodigal should *come to himself*. He is made to feel his wants and misery: he follows *the light shining in a dark place*: he calls for help: he is made willing to follow his guide: he proceeds with implicit confidence. And now let us examine



to what, at length, he is brought ; and by what *means* ?

I speak of a matter of fact. Out of what is he brought ? He is brought from the basest, meanest, under-trodden state of slavery ; from a state of mind still more degraded, being *foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating*, wanting nothing of a complete devil but his powers. This man is brought, I say, to be a faithful and zealous servant of his God, an able and laborious minister of Christ, a useful and benevolent friend to his neighbour, wise to secure the salvation of his own soul, and wise to win the souls of others.

Consider also the *MEANS* by which he was rescued. It was not by the arguments of philosophists, or the rational considerations of what is called natural religion. Mr. N.'s own account informs us, that the peculiar discoveries of Revealed Truth gradually broke in upon his mind ; till, at length, he was made sensible that *there was a remedy provided in the Gospel*, and which was fully sufficient to meet even *his* case ; and he found *that, and that only*, to be *the power of God unto salvation*.

The result, therefore, which should be drawn from these premises, is the following. There exists a desperate disorder in the world, called *Sin*. Heathens, as well as Christians, have marked its malignant influence : they have tried various expedients, which have been prescribed for its cure ; or its mitigation, at least : but no means have been discovered, except God's own appointed means, which have availed to the relief of so much as a single individual. Yet, strange to say, this *medicina mentis* of God's

own appointment, to which only he has promised a peculiar blessing, and by which he is daily recovering men in the most desperate circumstances who actually employ it, strange to say, this remedy still remains a stumbling-block; is counted foolishness; insomuch that many will rather dash this cup of salvation from the lips of a profligate, like Newton, when *disposed* to receive it, than that he should obtain relief in *that* way. Their conduct seems to say, 'Rather let such a wretch go on in his profligacy, than the Gospel be acknowledged to be the wisdom and the power of God.'

Not that the case of Mr. N., here presented to the consideration of an unbeliever, is brought forward as if the Gospel *needed* any further evidence, or has occasion for facts of our own time to give it additional authenticity: but we are directed to regard the "cloud of witnesses," among which our departed brother was distinguished; and, though now dead, yet speaketh. May the reader have ears to hear the important report!

Does, therefore, the question return, as to what the unbeliever should do? Let him, after seriously considering what is here advanced, consider also what conduct is becoming a responsible, or at least a rational creature? Surely it becomes such an one, to avoid all means of stifling the voice of conscience, whenever it begins to speak—to regard the voice of God, yet speaking to him in the revelation of his grace; and that, much more humbly and seriously than such persons are wont to do. It becomes him, if he have any regard to the interest of his own soul, or the souls of his fellow-creatures, to give no countenance by his declarations or example, to the sense-

less cavils and indecent scoffs, by which the profligate aim to cloak the disorders of their hearts—by which vanity aims at distinction, and half-thinkers affect depth. The person I am now addressing cannot but observe how much the judgment becomes the dupe of the passions. *If the veil be upon the heart, it will be upon every thing.* We need not only an *object* presented, but an *organ* to discern it. Now the Gospel alone affords both these. Mr. N. becomes an instructive example, in this respect, to the unbeliever. ‘One of the first helps,’ says he, ‘which I received,’ in consequence of a determination to examine the New Testament more carefully, ‘was from Luke vi. 13,—“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” I had been sensible, that to profess faith in Jesus Christ, when, in reality I did not believe his history, was no better than a mockery of the heart-searching God; but here I found a Spirit spoken of, which was to be communicated to those who ask it. Upon this I reasoned thus: If this book be true, the promise in this passage must be true likewise: I have need of that very Spirit by which the whole was written, in order to understand it aright. He has engaged here, to give that Spirit to those who ask: and, if it be of God, he will make good his own word.’

A man, therefore, who is found in this unhappy state, but not judicially hardened in it, should mark this stage of Mr. N.’s recovery, and attend to the facts and evidences of the power and excellency of real religion, such as this before him. He should appreciate that Gospel, which it has pleased God to

employ as his instrument for displaying the wonders of his might in the moral world. He should pray that he may experience the power of it in his own heart, and thus not lose the additional benefit of the cases presented to him in Memoirs like these: a case, probably, far exceeding his own in the malignity of its symptoms. Let him also consider, that, while such convictions can produce no real loss to him, they may secure advantages beyond calculation. He may not be able, at present, to comprehend how "Godliness is profitable for all things, in having not only the promise of the life that now is, but of that which is to come:" but he may see, as a rational creature, that, at the very lowest estimation, he has taken the safe side, by embracing the only hope set before him: and, on this ground, it is clearly demonstrable, that not only the grossest *folly* must attach to the rejector of a revelation attended with such accumulated evidences; but actual guilt also, and the highest ingratitude and presumption.

II. But there is another class of men to whom I would recommend a serious consideration of Mr. N.'s religious character and principles.

The persons whom I am now addressing, are convinced of the truth of revelation; and some of them can ably contend for it against unbelievers. They are also conscientious: they are often useful in society; and are sometimes found amiable and benevolent: they are even religious, according to their views of religion; and some of them are exact in their devotions. Yet, from certain morbid symptoms, they appear not to receive the grace of God in truth, nor

to be cordially disposed to the spirit of the Gospel. So much apparent right intention and exemplary conduct seems indeed to demand respect; and a respect, which some who possess more zeal than judgment do not duly pay them.

‘But why,’ it is asked, ‘should you suspect any thing essentially wrong in such characters as you describe?’ I reply, for the following reasons:—

I have observed with much concern, that when God hath wrought such a mighty operation of grace in the heart of a man like NEWTON,—this man has not, upon such a saving change being wrought, suited the religious taste of the persons just mentioned. They will, indeed, commend his external change of conduct; but will by no means relish his broken and contrite spirit, or his ascription of the change to free and unmerited favour, and his *counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus*, as that Lord who hath thus called him *from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God*. They will not relish the zeal and evangelical strain of his preaching; his endeavour to alarm a stupid sleeping conscience, to probe a deceitful heart, to expose the wretchedness of the world, and to rend the veil from formality and hypocrisy: nay, they will rather prefer some dry moralist, or mere formalist, who, instead of having experienced any such change of heart, will rather *revile* it.

Again, I have observed a lamentable *disposition of mind* in such persons, to form false and unfavourable associations. They will pay too much attention to injurious representations, true or false, of a religious class of mankind, whom the world has

branded with some general term of reproach. Two or three ignorant or extravagant fanatics shall be supposed to represent the religious world at large; it not being considered how much such offensive characters are actually grieving those whose cause I am pleading. No one, indeed, can have lived long in society, but he must needs have met the counterfeit of every excellence. In the article of property, for instance, who is not on the watch lest he should be imposed on? And, while the love of property is so general, who is not studious to discover the difference between the true and the false? It will be so in religion, wherever there is the attention which its worth so imperiously demands. Love has a piercing eye, which will discover its object in a crowd. But, if there be this disposition to confound in the lump the precious with the vile, it is symptomatic of something morbid in the heart. We have reason to fear a latent aversion, in the persons offended, to vital and spiritual religion itself; notwithstanding all the allowance that can be made for the prevailing prejudices of their education and circumstances.

And here also, we cannot but lament the effect of such a disposition, in those *perverse conclusions* which these persons are often observed to draw from a sermon. Of the two handles which attach to every thing, what must we think of that mind which is ever choosing the wrong? Our Lord, for instance, shows how much the *farm*, the *oxen*, and the *wife*, become impediments in the way of those who refuse his invitation: but a *perverse conclusion* would infer that he was, therefore, an enemy to lawful engagements. Candour, however, sees, at a glance,

that this was not his design in speaking the parable. His drift was evidently to mark the state and *spirit* of the recusants; and not to discountenance their lawful occupations. He meant to show that even lawful pursuits may be unlawfully pursued, when they become *sole* objects, and are thus preferred to his inestimable proposal. It is thus that the well-disposed hearer will mark the *design* of his minister; and draw wholesome nourishment from that discourse, which another will turn to poison, by stopping to cavil at the letter.

Another objection arises from the affinity which characters of this class have with a *world which lieth in wickedness*. In this instance of their worldly attachments, their *charity will readily cover a multitude of sins*, and form excuses for serious breaches of both tables of the law, in their worldly friends. They appear in their element while in the society of these friends, especially if wealthy and accomplished. If any person's ear is wounded with a profane expression from one of their rich and fashionable acquaintances, they are ready to whisper that ' notwithstanding his unguarded language, he has yet upon the whole, one of the best of hearts.' Yet an infallible monitor has said, " Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" If the old maxim does not always hold good, that, ' a man is known by the company he *keeps*,' it will infallibly stand good if we add one word to it, namely, that ' a man is known by the company he *chooses* to keep.' The physician may be detained in an infectious chamber, and the lawyer be found conversing with his client in a shower of rain: but nobody will infer from thence, that the one *chooses* to breathe foul air,

or that the other *chooses* to be wet to his skin. While the true Christian, therefore, will avoid incivility, fanaticism, or becoming the dupe of any religious party, he will also join the Psalmist in declaring “ I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.”

Again, these moral and religious characters, whom I am labouring to convince of their errors, have been observed to be more disposed to nurse, than to examine, their prejudices against a minister of Mr. N.’s principles. ‘ His teaching,’ say they, ‘ tends to divide a parish, or a family.’ But why do they not examine the reason? Why do they not consider, that introducing *good* has ever been the occasion of disturbing *evil*? I recollect a great family, whose servants were in a ferment, because one truly conscientious man was found among them. ‘ *He will spoil the place,*’ was their term, because he would not connive at their iniquity. But let me ask, which was to be blamed in this affair? his integrity, or their corruption? The master understood the case, and valued his servant in proportion as he marked the division. And thus it is in religion, while moving in a blind and corrupt world. Christ, though the Prince of Peace, expressly declared that his doctrine would be the occasion of much division in the world; that he “ came not to send peace, but a sword:” that he should be the occasion of family variance, &c. Matt. x. 34, 35; and warns his disciples of what they must expect, while they endeavoured faithfully to conduct his interests. Plain matter of fact declares, that, the maintaining truth, has been the occasion of the suffering state of the true church in all ages, and that often unto the death of its innumerable martyrs.



But, should a man who reads his Bible, or has any regard for the interests of truth, stand in need to have this explained ?

Another mistake might be exposed, in the stale objection, that such principles as Mr. N.'s tend to injure the interests of morality, from his strictly adhering to the doctrine of our eleventh article, on justification by faith. I would hope that this objection arises, in many, from a very slight acquaintance with the subject. It requires, indeed, but little attention to mark how expressly the scriptures maintain our justification on the sole merit of our Redeemer, while they as fully maintain the necessity of our sanctification or holiness by his Spirit. It has been repeatedly proved, by sound and incontestible arguments, that these two grand fundamentals of our religion are so far from opposing each other, either in scripture or in experience, that, when *real*, they are found to be *inseparable*. But, because this is not the place, either to state, or to defend this doctrine at large, it may help such as have hitherto stumbled respecting it, to observe an illustration and proof of this position, in the matter of fact just now presented to their view.

To one willing to learn, I would say, 'What proof would you require of the practical tendency of principles like Mr. N.'s?' We bring you, in his history, a most deplorable instance of human depravity and moral disorder. What experiment should be tried to recover this wretched creature to God and to himself? Regard, I say, the fact in this man's history. You will find that his recovery was not brought about by such considerations as are urged in what are termed moral or rational discourses; but on the

contrary, by such truths as he laboured throughout his ministry to establish, not only from the Scriptures, but from his own experience of their efficacy. He dwelt on truths which are essential and peculiar to Christianity : such as the guilt and utter depravity of our fallen nature, whereby man is become an alien and apostate from his God ; his inability to recover himself without the grace of the Holy Spirit ; the necessity of regeneration by the same Spirit ; and of faith in the Redeemer, not only as the alone ground of his justification before God, but as the root and motive of all acceptable obedience and good works : ‘ If I wanted a man to fly,’ said Mr. N. ‘ I must contrive to find him wings ; and, thus, if I would successfully enforce moral duties, I must advance evangelical motives.’ He preached truths like these, constantly and fervently ; and he lived a consistent example of them. Thus in all things approving himself a true disciple and minister of Christ, those who knew him, know that, without making any odious comparison, it might be literally affirmed of Mr. N. that “ by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,” his mouth was opened and his heart enlarged towards men.

I trust it is from a pure motive, that I am endeavouring to convince persons of the class which I am addressing, of their mistake. And I am the more induced to bring a case in point before them, because I think it cannot be paralleled as an instance of the power of religion, among those who labour to keep up prejudices against ministers of Mr. N.’s

character; or who, by unfair or partial statements, strive to subvert the doctrines which he preached, and the great end to which all his labours were directed, namely, "the life of God in the soul of man."

If indeed any one is *WILLING to be deceived, let him be deceived*. At least such an one will not be addressed here. But, if a man has any serious sense of the value of his soul, of its lost condition by sin, and of the necessity of recovering the friendship of his God; if he feels the express declaration in the Scriptures of an eternity of happiness or misery to be of infinite importance, and one to which the weightiest concern in this perishing world is but as the "dust in the balance," let such an one consider these things. Let him enquire whether those, who object to the character and views of such a minister as Mr. N.—are ready to probe the state of their own hearts deeply, as he did. When he was no longer an infidel, he renounced his grosser habits, and was to all appearance a new man: 'Yet,' says he, 'though I cannot doubt that this change, so far as it prevailed, was wrought by the Spirit and power of God, still I was greatly deficient in many respects. I was in some degree affected with the sense of my more enormous sins, but I was little aware of the innate evils of my heart. I had no apprehension of the spirituality and extent of the law of God. The hidden life of a Christian, as it consists in communion with God by Jesus Christ, and a continual dependence upon him for hourly supplies of wisdom, strength, and comfort, was a mystery of which I had as yet no knowledge. I acknowledged the Lord's mercy in pardoning what was past, but depended

chiefly upon my own resolution to do better for the time to come.'

Let the honest enquirer also consider whether the objectors just spoken of, are observed to be as anxious as Mr. N. was in their endeavours to serve God and obey his will; to glorify his Son, and to save the souls of men: whether they have experienced the force of truth, in the conversion of their own hearts and lives. *Conformed to the world*, as he once was, have they been since *transformed by the renewing of their minds*, as he at length became? A few such questions as these, well considered, would lead to important discoveries. Such an inquiry would show, that however some persons may be able to treat of the outworks of revelation, as they may of any other science which they have studied; yet, for such to dogmatize on religion, as it consists in a vital, spiritual, and experimental principle, would be as absurd as for a man originally deprived of one of the five senses, to deny the perceptions of those who possess them all. In short, it is as ridiculous as it is profane, for men rashly to assert on religious points, who evidently appear to have nothing so little at heart as the real influence and actual interests of religion.

Lastly, let nominal Christians seriously consider whether our immortal interests are not much too important to be staked upon a mere *prejudice of education*, an old, unrevised *habit of thinking*, a taking it for granted that they are right, when the event may awfully prove the reverse; and that too, when such errors can never be rectified. The persons with whom I have been pleading would pity the Jew or the Pagan in such an error; I earnestly pray that they may be enabled to see as clearly their own

mistake, and not resent the admonition of a real friend now seeking to prevent it.

III. But there yet remains a class of persons, found in the religious world, who entertain a high regard for Mr. N.'s character, and who should gather that instruction from it of which they appear to stand in great need. 'They should all take care,' as he expresses it, 'that they do not make their profession of religion *a receipt in full for all other obligations.*' I do not regard this class as hypocrites, so much as *self-deceivers*. They have a zeal for the gospel; but without a comprehensive view of its nature. They do not consider, that, in avoiding error on the one hand, they are plunging into a contrary mistake. Like a child crossing a bridge, they tremblingly avoid the deep water which they perceive roaring on one side; and recede from it, till they are ready to perish from not perceiving the danger of that which lies on the other.

The persons of whom I am here speaking, are defective in the grand article of AN HUMBLE AND CONTRITE SPIRIT. I remember Mr. N. used to remark, that 'if any one *criterion* could be given of a real work of grace begun in the heart of a sinner, it would be found in his *contrite spirit.*' Nothing is more insisted on in Scripture, as essential to real religion. I never knew any truly serious Christian, who would not readily join in acknowledging that 'the religion of a sinner,' as Mr. N. expresses it, 'stands on two pillars, namely, what Christ did *for* us in his flesh, and what he performs *in* us by his Spirit; most errors,' he adds, 'arise from an attempt to separate these two.' But the enemy still comes and sows

tares among the wheat: a sort of loose profession has obtained, which has brought much reproach on religion; and has become a cause of stumbling to many, who perceive a class of Christians contending for only a *part* of Christianity.

You can prevail little with a professor of this description, in exhorting him by "the meekness and gentleness of Christ," to self-denying, patient, or forbearing habits. If you state the genius of Christ's religion as it relates to the returning "good for evil, in blessing them that curse, and praying for such as revile and persecute, in showing, out of a good conversation, their works with meekness of wisdom, or, in having a fervent charity towards all men," &c. he is ready to take fire; and to cover his conduct by maintaining a crude system of mere doctrinal points, ill understood. Your well-intended remonstrance may perhaps lead him to ask, whether you mean to bring him back to the 'Whole Duty of Man,' or to 'Nelson's Fasts and Festivals.' He will lament that you yourself are not *clear* in the gospel; because, in fact, you maintain the *whole* of it: and that you are not *faithful*; because you maintain the whole of it in a patient, forbearing spirit.

The views of such persons, and the evil tempers to which they give place in their spiritual warfare, have often reminded me of the shrewd answer which our Richard the First sent to the Pope; who was angry because a certain warlike bishop had fallen by Richard in battle, and whom, being an ecclesiastic, the Pope called his *son*. Richard sent the bishop's armour to the Pope, with the words of Joseph's brethren: "Know now whether this be thy son's coat or not."

Nothing, however, could be more opposed to the spirit and character of our departed friend, than the temper that has just been described. His zeal in propagating the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, was not more conspicuous, than the tenderness of his spirit as to the manner of his maintaining and delivering it. He was found constantly "speaking the truth in love; and in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God, peradventure, would give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." There was a gentleness, a candour, and a forbearance in him, that I do not recollect to have seen in any equal degree among his brethren; and which had so conciliating an effect, that even the enemies of truth often spoke loudly in praise of his character. On the other hand, this generated such an affection in his friends, that, had he attempted to continue his public ministry, even after his powers had failed, a great part of his congregation would have assembled, were it merely for the pleasure they had in seeing *himself*.

That this account is not panegyric, is known to all who were personally acquainted with Mr. N. But, as many who may read these memoirs had not that pleasure, I will add the testimony of one whose nice discernment of character will admit of no question.

'A people will love a minister, if a minister seems to love his people. The old maxim, *simile agit in simile*, is in no case more exactly verified: therefore you were beloved at Olney; and, if you preached to the Chickesaws and Chactaws, would be equally beloved by them.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Cowper to Mr. Newton.

As the spirit of Christian benevolence and charity seems not to have been sufficiently cultivated among us, while a furious and often abusive zeal for certain points, as Cowper remarks, has been substituted for the whole truth, I am led to dwell longer than I intended in exhibiting this amiable feature of Mr. N.'s character; especially on account of those Christians who have imbibed a false taste in their religion from such teachers or books as have fallen in their way. I, therefore, earnestly request such persons to weigh well the inquiries which follow.

Have you ever sufficiently considered the evil of divisions and heart-burnings in a church; and what interest that enemy, who comes to sow tares among the wheat, takes in promoting them? Do you reflect that another Christian may be doing God's work, though his mode of doing it may not meet your taste, any more than your taste meets his? Do you consider how much greater evil a wrong spirit and temper produce, than the things you object against? Do you weigh the consequences of your haste in weakening the hands, and grieving the heart of any godly minister, whom you constantly or occasionally attend; and in actually laying a stumbling-block in the way of the ungodly, while you depreciate him and his services?

Let me further exhort such as are in danger from this unchastised spirit to consider, how much corrupt nature is *at the bottom of this error*. Corrupt nature frêts and rages at any supposed contradiction or restraint: it would substitute the work of the tongue for that of the heart. In the mean time, real religion is scorned by the world; which cannot distinguish between a thing so deformed, and the thing as it ought to appear.



Consider, also, whether there needs any grace at all, in order to maintain such a sort of profession. Are we only to give new appellations to the evil passions of corrupt nature, and then call names, hate, boast, and give ourselves the preference, as much as any ungodly man whatever? A zealot at an election can fight and strive for his favourite candidate: with inflamed zeal he can cause divisions, exhibit pride, self-will, and impatience of subordination; but, let me ask, will the same evil tempers change their nature because they are employed about spiritual objects?

Much blame attaches, too, respecting certain disputable points for which such persons strive. It seems as if some, who are otherwise good men, did not relish the Bible till they had garbled and corrected it; and that, if the whole were not of acknowledged authority, they would condemn it as it now stands. They speak as if it were not accurate in its terms, or sufficiently express or decisive in confirming their fond opinions. This leads them to be shy of some parts of Revelation: and to distort others, in order to fit them for their system. While contending for that system, they appear to forget the stress which the Apostle lays upon the holy, humble, self-denying, affectionate spirit of Christianity, in 1 Cor. xiii., how gentle it is! how easy to be entreated! how it hopeth and endureth all things, &c. while, on the contrary, they who can speak with the tongues of men and of angels, who have all knowledge, who can work miracles, and even die martyrs, would, without this distinguishing characteristic of Christianity, be considered of God as NOTHING. The Old Testament Dispensation, it is granted, had a severe aspect; and special occasions may be pleaded for special

expressions of holy indignation, under any dispensation : but, when the Prophet describes the brighter day, he foretels that then *the wolf shall dwell with the lamb*, as emblematical of the prevalence of that grace described by the Apostle in the chapter just quoted. Hold, therefore, the faith once delivered to the saints as firmly as possible ; but hold it in love. Buy the truth, and sell it not ; rather die for it, than part with it, but speak it in love : and walk in it as Christ also walked ; ever remembering that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

I feel conscious that it is simply with a view to convince many well-meaning Christians of their error (and I have found more or less of this class in almost every place where I have been) that I thus speak. If a gross superstition arising in the church perverted the Christianity of former ages ; I wish I may mistake in supposing, that a loose and unscriptural profession is widely spreading as the bane of our age. Against such a departure from the true genius of Christianity, I certainly, as a minister of Christ, ought to bear my feeble testimony. Consider, therefore, that what is said, is said with a single view to your best interests ; and *the Lord give you understanding in all things !*

As I referred the Christians who were last addressed to the character of Mr. N. as an example, so I never knew a more perfect one to my purpose. When any person depreciated the ministry of a good man, who, by advancing important truths, was opposing the reigning errors of the times ; but who, from timidity or prejudice, was shy of Mr. N. he would imitate his Divine Master, by saying, ‘ Let him alone : he that is not against us, is on our side.

Make no man an offender for a word. He is doing good, according to his views. Let us pray for him, and by no means weaken his hands. Who knows but God may one day put him far above our heads, both in knowledge and usefulness?'

His grand point, in a few words, as he used to express it, was, 'TO BREAK A HARD HEART, AND TO HEAL A BROKEN HEART.' To implant the life of God in the soul of man, he would sacrifice every subordinate consideration: he felt every other to be comparatively insignificant. He saw the spirit of ancient Pharisaism working among those who cry the most against it, who exact to a scruple in the tythe of mint, anise, and cummin of their own peculiarities, while they pass over the weightier matters of unity and love, straining at the gnat of a private opinion, and swallowing the camel of a deadly discord. On the contrary, so far as order and circumstances would admit, Mr. N. clave to every good man, and endeavour to strengthen his hands, in whatever denomination of Christians he was found. His character well illustrated the scripture, that though "scarcely for a righteous (or just) man would one die, yet for a good man, (that is, one eminent for his candour and benevolence) some would even dare to die." However they *admired* some other ministers, they all *loved him*; and saw exemplified in him that "wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

I conclude these Memoirs with a word to such as are endeavouring to follow the steps of their late faithful friend, as he followed Christ. We cannot

but lament the errors just described. We cannot, if we have any zeal for the gospel, but protest against them. But let us recollect that they are not the *only* errors which are found in the church; and therefore let us watch lest any other "root of bitterness spring up to trouble us, and defile many." When you lament with me the removal of ministers like Mr. N., let us recollect that ETERNAL FRIEND, who will never leave his church without witnesses to the truth; and who, among other reasons for removing earthly helps, teaches us thereby to rest only on that help which cannot be removed. Let us take comfort, too, in recollecting, that, spotted as the church may appear, from the inconsistencies of many of its members, yet all the real good in this corrupt world is to be found in that church. God saw seven thousand true believers in Israel, while his prophet could see but one. Where some Jehu is sounding a trumpet before him, many are quietly passing to heaven without any such clamour. As a great writer remarks, 'Because half-a-dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, while thousands of great cattle chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those that made the noise, are the only inhabitants of the field.'

But I must remark, that nothing has been more profitable to myself in considering Mr. N.'s life, than the exhibition which it makes of a particular Providence. If the church be not conducted by such *visible* signs now, as formerly, it is found to be as *actually* conducted. We read of a divine hand concerned in *the fall of sparrows*, in numbering *the hairs of our head*, and in raising *our dust to life*; but with

what little interest we read this, appears by our distrust in the first trial we meet. If we do not dare to join the sentiments of some, who regard such expressions as purely figurative and hyperbolic; yet our imagination is so overwhelmed with the difficulty of the performance, that we are apt to turn from the subject, with some general hope, but with a very indistinct and vague idea of a *God at hand*, faithful to his promise, and almighty to deliver. Yet how many cases occur in the history of every one of us, in which nothing short of an Almighty arm could prove “a present help in the time of trouble!”

Now this short history before us is admirably calculated to encourage our faith and hope, when we are called to pass through those deep waters which seem to bid defiance to human strength and contrivance. What, for instance, but a divine interference caused Mr. N. to be roused from sleep on board the *Harwich*, at the moment of exchanging men, and thereby effected his removal? What placed him in a situation so remarkably suited to his recovering the ship which had already passed the place of his station in Africa, and brought him back to his country? What kept him from returning in the boat that was lost at Rio Cestors? or from putting off to the ship that was blown up near Liverpool? Not to mention many other of his special deliverances.

““I am a wonder unto many,”” says he, in the motto of his Narrative: and, if we as distinctly considered the strange methods of mercy which have occurred in our own cases, we should at least be “a wonder to ourselves.” But my aim is to point out the use which we should make of these Memoirs in

this respect. We should, as Christians, mark the error of despair. We should see that the case of a praying man *cannot* be desperate;—that, if a man be out of the pit of hell, he is on the ground of mercy. We should recollect that God sees a way of escape when we see none; that nothing is too hard for him; that he *warrants* our dependance, and invites us to call him on in the day of trouble, and gives a promise of deliverance. We should, therefore, in every trial, adopt the language of Mr. N.'s favourite HERBERT:—

‘ Away Despair ! my gracious Lord doth hear :  
 Though winds and waves assault my keel,  
 He doth preserve it : he doth steer,  
 Ev’n when the boat seems most to reel :  
 Storms are the triumph of his art :  
 Well may he close his eyes, but not his heart.’

From these facts we should see that Christ is able, not only to “ save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him : ” but that he is able to bring the most hardened blasphemer and abject slave from his chains of sin and misery, to stand in the most honourable and useful station, and proclaim to the wretched and the ruined, the exceeding riches of his grace. I have observed, from my own experience, as well as from that of others, how strong a hold Satan builds on *despair*. The pressing fascinations of the world, the secret invitations of sensuality, and the distant prospect of eternal things, form a powerful current against vital religion. The heart of a Christian is ready to sink whenever these proud waters rise. Let him, therefore, recollect, that his hope, his only hope, is in pressing right onward through a world of lies and vanity;—that his present

dispensation is the walk of *faith*, and not of *sight*;— and that “by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, he has given strong consolation to such as flee for refuge to the hope set before them.”

THE END.



SCELEYS, THAMES DITTON, SURREY.

W. G. P.

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